

**Barnegat Bay National Estuary Program –
Putting All the Pieces Together**

**A Communication and Outreach Plan to Support
the BBNEP 2008-2011 Strategic Plan**

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Background

The Barnegat Bay National Estuary Program (BBNEP) is a partnership of federal, state, county, municipal, academic, business, non-profit, and private organizations working together to protect and restore the natural resources of the Barnegat Bay ecosystem.

In 2002, the BBNEP's Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) for the estuary was approved by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The CCMP was intended to address all uses affecting the restoration and maintenance of the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the estuary. In 2007, BBNEP stakeholders engaged in a strategic planning process to assess progress on the CCMP and developed a revised set of priorities which reflect the changes in the estuary's condition and emerging threats. The resulting 2008-2011 Strategic Plan was approved by the BBNEP's Policy Committee and signed by more than 50 stakeholders in May 2008. The BBNEP's 2008-2011 Strategic Plan (see Appendix for additional details) identifies five priority issues:

- Improving the capacity of the BBNEP office and strengthening its working relationships with partners to identify, evaluate and provide and initiate and support possible remedies which address priority issues; and
- Improving our recognition and understanding of the bay's condition, and addressing the causes of water quality degradation within the ecosystem, especially eutrophication in the bay and storm water and non-point source pollution in the watershed.
- Addressing water supply and flow issues that affect the bay and watershed;
- Preventing habitat loss, especially of submerged aquatic vegetation, and supporting habitat restoration; and
- Improving understanding of, and addressing, fisheries declines.

Purpose of the Communications Plan

The Barnegat Bay watershed is fortunate to have a number of well-established and active organizations which implement various forms of public education and outreach programs on watershed and estuary related topics. Historically, these organizations have formed successful working partnerships to carry out various projects and programs. However, a consistent and structured coordination mechanism has never been established for this diverse group of outreach and education practitioners. The need existed for more consistent coordination and communication between these various groups and their programs.

The purposes of BBNEP's Communications Plan are to establish clear objectives, approaches, and methods to engage distinct target audiences that are important to protecting the Barnegat Bay ecosystem. The Communication Plan defines a strategy for effectively leveraging and coordinating the efforts of all communication and outreach practitioners working in the Barnegat Bay watershed.

Additionally, the Communication Plan will facilitate implementation of the BBNEP 2008-2011 Strategic Plan, as well as effectively and consistently communicate information to the public about the five priorities identified in the plan.

Goal and Objectives

The goal of the Communication Plan is to identify ways to enhance and improve the BBNEP's communication, outreach, and public involvement for the next three to five years.

To achieve these goals, the BBNEP has established the following specific objectives:

- Support the objectives of the Strategic Plan;
- Improve coordination among partner organizations to minimize duplication, while leveraging additional education and outreach opportunities;
- Effect better two-way interaction with stakeholders and target audiences;
- Brand the BBNEP image;
- Establish BBNEP recognition for all projects, programs and events that are part of the CCMP and funded in all/or part by the BBNEP; and
- Provide for measurable outcomes and regular evaluation.

Current BBNEP Program Office Education and Outreach Activities

Public participation, education, and outreach are central to the BBNEP's mission to protect and restore the Barnegat Bay. In addition to cooperating with and supporting its partners on various public outreach and education initiatives, the BBNEP Program Office takes the lead on a range of activities.

A hallmark of the program is *The Barnegat Bay Beat*, our quarterly newsletter on watershed wide ecosystem-related issues and activities. In 2009, the distribution of *The Barnegat Bay Beat* is 2,500 paper copies and approximately 400 e-mail subscriptions. The newsletter is also sent out in bulk distribution to area libraries and other public places. The newsletter is also available for download from the BBNEP's website, www.bbnep.org.¹

¹ In November 2009, *The Barnegat Bay Beat* was awarded the "Outstanding Communications for 2009" award by the New Jersey Association of Conservation Districts. The nomination was submitted the Ocean County Soil Conservation District.

