

COASTtoday

A Newsletter from the New Jersey Sea Grant Consortium

State of the Shore Media Event Makes Biggest Splash Ever



Speakers at the State of the Shore Media Event included left to right: Dr. Jon Miller of Stevens Institute of Technology, Coastal Processes Specialist, New Jersey Sea Grant Extension Program; Grace Hanlon, Executive Director, New Jersey Division of Travel and Tourism; and Irene Kropp, Deputy Commissioner, New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.

The New Jersey Sea Grant Consortium (NJS GC) hosted its 9th annual State of the Shore Media Event on May 26th on Sandy Hook. The event traditionally takes place prior to the Memorial Day weekend and showcases the condition of New Jersey's beaches for the coming summer season. This year's event received unprecedented media coverage and featured remarks from various government officials including New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Deputy Commissioner Irene Kropp and Executive Director of New Jersey Travel and Tourism Grace Hanlon.

Anchoring the event was the *State of the Shore Report*, delivered by Dr. Jon Miller, NJS GC's Extension Program Coastal Processes Specialist. Dr. Miller told attendees that New Jersey's beaches are in good shape despite the long, harsh winter season.

Gathered attendees also heard comments from Dr. Stan Hales of the Barnegat Bay Partnership (BBP) and

Dr. Michael Peek of William Paterson University. Dr. Hales' comments focused on a BBP initiative to monitor New Jersey's wetlands, while Dr. Peek focused on how his NJS GC-funded research will support the dune systems on New Jersey beaches that help to protect coastal property.

Also announced were the winners of the New Jersey's Top Ten Beaches Survey that asks New Jersey residents and visitors to vote for their favorite Jersey Shore beach. The survey, now in its 4th year, named The Wildwoods (which combines Wildwood, North Wildwood and Wildwood Crest as one entry) as New Jersey's top beach choice. The top ten list was rounded out by Long Beach Island, Ocean City, Sea Isle City, Cape May, Asbury Park, Seaside Heights, Island Beach State Park, Cape May Point, and Sandy Hook. The 2011 winners were announced by Grace Hanlon and Dr. Stewart Farrell, Director of the Richard Stockton College Coastal Research Center, whose research is a key component in the ranking of the beaches.



EXTENSION

Rain Garden Projects Plant Seeds of Stewardship in All Ages

The NJSJC Water Resources Agents, Amy Boyajian and Jillian Thompson, recently worked with their colleagues from the NJSJC Extension Program and Rutgers Cooperative Extension Water Resources Program to promote the benefits of rain gardens to stakeholders of all ages.



This spring Amy and Jillian spent time teaching third graders at Ethel Jacobsen Elementary School on Long Beach Island all about stormwater management. Using the “Stormwater Management in Your School Yard” educational program, the students learned about stormwater and how it can be managed through the use of rain barrels and rain gardens. Two demonstration rain gardens, both designed to attract butterflies and birds, were installed on the school’s grounds by the Ethel Jacobsen Elementary School’s faculty, staff, and students, with guidance from the Water Resources Program team. The materials for the rain gardens were provided through a Go Green grant the school received from the OceanFirst Foundation. The newly installed rain gardens not only add aesthetically pleasing gardens to the existing landscape, but also capture stormwater runoff from the school’s rooftop before it enters the nearby Barnegat Bay. For more information about rain gardens and the “Stormwater Management in Your School Yard” youth education program, contact Amy Boyajian at boyajian@envsci.rutgers.edu or Jillian Thompson at jthompson@envsci.rutgers.edu.

In late June, the NJSJC Extension Program took the team lead to work with the Rutgers Cooperative Extension Water Resources Program (RCEWRP)

to implement a stormwater management project at Morgan Marina located in Parlin. Morgan Marina, a designated New Jersey Clean Marina, has a steep hill on its property that is slowly eroding and in need of stabilization to prevent the sediment from entering nearby Cheesequake Creek. NJSJC’s Marine Recreation Extension Agent Michael Danko became aware of the problem earlier this year during a Clean Marina visit and recognized it as a unique opportunity to put the knowledge and practices of the Water Resources Program to use at a waterfront business. After several visits to the site over the past few months, staff from both organizations along with the marina owners developed a plan to stabilize the hill by planting native trees, bushes, grasses and flowering plants on top of the hill and along the slope in an effort to attempt to stabilize the sediment and prevent further erosion.

