



RiverCurrents

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www.gehwa.org

Issue 32

Up Close & Personal With Osprey

Many thanks to Jane Galetto from Citizens United to Protect the Maurice River and Its Tributaries, Inc. (CU) for presenting a photo essay at GEHWA's March members' meeting about the maturation of osprey from "eggs to flight". Jane presented highlights of the marvels of these 10 weeks of growth and used photographs taken from man-made osprey nests that dot the Maurice River corridor. Jane has been leading the management of a Maurice River osprey colony since 1985.

If you were unable to attend the March meeting, you can learn about osprey and see the "eggs to flight" slide show on CU's website. Just go to www.cumauriceriver.org/pages/Osprey.html.

"Day at the Bay" Festival Coming Soon

More details are in as the June 13th "Day at the Bay" festival gets closer. Atlantic County, Somers Point, and other organizers want to showcase the area and have organized a day filled with water-related activities and entertainment. Events to be held at Kennedy Park in Somers Point will start at 8AM and include crew team competitions, a masters crew competition, catamaran and lifeguard races, an unusual kayak water rally, and all-day entertainment. In addition, the US Coast Guard plans a demonstration and a flyover of the NJ Air National Guard's 177th Fighter Wing is planned. Interested in sponsoring an event or just want more information? Call (609) 343-2162.

Governor Visits South Jersey

Governor McGreevey held a press-free environmental meeting in Galloway Township in February with about 30 regional people participating. The Governor's main agenda seemed to be building support for the regulatory and enforcement changes he is proposing to protect New Jersey residents and the environment. A handout was distributed which addressed such topics as reducing toxic mercury emissions, ensuring that polluters pay for environmental damage, clean air, and safe drinking water. The Governor answered many environmentally-related questions ranging from stormwater management and water quality, to ATV issues. Fred Akers and Belinda Irizarry represented GEHWA and the Great Egg Harbor River Council at this meeting and were glad to have a chance to both meet and hear the Governor's environmental agenda.

It Takes
2 million algae
...to feed 2,000
mayfly nymphs
...to feed 200
minnows
...to feed 20 bass
...to feed 2 pickerel
...to feed 1 osprey.
An osprey catches
6 lbs. of fish daily
to feed its family.

New Jersey Farmers Get Aid to Protect Waterways

Recognizing the difficulty facing farmers to pay for restoration and protection of stream banks, the State of New Jersey and the US Department of Agriculture teamed up together to create a dedicated fund of \$100 million called the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program. This program will pay farmers to restore streamside buffers to protect waterways and also pay annual rental fees while the land remains protected. The program is voluntary; however, with the federal and state governments picking up the tab, many of our waterways can be protected through reduced erosion and the flow of nonpoint source pollution. This is another feather in the McGreevey administration's cap to protect the quality of our rivers and streams.

**Attn: Middle School and High School
Science and Social Studies Teachers**
Pinelands Summer Teacher Institute is
planned for July 12-16, 2004. Call (609)
894-8000 for details.

Enforcement From the Air

Massachusetts is the first state in the nation to use aerial photographs and photo-analysis software, similar to the sort used by the Defense Department to spot enemy targets, to spot illegal construction in wetlands. The software and aeriels work together to enable state land use regulators to have a birds-eye view of the land enabling them to compare aeriels from previous years with current ones. This technique has changed the land use regulation effort since the state is able to do the primary field work from the air – and their desks. This technology is far more reliable and the photographs depicting the violations are very clear to a jury, making it easy to see what has been done. Once this technique was employed, MA Department of Environmental Protection discovered that more than 3,000 locations had been filled between 1991 and 2001, resulting in a net loss of more than 700 acres of wetlands that

they previously were unaware of, with at least half of those locations involving illegal actions.

By being the first to digitize its aerial maps and link them to a computer database for wetlands protection, Massachusetts has significantly raised the level of detection and lowered the cost of enforcement. Not only is Massachusetts winning its court battles with this effort, it is sending a message to individuals and businesses that bypass state regulations that the state can see what is on their property.

This technique has far reaching implications for other states and hopefully one that NJDEP will consider. If NJDEP does not move in this direction, the new technology has made it possible for environmental watchdogs to monitor compliance.

