

**70th Anniversary Celebration
of the
New Jersey School of Conservation
and**

**Dedication of the
John J. Kirk
Piney Point Legacy Kiosk**

October 12 and 13, 2019

Hosted by the
Friends of the New Jersey School of Conservation





Welcome Message from the Director

I take great pride in welcoming you to the celebration of the 70th anniversary of the New Jersey School of Conservation. This is a day to celebrate this school and the people and personalities that have shaped it. The pictures and stories that will be shared this weekend will no doubt bring joy and pluck at the heart strings of our distinguished alumni.

As you reflect on the lives who have shaped the SOC, you are celebrating not just the school, but the birthplace of an idea and an educational movement that had a global impact. From this little spot in New Jersey 70 years ago, our founders planted the seeds of an educational revolution that took root and spread throughout the world; namely that education could be more than classrooms and books. Education should be about discovery. First-hand experience makes learning more vivid. Experience etches lessons on a student's mind like no textbook can. In our outdoor classroom, discoveries weren't limited to the sciences. Anything taught in a classroom could be taught as effectively here, in nature. More importantly, a school committed to small focused groups of students solving real problems would more effectively instill the lessons of self-discipline, kindness and the power of community than was possible in traditional settings. Experienced educators know that this school makes a difference not only in science but in a person. Connect these lessons to what students learned in the classroom and you had a powerful tool for creating the educated citizenry the world needs.

From this campus, our ideas spread around the planet. At one time, there were many University affiliated programs like ours and staffed by our graduates. Today, most of those programs have ceased to exist, victims of budget cuts and a world addicted to electronic entertainment. Yet, we have managed to stay relevant for 70 years in spite of the changing world around us. Educators still see the value in our programs and continue to lobby schools to bring their students to the New Jersey School of Conservation.

Everything in life seems to come in cycles. Once again, we need an educational system that will instill in young men and women the need to care for nature and one another. As you celebrate with us today, I believe you will see us continue with the mission of our founders and continue to influence generations to come.

Sincerely,



William H. Thomas
Director

NJ SOC 70th Anniversary Weekend Program

Friday, October 11, 2019

Arrival and Dinner on your own

Saturday, October 12, 2019

8am **Breakfast**
Long House

9:30am **Reflections on the History,
Formation and Philosophy of the NJSOC**
Kittatinny Hall

Kerry Kirk Pflugh, *president, Friends of NJSOC*, welcome and introduction
Tom Card, *NJSOC Environmental Educator*
Robert Partridge, *son of De Alton Partridge, first Director NJSOC*
Dr. Thomas Rillo, *professor emeritus Indiana State University (by video)*
Mrs. Virginia Littell, *founder, Sussex County Child Advocacy Center*
Mr. Jerry Schierloh, *former Associate Director of the NJSOC*
Dr. Jim Merritt, *former Outdoor Pursuits Coordinator of the NJSOC*

12:00pm **Lunch, Friends of NJSOC Awards of Merit and Announcements**
Big Timbers

1:15pm **Dedication of John J. Kirk Piney Point Legacy Kiosk**
Piney Point
See page 5

2:30pm **NJSOC Now and into the Future**
Kittatinny Hall
Dr. William H. Thomas and SOC staff

4:00pm **Camp Wapalanne Legacy 1950-1985**
Friends Officers and former Campers and Counselors

5:00 – 5:45 pm **Networking and Visiting**

6:00pm **Dinner**
Big Timbers

7:30pm **Campfire and Music**
Piney Point
followed by Star Gazing, *Kirk's Corral*