In 2009, the BBNEP Program Office conducted an evaluation of *The Barnegat Bay Beat* using a survey of readers to gain a better understanding of the value of newsletter, including preferences on topic coverage, format, and content. The survey received a roughly 10% response rate. A majority of respondents indicated that: (1) they value the articles found in the newsletter, (2) they feel more informed and more willing to engage others in conversation about the bay based on knowledge gleaned from reading *The Barnegat Bay Beat*, and (3) they welcome additional articles regarding how individual readers could have a positive impact on the bay.

Strategy:

Incorporate at least one article into each edition of *The Barnegat Bay Beat* informing readers of actions they can take that relate to the Strategic Plan.

In addition to the quarterly newsletter, the BBNEP Program Office has produced a variety of printed materials over the years including the State of the Bay Technical Report and public summary document, storm water and non point source pollution brochures, “Give Back to the Bay” posters, wildlife posters (most recently with a corresponding web-related tool), fact sheets, products for educators, children’s coloring/activity books, and other promotional materials (e.g., “Barnegat Bay, Respect It, Protect It” bumper stickers).

Another important medium for providing information to the general public on Barnegat Bay and the estuary program is BBNEP’s website, www.bbnep.org. The BBNEP website is currently undergoing a comprehensive renovation with an expected launch date for the new and improved website in Spring 2010. The new website, the newsletter, and all other future BBNEP print materials will display the new BBNEP “brand” image. (See “BBNEP Branding” section below for more information.) The website will also include a web portal for critical science and technical data and reports along with an interactive watershed mapping feature.

Strategy:

Review the website before launch and periodically thereafter to ensure that all BBNEP funded projects are prominently displayed.

The BBNEP website also serves as the home for the Barnegat Bay Speakers Bureau, a directory of expert lecturers and professionals on a wide range of bay-related topics. The Barnegat Bay Speakers Bureau is maintained by the Program Office to assist the public in contacting speakers for classroom programs, club meetings, or other events.

Since the BBNEP’s inception, the Program Office annually coordinate, funds, and administers the Public Participation and Education Minigrant Program, which provides small grant funding (\$1,000 - \$7,500) for activities with a strong public education and/or participation component which support the CCMP and Strategic Plan. The minigrant program funds an average of 7 projects annually with approximately \$30-35,000

(depending on work plan budgets). This grant program is the BBNEP primary mechanism for engaging and involving small organizations in carrying out the program’s mission to a wide-range of audiences throughout the watershed.

To further engage the general public, the BBNEP Office staff organizes the annual Barnegat Bay Festival, which is the BBNEP’s largest and signature public event. In partnership with a number of our public and private partners, the festival is held on the first Sunday in June. Over the last 12 years, attendance has continued to grow with over an estimated 3,000 attendees in 2009.

In February 2009, the Program Office convened the “First Annual Education and Outreach Retreat.” The retreat brought together education and outreach professionals working on Barnegat Bay-related topics to discuss their work and how to better improve their coordination and messaging. The 2010 Education and Outreach Retreat was held in January; nearly all attendees recommended that the event be held annually.

Strategy:
Tie the annual Education and Outreach Retreat to one or more Communication Plan objectives through concrete actions.

Finally, the Program Office also serves as central point for getting important news about Barnegat Bay watershed related issues and activities into the media via newsprint, radio, and local TV. Several radio stations, as well as the large regional newspapers, regularly pick up and cover news releases sent to them by the Program Office.

BBNEP Branding

Aside from the creation of its logo, the BBNEP had not previously undertaken a comprehensive branding/imaging effort. As a result, many of its products do not have a consistent look and are not instantly recognizable as having been produced by the BBNEP or being associated with the BBNEP. To address this issue, the Program Office solicited a request for proposals for a “Branding and Style Guide Project” and selected the Raven and Crow Studio (Brooklyn, New York). Deliverables include a logo redesign, a comprehensive style guide for the use of the logo on a wide variety of BBNEP materials, and product templates (*i.e.*, newsletter design, website header). The anticipated completion date of this branding effort is spring 2010.

