

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Dr. Denise Gemmellaro and I am an assistant professor of forensic science at Kean University, in Union, NJ.

I am writing to you to state my full support to the to the Friends of the New Jersey School of Conservation to become permanent managers of the NJ School of Conservation; I also state my intention to continue to use the site for forensic entomology, forensic science and biology research and training.

The NJ SOC is the place where for 8 years I have organized my annual forensic entomology workshop, an event that has attracted students and participants from all over the world every year. This event is the only full immersion training opportunity in the field of forensic entomology in the world and has been offered in collaboration with three major university of New Jersey (Montclair State University, Rutgers University and Kean University). People have come to the NJ SOC from South Korea, from Ecuador, from Africa, from Italy and from many other places in the US to receive training in forensic entomology and to enjoy the welcoming, magical atmosphere offered by the School and made possible by its capable staff. The number of attendees to the workshop has ranged from 12 to 53, some of them being people who keep coming back year after year; therefore it is safe to say that there is a lot of interest towards this event. The 2020 edition of the workshop had been scheduled for August and, even though we didn't know if was going to go through due to the current situation, it had already attracted participants from India, Italy and the United States.

Moreover, the NJ SOC is the place that I have used for multiple years to train the FBI and the NJ State Police. People from Quantico, VA came to attend the training we offered there and we had already agreed to continue their training every year for new and returning agents. Word of the training at the SOC has arrived at other law enforcement agencies, such as the NY State Police of Buffalo and they too have requested to be trained at the NJ School of Conservation. Agents and police officers have already reserved their spot for whenever we are going to be able to offer the training again.

From an ecological perspective, the NJ SOC is a paradise to conduct any type of research. Being an assistant professor at Kean, I am in need of a research center to take my students for field work and I absolutely intend it to be the NJ SOC

Ultimately, the School of Conservation is the place that had been selected for the annual meeting of NAFEA (North American Forensic Entomology Association) in 2021. During the business meeting, we discussed all the advantages of this location: proximity to major airports, possibility to stay overnight, different habitats to offer workshops, large library, lab space and very student friendly. The association felt that the NJ SOC was the ideal place to encourage student participation and have one of the largest meetings of the last years. Of course, after the recent events I talked to the NAFEA Executive Committee to explain the situation. Everyone still agrees that the NJ SOC must be a location for a NAFEA meeting! This is an event that requires attendees to stay overnight at the site. We look forward to when that can be done again.

The NJ SOC is a place to be used for all these activities, and many more. This is truly the ideal place for research, education, training and Nature appreciation. I believe the Friends of the NJ School of Conservation will be the best manager to ensure the realization of all those activities and the wellbeing of the NJ SOC.

Respectfully,

Maria Denise Gemmellaro, PhD, M-ABFE  
Assistant Professor  
School of Natural Sciences  
Kean University