Sunday, October 13, 2019

7am **Sunrise Run around the Lake**
Trading Post

8am **Breakfast**
Long House

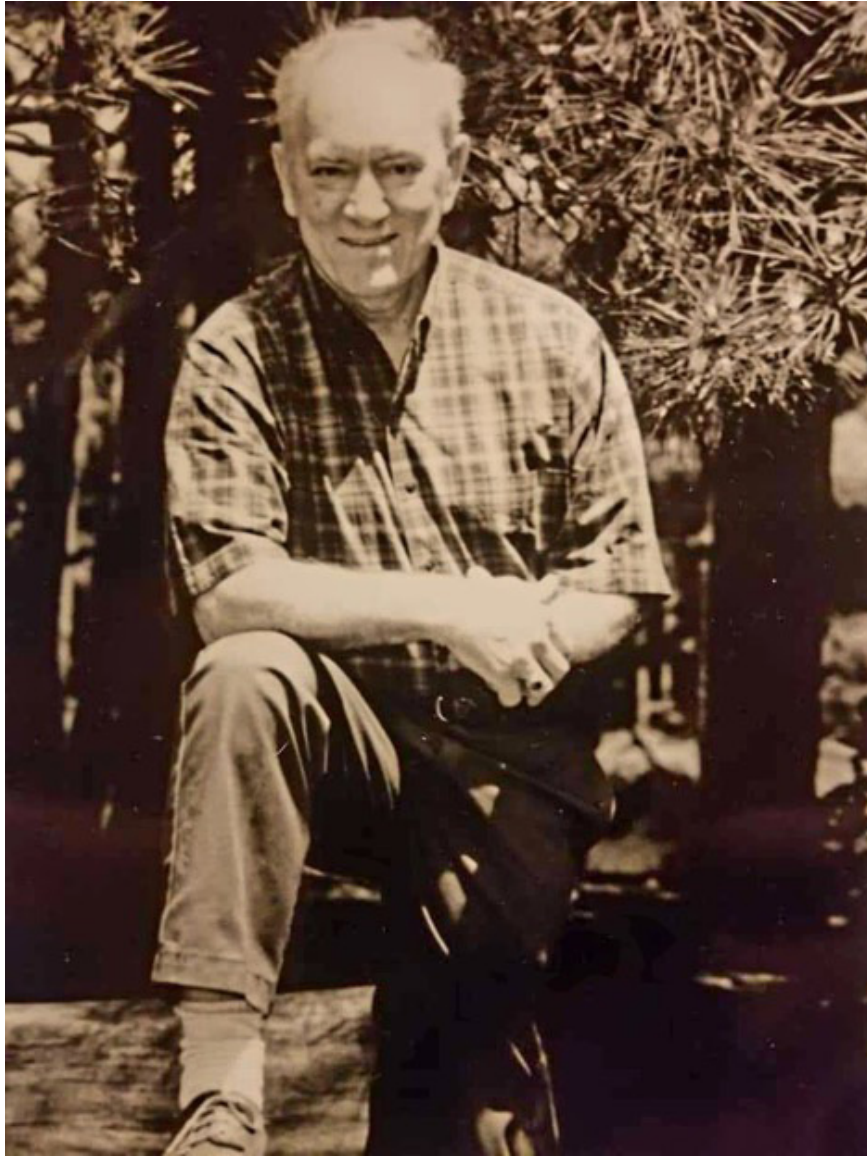
9:15 – 10:30am **Activities**
Climbing Wall and ASE's, *Barricaded Road*
Archery, *Archery Range*
Boating, *Boat Dock*
Spinning and Weaving, *DeGroat Cabin*
Blacksmithing, *Barn*

10:45am – Noon **Activities Repeat**

12:15pm **Lunch**
Long House

1:30 – 3:30pm **Activities repeat**
except for Climbing wall
Fly Fishing, *Kirk's Corral*

3:45 – 5pm **Open time/Depart**



Dr. John J. Kirk

John J. Kirk Memorial Kiosk Dedication Ceremony

Saturday, October 12, 2019

Welcome

Dr. William H. Thomas
Director, New Jersey School of Conservation

Opening

Kerry Kirk Pflug
President, Friends of the New Jersey School of Conservation

Explanation of Piney Point Memorial Kiosk

Jerry Schierloh
*Former Associate Director of the New Jersey School of Conservation
and Friends Officer*

