

# New Watershed Association Tackles Environmental Issues

## CNJWA to serve four counties & 17 towns

By Joshua Schulman

The Central New Jersey Watershed Association (CNJWA) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to environmental conservation in central New Jersey. Formerly known as the Crosswicks-Doctors Creek Watershed Association (CDCWA) this year CDCWA combined with the Crafts Creek Spring Hill Brook Watershed Association to create the CNJWA, with the goal of enhancing environmental protection throughout 17 municipalities (including Allentown and Upper Freehold) in four counties.



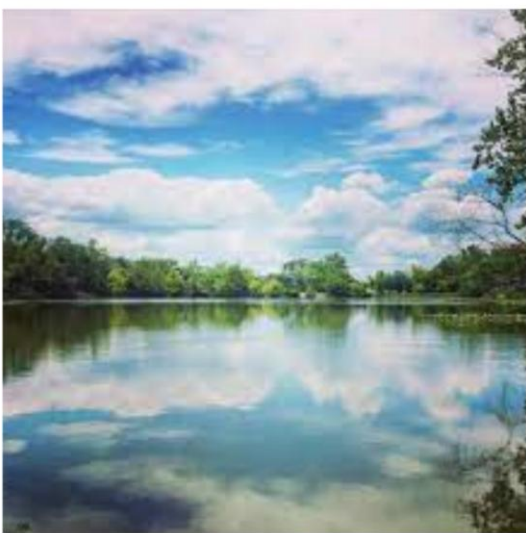
A watershed is a topographic feature within a boundary that drains into a common water body like a river, stream, or lake. The Crosswicks-Doctors Creek and Crafts Creek-Spring Hill Brook Watersheds are examples of such an area in central New Jersey, as it encompasses several water bodies that eventually empty into the Delaware River.

Greg Westfall is the organization's president. Westfall offers a wealth of experience and knowledge to his leadership role. He served as the mayor of Allentown from 2016 to 2020, where he played a key role in environmental initiatives that positively impacted the town.

During his time as mayor, the borough oversaw a \$5 million renovation of the Allentown Wastewater Treatment Plant. Previously, the plant had struggled to meet ammonia reduction standards, but the renovation enabled it to successfully meet water quality requirements.

Westfall spearheaded the preservation of a three-acre property in the center of Allentown that had initially been slated for housing development. Thanks to successful efforts by the Allentown Borough Council in securing funding from Monmouth County and the Monmouth Conservation Foundation, the property was purchased for \$250,000 and transformed into the Sgt. George Ashby Memorial Park. The park, named after New Jersey's longest-living Civil War veteran, now features walking paths and green spaces for the community to enjoy. The next step is for the park to eventually connect to a third entrance on Church Street.

Beyond his work with CNJWA, Westfall is an active member of the New Jersey Association for Floodplain Management (NJAFM), a volunteer group devoted to reducing flood risks across the state. The association works with municipalities, counties, and federal agencies to mitigate the threat of flooding. Westfall pointed out that areas like Manville and Hamilton have been particularly vulnerable to frequent flood losses, with some properties experiencing repeated flood damage.



