

Lenapehoking Reestablishment Project

By Pat Johnson

The Ocean County Cultural and Heritage Commission is pleased to welcome members of the Lenapehoking Reestablishment Project to a number of events this fall.

Ty Dancing Wolf Ellis is the founder and CEO of the Lenapehoking Reestablishment Project (LRP) located on the border of Salem and Cumberland Counties. Although the organization was formally established in 2023, Ellis said it has been in progress for ten years. Lenapehoking means lands of the Lenape and that encompasses all of New Jersey, parts of Delaware, Pennsylvania and New York. According to their website, LRP is dedicated to the promoting of Lenape Awareness while supporting tribal youth.

“The project was started by citizens of the Nanticoke Lenni-Lenape Tribal Nation of New Jersey; LRP is an entity working outside of the capacity of the originating Nation. It prides itself on existing for the people, by the people with roots in Lenapehoking—the lands of our ancestors. We hope to first build up a following of our surrounding communities and organizations that can assist in bringing the public awareness as well as

establishing footholds within our territory. We are currently limited to the Lenape of the area but with intentions to extend to all nations in Lenapehoking as well as descendants of Lenape people who were once displaced from the lands of their ancestors.”

The LRP is promoting indigenous arts, dance and song performances plus craft workshops teaching traditional crafts such as beadwork, leatherwork, bone jewelry, dream catchers, pine needle work and drum making. While teaching traditional crafts, the facilitators also teach Lenape culture and history, said Ellis.

The organization recently assisted in the formation of a Youth Group Indigenous Youth of Lenapehoking (AKA the Cohanzick Nature Reserve Youth Group) and currently provides workshops under the partnership of the Native American Advancement Corporation (NAAC). They just recently held their fourth Annual Youth Retreat at the Cohanzick Nature Reserve, 63 acres now stewarded by the NAAC, for the second year in a row. The event



Ty Dancing Wolf Ellis and Trinity Norwood traditional performance.
Photo credit: Lenapehoking Reestablishment Project.

brought together Lenape youth and sister and surrounding communities, such as Taino, White Mountain Apache, Nanticoke, Wampanoag, Upper Mattaponi, Rappahannock, and more.

This year the youth group visited the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington D.C. and during a tour of the collections were given special dispensation to touch some of the artifacts without gloves, artifacts that are considered “ancestors,” said Ellis. “There was a lot of energy around that,” said Ellis. “It was good to see how they are being cared for.”

LRP will be teaching Lenape history and culture during the Pinelands Jamboree at Wells Mill County Park on October 11 where they will offer Indigenous art for sale. They will have a cornhusk doll making craft for children.

Cedar Bridge County Historic Site will welcome members of LRP for a dream catcher workshop on November 6. The following week, LRP members will host a bead-making workshop at the Ocean County Library in Toms River, November 13 at 6:30 p.m. And Ty Dancing Wolf Ellis will be the keynote speaker at the Student Leadership Conference at Ocean County College on October 29, 2025.



Events that draw crowds in which LRP encourages people to visit are the “Pow-Wows”, where Indigenous People from multiple communities come together to sing, drum, dance, and educate the public. The Pow-Wows that mean the most to LRP, as the individuals who founded LRP are a part of these communities, are the Nanticoke Lenni-Lenape Strawberry Moon Pow-Wow held annually at the Cumberland County Fairgrounds, NJ, the first weekend in June, and the Nanticoke Pow-Wow held at Hudson Fields in Milton, DE, the first weekend in September.

LRP Youth Group and
National Museum of the American Indian mentors.