Reflections on our Father

Paul G. Kirk
Son

The Irish Blessing

Debbie Kirk Zupito
Daughter

Final Thoughts on a Life Well Lived

John P. Kirk
Son

Dedication and Blessing of the Memorial Kiosk

Rev. Kiernan McHugh
President of the Sussex County Academy of Catholic School

Ribbon Cutting

Dr. William H. Thomas, Friends Officers and Kirk Family

Closing Song – Power and Glory

Pete Martyniuk and the Wapalanne Alumni



Dr. John J. Kirk, known affectionately to his family and friends as Jack, DK, Professor, the Wizard of Wapalanne, and dad, lived an extraordinary, multifaceted life. He traveled the globe; his writings were published in 25 countries and translated into nine languages; he established a multidisciplinary approach to environmental education that is used in classrooms and field centers around the world today; he co-founded the United Nations Environmental Sabbath Programme, reaching 60,000 faith leaders across the planet who have helped spread the green gospel to their congregations; he took what once was a Civilian Conservation Corps camp and turned it into an international environmental field center; he raised four children; he loved dogs and all animals; he taught CCD and served on his local environmental commission; he had a quick wit, exemplified by such famous quips as, “I’m a rose between two thorns,” or “a square doesn’t blow over in a wind storm,” or “If what you did yesterday still looks good today, you didn’t do very much today.” He was fiercely proud of his Irish heritage; he was a devout Catholic; he trained educators and helped establish environmental field centers all over the world; he dined with the Crown Prince of Japan, and loved to teach fly fishing, tie flies, and fly fish. In his final days, he was surrounded by family – his greatest love.

Dr. Kirk started his professional career in the late 1950’s, as a member of the faculty at the University of Michigan. His next position was Supervisor of Camping Services for the State of Michigan, where he administered the licensing and inspection program for 1,000 children’s summer camps in the state, and established year round camps to rehabilitate socially maladjusted boys, ages 13 to 18.

In 1963, he assumed the position of Director of the New Jersey School of Conservation (SOC). It is here that Dr. Kirk saw the importance of linking environmental education to elementary, secondary and higher education, religion, recreation, organized camping, politics, and outdoor education and environmental studies, in order to create an informed and environmentally literate citizenry. He was instrumental in building the SOC into the third largest environmental field center in the world and in making Camp Wapalanne, a model ecology summer camp program.

During his tenure, the SOC’s residency program serviced more than 300,000 students, teachers, masters and doctoral candidates, faculty and visiting professionals from every walk of life through the nearly 40,000 workshops and Environmental Education (EE) programs offered at the SOC. An addi-

tional 5,000 young people were exposed to Dr. Kirk's philosophies and concepts of EE by attending one of four summer camps including, Camp Wapalanne and a Junior Fly Fishing Camp. The other two camps incorporated environmental themes into their programs – A. Harry Moore, a summer camp sponsored by Jersey City State College for the mentally and physically challenged youth and a Music Camp, sponsored by Montclair University, where students write and perform symphonies to the earth.

Dr. Kirk also lent his wisdom and expertise to numerous professional organizations and civic groups, including the American Nature Study Society, the American Camping Association, the National Council of Outdoor Education, the Garden Clubs of New Jersey, United Nations Interfaith Partnership for the Environment, the New Jersey Commission on Environmental Education, the Sussex County Community College Board of Trustees and the Sparta Township Environmental Commission. Over the years, he received honors and recognition from virtually all of these organizations.

In addition to his work in New Jersey, he consulted with and visited 20 countries establishing EE programs and creating professional and student exchange programs to enhance and complement EE across the planet. His integrated approach to environmental education continues to be used today in varying forms at residential environmental field centers across the state of New Jersey, nationally and internationally.

His work internationally drew recognition from the United Nations and in 1978, he was invited by the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) to participate in developing an international plan for EE. Dr. Kirk became a member of the North American Committee of the Belgrade Charter and helped introduce the Charter which laid the foundation for the field of environmental education to countries around the world.

In the 1980's, Dr. Kirk conceived yet another approach to spread the environmental message. He approached leaders of UNEP with the idea of establishing what would become the Interfaith Partnership

for the Environment (IPE), a group that would help establish relationships between religious leaders and UNEP. The IPE provided the necessary link between religion and UNEP's agenda for environmental protection. More than 60,000 leaders worldwide have participated in this program and shared the "green gospel" with their followers. In New Jersey, Greenfaith was established as an outgrowth of this effort. And in 2006, Greenfaith honored him for his efforts on behalf of religion and the environment at their first annual awards dinner.

In 2001, after 38 years as the Director of the New Jersey School of Conservation, Dr. Kirk decided it was time to retire. He left behind a legacy of environmental education innovations that continue to this day. For a short time, he continued to consult with colleagues, students and friends on environmental education matters.

