

June-July 2022, Bi-Monthly Education Report

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

July 21, 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.

June-July 2022 Education & Outreach Activities, as per the Annual Plan of Operations:

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

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 manages and distributes Inspection Requests and 48 Hour Notices as they are received electronically through the website, directing requests to Inspectors overseeing specific territories.
2. **(APO Item #1, Activity 17, Sub-Task)** Becky investigates funding opportunities for District Technical Staff to be trained in non-SESC programs and projects.
 - Becky and Brittany Moore are working together on the Lakewood Stormwater Basin Retrofit Project.

(APO Item #3) GENERAL OPERATIONS

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 on the website, the following:
 - financial information
 - Board meeting minutes, agendas and meeting notices, as required
 - Public Notices
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 for FY23
 - Becky completed professional development:
 - May 31: Climate Action Landscaping webinar presented by Shades of Green Permaculture
 - June 21-24: Life Science Field Training Institute, hosted by the Pinelands Preservation Alliance
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](#).
 - Sub-Task: Becky continues to work with BBP on the shared services agreement for: Part 1 - Assistance with BBP Communications & Outreach, and Part 2 - Bay-Friendly Yards. (see APO Item #4, Activity 1)

- 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.

(APO Item #4) EDUCATION INITIATIVES – GRANT RELATED

1. (APO Item #4, Activity 1) Becky manages, coordinates, administers and implements current grants to expand granted projects when opportunities arise.

Grant 1: Jersey-Friendly Yards (including subcontract)

- Subcontract with Barnegat Bay Partnership **Part 1: Assistance with BBP Communication & Outreach.** 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 24:** Becky presented **Jersey-Friendly Yards – Landscaping for a Healthy Community**, webinar hosted by Manalapan Environmental Commission. **20 attendees**
 - ✓ **June 2:** Becky presented **Attracting Birds to Your Jersey-Friendly Yard**, webinar hosted by Southern Ocean Birding Group. **12 attendees**
 - ✓ **June 8:** Becky presented **Jersey-Friendly Yards – Landscaping for a Healthy Environment**, webinar hosted by Rutgers Master Gardeners of Somerset County. **82 attendees**
 - ✓ **July 7:** Becky presented **Jersey-Friendly Yards – Native Plants for Small Yards**, in-person PPT program to Lacey Township Garden Club. **23 attendees**
 - Per the subcontract, Becky continues to produce a quarterly Barnegat Bay Master Naturalist Newsletter, titled *The Naturalist*. Newsletters are found on BBP’s [Master Naturalist Program](#) webpage. (Newsletters: [Spring/Summer 2022](#), [Winter 2022](#), [Fall 2021](#), [Summer 2021](#), [Spring 2021](#), [Winter 2021](#), [Fall 2020](#)) Moving forward, *The Naturalist* will be published twice annually.
- (NJDEP Grant) 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 Certification Program**. The [Jersey-Friendly Yards Certification Program webpages](#) are complete. The Certification Program is officially launched and a Press Release was issued by Barnegat Bay Partnership. Becky will be promoting the launch of the JFY Certification Program through an article in OCSCD’s August newsletter (will be published August 1st). Becky continues to work with Karen Walzer to reach out to schools and encourage enrollment in the School Certification Program. Becky receives Resident Program enrollment applications via email automation.
 - **Resident Certification Program:** <https://www.jerseyyards.org/certification-program/residents-certification/>
 - ✓ 6 new Resident Certification requests
 - **School Certification Program:** <https://www.jerseyyards.org/certification-program/schools-certification/>
 - **Municipal Certification Program:** <https://www.jerseyyards.org/certification-program/municipal-certification/>

Grant 2: Lakewood Township Stormwater Basins 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.

- Becky Laboy and Brittany Moore assist partners to implement and promote the Lakewood Township Stormwater Basin Retrofit Project. On Tuesday, May 24, Becky, Brittany and OCSCD Staff: Ramon Mejia, Ben Hayden and Rachel Hammack, together with staff from Freehold Soil Conservation District, Camden County Soil Conservation District and South Jersey Resource Conservation & Development (SJRC&D), planted 1200 plugs in the Shemen Street Basin. Brittany and Becky co-authored an article for the OCSCD [July Newsletter](#) and [OCSCD blog](#).

2. (APO Item #4, Activity 2) Seeks Grants and Funding to support both on-going and new initiatives and programs:

Becky continues to research potential grants that will support the District’s Mission. Becky looks forward to collaborating with other organizations, agencies and District staff on application submittals and project implementation. No new grants have been submitted at this time.

(APO Item #5) EDUCATION INITIATIVES

1. (APO Item #5, Activity 1) To maintain and enhance OCSCD website. To more effectively utilize and disseminate pertinent and educational resources and assist in fulfilling OCSCD Mission.

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

Becky has been using 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 1,695 contacts on our General list, with an additional 2,293 statewide education administrators (used for our Roundtable campaigns), totaling 3988, of which, 976 are considered “most engaged”. We have a 35% average 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 our social media and project links, visit the “[connect](#)” page on our website
- Maintains 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.
- Developed 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 2021 Annual Report.

