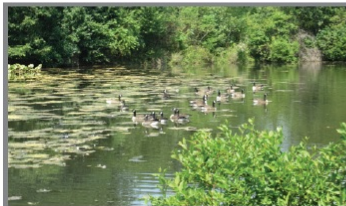


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Water Pages eNewsletter

[Cleaning New Jersey's Waterways]



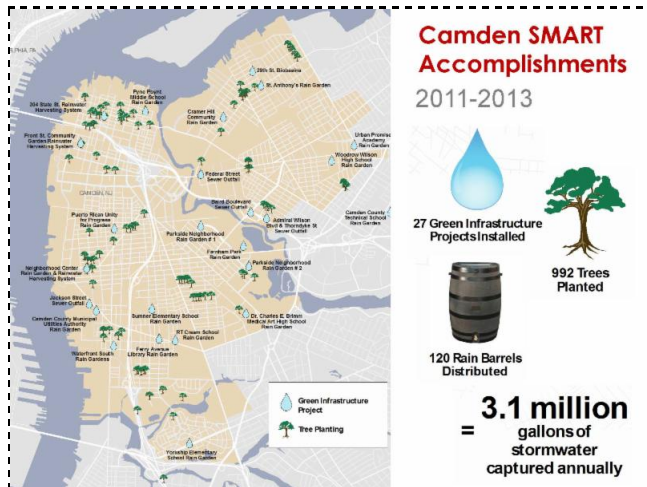
On Friday, October 24, 2014, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) approved New Jersey's 2012 list of polluted waterways, which resulted in rhetoric from different groups as stated in the Newark Star-Ledger's Article: [Troubled Waters: NJ still struggling to clean up polluted waters](#). It is a

shame that often what gets published in the paper are the sound bites of claims that other groups should be doing more to fix the problem. The reality is that most of the groups mentioned in the article are working hard to restore the health of New Jersey's waterways. I know this because we are working with them.

The Rutgers Cooperative Extension (RCE) Water Resources Program is working closely with the [NJ Department of Environmental Protection \(NJDEP\)](#) to implement stormwater management practices where there are none. We are working with the [Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)](#) to implement pollution prevention measures to eliminate pollution at the source. We are working with Hackensack Riverkeeper and the NY/NJ Baykeeper to bring green infrastructure to our urban areas. While these groups may not be working independently, they all share a common goal: clean water for New Jersey. We are excited about bringing the expertise of Rutgers University to the table to help all of these groups. Efforts to clean New Jersey's waterways are happening up and down the garden state from the local grass-roots organization to state and federal agencies. The RCE Water Resources Program, established in 2002 by Dr. Christopher C. Obropta, P.E.,

has been dedicated to solving New Jersey's water resources issues. Through competitive grants secured from local, state, and national entities, the RCE Water Resources Program has been working to identify and address community water resources issues using sustainable and practical science-based solutions.

As part of the RCE Water Resources Program's commitment to the Clean Water Act and its focus on cleaning our waterways, the RCE Water Resources Program sat in on the [Camden SMART](#) and [Newark DIG](#) community groups to provide technical support in leading green infrastructure initiatives in both Camden and Newark to improve the quality of life, health, and the viability of the city and its residents while dealing with a combined



sewer system. Green infrastructure has been established as the first line of defense to better manage stormwater runoff, improve water quality and resilience to flooding, and reduce combined sewer overflows (CSOs). Our efforts in both Camden SMART and Newark DIG have been successful due to our continued partnership with the NJDEP. We have secured funding through various programs at NJDEP to assist these communities with managing stormwater through green infrastructure to reduce the impacts to our waterways and therefore improve the water quality.



In 2013, the RCE Water Resources Program partnered with the [NJ Water Supply Authority \(NJWSA\)](#) to offer a rain garden rebate program to encourage homeowners in Bridgewater, Raritan and Somerville to build rain gardens. The program empowers residents in learning about how to design and build a rain garden with native plants to reduce stormwater runoff from their homes. The [Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission \(PVSC\)](#) partnership also aims to pilot an

outreach and technical assistance program to provide guidance and direction to the 48 municipalities in their service area in identifying the benefits and opportunities of implementing green infrastructure practices. By intercepting stormwater runoff at the source in urban, suburban and rural communities, we can minimize flooding, comply with regulatory statutes, and improve New Jersey's waterways.

The RCE Water Resources Program and the many partnerships we've established in New Jersey are only a piece of the pie. Many other organizations in New Jersey

are focusing on water quality issues and ways we can improve.

