

2015 – 2017 ~ Calendar Year Analysis
Education Outreach Program
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Ocean County Soil Conservation District

Following is a three-year compilation of accomplishments achieved by the OCSCD Education & Outreach Department, from 2015-2017.

In an effort to support the OCSCD Mission Statement: “...to implement exemplary programs and services focusing on the following issues: ...further natural resource stewardship...develop and nurture effective relationships with the community to sustain functioning ecosystem services through education and resource management”, the Education & Outreach Department provided the following high quality programs and point-of-contact services based on the following Action Items, as set forth in the Annual Plan of Operations (FY17):

ITEM #1 – IMPLEMENTATION OF CHAPTER 251 SOIL EROSION CONTROL ACT

- **Activity 1:**
 - **2017:** Log-in applications to the database, field phone calls, assist with walk-in applicants
- **Activity 4:** Support and partner with statewide and regional initiatives related to soil health
 - **2017:** Provided supporting services to John Showler, NRCS, USDA State Soil Erosion Control Engineer, in preparation of the “Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Standards Training” through New Jersey Department of Agriculture and New Jersey Natural Resources Conservation Program
 - Implemented and facilitated the Training registration process through OCSCD’s Constant Contact promotional media platform
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ITEM #3 – GENERAL OPERATIONS

- **Activity 3:** Participate in training opportunities:
 - **2017:** ANJEE, Delaware Estuary Science & Environmental Summit, Rutgers Garden Series workshops – “Botany” and “Diagnostics”, Pinelands Short Course, Training Workshop at Burlington SCD, New Jersey Conservation Association land Rally, Native Plant Society of New Jersey Spring and Fall Conferences, Bringing Nature Home to Your Jersey-Friendly Yard Conference, NRCS Webinars (April 6 - Urban Agriculture Grant Opportunities, June 19 - The Watershed Institute Grant Opportunities, July 20 – NACD Food Agriculture, October 31 – Restoring Native Plant Communities: Soil and Hydrology Suited Planning Tools), Chapter 251 Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Standards Training through New Jersey Department of Agriculture and New Jersey Natural Resources Conservation Program.
 - **2016:** ANJEE, Rutgers Organic Land Care Course, CEC Retreat, Land Conservation Conference, NENACD Conference, NRCS Webinars (Sept 13, Soil Health Impacts on Pest Management; Sept 21, Xerces - Pollinator Habitat;

Aug 31 and Sept 28, USDA PLANTS parts 1 and 2), SWCS hosts Xerces Society program, ALS Conference, Project WET

- **2015:** ANJEE, CEC Retreat
- **Activity 5:** Serve as liaison for Barnegat Bay Partnership Communication & Education Committee
 - **2015-2017:** Actively attended and participated in BBP CEC monthly meetings on behalf of OCSCD; participated in the 2017 CCMP Revision Committee

ITEM #4 – EDUCATION INITIATIVES (GRANT RELATED)

- **Activity 1:** Continue to manage, coordinate, administer and implement grants and expand granted projects
 - **Grant 8: Jersey-Friendly Yards at the Lighthouse Center**
 - **2017:** Wrote successful grant project to support educational workshops promoting Jersey-Friendly Yards, at the LHC-NRE. Will begin programs in 2018.
 - **Grant 7: Urban Agriculture Conservation Initiative**
 - **2017:** Project implementation: formed UAC Advisory Committee; defined goals and objectives; assisted with facilitation of gleaning events; planning Leadership Meeting; coordinating installation of raised garden beds at Lakewood High School and GCU's Mercy Garden
 - **Grant 6: Experience Jersey-Friendly Yards**
 - **2017:** Project implementation: installed 3 Jersey-Friendly gardens in Toms River, Island Heights and Pine Beach; began coordination of EJFY Workshops for Home Gardeners; began coordination of the EJFY community programs
 - **Grant 5: From Lawn to Garden – Going Green, Saving Green**
 - **2017:** ~closed~ Continue to monitor garden sites.
 - **2016:** Completed project implementation: 3 native plant gardens at 3 OceanFirst Bank branches using Jersey-Friendly Yards website to plan, design and select plants for gardens. Completed the required 6 educational program presentations, plus an additional 5 programs. Submitted biannual reports. Final report to be submitted in January, 2017.
 - **Grant 4: NJ Bay Friendly Yards and Stormwater Practices: Promoting Best Practices through an Interactive Information Portal and Pilot Communities Demonstration Projects - 319h project**
 - **2017:** ~closed~ Continue to monitor garden sites.
 - **2016:** Continued monitoring of sites. Submitted comprehensive Final Report including Case Studies.
 - **2015:** OCSCD, subcontractor, began implementation of the "Pilot Communities Demonstration Projects" component. Through an application process, six Pilot Communities: Bay Head Shores, Cedarcroft Club, Metedeconk River Yacht Club, Nejecho Beach,