Strategy:
Implement the style guide recommendations on all communications to ensure consistency among and recognizability of BBNEP products and efforts.

Putting the Pieces Together: Survey of BBNEP Education and Outreach Partners

As a follow-up to the first Education and Outreach retreat, the BBNEP conducted an online survey of 47 partner organizations during the summer 2009. This survey was

administered in order to further assess the current education and outreach taking place in the Barnegat Bay watershed and to identify areas where there are opportunities to improve education efforts. The survey collected detailed information about outreach and education topic areas, target audiences, and the “tools” and methods utilized. Thirty partners (64% of those asked; see Table 1) participated in the survey.

Table 1. Participants in the BBNEP Education and Outreach Survey.

Organization	Website
Alliance for a Living Ocean	www.livingocean.org
American Littoral Society	www.littoralsociety.org
Cattus Island County Park	www.oceancountyparks.org
Clean Ocean Action	www.cleanoceanaction.org
Double Trouble State Park	www.njparksandforests.org
Forest Resource Education Center	www.njforestrycenter.org
Jackson Township Environmental Commission	www.jacksontownshipnj.net
Jacques Cousteau Natl. Estuar. Research Reserve	www.jcnerr.org
LBI Foundation of the Arts and Sciences	www.lbifscience.org
League of Women Voters	www.LWVNJ.org
Marine Academy of Technology and Environmental Science	www.ocvts.org
Marine Trades Association of New Jersey	www.mtanj.org
Natural Resource Education Foundation	www.experiencebarnegatbay.org
New Jersey Audubon	www.njaudubon.org
NJDEP Division of Fish and Wildlife	www.njfishandwildlife.com
NJDEP Division of Water Supply	www.nj.gov/dep/watersupply/
NJDEP Division of Water Monitoring and Standards, Volunteer Water Monitoring	www.state.nj.us/dep/wms/bfbm/vm/
Ocean County College	www.ocean.edu
Ocean County Parks	www.oceancountyparks.org
Ocean County Public Affairs and Tourism	www.co.ocean.nj.us www.OceanCountyTourism.com
Ocean County Soil Conservation District	www.ocscd.org
Pinelands Preservation Alliance	www.ppa.org
Point Pleasant Environmental Commission	www.env.ptboro.com
Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Ocean County	ocean.njaes.rutgers.edu
Save Barnegat Bay	www.savebarnegatbay.org
Sedge Island Natural Resource Education Center	www.sedgeisland.org
Toms River Regional Schools	www.trschools.com
Tuckerton Seaport (Barnegat Bay Decoy and Baymen's Museum)	www.tuckertonseaport.org
Urban Coast Institute	www.monmouth.edu/urban_coast_institute

Outreach and Education Topic Areas

Survey participants were asked whether or not their outreach covered each of 22 topic areas. The 22 topic areas were developed with input from attendees at the first annual Education and Outreach Retreat in February 2009 and later fine-tuned by the BBNEP Communication Plan Work Group. Of the 22 topic areas used in the survey, seven directly correspond to the four environmental priority issue areas from the 2008-2011 BBNEP Strategic Plan (represented in bold below).

Table 1: Topic area coverage across all target audiences. Specific topic areas are listed within general categories in decreasing order of coverage. Topic areas in bold directly correspond to the four environmental priorities identified in the BBNEP 2008-2011 Strategic Plan.	
Specific Topic Area	Percentage of Survey Participants Covering this Topic
<u>Water Quality</u>	
Nonpoint source pollution and eutrophication	96.7%
Water quality	86.7%
Stormwater management and stormwater BMPs	60%
<u>Water Supply</u>	
Watersheds	93.3%
Water conservation and supply	82.8%
Low-maintenance/bay-friendly landscaping	76.7%
Groundwater (including aquifers)	70%
Geology and Soil	53.3%
<u>Habitat Issues</u>	
Habitat loss and restoration	86.7%
Land use planning and sustainability	73.7%
Land preservations and acquisition	60%
Climate change and sea level rise	51.6%
<u>Living Resources</u>	
Watershed wildlife	83.3%
Invasive species (plants and animals)	76.7%
Fisheries and fisheries decline	50%
<u>Ecology</u>	
Estuaries and estuarine ecology	80.6%
Wetlands and salt marsh ecology	62.1%
Barrier island ecology	61.3%
Pinelands ecology	53.3%
Oceans	51.7%
<u>Other</u>	
Recreation and tourism	72.4%
Regional history / traditional uses	60%

