

2015 – 2018 Accomplishments
Education & Outreach Program
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Ocean County Soil Conservation District

Following is a four-year compilation of accomplishments achieved by the OCSCD Education & Outreach Department, from 2015-2018.

*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 Program 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**:*

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

- **Activity 1:**
 - **2017, 2018:** 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

ITEM #3 – GENERAL OPERATIONS

- **Activity 3:** Participate in training opportunities:
 - **2018: Earned BS in Biology degree from Kean University** (personal/professional accomplishment), ANJEE, Native Plant Society of New Jersey Spring and Fall Conferences, 2nd Annual Inspiration for Your Jersey-Friendly Yards Conference, Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Ocean County: 2 workshops on Improving Lecturing and Presenting Skills, Pinelands Summer Short Course – “Heart of the Pines” Tour, BBP CEC Retreat, Rutgers Cooperative Extension School Gardens Teacher Training; Webinars: *June 21 NACD: “Backyard Food Production, Carroll Soil & Water CD, Ohio” and USDA “Urban Agroforestry”, *Sept 20 NACD: “UAC – Upper Big Blue NRD, Neb., and RCD of Greater Sand Diego County, Calif.”, *Oct 4 Urban Forestry Today: “The Science of Fall Leaf Color”, *Oct 23 USDA/NRCS “Role of Agroforestry in Supporting Pollinators”.
 - **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, 1st Annual 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:** Received **Rutgers Organic Land Care Course Certificate**, ANJEE, 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
 - **2015-2018:** Actively attend and participate in BBP CEC monthly meetings on behalf of OCSCD; participant in the 2017-2018 CCMP Revision Committee

ITEM #4 – EDUCATION INITIATIVES (GRANT RELATED)

- **Activity 1:** Continue to manage, coordinate, administer and implement grants and expand granted projects.

In the past 4 years, E&O has secured \$73,612 in grant funding to support OCSCD’s Education & Outreach mission.

- **Grant 8: Jersey-Friendly Yards at the Lighthouse Center**
 - **2017-2018:** Successfully secured **\$3812** funding to support educational workshops promoting Jersey-Friendly Yards at the Lighthouse Center for Natural Resource Education. Implemented 4 programs, 2 Jersey-Friendly garden tours and 1 event – the 2nd annual Jersey-Friendly Yards Conference.
- **Grant 7: Urban Agriculture Conservation Initiative**
 - **2017-2018:** Successfully secured **\$50,000** funding to support the provisioning of technical support to Lakewood Township, Lakewood High School and Georgian Court University, resulting in access to fresh produce.
- **Grant 6: Experience Jersey-Friendly Yards**
 - **2017-2018:** Successfully secured **\$10,000** funding to support the installation of 3 Jersey-Friendly gardens in Toms River, Island Heights and Pine Beach; development and implementation of intensive workshops for 10 home owners resulting in 10 Jersey-Friendly home gardens, and the implementation of 4 EJFY workshops for the community

- **Grant 5: From Lawn to Garden – Going Green, Saving Green**
 - **2016-2017:** Secured **\$9,800** in funding to support installation of 3 native plant gardens at 3 OceanFirst Bank branches using Jersey-Friendly Yards website to plan, design and select plants for gardens. Developed and presented 11 educational program. ~grant closed~
- **Grant 4: NJ Bay Friendly Yards and Stormwater Practices: Promoting Best Practices through an Interactive Information Portal and Pilot Communities Demonstration Projects - 319h project**
 - **2015-2016:** OCSCD, subcontractor, implementation of the “Pilot Communities Demonstration Projects” component of the NJ Yards grant. Trained 6 HOA representatives to use the JFY website, resulting in the installation of 6 Jersey-Friendly gardens in pilot communities: Bay Head Shores, Cedarcroft Club, Metedeconk River Yacht Club, Nejecho Beach, Seawood Harbor, and Visitation Relief Center. ~grant closed~
- **Grant 3: Partner w/American Littoral Society**
 - **2016:** Attended culminating program at OC Library, shared E&O literature. ~grant closed~
- **Grant 2: SHIP (Soil Health Improvement Project) Jakes Branch County Park**
 - **2018:** ~grant closed~ *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:** Utilized Jakes Branch as a venue for educational workshops and programs, utilized 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: \$73,612; of that amount, \$37,612 covered OCSCD personnel salaries, of that amount, \$30,312 covered Becky Laboy’s salary*

 - **2018:**
 - September, 2018: Co-submitted “Bay-Friendly Stewardship Certification Program” with Barnegat Bay Partnership, requesting \$98,531.29, with \$53,500 directed to OCSCD to cover salary for Becky Laboy, over 3 years 2019-2021.

