where microorganisms conduct important phases of the carbon, nitrogen, phosphorus, and sulfur cycles, breaking down harmful pollutants into simple forms, which in turn can be utilized by other organisms for food.

In their natural state, tidal marshes act as buffers against storm-driven floodwaters. They store water from overflowing riverbanks and excess surface waters. In addition to the sponging effect of the soil, wetland vegetation helps slow the speed of floodwaters, lowering flood levels and reducing erosion. Coastal wetlands offer protection from storm runoff and extreme tidal fluctuation, preventing shorelines from eroding away.

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ABOUT THE MIDDLETOWN ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

The Middletown Environmental Commission is the oldest environmental commission in New Jersey, having originated in 1970. The majority of the members possess a strong background in environmental sciences and issues. It meets monthly to review requests for property changes (housing developments, commercial building, private docks, etc.). The environmental commission acts as an advisory body to the township planning committee regarding these issues. Several of the members are members of other environmental councils and committees. It has planned and implemented special projects such as planting signs describing natural wetlands delineation in the township (with the help of high school students), as well as water quality testing at key sites along waterways. It is a volunteer organization, with members serving three year terms.

Commission Members who Contributed to this Booklet: Mike Fedosh, Chair, Amy Codella, Julius Coppola, Kim Cottell, Jim Cross, Jeff Rauch, Charline Scott, Sarah Stewart.
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