NJSJC staff and RCEWRP staff and student interns with assistance from Morgan Marina staff sowed close to 400 plants including Eastern Red Cedar, Beach Plum, Seaside Goldenrod, and Indian Grass, whose root system can extend up to eight feet to help stabilize the sediment on the hillside. The flowering bushes and plants will also help to add aesthetic value to the project. Funding for this project was provided by the NJSJC, Rutgers, and the *I BOAT NJ* Program. The Water Resources Program team anticipates the plants will flower this summer and the vegetation will be well established before winter.



EDUCATION

Sandy Hook Groups Team Up for Geoscience Project

The NJSJC, Rutgers University, Brookdale Community College, the National Park Service and the Sandy Hook Foundation have received funding from the National Science Foundation to conduct an education project for school-aged children based on several research studies being conducted on Sandy Hook. The partnership grant allowed the team of research scientists, science educators and supporters of science-based conservation to work together to develop curricula that engage middle school students and their teachers in these real-world studies that seek to increase understanding of the popular National Recreation Area. The end-product Geoscience program will emphasize inquiry-based learning, integrated science topics and technology.

The program is being developed and piloted in partnership with teachers and administrators from the Red Bank Middle School. As part of this process, 22 district teachers and administrators participated in a four-day training institute at the NJSJC’s Sandy Hook headquarters in mid June. This intensive workshop, planned and facilitated by marine educators from the Consortium and Rutgers University, paired teachers with research scientists who shared their experience and expertise on topics from sea level

rise and climate change to the use of advanced technology in mapping coastal habitats. The group also worked together daily to develop lesson plans and teaching modules for future classroom use. Once they are finalized, these new teaching modules will be made available to other schools and educational settings throughout the New York/New Jersey metropolitan area including after-school programs and education programs currently being offered to the public on Sandy Hook.



Danko Named to Management Position



MICHAEL DANKO

The New Jersey Sea Grant Consortium has appointed Michael Danko as Assistant Director of its Extension Program. Danko is the organization's marine recreation agent for fishing and boating and has been an integral part of the Consortium's Extension Program for nearly 8 years.

Mike has risen through the ranks at the Consortium since 1993. During that time, he served as station biologist in charge of education projects and operated the organization's research vessel, managing the now defunct Marine Operations division. He has received numerous awards and accolades for his work with the recreational boating and fishing industries, and earned the respect of his colleagues, peers and project partners.

Mike will continue to operate the Marine Recreation Extension Program he has grown over the years but will now also assume broader responsibilities in the overall management and growth of the Extension Program.



The Stew Tweed Fisheries and Aquaculture Scholarships were presented by Congressman Frank Pallone (6th District) to the 2011 recipients at a special ceremony during this year's Ocean Fun Days event on Sandy Hook. Pictured left to right: Congressman Frank Pallone; graduate student recipient Eric Lindsay, NJSGC Executive Director Claire Antonucci, Stew Tweed's daughter Pattie Pantelione, a teacher at Middle Township High School, who accepted the award for high school recipient William Schroer, Stew's wife Gail Tweed and, in front, granddaughters Jordan and Katie Pantelione.

Top Ten Beaches Project Takes Top Honors



The New Jersey Top Ten Beaches project received a coveted Governor's Tourism Award during a special ceremony at the 2011

Governor's Conference on Tourism at Trump Marina in Atlantic City.

NJSGC Communications Director Kim Kosko and Dr. Stewart Farrell, Director of the Coastal Research Center at Richard Stockton College accepted the Governor's Top Honor Tourism Award for Excellence for Special Promotions presented by Grace Hanlon, Executive Director of the New Jersey Division of Travel

and Tourism and Joann DeVescio, President of the New Jersey Travel Industry Association. Designed four years ago to promote stewardship and pride in New Jersey's beaches, the annual NJTTB survey has since become a highly competitive but friendly event among New Jersey beachgoers and the tourism community.