Seawood Harbor, and Visitation Relief Center were selected to pilot the *Jersey-Friendly Yards* website and be demonstration sites to showcase the *Jersey-Friendly Yards* gardens. Soil assessments and tests were conducted on each site and used in conjunction with the www.jerseyyards.org website to select appropriate plants. \$500 value in plant materials for each site were purchased from Pinelands Nursery and Clemson Farms. Planting occurred in the end of October and early November for all sites. Monitoring will continue to take place in the spring.

- **Grant 3: Partner w/American Littoral Society**
 - **2017:** ~closed~
 - **2016:** Attended culminating program at OC Library, shared E&O literature
- **Grant 2: SHIP (Soil Health Improvement Project) Jakes Branch County Park** ~closed, but continue with maintenance and monitoring~
 - **2017:** OCSCD and Jakes Branch County Park, along with Barnegat Bay Partnership's resident Watershed Ambassador, are coordinating efforts to co-manage the SHIP gardens; assemble a team of volunteers led by the BB Watershed Ambassador to monitor and manage weeding, offer native plant identification training workshops for volunteers.
 - **2015-2016:** Continued to utilize Jakes Branch as a venue for educational workshops and programs, utilizing the SHIP Gardens as demonstration sites for soil and native plant education and exploration. OCSCD's E&O Department takes a leading role in plant replacement and garden maintenance, along with volunteer recruitment.
 - **2015:** Hosted and facilitated tour of SHIP Gardens for EPA visit, Aug 5.
- **Grant 1: 319h** ~closed~

ITEM #5 – EDUCATION INITIATIVES (NON-GRANT RELATED)

- **Activity 1: Seek grants and funding to support non-grant initiatives and programs**

**Total grant funding received in past 3 years: \$73,812; of that amount, \$37,612 covered OCSCD personnel salaries, of that amount, \$30,312 covered Becky Laboy's salary*

- **2017:**
 - Co-wrote and submitted *Urban Agriculture Conservation Initiative*. Grant was fully funded for \$50K, for 2017-2018 implementation. OCSCD will receive \$25K to cover salaries for Christine Raabe (\$4,000), Jean Baluski (\$1,000) and Becky Laboy (\$19,500).
 - Wrote "Experience Jersey-Friendly Yards at the Lighthouse Center". Grant was fully funded for \$3812, for 2018 implementation. OCSCD will receive \$3312 to cover salary for Becky Laboy.
- **2016:**
 - Wrote and submitted proposal to NJDEP: "*Jersey-Friendly Yards Along*

the Metedeconk River". Grant was not funded.

- Wrote and submitted "*Experience Jersey-Friendly Yards*". Grant was fully funded for \$10K, for 2017-2018 implementation. OCSCD received \$5,000 to cover salary for Becky Laboy.

- **2015:**

- Wrote and submitted "*From Lawn to Garden – Going Green, Saving Green*". Grant was fully funded for \$10K, 2015-2016 implementation. OCSCD received \$4,300 to cover salaries for Christine Raabe (\$1800) and Becky Laboy (\$2500).

- **Activity 2: Maintain and enhance OCSCD website and Constant Contact**

E&O continues to update the OCSCD website with educational information under the "Educational Programs/Resources" tab and the "Healthy Soil Resources" tab.

Information is continually modified on the EERT, Poster Contest, TIC, and Roundtable pages to reflect current programs and events.

- **2017 *OCSCD website:** A new page was created on the OCSCD website to promote [outreach programs for adults](#) and [outreach programs for kids](#), and to promote the [Urban Agriculture Conservation](#) initiative.
- **2017 *Constant Contact:**
 - Created 13 campaigns;
 - sent 9,530 emails;
 - average click-through rate is 15%;
 - top performing campaigns:
 - Erosion Control Standards Training
 - 65% click-through rate
 - 20th Annual Environmental Educators Roundtable
 - 25% click-through rate
 - \$150 Funding Available to Create your own Jersey-Friendly Yard
 - 19% click-through rate
 - added 292 more people to the contact list; contact list grew 27%
 - email opens by device:
 - 34% mobile device
 - 66% desktop
- **2016:** A new page was created on the OCSCD website to promote [educational programs](#) available to the public in 2016.
- **2015:** A new page for the International Year of Soils was created on the OCSCD website to promote monthly workshops.