- The [American Littoral Society](#)'s mission is to promote the study and conservation of marine life and habitat, protect the coast from harm, and empower others to do the same since 1961. The American Littoral Society provides a voice for the coast and also gives concerned citizens the knowledge and tools they need to raise their voices.
- The [Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions' \(ANJEC\)](#) goal is to achieve responsible and sustainable use of New Jersey's natural resources and protection of environmental health statewide. By offering leadership, education and support to environmental commissions and other local boards, public officials and organizations, ANJEC has become an advocate group for strong state and regional environmental policy efforts in New Jersey.
- The [New Jersey Tree Foundation's \(NJTF\)](#) mission is to reforest New Jersey's most urban cities by planting trees with community volunteers and partners to help residents in improving their environment and quality of life in their own hands.
- The [NY/NJ Baykeeper](#), [Hackensack Riverkeeper](#) and the [Raritan Riverkeeper](#) are citizen guardians of the Hudson-Raritan Estuary, Hackensack River, and Raritan River to protect, preserve, and restore the environment of New Jersey's urban cores in benefiting from its natural and human communities. The Baykeeper and Riverkeeper organizations seek to end pollution, improve public access, carry out public education, and work with stakeholders in planning for a sustainable future.



Working together, we can improve our waterways and reduce the number of contaminated waterways in New Jersey. Let us help you move your ideas into action. Let's stop the bickering and get to work together in securing our own quality of life by improving our waterways. Every effort helps!

[Grant Funding Opportunities for You]

The RCE Water Resources Program would like to inform you of some great funding opportunities for local organizations or municipalities. Should you like to partner with the RCE Water Resources Program, please reach out to a staff member to discuss opportunities for working together.

- [EPA's Environmental Justice Small Grants Program](#)
- [EPA's Environmental Education Model Grants Program](#)
- [Department of the Interior Fish and Wildlife Service Conservation Education and Mentorship Program](#)

- [NFWF Five Star and Urban Waters Restoration Grant Program](#)
- [Sustainable Jersey Small Grans Program](#)

[Rutgers Environmental Stewards Class Internship by Brenda Taube]

I thoroughly enjoyed my Environmental Steward Class. I have always been concerned about our environment and feel that education is the key to making everyone care, so thank you for offering this course.



As an Environmental Steward student, I learned our City needed a "green team" so when the Stewardship Program was over, I started one in my home town where I serve as a City Commissioner. At one of our first green team meetings, I suggested we host a "Stormwater Management Workshop." I suggested this workshop after listening to Dr. Chris Obropta and Dr. Ken Miller lecture during the Rutgers Environmental Stewards Class. I said to myself, "this information must be shared!" I live and represent people who live on a barrier island, and this information is important for everyone to know, especially those involved in planning.

Thankfully, our team supported the workshop and we hosted over 100 people on Thursday, July 17, 2014 at the Margate Performing Arts Center. The attendees represented the whole Absecon Island (Atlantic City, Ventnor, Margate and Longport) and elsewhere including Hammonton, Brigantine, Dennis Township, Somers Point, and Stone Harbor. Municipal planners, administrators, engineers, planning board members, zoning officers, green teams, elected officials, and general members of the public attended representing the previously mentioned municipalities. Dr. Ken Miller, Dr. Chris Obropta, and Lisa Auermuller were our presenters. They all spoke very knowledgeably to an enthusiastic audience, ready to learn how to become more sustainable and more flood resilient communities.

Dr. Ken Miller's information on sea-level rise is now on our website. Municipal officials and planners, as well as residents, want to know what sea-level expectations are so appropriate action can be implemented to protect public and private property. This information is especially topical for Margate as we are debating the somewhat controversial state and federally funded Shore Protection Project. Dr. Chris Obropta's presentation on implementing resilience activities was helpful because attendees learned how important it is to have permeable surfaces. In fact, as a result of the information shared by Dr. Obropta, the City of

Margate will be paving its new parking lot adjoining City Hall with permeable asphalt. In Margate, we are also considering rain gardens in our "parkway section" of the City as well. It's highly unlikely that either of these projects would have been considered prior to Dr. Obropta's presentation. Lisa Auermuller of the Jacques Cousteau National Estuarine Research Reserve offers assistance to municipalities free of charge with planning for resilience. Her group is currently assisting Margate, Brigantine, and Longport with resiliency planning. These three municipalities are working with Ms. Auermuller's group as a direct result of her presentation in the workshop.

The forum was promoted to all municipalities on the Absecon Island including Atlantic City, Ventnor, Longport as well as Margate and on the NJ Flood Plain Manager's website. As previously mentioned, we had representatives from outside our target area attend, which I think speaks loudly about the concern we all have about flooding, even non-coastal communities.

Our team was pleased with the media attention garnered as a result of this event. There was coverage in two local papers, "[Downbeach Current](#)" and the "[Press of Atlantic City](#)". We also had air time on our local television station [NBC 40](#) during both evening news programs and again the next morning as well as coverage on [CBS](#). I'm very proud of our green team, its highly competent leader, Chairperson Monica Coffey, and of the success of this workshop! Our team is one year young, and we've just learned that we've been approved for a bronze level certification through "Sustainable Jersey." Our City is very fortunate to have a group of highly qualified and motivated people who work so well together for the common purpose of lessening our environmental footprint...one step at a time - one workshop at a time.

Don't forget to visit our website at: water.rutgers.edu

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