

2020 August/September, Bi-Monthly Board Report, Education & Outreach, Becky Laboy, E&O Specialist September 17, 2020

In support of OCSCD's Annual Plan of Operations, which includes in its vision "to be recognized as a conservation leader", and includes in its mission "to protect, restore and sustain fully functioning soil resources...", "further natural resource stewardship through educational programs..." and "develop and nurture effective relationships... to sustain functioning ecosystem services...", the Education Department has championed 2 main initiatives to effectuate OCSCD's vision and mission: **Jersey-Friendly Yards** and **Urban and Community Agriculture**. OCSCD has subcontracted with Barnegat Bay Partnership to support the Jersey-Friendly Yards initiative, as well as other watershed-wide initiatives that serve mutual constituents and sustain the natural resources of the communities we serve. OCSCD is collaborating with Rutgers Cooperative Extension to facilitate the Community Garden Network, in support of the Urban and Community Agriculture initiative. In addition, the Education Department continues to provide community and statewide programs, and write grants to support OCSCD's overall mission.

GENERAL OPERATIONS (APO Item #3)

Professional Development: (APO Item #3, Activity 3)

- July 14: **Don't Harass the Seagrass**, Ask a Barnegat Bay Scientist series, presented by Dr. Elizabeth Lacey, hosted by Barnegat Bay Partnership. (1 hr)
- July 21: **If You Plant It, They Will Come**, JFY Conference webinar, presented by Dr. Randi Eckel, hosted by BBP (1 hr)
- July 28: **Tuckerton Oyster Reef**, Ask a Barnegat Bay Scientist series, presented by Dr. Christine Thompson, hosted by BBP (1 hr)
- August 11: **Fisheries in Barnegat Bay**, Ask a Barnegat Bay Scientist series, presented by Doug Zemeckis, hosted by BBP (1 hr)
- August 13: **The Buzz About Bees**, JFY Conference webinar, presented by Mike Haberland, hosted by BBP, (1 hr)
- August 18: **Plant This, Not That**, JFY Conference webinar, presented by Mike Van Clef, hosted by BBP (1 hr)
- August 20: **NACD Urban & Community Conservation**, presented by NACD (1 hr)
- August 20: **Your Insect Allies: Meet the Beneficial Insects**, hosted by the Xerces Society
- August 27: USDA webinar introducing the new **Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production** (1 hr)
- August 27: **Secrets of Low-Maintenance Landscaping**, hosted by BTMUA (1 hr)
- September 3: **Beyond Plants – What Else Do Insects Need?**, hosted by Xerces Society (1 hr)

EDUCATION INITIATIVES – GRANT RELATED (APO Item #4)

Jersey-Friendly Yards Initiative: (APO Item #4, Activity 1)

- **2020 Jersey-Friendly Yards Webinar Series:** Our 4th Annual Jersey-Friendly Yards Conference continues with our online webinar series, based on our theme: "Wild About Jersey-Friendly Yards!", with a focus on creating a yard that supports wildlife. Several more webinars were presented in the past 2 months, which Becky viewed as part of her professional development, and which Becky also assisted with hosting. On September 1, Becky took her turn at presenting *Attracting Birds to Your Jersey-Friendly Yard*. The recorded programs are available on the [Jersey-Friendly Yards](#) website.
- **JFY Certification:** Becky continues to work with Karen Walzer of BBP on the Jersey-Friendly Yards Certification program. This is part of a grant/sub-contract with Barnegat Bay Partnership, which will continue for a 3-year period until June 8, 2023, through which OCSCD will receive \$53,500 in support of Becky's salary.

Urban and Community Agriculture Initiative: (APO Item #4, Activity 1)

- The **Community Garden Network of Ocean County (CGN)** team, consisting of OCSCD, RCE, Fulfill, Rutgers Master Gardeners of Ocean County, along with Soil to Soul and Toms River Green Team, continues involvement to connect the community to healthy food resources, increase community food security, and improve access to healthy food. Becky viewed a USDA webinar to learn about the new USDA Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production, including a description of the new FSA Urban and Suburban County Committees.