The BBNEP partners consistently deliver education and outreach on water-quality-related topics, which are the Strategic Plan’s highest priority. Given the overlapping coverage of topic areas related to the Strategic Plan by many of the survey respondents, once implementation projects are completed a variety of BBNEP partners can be engaged in providing outreach and education about the efforts and results. Improved coordination by the BBNEP office at that time can lead to a streamlining of efforts, reduction of potential redundancies, and the creation of new partnerships.

Strategy:
Gather partners together to identify areas of overlap and discuss ways to minimize duplication of efforts while maintaining a high level of interaction.

Strategy:
Further examine and assess outreach efforts on topics which few partners address (e.g., climate changes, fisheries); then revise and prioritize education and outreach efforts on those topics as necessary.

Outreach on other strategic plan topics is lower and more variable, with outreach on fisheries being the least of any topic area. The BBNEP program office should prioritize education and outreach efforts on these topics to ensure that all of the BBNEP’s priority areas are adequately addressed.

Outreach and Education Target Audiences

Survey respondents were asked to identify which audiences they focus on via their respective education and outreach efforts. The target audiences are grouped *post hoc* into general categories based on similarities in membership interests. For example, the general public, students, educators, tourists, and some smaller groups were grouped into the general education category; homeowners, new residents, and senior citizens were grouped in to the residential outreach category (See Table 2). The grouping of audiences into these categories provided a convenient approach for recognizing patterns in the delivery of outreach and education activities. Such groupings were especially helpful in recognizing the overall focus of the collective outreach and for identifying audiences and topics which receive little attention from partners overall.

Strategy:
Identify partners who focus on seemingly underserved target audiences and assess the effectiveness of their outreach efforts, providing enhancements, if necessary.

The general education groups received the most outreach from survey respondents; outreach to large audiences, such as the general public, students and teachers, was provided by 83-91% of BBNEP partners (Table 2). Smaller general education groups (e.g., scouts and youth leaders) received educational programming and other outreach from considerably fewer partners. Residential audiences (*i.e.*,

homeowners, new residents, seniors, and landscaping personnel) received programming from a high percentage of, but fewer outreach partners. The focus on this group is likely the result of the extensive efforts to communicate the importance of fertilizer practices and low-impact landscaping throughout the watershed. Most other target audience categories (e.g., decision makers, corporate groups, and water-resource users) received outreach from 29–40% of outreach partners. Some of these groups are potentially important audiences which must be engaged to protect the bay; the need for additional outreach to these audiences should be further evaluated and carefully considered. Lastly, Spanish-speaking residents consistently received the least attention from any partners; this should be addressed in recognition of the tremendous growth of this group within some towns in the watershed. Additional details regarding outreach audiences are provided in Table 2.

Table 2: Audiences targeted by survey respondents through their education and outreach efforts across all topic areas. The percentage of survey respondents targeting a specific audience across all topic areas is identified in parentheses ().