- **Activity 3: Maintain communications and network with and present on behalf of regional and statewide initiatives**

- **2015 - 2017:**

- Received support from Barnegat Bay Roundtable Steering & Planning Committee for Annual Barnegat Bay Watershed Environmental Educators Roundtable

- Attended monthly BBP CEC meetings and actively participated in BBP events
 - Attended and presented at annual ANJEE Conferences, 2015-2017
 - Attended and presented at the Delaware Estuary Science & Environmental Summit Bi-annual Conference
 - Attended and presented at the New Jersey Conservation Association Land Rally
 - Attended, presented and exhibited at the Native Plant Society of New Jersey Spring and Fall Conferences
 - Partnered with BTMUA, OC Master Composters in educational program presentations
- **Activity 4: Trout in the Classroom**
 - **2017:** Participated in all planning meetings and presented program on TIC Field Day on May 17, 2017. **Serviced 110 students**
 - **2016:** Participated in all planning meetings and offered support on TIC Field Day on May 18, 2016. **Serviced 150 students**
 - **2015:** Participated in all planning meetings and offered support on TIC Field Day on May 13, 2015. **Serviced 140 students**
- **Activity 5: Organize Soil Health Workshops with various partners**
 - **2017:** Implemented **xx** workshops supporting and promoting healthy soil and healthy ecosystems: Pinelands Short Course, Rutgers Gardens Series, New Jersey Conservation Association
 - **2016:** Implemented 11 workshops through the “From Lawn to Garden – Going Green, Saving Green” grant project. Partnered with various organizations: BTMUA, Shari Kondrup; BBP, Karen Walzer; Ocean County Ocean County Department of Solid Waste, Mary Jerkowicz; NPSNJ, President John Black and Jersey Shore Chapter co-leaders; Rutgers Soil Testing Laboratory, Dr. Stephanie Murphy; Montclair University, Dr Jennifer Krumin; Eileen Miller; MATES/Project Terrapin, Dr. John Wnek; and NRCS, Fred Schoenagel III. A total of **190 participants** attended workshops in 2016.
 - **2015:** Implemented 12 workshops in support of International Year of Soils. Partnered with various organizations: Ocean County Department of Solid Waste, Mary Jerkowicz; NJDEP Watershed Ambassador, Jordan Foreman; NRCS, Rob Tunstead; NRCS, Fred Schoenagel III. Workshops were well received by the public, Master Gardeners, Master Composters and Master Naturalists, all with whom relationships are being built and strengthened. A total of **144 participants** attended workshops in 2015.
- **Activity 6: Coordinate Local Annual Poster Contest**
Promoted 2015, 2016, 2017 Poster Contest information on OCSCD website, through Constant Contact and via email. OCSCD website information regarding contest and winners is updated to reflect the current contest and the previous years’ winners.

- **2017: *Healthy Soils Are Full of Life!***
 - **Received 45 entries**, selected 1 Grand Champion Winner: Grace Boyle of Cedar Creek Elementary School, who received \$50 prize, and teacher Jennifer Mantega, who received \$150 towards an environmental project at the school.
- **2016: *We All Need Trees***
 - **Received 35 entries**, selected 1 Grand Champion Winner: Anthony Rivera, from Jackson Liberty High School.
- **2015: *Our Hardworking Pollinators***
 - **Received 22 entries**, selected 1 Grand Champion Winner: Aleia Sabra, who received \$250 prize toward an environmental project – a Butterfly Garden, at her homeschool.
- **Activity 7: Exhibit Soil Health Display at Festivals and Outreach Events**
Set up a table to exhibit the “Improve Your Soil Health” display, handed-out Low Maintenance Landscaping guides and supplemental literature at Ocean County events in 2015 and 2016.
 - **2017: Exposure to 7500 people** (Attended both Saturday and Sunday.)
 - **2016: Exposure to 4450 people** (*Decline in numbers due to my attendance to WILD EXPO on Sunday only, so 3600 fewer people reached than in 2015; rainy BBP Festival, so 3000 fewer guests reached than in 2015.)
 - **2015: Exposure to 7395 people**
- **Activity 8: Distribution of Low Maintenance Landscaping Guide**
 - **2015-2017:** Distributed approximately 7000 LML Guides at events and workshops, stuffed with additional literature including: “Going Native!”, New Jersey Soil Health Assessment Guide, Jersey-Friendly Yards postcard.
- **Activity 9: Provide In-service Workshops and Professional Development Utilizing Discovering Barnegat Bay**
 - **2017:** EERT – handed out most of our remaining DBB curricula guides; DBB was the theme for our Roundtable – all workshops were DBB lessons delivered by their authors/creators.
 - **2016-17:** Discovering Barnegat Bay curriculum is the platform upon which the 2017 EERT will be launched (See Activity 12)
 - **2015-16:** *Non-active.
- **Activity 10: Convert DBB into Electronic Format**
*To be explored
- **Activity 11: Project Soil Conservation Activity Guide**
*Project on-hold/Non-active
- **Activity 12: Plan and Coordinate Environmental Educators Roundtable**