Dr. Kirk lived an accomplished and multi-faceted life filled with love, faith, family, professional success and fun. He will be remembered for his brilliance, innovative thinking, wicked humor, quick temper, forgiving nature, acceptance of all people, unique style, and joy for life. ■



The Kirk Family

70th Anniversary Speakers



Tom Card,
NJSOC Environmental
Educator

Mr. Card is a life-long resident of Sussex County, New Jersey. Mr. Card came to the SOC after 33 years with the New Jersey Park Service as a ranger and a supervising lieutenant. He was a student at Seton Hall University and

a graduate of the New Jersey State Police Academy. Mr. Card has had extensive training with the National Association of Search and Rescue (NASAR) and served on the High Angle Rescue Team, which performs rescues on high cliff surfaces. He was previously active in the community as a member of the Wantage School Board and a leader with the Boy Scouts. Mr. Card enjoys hiking, camping and all outdoor activities.

gineering, Electrical Engineering, Carpentry and Plumbing. His knowledge of the camp's mechanical and electrical utilities resulted in his teaching an afternoon class on the history and operation of the School of Conservation. These classes were presented during the last couple of years he lived there.

After graduating from Montclair High School, Mr. Partridge joined the US Navy as part of the Naval Air group. While in the Navy, he worked on various high level training devices including Link Trainers. He went on to IBM where he was a Field Engineer, Instructor, Field Manager and Programmer. He then signed up with Decision Data Computer Corp where he was the Corporate Field Service Manager. He then joined Bose Corporation where he worked in sales, field engineering, and sales management. During his Bose career, he worked on several special projects and was loaned to NASA on one project. He retired in 2001.



Robert Partridge,
son of first SOC Director
Mr. Robert Partridge was born and raised in the Upper Montclair, NJ area. Bobb's father, the late Dr. DeAlton Partridge was the first Director of the NJSOC and later went on to become President of Montclair State. In the summer of 1949, Mr.

Partridge's family moved to the camp for the first of many summers. He was nine.

While Dr. Partridge was focused on getting the new camp up and running, young Bobb found inspiration in things mechanical and electrical. The work needed to bring the dormant facility up to life, turned out to be fertile ground for an exposure and an early education in Mechanical En-



Thomas J. Rillo,
Ph.D. Emeritus Professor
of Environmental
Education

Dr. Rillo taught at various levels of education for over forty-four years. He first spent seven years teaching in the public schools of New Jersey at the secondary level. Dr. Rillo's first assignment in

higher education was as Assistant Professor of Education and Coordinator of Outdoor Education at Montclair State College in New Jersey. During this time, he was associated with the New Jersey State School of Conservation. At Southern Illinois University, he was Associate Professor of Outdoor Education, Chairman of the Outdoor Education Division, and Coordinator of the Outdoor Education Center for Southern Illinois. At Glassboro State College,

he was a Full Professor of Environmental Education and responsible for a graduate program at four other New Jersey institutions of higher education. Dr. Rillo was a professor of environmental education at Indiana University for 22 years.

Dr. Rillo was active in outdoor education and environmental education for over sixty years. He is author of numerous publications relating to outdoor and environmental education. Dr. Rillo is the recipient of numerous awards including: National Wildlife Federation Conservation Award; the Association of Interpretive Naturalist Award for Excellence; The Lorado Taft Outdoor Education Award; the Julian W. Smith Outdoor Education Award, and The L.B. Sharp Award for Outdoor Education Excellence to name just a few. One of his most recent interests is fitness for the aged and aging. He conducts workshops or seminars on the topic of fitness for this population.



Virginia N. Littell

Throughout her life, Mrs. Littell has been devoted to community service that has impacted many people in New Jersey and the northeast. Mrs. Littell has served over 40 years as a hospital trustee and Chairman of the Board of the Sussex Division of St. Clare's Hospital. She

served for 14 years as a member of the New Jersey Hospital Association and as a member of the Association's Executive Committee. She also was Chairman of the Council of Hospital Governance for 12 years, which advises all the Boards of Trustees of every hospital in New Jersey.

Twenty years ago, she founded the Sussex County Child Advocacy Center for abused children, a member of the National Children's Alliance. The community named the Center, "Ginnie's House" in Mrs. Littell's honor.

Mrs. Littell has been active in Republican politics for her whole adult life. She is only the second woman in either political party in New Jersey, to lead the Republican statewide organization. Mrs. Littell served as delegate to three Republican National Conventions and served as a member of the Electoral College. As a member of the Republican

National Committee, she was elected Vice Chairman of the 14 state Northeast Region, one of the five regions in the country.

