

**Contact: Arthur R. Ondish**  
Chairman  
Lake Hopatcong Commission  
Phone: 201-787-6538

117 Lakeside Boulevard  
Landing, NJ 07850-1120  
[www.lakehopatcong.org](http://www.lakehopatcong.org)

**Lake Hopatcong  
Commission**

# Press Release

## **Lake Hopatcong Commission Earns DEP Environmental Award**

**Landing, New Jersey, November 14, 2005** — New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has selected the Lake Hopatcong Commission as a recipient for the 2005 New Jersey Environmental Excellence Award. The distinguished award recognizes the Commission's significant contribution to environmental protection in New Jersey in the Clean & Plentiful Water category. The Commission earned the award for its leadership and innovation to promote the use of lake-friendly, phosphorous-free fertilizer in an aggressive outreach campaign and for its annual weed harvesting program.

Arthur Ondish, Chairman of the Lake Hopatcong Commission attributed the success of the lake-friendly fertilizer outreach program to the community involvement. "Everyone wanted to get involved in the outreach program," Ondish stated. "Many local retailers agreed to carry the phosphorous-free fertilizer, schools distributed flyers, local municipalities provided information on their websites and in their newsletters and lake-friendly fertilizers signs are proudly on display throughout the Lake Hopatcong watershed thanks to local businesses, civic and volunteer groups, government agencies and many others. Residents are beginning to use phosphorous-free fertilizer on their lawns and gardens to protect Lake Hopatcong."

The Commission hung lake-friendly fertilizer signs on their harvesting equipment used to remove tons of weeds from Lake Hopatcong. Since its inception in 2001, the Commission's weed harvesting program has removed over 5,500 tons of wet plant biomass from the lake. The removal of this plant biomass has also resulted in the removal of a significant amount of

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phosphorus and other nutrients absorbed by the vegetation. High levels of phosphorous stimulate unwanted algae and weed growth and impede recreational activities such as swimming, boating and fishing.

Plans are underway to expand the lake-friendly fertilizer outreach campaign. More retailers will be encouraged to carry the non-phosphorous fertilizer and residents will be urged to make the switch to lake-friendly fertilizer. To learn more on how you can protect Lake Hopatcong by using lake-friendly fertilizer and for other yard and lawn maintenance tips, visit [www.lakehopatcong.org](http://www.lakehopatcong.org).

The Lake Hopatcong Commission will receive the award at a ceremony to honor environmental leaders throughout the State. The awards are co-sponsored by DEP, the New Jersey Corporation for Advanced Technology (NJCAT) and the NJ League of Municipalities.

The Lake Hopatcong Commission is an independent New Jersey State commission founded in 2001 to protect the natural resources of the State's largest lake. The Commission was created through legislation introduced by Senators Anthony Bucco (R-Morris) and Robert E. Littell (R-Sussex).

Lake Hopatcong is a 9-mile-long lake located in the northwest part of New Jersey on the borders of Sussex and Morris Counties. The 2700-acre lake is held in trust by the State of New Jersey for all New Jersey residents. It has nearly 40 miles of shoreline and a watershed population of over 65,000 people. It is a major recreational center in New Jersey and is considered one of the best freshwater fishing locations on the East Coast. The lake is also an emergency source of drinking water during declared drought emergencies.

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