Remember:

If you become aware of an environmental incident, call the NJDEP's 24-hour, toll-free hotline which is 1-877-WARN-DEP

Bridge in Hamilton Township Will Be Restored

At a recent town meeting, Hamilton Township agreed to support the rehabilitation of the bridge located in Mays Landing behind the Joseph Shaner Memorial School that crosses Babcock Creek. Recognizing the important role this bridge plays in the County's bike path and the access it provides to nearby Underhill Park, the Township and the County will work together to restore the bridge that was closed several years ago due to its unsafe condition.

GEHWA applauds Hamilton Township and Atlantic County for their decision and supports their efforts to continue the bike path that is planned to eventually extend to Buena Vista Township. Hopefully, the Township and the County will reach a similar conclusion on the Weymouth Furnace Bridge and recognize the importance of that bridge to the historic and archeological district and to the Great Egg Harbor River.

Vernal Pools Get Attention

What's a vernal pool or pond? Did you ever notice a pool of water in the middle of a wooded area or meadow that didn't have any noticeable water source? That is usually a vernal pool – it's a wetland that occurs in a confined area and has no obvious outflow. The size of these pools range from about 10 square feet to several acres and they contain no permanent fish. Generally the pools last just a few months from between March and September and then they dry up.

What makes these areas so special is that these are the places where fogs and salamanders breed because their eggs and young can survive more readily when no fish are present. They are also foraging habitat for turtles, birds, snakes and mammals, not to mention that they can be habitat for rare plants, dragonflies and fairy shrimp. It is estimated that about 500 total species inhabit vernal pools annually.

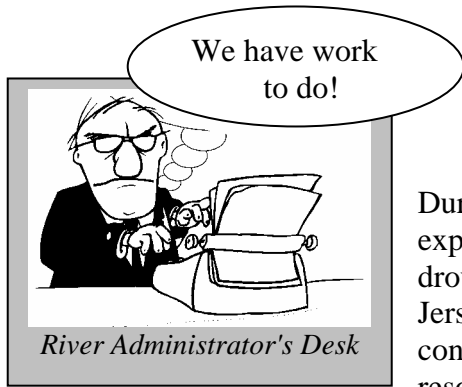
Finally recognizing the importance of these areas, the NJDEP under the Endangered and Nongame Species Program (ENSP) is conducting a Vernal Pool Survey to map vernal pools and report on the species present in them. The surveys rely on volunteers, so if you are interested in helping, call (908) 735-8975 or visit the ENSP website at <http://www.state.nj.us/dep/fgw/ensp/vernalpool.htm>

The South Jersey Land Trust Helps South Jersey Communities

Recognizing the need for increased land protection in the rapidly developing southern New Jersey area, a group of concerned South Jersey residents organized themselves and formed the South Jersey Land Trust (SJLT) in 1990. This volunteer group has successfully protected more than 1,125 acres and their efforts are continuing. In the last four years, the SJLT has joined forces with the NJ Conservation Foundation and the Green Acres Program to target important areas that need protection.

To date, over 500 acres of municipal open space that provide critical wildlife habitat and stream corridor protection have been preserved by SJLT, as well as opportunities for hiking, wildlife observation and other passive recreation activities. Over 155 acres of farmland have also been protected by SJLT.

The success stories of the South Jersey Land Trust continue to grow and the impact has been noticed in the Great Egg Harbor River watershed with 325 acres in Hamilton Township being protected through conservation easement. If you have an interest in getting involved or know of a special place in need of preservation, please contact SJLT at 856-589-2049.



Will Collecting Rain Keep The Well From Running Dry?

By: Fred Akers

During the drought of 2002, the Great Egg Harbor River and other local rivers experienced the lowest stream flow levels in recorded history. But since the drought of 2002 was not the most severe drought in recorded history, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) is now very concerned that the human consumption or demand for our groundwater resources is exceeding supply, creating a water supply deficit.

The public water supply is a "Public Trust Resource" which belongs to everyone, and it is the job of the NJDEP to protect both the quality and quantity of this resource for current and future beneficiaries. The McGreevey administration has taken a very pro-active anti-sprawl approach to achieve the goal of sustainable drinking water statewide, and the building moratorium here in Atlantic County during the 2002 drought (Executive Order 32) was just the beginning of a very "precautionary" approach to well water supply protection here in Atlantic County and Southern NJ.

