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**Barnegat Bay Partnership
Communication and Education Committee (CEC) Meeting Minutes
January 18, 2017 (9:30 a.m.) at BBP Office**

Present:

Members: Shari Kondrup (BTMUA), Lynette Lurig (NJDEP), Joel Mott (Pinelands Commission), Chris Claus (OC Parks), Karen Walzer (BBP); by phone: Peter Brandt (EPA), Barbara Spinweber (EPA), Wes Dalzell (ReClam the Bay)

BBP Staff: Betsy Hyle, Stan Hales

Guests: Mike and Debbie Bennett (BEAR), GraceAnne Taylor (OC Parks)

Members Absent: Angela Andersen (LBIF), Scott Bruinooge (OCC), Becky Laboy (OCSCD), Kaitlin Gannon (JCNERR)

Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes

Shari pointed out a misspelling in the November 30, 2016 meeting minutes. Chris made a motion to approve the minutes with the correction, seconded by Shari, all in favor. CEC meetings in 2017 will be held on the third Wednesdays of the month; a meeting schedule for the year has been emailed to CEC members.

2017 CEC Grant Funding Opportunity (GFO)

The BBP received eleven proposals in response to the 2017 GFO. One did not meet the minimum requirements of the GFO and was disqualified. The other ten were sent to review committee members along with a score sheet using the criteria in the GFO. Karen verbally summarized the objectives of each proposed project. The BBP has asked review committee members to return the score sheets by February 1st, and a meeting of the committee to discuss the proposals and make funding recommendations is scheduled for February 7th. The anticipated announcement date for the grants is April 1, 2017.

Education and Outreach Retreat

The 2017 retreat is scheduled for March 22nd with the theme of messaging through storytelling. John Black, president of the Native Plant Society of New Jersey, will present a program about storytelling. Kevin Sparkman, vice-president of Fusionspark Media, will talk about using photographs to tell a story. Rachael Graham, EPA Citizen Science Coordinator, will update everyone on EPA citizen science initiatives. Dr. John Wnek and MATES students will present about the BBP grant-funded “Turtle Gardens” project and the use of a story map as part of the project. CEC members offered the following suggestions for the retreat title: “Tale of the Bay,” “Telling the Story,” and “Art and Education.” The CEC discussed ideas for a group activity at the retreat and decided on having attendees review and rate photos for use on the BBP website. The invitation to the retreat will include a request to submit photos for the activity. There was also a discussion about having a BBP photo contest with different age and topic categories (such as wildlife, scenery, bay through the seasons) with prizes offered to the winners.

CCMP Revision Update

Stan gave an update on the activities of the CCMP steering committee. The committee has met several times to review the feedback from the questions sent to BBP partners and to discuss actions for the revised CCMP. Laura Bishop Communications, the consulting firm assisting with the process, is compiling the results of the meetings into a draft document, which should be done in a couple of weeks. Once completed, the document will be reviewed by the steering committee, after which it will be distributed to the BBP committees for review and comment. The BBP would like to present the draft to the Policy Committee by May. Communication actions have been part of the discussion by the steering committee and will be incorporated in the Communication Plan, which will be revised following the CCMP revision.

BBP Education Report

The farm panel from the “Protect Our Bay” poster will be used for the farm-to-table theme of this year’s festival (Sunday, June 4th). Betsy will be sending an email to the CEC for tagline ideas using this theme. Brick Wenzel, a member of the Ocean County Farm Board, did a presentation to the board about ideas for participation in the festival by local farmers and fishermen. There are also plans to have local produce and seafood at the Barnegat Bay Foundation’s Gala, which will be the Friday before the festival.

Partner Updates

NJDEP (Lynette): The Barnegat Bay Blitz will be on June 7th, the Wednesday after the festival. The festival can be the kick-off of a Barnegat Bay week and help promote the Blitz. Karen Bryne is working on bringing back the popular “Becoming an Outdoor Woman” programs. NJDEP will be issuing an RFP in February throughout the state. More than \$8 million will be available for on-the-ground clean water projects in the Barnegat Bay watershed. NJDEP will be using 319 and other funding sources, including Natural Resource Damages funding. Two information sessions will be held at Ocean County College for potential applicants after the RFP is released. Applicants will have 90 days to submit project proposals.

RCTB (Wes): Dr. Daphne Munro presented a program about the hard clam larval dispersal and recruitment project to RCTB. Dr. Steve Yergeau is filling in for the RCE marine agent until a new one is hired, which will be July at the earliest. RCTB’s open house will be on April 25th, and classes for the Shellfish Gardeners course will begin on May 2nd.

BTMUA (Shari): The Brick Plaza project is expected to start soon. A Georgian Court University student will be doing a Spanish translation of the OCSCD’s “Low-Maintenance Landscaping for the Barnegat Bay Watershed” as a service project. Shari is scheduling a series of Sunday environmental programs at the Brick Reservoir starting this spring and is looking for presenters. She posts programs and events on the BTMUA website, www.metedeconkriver.org. Shari found a website (Canfei Nesharim) with information about environmental stewardship targeting an Orthodox Jewish audience.
Action: Karen will email the url for the Canfei Nesharim website to CEC members.

Ocean County Parks (Chris Claus and GraceAnne Taylor): Chris and GraceAnne have been doing “Borrow a Naturalist” and other programs at schools. Elms Elementary School in Jackson has asked for their assistance in designing a garden.

BEAR (Mike and Debbie Bennett): BEAR is now up to 34 members in the Outdoor Adventure Club. The Bennetts bring in guest speakers about topics such as marine science and marine careers, climate change, water quality testing, forestry, and composting. Club members learn about environmental stewardship while enjoying outdoor recreational activities.

Pinelands Commission (Joel): The Pinelands Short Course is on March 11th at Stockton University. A new “summer field short course” is being planned for July 27th with lectures in the morning and field activities in the afternoon. Work on the Pinelands Commission’s new visitor center should begin by the summer. The commission printed a Pineland calendar for 2017, and Joel brought a few for CEC members.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on February 15th.

Meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.