

## Soft Plastics Challenge

The Township's Environmental Commission has recently completed a community challenge to collect 500 pounds of soft plastic film in a six month period. This is the equivalent of about 40,500 common grocery store bags. The "Recycling Challenge" program is offered to municipalities, schools and civic organizations nationwide by the Virginia-based Trex Company. If enough pounds of eligible plastics are collected, the company awards a bench, made of recycled materials, to the participating group. As a result of the overwhelming support of Township residents, the Environmental Commission was able to meet the goal in four months!

"We felt this program would give our residents a fun way to come together for two good reasons," said Kathleen Parrish, chair of Byram's Environmental Commission. "We can promote responsible recycling of plastics and, hopefully, improve our public parks." The Trex bench will be placed in Tamarack Park in the Spring.

The Environmental Commission approached the Recreation Committee to ascertain if they would be willing to sponsor a challenge to keep the momentum going and were thrilled that the Committee agreed to do this! Residents are asked to continue to drop off eligible plastics such as over-wraps from water bottle cases, bubble wrap, newspaper sleeves, cereal box liners, produce, bread and salt bags, and other such items. Plastic items labeled with a No. 2 or 4 recycling symbol are also acceptable. Donated plastic materials must be clean, dry and free from food residue. Plastics are being collected in a designated bin located at the Byram Municipal Building at 10 Mansfield Drive, Stanhope.

"The Trex Company has successfully hosted the Recycling Challenge since 2006," said Trex Materials Sourcing Manager Stephanie Hicks, "with the objective of educating the public on the importance of plastic film recycling through community and municipality programs." Since the program's inception, more than 2,000 municipalities, schools and civic organizations have participated.

More information about the Recycling Challenge, as well as which plastics are acceptable and unacceptable, is available at [recycle.trex.com](https://recycle.trex.com), or by contacting Donna Fett by email at [dfett@byramtwp.org](mailto:dfett@byramtwp.org).

Did you know that New Jersey will be phasing out single-use plastic shopping bags by May 2022? In order to help support this change, the Environmental Commission is providing residents with a limited number of re-useable shopping bags at no cost. These free bags are available in the Township Administration Lobby located at 10 Mansfield Drive, Stanhope. These bags will also be distributed at future Environmental Commission sponsored events. Please stop by, drop off your eligible soft film plastics in the collection bin and pick up a free re-useable shopping bag! More information about the ban on plastic bags and alternative solutions is available at <https://www.bagupnj.com/>.