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## **ANNUAL PLAN OF OPERATIONS JULY 1, 2025 – JUNE 30, 2026– FY26**

In 2026 we celebrate the 73rd year of the Ocean County Soil Conservation District. The purpose of this Work Plan is to improve our planning abilities to build and sustain a conservation legacy through incorporating innovative ideas, programs and initiatives that support long range strategic goals. It is intended to help guide the District in serving its constituents and sustaining the natural resources of the communities we serve.

The Ocean County Soil Conservation District strives to lead efforts to conserve our soil and water resources by working with homeowners, farmers, and public officials, various state and federal agencies, and non-profit organizations. The Ocean County SCD strongly supports the protection and restoration of our soil resources through our abilities to plan, provide technical assistance and most importantly to educate. The Board believes that effective soil management is fundamental to protecting water quality, water quantity, and to minimizing both soil erosion and nutrient transport concerns as identified through the adoption of this Plan and through sustaining effective working relationships with its partners and elected officials.

### **VISION STATEMENT**

*To be recognized as a conservation leader with the ability to partner effectively and use every opportunity to further sustainable natural resource management for current and future citizens of Ocean County and beyond.*

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

Ocean County Soil Conservation District strives to implement exemplary programs and services focusing on the following issues:

Protect, restore and sustain fully functioning soil resources to minimize nutrient transport and nonpoint pollution through (a) effective implementation of Chapter 251 P.L. 1975 Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Act; and (b) contributing to sustainable soil management practices for all land use within the county.

Further natural resource stewardship through: (a) educational programs for students in Grades K-16 and the public; (b) effective management of public lands, preserved areas and open space; (c) teachers, educators and youth leaders through training in the use of regionally specific curricula and educational resources.

Develop and nurture effective relationships with: elected officials at the federal, state and local levels, public agencies and non-profit organizations to sustain functioning ecosystem services through education and resource management.

Continue to expand projects, partnerships and opportunities based on natural resource concerns and priorities of the county and region. Topics of particular significance and focus include aquaculture, urban agriculture, sea level rise, climate change and coastal ecosystem response and restoration opportunities.

## VALUES AND APPRECIATION

### THE OCEAN COUNTY SCD VALUES OPPORTUNITIES TO:

- Educate the public – residents, visitors, businesses, government agencies, non-for-profit organizations with similar goals and missions.
- Effectively apply science, research and management to sustain and enhance our natural resources.
- Promote a better understanding of social and economic concerns in natural resource management within our local communities.
- Enhance capabilities and contributions from District staff and from our partners

### CHALLENGES AND NATURAL RESOURCE CONCERNS

#### Soil Health:

Excessive runoff is transporting nutrients into freshwater habitats and Barnegat Bay.

Increased water consumption due to shallow root systems on turf and farmland; improving guidelines, programs and training District staff to sustain functioning soils on turf athletic fields and farmland and the appropriate use of fertilizers and soil amendments and soil management practices.

#### Water Quality and Quantity:

Reduced groundwater recharge; decreased fish and wildlife habitat; loss of SAV beds; potential loss of wetlands due to altered hydrology; and depleted and degraded soils increasing runoff and nutrient transport to the bay.

#### Soil Erosion:

Lack of healthy fully functioning soils accelerating erosion on farm and urban lands; critical roadside erosion in Pineland areas; and ineffectual buffers or riparian vegetation due to altered soil conditions.

#### Related Natural Resource Concerns:

Insufficient awareness and education of the connection between healthy soils and sustaining water resources; incorporating soil health practices/guidelines on all farmlands to sustain food supplies and minimize agricultural impacts: training and technology transfer to construct BMPs that sustain soil health; restoration of soils on disturbed and mined sites to help sequester carbon to reduce potential impacts on climate change and sustaining financial resources through partnering with public and private resources to continue District operations and provide exemplary service to constituents.

### DISTRICT LEADERSHIP & STAFF

To become a highly effective organization through developing leadership skills and knowledge that can enable the District to strategically lead, integrate and engage with communities and other partners.

