

## CHAPTER 3

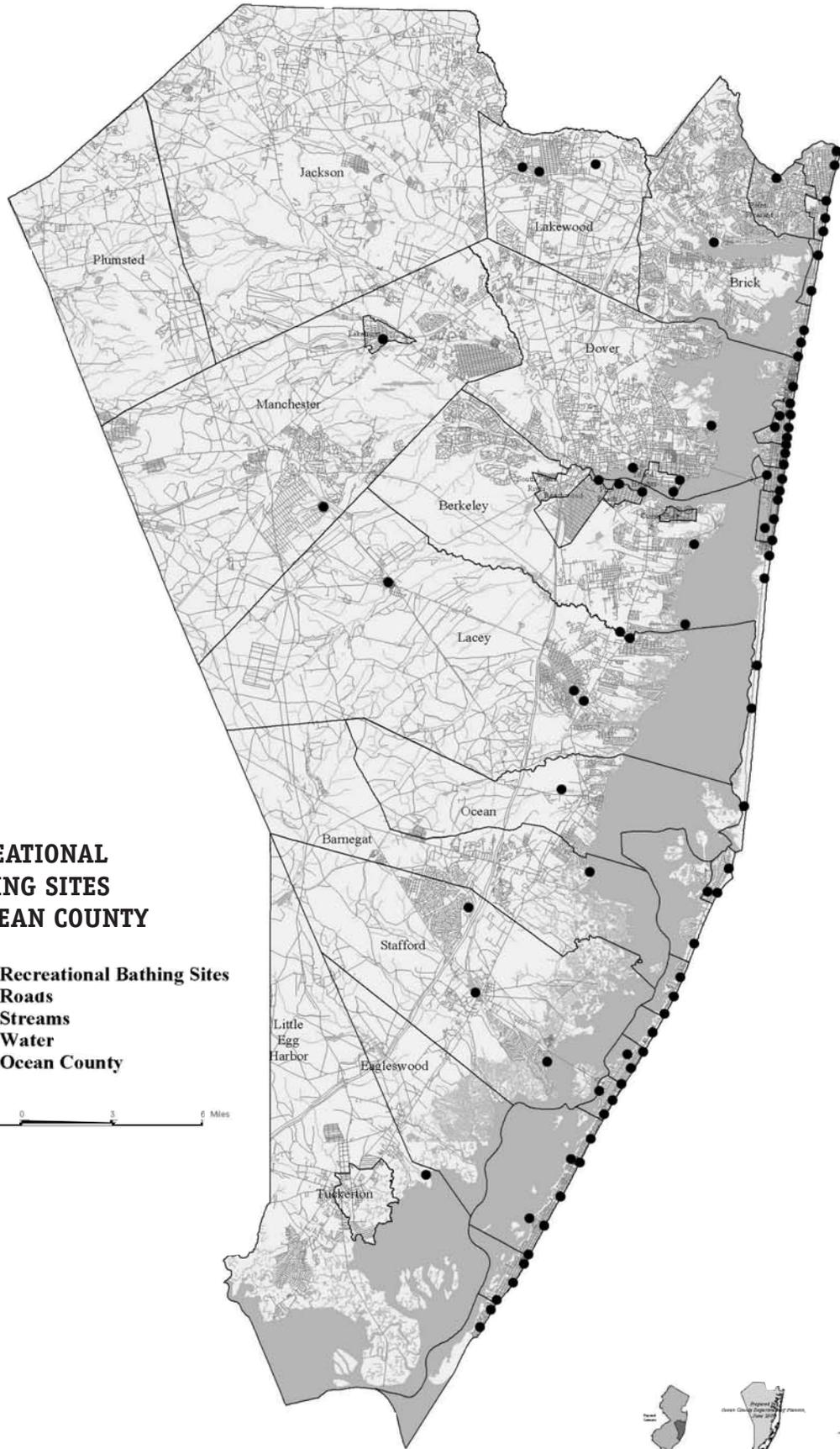
### Early Actions

*PHOTO COURTESY TUCKERTON SEAPORT, A PROJECT OF THE BARNEGAT BAY DECOY AND BAYMEN'S MUSEUM, INC.*

## RECREATIONAL BATHING SITES IN OCEAN COUNTY

- Recreational Bathing Sites
- ▬ Roads
- ▬ Streams
- Water
- Ocean County

0 2 4 6 Miles



### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

Barnegat Bay was accepted into the NEP in July 1995. The newly formulated partnership of federal, state, and local interests which now comprises the BBNEP recognized that development of the CCMP would take several years. At that point, however, the State of New Jersey and other regional and local interests had compiled a substantial body of data indicating that the environmental quality of Barnegat Bay was already threatened. Water quality degradation, loss and alteration of natural habitat, and competition among the bay's human population were all identified as critical issues. The BBNEP recognized the need to develop and implement quick, short-term actions to address these issues while the CCMP was being written. This suite of Early Actions was guided by recommendations from several sources, including the 1993 Watershed Management Plan for the Barnegat Bay, the Ocean County Water Management Strategic Plan, the Barnegat Bay Management Conference Committees, Local Government Roundtables, and citizen input. Since the goals of the 1993 Watershed Management Plan are similar to the current goals of the BBNEP, the early actions were consistent with the current priorities.

The following categories of Early Actions were developed and implemented:

- Action Now Agenda;
- Action Plan Demonstration Projects;
- Local Government Involvement;
- Ocean County Local Government Environmental Roundtable;
- Public Participation and Education;
- Nonpoint Source Watershed Protection Projects;
- Survey Review of the Barnegat Bay Watershed;
- Special Public Health Projects;
- Trust for Public Land; and
- Save Barnegat Bay.

Each of these categories of actions is summarized in this chapter. Detailed results of these actions can be found in Appendix C.

### 3.2 "ACTION NOW" AGENDA

The BBNEP Management Conference committed to developing a preliminary Action Plan or "Action Now" Agenda as part of the BBNEP's USEPA/NJDEP Joint Conference Agreement that was approved on April 16, 1996. The objective of developing the agenda was to identify short-term actions that could be implemented immediately during the development of this CCMP. As a result of this commitment, the "Action Now" Agenda was published on June 25, 1997. The actions identified in the agenda built upon the actions that were previously recommended in "A Watershed Management Plan for the Barnegat Bay" (1993) by examining processes for implementing the plan's actions, engaging action item stakeholders in a constructive dialogue, and where appropriate, implementing immediate actions that would directly benefit Barnegat Bay, its watershed, and its inhabitants.