"We're thrilled this project has become such an annual favorite with the public. We hope it continues to generate interest and serve its primary purpose, which is to create a positive image and sense of responsibility toward the Jersey Shore and remind people what an important natural and economic treasure our coastal resources are," said Kosko.

Ocean Fun Days Draws Record Crowds

This year's *Ocean Fun Days*, NJSGC's annual family-oriented event with an eco-friendly focus was an unprecedented success with record high attendance. For the eighth consecutive year, *Ocean Fun Days* offered two days of free family fun on Saturday May 21st at Island Beach State Park and Sunday May 22nd at Sandy Hook that featured special displays, tours and things to do that celebrated the wonders of the Jersey Shore.

The event was presented by New Jersey Natural Gas, in partnership with NJSGC, the Asbury Park Press, the New Jersey

Department of Environmental Protection, the New Jersey Division of Parks and Forestry and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Nearly 50 exhibitors, more than ever before, participated, offering hands-on exhibits, classes, nature tours and children's activities. Visitors learned first-hand from marine scientists, researchers and environmentalists how to conserve energy and preserve our coastal resources.



NJ Sea Grant Goes Under the Microscope

The National Sea Grant Program Site Review team included, from left: Art Gold, Director, Region 1 National Water Quality Program, University of Rhode Island; Linda Duguay, Director, University of Southern California Sea Grant Program; Dorn Carlson (SRT Chair), NJSG Program Officer, National Sea Grant Office; Diane Detroye, Director, NASA Space Grant; and John Woeste (SRT Vice Chair), Chair, National Sea Grant Advisory Board.



Once every four years, the National Sea Grant Program requires that a site review team visit each state Sea Grant Program to hear about its research, education and extension efforts and discuss broad issues related to program management and organization, stakeholder engagement, and collaborative network/NOAA activities. The team members then compare notes and produce a site visit report that is eventually transmitted to the National Sea Grant Office (NSGO) and shared with the Sea Grant Program under review.

The NJSGC was recently visited by a panel of five scientists and managers representing the National Sea Grant Office, other Sea Grant Programs and other government agencies. NJSGC's

Executive Director Claire Antonucci believes the recent review was a success. "One of the things that helped make a favorable impression on the review panel was the participation of our Board of Trustees and the enthusiasm and commitment of the many stakeholders who participated in panel discussions about some of the program's showcase projects. That support was extremely gratifying and greatly appreciated."

The final review team report is expected in about six weeks. While there is no official score or rating involved the program is evaluated to make sure it's meeting the NSGO programmatic standards and requirements.

Consortium Recruits Taghon for Research Project Development

The New Jersey Sea Grant Consortium recently welcomed Dr. Gary Taghon on board as a part-time consultant to help develop additional research projects beyond those funded through the organization's Sea Grant research program and to seek out additional projects and partnerships for NJSGC and its membership.

Dr. Taghon, who received his Ph.D. from the University of Washington is no stranger to the Sea Grant Program. In the late 1990s, Taghon was Principal Investigator on a New Jersey Sea Grant Funded Project, *Comparison of growth rates and diets of Fundulus heteroclitus, and benthic invertebrate community succession, in restored and reference marshes.*



DR. GARY TAGHON

Taghon, who attended the recent National Sea Grant Office Site Review visit, has already begun developing an inventory of research occurring at NJSGC member institutions. This will enable him to create a database of researchers, projects and collaborations that can be used in expanding the search for funding opportunities. Taghon's first meeting with NJSGC member New Jersey Institute of Technology provided a lot of positive researcher feedback and another meeting was held recently with the NOAA/National Marine Fisheries Service at Sandy Hook.

Taghon who is currently a Professor at the Rutgers University Institute of Marine Sciences plans to spend several days a month at the NJSGC Sandy Hook facility.