



River Currents

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www.gehwa.org

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The Great Egg Harbor River Is For The Birds

The room was filled at the Fox Nature Center as members and guests listened to Clay Sutton at the September 28th bi-monthly GEHWA meeting.

Clay is a Naturalist, a Biologist, a Writer, and a Lecturer who has studied birds in the wild for over 30 years. Clay described the many waterfowl and raptors he encountered during the first winter raptor survey on the tidal section of the Great Egg Harbor River. The slides and discussion about his discoveries kept members attentive - prompting interesting questions and a desire to learn more.

Clay completed and published Winter Raptor and Waterbird Surveys for the Maurice River and the Cohansey River for the past 17 years. With financial support from the National Park Service, GEHWA is very pleased to be working closely with Clay Sutton to establish baseline documentation of the status and trends of bird use and populations on the tidal area of the Great Egg Harbor River. GEHWA intends to work with Clay to produce annual studies of the bird population in the tidal section of the river so that trends and long-term protection strategies can be established.



Thanks for the Memories

By: Mary Vavra

It is with mixed emotions that I relinquish my responsibilities as the Manager for the Great Egg Harbor National Scenic and Recreational River. I started working with the Great Egg Harbor Watershed Association (GEHWA) in 1996 nervous about the work that had to be done and concern over whether I was capable of working in an arena that was so very different from what I had done previously. There was so much work to do and I had no experience (although experience is something you get just after you need it!). What I had not counted on was the level of interest and cooperation that I received during the course of these last nine years from GEHWA, the River Council, local residents, and a variety of state and federal agencies.

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What started out as a “job”, quickly blossomed into a career. I became a believer the first time I traveled down the Great Egg Harbor River when I watched with a sense of awe a Bald Eagle fly overhead for the first time in my life. I became a woman on a mission with the same goals shared by GEHWA and others of protecting the river and the resources it supports.

The path was not always smooth, as I quickly learned that no one really listens until you make a mistake. I truly believe that 12 years after designation, the National Park Service has found its niche as a partner and ally with local municipalities and GEHWA in protecting the river corridor. So much has been accomplished since the designation of the river in 1992, largely as a result of the cooperation between the National Park Service and GEHWA. I remember Patrick Noonan, who was President of The Conservation Fund in 1990, saying, “...if you look at any field of endeavor, it’s the one percent that makes things happen. Nine percent watch things happen, and the great majority, ninety percent...say, ‘what happened?’” GEHWA represents the one percent that has made, and continues to make, things happen!

I appreciate all the help, advice, and support I’ve received over the years. I know that you will find my NPS replacement, Paul Kenney, ready and eager to take up the gauntlet and move forward in helping GEHWA and the Great Egg Harbor River Council succeed in achieving the primary goal of protecting the 129-mile river corridor and its resources that we are borrowing from our children.

There aren’t too many jobs a person can have that leave such an imprint in their heart. For this, I am extremely grateful.



Congressman LoBiondo Supports New Jersey’s Partnership Wild and Scenic Rivers

On August 13th Citizens United to Protect the Maurice River and Its Tributaries, Inc. (CU) coordinated a mini-summit on the river so that Congressman LoBiondo could get an update on conservation activities in his district and also slurp a few oysters. Fred Akers attended for GEHWA and representatives were in attendance from the Congressional staff, NJ Audubon Society, GEHWA, The Natural Lands Trust, New Jersey Conservation Foundation, National Park Service, and people from a whole host of

other organizations. Each non-profit organization had an opportunity to make a short presentation to the Congressman. Fred thanked Congressman LoBiondo for his steadfast support for the Partnership Wild and Scenic Rivers Program and especially for the 50% appropriation increase all the rivers received in 2004. Valuable information was exchanged and although hurricane squalls were forecast, the weather cooperated.





The Watershed View

By: George S. Hawkins, Executive Director
Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association

Watershed groups and the dedicated people who give them vitality are delighted by New Jersey’s new stormwater rules. The watershed ideal is based on several principles. First, water is an essential resource for life that must be protected. Rainwater is our principal source of this resource, and we must manage and protect it.

