

**2019 October-November, Bi-Monthly Board Report, Education & Outreach, Becky Laboy, E&O Specialist
November 21, 2019**

In support of OCSCD's Annual Plan of Operations, 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: **Jersey-Friendly Yards** and **Urban and Community Agriculture**. In addition, OCSCD has subcontracted with Barnegat Bay Partnership to support the Jersey-Friendly Yards initiative, as well as other watershed-wide initiatives that serve mutual constituents and sustain the natural resources of the communities we both serve.

- **Jersey-Friendly Yards Initiative:** (APO Item #4, Activity 1)
 - **2019 Jersey-Friendly Yards Conference (3rd annual):** "Putting Your Jersey-Friendly Yard into Practice" took place on **October 19**. Two featured speakers included Bruce Crawford, Director of Rutgers Gardens, and Pat Sutton, renowned naturalist, educator and author. We also offered a choice of 6 workshops for participants to attend that all reflected the 8-Steps to a Jersey-Friendly Yard, as depicted on the JFY website. In addition there were exhibitors, native plant sales, and light morning refreshments and lunch, all included in the price of \$35 per person. Christine, Becky and one volunteer (Rich Tomasik) attended on behalf of OCSCD. We reached our maximum capacity of **200 guests**, and "sold out"!



Pat Sutton, Featured Speaker



Conference Volunteers



A variety of exhibitors



Native plant sales

- **Urban and Community Agriculture Initiative:** (APO Item #4, Activity 1)

The **Community Garden Network of Ocean County (CGN)** continues efforts to increase community food security, improve access to healthy food, and provide education and resources about urban agriculture practices, through monthly meetings, education and outreach, and project implementation.

 - The CGN Leaders met with John Carman, Director of the Juvenile Service Center in Toms River to discuss ways to support their new "Youth Center" program, which provides a safe environment for all participants to work on high school completion, provide vocational / technical educational enhancement, offer community service and learn life skills. The CGN sent a letter to Mr. Carman offering assistance to the on-site food garden to provide education and resources about urban agriculture practices and technical grant writing assistance.
 - NACD announced another round of Urban Agriculture Conservation funding for 2020. Becky will be reviewing the grant and determining feasibility.
- **Subcontract with Barnegat Bay Partnership:** (APO Item #4, Activity 1)

The sub-award/sub-contract agreement between OCSCD and BBP, started on July 1, 2019 and runs for 1 year. The first quarterly report (July 1 – September 30, 2019) is attached. Becky continues to implement the following components:

 - 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.
 - **November 1:** The Watershed Institute's NJ Watershed Conference, presenting "Jersey-Friendly Yards: Landscaping for a Healthy Environment" (**30 participants**)
 - **November 14:** "Combating Climate Change with a Jersey-Friendly Yard" at Pinelands Commission

- February 3, 10, 17, 24: Series of JFY programs offered in partnership with BBP, Jacques Cousteau National Estuarine Research Reserve (JCNERR), Brick Township Municipal Utilities Authority, Ocean County Department of Solid Waste Management's Master Composters Education Program. "The Importance of a Healthy watershed", "Jersey-Friendly Yards", "Start With healthy Soil", "Water Wisely".
- Research and develop new content for the Plant Database, Success Stories, and other sections of the JFY website: monthly addition of new content.
 - Becky is continuing to add additional plants to the compiled list of plants to add to the JFY website.
- Develop and post appropriate messages on JFY social media sites, including the JFY Facebook page and Twitter account, at least 1 per week.
 - Becky continues to post information on Facebook and tweets on Twitter promoting Jersey-Friendly events, programs, gardens and plants, exceeding the required amount.
- Research and identify grant opportunities for funding JFY projects and assist with preparation and submission of grant proposals: 1-2 per year.
 - A Letter of Intent was submitted to The Watershed Institute in partnership with Natural Resource Education Foundation, however, we were not invited to submit an application.
- 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.
 - Becky and Karen Walzer presented a Jersey-Friendly Yards "training program" to the NJDEP Watershed Ambassadors at their monthly meeting on November 6, at Cattus Island County Park, in an effort to incorporate JFY into the Ambassadors training program and term of service. Although there has been no formalization of the partnership, this program was an opportunity to lay the groundwork for a future partnership. **(26 people in attendance)**
 - Becky is in talks with Karen Walzer of BBP, and Steve Yergeau and Sue Servidio of Rutgers to create a Train-the-Trainer program in collaboration with the Rutgers Master Gardeners.
- Assist BBP with developing stewardship opportunities for BBP volunteers and grow informal educational and volunteer activities targeting specific audiences: monthly volunteer opportunity/activity provided.
 - Becky is assisting with the development of programs for the BBVMN graduates, and is assisting with preparations for the implementation of the Spring 2020 Barnegat Bay Volunteer Master Naturalist Program.