General Education (mean= 68%)	Residential Outreach (mean= 51%)	Decision Makers (mean= 40%)	Corporate Outreach (mean= 29%)	Water - Resource Users (mean= 31%)	Other (mean= 31%)
General public (90%)	Homeowners (59%)	Elected officials (45%)	Business leaders (34%)	Boaters / boating industry (34%)	Spanish-speaking residents (10%)
Educators (83%)	New residents (41%)	Municipal Appointees (38%)	Builders and Developers (31%)	Recreational users of water resources (45%)	NGOs (52%)
Students (86%)	Senior citizens (59%)	Municipal staff (41%)	Realtors (21%)	Commercial fishermen (14%)	
Youth leaders (38%)	Landscapers and grounds-maintenance personnel (45%)	Resource managers (34%)			
Scouts (59%)					
Tourists (52%)					

Finally, the BBNEP Program Office should: (1) encourage partners to work with the seemingly “underserved” audiences through the mini-grant program, and (2) develop additional education and outreach efforts targeted on these audiences.

Strategy:
Further assess and develop outreach to small but influential audiences which receive little attention from most partners, but are potentially important to protecting and restoring the bay.

Target Audiences by Topic Area

The survey also identified the topic areas delivered to different audiences by BBNEP partners. These data are useful for examining the appropriateness of topics delivered to different audiences. For example, students, educators, the general public, and homeowners were the most targeted audiences for specific topic areas of water quality, including nonpoint-source pollution and stormwater management. Surprisingly, these topics were not presented by many partners to groups such as builders and landscapers, which may be equally important audiences for such topics.

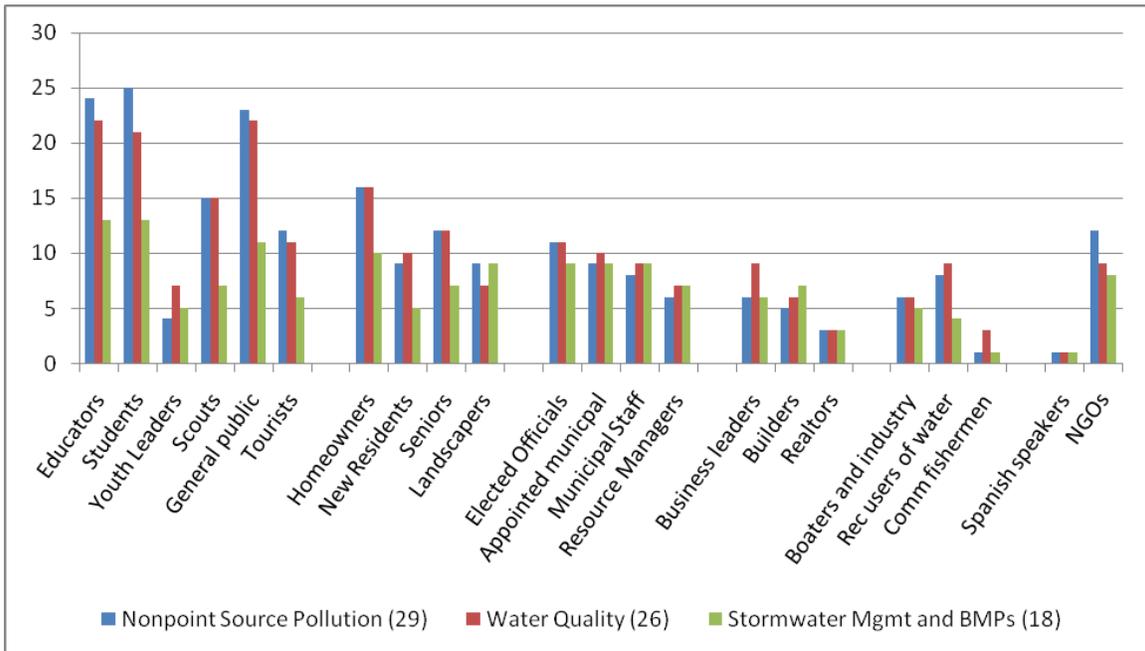


Figure 1. Number of survey participants providing outreach to each target audience for Water Quality issues. The number in parentheses identifies how many respondents indicated they provided outreach in that specific topic area.