For too long, rain – or stormwater – has been managed as a public nuisance, to be collected in ecologically barren basins and removed off-site as quickly as possible. The new emphasis in these rules treat water as a valuable resource – by replenishing groundwater, by incorporating natural conditions, by reducing sedimentation, by protecting stream corridors – is a tremendous step.

Second, water must be handled in a regional manner – a river will only be clean if protective measures are taken along its entire length, from headwaters to the ocean. The emphasis of this rule on regional stormwater planning will help us protect entire river ecosystems.

Third, the health of a river is directly related to what we do on the land that surrounds the river (its “watershed”)! The emphasis in these rules requiring best management practices for new construction and development will improve the water quality that reaches our aquifers, reservoirs and rivers.

Finally, our own behavior has a direct impact on the health of our streams. The elements of this rule that apply to our communities and homes remind us of our own responsibility.

In short, watershed management and stormwater management go hand in hand. We believe that protection of our streams, rivers, reservoirs, and aquifers is critical to the vitality of nature, the economy, and ultimately, our lives. For all these reasons, we strongly support and applaud the approach and content of the stormwater program.



New Jersey Sponsors Study of Intracoastal Dredging

Assemblyman Jeff Van Drew sponsored a bill that was recently approved by the NJ Legislature authorizing approximately \$1million as the state’s share in a \$2 million study of the Intracoastal Waterway in Atlantic and Cape May Counties and the identification of possible dredge-spoils sites.

It is anticipated that the study will help the US Army Corps of Engineers identify the channels that need attention. Since finding suitable dredge disposal sites is one of the biggest obstacles, much of the conflict associated with dredging could be avoided with spoil sites already identified

Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away. (George Carlin)



GEHWA Receives Another Grant from Stony Brook – Millstone Watershed Association

The Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association (The Association) announced \$89,700 in grant awards to 17 groups throughout New Jersey. Through the Association’s Watershed Institute Grants program, funding is available to help strengthen the capacity of grassroots organizations working to protect environmental resources in their communities.

GEHWA was awarded \$4,000 to expand its new “In School” program through the acquisition of watershed awareness tools compatible with New Jersey’s State Curriculum Guidelines to educate children about pollution and watershed management.

Grants ranging from \$3,300 to \$10,000 were awarded to projects such as membership development and well testing for homeowners. Other funded projects include support that will enable organizations to inspire children through environmental education programs and foster awareness and stewardship of their watershed. Grant funding will also give groups the

foundation to become more self-reliant and visible advocates in their communities.

The Association formed The Watershed Institute in 2001 to strengthen local efforts to protect the environment by providing support, tailored advice and workshops for watershed associations. Funded by the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, the Watershed Institute Grants Program is “a small grant program dedicated to helping watershed groups carry out effective projects.”

Established in 1949, the Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association works with municipalities, local organizations, and individuals to promote and improve water quality through technical assistance, water quality monitoring, and education. The Association’s mission is to enhance the quality of the natural environment in the area drained by the Stony Brook and Millstone River. For more information, please visit the Association’s web site, www.thewatershed.org.

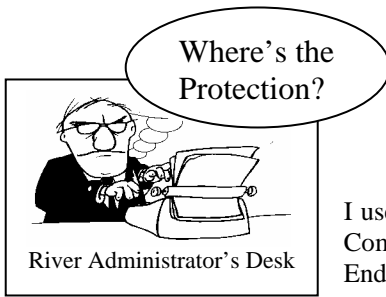


Help Keep Our Waters Clean

There is no question that the New Jersey coastline is a major destination point for recreationists offering a variety of opportunities to enjoy nature’s resources. According to the NJ Department of Environmental Protection, more than 800,000 people took advantage of the state’s water resources, contributing about \$1.4 billion to the economy. With so much interest in water-based recreation, it is no surprise that recreational boating is on the rise, with nearly a quarter-million registered vessels in New Jersey. While people depend on the state’s water resources for recreation, there are many other species that need quality water for survival. If not protected, New Jersey waters can adversely affect humans and the hundreds of species that depend on them.