As a result of Executive Order 32, the NJDEP published a report last September, *The Status of the Water Supply of Southeastern New Jersey*, that details the state's water supply concerns and calls for specific actions to address the water supply deficit. Based on a pattern of decreasing ground water levels and salt water intrusion, the report concludes that the area will continue to experience stream flow depletion and salt water intrusion, and that additional development in the region will make these issues worse and increase the risk to water quality.

One of the main problems identified in this report is the fact that a significant amount of our water usage is a "depletive" use, referring to the fact that we pump millions of gallons of water out of the ground every day, use it once, then send it out to the ocean. This depletes our water supply, with little or no opportunity for reuse or recharging water back into the ground. The long term solutions to this situation will involve limiting new water allocations until alternative sources, beneficial reuse, and mandatory conservation measures, are put into effect.

One important area that deserves special attention is to address the question of how much new water in the form of rain and snow (stormwater) actually gets into the ground and becomes an addition to our well water supply. This is called aquifer recharge, and requires large surface areas of loose (un-compacted) soils that can absorb or "infiltrate" large quantities of new stormwater into the groundwater. The quality of the water that gets infiltrated is critical to clean drinking water, and it is also critical to prevent the loose ground from getting clogged up and preventing good infiltration.

While constructing more and more buildings with roofs and paving more and more parking lots and roads is often viewed as an economic necessity and a right of property ownership, it is also a fact that these activities are creating more and more "impervious" surfaces that new rainwater cannot get through to get into the ground, which can limit the water supply to support all this ever increasing development. These impervious surfaces not only block off the ability of rainwater to recharge aquifers where it falls, but they also channel new rainwater into rivers and streams, allowing our potential drinking water to wash away into the sea. The washing off of all the impervious surfaces exposes this water to chemical and bacterial contamination from non-point source pollutants, which not only is impacting the quality of our surface waters, but can also pollute our groundwater if contaminants find their way underground. And excessive stormwater runoff from impervious surfaces can cause flooding and water quality degradation from erosion and loss of aquatic habitat.

To strongly address the water issues related to stormwater for both water quality and recharge, the NJDEP issued new stormwater regulations for municipalities on February 2nd of this year. These new rules create the most comprehensive state stormwater program in the country, and will establish not only a stormwater discharge permit system, but will also set very detailed stormwater management practices for municipalities,

institutions, and road agencies. These best management practices, or BMPs, will not only control the discharge of stormwater and protect water quality, but they will also require that rainwater be safely collected and recharged to groundwater, in recognition of the valuable natural resource that it is.

The primary BMP to promote the recharge of stormwater will be to engineer and maintain measurable and adequate rates of infiltration for every development site. While the stormwater basins and management practices of the past focused on retention and detention to prevent flooding, very few systems were designed for recharge, and very few have been adequately cleaned and maintained to keep up good infiltration rates. Many of the aging basins throughout the watershed are clogged and constantly full, and over flow during even minor rainfalls, defeating their designed purpose in the first place.

I have spoken with a number of residents in the watershed who thought that the basins that they have seen around were merely landscaping features for developments, and did not realize that they were required as part of a stormwater management plan with specific performance requirements to meet state and federal Clean Water Act requirements. The McGreevey Administration's new stormwater rules have a number of specific and technical requirements, some of which will require public education about the BMPs and the establishment of a host of new ordinances designed to stop the flow of surface contaminates at the source.

GEHWA will be working with the state, county, municipalities and the public through the Great Egg Harbor River Council, environmental commissions, municipal boards, and citizens groups to help provide information on the new rules and assist with the development and implementation of stormwater management plans in the watershed. We are now offering municipalities and agencies a free stormwater CD with over 60 files downloaded from the NJDEP stormwater web site (<http://www.nj.gov/dep/stormwater/>), including the new Best Management Practices Manual. If you would like a copy mailed to you, please either call 856-697-6114, or email me at akers@gowebway.com.