She was educated at Boston College. She has received an Honorary Doctorate Degree from Centenary University in Hackettstown, NJ. She serves on the Rutgers University Business School Board. Mrs. Littell was married to the late Senator Robert E. Littell, who served 40 years in the New Jersey Legislature.



Jerry Schierloh, Former Associate Professor, NJSOC

Mr. Schierloh is an environmental education professional who retired in 1999 from a 32-year career as Associate Professor of Environmental Studies with the New Jersey School of Conservation, Montclair

State University. During his career at the NJSOC, Mr. Schierloh gained experience in planning and implementing environmental education in a variety of contexts including: comprehensive natural science curriculum; coordinating undergraduate college environmental programs; team-teaching graduate courses, and supervising some 40-50 graduate-level independent studies on topics relevant to environmental education curriculum development. In addition, Mr. Schierloh served on a national task group and committee (through the Alliance for Environmental Education) to establish standards for environmental education curricula in relation to formal education.

For fifteen years following his retirement from the School of Conservation, Mr. Schierloh expanded his career-long interest in promoting school and community-based environmental education. He developed a series of instructional programs and models that could be used to train classroom teachers to use a variety of local and regional outdoor learning environments to enrich their existing curricula.



Dr. James Merritt,
Former Outdoor Pursuits
Coordinator, NJSOC
Dr. Merritt is a lifelong
environmental educator.
While in college, he spent his
vacations teaching in
Outward Bound Schools. For
the next fifteen summers, he
taught mountaineering and
kayaking in the USA,

England, New Zealand and Africa. In 1970, he began work as the Outdoor Pursuits Specialist at the New Jersey School of Conservation. During this time, he earned his doctorate in the School of Education at New York University, where his dissertation focused on his research developing outdoor recreation programs for special needs children. After seventeen years, he left the New Jersey School of Conservation. He then spent much of the remainder of his full time working career working in outdoor programs with special needs populations. He retired from formal education in 2000, moved to his boyhood home at the Jersey Shore and began a job as the Program Director at the Sedge Island Natural Resource Education Center. Although he recently retired from Sedge, Dr. Merritt continues to volunteer in a variety of environmental organizations including: Friends of Island Beach, Save Barnegat Bay, Cattus Island County Park, and several others.



Dr. William H. Thomas,
Director, NJSOC
Dr. William H. Thomas
earned a Ph.D. in Anthropol-
ogy from Arizona State
University. His research
interests include ethno-ecol-
ogy, conservation, and
traditional ecological
wisdom of indigenous
people. Since 1988, he has

conducted ethno-ecological research in Papua New Guinea. He is currently a fellow in the Explorers Club and has recently received the prestigious Lowell Thomas Award for his work with the Hewa people in the New Guinea Highlands. Dr. Thomas’ work has been recognized by the United Nations for the development of research methodologies identified as one of the “Best Practices” in the use of indigenous knowledge.



**Jennifer
Correa-Kruegel**

Ms. Correa-Kruegel has
worked in the field of environ-
mental education since 2003.
She obtained her undergradu-
ate degree in Environmental
Studies from Ramapo College
of New Jersey in 2002 and
received a Master’s degree in

Parks and Resource Management from Slippery Rock University in 2009. Ms. Correa-Kruegel’s role at the NJSOC began in 2006 as Program Coordinator and evolved into Environmental Educator in 2010. In conjunction with NJDEP’s Endangered and Non-Game program, Ms. Correa-Kruegel conducts turtle and salamander research at the NJ SOC.



Tanya Sulikowski

Ms. Sulikowski trained as a
field ecologist and has
continued to work with a
variety of species throughout
her career. She also taught
middle and high school
science and used her
hands-on knowledge of
ecology to bring science
lessons to life. Her experi-

ences in the forest and the classroom demonstrated to her what a powerful teacher nature can be. Ms. Sulikowski was recently selected as a Grosvenor Teaching Fellow by National Geographic and awarded the “Women in Wildlife” Award for Education by the Conserve Wildlife Foundation of NJ. She earned her B.S in Conservation and Applied Ecology from Rutgers University and M.S. in Ecology and Evolution from Montclair State University. Her thesis research focused on how land use impacts macroinvertebrate communities and she had the privilege of using the Flat Brook at the School of Conservation as her benchmark research site. ■

Friends of the New Jersey School of Conservation Officers



Kerry Kirk Pflugh
President

Mrs. Pflugh has been affiliated with the SOC for more than 50 years. Her dad, Dr. John J. Kirk, was the Director of the SOC for 38 years. Her family moved from Michigan when she was five. They lived in the Staff Lodge for several months before moving to

Sparta where she lived except for college, Cook College – Rutgers and graduate school, University of Wisconsin – Madison, until she was married. Mrs. Pflugh works for the State of New Jersey at the Department of Environmental Protection. She is very pleased to be a part of supporting the School of Conservation and the wonderful staff, who work so hard to educate the residents of New Jersey.