Sewage discharges from vessels can degrade water quality, affect public health, close shellfish beds and swimming beaches. New Jersey’s Clean Vessel Act Program has been extremely active with nearly 180 pumpout stations operating at marinas and providing services to the boating public. Pumpout stations are easy to use and CVA-participating marinas can charge no more than \$5 per pumpout, so it is not an expensive process. In addition, there are four pumpout boats patrolling coastal waterways during the summer months, assisting boaters in open waters.

Even though summer is over, learn more about how boaters can help keep New Jersey’s waters clean. Obtain a free guide which shows locations of all New Jersey’s pumpout stations by contacting the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife’s CVA Office at (609) –748-2056. Don’t think that one boater acting responsibly can’t make a difference!



Who's protecting the Pinelands Forests?

By: Fred Akers

I used to think that the Pinelands Protection Act, the Pinelands Commission, and the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan had the protection of the forest and all the Threatened and Endangered Species which live in the Great Egg Harbor Watershed's forests pretty much covered. I recently found out that this is not really the case. Last month, the Pinelands Commission rezoned 87 acres from Pinelands Forest Area to Agricultural Production Area in a federally designated Scenic and Recreational portion of the South River with absolutely no concern for the Barred Owl and Pine Barren Tree Frogs known to frequent that forested acreage, not to mention the federal designation.

When I inquired about this, I found out the little known fact that agricultural activities are automatically allowed in all Pinelands Forest Areas in the Pinelands Protection Area with no permits required. In other words, if you own woods and you are a certified farmer, you can cut down any woods anytime you want to farm that land with no questions asked by the Pinelands Commission. You can also purchase land in the Pinelands Forest Area to harvest the trees, but you need a permit for that along with many Pinelands Commission rules and regulations you have to follow.

There are goals and objectives for the management of both the Forest Areas and the Agricultural Production Areas stated in the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP) (Subchapter 5). The purpose of the Forest Areas as stated is to, "support characteristic Pinelands plant and animal species and provide suitable habitat for many threatened and endangered species. These largely undeveloped areas are an essential element of the Pinelands environment, contain high quality water resources and wetlands, and are very sensitive to random and uncontrolled development".

But the CMP also states that, "agricultural activity is an important element of the Pinelands economy and plays a significant role in the conservation of the essential ecological character of the Pinelands". It also states that, "the long-term viability of agricultural activity depends upon the protection from competing land uses and continued use of agricultural practices that conserve the soil and water resources of the Pinelands". Now given that Agriculture is an approved use in the Forest Area, it appears to me that strict interpretation or compliance of the CMP categorizes Forest land use as a competing land use to Agriculture, and therefore the values attributed to Forest uses as previously stated, such as species habitat, are to be automatically sacrificed for most agricultural operations. In other words, from the very beginning in 1980, it is more important to maintain and expand agriculture, than it is to preserve forest.

Once the land is put to agricultural uses, does the Pinelands Commission have any say about how the land is managed from then on? The answer is no, because the total management of agriculture is then outsourced to the New Jersey Department of Agriculture, the Soil Conservation District, and Rutgers University. For all management areas in the Pinelands, including the Forest Area, it is up to these agencies to set the agricultural standards for conservation of the soil and water resources and the essential ecological character of the Pinelands, not the Pinelands Commission. Voluntary compliance and the "Right-To-Farm" becomes the law of the land. This was the agricultural deal in 1980, and forest habitat protection isn't part of it.

Perhaps back then the vision of farming was one of plowing the soil and planting crops for food in that soil, and the soil types would dictate to a large degree what forests would be farmed and what forests were not feasible to farm because of poor soil types for planted crops. Based on traditional farming, by 1980 most high yield lands were already cut and under cultivation.

But times change, and today agricultural production is moving away from soil related food production to other non-soil crops like hydroponic vegetables, fish and shrimp, and non-edible crops, like architectural trees, bushes, flowers and shrubs, house plants, and sod. Unlike ground grown food crops that traditionally required "in place" soil conservation and may have played a significant role in the conservation of the essential ecological character of the Pinelands, these new forms of agriculture may in fact significantly change the essential ecological character of the Pinelands.