- **Constant Contact:**
 - 1402 “Active Contacts”
 - added 286 contacts in 2017
 - **2016:**
 - **OCSCD website:** A new page was created on the OCSCD website to promote 2016 series of educational programs available to the public: “From Lawn to Garden – Going green, Saving Green”.
 - **Constant Contact:**
 - 1116 “Active Contacts”
 - added 442 contacts in 2017
 - **2015:**
 - **OCSCD website:** A new page for the “International Year of Soils” was created on the OCSCD website to promote monthly workshops.
 - **Constant Contact:** A Constant Contact Account was opened
 - Added 674 “Active Contacts”
- **Activity 3: Maintain communications and network with and present on behalf of regional and statewide initiatives**
 - **2015 - 2018:**
 - 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, 2015-2018
 - Attended and presented at the Delaware Estuary Science & Environmental Summit Bi-annual Conference, 2016
 - Attended and presented at the New Jersey Conservation Association Land Rally, 2016-2017
 - Attended, presented and exhibited at the Native Plant Society of New Jersey Spring and/or Fall Conferences 2015-2018
 - Partnered with BTMUA, OC Master Composters, BBP in educational program presentations
- **Activity 4: Trout in the Classroom**
 - **2018:** TIC Field Day cancelled
 - **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** (*Please see attached spreadsheet of overall program attendance numbers for 2015-2018.)

- **2018:** Implemented 17 education outreach programs focused on “Jersey-Friendly Yards”. A total of 384 people attended these workshops.
 - **2017:** Although there was no named “series” of programs (such as the 2015 “International Year of Soils” series of programs), numerous outreach programs, workshops and speaking events were implemented supporting and promoting healthy soil and healthy ecosystems including: Pinelands Short Course, Rutgers Gardens Series, New Jersey Conservation Association (*Please see attached spreadsheet of overall program attendance numbers.)
 - **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 Krumins; 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.
 - **2018:** *Watersheds: Our Water, Our Home*
 - **Received 51 entries**, selected 1 Grand Champion Winner: Summer Sprague, who received \$50 prize. She attends school in Burlington County, therefore, the \$150 prize towards an environmental project at the school was forfeited.
 - **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 at events and conferences, handed-out Low Maintenance Landscaping guides and supplemental literature, engaged participants in soil-based activities. (*Please see attached spreadsheet of event attendance numbers.)
 - **2018:** Exposure to **3274 people**
 - **2017:** Exposure to **13950 people**
 - **2016:** Exposure to **6687 people**
 - **2015:** Exposure to **12868 people**

- **Activity 8: Distribution of Low Maintenance Landscaping Guide**
 - **2018:** Through grant funding of the Urban Agriculture Conservation initiative, OCSCD purchased 3000 copies of the Spanish translation of the Low Maintenance Landscaping Guides.
 - **2015-2018:** Distributed approximately 7000 LML Guides at events, conferences 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**
 - **2018:** ~Non-active~
 - **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**
 - **2018:** 21st Annual EERT on April 18: **65 people attended**
 - **2017:** 20th Annual EERT on April 19: **85 people attended**; theme “Re-Discovering Barnegat Bay”
 - **2016:** 19th Annual EERT on April 20: **90 people attended**; theme “We All Need Trees” (continuing theme of Poster Contest)
 - **2015:** 18th Annual EERT on April 22: **83 people attended**; theme: “Celebrating the International Year of Soils”

- **Activity 13: Barnegat Bay Festival**
 - **2018:** No BBP Festival in 2018
 - **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**
 - **2018:** Several volunteers assisted with various activities: Lisa Mazzuca co-presented “Native Edibles” on Aug 23; Irene Tysh assisted with the Wild Expo on Sept 8 and the Forestry Festival on Oct 5; Barbara Pepe offered 10 hrs in the office helping to organize educational materials.
 - **2017: Part-time volunteer** 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**
 (*Please see attached spreadsheet of all programs attendance numbers.)
 - **2018:** “Experience Jersey-Friendly Yards” program series, and other Outreach programs. Serviced a total of **406 people**
 - **2017:** Developed and implemented adult and children’s Outreach Programs; presented at Conferences (ANJEE, Delaware Estuary Science & Environmental Summit, Rutgers, Pinelands Short Course, NJ Conservation Association Land Rally, etc), as well as to schools, garden clubs, libraries, YMCA summer campers, community groups and interested organizations. Serviced a total of **1050 people**
 - **2016:** Outreach programs – other than “From Lawn to Garden – Going Green, Saving Green” – which is listed under Activity 5. Serviced a total of **732 people**
 - **2015:** Outreach programs – other than “International Year of Soils” – which is listed under Activity 5. Serviced a total of **1296 people**

- **Activity 16: NJ Envirothon**
 - **2018:** Co-led the Wildlife Station. Created Written Test, with assistance from

NJ Watershed Ambassadors. Co-implemented the Wildlife Station with Freehold Soil District. Theme: "Farmland and Western Rangeland Management". Serviced **130 students**. Serviced Also co-facilitated the South Jersey Training: **30 students**.

- **2017:** Co-led the Wildlife Station. Created the Written Test, with assistance from NJ Watershed Ambassadors. Co-implemented the Wildlife Station with Freehold Soil District. Theme was "Agricultural Soil and Water Conservation Stewardship". Serviced **130 students**. Also facilitated the South Jersey Training: **35 students**.
 - **2016:** Co-led the Wildlife Station. Created the Written Test, 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 **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 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.*

 - **2018:** OCSCD has 1529 active *Constant Contact* contacts; 9 campaigns were sent, 1 event registrations were created.
 - **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**

2015-2018: 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.

OCSCD E&O Partnerships:

Barneget 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!