Following is a list of programs and events implemented and anticipated by the Education Department that support the overall mission of OCSCD (separate from the programs financially supported through the BBP sub-contract).

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

- September 7 and 8: WILD EXPO (**6,000 people** in attendance for the two-day event)
- October 5: Fall Forestry Festival (**500 people in attendance**)
- October 19: 3rd Annual JFY Conference, Theme: "Putting Your Jersey-Friendly Yard into Practice" (**200 people in attendance**)
- November 15: Sands-on Science for Cub Scout Pack 21, Seaside Heights
- January 28, 2020: Sands-on Science for Potter Creek Crusaders
- March 4, 2020: In collaboration with Dr. Steve Yergeau of Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Ocean County, Becky will present "Scratch the Surface, Part 1: Start With Healthy Soil"

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

- **Poster Contest:** 2020 Theme: **Where would we BEE without Pollinators?**
- **23rd Annual Environmental Educators Roundtable:** will be held on **April 22** at the Lighthouse Center for Natural Resource Education. OCSCD will be emphasizing "STEAM"-based presentations that incorporate Next Generation Science Standards.
- **Envirothon:** Next year's theme is: **Water Resources Management: Local Control and Local Solutions.** Becky will again co-coordinate the Wildlife Station with Holly Reynolds, Freehold Soil Conservation District; the Freehold

Soil District will host the Envirothon, the location will be at Camp Topanemus, 380 Monmouth Road, Millstone, NJ 08510; Rich Belcher is retiring in January, so he will not be at the 2020 event, no replacement has been announced.

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

- Becky is currently reviewing several possible grants:
 - EPA: Environmental Education Local Grants program for Region 2
 - NACD: Urban Agriculture Conservation Initiative FY2020
 - NFWF Five Star and Urban Waters Restoration Grant Program 2020 Request for Proposals

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

- Maintains and enhances the Education components of the OCSCD website
- Utilizes social media (Constant Contact, Facebook and Twitter) to disseminate information about OCSCD programs.
- Creates and sends a monthly eNewsletter to our **1,471 active contacts**
- Maintains database and mailing list of contacts for E&O initiatives

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

- September 19: Completed Fred Pryor trainings: “Cutting Edge Success at Work: Contribute to the Team”, “Building Strong Professional Relationships”, “Working Well with Everyone: The Power of Inclusion”, “Working Well with Everyone: Diversity = Greatness”, “Respect – Working with Dislike”.
- November 1: The Watershed Institute’s 3rd Annual Watershed Conference: In addition to presenting JFY, Becky attended several programs including, “Flipping the Script on American Environmental Thought”, “Microplastics in the Passaic – Methods and Community Connections”, “Development of a Civic Science pathogen Monitoring Program on the Lower Raritan River”.

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

- **Lisa Mazzuca**, one of OCSCD’s “Jersey-Friendly Gardeners”, is managing and maintaining the SHIP gardens.
- **Irene Tysh**, Master Naturalist, assisted with OCSCD’s Wild Expo exhibit on September 8; assisted OCSCD staff Jen Gardener at the Fall Forestry Festival on October 5.
- **Rich Tomasik** assisted OCSCD at the Jersey-Friendly Yards Conference on October 19.