

## May-June 2022, Bi-Monthly Education Report

Presented to the Board of Directors, Ocean County Soil Conservation District

May 17, 2022

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In support of OCSCD's Annual Plan of Operations (APO), 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 is championing the **Jersey-Friendly Yards** and **Barnegat Bay Master Naturalist** initiatives in cooperation with Barnegat Bay Partnership, to effectuate OCSCD's vision and mission. In addition, the Education Department is supporting the OCSCD technical staff on two additional grant projects: **Sustainable Practices for Aquaculture Resource Conservation (SPARC)** and **Lakewood Township Stormwater Basin Retrofit Project**. In addition, the Education Department continues to provide community outreach programs and statewide initiatives, as well as write grants to support OCSCD's overall mission.

### April-May 2022 Education & Outreach Activities, as per the Annual Plan of Operations:

#### I. IMPLEMENTATION OF CHAPTER 251 SOIL EROSION CONTROL ACT & OTHER NATURAL RESOURCE PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS (APO Item #1)

##### **1. (APO Item #1, Activity 14)**

###### **Becky maintains the District Website and Manages Distribution of Notices.**

Becky maintains and updates the District website with Chapter 251 SESC-related information. Becky also manages and distributes Inspection Requests and 48 Hour Notices as they are received electronically through the website, appropriating requests to Inspectors overseeing specific territories.

#### II. GENERAL OPERATIONS (APO Item #3)

**1. (APO Item #3, Activity 1)** Becky provides support and assistance to Christine Raabe, Jean Baluski and Christina Mooney to provide for the accountability of the District to the public, legislature and to NJDA-SSCC by posting financial information, Board meeting minutes, agendas and meeting notices on the website as required.

**2. (APO Item #3, Activity 3)** Becky participates in various training opportunities to enhance overall abilities as a District employee. Becky has developed and submitted an Individual Professional Development Plan.

- Becky completed mandatory training on State ethics and Discrimination.

##### **3. (APO Item #3, Activity 5)**

- **Becky serves as OCSCD representative member of the Barnegat Bay Partnership's Communication and Education Committee (CEC)** Becky attends bi-monthly meetings of the CEC and reports on OCSCD's education initiatives related to National Estuary Program activities and goals, such as those specified in BBP's [CCMP](#) and [Communication Plan](#).
- **Becky is representing OCSCD at the monthly New Jersey Bay Islands Initiative (NJBII).** Becky attends monthly meetings with all constituents, as well as monthly meetings as part of the Communications working group.

#### III. EDUCATION INITIATIVES – GRANT RELATED (APO Item #4)

##### **1. (APO Item #4, Activity 1)**

Subcontract with Barnegat Bay Partnership **Part 1: Communication & Outreach (Education & Stewardship annual contract, in its 3<sup>rd</sup> year)** OCSCD is subcontracting with Barnegat Bay Partnership to support watershed-wide education and stewardship initiatives, including Jersey-Friendly Yards and Barnegat Bay Master Naturalist Program:

- Per the subcontract, Becky continues to assist Karen Walzer, Public Outreach Coordinator for BBP, to promote the JFY website as a guide to landscape practices for managing stormwater and reducing nonpoint source pollution in the Barnegat Bay watershed, engage community members and statewide "Green Groups", including

Green Teams, Environmental Organizations, Garden Clubs, members in the JFY landscaping best practices, and provide JFY program.

- **May 5**, Becky presented **Attracting Pollinators to Your Jersey-Friendly Yard**, webinar hosted by Kemmerer Library, Harding Township, Morris County (**5 participants**).
  - **May 19**, Becky will present **Jersey-Friendly Yards – Landscaping for a Healthy Community**, hosted by Rutgers Master Gardeners of Cumberland County.
  - **May 21**, Becky will attend and exhibit at Long Beach Township Field Station’s **Pollinator Picnic event**, designed to educate about the importance of native plants for pollinators.
  - **May 24**, Becky will present **Jersey-Friendly Yards – Landscaping for a Healthy Community**, hosted by Manalapan Environmental Commission.
  - **June 2**, Becky will present **Attracting Birds to Your Jersey-Friendly Yard**, webinar hosted by Southern Ocean Birding Group
- Per the subcontract, Becky continues to engage Barnegat Bay Volunteer Master Naturalists in watershed-wide stewardship and conservation projects, and produces a quarterly BBVMN Newsletter (*Spring/Summer 2022 is forthcoming*, [Winter 2022](#), [Fall 2021](#), [Summer 2021](#), [Spring 2021](#), [Winter 2021](#), [Fall 2020](#))

#### Subcontract with Barnegat Bay Partnership **Part 2: Bay-Friendly Certification Project (3 year contract):**

- Becky continues to assist Karen Walzer, Public Outreach Coordinator for BBP, on the **Jersey-Friendly Yards (Bay Friendly) Certification program**. BBP has subcontracted with webmaster, Lisa Mazzuca (who is also OCSCD’s webmaster) to develop the content for Jersey-Friendly certification webpages on the JFY website. The Certification Program will be housed and promoted on these pages. Becky is working with Karen and Lisa to help provide content and photos. The launch of the Certification Program is anticipated to be in mid-late May, 2022. The following links show the *draft pages*, they are not yet live and are only offered for purposes of Board review.
- **Resident Certification Program:** <https://www.jerseyyards.org/certification-program/residents-certification/>
- **School Certification Program:** <https://www.jerseyyards.org/certification-program/schools-certification/>
- **Municipal Certification Program:** <https://www.jerseyyards.org/certification-program/municipal-certification/>

