



## Storm Drain Stenciling Gets Students Involved

On Tuesday, May 11<sup>th</sup>, the Oak Crest High School Science Club lead by Science Club Advisor, Lea Fitzpatrick, participated in a storm drain marking program. The program was lead by Andrew Anderson from the NJ Watershed Ambassador Program Area 15 and Belinda Irizarry, GEHWA Coordinator. Approximately 24 storm drains along Oak Crest Drive off the Black Horse Pike in Hamilton Township were marked. The markers are waterproof disks with a graphic of a fish and the wording “No Dumping, Drain to River” in both English and Spanish.

Before markers were placed on the storm drains, the six Science Club students first prepared the storm drains by brushing off any rust or residues. Along with the markers placement, the students also left storm drain educational information on the doors of local residents. The door hangers were supplied by Kristina Santora of Clean Ocean Action who also joined in on this project. The students also painted an awareness sign

duplicating the storm drain markers and the sign will be installed at the entrance of the development located along Oak Crest Drive. Hamilton Township Environmental Officer, Ingrid Perez, supplied the students with safety vests and logged the location of the storm drain markers for future reference. It was a very hot day, but Mr. Fitzpatrick and the students did a wonderful job!

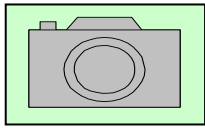


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## Wet Lands!

GEHWA members were entertained at a recent bi-monthly meeting by Bill Nye, the “Science Guy”. Well, Bill wasn’t actually there in person, but his video “Wet Lands” put him right in the Fox Nature Center with Fred Akers and everyone else interested in the purpose and benefits of wetlands. Fred complemented the video by providing a Wetlands 101 course describing Wetlands as “nature’s kidneys” because of their filtering and nutrient processing functions. As children many of us were told that these mosquito-infested swamps needed to be cleared and filled in. Slowly, we are beginning to recognize the value of these long unappreciated environments as havens for animal species, buffers against storms and floods, cleansing agents in the nutrient cycle, storage reservoirs for aquifer recharge, and interesting places to visit and to learn about.

# RiverCurrents



**Take your best shot...it could be a winner!**

The urge to photograph the rich diversity of our nation's National Parks is irresistible. And the next picture you take could win a Grand Prize trip for you and three guests to the park of your choice. So make sure you capture every special moment. Gather your most dramatic, or unusual National Park picture from 2004 (or take some more – there's still time) and send them to the National Parks Pass Experience Your America Photo Contest by January 5, 2005. The 2004 National Parks Pass "Experience Your America" photo contest is being sponsored by the National Park Service and the National Park Foundation with Kodak.

Remember the Great Egg Harbor National Scenic and Recreational River is a unit of the National Park System. A unique photograph of the river and its many outstanding resources can be entered into the contest. For more information on the photo contest; visit [www.nationalparks.org](http://www.nationalparks.org)

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## **Mark Demitroff Makes Front-Page News**

Recent articles in the Courier Post featured Mark Demitroff, a GEHWA Board Member, who has been actively involved in bringing attention to water supply issues and the South Jersey region's historical natural features (spungs, blue holes, and savannas). With financial assistance from GEHWA and the National Park Service, Mark and Dr. Hugh French, a renowned geologist with the University of Ottawa in Ontario, have challenged conventional thinking and are trying to focus attention on South Jersey's decreasing water supply and addressing why many of the natural features have dried up. If you are interested in reading the entire article go to: <http://www.southjerseynews.com/issues/march/m032804a.htm>

## **Water Conservation**

The NJ Department of Environmental Protection traveled to the Mays Landing Library on May 6<sup>th</sup> and invited public comments on a draft report entitled "Status of the Water Supply of Southeastern New Jersey." This draft report represents a change in thinking by NJDEP and provides information that recognizes the State's stewardship responsibilities to protect groundwater resources.

The meeting was well attended by area residents, environmentalists and local officials, all interested in the direction the State will be taking in not only the growth areas of Hamilton, Egg Harbor and Galloway Townships, but in the southeastern area of the state as well. The report is available online at [www.state.nj.us/dep/watershedmgt/hottopics.htm](http://www.state.nj.us/dep/watershedmgt/hottopics.htm).

