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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

\$350K Grant to Fund Stormwater Enhancements in Witten Park, Benefiting Lake Hopatcong

Hopatcong, N.J. (August 30, 2024) – The Lake Hopatcong Commission, in collaboration with the Lake Hopatcong Foundation, has received a \$353,000 grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) through the Delaware Watershed Conservation Fund (DWCF). This grant will fund stormwater improvements at Witten Park in the Borough of Hopatcong.

The DWCF, which is primarily funded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, aims to conserve and restore natural areas, corridors, and waterways throughout the Delaware River watershed. These efforts support native migratory and resident wildlife, fish, and plants while contributing to the social health and economic vitality of surrounding communities.

“The installation of stormwater improvements at Witten Park will enhance wildlife habitat, expand recreational opportunities, and advance our goal of reducing nutrient input to Lake Hopatcong, which fuels aquatic weed growth and harmful algal blooms,” said Ron Smith, Chairman of the Lake Hopatcong Commission.

The project will implement a regenerative stormwater conveyance system designed to improve current site conditions and restore wetlands, in-stream, and upland areas. By consolidating four existing stormwater culverts into a single, centrally located outlet, the project will incorporate natural stream features, such as pools, riffles, and native plantings, to better convey, infiltrate, and treat stormwater runoff. Additionally, the site will be stabilized through the installation of native vegetation, which will restore water quality by shading the stream, moderating water temperatures, and enhancing habitat for aquatic organisms.

“We are incredibly grateful to all of our project partners and contributors whose efforts and expertise have made this important water quality project possible,” said Kyle Richter, Executive Director of the Lake Hopatcong Foundation. Working together, we can achieve meaningful, lasting improvements that will benefit Lake Hopatcong and its surrounding communities for generations to come.”

The project funding will be rounded out with in-kind contributions totaling \$383,000 provided by various local partners, including the [Lake Hopatcong Commission](#), [Lake Hopatcong Foundation](#), [Hopatcong Borough](#), [Sussex County](#), [Lake Hopatcong Historical Museum](#), and [Princeton Hydro](#). This is the second grant awarded to the Lake Hopatcong Commission by NFWF.

“This funding will play a crucial role in preventing harmful algal blooms (HABs) by reducing nutrient inputs and enhancing water quality in the watershed,” said Dr. Fred Lubnow, Senior Technical Director of Ecological Services at Princeton Hydro. “By raising awareness, fostering collaboration, and implementing effective stormwater management strategies, we can continue to address the challenges posed by HABs and keep Lake Hopatcong open for business and recreation.”

The Lake Hopatcong Commission is an independent state agency created in, but not of, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection. The LHC is recognized as a steward of the lake and watershed. The 11-member Board of State and local appointees include representatives of the four municipalities and two counties surrounding Lake Hopatcong. The LHC is responsible for fulfilling the obligations of the Lake Hopatcong Protection Act, to safeguard Lake Hopatcong as a natural, scenic, and recreational resource. To learn more, visit lakehopatcongcommission.org.

The Lake Hopatcong Foundation is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to protecting the lake environment and enhancing the lake experience by bringing together public and private resources to encourage a culture of sustainability and stewardship on and around New Jersey’s largest lake, for this and future generations. To learn more, visit lakehopatcongfoundation.org.

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