Overall, outreach to date has focused on general audiences with low individual but high cumulative impacts. For example, students, educators, and the general public are the most frequently targeted audience for all topic areas. While this may make sense for some topics, such as those which are primarily informational in nature (the ecology topics), it may not be as effective as outreach to audiences (such as legislators and municipal officials) which are in a position to take actions with broad effects via regulatory, funding, or legislative actions. While the partners provide moderate levels of outreach to some key audiences on some topics (e.g., landscapers and grounds maintenance personnel in the area of low-maintenance/bay-friendly landscaping), outreach to

Strategy:

Work with partners to identify the most critical and effective target audiences for each topic area; then, refine existing and develop future programs with partners to deliver outreach to those influential audiences.

most other groups is delivered more variably and by fewer partners. Clearly, additional discussion regarding the need to engage partners in additional outreach to key audiences warrants additional discussion and evaluation.

Education and Outreach “Tools” Utilized for Target Audiences

Survey participants were asked to identify, from a list of 13 provided choices, which education and outreach methodologies or tools they use for each target audience. The methodology choices provided in this question were presented in the following order: N/A (indicates that you do not outreach to this target audience), workshops, conferences, technical assistance, websites, list serves, social-networking tools, online courses, newsletters, print materials, exhibits, recreational programs, and guest lectures.

The tools that are most often employed by partners for the three most targeted audiences (general public, students, and educators) across all topic areas are print materials and guest lectures (Figure 2). Workshops are used more often for educators, and recreational programs are used more often for students (Figure 2). Online courses were not used with any of these audiences, a surprising finding given the number of educational institutions which are partners and the widespread partner focus on outreaching to student audiences.

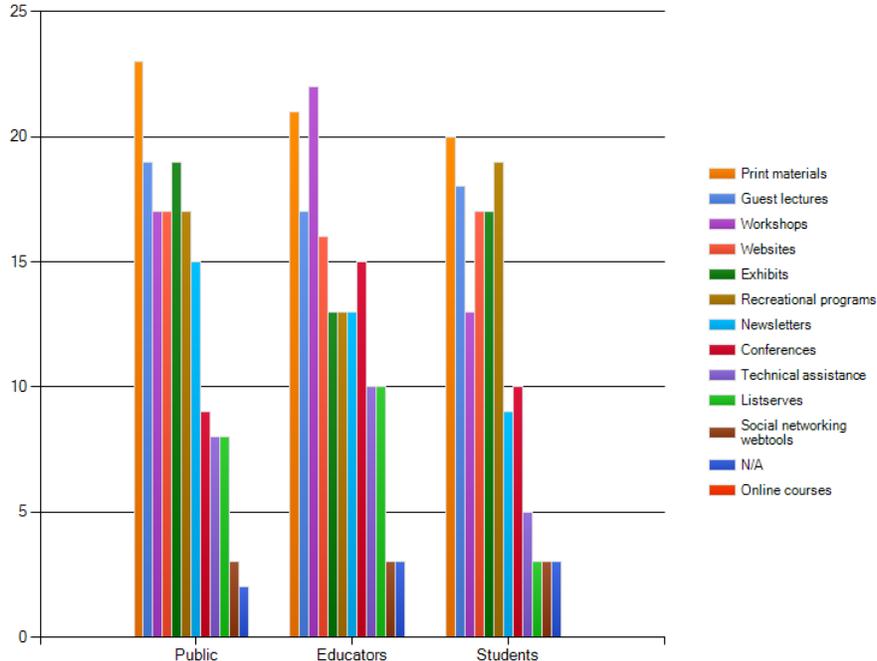


Figure 2. Outreach methods used for the three most common audiences.

The tools which are consistently used by partners for more specific target audiences include print materials (mean=10), websites (mean=9), workshops, guest lectures, newsletters, and recreational programs (means=8) (Figure 3). Tools which are less

utilized included list serves (mean=5), technical assistance (mean=4), and online courses (mean <1).