The way the rules stand now, the forests can be cut to make parking lots for greenhouses and potted plants, with no permits required for additional water withdrawals, stormwater management measures, or limits to impervious surfaces. Natural topsoil can be repeatedly mined and exported through the creation and sales of root balls, soil filled plant pots, and cut and rolled sod. New chemicals for fertilization and pest control to manage these new crops can be introduced. These new Agricultural uses are becoming highly coveted ratables at an astounding scale in Cumberland County, and it is just a matter of time before the Right-To-Farm will bring them into the Pinelands Forest Areas, where the fertility of existing soil types beneath existing Forests won't matter.

Forest areas have significant ecological value to all watersheds, but we won't find these values on the agricultural balance sheet. The network of rivers, lakes and streams throughout the Pinelands originate from a myriad of small streams and wetlands, many so small they do not appear on any map. Yet these headwater streams and wetlands exert critical influences on

the character and quality of downstream waters. The natural processes that occur in such headwater systems benefit humans by mitigating flooding, maintaining water quality and quantity, recycling nutrients, and providing habitat for plants and animals. Most of these small streams and wetlands occur in forested areas throughout the Pinelands, and many can be found in the Pinelands Forest Areas in the Pinelands Protection Area.

As I monitor and assess the condition and quality of the Pineland headwaters of the Great Egg Harbor Watershed, I have found significant water quality degradation from traditional agricultural operations in the Pinelands and good stewardship as well. I have observed tons of farm soil directly discharged into Pinelands waters over a period of many years creating federally impaired water quality, and cows and horses wallowing directly in ground water springs that then flow into fishing ponds and lakes. I personally know residents who have to treat drinking water because of very high nitrate concentrations from nearby agricultural activities. And I also personally know traditional farmers who are exemplary in their conservation and management practices.

But just like Threatened and Endangered species and their habitats, traditional farming practices and the woods that surround them are becoming a diminishing resource. Urbanization and sprawl are constantly on the increase, and here in southern New Jersey farm production is in a transition from local food production to the mass production of architectural products demanded by residential and commercial developments both locally and across the country.

This shifting in the purpose of agriculture and the resulting disconnect with the Pinelands soils threatens the traditional view of conservation of the soil and water resources and the essential ecological character of the Pinelands that agriculture was supposed to provide to the Pinelands Protection Act. Once the Pinelands Forests are cut in the name of agriculture, it is then up to the Department of Agriculture, the Soil Conservation District, and the Rutgers Cooperative Extension to protect the essential character of the Pinelands. But these agencies do not have that mission, they do not have a comprehensive management plan to protect the Pinelands, and they are not the Pinelands Commission.



Impervious Surface Now Covers An Area the Size of Ohio

A recent article in the *Press of Atlantic City* reported on a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) report that estimated the total land coverage of impervious surfaces (such as buildings, roads, parking lots and roofs) in the 48 contiguous states covers an area about the size of Ohio. This is significant as the runoff

from impervious surfaces is directly linked to pollution of our rivers and streams. There is a distinct correlation between the health of a watershed and the amount of impervious coverage. The report is providing municipalities with a warning about the impact sprawl has on the quality of our water.



Federation of Gloucester County Watersheds Receives Grant

Once again the Stony Brook – Millstone Watershed Association showed its interest in supporting the work of watershed groups throughout New Jersey. The Federation of Gloucester County Watersheds received a \$10,000 grant to step up watershed protection in Gloucester County. The funding will be used to increase educational programs by presenting the Federation’s new teacher’s guide at classroom presentations and conferences. The Federation is at an important crossroad for ensuring long-term stability and will examine and assess the structure and membership roles of their organization.



Education/Information:

More on Stormwater Management

Check out the Spring 2004 issue of *New Jersey Flows*, a newsletter produced by the New Jersey Resources Research Institute. This particular issue is devoted to Stormwater Management and provides a “Municipal Stormwater Rule Primer” that is easy to follow and understand. The spring edition also provides important and useful information about management techniques and other topics of interest in the area of stormwater management. If you are interested in seeing a copy of this issue or future issues, send an e-mail with your name, address and e-mail address to derbedrosian@aesop.rutgers.edu. In the subject line of your e-mail put the word “subscription”. (Excerpted from the Spring 2004 issue of *New Jersey Flows*)



Looking for an Environmental Consultant?

