

# Save Barnegat Bay's EcoCenter



Save Barnegat Bay's EcoCenter is located where the bay meets the land in Toms River and is also home to the mouth of the Long Swamp Creek, which feeds the bay with fresh water. The property is open to the public and loved by the surrounding community. It is used regularly by the public for dog walking and enjoyment as it has extensive foot trails and a white, sandy beach.

## Their Mission

The EcoCenter's Mission is to increase science literacy about Barnegat Bay, to model bay-friendly practices and behaviors, to create a community gathering place while maintaining the property, to provide a key opportunity to expand partnerships and increase volunteerism, and to expand programs responsive to the needs of the community.



Honeybee apiaries

Jill Ocone

## Environmental Education Programs

The EcoCenter offers a wide range of environmental education programs focused on the restoration and protection of the bay. The center is a gathering place for meetings, talks, exhibits, and public educational programs, and it further strengthens Save Barnegat Bay's commitment to education, conservation, and environmental stewardship in the community.



Outdoor classroom

Jill Ocone

## Activities

Activities at the EcoCenter include guided nature walks and talks, bird counts, outdoor classroom areas, strategically located educational kiosks, workshops, seminars, hands-on activities, demonstration gardens and low-impact landscaping, kayaking and boat-based educational programming, clean-ups, environmental inventory, water quality testing, and research. Additionally, there is opportunity for restoration in targeted areas on the property including removal of invasive plant species and the replanting of native plants.

*The EcoCenter is in need of the following items: tools (shovels, rakes, screw drivers, a Dremel tool, etc.), waders (kid and adult sizes), craft supplies, paper towels, snacks for volunteers (granola bars, fresh fruit, chips), office supplies, a bike rack, and an outdoor grill. The EcoCenter is located at 117 Haines Road in Toms River.*

For more information, visit [www.savebarnegatbay.org](http://www.savebarnegatbay.org). You can also find them on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook @SaveBarnegatBay. To contact Save Barnegat Bay, call (732) 830-3600 or email: [info@savebarnegatbay.org](mailto:info@savebarnegatbay.org).

piloting a number of free programs for the public both at the EcoCenter and throughout the Barnegat Bay Watershed. This October, Save Barnegat Bay will host its inaugural, three-day conference titled "Charting a Course for Barnegat Bay," which is open to the public. Attendees will have the opportunity to interact directly with representatives from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection while learning about the bay's next chapter as a natural resource for the Jersey Shore and plans for further improving its water quality.

Wenzel recommends that all Jersey Shore residents, especially those who are newer to the watershed area, learn the area's history so that they can fully appreciate their connection to the local environment. "People miss the fundamentals of observation," she said. "Being local is about opening your eyes and ears, knowing your neighbors, and paying attention. Find an old-time local, perhaps the guy down the street with the overgrown yard. These folks know more about your neighborhood and the bay than anyone else."

Wenzel's passion for advocacy, devotion to the ecosystem, and leadership as executive director has undoubtedly been one of the driving forces behind the EcoCenter's substantial growth and the organization's commitment to charting a course for a cleaner Barnegat Bay.

"I don't walk away when I see something I can fix. A healthy bay is what every single person living at or visiting the Jersey Shore deserves," she said. ♦

*Save Barnegat Bay is a registered, community-based nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization with a record of accomplishment. Many members and donors generously support the work of the organization with their time, and the group provides flexibility and a strong foundation from which to grow. Volunteers and interns are always welcome. If you are interested in volunteering, visit [www.savebarnegatbay.org/participate](http://www.savebarnegatbay.org/participate).*

*Save Barnegat Bay accepts donations to their general fund and as tribute or memorial gifts. To make a donation, visit [www.savebarnegatbay.org/donate](http://www.savebarnegatbay.org/donate).*