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**Barnegat Bay Partnership
Communications and Education Committee (CEC) Meeting Minutes
December 3, 2014 (9:30 a.m.) at BBP Office**

Present:

Members: Angela Andersen (LBIF), Wes Dalzell (ReClam the Bay), Chris Claus (OC Parks), Lynette Lurig (NJDEP), Shari Kondrup (Brick MUA), Becky Laboy (OCSCD Alternate), Karen Walzer (BBP); by phone: Peter Brandt (EPA), Barbara Spinweber (EPA Alternate), Joel Mott (Pinelands Commission), Lisa Auermuller (JCNERR)

BBP Staff: Stan Hales, Betsy Hyle, Erin Reilly

Guests: John Zingis (Citizen Representative Alternate), GraceAnne Taylor (Barnegat Bay Watershed Ambassador); Cara Muscio (COA) by phone

Members Absent: Scott Bruinooge (OCC), Helen Henderson (ALS), Chelsea Simkins (MTA)

Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes

Angela made a motion to approve the July 16th meeting minutes, seconded by Shari, all in favor. Angela made a motion to approve the September 16th meeting minutes, seconded by Wes, all in favor. Becky made a motion to approve the October 15th meeting minutes, seconded by Shari, all in favor.

CEC 2015 Meeting Schedule

There was a discussion about meeting every other month instead of monthly in 2015. After a review of our upcoming activities and projects (including the review and selection of GFO proposals, Education and Outreach Retreat, Barnegat Bay Festival), members decided to continue meeting monthly, with the exception of August and December, and to continue offering the call-in option for those who cannot always make it in person.

Watershed Ambassador Project

GraceAnne presented her proposal for a geocaching project at Brown's Woods Preserve and asked for feedback from the CEC. She proposes to set up several caches on the property through www.geocaching.com/ and use them to educate people about the bay. She also explained that many participants remove trash as they search for the caches and that they have special "Cache In, Trash Out" clean-up days. Several people already picked up litter on the beach at Brown's Woods while searching for GraceAnne's "test" cache. Chris said that Ocean County would be issuing a policy about geocaching on county property within the next couple of days and that there are caches in county parks and libraries. Lisa offered to check whether or not there is a state policy. There was a discussion about taking care not to place caches in environmentally sensitive areas. GraceAnne will be contacting the Township of Toms River, which owns the property, to discuss the project.

Communication and Education Grant Funding Opportunity (GFO)

The CEC reviewed the final revisions to the GFO and discussed tentative deadlines for submission of applications and selection of grant recipients. The GFO will be announced as soon as the Spanish translation is completed. Peter suggested branding the grant program, which was done by the Long Island Sound NEP (“Long Island Futures Fund”).

Action: Karen will email CEC members for branding name suggestions and find a translator.

STAC GFO

Jim Vasslides, BBP Program Scientist, updated the CEC about the upcoming STAC GFO, which is targeting shellfish research and restoration. The STAC Shellfish Working Group will present its recommendations at the next joint Advisory Committee/STAC meeting in December. The GFO is expected to be announced at the end of December 2014 or beginning of January 2015. The CEC discussed aligning STAC and CEC GFOs in the future.

2015 Education and Outreach Retreat

The CEC continued planning for the 2015 E & O Retreat. Members agreed to hold it in late March and suggested Island Beach State Park as the location. Ideas discussed were taking the pulse of the crowd about Barnegat Bay issues, brainstorming about National Estuary Day, and having a stewardship project as part of the retreat. Planting dune grass, doing a beach clean-up, or assisting with osprey or piping plover projects were suggested as possible stewardship activities. A citizen science theme was also discussed.

Action: Karen will determine the final date and venue and contact potential science speakers.

DEP Education Update

The date of the 2015 Barnegat Bay Blitz has been set for June 3rd, which is 4 days before the Barnegat Bay Festival. Watershed Ambassador Day, which will be in late March, coincides with the anniversary of the DEP’s initiative to stop illegal dumping at state parks. Lynette, Katie Barnett, and Kyra Hoffmann (DEP) and Sandy Huber (Clean Communities) met with DOT about a proposed “Adopt a Stormwater Basin” program, which would be similar to the “Adopt a Highway” program. DOT, which has designated 2015 the “year of the environment,” will have an application process to adopt a basin and provide safety training. Groups adopting a basin will remove litter. The CEC discussed how the program will provide opportunities for education about stormwater basins.

Rain Barrel Program

Shari provided information about Rain Water Solutions, a company which offers municipalities and organizations a comprehensive program to make it easier for residents to order rain barrels. The company sets up a url, does the marketing, and handles the ordering of the barrels. Shari has been researching rain barrel options for the Brick MUA, which is planning stormwater outreach as part of the implementation of the Metedeconk Watershed Management Plan. She also updated the CEC about other implementation actions underway or in planning, including a basin in Howell, stormwater management project at Brick Plaza, Lake Carasaljo project, and model stormwater ordinance. Shari also shared information about Monarch Flyway, a company that buys milkweed plant parts (*e.g.*, the fluff is used in pillows).

BBP Education Updates

The Pete McLain tribute video has been completed and will be on YouTube within the next couple of days. George Stover of *Aqua Kids* has asked if we are interested in developing a curriculum to go along with the Barnegat Bay episodes filmed here during the summer. Ocean County Parks will be providing the vans again for the Barnegat Bay Festival on June 7th. This year the Island Heights firehouse is not available for festival parking, and Betsy is examining other options. The Barnegat Bay Foundation will co-sponsor the festival again. Ideas under consideration for the festival or the day before are a paddleboard race, paddleboard workshop, and regatta. Betsy is meeting with contacts at Ocean County College about displaying the poster artwork by Kathy English at the college.

Erin gave a summary of the BBP's planned Shoreline Assessment tool for citizen scientists. Volunteers will be recruited to collect by boat data about the condition of the shoreline, and there will be a three-year rotation of sites. The data will be used to identify potential restoration sites and research needs, as well as trends over time. Education about the impacts of development and sea-level rise on wetlands will also be part of the project.

Partner Sharing

OC Parks (Chris): There will be a Winter Solstice Celebration at Cattus Island Park.

BBP Citizen Representative (John Zingis): John suggested contacting the Ocean County Library system about distribution of the *Low Maintenance Landscaping Guide for the Barnegat Bay Watershed* at all the branches.

ReClam the Bay (Wes): Wes discussed the possibility of partners working together to submit a proposal to an upcoming EPA education grant program.

Long Beach Township (Angela): Long Beach Township received its Sustainable Jersey certification and is one of only four municipalities certified in the watershed.

Next CEC meeting

The next meeting will be in January of 2015, date to be determined.