Shayne Russell
Vice President

Ms. Russell's long-term relationship with Camp Wapalanne and the School of Conservation began at age 7 when she found herself in the same cabin as her life-long friend, Kerry Kirk. Both of her sisters are Wapalanne alumni – her twin

sister, Torrie, was a camper with her and her older sister, Jackie, was a counselor, Riflery Instructor, and also the Coordinator of School Programs during the school year at the NJSOC. Ms. Russell majored in Outdoor Recreation at Montclair State and during her Junior year, Dr. Kirk came to talk to her class about summer jobs at Camp Wapalanne. When summer came around, she was happily ensconced in a dome as a counselor in the Kit Carson Unit. In the winter of 1979, she got to experience the school

program as an undergraduate teaching intern at the SOC, and then continued on for a second summer camp season in the girls' Outpost. Ms. Russell believes we're fortunate to have a resource of this caliber in New Jersey. She is honored to have the opportunity to support the School as an officer of the Friends group.



Abby Farber
Treasurer

Ms. Farber was a Wapalanne camper during the early 1970's – one year in a cabin, then two summers in KCU. She's so happy to have found this group and to be supporting the SOC. Some of her fondest life memories are of Camp – the songs, the canoe

trips, learning about nature, going to the Sussex County Fair. She and her husband have two children and both of them attended summer sleep-away camp. She currently lives in paradise in the Pacific Northwest and runs a financial consulting practice for nonprofit organizations.



Steve Weintraub

Media and Technology

Mr. Weintraub is a web developer and graphic designer with a long career in the fintech, publishing, and photography industries. He manages the Friends website, social media, and technical infrastructure, along with

designing the Friends logos, web, and printed material. Steve was a camper at Wapalanne for seven years, along with his two older siblings. He is an avid runner, and credits his passion for the sport to those summers in Stokes dashing from the cabins to meal call at Big Timbers. He is honored and proud to be an officer of the Friends of NJSOC, and hopes we can all work together to support the School of Conservation for generations to come.



Jerry Schierloh

Friends Historian

Mr. Schierloh is an environmental education professional who retired in 1999 from a 32-year career as Associate Professor of Environmental Studies with the New Jersey School of Conservation. During his career at the NJSOC, Mr.

Schierloh gained experience in planning and implementing environmental education in a variety of contexts; these included: 1) Establishing and supervising a comprehensive Natural Science curriculum; 2) Coordinating undergraduate college environmental programs; 3) Serving as the School’s Assistant Director for Program Planning and Development; 4) Team-teaching a graduate course in Curriculum Development in Environmental Education, and 5) Supervising some 40-50 graduate-level independent studies on topics relevant to environmental education curriculum development.



Mary Jane Davis

Science Education Officer

Mrs. Davis’s first five summers after graduating from college were spent working at Camp Wapalanne. She still contends it was the best job she ever had. During those summers, she says she had the privilege to work and learn from Dr. Kirk, spend

time with campers and some amazing co-counselors. Many of these relationships have stood the test of time and she treasures the 40 plus year friendships that started at camp. The time at Wapalanne and the various courses she had the opportunity to take at SOC, firmly cemented her love of the place and inspired her to embark on six Earthwatch expeditions. Although she is still busy as the science coordinator of Red Bank Catholic and teaching high school science, she is honored to have the opportunity to give back to the magical place and the people who have made it what it is. ■



Friends of the New Jersey SOC

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John J. Kirk Memorial Plaque Donors

The Friends of the New Jersey School of Conservation and the Kirk Family would like to thank each of you for your generous donation toward the memorial plaque for Dr. John J. Kirk.

Jennifer Allen

Pete Martyniuk

Berkeley Twp. Educational and
Environmental Program Foundation

Jim Merritt

Suzanne Blatchford

Jackie Patterson

Paul Bookman

Kerry Kirk Pflugh
and family

MJ Davis

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