Since the objective of developing the agenda was to immediately implement actions that would provide benefit, the BBNEP identified actions that the Management Conference had previously approved for implementation and that required little or no additional funds or staff. The 47 action items included in the agenda were categorized into the following environmental management issues:

- Watershed Management;
- Point and Nonpoint Source Pollution;
- Sensitive Areas;
- Water Area and Use;
- Fisheries Management;
- Public Participation; and
- Research and Monitoring.

The agenda included actions that could be initiated by the BBNEP, as well as actions that could be initiated under

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existing federal, state, and local programs. It also provided information on who would lead the actions, and the schedule and estimated cost for implementation. As a result of the completed agenda, the NJDEP now has some guidance for prioritizing funding in the watershed, and allowing the BBNEP the opportunity to initiate beneficial activities within the watershed during the CCMP planning and development process. "Agenda Now" activities have been under way since 1997. An update on the "Action Now" Agenda progress is included in Appendix C.

### 3.3 ACTION PLAN DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS

The Barnegat Bay National Estuary Program (BBNEP) was charged with identifying and implementing projects that utilize innovative and unique management strategies to address priority watershed issues. These projects, titled, "Action Plan Demonstration Projects" (APDP) were used as a mechanism for effective implementation of the "Action Now" Agenda. The BBNEP Management Conference solicited proposals and awarded funds totaling \$150,000 to grant recipients for 12 projects. These 12 projects

selected for early implementation provided integral information leading to the development of several action items in the CCMP.

The criteria used to select the grant recipients included:

- Applicability to action items identified in the "Action Now" Agenda;
- Amount of non-federal match offered in the proposal;
- Breadth and diversity of scope, target audience and practical effect; and
- Award of funds to as many worthwhile proposals as possible.

Table 3-1 lists the projects and funding awarded for each fiscal year. A short description of each project and the lessons learned are included in Appendix C.