- **2017:** 20th Annual EERT on April 19: **xx** people attended.
 - **2016:** 19th Annual EERT on April 20: **90 people attended**; theme “We All Need Trees” (continuing theme of Poster Contest); organizations represented at the Roundtable included: Barnegat Bay Partnership, NJ Sea Grant Consortium, Collier Youth Services – Kateri Environmental Center, JCNERR (Jacques Cousteau National Estuarine Research Reserve), Save Barnegat Bay, MATES – Project Terrapin, Ocean County Department of Solid Waste Management, Master Composters, Cedar Hollow Consulting, Naturally!, Potter Creek Crusaders, Ocean County Parks & Recreation, Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Fish & Wildlife, State Forestry Service, Jenkinsons Aquarium, and Pinelands Direct - Pinelands Nursery.
 - **2015:** 18th Annual EERT on April 22: **83 people attended**; theme: “Celebrating the International Year of Soils”; organizations represented at the Roundtable included: Barnegat Bay Partnership, NRCS (Natural Resources Conservation Services), NJ Sea Grant Consortium, Collier Youth Services – Kateri Environmental Center, JCNERR (Jacques Cousteau National Estuarine Research Reserve), Save Barnegat Bay, MATES – Project Terrapin, Ocean County Department of Solid Waste Management, Master Composters, Cedar Hollow Consulting, Naturally!, Potter Creek Crusaders, Ocean County Parks & Recreation, Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Fish & Wildlife, Pinelands Direct Native Plants – Pinelands Nursery, and BEAR (Boating Education and Rescue).
- **Activity 13: Barnegat Bay Festival**
 - **2017:** Exhibited “Improve Your Soil Health” display, set up the soil tunnel, shared hands-on opportunities to touch and learn about soil. Approximately **5000 people** in attendance
 - **2016:** Exhibited “Improve Your Soil Health” display, set up the soil tunnel, shared hands-on opportunities to touch and learn about soil. *Inclement weather, lower attendance rate. Approximately **2000 people** in attendance
 - **2015:** Exhibited “Improve Your Soil Health” display, set up the soil tunnel, patrons made “soil” using edible goodies, shared hands-on opportunities to touch and learn about soil. Approximately **5000 people** in attendance
 - **Activity 14: Internship Opportunities**
 - **2017:** Rita Varneke, who offers her time 2 days a week to assist with light office duties including organizing and filing,
 - **2016:** Recruited **one steady “part-time” volunteer**, Rita Varneke, who offers her time 2 days a week to assist with light office duties including organizing and filing, with grant implementation including garden installation, weeding and planting, and assists with facilitation of events and education programs. Ms. Varneke has offered over 300 hours in 2016.
 - **2015:** Retained **2 summer interns** and **15 volunteers**. Volunteers assisted with gardening/weeding, implementing Outreach Programs.

- **Activity 15: Outreach Programs**

- **2017:** Developed and implemented adult and children's Outreach Programs; presented to schools, garden clubs, libraries, YMCA summer campers, community groups and interested organizations.
- **2016:** Developed and implemented adult and children's Outreach Programs; presented to schools, garden clubs, libraries, YMCA summer campers, community groups and interested organizations. Presented special programs at ANJEE, Master Composter Training Session, CEC Retreat, Rutgers Soil Summit for Students, New Jersey Conservation Foundation Land Conference, Native Plant Society of New Jersey Spring and Fall Conferences. **Serviced a total of 179 people**
- **2015:** Developed and implemented adult and children's Outreach Programs; presented to schools, scouts, garden clubs, libraries, YMCA summer campers, community groups, government committees and interested organizations. Also presented special programs at Master Composter Training Session, Rutgers Shellfish Restoration Volunteer Training, Rutgers Soil Summit for Teachers. **Serviced a total of 906 people**