Subcontract with Barnegat Bay Partnership: (APO Item #4, Activity 1)

Through the 2020-2021 subcontract with BBP, Becky continues to work with Karen Walzer on the following items. This work is funded for a total of \$13,500 for the contract year:

- Promote and increase usage of the JFY website as a guide to landscape practices for managing stormwater and reducing nonpoint source pollution in the Barnegat Bay watershed.
 - Becky is collaborating with Pola Galie of NREF to submit a proposal to The Watershed Institute to support a series of webinars *Jersey-Friendly Yards - Landscaping for a Healthy Environment*. (Details describing this project are below under the “Seeks Grants and Funding” heading.)
- Develop, promote and grow a program to increase watershed stewardship by coordinating and engaging volunteers in meaningful projects that align with BBP, OCSCD strategic plans and the CCMP.
 - Becky is working with BBVMN’s to create a BBVMN electronic Newsletter to connect BBVMNs with each other and with perspective volunteer opportunities, and to share information about natural resources in the Barnegat Bay watershed.

Seeks grants and Funding: (APO Item #4, Activity 2)

- NREFNJ and OCSCD submitted a grant proposal to The Watershed Institute seeking funding to support our *Jersey-Friendly Yards – Landscaping for a Healthy Environment* project. This project is a collaboration between 7 watershed Partners: NREFNJ, OCSCD, BBP, RCE, JC NERR, OCP&R, SBB, who will collectively offer an educational webinar series featuring Jersey-Friendly Yards, gardens, landscapes, tools and resources, with the goal of educating, empowering and spurring action in Barnegat Bay watershed residents to change their landscaping behaviors so they adopt Jersey-Friendly landscaping practices for a healthier watershed. We will be notified of the grants’ status by December.

EDUCATION INITIATIVES (APO Item #5)

Website, Media and Promotions: (APO Item #5, Activity 1)

- Maintain and enhance the Education components of the OCSCD website
- Becky promotes OCSCD on social media, primarily through Facebook.
- Maintains database and mailing list of **1,788 active contacts** for E&O initiatives in OCSCD’s Constant Contact database.
- Creates and distributes a monthly eNewsletter advertising programs and conservation news.

Special Projects: (APO Item #5, Activity 2, 3, 5, 8)

- **Poster Contest:** The 2021 Poster Contest theme has been announced: [Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities](#).

Internships/Volunteers: (APO Item #5, Activity 6)

- Becky is working with intern, **Gabriella Marzella**, of Stockton, to complete an Independent Study through the District. Ms. Marzella is studying to be a Middle School Science Teacher. She is working on two projects: 1. She is utilizing the JFY website and concepts to create activities supporting the Girl Scout “Gardener Badge”. She has completed a draft of this project. 2. She is also creating a Middle School lesson plan/project that incorporates the JFY website, tools and resources, that schools can use towards “certification” for the anticipated “Bay-Friendly/Jersey-Friendly Certification Program”.

Outreach Programs, Conferences and Events: (APO Item #5, Activity 7)

- **July 14: Shorebirds** webinar for kids, hosted by JCNERR (**10 people in attendance**)
- **July 22: Combating Climate Change with a Jersey-Friendly Yard** for the Pinelands Commission. Live-streamed through the Pinelands Commission YouTube channel. (**135 views as of Sept 10**)
- **September 1: Attracting Birds to Your Jersey-Friendly Yard** program for the JFY 2020 Webinar Series (**132 people in attendance**)
- **September 9: Don’t Treat Your Soil Like Dirt** webinar, hosted by Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Ocean County. This program was part 1 in a series of 3, in collaboration with Dr. Steve Yergeau and Dr. Stephanie Murphy. (**132 people in attendance**)

Outreach Programs, Conferences, Events Anticipated: (APO Item #5, Activity 7)

- January 12: **Low Maintenance Landscaping with Jersey-Friendly Yards** webinar presentation, hosted by the Horticultural Society of South Jersey.
- January 27: **Attracting Birds to Your Yard** webinar presentation, hosted by the Ecological Landscaping Association