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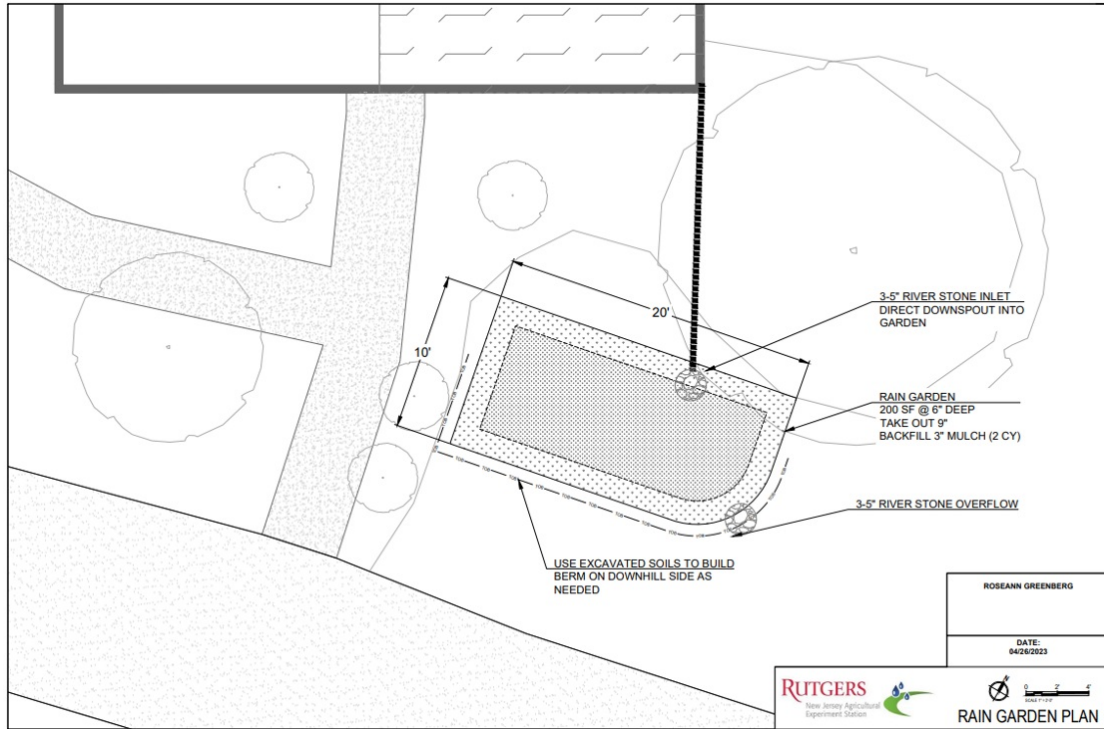
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WATER PAGES eNEWSLETTER

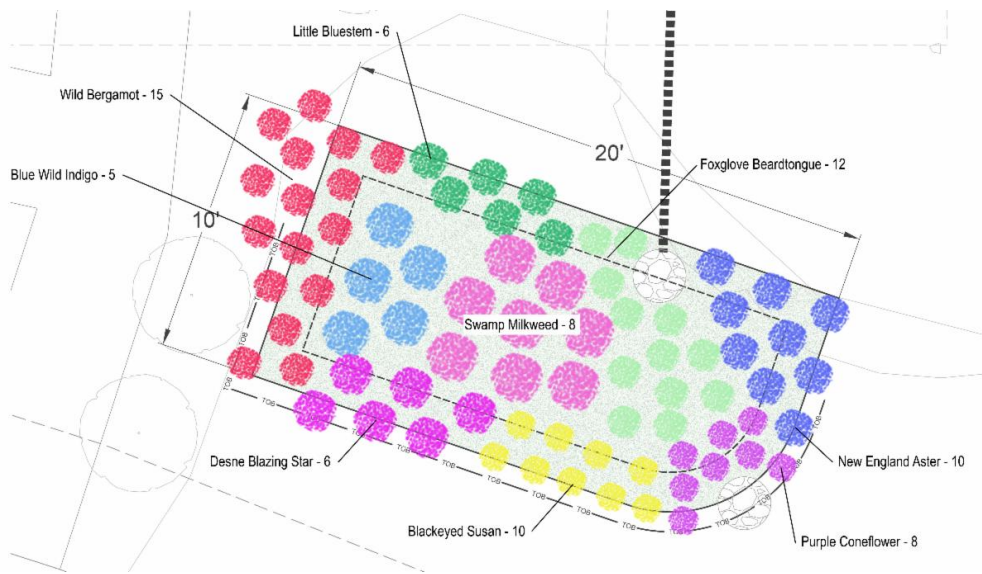
Green Infrastructure Champion Roseann Greenberg: Fostering Sustainable Landscapes and Empowering Homeowners

