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Barnegat Bay Partnership
Communications and Education Committee (CEC) Meeting Minutes
October 20, 2015 (9:30 a.m.) at BBP Office

Present:

Members: Wes Dalzell (ReClam the Bay), Katie Barnett (NJDEP), Shari Kondrup (BTMUA), Karen Walzer (BBP), Chris Claus (OC Parks), Becky Laboy (OCSCD), Joel Mott (Pinelands Commission); by phone: Angela Andersen (LBIF), Peter Brandt (EPA), Barbara Spinweber (EPA)

BBP Staff: Betsy Hyle

Guests: John Zingis (Citizen Representative), Lindsey Sigmund (Watershed Ambassador), Kim Belfer (Save Barnegat Bay), Mike and Debbie Bennett (BEAR), by phone: Jacalyn Woods (Tuckerton Seaport)

Members Absent: Scott Bruinooge (OCC)

Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes

Shari made a motion to approve the September 16, 2015 meeting minutes, seconded by Becky, all in favor.

Communication and Education Grant Funding Opportunity (GFO)

Karen reported that the subaward agreements have been signed and purchase orders issued for the five 2015 grants – the “green light” for work to commence. There was a discussion about potential priority topics and audiences for a 2016 GFO (total funding available is \$25,000). One suggestion was to align the CEC GFO topics with those of the recently issued STAC GFO – shellfish and water supply.

Action: Prepare a draft of the 2016 GFO.

BBP State of the Bay (SOTB) Conference

BBP science partners are working on the next *State of the Bay Report*, which will be issued in the spring of 2016. Prepared every five years, SOTB reports examine the status and trends of measurable environmental indicators, giving a picture of the overall health of the Barnegat Bay. The CEC will take the lead in deciding the format of the SOTB conference, which is to be held after the release of the 2016 report. Conference ideas discussed at the CEC meeting included pairing up educators with scientists for more public-friendly presentations, using short videos instead of PowerPoints, offering continuing education credits for attendance, and providing a choice of sessions about a variety of estuary topics of interest to the public. One suggestion was to have the conference focus on not only science but also on what people can do to help the bay. Possible conference locations (local high school, Georgian Court University, Ocean County College) and times (weekday, evening, weekend) were also discussed. The following individuals volunteered for a CEC subcommittee to work on the SOTB conference: Wes, Shari, Katie, Becky, Joel, John, and Betsy.

Action: Schedule a meeting of the SOTB planning subcommittee.

Education and Outreach Retreat

The CEC discussed planning for the 2016 retreat. A decision was made to hold the retreat in late March or early April. Suggestions included scheduling more time for networking, having an inspirational speaker, and involving attendees in the process of getting feedback from the public for the CCMP revision. There was discussion of a “What’s in it for me” theme – ideas included coming up with banner messages about actions people can take that will benefit the bay and themselves.

BBP Education Report

The BBP is partnering with the Institute on Science for Global Policy to host a two-day climate change conference, *The Shore’s Future: Living with Storms and Sea Level Rise*, on November 20-21, 2015. The CEC was asked to share information about the conference with their contacts. More debaters are needed on the first day to ask questions of the three scientists, who each submitted a position paper for the conference. On the second day, audience participants will break into caucus groups to discuss and come to a consensus on responses to three questions generated from the first day, and both moderators and scribes are needed for these caucus groups.

Jersey-Friendly Yards

Some of the demonstration sites funded by the grant have been planted; the rest are scheduled over the next few weeks. Kimberly reported that a video of the planting at the Visitation Relief Center has been posted on the Save Barnegat Bay website.

DEP Education Update

The DEP held a sea nettle outreach effort, called the “Bulkhead Blitz,” in the Silverton section of Toms River on October 19th. DEP staff and volunteers worked in lagoons identified as sea nettle hot spots, powerwashing and scrubbing docks and bulkheads. Dr. Paul Bologna collected samples before and after the work. Neighbors were supportive, and News12, NJTV, and NBC10 all covered the event.

The theme of the next rain barrel challenge is “Protect me from marine debris.” In November and December, DEP staff will be visiting participating schools to deliver the barrels and give presentations. The Barnegat Bay Blitz is scheduled for the week leading up to the Barnegat Bay Festival. The DEP will work with the CEC on a weeklong series of events up to the festival, and the Blitz results will be highlighted at the festival.

Partner Updates

Watershed Ambassador (Lindsey Sigmund): Lindsey is available to organize clean-ups throughout the watershed. She already completed one at Lake Shenandoah, and she is planning a marsh clean-up in Point Pleasant Borough on November 21. She is also working with an environmental club at Jackson Liberty High School to plant a rain garden there, and is planning a mural project at Mantoloking Bridge Park.

BEAR (Debbie and Mike Bennett): The Bennetts are working to bring the HOFNOD program to Lakewood. They plan to “train the trainers” in Lakewood and have already established connections with Jeff Shapiro in the Lakewood Recreation Department and with the Hispanic community through Lakewood Recreation Soccer.

Tuckerton Seaport (Jacalyn): The Seaport makes the connection between history, art, and the environment through its exhibits, programs, and events. Jacalyn sends email blasts to about 5,000 people and is willing to promote partner events and news.

OCSCD (Becky): The Environmental Educators Roundtable is scheduled for April 20, 2016 with the theme “We all need trees!” The district is looking for hands-on programs, preferably with no PowerPoints, for the Roundtable. Other 2016 events OCSCD will be participating in are the Envirothon in April and Trout in the Classroom field day in May.

Save Barnegat Bay (Kim): SBB is improving the demonstration garden, Janet’s Garden, at Island Beach State Park. Volunteers have been putting in all new native plants which represent the ones in the Herbarium collection. Georgian Court University interns have been adding to the collection, most of which is housed at GCU.

BTMUA (Shari): Rain gardens are being planned for Lake Carasaljo. Shari is working with Becky on an upcoming talk at Georgian Court University about “the right plant for the right place.”

Pinelands Commission (Joel): The Pinelands Short Course is scheduled for March 12, 2016. A new Pinelands Visitor Center is being installed at the Pinelands Commission office over the next two years.

Ocean County Parks (Chris): The park system is planning a “water trail” from Lake Shenandoah to Forge Pond with the waterway cleared for canoes and kayaks and a launch site established. Ocean County Park will have an “open house” event on June 12th celebrating the recreational opportunities at the park. The Bennetts are helping to organize the event.

ReClam the Bay (Wes): RCTB is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year. The organization is undergoing a restructuring this year following the departure of Geoff Flimlin (RCE Marine Extension Agent), who will be retiring after a sabbatical. Shellfish in the Classroom will continue this year; however, Wes is stepping down from managing it and others will take his place.

John Zingis: John reported the highlights of what he learned at the NOAA Planning and Facilitating Meetings workshop.

Next Meeting

The November meeting date will be rescheduled. A Doodle poll will be emailed to members to determine the best date.

Meeting adjourned at 11:55 a.m.