2. (APO Item #5, Activity 2) Becky maintains communication and network with regional and statewide Conservation Education and Environmental Education initiatives, including Barnegat Bay Roundtable Steering & Planning Committee, Barnegat Bay Estuary Program’s Communication and Education Committee, Conservation Partnership meetings, Natural Resource education Foundation of New Jersey (NREF), Jersey-Friendly Yards.

3. (APO Item #5, Activity 3) Poster Contest: The 2022 Poster Contest has been completed. Winners will be announced next month. Winners and [winning posters for 2021](#) can be found on the NJACD website. The 2023 contest theme has not yet been announced.

4. (APO Item #5, Activity 4) Promote the Distribution of Low Maintenance Landscaping Guides. Becky is currently searching for grants to support funding to print additional LML Guides.

5. (APO Item #5, Activity 5) Barnegat Bay Environmental Educators Roundtable: The District’s 25th Annual Barnegat Bay Environmental Educators Roundtable took place on April 27 at Jakes Branch County Park. All details can be found on the OCSCD website, on the [Barnegat Bay Environmental Educators Roundtable webpage](#). Planning for the 2023 BBEERT will commence within the next few months.

6. (APO Item #5, Activity 6) Internship & Volunteer Opportunities and Agreements: OCSCD recently received an Internship application from Kean University student Kaylee Evans, who has applied for the Education Outreach Assistant position.

7. (APO Item #5, Activity 7) Offer a variety of Outreach Programs based on soil health & natural resources to various groups/organizations; at least 12 per year. Becky has presented the following programs:

- ✓ **May 24:** Becky presented **Jersey-Friendly Yards – Landscaping for a Healthy Community**, webinar hosted by Manalapan Environmental Commission. **20 attendees** (As reflected in APO Item #4, Activity 1)
- ✓ **June 2:** Becky presented **Attracting Birds to Your Jersey-Friendly Yard**, webinar hosted by Southern Ocean Birding Group. **12 attendees** (As reflected in APO Item #4, Activity 1)
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8. (APO Item #5, Activity 8) 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.

9. (APO Item #5, Activity 9) Tack Participants, evaluations, provide reports on E&O activities to District Director and Board: Becky maintains constant contact with District Director, Christine Raabe, and provides bi-monthly reports regarding all education activities to the OCSCD Board of Supervisors.

10. (APO Item #5, Activity 10) Jersey-Friendly Yards Conference & Webinars: 2022 Jersey-Friendly Yards Webinar Series: Becky attends all meetings of the JFY Conference and Webinar Committee, and takes and distributes notes.

- The JFY Conference & Webinar Committee is offering a 2022 JFY webinar series, “Back to Basics: 8 Steps to a Jersey-Friendly Yard”. Each of the 8 webinars 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.
 - ✓ **Step 1: Plan Before You Plant in February** - Becky presented – **136 attendees**
 - ✓ **Step 2: Start with Healthy Soil on March 8** - Becky presented – **16 attendees** (*suggestion – create a flow chart that connects to other steps in the series... plus carbon cycle*)
 - ✓ **Step 3: Water Wisely on April 12** – Steve presented – **57 attendees**. Comment came in and was sent to Karen regarding “peat” – that is should not be recommended because it holds carbon and it’s not good to harvest. Commenter also said it’s not good to use cardboard as mulch because it suffocates the soil.
 - ✓ **Step 4: Fertilize Less on May 10:** speaker, Chris Adams of Eastbound LLC. **118 attendees**
 - ✓ **Step 5: Minimize Risks When Managing Pests on June 14:** Emily May of Xerces Society. **82 attendees**
 - ✓ **Step 6: Loose the Lawn and Create a Wildflower Meadow Instead on July 12:** speaker Patt Sutton presented. **554 attendees**

Next Up:

- **Step 7: Create Wildlife Habitat on August 9** – Kathleen Kerwin confirmed.
 - **Step 8: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle on September 13** – Sandra Blaine-Snow confirmed
- The JFY Conference & webinar Committee is planning an in-person half-day Conference on October 1, 2022, at Ocean County College, Gateway Building 101. A fee of \$20 will be charged by the Barnegat Bay Partnership to cover the cost of speakers. (This will be our first conference since 2019). The schedule is as follows:

Schedule: 2022 JFY Conference

8:15 – 9:00	Sign-in & visit exhibit tables
9:00 – 9:15	Welcome remarks
9:15 – 10:30	Screening of documentary, <i>Wild in the Garden State</i> , followed by Q&A Presented by Sarah Galloway and Dave Comins

10:30 – 10:45 Break
10:45 – 11:45 *Garden for Wildlife*
Presented by David Mizejewski, Naturalist, National Wildlife Federation
11:45 – 12:00 Closing remarks & Door Prizes
12:00 – 1:00 Native Plant Sale – Pinelands, Earth First