

2019 March-May, Bi-Monthly Board Report, Education & Outreach, Becky Laboy, E&O Specialist
May 16, 2019

In support of OCSCD's 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 has championed 2 main initiatives to effectuate OCSCD's vision and mission:

1. **Jersey-Friendly Yards Initiative:** created and launched by the Barnegat Bay Partnership, and piloted by OCSCD, Jersey-Friendly Yards has propelled OCSCD to the forefront as a conservation leader in the Barnegat Bay watershed. In partnership with Barnegat Bay Partnership and the Rutgers Cooperative Extension of New Jersey, OCSCD continues to grow and build on our success through relationship building with community members and through outreach efforts at venues throughout Ocean County. Successes include:
 - **4 successful JFY grant projects completed over the past 4 years** resulted in
 - the installation of **22 Jersey-Friendly gardens and landscapes** (including an award-winning "2018 Garden of Distinction" at OceanFirst Bank in Toms River) and
 - **50 outreach programs** reaching **2000 community members**.
 - **2 annual Jersey-Friendly Yards Conferences;** we are planning the 3rd annual Jersey-Friendly Yards Conference for Saturday October 19, 2019.
 - OCSCD and BBP are seeking a **partnership with the NJDEP Watershed Ambassador program** and with the **Ocean County Master Gardener program**, to incorporate JFY into the annual training provided to each cohort of Ambassadors and Master Gardeners, in an effort to "**train-the-trainer**", and expand the Jersey-Friendly Yards program into other New Jersey watersheds.
 - Becky continues to **write grants to secure funding** to support further Jersey-Friendly garden installations, as well as education and outreach efforts. Secured future grant funding includes:
 - **Bay Friendly Stewardship Program:** Barnegat Bay Partnership received funding for this grant, through which, OCSCD will be sub-contracting for a total of \$53,500 over a period of 3 years. Of this amount, **\$36,000** is allocated to support Becky Laboy's salaried time (\$12K per year); \$12,500 is allocated for materials (plants, etc...); \$5K is allocated for technical soil and landscape assistance.
 - **Barnegat Bay Partnership Subcontract:** OCSCD will subcontract with BBP to support the Jersey-Friendly Yards initiative. OCSCD will be subcontracting for a total of **\$13,500**, which is allocated to support Becky Laboy's salaried time for one year. Tasks will include:
 - Develop, coordinate and present programs and workshops designed to educate and engage property owners in using the resources and tools on the JFY website, total of 12 per year.
 - Research and develop new content for the Plant Database, Success Stories, and other sections of the JFY website: monthly addition of new content.
 - Develop and post appropriate messages on JFY social media sites, including the JFY Facebook page and Twitter account, at least 1 per week.
 - Research and identify grant opportunities for funding JFY projects and assist with preparation and submission of grant proposals: 1-2 per year.
 - Develop, promote and grow a program to increase watershed stewardship by coordinating and engaging volunteers in meaningful projects that align with BBP and OCSCD strategic plans and the CCMP.
 - Assist with developing, organizing and delivering a "train-the-trainer" program for recruitment and training of volunteers to present programs about the JFY website and its resources and tools: 2-3 training programs delivered per year.
 - Assist BBP with developing stewardship opportunities for BBP volunteers, and grow informal educational and volunteer activities targeting specific audiences: monthly volunteer opportunity/activity provided.

2. **Urban and Community Agriculture Initiative:** With the launch and completion of the 2017 Urban Agriculture Conservation (UAC) grant through NACD, OCSCD has focused efforts to increase community food security, improve access to healthy food, and provide education and resources about urban agriculture practices. A sustaining result of the UAC grant was the formation of the **Community Garden Network of Ocean County (CGN)**, in March 2018, developed from a need to create a network of community gardeners, to share knowledge and resources, help sustain existing community gardens and help develop new ones, and to connect communities with fresh, nutritious food. The resulting CGN is a partnership between OCSCD, Rutgers Agricultural Experiment Station, Rutgers Master Gardeners of Ocean County, Fulfill, Soil to Soul, Southern Ocean Hunger Foundation, Wrangle Brook Community Garden and Community Garden of Beach Haven.
- We hold monthly meetings with a core group of leaders, including Becky Laboy, OCSCD.
 - We determined our mission and goals:
 - Mission: To advocate and create a network for community gardens of all kinds, connect partners, provide education and share resources
 - Goals:
 - Sustain existing and help develop new community gardens
 - Increase community food security and improve access to healthy food
 - Protect and improve the quality of our open space resources
 - Beautify the county with environmentally appropriate planting
 - Strengthen community involvement and build community gardens
 - Share resources, information and efforts
 - Make garden resources available to all residents and garden groups
 - Collaborate with groups and individuals on the development of new community gardens
 - Facilitate “best practices” in gardening and community garden developments
 - Host workshops dedicated to sharing community garden techniques including continued education on a bi-monthly basis
 - We have confirmed 7 educational programs on our 2019 calendar:
 - Jan 22: Seed Starting, Crop Planning and Winter Sowing
 - April 9: Integrated Pest Management
 - July 16: Gleaning, Growing a Donation Garden, Connecting with Food Pantries
 - August: Garden Party Fundraiser
 - September: Cooking from the Garden
 - Date TBD: Combating Climate Change in the Community Garden, Regenerative Agriculture, Carbon Farming
 - Date TBD: Cover Crops
 - For our first “project”, the CGN of OC has connected with the Toms River Green Team, who requested assistance to jump-start their small community garden at **Riverwood Park** in Toms River. They have a fenced-in garden area that needed attention. CGN assisted in cleaning it and re-establishing the beds. This week (May 15), the CGN team assisted in planting the 8 available beds, in an effort to attract community gardeners. Food grown by CGN will be donated to the local food pantry. The garden will be managed by the Toms River Green Team and gardened by the community.