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## **Estell Manor Gets Dumped On...**

The NJ Department of Environmental Protection pre-empted normal processes and basically forced Estell Manor to accept salty bay dredged material, relieving Stone Harbor from finding a more suitable site for the material taken from their area. NJDEP cited an "urgent" need and allowed approximately 2,000 truck loads of the dredged material to be dumped without providing adequate time for local officials to review plans and make sure that the planning is appropriate and local considerations are included.

Residents and neighbors of the Tuckahoe Turf Farm, which accepted the dredged material in Estell Manor, expressed their concerns and misgivings at a local meeting but it was to no avail. Elected officials voted to take no action at the advice of their Solicitor which then cleared the way for NJDEP to resolve a problem for Stone Harbor at the expense of Estell Manor residents.



## Boaters Beware!

The next time you reach for that beer while driving a boat in New Jersey, think twice. The State Senate approved a bill that makes the legal blood alcohol level for boat operators consistent with the same standard for motorists.

Exceeding the .08 percent alcohol level carries some significant fines and loss of license for boaters. The purpose of the focus on boaters and alcohol levels is to further promote safety on New Jersey's waterways. The bill is on its way to the NJ Assembly for consideration.

## Land Purchases Continue in Atlantic County

The Board of Chosen Freeholders unanimously agreed to renew the 2-cent open space tax with the stipulation that the funds raised will be dedicated solely to the acquisition of land to offset the extensive development taking place in the County. To date, Atlantic County has purchased about 6,000 acres and is continuing to work on the acquisition of additional properties with a goal of buying about 500 acres of open space annually. The Freeholders should be commended on their pro-active approach to assuring the protection of adequate open space as the Pinelands growth areas continues to be developed.

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## Stockton Water Watch and Hamilton Twp. Clean Up Open Space

On March 27<sup>th</sup> the Hamilton Preserve on Egg Harbor Avenue received a major volunteer clean up. Casey Romanik, the NJ Community Water Watch Campus Organizer for the Richard Stockton Office of Student Development, identified this property owned by the New Jersey Natural Lands Trust as having a major amount of trash and needing some attention.

Casey and her Stockton group organized a partnership with Hamilton Township, the Atlantic County Utility Authority, the State of New Jersey, and the Great Egg Harbor Watershed Association (GEHWA) to clean up these lands. They recruited over 90 volunteers and with the help of all the partners, especially Hamilton Township, filled a 30-yard dumpster with trash plus they also collected a huge pile of recyclables. GEHWA especially appreciated this clean up of preserved open space in the source waters of Gravelly Run, a major tributary of the Great Egg Harbor River.



Where's all the  
Open Space?



## Open Space Is a Good Investment

(By Fred Akers)

The Great Egg Harbor Watershed Association and the Great Egg Harbor National Scenic and Recreational River Council both recognize that the acquisition of open space within the federally designated Scenic & Recreational Great Egg Harbor River corridor and throughout the larger watershed is fundamental to protecting our natural resources from being developed over and otherwise diminished. Open space acquisition is a “fair value” free market mechanism to acquire rights to valuable natural resources by purchasing the property rights of private landowners.

With the use of public funds generated by open space taxes at the municipal, county, and state levels, open space lands purchased from public funds become public property owned collectively by large numbers of people. Open space acquisition basically buys the property rights of a few, and transfers these property rights to millions of people. This means that one individual does not have to actually own property to have rights to public property. Depending on the purpose and management of public property, these rights often include hunting, fishing, swimming, camping, canoeing, hiking, bicycling, bird watching, and other both passive and active recreational pursuits.

We often hear, especially at the municipal level, that towns will lose tax rates if open space is purchased and taken off the tax rolls, or if development restrictions are placed on it. But when detailed economic analysis are used to accurately calculate all the costs of development, including the many hidden costs that are often never mentioned, preserving open space can be shown to be a good economic investment that avoids offsite and infrastructure costs and has the long range benefit of avoiding future costs. While these hidden costs apply to all types of development including commercial, it is now becoming common knowledge that single-family residential tax rates don't cover the costs of municipal services, community infrastructure and local schools. Studies show that for every \$1.00 collected in taxes, residential development costs range between \$1.04 to \$1.67 in services – and these costs continue forever, generally increasing over time.

