

JERSEY SHORE PROFILE.....

FIVE FOR FIGHTING

Local Organizations Fight For The Environment's Right To Survive

by Jill M. Ocone



Right: Clean Ocean Action's bi-annual Beach Sweeps is one of the longest running clean-up events in the U.S. This year's Fall Beach Sweeps will be held on October 25 on beaches throughout New Jersey.

Below: Bay Head's beach.



Fuse



David Turton Photography

The Jersey Shore...its ocean, sea life, beaches, dunes, and bays...with so much of the natural being the dominant feature of the region, the mission of many local environmental organizations is to protect its resources.

But how does each organization differentiate itself among so many seemingly similar groups? Here are five that each do their part while working together to fight for the Jersey Shore's environmental survival.

Clean Water Action: Protecting New Jersey's Health, Water, and Environment

Clean Water Action (CWA) is a national organization founded in 1972 with a strong presence at the Jersey Shore since 1982. Their founding Executive Director, David Zwick, helped write and secure passage of the original federal Clean Water Act in 1972, hence their name.

"CWA speaks truth to power, and we aren't afraid to take chances," says Amy Goldsmith, CWA State Director. "We've won important substantive victories nationally, in Trenton, and locally that have had a huge impact on the quality of life at the Jersey Shore. We push policy makers to put clean water, clean air, and public health first, and encourage lawmakers to make polluters, not taxpayers, pay to clean up their mess. Our door-to-door canvass and extensive email list enable us to educate citizens about important issues in their backyards and beyond, and helps the organization keep its finger on the pulse of what's important to residents."

Through its new Clean Water Champs program, CWA offers shore residents an opportunity to both volunteer and learn about home composting, building rain barrels, green cleaning, becoming a citizen advocate for the environment, and more.

continued on page 52

CWA also serves as the “go-to” organization for grassroots groups fighting important issues in the area. “GRAMMES (Grandmothers, Mothers, and More for Energy Safety) is a great example,” says Janet Tauro, Co-Founder of GRAMMES and now CWA N.J. Board Chair.

CWA provided GRAMMES with guidance and support to fight for more oversight of safety issues at the Oyster Creek nuclear plant and secure its shutdown in 2019, ten years earlier than originally proposed.

“You could call this the David vs. Goliath fight along Barnegat Bay; a group of citizens taking on one of the most powerful corporations in America, Exelon, the owners of Oyster Creek in Lacey Township,” said Tauro. “And it’s not over. We are going to continue to be vigilant and pro-active in shining a light on safety issues like the storage of 750 metric tons of radioactive waste that’s on site.”

There are 175,000 Garden State CWA members with the largest percentage in Monmouth and Ocean Counties where their community canvasses have been active for over thirty years. “Our membership gives us our strength—donations large and small enable us to have more power to make the changes we seek,” said Goldsmith. “We’ve got our boots-on-the-ground and have a long record of winning in ways that make a difference, whether it’s at the Shore or in your home, school, workplace, or community.”

CWA worked with hundreds of towns, schools, institutions, and even the Garden State Parkway to significantly curb the use of toxic pesticides, thereby reducing water pollution and limiting exposure to children, people, and pets. The warning flags seen on many lawns were the result of CWA’s efforts in Trenton. They co-led efforts with other organizations to pass the strongest-in-the-nation fertilizer bill to protect Barnegat Bay and other waters from

excessive nutrient pollution.

After a possible cancer cluster was discovered in Toms River, due to contaminated well water, CWA helped secure amendments to the federal Safe Drinking Water Act to provide additional protections of the nation’s “source (drinking) waters” and increase consumer access to information about their tap water.

Drinking water utilities are now required to issue “easy to read” annual water quality reports to customers. These reports helped CWA work with Monmouth and Ocean County residents to protect drinking water from contaminants like disinfectant-by-products (DBPs). DBPs form when disinfectants react with natural organic matter, such as leaves, and have been linked to nervous system disorders, birth defects, and cancer.



The Clean Water Action staff at a Stop Fracking Waste Lobby Day at the Statehouse, June 2014.

Additionally, In January 2014, CWA co-led the effort that stopped a frack gas pipeline from being built in the Pinelands, a national treasure and the source of drinking water for millions. “This was an incredible victory involving local residents, environmental groups, and our own staff, volunteers, and members working tirelessly and sometimes round-the-clock to defeat the pipeline,” said David Pringle, CWA Campaign Director.