<b>BOARD OF SUPERVISORS</b>  Dr. William Pollock, Chairman John Tiedemann, Vice Chairman Dr. Michael Gross, Secretary Gary Paxton, Treasurer Ray Bukowski, Board Member  Martha Maxwell Doyle, Supervisor Emeritus	District Staff Name, Title	Initials	District Staff Name, Title	Initials
	Christine Raabe, Director	CR	Georgie Lennon, Inspector II	GL
	Jean Baluski, Assistant Director	JB	Joseph Serio, Inspector II	JS
	Ramon Mejia, Resource Conservationist	RM	Benjamin Hayden, Inspector I	BH
	Jessica Pinto, Senior Erosion Control Specialist	JP	Liam McBride, Inspector I	LM
	Brittany Moore, Senior Erosion Control Specialist	BM	Amanda Sullivan, Clerk II	AS
	Kristin Adams, Conservation Specialist	KA	Mary Ellen Banfield, Office Manager	MEB
	Sean Yeats, Inspector II	SY	Rebecca (Becky) Laboy, Education Coordinator	BL
	Rachel Hammack, Inspector I	RH	Mary Elliott, Part-time Clerk	ME

**ITEM #1–IMPLEMENTATION OF CHAPTER 251 SOIL EROSION CONTROL ACT & OTHER NATURAL RESOURCE PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS**

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Educate the public, elected officials, and building community about the significance of reducing soil erosion on construction sites. Maintain an effective relationship with SSCC, NRCS, NJDOT, NJDEP, all Ocean County municipalities and others to minimize nonpoint pollution.

ACTIVITY	WHO	WHEN
<b>Pending Jean Baluski's retirement in October 2025, the District is anticipating that Ramon Mejia will be transitioning into taking on the majority of JB's responsibilities, while other tasks and responsibilities will be delegated accordingly to other staff. Manage, schedule and evaluate other members of the technical staff team.</b>	JB & RM	Ongoing
1. Accept, review and certify <b>approximately 900</b> Chapter 251 Soil Erosion and Sediment Control plans.	TECHNICAL STAFF	Ongoing
<u>Sub-Task:</u> Log in applications; prepare and distribute certifications	AS (others as needed)	Ongoing
2. Make <b>approximately 5000</b> inspections on construction sites to minimize off site sedimentation.	TECHNICAL STAFF	Ongoing
Assists in the supervision of site inspectors. Routinely works with both to resolve enforcement actions	Reviewers/ECS – RM, BM, JP	Ongoing
3. Coordinate application, log in and the processing of the 5G3 Stormwater Discharge Program with NJDEP, SSCC via the e-permitting process.	AS & ME	Ongoing
<u>Sub-Task:</u> Actively inspect sites for compliance with the 5G3 permit requirements.	All Inspectors	Ongoing
4. To continue to support and partner with statewide and regional initiatives related to soil health and appropriate applications of BMPs.	CR (other staff as needed/assigned)	Ongoing
5. Work closely with SSCC and SCDs to help effectuate soil erosion control and to help sustain functioning soils pursuant to the revised Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Standards.	CR & JB *ALL Staff	Ongoing
6. Update all files, records, Supervisor records/attendance, maps, etc., in accordance with the SSCC Record Retention Policies.	MEB* Others as needed	Semi- Annually
<u>Sub-Task:</u> Responsible for maintaining records and following the Record Retention Policy pursuant to Policy and Procedures Manual annually (SESC Plans)	MEB - JB * coordinate and assign to other staff as needed (RM, JP)	January-March
<u>Sub-Task:</u> Coordinates filing/archiving of SCD files/SESC Plans.	JB *coordinate and assign other staff as needed	As Needed
7. Maintain and distribute Chapter 251 policies, memos, guidelines to ALL staff. Keep accurate file both printed and electronic.	CR & JB (RM)	Ongoing
8. Review and prepare reports regarding exempt municipalities for action by the Board (i.e. Long Beach Township)	JP	March
9. Serves as Technical Advisor for Engineering Standards to District Director & District Staff.	JB * RM	Ongoing
<u>Sub-Task:</u> Coordinates technical review with SSCC Engineer as needed. Site visits & consultation	JB, *RM & BM, JP	As Needed
<u>Sub-Task:</u> Forwards (emails) technical review letters to SSCC Engineer	TECHNICAL STAFF	As Needed
<u>Sub Task:</u> Serves as Technical Advisor to the District Director & District Staff regarding vegetative standards, plant and soil restoration guidelines in accordance with the Standards for SESC	JB & * RM (BM, JP as appropriate)	Ongoing
<u>Sub-Task:</u> Evaluate 251 workload for review and inspection	JB & *RM	Ongoing/Quarterly