Even including the initial cost of acquisition, open space is less costly to tax payers over both the short and long term than development of the same parcel. The major public costs to preserve natural areas are finite, often paid by a bond or loan over 20 years. The public needs to have a clearer understanding of the benefits and values of preserving open space to support this investment:

- to ensure the health and diversity of animal and plant communities,
- to prevent increased flooding caused by additional impervious land cover,
- to help lessen pollution by absorbing contaminants from our air and water,
- to maintain a thriving outdoor tourism industry, giving places to fish, swim, boat hunt and hike,
- to lessen overdevelopment and suburban sprawl,
- to preserve our connection with the natural world, and
- to provide tranquil, noise-free islands amid the rush and bustle of life.

Egg Harbor Township, Weymouth Township, and Monroe Township, are municipalities in the Great Egg Harbor Watershed whose citizens have approved local open space taxes. Atlantic County has secured voter approval for a number of years now to have a 2% open space tax county-wide, and Atlantic County has been very proactive in working with municipalities and the Great Egg Harbor Watershed Association to purchase and maintain critical open space parcels in the Atlantic County section of our watershed.

One of the most significant tools we have to promote the protection of the outstanding resource values in our watershed is the permanent preservation of wetlands, source water tributaries, main stem corridors, historic sites, threatened and endangered species habitats, critical uplands, and all other lands with significant natural resource values. Since neither the GEHWA nor the River Council are land trusts, we need to encourage and assist those entities that purchase open space as much as we can. We also need to encourage all municipalities in the watershed to:

- maintain active Environmental Commissions,
- encourage Environmental Commissions to apply for state and federal funding to;
- conduct up to date natural resource inventories,
- develop open space inventories with a GIS updatable format,
- offer local residents the opportunity to approve local open space taxes, and
- partner with counties, Green Acres, and other land trusts to preserve as much open space as possible.

Both the Great Egg Harbor Watershed Association and the River Council are working to develop programs to achieve these goals in partnership with local municipalities and counties in our watershed. By working together to preserve open space, we will be working together to preserve our watershed, our sense of place, and our quality of life.



### **Wildlife Conservation Corps Citizen Scientists Wanted**

Are you an experienced birder who can identify a wide range of birds by both sight and sound? If so, the Endangered and Nongame Species Program anticipates needing your help on one or more research projects during this year's field season. Consider become a Wildlife Conservation Corps Citizen Scientist.

For more information, call Sharon DeFalco at ENSP's Assunpink office at (609) 259-6963

### **Volunteers Needed**

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 Marine Mammal Stranding Center 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 it until help can arrive on the scene.

There is a need for many more volunteers with flexible schedules and additional resources. A training seminar for 15-50 volunteers will be held at the Atlantic County Utilities Authority Recycling Center on Saturday, June 5, 2004 beginning at 11AM. For more information, call MMSC at (609) 266-0538

### **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](mailto:gehwa.gehwa@verizon.net)



## Information:

### ***NJ Clean Vessel Act Program***

Mike Danko, from the NJ Sea Grant Extension Program, is conducting a workshop on Wednesday, **June 9<sup>th</sup>**, to provide educational information about the importance of preventing sewage from entering our waterways, how marina owners and municipalities can provide pump out facilities and answer specific questions about the program. The Clean Vessel Program covers all the costs to install marina pump out facilities and to operate a pump out vessel. The workshop will be conducted at the Garden State Marina in Somers Point from 8:30am to 11:00AM. For more information, call Mike at (732) 872-1300, ext. 29.

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### ***Go With the Flow: Instream Flow Toolkit Just Released!***

American Rivers and the Washington Environmental Council have recently released *Instream Flow Toolkit: An Advocacy Guide to Healthy River and Stream Flows in Washington*. The toolkit provides valuable information to the public working to recover and protect river flow levels for ecological or recreational purposes. The document includes tools to address the entire spectrum of issues involved in determining and achieving instream flows, ranging from policy and legal aspects to science and outreach. The toolkit, which is tailored to Washington State, but is largely applicable to any region, can be found online at: [http://www.amrivers.org/doc\\_repository/InstreamFlowToolkit.pdf](http://www.amrivers.org/doc_repository/InstreamFlowToolkit.pdf).