- **Activity 16: NJ Envirothon**

- **2017:** Co-led the Wildlife Station. Created the Written Test only, with assistance from NJ Watershed Ambassadors and MacKenzie Hall of NJDEP. Co-implemented the Wildlife Station with Freehold Soil District. Theme was "Invasive Species". **Serviced xx teams of 4 = 128 students.** Also facilitated the South Jersey Training, **xx students.**
- **2016:** Co-led the Wildlife Station. Created the Written Test only, with assistance from NJ Watershed Ambassadors and MacKenzie Hall of NJDEP. Co-implemented the Wildlife Station with Freehold Soil District. Theme was "Invasive Species". **Serviced 36 teams of 4 = 128 students.** Also facilitated the South Jersey Training, **22 students.**
- **2015:** Led the Wildlife Station. Created and implemented the Wildlife Station Hands-on and Written Tests with assistance from NJ Watershed Ambassadors, Freehold Soil District, MacKenzie Hall of NJDEP, and volunteers. Theme was "Urban and Community Forestry". **Serviced 36 teams of 4 = 128 students.** Also facilitated the South Jersey Training, **22 students.**

- **Activity 17: Update/create/maintain database and mailing list/contacts for E&O activities**

Initiated the requisition of Constant Contact in 2015 as a tool for education and outreach promotion, in an effort to mainstream communications with constituents. Information regarding educational programs and events is actively disseminated through Constant Contact. **For 3 combined years, we have an average 27.9% open rate.*

- **2017:** OCSCD has 1402 active *Constant Contact* contacts; 11 campaigns were sent, 2 event registrations were created.

- **2016:** OCSCD has 1116 active *Constant Contact* contacts; 16 campaigns were sent, 2 event registrations were created, 1 survey was sent.
- **2015:** OCSCD had 674 active *Constant Contact* contacts; 16 campaigns were sent, 1 event registration was created.
- **Activity 18: Track participants, evaluations, etc. Provide quarterly reports on E&O activities to District Director and Board**
 Quarterly comprehensive reports are created and offered to the District Director and Board for all Board Meetings. Education & Outreach updates are informally shared at Staff meetings. Program evaluations are distributed at formal programs, and information is collected.
 - **2017:** A total of xx
 - **2016:** A total of **7772** people participated in or were exposed to Education & Outreach programs, workshops, events and activities, offered throughout the year by OCSCD E&O Department. (*2016 decline in numbers due to: attendance at WILD EXPO on Sunday only, so 3600 fewer people reached than in 2015; rainy BBP Festival, so 3000 fewer guests reached than in 2015. However, taking those two events into account, all other things being equal, exposure/participation in E&O programs/events **increased by 113 people in 2016.**)
 - **2015:** A total of **14,213** people participated in or were exposed to Education & Outreach programs, workshops, events and activities, offered throughout the year by OCSCD E&O Department.

OCSCD E&O Partnerships:

Barnegat Bay Partnership: OCSCD is an actively participating and voting member of the Barnegat Bay Partnership CEC. BBP funded and supported “*From Lawn to Garden – Going Green, Saving Green*” grant project. OCSCD’s E&O Department works closely with BBP to promote and implement *Jersey-Friendly Yards* programs. OCSCD exhibits at BBP’s annual Barnegat Bay Festival.

Ocean County Parks & Recreation: Presented at the 18th, 19th and 20th annual Roundtable; will be presenting at the 21st annual Roundtable; Park staff offer much relied-on assistance with event facilitation. OCSCD has a partnership with Jakes Branch for program venue and SHIP Gardens project. OCSCD supports OCPR programs and events.

EPA: provides funding support for grant projects.

MATES/Project Terrapin: participate in the MATES EXPO annually.

Watershed Ambassadors: Invited to exhibit at the 18th, 19th, 20th annual Roundtables, will be presenting at the 21st annual Roundtable.

Rutgers: Strengthened our relationship with Master gardeners and with REC Director, Steve Yergeau; partnered with RCE for the 2017 Jersey-Friendly Yards Conference.

Internal Collaboration with other departments:

OCSCD staff assists with the Barnegat Bay Festival and EERT, annually.

Overall, E&O had an extremely successful past three years. I am looking forward to providing continuity of programs, workshops and outreach in 2018!