The APDP results were considered in both the planning and development of the CCMP and various action items. These projects were also initiated as examples of actions that others in the watershed could duplicate.

**TABLE 3-1: Projects and Funds Awarded for Fiscal Years 1997 and 1998**

<b>Funding 1997</b>	
Eco-Tour of the Barrier Island	\$ 5,000.00
Watershed Signs at Public Access Points	\$ 9,280.00
Environmental Educator's Roundtable	\$ 16,000.00
Public Demonstration of Marine Pumpout Vessel	\$ 15,000.00
Barnegat Bay Ecosystem Restoration	\$ 29,720.00
Total	\$ 75,000.00
<b>Funding 1998</b>	
Managing our Endangered Species Heritage	\$ 9,996.00
Dredged Materials Disposal and Habitat Restoration	\$ 10,567.00
Adopt-a-Storm Drain	\$ 3,070.00
Watershed Demonstration Garden	\$ 12,000.00
Coastal Decision-Making Resource Center	\$ 16,995.00
Coordination of the Pump Out Boat	\$ 15,000.00
BBWA Local Government Outreach (partial funding)	\$ 7,372.00
Total	\$ 75,000.00

### 3.4 LOCAL GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT

Central to the operation of the BBNEP is the principle that the Management Conference should serve in an advisory capacity and should facilitate the implementation of actions and policies through increased awareness and stakeholder participation in the development and implementation of the CCMP. Local governments are one criti-

cal stakeholder group to this process. Therefore, the BBNEP established a Local Government Committee (LGC). The Ocean County Mayors' Association has served as LGC for three years and has provided a forum for exchange of information between the Management Conference and local government agencies. The Management Conference is committed to encouraging active participation from the LGC and has, therefore, developed the following actions to ensure that local governments support and commit to the implementation of the CCMP.

#### PRINCIPLES OF THE BBNEP COMMITMENT TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Strengthen the Voice of Local Government in the Development of Bay Program Policy. Continual input from the local officials is essential to maintain a viable CCMP. Therefore, the following three actions are recommended.

- Convene periodic local government roundtable meetings in each of the Ocean County municipalities. Three initial roundtables have already been conducted in Brick, Stafford, and Jackson Townships. The issues raised during these roundtables are incorporated in this CCMP. Summaries of the roundtable discussions can be found in Appendix B.
- Develop a network of local officials and staff with specific expertise in dealing with resource protection issues; and
- Identify local officials with appropriate expertise to serve on, or advise, the Barnegat Bay Estuary Program committees and workgroups.

Recognize Local Government Efforts. In order to maintain interest and to provide guidance, the BBNEP will identify and catalogue restoration and protection efforts and success stories that can serve as models to assist other local governments in their efforts to manage land use in the watershed and protect Barnegat Bay.

Broaden Outreach Efforts and Improve Communications. Local government officials are a critical link in communicating the CCMP goals and objectives to the public. Communication links to official and civic groups will be strengthened by the following actions:

- Support efforts by local watershed organizations, civic associations, and land conservancies/trusts to build constituencies that can support local government decisions or investments in protecting or restoring Barnegat Bay, its rivers, and its streams.\*
- Disseminate information to local governments on the progress being made to protect and restore local rivers and streams in Ocean County, as well as actions they can take to achieve similar improvements.\*
- Participate in the Ocean County Mayors' Association monthly meetings to inform municipal governments how their actions can contribute to the protection and restoration of local streams and rivers, and ultimately, Barnegat Bay.\*

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### PRINCIPLES OF THE BBNEP COMMITMENT TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS (CONTINUED)

- Utilize public outreach and Ocean County informational services as vehicles to distribute information to local governments, including Monmouth County municipalities located in the Barnegat Bay watershed, on issues related to the protection and restoration of the bay, its rivers, and streams.\*
- Develop informational materials that are tailored to the local government audience in order to better communicate and share information with municipal officials and staff regarding the Barnegat Bay protection effort.

Provide Technical and Financial Support to Local Governments. In order to maintain the objectives of the CCMP and to implement programs without undue strain on local budgets, the BBNEP will:

- Seek funding to assist local government efforts to implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) aimed at protecting and restoring impaired uses in the bay and its watershed.\*
- Develop a compendium of federal, state, non-profit and private assistance programs that provide local governments with resources (financial or technical) to implement watershed management and related protection and restoration activities.