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### ***Greenway Planning Grants***

The Kodak American Greenways Awards Program, a partnership project of the Eastman Kodak Company, The Conservation Fund, and the National Geographic Society, provides small grants to stimulate the planning and design of greenways in communities throughout the US. For more information, go to: <http://www.lgean.org/html/whatsnew.cfm?id=734>.

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### ***Assessment and Watershed Protection Program Grants***

The US EPA is seeking preproposals to conduct projects that promote the coordination and acceleration of research, investigations, experiments, training, demonstrations, surveys and studies relating to the causes, effects (including health and welfare effects), extent, prevention, reduction and elimination of water pollution.

Proposals are due by June 21<sup>st</sup> with approximately \$900,000 available to projects ranging from \$5,000 to \$100,000. State and local governments, public or private nonprofit, nongovernmental institutions and individuals are eligible to apply. Contact Katie Flahive at (202) 566-1206 or e-mail [Flahive.Katie@epa.gov](mailto:Flahive.Katie@epa.gov) for additional information.

**Attention all Middle School and High School  
Science and Social Studies Teachers**  
The Pinelands Summer Teacher Institute is scheduled  
for July 12 – 16, 2004. Call (609) 894-8000 for  
details or check out [www.pinelandsalliance.org](http://www.pinelandsalliance.org)

## Around the Region.....

### **Conectiv Power Delivery Schedules Closure of B.L. England site**

As part of a settlement agreement with the NJ Department of Environmental Protection, Conectiv has decided to close the B.L. England generating station located in Beesleys Point along the Great Egg Harbor River. Groundwater damage from an oil-line leak at the B.L. England site, combined with environmental issues at other Conectiv-owned sites, resulted in NJDEP and Conectiv negotiating a settlement agreement, although the agreement has not been finalized.

### **Peak O' the Moon Receives Protection**

The NJDEP, through the Green Acres Program, assisted in the purchase of a 130-acre salt hay farm on the Maurice River. While not directly located in the Maurice National Scenic and Recreational River corridor, this property is located on the river at a spot known locally as "Peak O' the Moon" in Port Norris. Known for its habitat for a diverse resident and migratory bird population, the property contains approximately 113 acres of coastal wetlands, 11 acres of freshwater wetlands and six acres of uplands.

### **Berlin Ordered to Shut Down Well**

In a major victory for the environment, the NJDEP has revoked the water allocation permit for Berlin Borough's well No. 12. This is the well that was responsible for almost drying up a stream that flows into Marlton Lakes. The Pinelands Preservation Alliance (PPA) became aware of the problem about three years ago when residents of Marlton Lakes reached out to PPA for help. Allowing this well to remain in operation, knowing that it would harm a federally threatened plant species (swamp pink) would have made a mockery of the Federal Endangered Species Act. The NJDEP made the difficult but right decision to shut down the well. (Excerpted from April/May 2004 issue of *Inside the Pinelands*).

### **Removing Trees Cost Money in Monroe Township**

If an amendment to Monroe Township's tree ordinance is approved, major developers will begin to explore alternatives to clear cutting areas

proposed for new development or their wallets will be affected. At the recommendation of the Township's Environmental Commission, developers will be required to retain a percentage of trees on wooded lots, reforest the land that is cleared, or pay \$2,500 per acre of cleared trees.

The Environmental Commission recognized the amount of development taking place in Monroe Township and wanted to explore options before the tree lines disappeared. This amendment is just one of many recommended by the Environmental Commission that will address issues before they become problems. If approved, Monroe Township provides an excellent example for other municipalities in the watershed.

### **Horseshoe Crabs Receive More Attention**

Based on new information about dwindling numbers of red knots, a migratory shorebird, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission once again decided to limit the horseshoe crab catch this year. Recent research has indicated that the red knot population has declined by half since 2000, falling from 45,000 to between 22,000 and 25,000 in 2002. Researchers have tied this problem to the decline in horseshoe crab population. The Commission made permanent the bait catch limit from 300,000 to 150,000 crabs in both New Jersey and Delaware. Maryland's harvest was cut from 230,000 to 170,000 and New York voluntarily limited its fishery from 260,000 to 150,000 crabs. The NJ Audubon Society applauded the Commission's proactive approach to assuring that the horseshoe crab's imminent endangerment does not result in extinction.



