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## *Water Pages eNewsletter*

### **[Climate Resilient Green Infrastructure for the Raritan River Basin: Summer Stats]**

Over the past two months, the Rutgers Cooperative Extension (RCE) Water Resources Program student intern team has spent 2,200 hours working on impervious cover reduction action plans for 54 municipalities within the Raritan River Basin. Funded by the Hurricane Sandy Coastal Resiliency Competitive Grant Program, a grant administered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the reduction action plans seek to provide municipalities with ways of reducing stormwater through climate resilient green infrastructure practices.

Thus far, students have conducted site visits for 41 of the 54 municipalities (76%) and completed drafts of 16 reduction action plans. An additional 34 plans are being actively pursued at this time.

Students have also completed designs for six demonstration projects within the Raritan River Basin. Such designs include site surveying, hydrologic modeling, and the completion of construction documents using AutoCAD. Students are also actively pursuing several additional designs. As an integral part of this summer's work, these designs will be implemented within the Raritan River Basin to demonstrate climate resilient green infrastructure practices.

For more information about this program, please visit our website at: <http://water.rutgers.edu/Projects/NFWF/NFWF.html>

### **[We're Conducting a Study on our Rainwater Harvesting Systems]**



Urban agriculture is growing every day with a mission to bring locally produced healthy foods into our neighborhoods. Often, our community gardens are faced with no access to water or rely on local fire departments to fill barrels of water to grow edible crops. Over the past five years, the RCE Water Resources Program has partnered with local community gardeners in Camden and Newark to install rainwater harvesting systems that capture rooftop runoff and store the harvested water for later use to irrigate the garden. Although these systems are installed with a first flush diverter that removes the first few gallons of rainwater away from the cistern, there are concerns whether or not rooftop runoff is safe to use for edible crops.

Previous studies have determine best practices and recommendations when using harvested water to irrigate crops, though concerns stem from whether or not our urban communities face similar struggles with rainwater harvesting as our suburban communities. In an attempt to understand the needs of our partners, the RCE Water Resources Program is conducting a research study on the levels of *E. coli* bacteria in rainwater harvesting systems in both Camden and Newark.



The study will include a total of 10 cisterns of varying sizes that are located throughout Camden and Newark. The goal of our study is to take several samples at each site to determine whether the samples meet federal irrigation standards for *E. coli* bacteria. The RCE Water Resources Program's aim is to analyze the findings and issue a fact sheet to share with our local partners and other community gardeners looking to produce local foods for their neighborhoods for best practices when it comes to rainwater harvesting systems.

## [Meet Our Summer Intern Team]

This summer, the RCE Water Resources Program was able to offer and support 25 internship opportunities to Rutgers undergraduate students. Our interns vary from majors that include bioenvironmental engineering, civil engineering, environmental planning and design, environmental sciences, and landscape architecture. With diverse backgrounds and interests, we have assigned our interns to various projects

and programs running across the state. As you may have already bumped into one of them wearing our stylish, colorful (at times neon) shirts, we would like you to meet the team! Be sure to follow us on Facebook [@RCEWaterResourcesProgram](#) or on Twitter [@RCEWRP](#) to meet our intern team!

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