Roseann Greenberg is a Green Infrastructure Champion from the 2023 Green Infrastructure Champion Training Program. Ms. Greenberg was actively engaged in all 10 training classes of the program, and she even participated in the Spring 2023 Homeowner Rain Garden Rebate Program. The Homeowner Rain Garden Rebate Program initiative is aimed at educating homeowners about rain gardens and how they can design and build one for their home. As part of this program, attendees were provided with an opportunity to participate in a rain garden education session, followed by the option to sign up for a personalized half-hour design session via Zoom with RCE professionals — including both environmental engineers and landscape architects. Ms. Greenberg came to a session and designed and later installed a rain garden early in the fall of 2023. The rain garden is 200 square feet, with six inches of ponding. This beautifully crafted rain garden manages stormwater runoff from a 945 square foot rooftop.

“The rain garden has been working great with all the rain we have been getting lately. We had over five inches from one storm and everything worked just as your designers planned it. I can't wait for spring and the native plants to get growing and really filling in. It should look beautiful.” ~ Roseann



Design plan from the Spring 2023 Homeowner Rain Garden Rebate Program



Planting plan from the Spring 2023 Homeowner Rain Garden Rebate Program



Installation of the rain garden designed as part of the Spring 2023 Homeowner Rain Garden Rebate Program [Photo credit: Roseann Greenberg]

A Community Coming Together: Green Infrastructure Action in Madison, New Jersey

On Monday, February 12th, Dr. Obropta presented the Green Infrastructure Action Plan for Madison, New Jersey to the Madison Borough Council. The plan was well-received. The plan was funded by a PSE&G grant through Sustainable Jersey. The Action Plan examined 65 publicly owned properties for green infrastructure opportunities and included 18 of these properties. One or more green infrastructure projects are proposed for each site. The RCE Water Resources Program will also prepare a Green Infrastructure Strategic Plan, which will identify more green infrastructure opportunities in Madison and help set a long-term goal for implementation of green infrastructure.

In addition to presenting the plan to the Borough, Dr. Obropta provided training for environmental commissioners, green team members, and the general public on the need to manage stormwater runoff more effectively and the role green infrastructure could play in retrofitting existing development with green infrastructure. The training was held on Saturday, February 17th in Madison. Dr. Obropta left his home in Hillsborough New Jersey that morning after digging out of 12 inches of snow, fully expecting a very small turn out for the training session. To his surprise, 24 people were in attendance, all eager to learn and make a difference in battling stormwater pollution and flooding in their municipality. The three-hour training was a great success. All 24 participants left with increased knowledge of green infrastructure and knowing how to identify opportunities for green infrastructure. These trainees will begin looking for more green infrastructure opportunities in the Borough.

If you are interested in learning more about how the RCE Water Resources Program can help your municipality with green infrastructure planning, please contact Dr. Christopher Obropta at obropta@envsci.rutgers.edu.



Dr. Obropta on his way to Madison, early Saturday morning at the end of a major snowstorm; rain, sleet, or snow will not keep us from teaching people about green infrastructure [Photo credit: Christopher C. Obropta, Ph.D., P.E.]



Participants working in a small group on an exercise during the training to identify green infrastructure opportunities at a site [Photo credit: Christopher C. Obropta, Ph.D., P.E.]