Telephone Numbers to Remember

Great Egg Harbor Watershed Association

P. O. Box 900; Hammonton, NJ 08037
e-mail address: gehwa.gehwa@verizon.net
Internet address: www.gehwa.org

Julie Akers, President (856) 697-6114
Belinda Irizarry, Coordinator; (609) 567-4762

Great Egg Harbor River Administrator

Fred Akers, (856)-697-6114;
Akers@gowebway.com

National Park Service

Mary Vavra (215) 597-9175;
mary_vavra@nps.gov

NJDEP Watershed Management Office

Adriana Calle (609) 777-0586

Atlantic County Department of Planning

Bob Lindaw (609) 645-5898

NJDEP Hotline - 1- 877-WARN DEP

US Army Corps of Engineers

(215) 656-6725

NJDEP Regulatory Office for Atlantic Co.

(609) 292-8262

NJDEP Enforcement Officer

[Kevin Brown \(732\) 255-0787](mailto:Kevin.Brown@dep.state.nj.gov)

NJ Receives Funding to Study Economic Value of Ecosystems

Recognizing the importance of natural ecosystems, the Geraldine R. Dodge and the William Penn Foundations are financially supporting a study to assess the economic value of services provided by the state's natural ecosystems. This study will be among the first in the US to assess the value of the major ecosystems of an entire state and when complete, the analysis will include a comprehensive report on the value of New Jersey's natural capital by land type and ecosystem service, including maps showing the level of that value at varying spatial scales.

It is anticipated that once the services provided by the state's ecosystem are translated into economic terms, it will be less difficult for decision-makers to weigh those values against the potential values of growth and development and what it might cost to replace those services. When completed, the natural resource assessment's findings are expected to become an important reference point in land use debates and related policy decisions at the state and local levels. The assessment will improve the DEP's ability to make economically sound decisions on the levels of natural resource damage assessments.

Marine Mammal Stranding Center Training Seminar

The Marine Mammal Stranding Center (MMSC) attained its 25-year anniversary this year. This milestone has brought the realization that in order to help these animals on so many different levels, it is imperative for the Center to continue to carry on these important operations. This work not only helps each individual animal, it aids marine mammals and sea turtles species as a whole.

There are over 1,500 miles of coastal waterways in New Jersey, with any of these waterways having the possibility of a marine mammal or sea turtle stranding occur. Some of these areas are very remote and it often takes the staff of the MMSC several hours to reach an animal that has beached. While their present small corps of trained volunteers are always willing, because

of jobs or other responsibilities they are not always able to respond to an animal or stay with the animal until help can arrive on the scene. There is a need for many more volunteers with flexible schedules and additional resources.

Plans are currently underway to conduct a training seminar for volunteers at the Atlantic County Utilities Authority Recycling Center. The Great Egg Harbor Watershed Association will be coordinating this event which will take place in the early part of June. Interested participants must be at least 18 years old and the workshop would like to target police officers, firefighters, municipal workers and coastal residents. For more information, or to register, please contact Sheila Dean or Bob Schoelkopf of the MMSC at (609) 266-0538

Folsom Environmental Commission Reaches Out to Residents

The Folsom Environmental Commission mailed its first environmental information packet to all Folsom residents in March 2004. The packet included a newsletter highlighting the Commission's annual activities, recycling information and tips, and information on Folsom's inclusion in the Great Egg Harbor Watershed boundary. The packet also included a septic system care brochure, the FEC's storm drain stenciling program and recycling sticker reminders. Residents were encouraged to become new members to support the Commission's activities.

Calendar of Events

Saturday, April 17th

Cape May County Earth Day Celebration
10AM-3PM; Cape May Zoo; Route 9
Cape May Courthouse (609) 465-9026

Saturday, April 24th

Washington Township Earth Day Celebration
10AM – 4PM; Washington Twp. Lake Park; Greentree Road; Call (856) 881-9540 for info.

Saturday, April 24th

Bonnet Island Cleanup
The Alliance for a Living Ocean is sponsoring a Cleanup on the Bonnet Island portion of the Edwin B. Forsythe Wildlife Refuge; Rte 72 in Stafford Twp; and the 9th to 12th Street Boat Ramp area in Ship Bottom. Volunteers should meet at The Dutchman's Brauhaus on Bonnet Island in Stafford Twp for free refreshments and to pick up supplies. For more info, call the Alliance at (609) 492-0222. Groups are welcome.