For 2015, CWA’s goals include: 1) implementing a green infrastructure pilot program on a local level to reduce flooding and enhance resiliency against future routine and superstorms and climate change impacts; 2) co-leading the N.J. Free coalition

with a goal to require N.J. to power itself up with thirty percent renewable energy by 2025 and eighty percent by 2050; 3) expanding its Zero Waste efforts—reduce, reuse, recycle, and compost—in cities and suburbs in order to minimize the burying and burning of trash in our landfills and incinerators; 4) implementing Pesticide Free Zones in Monmouth and Ocean County parks to reduce toxic exposure to kids and recreational users.

“In all our work, political accountability is key—decision makers need support to do the right thing and be held to account when they don’t,” said Pringle. “From the climate crisis to the degradation of Barnegat Bay, drinking water, and cancer clusters to over reliance on nuclear and fossil fuels, the stakes are huge. Clean water, clean energy, and a clean economy are second to none.”

To learn more, volunteer, or donate, please visit Clean Water Action New Jersey’s website at www.cleanwateraction.org/njef.

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Clean Ocean Action: Making Waves to Save our Seas

Clean Ocean Action (COA) was formed in 1984 to investigate the sources, effects, and solutions of ocean pollution. COA works to protect waterways using science, law, research, education, and citizen action.

The mission of COA is to improve the degraded water qualities of the ocean off the New Jersey/New York coast. An active, grassroots environmental organization for over thirty years, COA is, in a way, the “parent” organization of over 125 boating, business, community, conservation, diving, environmental, fishing, religious, service, student, surfing, and women’s groups. Together, they work to clean up and protect the waters of



Holly Turner-Morgan

Volunteers at a Clean Ocean Action Beach Sweeps event at Ideal Beach in Middletown.

the New York bight.

A recent and unexpected victory for COA came during the summer of 2014, when the Rutgers Ocean Seismic Study off the New Jersey Coast was postponed to next summer. The controversial study, which sends seismic blasts into the ocean floor, with possible harm to marine life, was halted due to equipment malfunctions, but that was good news for organizations such as COA. Executive Director Cindy Zipf said, "It is a victory for marine life this summer, and for the state of New Jersey and thousands of citizens that have rallied to their defense... now time is on our side and we will demand that the permitting process have robust congressional and state oversight and ample time for public review. We, the people, will be prepared and organized to advocate on behalf of New Jersey marine life to stop this dangerous experiment."

COA's bi-annual Beach Sweeps is one of the longest running clean-up events in the United States and perhaps worldwide. In 1985, the first Beach Sweep was held at Sandy Hook with only seventy-five volunteers. Fast forward to 2014, where the Beach Sweeps now take place not only along New Jersey's coastline but also along inland waterways such as lakes and rivers. Each piece of debris removed from all locations is logged from every Beach Sweep. Individual volunteers along with school and community groups comprise the

total of over 101,000 volunteers who have participated in the Beach Sweeps, with over 5.19 million pieces of debris removed from New Jersey beaches. The annual Beach Sweeps are held every April and October.

COA supports such initiatives as New Jersey's Artificial Reef Program, President Obama's Ocean Policy Task Force, the Clean Ocean Zone, efforts to improve water quality related laws and policies, and increasing awareness of non-point source pollution. In addition, COA offers educational programs including the Student Summit, Student Ocean Advocates, Barnegat Bay Buddy Challenge, and Wreck Pond Pals, as well as topical educational presentations.

COA's leadership is excited to announce its newest initiative, the Municipal Blue Star Program. Launched in September 2014, any municipality registered or certified with Sustainable New Jersey is eligible to work toward a Blue Star Award by reducing stormwater pollution and improving water quality. "Blue Star combines the visionary Sustainable New Jersey Program with COA's focus on water quality protection," said Zipf. "It will help communities become leaders in environmental stewardship, and ensure the vitality of a clean coastal ecosystem and economy." COA hopes

that municipal leaders, Green Team members, environmental groups, and Sustainability and Clean Community Program Managers will get involved in the Municipal Blue Star Program to help improve and protect local water quality.

To learn more about the Beach Sweeps, please visit www.cleanoceanaction.org/index.php?id=aboutbeachsweeps.