Building Resilience: Insights from the 2024 New Jersey Coastal and Climate Resilience Conference

Hollie DiMuro recently attended the 2024 New Jersey Coastal and Climate Resilience Conference at Monmouth University, representing the Rutgers Cooperative Extension



Water Resources Program. Over the three-day conference, a diverse group of coastal and climate resilience professionals and experts united to bring forth pressing issues and innovative solutions to deal with climate change and coastal development. Some key takeaways from the conference and the workshops attended were:

Ecosystem Restoration and Floodplain Management: This talk highlighted successful projects under the New Jersey Department of

Environmental Protection's Blue Acres Program. Restoration efforts post-Superstorm Sandy, such as the rehabilitation of Money Island, not only mitigate flood risk but also enhance ecological resilience, fostering habitats for vital species like horseshoe crabs and shorebirds.

Nature-Based Solutions: The importance of nature-based strategies in coastal resilience was emphasized throughout the conference, with a focus on living shorelines and regenerative stormwater conveyance systems. These approaches not only mitigate flood risk but also offer ancillary benefits such as improved water quality and enhanced biodiversity.

Community Engagement and Social Resilience: Discussions explored the social and economic systems of coastal resilience, emphasizing the importance of engaging communities in restoration efforts. Effective communication, collaboration, and long-term planning emerged as important components in building resilient communities and ecosystems.

Policy and Planning Considerations: Addressing the complexity of climate change and coastal development, the conference stressed the need for comprehensive policy frameworks and long-term planning strategies. Considerations for future sea-level rise, storm surge mitigation, and equitable resource distribution were highlighted as significant aspects in promoting resilience.

In summary, the conference served as a valuable platform for sharing knowledge, best practices, and lessons learned in coastal resilience and ecosystem management. By integrating nature-based solutions, community engagement, and effective policy frameworks, stakeholders can collaboratively work towards building more resilient New Jersey coastal communities and ecosystems.



Spring: A Time to Reflect

As I sit here in my living room on this rainy Saturday morning, looking out my patio door, watching the rain come down, and the detention basin off in the distance slowly filling, I am thinking about my 33-year career working in the field of water resources management and my first 12 years as a consultant where I learned valuable leadership skills from my bosses, how to write proposals, design stormwater practices, and all about being billable. I learned to care about the work, but more importantly, I learned to care about the people ~ my clients and my colleagues.

I had always expected someday to own my own company. I never expected to become the Extension Specialist in Water Resources for Rutgers Cooperative Extension or a professor in the Department of Environmental Sciences. At Rutgers I created the Water Resources Program. It's similar to a small consulting company embedded in Rutgers Cooperative Extension. I have full-time employees and student interns who are all paid from grant funding that I secured. It is different than my earlier life as a consultant where the driving force was making money for the company. Now the driving force is to help people solve their problems. For the most part, we work to restore the environment to improve water quality and reduce flooding. I have partnered with great people from across the state, nonprofit environmental organizations, urban community groups, regulatory people from EPA and NJDEP, town engineers, planners, mayors, and individual residents. It has been a wonderful experience. I have been at Rutgers for 21 years; I'm tired, really tired, but I still love my job. The bureaucracy of the university and funding agencies has gotten

tougher to deal with, but we persevere. The flooding has gotten worse due to climate change, but we take this into account as we design and build our projects with New Jersey's communities. The staff and students leave and move on to new jobs. We miss them, but we hire and train new people to continue the work. We never lose site of our mission *"to identify and address water resources issues by engaging and empowering communities to employ practical science-based solutions to help create a more equitable and sustainable New Jersey."* I gave a talk on Thursday, and the last question I took was "did I ever consider a career as a standup comedian?" As fun as that sounds, I am really happy doing what I do, but maybe in my next life. Thank you for listening to my rant on this rainy Saturday morning. Please remember you can always donate to the Rutgers Cooperative Extension Water Resources Program at www.water.rutgers.edu and at the link below. We will always use your donations wisely.

~ Christopher C. Obropta, Ph.D., P.E., Extension Specialist in Water Resources



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