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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Program offers \$450 rebates for rain gardens

Lake Hopatcong, N.J. (February 11, 2021)— A free educational webinar on the basics of rain garden installation will be presented Wednesday, March 3, at noon and 7 p.m. It will be hosted by the Lake Hopatcong Commission (LHC), in partnership with the Lake Hopatcong Foundation (LHF) and the Rutgers Cooperative Extension Water Resources Program.

Along with the webinar, participants will have an opportunity to schedule a free 30-minute virtual consultation, in which they can work one-on-one with a Rutgers landscape architect to plan a customized rain garden for their property.

Sixteen participants from Jefferson, Hopatcong, Mount Arlington, or Roxbury, who reside within the Lake Hopatcong watershed, will be eligible to receive a rebate of up to \$450, after installation of a rain garden and inspection by the Rutgers team.

"This is a wonderful opportunity for residents within the Lake Hopatcong watershed to not only learn about the benefits of rain gardens, but also to get assistance in the planning and expense of adding a rain garden to their yards," said LHC Administrator Colleen Lyons.

A rain garden is a collection of native shrubs, perennials, and flowers planted in a small depression, designed to temporarily hold and soak in rainwater runoff from impermeable surfaces such as roofs, driveways, and patios, effectively controlling pollution and mitigating flooding.

"Rain gardens are a great step for homeowners who want to be able to do something positive for Lake Hopatcong's water quality," said LHF Grants and Program Director Donna Macalle-Holly. "The goal of this program is to install at least 16 gardens within the Lake Hopatcong watershed by the end of this year."

Pete and Sara Buonomo, of Landing, took part in the program last spring, installing a rain garden in a flood-prone area of their property and receiving the rebate upon completion.

"When we first moved into our home and the warm weather came around, it was very clear we had a drainage issue," explained Sara Buonomo. "Neither my husband nor I knew what a rain garden even was, but after attending the hour-long seminar it was clear we had the answer to our problems."

"We scheduled the follow up, proceeded with the plans created, and a few weeks later, voila, a scary, uneven, flood-prone backyard was turned into a beautiful rain garden oasis. All in all, it was a wonderful experience, which was beneficial to us, our neighbors and, most importantly, the environment."

Funding for the project was provided through a Harmful Algal Bloom Grant from the N.J. Department of Environmental Protection awarded to the LHC in partnership with the LHF, along with other project partners, to evaluate innovative technologies to control, prevent, or mitigate harmful algal blooms on Lake Hopatcong.

For more information or to register for the webinar, visit lakehopatcongcommission.org.

The Lake Hopatcong Commission is an independent state agency created in, but not of, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection. The Commission 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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Pete and Sara Buonomo installed a rain garden in their flood-prone back yard in Landing with assistance from Rutgers Cooperative Extension Water Resources Program through a rebate program offered to residents in the Lake Hopatcong Watershed.