To volunteer, donate, or get involved, visit www.cleanoceanaction.org/index.php?id=126.

Clean Ocean Action

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Alliance for a Living Ocean: Managing Water from "The Raindrop to the Ocean"

The mission of the Alliance for a Living Ocean (ALO) is to promote and maintain clean water and a healthy coastal environment through education, research, and active participation. Based on Long Beach Island, the organization works with the LBI community. "This keeps us connected and in tune with the issues and people of our home," said

continued on page 54



Kyle Gronostajski

Seining at a "Sea Critter Roundup" event on Long Beach Island—one of the many programs offered by the Alliance for a Living Ocean.

Executive Director Kyle Gronostajski.

ALO was founded in 1987 after a fifty-mile garbage slick, including medical waste, loomed off the coast of New Jersey. A group of concerned citizens led by Karen Kiss, Ken Smith, and John Woodland formed with the goals of identifying the source of the ocean pollution and focusing public attention on the problem of ocean dumping.

Over the years, ALO has been instrumental in raising awareness through its Hands Across the Beach campaign, Earth Day cleanups, and Adopt a Beach campaigns, as well as taking a leading role in passing the Clean Water Enforcement Act and in closing the Fresh Kills landfill. ALO has received numerous awards for their environmental efforts, including the 1999 Governor’s Award for the Environment.

Through educational programs, local activities, and promoting legislative action, ALO has focused on the issues of ocean dumping, plastics recycling, non-source point pollution, and opposing a natural gas pipeline along New Jersey.

2014 marks the sixth year for ALO’s Long Beach Island Longboard Classic surf contest, which raises funds to support the organization’s

missions and educational programs. Gronostajski said that another goal reached in 2014 was increasing the number of partners that ALO collaborates with, which results in the ability to provide more education and outreach programs to the public.

To join the Alliance for a Living Ocean as a member, volunteer, or donate, visit www.livingocean.org/join.htm.

Alliance for a Living Ocean

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Barnegat Bay, a brackish extension of the Atlantic Ocean, runs along the coast of Ocean County for approximately forty-two miles. The two barrier islands along the bay begin in Point Pleasant Beach and run south through Long Beach Island.

The bay’s ecosystem has struggled to survive over the years as a result of both human and natural influences. As such, the two important environmental organizations that follow focus exclusively on the bay and its resources.

ReClam The Bay: Promoting Environmental Involvement

Established in 2005, ReClam the Bay (RCB) is dedicated to providing awareness and education about the environmental benefit of shellfish in the Barnegat Bay ecosystem. What is unique about RCB is that it provides volunteers with hands-on experiences to help repopulate the Barnegat Bay estuary with shellfish, including growing and maintaining millions of clams and oysters.

RCB’s mission is to involve the general public in their campaign so that they will understand that the quality of water in the bay ecosystem (including the coastal bay and its watersheds), and the quality of the shellfish they eat, are their responsibility. By helping with the care, feeding, and life cycle of the shellfish, citizens can see firsthand how important these clams and oysters are to the bay environment.

“We enable people to participate in caring for about one million shellfish each year. We then release the shellfish into Barnegat Bay,” said Rick Bushnell, president of RCB. “By learning how to care for the tiny animals, they learn how to care for the bay. Since the ‘babies’ that volunteers raised are in the bay, people want to change their behavior to improve the habitat for their babies.”

RCB works closely with the Barnegat Bay Shellfish Restoration Program (BBSRP), which was established by the Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Ocean County. Hands-on volunteers, with the BBSRP and RCB, build and maintain clam nurseries to rear baby clams that will eventually repopulate the bay. Volunteers attend many hours of training so that they are aware of what they need to do to properly care for the baby shellfish.

Bushnell explained RCB strives to reach and teach as many people as possible. “We do that by providing education at the eight shellfish nurseries located all around the forty mile long Barnegat Bay, a variety of scheduled education sessions, and fairs and festivals throughout the summer. In the winter, we reach into



ReClam The Bay enables the public to participate in caring for about one million shellfish each year, which are then released into Barnegat Bay.

the schools with a program called “Shellfish in the Classroom” and participate in after school programs. We are still in our 2014 season but we are on track to meet or exceed our goal of reaching ten thousand people,” he said.