Photo by Kevin Karlson

## Spreading the Word.....

It's not often people take the time to provide feedback about GEHWA's education programs, but we wanted to share the following letter we received as a result of the work Belinda did with Brownie Troop #575:

*Dear Belinda:*  
*Thank you so much for your visit and your wonderful presentation and information regarding the watershed program. I think the girls really learned something. Not only were they excited and impressed with all of the puppets, they got to know a little more about their environment. Many of them commented how they were amazed that some of the animals and reptiles lived in our area. All of them were shocked and then enlightened to our part in polluting our environment and the direct affect on the ocean and bay. I am sure each and every one of our Brownies will think twice when they picnic at the beach or the bay.*

*Your kindness and thoughtfulness were not only appreciated but gratefully admired by not only the girls but the leaders and parents as well. You do a wonderful job for our children ad we are incredibly thankful to have such a wonderful organization available to our community.*

*Thank you so much,*  
*Kathy Loftus & Lorraine Goheen and Brownie Troop #575; Long Beach Island, NJ*

If you, or an organization you are involved in, are interested in any of the educational programs GEHWA has to offer, please contact Belinda at (609) 567-4762.



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

**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

# Calendar of Events

## Saturday, June 5<sup>th</sup>

### *Barnegat Bay Festival*

10Am – 4PM Berkeley Island County Park; Bayville  
Call (609) 894-8000

## Sunday, June 6<sup>th</sup>

### *Gloucester County Water Fest*

11AM – 4PM; Scotland Run Park; Clayton, NJ

## Saturday, June 5<sup>th</sup> & Sunday, June 6<sup>th</sup>

### *Delaware Bay Days*

10AM-5PM  
High Street; Bivalve (Port Norris)

## Wednesday, June 9<sup>th</sup>

### *NJ Clean Vessel Act Workshop*

Garden State Marina; Somers Point, NJ  
Contact: Mike Danko (732) 872-1300, ext. 29

## Wednesday, June 9<sup>th</sup>

### *The 2004 Road Show*

Atlantic County Library; Egg Harbor Rd; Hammonton  
Sponsored by: Hammonton Environmental Commission & ANJEC  
Workshop for Environmental Commissions covering Smart Growth and Effective Environmental Commissions  
Call 973-539-7547

## Sunday, June 13<sup>th</sup>

### *Day at the Bay Festival*

8AM – 8PM  
Kennedy Park; Somers Point  
Call (609) 343-2162

## Tuesday, June 29<sup>th</sup>; & Wednesday, June 30<sup>th</sup>

### *Making the Watershed Connection – An Interactive Conference for NJ Educators*

Sponsored by NJDEP & the Watershed Partnership for NJ  
Location: EcoComplex in Bordentown, NJ  
Starts at 8AM; Call (732) 932-9271

## Saturday, July 3<sup>rd</sup>

### *Buena Vista's 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Independence Day Celebration*

Starting Time 2PM at Michael Debbi Park on Cedar Avenue; Richland  
(856) 697-2100

## Monday, July 12 through July 16<sup>th</sup>

### *Pinelands Summer Teacher Institute*

Call (609) 894-8000 for details or check out [www.pinelandsalliance.org](http://www.pinelandsalliance.org)

## Tuesday, July 27<sup>th</sup>

### *GEHWA's Picnic and Nature Walk* (rain or shine)

6PM; Fox Nature Center; Estell Manor Park  
Enjoy the company of other members and their families at a potluck picnic and a walk through the park.

## Tuesday, August 10<sup>th</sup>

### *Southern Area Stormwater Conference*

8:30AM – 3:30PM  
Presentations, Discussions & Answers to questions about the new Stormwater Mgt. Rules  
NJ Chapter of the American Planning Assoc. & NJDEP  
Location: Richard Stockton College of NJ; Pomona  
Call: (732) 262-4783

## 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