<u>Sub-Task:</u> Maintains interpretations, administrative bulletins, policies, guidelines, Policy and Procedure Manual, and make suggestions to the District Director for uniform implementation of Chapter 251 pursuant to SSCC policies;	JB & * RM Input from: JP, BM, JS	Ongoing
10. Assists District Director in project costs analysis by annually reviewing a random survey of completed projects (SF & SP) as an integral component of a fee schedule modification application.	JB – transitioning to RM	Annually/ January
<u>Sub-Task:</u> Prepares for the District Director a report from the District’s database of all practices, inspections, acreage, etc. to be presented at each Board of Supervisor meeting.	JB & JP	Monthly
11. Maintain, update, generate various reports as needed/requested by SSCC, District Director &/or, auditors, etc. from District’s Access database * Work in coordination with District computer consultant.	JB & RM	Ongoing
Sub-Task – <b>Monthly</b> # of inspections emailed to SSCC	RM	Monthly
12. New Jersey Hydrologic Modeling Database – Input data from the basin summary sheets into database. Promote H&H website: <a href="https://hydro.rutgers.edu/">https://hydro.rutgers.edu/</a>	RM to Coordinate Interns <b>All Technical Staff</b>	Ongoing
13. Coordinate additional workload due to expiration of Plans	JB & RM to Coordinate	Ongoing
14. Update District Website with 251-SESC related items District website updated/overhauled	BL (assistance from JB & JP)	Ongoing/AS Needed
15. USDA/NRCS State Technical Committee	CR & KA	Quarterly Meetings
16. Plan, implement and evaluate SESC/Chapter 251 training for contractors, engineers, municipal code officials, in coordination with SSCC training subcommittee, NJACD, etc.	CR & training committee All Staff assist	NJDEA Regularly scheduled training
17. Explore additional opportunities for District technical staff to be trained in non-SESC programs and projects that support the District mission and diversify funding and services.	CR All Staff	Ongoing
<u>Sub-Task:</u> Initiate involvement in agricultural technical services and training opportunities i.e., Conservation Planning Certification &/or cooperative agreement with NRCS	CR Coordinate w/ Partners KA & Other staff as interested	Ongoing
<u>Sub-Task:</u> Investigate <b>funding opportunities</b> to enhance District services and plan for future projects/programs and agreements: 1. NRCS – RCPP – COASTAL Grant – Extensive Partnership & Effort & Technical Assistance Partnership 2. SJRC&D – 319h Basin Retrofit grant – Lakewood -	CR- Coordinate w/ Assist from all staff: 1. KA- Aquaculture & Conservation Planner 2. BM & BL – SJRC&D /319h	RCPP –4/2022 – 5 year  Quarterly Reporting

## ITEM #2 – FISCAL ADMINISTRATION

ACTIVITY	WHO	WHEN
1. Utilize QuickBooks to maintain District's financial transactions and to prepare monthly Treasurer Reports for the Board. Timely information on agreements, contracts, grants, project budgets, financial statements and investments will be maintained and provided.	MEB (CR & JB to assist)	Ongoing
<u>Sub-Task:</u> <i>Quality Control Officer</i> – Review bank reconciliation	JP * Alternate: BL	Monthly
2. Prepare an Annual Budget for Board Approval in March/SSCC Submittal in April	CR & JB * input from Board	Winter Due March
<u>Sub-Task:</u> Study and evaluate budget; review, change, eliminate, or add new programs; and make recommendations to the Board regarding personnel, audits, financial planning, etc. (modify as needed when new grants obtained.) * See items listed in specific Items #1- SESC/Chapter 251 & 4 - Education	CR With assistance from JB and others as grant opportunities arise*	Ongoing
<u>Sub-Task:</u> Determine necessary reserve funds for 251 operating expenses: current and future retirements; capital improvements (vehicle replacements, building maintenance, and technology upgrades, etc.)	CR With assistance from JB & MEB	Ongoing
3. Prepare an Annual Plan of Operation (FY July 1- June 30)	CR With assistance from JB & Staff	Winter/Spring
<u>Sub-Task:</u> Evaluate and revise long range plans as needed.	CR & Board w/input of all staff	As Needed
4. Evaluate Personnel/Staffing Needs- District Succession Plan pending retirements	CR, JB, RM	Winter/Spring
5. Conduct (and review) Annual Audit	MEB & JB/ CR (and Board)	Fall/Winter
6. Insurance Policies & Audits, District Invoicing, Payments, Bill Payment & reconciliation, Payroll, Bank Deposits, Grant Financial reports, Legal Notices, etc.	MEB (CR/JB Assist as needed)	Ongoing
7. Personnel Records & Benefits – Payments/processing, PERS, COBRA, Deferred Comp. /HR contact	MEB (CR/JB Assist as needed)	Ongoing