A goal for 2015 is to put a “living shoreline” program in place on Mordecai Island, just off Beach Haven. Bushnell explained, “The project uses shellfish to create a more resilient shoreline and helps everyone to understand how nature can be used to protect our environment, if we help bring nature back to what it was.”

RCB also hopes for increased involvement by homeowners around the bay with helping manage rain-water runoff and planting native plants. “These changes in behavior will reduce the amount of nitrogen going into the bay. The biggest single

problem is too much nitrogen, which overstimulates the growth of algae, which, in turn, causes many problems for our baby clams,” he stated.

A wealth of educational information is available on RCB’s website, including videos, articles, and activities for both adults and children. RCB urges all citizens to be stewards of and help care for the natural resources shared by all.

To volunteer, learn more, or donate to ReClam The Bay, visit www.reclamthebay.org.

ReClam The Bay

Headquarters: Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Ocean County, 1623 Whitesville Road, Toms River, NJ 08755 (732) 349-1152

www.reclamthebay.org

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Save Barnegat Bay: Restoring and Protecting the Bay

Save Barnegat Bay (SBB) is proud to be a strong and independent voice for Barnegat Bay, which is a natural, recreational, and economical resource for the Jersey Shore.

Founded in 1971 as the Ocean County chapter of the Izaak Walton League of America to stop the development of Herring Point in Brick Township (also known as the “F Cove”), the organization has evolved into one that provides educational programs and advocacy campaigns involving over 1,500 members.

Key missions of SBB include conserving undeveloped natural land and clean water throughout the Barnegat Bay watershed. By objecting to developmental proposals and using funding from Green Acres and other sources to purchase protected, natural open space land, SBB’s efforts have resulted in preserving the natural habitats for plant and animal life who call the watershed home.

Taking a leadership role in advocating the creation of the Ocean County Natural Lands Trust Fund, SBB frequently works closely with other environmental groups and governmental agencies, both at the Jersey Shore and nationwide. SBB’s leadership and members helped with several residential and environmental cleanups and still do their part in helping restore the shore after Superstorm Sandy.

SBB’s emphasis on educating the public is evident in many ways, including setting up informational tents at several expos and events in Ocean County. Additionally, in June 2014, the group organized a successful “Rally for the Bay,” which was held at Trader Cove Park in Brick Township to celebrate both the forty-fourth birthday of the organization and to highlight Trader Cove Park and Marina and Mantoloking Bridge County Park. Entertainers included Billy Hector, Eryn Sherwell and The Whiskey Devils, Cindy G and the Rising River Bluegrass Band, Pat Karwin, and Mark Cardinale.

ReClam The Bay Upwellers

Nurseries for baby shellfish are called “upwellers.” Comprised of a shallow tank with “silos,” water enters a baby clam filled silo through its screened bottom, then exits through a flow hole in its side near the top.

The public can view the upwellers with a ReClam The Bay volunteer at various locations throughout the shore. Please call or check the ReClam The Bay website for viewing dates.



Wes Dalzell

MONDAYS

SEASIDE PARK MARINA

Corner of J Street and Central Avenue, Seaside Park
1:00 PM

TUESDAYS

BRANT BEACH YACHT CLUB

59th Street and Bayview, Brant Beach
3:30 PM

WEDNESDAYS

CATTUS ISLAND COUNTY PARK

1170 Cattus Island Boulevard (in front of the county offices), Toms River
10:30 AM

THURSDAYS

SURF CITY YACHT CLUB

9th Street and the bay, Surf City
5:00 PM

FRIDAYS

BARNEGAT LIGHT MUNICIPAL BOAT RAMP

10th and Bayview, Barnegat Light
11:00 AM

MANTOLOKING YACHT CLUB

Bay and Downer Avenues, Mantoloking
10:30 AM

MORRISON’S MARINA

Pelham Avenue and the bay (north dock), Beach Haven
11:00 AM

SATURDAYS

HOLIDAY HARBOR

115 Admiral Way, Waretown
8:00 AM

For more information: ReClam The Bay, Headquarters at: Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Ocean County, 1623 Whitesville Road, Toms River, NJ 08755; (732) 349-1152. Website: www.reclamthebay.org. Facebook: www.facebook.com/reclamthebay. Twitter: @reclamthebay.

continued on page 62