

# **West Avenue Nature Trails Report – 03/07/2011**

Submitted by: Marlene Jass - Chairperson Dunes Subcommittee

## **The Dunes**

The area known as “The Dunes” is located at the North-West end of Delanco Township and shares a common border with Beverly City. The Dunes is one of two Delanco Township-owned waterfront land parcels that offer an opportunity for passive recreational activities. Notwithstanding ownership questions, research of legal documents show Delanco has ownership of the entire parcel: however, the 38.5 acre site can be looked at as two parts. The Center portion, 2.6 acres, is utilized for Delanco’s compost site. The portion adjacent to Beverly City has been used by the Army Corps of Engineers to deposit dredge spoils and may or may not be used again for that purpose, depending on Federal funding and/or political influence and its future use will remain clouded as the final disposition of “dredging” is beyond the scope of knowledge by this committee.

## **The Sub-Committee has representation from the following Township organizations:**

Public Works, Recreation, Land Use, Police, Environmental Advisory, and Township Committee all giving valuable input as to how best to give Delanco citizens, safe, affordable, environmentally positive access to the West Avenue Nature Trails.

## **The mission of this committee was to investigate all aspects of the West Avenue Trails, prior to opening the area to the public**

Opening the West Avenue Nature Trails will strengthen community image and sense of place, foster human development, increase common unity and provide wonderful recreational experiences for our adults and youth.

## **Our goal is to**

Provide “public access” to the West Avenue Area will be done in stages

### **Stage 1** - Westerly and Eastern Area (existing trails)

- Color map and markers indicating trails (see attached)
- Informational signage at entrances & designated areas
- Separation of pedestrian, truck traffic and leaf compost area
- Meet all the recommendations of the Loss Control Report from JIF Insurance Fund (see attached)

- Provide signage required by State Parks and Recreation to be posted, including the established TWP ordinances of permitted and prohibited activities.

### **Stage 2 – Enhancements**

- Construct scenic overlooks, organized group camping area and benches.
- Provide the highest degree of enjoyment, health, safety and well being for the entire community.
- Provide memorable recreation and leisure experiences for all we serve.
- Create visual enjoyment and protect our natural areas.
- Provide passive recreation nature trail for walking, hiking, tree/plant identification, birding, animal identification, educational opportunities and other passive activities.
- Promote positive community relations and public awareness.

### **Operations, Maintenance and Patrol:**

*Comments: by Mr. John Fenimore (maintenance /compost) and Chief George Sacalis (Patrol-safety input)*

The cost of the project will not affect Police and Public works Departments Budgets according to Mr. John Fenimore and Chief George Sacalis.

- The hours of operation will be daily - dawn to dusk.
- Split rail fencing will be obtained and the entrance gate will be modified for the required delineation, keeping persons away from the compost road at the entrance of the trails.
- Required signage to be obtained.
- Funding to be provided from the "Delanco Open Space Fund".
- Recreation/Dunes Sub-Committee will oversee the project.
- EMS and Fire Company overview from a safety aspect are in progress.

### **Benefits of West Avenue Nature Trails:**

- Leisure activities in the trails improve moods, reduce stress and enhance a sense of wellness.
- Educational and recreational opportunity for enjoyable nature studies.
- West Avenue Nature Trails will facilitate social and family interactions.
- West Avenue Nature Trails provide true economic benefits.
- Public Access to the trails provides the opportunity to be physically active.
- Preserve our woodlands and scenic areas and open space.
- Providing year round "public access" to our West Avenue Nature Trails.

### **Approvals to be obtained from TWP Committee;**

- Resolution: To proceed with West Avenue Nature Trails project.
- Authorization to use funds from the "Delanco Open Space Fund".

- Ordinance: Create permitted and prohibited uses (rules and regulations).

**Recommendation to the following Committees:**

- **JLUB:** Amend Master Plan referencing the Dunes and recreational areas
- **Recreation Commission:** Master Plan to be updated reflecting active and passive recreational improvements.