

2020 June/July, Bi-Monthly Board Report, Education & Outreach, Becky Laboy, E&O Specialist
July 16, 2020

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**. 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 serve. OCSCD is collaborating with Rutgers Cooperative Extension to facilitate the Community Garden Network, in support of the Urban and Community Agriculture initiative. In addition, the Education Department continues to provide community programs, speak at conferences, and write grants to support OCSCD's overall mission.

GENERAL OPERATIONS (APO Item #3)

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

- May 28: **Nature's Best Hope**, presented by Dr. Doug Tallamy, hosted by Save Barnegat Bay (1 hr)
- June 1: **Plant This, Not That**, presented by Rutgers Cooperative Extension, "Earth Day at Home" series (1 hr)
- June 8: **Exploring Your Watershed from Home** presented by RCE, "Earth Day at Home" series (1 hr)
- June 16: **Wind Farms on the NJ Coast** presented by Orstead, hosted by NREF (1 hr)
- June 17: **Native Plants That Bridge the Seasonal Divide** presented by Ecological Landscape Alliance (1 hr)
- July 9: **Ways to Use Integrated Pest Management to Keep Our Water Clean**, hosted by BTMUA in support of the Jersey-Friendly Yards initiative. (1 hr)

EDUCATION INITIATIVES – GRANT RELATED (APO Item #4)

Jersey-Friendly Yards Initiative: (APO Item #4, Activity 1)

- **2020 Jersey-Friendly Yards Webinar Series:** Our 4th Annual Jersey-Friendly Yards Conference has shifted to an online platform. OCSCD, BBP and RCE have developed a webinar series based on our 2020 theme: "Wild About Jersey-Friendly Yards!", with a focus on creating a yard that supports wildlife. We presented our first webinar, "Introduction to Jersey-Friendly Yards" on July 7, from 7-8pm, presented by Karen Walzer and Becky Laboy. The recorded program is available on the JFY website, Workshops/Events page, through a link at the end of the program description.
- **JFY Certification:** OCSCD received a renewed subcontract with BBP allowing work on the Bay-Friendly/Jersey-Friendly Certification program to begin on July 9, 2020 and continue for a 3-year period until June 8, 2023. OCSCD will receive \$53,500 over this 3-year period.

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

- The **Community Garden Network of Ocean County (CGN)** continues efforts to connect the community to healthy food resources, to increase community food security, and improve access to healthy food. The CGN team, consisting of OCSCD, RCE, Fulfill, Rutgers Master Gardeners of Ocean County, along with Soil to Soul and Toms River Green Team, joined a virtual meeting organized by Soil to Soul and partners, to discuss the creation of a Food Democracy Collaborative. This group would support the formation of a food policy council network/coalition for collective action to improve food access and overall resilience of the food and agriculture systems of our region. Additional meetings to follow.

Subcontract with Barnegat Bay Partnership: (APO Item #4, Activity 1)

The sub-award/sub-contract agreement between OCSCD and BBP, which started on July 1, 2019 was completed on June 30, 2020. Becky is compiling the 4th and final report, which will be submitted to the BBP, and subsequently submitted to the Board at the next Board Meeting. For this 4th quarter, Becky focused on the following:

- Research and develop new content for the Plant Database.

- Develop and post appropriate messages on the JFY Facebook pages, to continue to build a “web presence” for JFY.

The Barnegat Bay Partnership issued a new subaward to OCSCD for another year, July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021, allocating \$13,500 for assistance with:

- Promote and increase usage of the JFY website as a guide to landscape practices for managing stormwater and reducing nonpoint source pollution in the Barnegat Bay watershed.
- Develop, promote and grow a program to increase watershed stewardship by coordinating and engaging volunteers in meaningful projects that align with BBP, OCSCD strategic plans and the CCMP.

Seeks grants and Funding: (APO Item #4, Activity 2)

- June 26, Becky participated in The Watershed Institute’s interactive webinar promoting their new round of small grants. Will assist NREF with an application that supports watershed partners in implementing educational programs/webinars that focus on our Jersey-Friendly gardens.

EDUCATION INITIATIVES (APO Item #5)

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

- Maintain and enhance the Education components of the OCSCD website
- Becky promotes OCSCD on social media, primarily through Facebook.
- Maintains database and mailing list of **1,788 active contacts** for E&O initiatives in OCSCD’s Constant Contact database.
- Creates and distributes a monthly eNewsletter advertising programs and conservation news.

Special Projects: (APO Item #5, Activity 2, 3, 5, 8)

- **Poster Contest:** This year’s NJACD Statewide Poster Contest winners have been decided and are posted on the NJACD prototype website (not yet available publicly): <https://njacd.weebly.com/poster-contest> Theme: **Where would we BEE without Pollinators?** The winners received cash prizes by NJACD and the Grand Champion will have their poster printed on the NJACD pocket-folders.

Internships/Volunteers: (APO Item #5, Activity 6)

- Becky is working with intern, **Gabriella Marzella**, of Stockton, to complete an Independent Study through the District. Ms. Marzella is studying to be a Middle School Science Teacher. She is working on two projects: 1. She is utilizing the JFY website and concepts to create activities supporting the Girl Scout “Gardener Badge”. 2. She is also creating a Middle School lesson plan/project that incorporates the JFY website, tools and resources, that schools can use towards “certification” for the anticipated “Bay-Friendly/Jersey-Friendly Certification Program”.

Outreach Programs, Conferences and Events: (APO Item #5, Activity 7)

- June 4: **Unique Plants and Wildflowers of Barrens & Bogs**, webinar presented by Becky for the Pinelands Commission, the first webinar in their “Pinelands Speaker Series”, live-streamed through YouTube (**over 400 “views” through YouTube**)
- June 24: **Don’t Treat Your Soil Like Dirt!** webinar presented by Becky for the Native Plant Society of New Jersey (**59 people in attendance**)
- July 7: **Introduction to Jersey-Friendly Yards** presented by Becky and Karen Walzer of BBP, our first webinar in our 2020 series “Wild About Jersey-Friendly Yards!”, in lieu of a 2020 Conference. (**107 people in attendance**)
- July 14: **Shorebirds** webinar for kids, hosted by JCNERR

Outreach Programs, Conferences, Events Anticipated: (APO Item #5, Activity 7)

- July 22: **Combating Climate Change with a Jersey-Friendly Yard** for the Pinelands Commission.
- September 1: **Attracting Birds to Your Jersey-Friendly Yard** program for the JFY 2020 Webinar Series