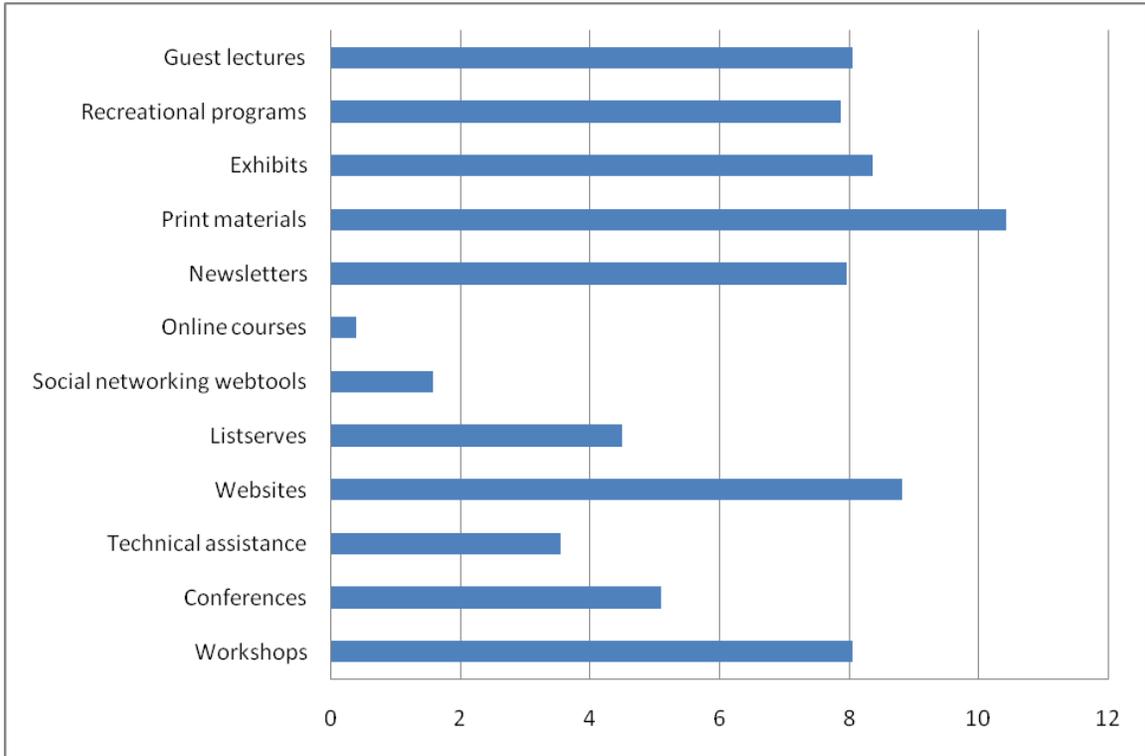


Figure 3: Outreach methods used across all target audiences.

The most widely used outreach tools have their broadest applicability to the “general” audience, though some, such as workshops and guest lectures, can also be used to educate the “influential” audiences which receive little outreach. Some of the lesser-used tools, including technical assistance and online courses, lend themselves to smaller audiences. This is particularly true for those in the “decision makers” category, who may need assistance translating general ideas and guidance into action, or need specific, detailed information which may be inappropriate or overly technical for general distribution.

Strategy:
 Identify and work with those partners providing outreach to key target audiences to identify the most effective methods for educating and providing outreach to those groups.

Strategy:
 Work with key partners to identify target audiences which would benefit from electronic outreach techniques, such as online courses and list serves.

Given the Program office’s association with Ocean County College, the utility of online courses to select audiences should be investigated. These audiences may also benefit from list serves, which would allow them to interact with others who may have similar questions or information needs, and receive responses (and hopefully ideas and encouragement) from those who have the knowledge and expertise in that area.

Survey Conclusions

The survey indicates that most BBNEP partners are providing outreach on key water quality topics to general audiences throughout the watershed. This is an important finding and confirms the efforts of the BBNEP and its partners. Several key areas for further exploration and follow-up were identified during the survey. They should be viewed as important “next steps” and will be pursued in preparation of future annual retreats. They include:

- Continually working with key partners on specific and practical issues to improve aspects of outreach and education (see “Strategies” highlighted above);
- Continuing to update and improve the data garnered from this first survey through annual or bi-annual survey updates;
- Tailoring the annual Public Participation and Education Minigrant Program to support areas which, based on the data, would benefit from additional attention or support.