Sunday, April 25th

ACUA Earth Day 2004
10AM – 4PM Haneman Environmental Park
6700 Delilah Road; Egg Harbor Township
(609) 272-6950

Saturday, May 1st

Promoting Community Engagement Around the Environment

Stockton College WaterWatch
9:00AM – Stockton College
Free breakfast, lunch and BBQ dinner
Governor McGreevey and former Governor Florio invited
Contact: Casey at case@waterwatchonline.org

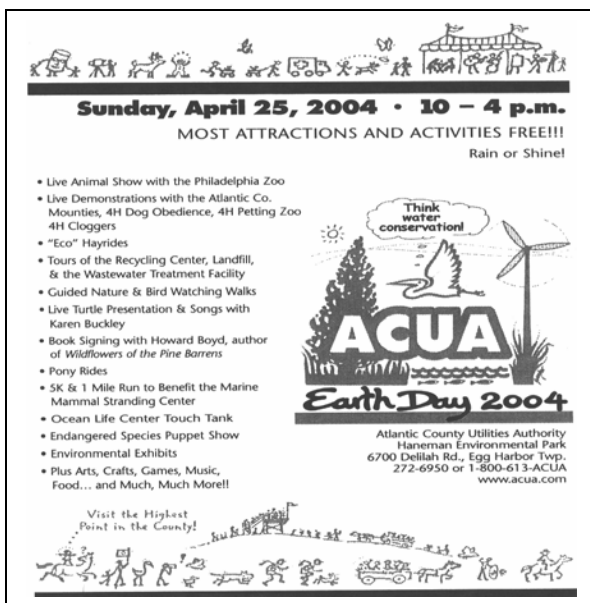
Sunday, June 6th

Gloucester County Waterfest
11AM to 4PM; Scotland Run Park
Clayton Road; Clayton
(856) 881-0845

Sunday, June 13th

Day at the Bay, Somers Point
Call (609) 343-2162.

**** Gloucester Co. Federation of Watersheds** – 4th Thurs. of every month; 7PM; Scotland Run Nature Cntr.
**** Great Egg Harbor NS&R River Council** – 3rd Wednesday of every month; 7PM; Fox Nature Center
**** Great Egg Harbor Watershed Association** – 4th Tuesday every other month; 7PM; Fox Nature Center; Estell Manor Park; Jan/Mar/May/July/Sep/Nov 2004
For more information on events and programs: Call (609) 567-4762; www.gehwa.org or e-mail gehwa.gehwa@verizon.net.



Sunday, April 25, 2004 • 10 – 4 p.m.
MOST ATTRACTIONS AND ACTIVITIES FREE!!!
Rain or Shine!

- Live Animal Show with the Philadelphia Zoo
- Live Demonstrations with the Atlantic Co. Mounties, 4H Dog Obedience, 4H Petting Zoo, 4H Cloggers
- "Eco" Hayrides
- Tours of the Recycling Center, Landfill, & the Wastewater Treatment Facility
- Guided Nature & Bird Watching Walks
- Live Turtle Presentation & Songs with Karen Buckley
- Book Signing with Howard Boyd, author of *Wildflowers of the Pine Barrens*
- Pony Rides
- 5K & 1 Mile Run to Benefit the Marine Mammal Stranding Center
- Ocean Life Center Touch Tank
- Endangered Species Puppet Show
- Environmental Exhibits
- Plus Arts, Crafts, Games, Music, Food... and Much, Much More!!!

Think water conservation!

ACUA
Earth Day 2004

Atlantic County Utilities Authority
Haneman Environmental Park
6700 Delilah Rd., Egg Harbor Twp.
272-6950 or 1-800-613-ACUA
www.acua.com

Visit the Highest Point in the County!

GEHWA Offers Programs for Children

GEHWA is offering children's environmental education programs to schools, scouts, 4-H and children's clubs. There is no charge and each program takes approximately one hour.

For more information on the various programs or to obtain a brochure, please contact Belinda at (609) 567-4762 or email: gehwa.gehwa@verizon.net

Membership Information

Your membership assures our survival as a non-profit advocate for the Great Egg Harbor River and Watershed. Without you, we could not exist. Thanks for your support.

Name/Organization: _____
Street Address: _____
City, State, and Zip: _____
Phone Number: _____ e-mail address: _____

Annual Membership: Individual: \$7; Family: \$15; Supporting: \$20; Patron: \$50; Corporate \$100
_____ Check here if non-profit organization

Please mail this form along with your check to: Great Egg Harbor Watershed Association,
P.O. Box 900; Hammonton, NJ 08037