Local officials seeking to hire consultants for environmental services are encouraged to visit the Local Government Environmental Assistance Network (LGEAN) directory of environmental consultants. The directory, located on the LGEAN Web site, enables local government officials and other users to identify and contact consultants who perform work in the environmental and geographical area in which they are interested. For more information, check out: <http://www.lgean.org/html/consult/index.cfm>.



EPA Reference Materials Online:

(Excerpted from Spring 2004 issue of *New Jersey Flows*)

NPDES Stormwater Site – http://cfpub.epa.gov/npdes/home.cfm?program_id=6

Green Landscaping with Native Plants for Municipal Officials – www.epa.gov/glnpo/greenacres/toolkit

Stormwater Outreach Materials – <http://cfpub.epa.gov/npdes/stormwatermonth.cfm>

Customizable Stormwater Brochures – <http://cfpub.epa.gov/npdes/stormwatermonth.cfm#customize>

An Overview of Stormwater Modeling tools: http://www.forester.net/sw_0203_modeling.html

Low-Impact Development and Polluted Runoff EPA Sites: www.epa.gov/owow/nps/lid/ and www.epa.gov/owow/nps/urban.html

Stormwater Program Overview – http://cfpub.epa.gov/npdes/home.cfm?program_id+6

Graphic Presentation on Stormwater Management: www.stormwatercenter.net/intro_slides.htm



Teaching the Poetry of Rivers

The Colorado Foundation for Water Education announced a new resource for teachers: *Teaching the Poetry of Rivers*. This online resource supports the national “River of Words” poetry contest, integrating poetry, water resource science, and the humanities. The Foundation’s free lesson plans can be adapted for all grade levels, and are designed to help youth explore the natural and cultural history of the place they live, and to express what they discover through poetry and art. For more information on the program and to sign up for access to the program materials, please visit <http://www.cfwe.org/row.asp>. You can also reach the Foundation by phone at (303) 377-4433 or at www.cfwe.org.



New Report Identifies Smart Growth Policies that Protect Water Resources

EPA has released a report called “Protecting Water Resources with Smart Growth”. The report is a compilation of 75 policies designed to protect water resources and implement smart growth. Forty-six of these policies are oriented to the watershed, or regional level; the other 29 are targeted for specific development sites. For more information, click on the following URL: <http://www.lgean.org/html/whatsnew.cfm?id=796>



DigitalGlobe Announces New Product for Impervious Surface Mapping

The new product by DigitalGlobe called DGStormWater, is designed for city and county GIS coordinators, tax assessors, local utility companies, engineering firms and flood mapping organizations responsible for measuring and managing stormwater runoff. The product uses satellite imagery to calculate the impervious surface area of a property in days versus months

compared to existing data collection methods. This product reportedly serves as valuable source data for hydrological and hydrographic modeling as well as floodplain and watershed management and supports compliance with storm water management regulations mandated by the US EPA. For more information, go to www.digitalglobe.com/dgstormwater.



Calendar of Events

Sunday, October 17th

20th Annual Batsto Country Living Fair
10AM – 4PM; Historic Batsto Village
Rte 542; Hammonton, NJ; Call (609) 561-0209

Saturday, October 23rd

Celebrate Wildlife Refuge Day
10AM – 3PM; Edwin B. Forsythe NWR
Great Creek Road; Oceanville, NJ
Call (609) 748-1535

Wednesday, October 27th

Creepy Critters Moonlight Nature walk
7PM; Scotland Run park
Clayton Road; Clayton, NJ
Learn about all those “creepy critters” that are so important to our environment. A family event – come in costume!
Hosted by Gloucester County Parks and GEHWA. Call (609) 567-4762 for more information

** 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.greategg.org or e-mail gehwa.gehwa@verizon.net.

Remember:
 If you become aware of an environmental incident, call the NJDEP's 24-hour, toll-free hotline at 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
 Paul Kenney (215) 597-5823
 Paul_Kenney@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 County
 (609) 292-8262

NJDEP Enforcement Officer
 Kevin Brown (732) 255-0787

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: \$10; Family: \$15; Supporting: \$35; Patron: \$50;
 _____ 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