February, 2019: CGN team assessing the needs of the Riverwood Park Community Garden.



April, 2019: The restored beds at the Riverwood Park Community Garden.

Following is a list of programs and events implemented and anticipated by the Education Department that support the Jersey-Friendly Yards Initiative and the Urban and Community Agriculture initiatives, as well as the overall mission of OCSCD.

Outreach Programs, Conferences and Events: (APO Item #5, Activity 9)

- March 25: Toms River Intermediate South Afterschool Environmental Club. Program: “Soil Scientists”, presented to this afterschool environmental group of 6-8th graders. Students used Rapitest Kits to determine a soil sample’s N, P, K and pH. Students learned the importance of nutrients and pH to plants. (15 students and 3 teachers attended)
- April 5: Monmouth County Master Gardeners School Gardens Event. Presented “Jersey-Friendly Yards” to teachers and educators; exhibited soil display. (Over 100 teachers in attendance.)
- April 9: The Community Garden Network of Ocean County, facilitated our “Integrated Pest Management” program, presented by the Rutgers Masters Gardeners IPM Committee. (15 participants attended)
- April 10: Envirothon training Session, took place at FREC. (45 students attended)
- April 29: Sierra Club of Ocean County, “Jersey Friendly Yards Tutorial”; Becky Laboy and Karen Walzer. (22 people in attendance)
- May 2: Brick Branch of the OC Library, “Jersey-Friendly Yards – Landscaping for a Healthier Barnegat Bay”; Becky Laboy and Karen Walzer. (3 people in attendance)

Anticipated Outreach Programs, Conferences and Events: (APO Item #5, Activity 9)

- June 1: National Trails Day – volunteer spring SHIP gardening and weeding at Jakes Branch. Advertised in the OC Parks & Rec newsletter, as well as through OCSCD’s e-Newsletter. (11 volunteers registered)
- June 8: Barnegat Bay Blitz. The NJDEP is moving the annual Blitz location to a different watershed. BBP will take the lead on implementing the Barnegat Bay Blitz. OCSCD will work with the Forked River Team Captains.
- August 11: Jersey-Friendly Yards program at BTMUA.
- August 14: Jersey-Friendly Yards program at Berkeley Branch of the Ocean County Library
- September 7 and 8: WILD EXPO
- September 27: ANJEE Conference (tentative)
- October 19: 3rd Annual JFY Conference. Theme: “Putting Your Jersey-Friendly Yard into Practice”.

Special Events/Projects: (APO Item #5, Activity 2, 3, 6, 10, 14)

- **Trout in the Classroom:** 2019 TIC Field Day at the FREC on **May 16** was *cancelled* due to cancellations from participating schools.
- **Poster Contest:** Theme: “Life in the Soil: Dig Deeper”. We received 24 entries with representatives from all four grade groups. The Board selected the Grand Champion Winner: **Summer Sprague**, who received a check for \$50 from OCSCD. The four winning posters were submitted for entry into the State competition, none won.
- **22nd Annual Environmental Educators Roundtable:** was held on **April 17** at the Lighthouse Center for Natural Resource Education. 52 people registered; plus 1 “walk-in”, totaling **53 registered participants**, of whom **48 attended**. Presenters included: NJ Sea Grant Consortium, Conserve Wildlife Foundation, Jacques Cousteau National Estuarine Research Reserve, Rutgers Cooperative Extension of OC, ReClam the Bay, and Project Terrapin, with Lisa Auermuller of JCNERR providing the Keynote. (See attached analysis of the evaluations.)
- **Envirothon:** was on **May 11**. This year’s theme was: **Agriculture and the Environment: Knowledge and Technology to Feed the World**. As co-coordinator of the Wildlife Station with Holly Reynolds, Freehold Soil Conservation District, Becky has attended bi-monthly meetings, and created the “Wildlife Station – Written Test” for this event. OCSCD Volunteer, Irene Tish, assisted Becky with the implementation of the Wildlife Station this year. (27 schools with teams of 4 students each = 108, attended)
- **SHIP Gardens:** In partnership with Jakes Branch County Park, OCSCD is continuing to manage and maintain these **Jersey-Friendly Demonstration Gardens** as tools for teaching and learning. The SHIP Gardens are established along the “Plant Discovery Trail” at Jakes Branch, as it is now officially named by the Park. The Bluebird Nest Boxes are incorporated into this trail as an interrelated nature feature that showcases the ecosystem services provided by the birds, and the need to eliminate overuse of chemical pesticides and fertilizers in an effort to create healthy soil for plants and wildlife.