## 2. (APO Item #4, Activity 1)

### Expand Granted Projects: Jersey-Friendly Yards

- **2022 Jersey-Friendly Yards Webinar Series:** The JFY Conference Committee is offering a 2022 JFY webinar series, “Back to Basics”. Each webinar reflects one of the 8 Steps to a Jersey-Friendly Yard. Becky presented the first 2 webinars: Step 1 Plan Before You Plant, and Step 2 Start With Healthy Soil. Recordings can be found on the [Jersey-Friendly Yards Events](#) webpage.
  - **April 12**, Steve Yergeau, RCE, presented “Water Wisely”, hosted by the Jersey-Friendly Yards Team: BBP, OCSCD, RCE. (**57 attendees**)
  - **May 10**, guest presenter, Christopher Adams of Eastbound LLC., presented “Fertilize Less”, hosted by the Jersey-Friendly Yards Team: BBP, OCSCD, RCE. (**118 attendees**)

## 3. (APO Item #4, Activity 1)

### Grant Projects: Lakewood Township Stormwater Basin Retrofit Project

OCSCD is partnering with South Jersey Resource Conservation and Development Council, Lakewood Township Department of Public Works, and the Camden County Soil Conservation District on a grant from the State of New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection: Lakewood Township Stormwater Basin Retrofit Project. The grant is funded by a Federal 319(h) Water Quality Restoration grant awarded by the NJ Department of Environmental Protection to the SJRC&D.

- **May 19:** Becky and several OCSCD Staff will be participating in the Sheman Street Basin vegetative enhancement project by planting 1200 plugs.

## 4. (APO Item #4, Activity 2)

### Seeks Grants and Funding:

OCSCD’s Education Department continues to research potential grants that will support the District’s Mission. Becky looks forward to possibly collaborating with other District staff on application submittals and project implementation.

## IV. EDUCATION INITIATIVES (APO Item #5)

### 1. (APO Item #5, Activity 1)

#### **Communications: Website, Newsletter, Blogs, Social Media and Annual Report:**

Becky has been working in several OCSCD media communications platforms in an effort to engage a broader audience in support of the District's Mission. These include:

- OCSCD's new [website](#)
- [Newsletters](#) continue to be distributed monthly, typically on the first day of the month, to our growing audience of 1,889 contacts, of which, 284 are considered "most engaged". We have a 36% email open rate". Newsletters contain the latest updates about current educational programs, Jersey-Friendly Yards, and grant projects and partnerships. Technical staff have also been contributing information to our "Staff in the Field" section, where they discuss soil conservation practices pertaining to SESC Standards.
- [Blog posts](#) on our website highlight the District's many projects, as well as our soil conservation message.
- Newsletters, blogs and other soil conservation information are also distributed via the District's social media platforms: [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#)
- For access to all of our social media and project links, visit the "[connect](#)" page on our website
- Maintain database and emailing list of contacts in Constant Contact database. With the addition of schools throughout New Jersey, we now have a contacts list of 4,000 contacts.
- Develop an OCSCD Annual Report, highlighting the many projects, programs and partners with which the District staff are engaged. We are targeting a mid-to-end of December release date for our 2022 Annual Report.

### 2. (APO Item #5, Activity 2, 3, 5, 8)

#### **Special Projects:**

- **Barnegat Bay Environmental Educators Roundtable:** The District's **25<sup>th</sup> Annual Barnegat Bay Environmental Educators Roundtable** took place on April 27 at Jakes Branch County Park. This year's Roundtable was planned and implemented in collaboration with Ocean County Parks & Recreation and OC Cultural & Heritage. This year's Roundtable, including exhibitors, dining and our "keynote" was held under a large rented tent. Four field trips and four workshops were offered; all took place predominantly outside, and each had an underlying focus on soil. OCSCD staff, Jessica Pinto and Kristin Adams, presented "Soil Science Sampler" as one of the workshops in rotation. Our keynote this year was an outdoor movie: "Kiss the Ground" – a film about the importance of soil in capturing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. All details can be found on the OCSCD website, on the [Barnegat Bay Environmental Educators Roundtable webpage](#). Details offering a breakdown of attendance, income and costs are attached.
- **Poster Contest:** The 2022 Poster Contest has been completed. The 2023 contest theme has not yet been announced.
- **Envirothon:** The 2022 NJ Envirothon took place on **Saturday, May 7**, and was again virtual this year. Becky assisted with the creation of the Wildlife Station written-test. Winners have yet to be announced.
- **Trout-in-the-Classroom:** The status of TIC Release at FREC in 2022 is "to-be-determined".

### 3. (APO Item #5, Activity 6)

#### **Internships/Volunteers:**

- The Education Department does not have any interns at this time.

### 4. (APO Item #5, Activity 7)

#### **Outreach Programs, Conferences and Events:**

- Numerous Jersey-Friendly Yards programs were presented during the last 2 months, as listed above under **APO Item #4, Activity 1**.