Provide Scientific/Technical Data to Local Governments. The BBNEP has already developed a substantial database on the environmental conditions and natural resources of Barnegat Bay and its watershed and has access to scientific, engineering, and planning technologies which will improve the quality of the watershed. The BBNEP will:

- Assist local government informational needs by implementing the Barnegat Bay Data Management System.
- Prepare information "Fact Sheets" on the impacts of nonpoint sources of pollution on local resources (rivers, streams, bays, water supplies), including sub-watershed maps and contact agencies and phone numbers.\*
- Identify models, technologies, and practices that can be used to assess and minimize the impacts of different development patterns on water quality. Provide periodic technical exchanges with local government officials on alternative stormwater management practices, and other technologies that help protect surface and ground-water quality.

*\*Indicates actions that the BBNEP has already initiated.*

## 3.5 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND EDUCATION

### MINI-GRANT PROJECTS

The BBNEP recognizes that public participation and education is integral to promoting environmental awareness and stewardship and is necessary for successful implementation of the CCMP. Therefore, the Mini-Grant program was established to foster public awareness and education of the Barnegat Bay Estuary and its surrounding watershed. The program was designed to motivate the public to

actively participate in protecting and restoring the bay by funding environmental education projects that will directly benefit Barnegat Bay and its watershed area. Applicants were invited to submit a proposal in one of the following subject areas: nonpoint source pollution prevention/water quality control, estuarine education, habitat enhancement/ preservation, citizen monitoring, and public participation. Mini-Grants were awarded in 1997, 1998, and 2000 totaling \$70,000. The grants are listed in Appendix D. The successful completion of these projects increased public awareness through education, with emphasis on the ecosystem as a living environmental and social resource.

### 3.6 FEDERAL/STATE PROGRAMS SUPPORTING THE BBNEP

#### SECTION 319(h) COMPETITIVE GRANTS

The objective of the 319(h) coastal watershed protection projects is to coordinate nonpoint source pollution and stormwater runoff control demonstration projects by funding local group activities that provide long-term results and serve as successful project "models" for future projects within other subwatersheds in Ocean County. The NJDEP provides coordination and financial and technical assistance. This is due, in large part, to the BBNEP being part of the NEP and having developed a watershed management plan.

Nonpoint source pollution and watershed protection projects have been implemented in various sections of the Barnegat Bay watershed over the last several years. BMPs for the purposes of protecting the surface and groundwater resources have been instituted. Within Ocean County the primary objective of the projects has been to reduce the nonpoint source pollution loadings to Barnegat Bay and its watershed, including contaminated stormwater runoff, so that beneficial uses of the bay and its tributaries will be protected and restored.

Through the conduct of these projects it is expected that significant sources of nonpoint source pollution will be identified and targeted actions will be developed and implemented to reduce those sources through innovative approaches, including public education and outreach, and through the development of creative partnerships and institutional arrangements. The effectiveness of each of these projects will be monitored, and, if successful, these valuable techniques will be applied to other subwatersheds in the Barnegat Bay watershed. Descriptions of each 319(h) grant project are provided in Appendix D.

### 3.7 BARNEGAT BAY ENVIRONMENTAL FUND

On February 26, 1992, the Ciba-Geigy Corporation made a donation of \$2,500,000 to NJDEP for enhancement and protection of the Barnegat Bay watershed. This is directly related to several priority issue areas in the CCMP,

specifically habitat protection and water quality/water supply protection. After a long public comment period, the NJDEP decided that \$1,975,000 would go into a land trust fund to purchase public access and environmentally sensitive areas. The remaining \$525,000 would be placed in an Environmental Grant Fund, which would support grants to non-profit organizations for environmental planning, education, monitoring, research, or stewardship.\* The Trust for Public Land (TPL) was designated as the administrator of the Ciba-Geigy donation. Expenditure of funds under these two programs is made with approval of the Barnegat Bay Environmental Grant Fund Advisory Board.