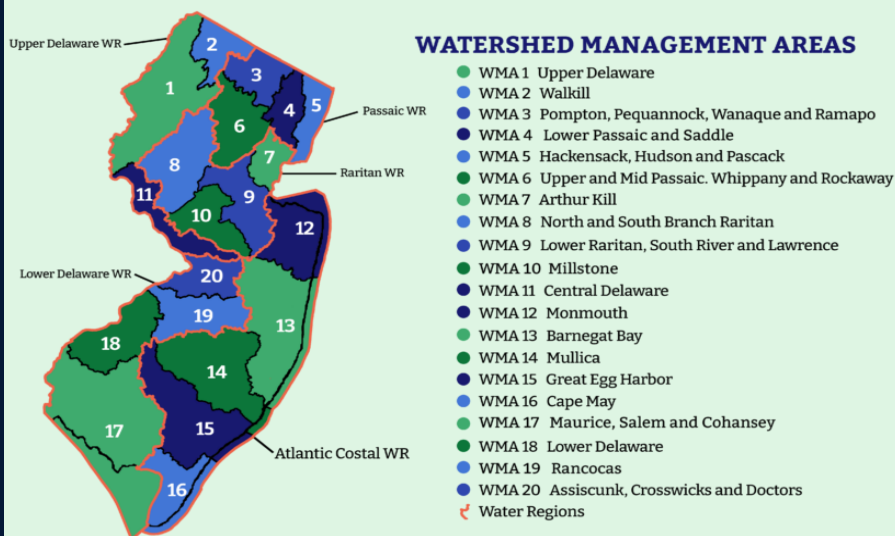
CNJWA will focus its efforts on addressing the environmental consequences of urban development. In many areas, farmland and forests have been replaced by roads, buildings, and other impervious surfaces. These surfaces prevent rainwater from soaking into the ground, causing more rapid runoff that can lead to flooding and water quality degradation.

An example of this development is the several planned and developing warehouse projects in municipalities adjoining Allentown Borough. The warehouses would be converting what was previously predominantly agricultural or forested land uses to 50% or more impervious surfaces. Westfall explained the adverse effects the project will eventually have on the environment if the warehouses continue to be built.

Continued on next page --

## Watershed merger (con't.)

"[The warehouses] can change the timing of surface water runoff. With an agricultural or forested condition, there's what a hydrologist would call a longer 'time of concentration,' from when a raindrop hits the ground to when it becomes concentrated runoff," Westfall stated.



"And in these situations, the runoff is concentrated into stormwater basins, which, while dampening the impact, can still be a problem if we find ourselves in days with more intense rain and precipitation events. It can be a real problem."

For residents in flood-prone areas, flood insurance is vital. Those who live in FEMA-mapped flood zones with a federally backed mortgage are required to carry flood insurance. However, flood insurance is not mandatory if the mortgage is paid off or not federally backed. These homeowners are

vulnerable to significant losses in the event of a flood.

New Jersey has a long history of flooding, with records of flood events dating back 75 to 100 years. Over time, municipalities have developed strategies to reduce flood risks, such as discouraging development in flood zones, relocating structures out of flood-prone areas through buyout programs, and elevating buildings.

Following Hurricane Sandy in 2012, the state made significant strides in flood-mitigation efforts, particularly along the shore. Similar efforts have been underway for decades in other parts of the state. FEMA and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) play pivotal roles in subsidizing these initiatives.

CNJWA will partner with schools, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, and other organizations to promote environmental education. Additionally, CNJWA will partner with counties, municipalities, open-space trusts, and others to accomplish farmland and open-space preservation. The organization wants to establish well-water testing opportunities for homeowners who depend on their own private wells. CNJWA will also offer members a newsletter covering local and regional opportunities for environmental education and protecting the shared watershed.

The organization hopes to create a lasting impact on the region's environmental health. CNJWA will also be focused on encouraging more community involvement to protect the natural beauty of central New Jersey for future generations. For further information, go to <https://mjwa.org/>.

**Allentown Lions Club**  
17th Annual  
**Run With Eagles**  
5K Run/Walk ---- 1 Mile Fun Run  
Proceeds to benefit local and regional community organizations  
Sponsored by the ALLENTOWN LIONS CLUB FOUNDATION INC 501(c)3

**Saturday, May 3, 2025**  
Cream Ridge Winery  
145 County Road 539, Cream Ridge, NJ

Awards | Refreshments | T-Shirts  
8am - Walk up Registration | 9am - Fun Run | 10am - 5K

Register at: <https://runsignup.com/race/nj/creamridge/runwitheagles>  
Or email to [nstarfarm@aol.com](mailto:nstarfarm@aol.com)