- Jersey-Friendly Gardener, Lisa Mazzuca, has taken the role of Volunteer Garden Manager.
 - The Butterfly Garden has been relocated along the Plant Discovery Trail
 - June 1, National Trails Day, will provide an opportunity for volunteers to assist with maintenance of the SHIP Gardens.
- Barnegat Bay Blitz:** the NJDEP is moving the Blitz location to a different watershed. BBP will be taking the lead on having one in the Barnegat Bay watershed on **June 8**. OCSCD will work with the Forked River Team Captains.

Grants: (APO Item #4, Activity 1)

- OCSCD received funding for the following grant projects, as a subcontractor:
 - “Bay-Friendly Stewardship Program”** grant with BBP. BBP received \$92,756.65, of which **\$53,500** is designated for OCSCD; of that, **\$36,000** will support Becky’s salary over 3 years.
 - “Lakewood Township Stormwater Basin Retrofit Project”** grant with South Jersey Resource Conservation and Development Council (SJRC&D). SJRC&D received \$325,000, of which **\$24,442** is designated for OCSCD; a portion of this amount will support Becky’s salary over 3 years.

OCSCD Grants: 2014-2019											
			Amount allocated towards Becky's Salary, per fiscal year:								
Grant	Grant Total Allocated to OCSCD	Amount Allocated to Becky's Salary	2014 (part-time)	FY 15 01/10/15 - 06/30/15	FY 16 07/01/15 - 06/30/16	FY 17 07/01/16 - 06/30/17	FY 18 07/01/17 - 05/16/18	FY 19 05/17/18 - 05/16/19	FY 20	FY 21	FY 22
Becky's Annual Salary			26,000	45,053	45,053	49,160	49,160	53,268	62,862	62,862	
NJ Yards (JFY)	16,000	8,062	1,892	6,170							
OceanFirst (JFY)	9,800	2,500			2,500						
Experience JFY	10,000	5,000				655.50	4,344.50				
Experience JFY LHC	3,312	3,312					2,771.50	540.5			
UAC	50,000	19,536.36					7,550.00	11,986.36			
Bay Friendly	53,500	36,000							12,000	12,000	12,000
BBP Subcontract	13,500	13,500							13,500		
Lakewood Basins	24,442	?							5,000	5,000	5,000
Totals:	180554.00	87910.83	1892.00	6170.00	2500.00	655.50	14,666.00	12526.86	30500.00	17000.00	
% of Becky's salary covered by grant			7.27%	13.69%	5.55%	1.33%	29.83%	23.52%	48.52%	27.04%	

Grant Writing: (APO Item #4, Activity 2)

- Becky continues to search for grant opportunities that support the District’s mission and 2 main initiatives, as outlined above: **Jersey-Friendly Yards** and **Urban and Community Agriculture**.

Website, Media and Promotions: (APO Item #5, Activity 1 and 11)

- Becky maintains and enhances the Education components of the OCSCD website,
- Utilizes social media (**Constant Contact** and **Facebook**) to disseminate information about OCSCD programs
- Maintains database and mailing list of contacts for E&O initiatives

Professional Development: (APO Item #3, Activity 3)

- February 1, 15, March 6, April 1, 24, May 17, June 7: Rutgers Green Infrastructure Champions Program workshop series. Topics include: “How to identify green infrastructure projects in your town”, “Moving from planning to implementation of green infrastructure”, “Maintaining green infrastructure practices/projects”, and more.

Internships/Volunteers: (APO Item #5, Activity 8)

- Lisa Mazzuca, one of OCSCD’s “Jersey-Friendly Gardeners”, is offering her volunteer services to assist with managing and maintaining the SHIP gardens.
- Irene Tysh, Master Naturalist, assisted with the Envirothon and will be assisting with OCSCD’s exhibits at future events, including Wild Expo, Forestry Festival and Jersey-Friendly Yards Conference.