### 3.8 SPECIAL PUBLIC HEALTH PROJECTS

In the third year of the BBNEP, the USEPA provided \$36,500 for special public health project activities. The following projects were funded:

#### 1. Support of Citizens Water Quality Monitoring Program

The Barnegat Bay Watch Monitoring Program was created to provide ongoing monitoring of health and ecological conditions in the Barnegat Bay/Little Egg Harbor ecosystem by citizen volunteers through the Alliance for a Living Ocean (ALO). Currently the program is monitoring between 25 and 50 sites throughout the watershed. The activities of the program are designed to produce data which will aid in detection of episodic events and identification of trends or changes in habitats and water quality in order to provide elected officials, resource managers, and scientists with information on the health and vitality of the ecosystem. During the third year, the BBNEP provided \$5,000 of Public Health funds to support the Barnegat Bay Watch Monitoring Program. The \$5,000 was used to purchase replacement chemicals and equipment for the 1999 sampling season. The ALO received the "Governor's Award" for environmental protection in 1999.

\* *The Barnegat Bay Environmental Grant Fund serves to support many of the Action Items.*

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### 2. Support of the Barnegat Bay Marine Sewage Pumpout Boat

As part of a coalition of agencies and organizations, the BBNEP has been active in supporting the establishment and continuation of a marine sewage pumpout vessel on Barnegat Bay. This vessel has now been purchased and launched and has had two successful years (1998 and 1999 boating seasons), pumping out more than 7,000 gallons of sewage from bay boats each year. The vessel covers the waters of Barnegat Bay and provides pumpout services to moored vessels.

This provides a convenience to vessel owners who might not otherwise have reasonable access to a marine sewage pumpout device.

The presence of the vessel should mitigate the sense of need some vessel owners have to dispose of their waste in the bay waters. Hence, there will be a direct decrease in public health hazards associated with illicit discharges. The BBNEP has committed \$16,500 of Public Health funds to support the second year of operation of the pumpout vessel. Twenty percent match was provided by the State of New Jersey's "Shore to Please" license plate fund. Also, the Barnegat Bay Pumpout Boat Program and its organizer, Pete McLain, were recognized by the USEPA with the 1999 Environmental Quality Award.

### 3. Barnegat Bay No Discharge Zone Application

The N.J. Marine Sciences Consortium was retained to develop an application for a No Discharge Zone for Barnegat Bay. This designation will make it illegal to discharge either treated or non-treated sewage from boats into Barnegat Bay and will assist in protecting bathing and shellfish water quality. The NJDEP has submitted an application to USEPA Region 2 and is currently working to provide the necessary documentation on the area boating population and the availability of sufficient pumpout capacity to allow USEPA to grant approval of this application.

### 3.9 SURVEY REVIEW OF THE BARNEGAT BAY WATERSHED

As part of the NJDEP grant entitled "A Partnership for Nonpoint Source Pollution Control in the Barnegat Bay Watershed," the Ocean County Soil Conservation District (OCSCD) established a cooperative effort among various conservation agencies to develop an effective communication and conservation education program for teachers, municipalities, environmental commissions, and the public. To effectively develop the communication and education strategy it was necessary to determine the level of general public knowledge about nonpoint source pollution and its effects on Barnegat Bay. Therefore, the OCSCD developed a survey entitled "Understanding and Communicating With People About People Pollution in the Watershed of Barnegat Bay" and distributed it at three public events – the Ocean County Fair in July 1995 and September 1996, and September 1997 at the Barnegat Bay Decoy and Gunning Show. This predates the organization of public outreach efforts for the Barnegat Bay Estuary Program. The following summarizes the responses received:

*Most respondents understood what a watershed was, yet only a small percentage knew that they lived within a watershed;*

*Although respondents knew that there were water quality problems in Barnegat Bay, there was little understanding of the term "nonpoint source pollution," or of the impact of nonpoint source pollution;*

*Although about one-half of the respondents said that they maintained their own lawns, only a small percentage of that number ever tested the soil for nutrients or pH level;*

*Most respondents had volunteered, or would be willing to volunteer, in a local conservation effort, but only a small percentage would consider doing so as part of an organization or would want to attend a meeting such as a hearing or seminar;*

*The preferred method for receiving conservation information was through newspapers, radio, or TV.*

These results helped to focus the Barnegat Bay National Estuary Program's public outreach efforts on the topics to discuss and the segments of the watershed population to reach.