### ITEM #3 – GENERAL OPERATIONS

ACTIVITY	WHO	WHEN
1. Provide for the accountability of the District to the public, legislature, and to NJDA- SSCC. Post financial information, Board meeting minutes, agendas and meeting notices on the website as required.	CR, JB, MEB & BL	Ongoing
2. Address and plan for leadership succession needs for both Board members and District staff. Cultivate staff and board leadership through a training plan to improve technical needs. Identify appropriate opportunities.	CR, Staff & Board	Ongoing
3. District staff shall participate in various training opportunities including computer, soils, management/leadership, stormwater and soil erosion control training to enhance overall abilities of District personnel. Financial Management – Training & Updates, CPESC - Hours/self-tracking – all 251 staff, Others as determined appropriate by Board, Director, and SSCC & NJCDEA.	All Staff	Ongoing As available/ applicable
Sub-Task: Develop Individual Professional Development Plans.	All Staff	Winter/Spring
Sub-Task: Review & Approve Individual Professional Development Plans	CR & JB	Spring
Sub-Task: Coordinate training recommendations for all positions.	CR & JB & All Staff	Ongoing
4. Work with and serve on the South Jersey RC&D Council. *OCSCD Director currently serving as Chair (since 2021)	CR (Chair) JP & BL assist	Monthly Meetings
5. Serve as Liaison to Advisory Committee for Barnegat Bay Partnership and member of Communication & Education Committee (CEC), Advisory Committee (AC) & Science and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC). Currently serve on: Stormwater Work Group: CR; BBP MOU Review: CR; Bay Shoreline and Sediment Work Group: CR; & Shellfish Work Group	CR – AC & STAC BL- CEC KA & Others	Monthly/As Needed
Sub-Task: Maintain a Shared Services Agreement/Subcontract with BBP for Jersey-Friendly Yards certification program (319h Grant) and overall bay stewardship. Renew contract as needed.* Annual Funding	CR Oversee BL	Weekly Commitment
6. Member of Ocean County Agricultural Development Board. (Keeps file, maintains notes, activities, minutes and other significant information. Represents SCD at meetings and participates in annual inspections of farms as established by the CADB).	JP Alternate/designated Staff as needed	Monthly
7. Support and work closely with the NJ Conservation Partnership including: NJ Association of Conservation Districts (NJACD), State Soil Conservation Committee (SSCC), and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Rutgers Agricultural Experiment Station & County RCE, and the NJ Bureau of Forestry. Attend District Manager meetings, SSCC Regional Supervisors meetings and the Annual meeting, etc.	CR & JB & Other staff as appropriate	Ongoing/as needed
8. Maintenance of District Facilities: building, grounds, vehicles, alarm security system, etc. Inspect building and review needs. Submit a written report to District Director at least twice annually or as needed. Utilize checklist reporting system; update to track repairs as they are completed. Coordinate Repairs, Bids & Estimates.	CR to oversee RM, JP, SY to lead MEB to Coordinate	Semi- Annually
Sub-Task: Coordinate Repairs, Bids & Estimates. (including obtaining and filing all required paperwork, licenses, insurance, invoices, scheduling, etc.)	MEB to Coordinate (CR & JB to assist)	Ongoing/As Needed
Sub-Task: Building Safety – Develop a District safety Manual & provide training	RM, JP, SY to lead	Ongoing
9. OCSCD District Security System – Be first response.	JB BH, RH	Ongoing
10. Notify Director of any issues/problems as they arise. (Seek recommendations from IT consultant)	CR & JB	Weekly/Ongoing

11. OCSCD Phone System: Computer File & Phone updates	JB, RM & AS	Ongoing
12. Basic receptionist duties of greeting walk-ins, routing phone calls, preparing mail, making copies, etc.	AS, ME & MEB	Ongoing/Daily
13. OCSCD equipment ownership & depreciation. Track specific items under ownership of OCSCD, purchase date, serial number, depreciation valuation, etc. Recommend replacement when appropriate and obtain quotes for budgeting purposes.	MEB (w/CR & JB input)	Annual
14. Inventory and purchase general operational supplies: letterhead, envelopes, paper products, pens, markers, folders, clips, post-its, cleaning supplies, and other miscellaneous items. * Items of significant expenditure (greater than \$200.00) or of unusual nature must receive authorization from Director or Assistant Director. Use of sales, coupons, special deals to be optimized. *Staff must submit special request forms for specific items requested.	AS	On-going
15. Continue to develop Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for all/every District activity using SOP template	CR & JB oversee *All Staff	Ongoing

#### ITEM #4 – EDUCATION INITIATIVES (GRANT RELATED)

ACTIVITY	WHO	WHEN
1. Continue to manage, coordinate, administer and implement current grants & to expand granted projects when the opportunities arise.	BL & MEB Financial	On-going
Grant 1: Certification Program for Jersey-Friendly – in partnership with BBP	BL Lead	OCSCD Subcontract – ends June 2025
Grant 2: Stormwater basins Restoration and retrofits in Lakewood Township/Metedeconk River Watershed in partnership with SJRC&D, Camden SCD & Lakewood Township Public Works Department	CR & BM BL & technical staff	NJDEP 319 Award & OCSCD Subcontract Ends September 2025
Renew subcontract with BBP for Volunteer Coordination, Stewardship development & Jersey Friendly Yards Promotion – evaluate quarterly/submit reports and track hours Assist in expanding JFY into other areas of the state	CR- Oversee BL-Implement	Ongoing
2. Seek grants and funding to support both ongoing and new initiatives and programs*	CR (BL & All staff to Assist)	Ongoing

**ITEM #5 – EDUCATION INITIATIVES**

Activity	Who	When
1. To maintain & enhance OCSCD website. To more effectively utilize and disseminate pertinent and educational resources and assist in fulfilling OCSCD Mission. Link to partners and projects.	BL & JP w/all staff input	Ongoing
Sub-Task: Update/create/maintain database & mailing list/contacts for E&O initiatives. Constant Contact – Dissemination of email newsletters/updates, announcements, etc.	BL	Ongoing/Monthly Newsletter
2. Maintain communication and network with regional and statewide Conservation Education and Environmental Education initiatives including: <i>Barnegat Bay Roundtable Steering &amp; Planning Committee; (OCSCD Host); Barnegat Bay Estuary Program's Communication and Education Committee (CEC &amp; AC, STAC); Conservation Partnership meetings (SSCC, RCE, &amp; NRCS, NJACD); Jersey Friendly Yards Annual Conference</i>	CR & BL Lead (other staff as needed)	Ongoing
3. Coordinate local Annual Poster Contest (NJDA/NJACD & NACD – Theme/rules/deadlines Edit brochure to be OCSCD-specific and send press release, post on OCSCD website, coordinate judging, etc.	BL	Winter/Early Spring
4. Promote the distribution of “Low Maintenance Homeowners Guide for Barnegat Bay Watershed” Explore outreach opportunities using the guidebook. Promote Spanish version 2018.	BL	Ongoing
5. Plan and coordinate Annual Barnegat Bay Environmental Educators Roundtable -2026 -29 <sup>th</sup> Annual	BL – all staff	Planning – fall/winter Event – 3 <sup>rd</sup> Wed of April
6. Internship & Volunteer opportunities agreements with – Stockton, Georgian Court, Ocean County College	CR Coordinate BL- E&O /JB & RM SESC	Ongoing- Update projects annually
7. Offer a variety of Outreach Programs based on soil health & natural resources to various groups/organizations. Offer at least 12 programs each year.	BL	Ongoing/as requested
8. NJ Envirothon* Assist NJACD as able. Attend meetings, coordinate the wildlife test, assist with training	BL – Other staff	Annual May Event
9. Track participants, evaluations, etc. provide reports on E&O activities to District Director & Board	BL	Bi-Monthly Report
10. Jersey Friendly Yards Conference – In cooperation with BBP, RCE/Master Gardeners, etc. * Continue offering virtual WebEx events. Coordinate with BBP & OCRCE	BL & CR	Oct. event / Ongoing monthly

CR Updated 05/07/25