The Communication Plan Action Items Matrices

Recommended actions to support the BBNEP Communication Plan are being presented in a series of matrices. The format of the matrices follows the Action Priorities in the BBNEP 2008-2011 Strategic Plan.

The first matrix Priority Area #1 was developed specifically to address activities for the BBNEP Program Office to: “Improve the capacity of the BBNEP Program office and strengthen its working relationship with partners to address priority issues. “ A number of the actions are currently underway. The remaining matrices for Priority Areas 2 through 5 were developed to support specific education and outreach activities as they related to the Strategic Plan. These Communication Plan Actions could be implemented by the BBNEP Program office or any of our partners. Finally, it should also be noted that detailed scopes of work (SOW) will need to be developed by the BBNEP Program Office and other partners to implement the recommendations, and achieve the desired outcomes.

Communications Plan Action Items: Priority Area 1 “- Improve the capacity of the BBNEP Program Office and strengthen its working relationship with partners to address priority issues. “

CPA# SPA#	Priority Action	Recommendations	Next Steps	Outcomes	Timeline	Suggested Tools/Resources	Status & Evaluation
CPA# 1.1 SPA# P6 SPA# P8 SPA# P11	Coordinating and Collaborating On Watershed Outreach and Education with partners	Host yearly retreat for all Education & Outreach Professionals	Develop 2010 retreat theme based on survey data Conduct annually Discuss Program Office and Partner SWOT document (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats)	More effective and coordinated communications both within the Barnegat Bay Education and Outreach network and to the various target audiences.	January 2010	Survey Monkey online survey tool Information summaries from previous years retreats Communication and Education Committee	Completed then ongoing annually
		Maintain & Update Information on watershed outreach and education	Establish annual update protocols		Bi-annually	Bi-annual survey, 1 to 1 or small group discussions	Completed for 2009 and 2010; next update will be in 2011.
		Formally establish the BBNEP Communications and Education Committee under the BBNEP Advisory Committee	See description and responsibilities of sub-committee included in 2010 BBNEP MOA	More effective and coordinated communications	Fall/Winter 2009	BBNEP MOA	Completed
CPA# 1.2 SPA# P9 SPA# P10 SPA# P11 SPA# WQ8D SPA#	Developing Additional Education & Outreach Opportunities as needed	Identify areas of audience overlap and gaps	Using survey results and in consultation with the CEC develop new outreach materials	New materials that address current Strategic Plan Actions and issues	Ongoing	www.cwp.org-secondary surveys from Center for Watershed Protection <u>Network Health Scorecard</u>	

CPA# SPA#	Priority Action	Recommendations	Next Steps	Outcomes	Timeline	Suggested Tools/Resources	Status & Evaluation
WQ10 CPA# 1.2 (Cont) SPA# WQ10A SPA# WS5 SPA# H5 SPA# H9 SPA# H9A SPA# H9B SPA# F4	Developing Additional Education & Outreach Opportunities as needed	Prioritize audiences/topics; refocus efforts if needed	Present Communication Survey to CEC; come to priority consensus	Better leveraging opportunities, New Initiatives	2010-2011		
		Promote added emphasis on Fisheries education and outreach	Work with the Fisheries Work Group and NGOs to develop materials	Better awareness regarding fisheries issues in the Bay/Watershed	2010-2011		
		Explore underserved audiences, and create new initiatives where necessary	Use the Communication Plan to identify underserved audiences and determine which partners match up best	Additional or new outreach efforts to historically underserved audiences in the watershed		Tailor the annual Public Participation and Education Mini- grant Program to support areas which would benefit from additional attention or support	
		Explore new target, audience, or topic specific methods	Discuss survey results and novel methods in consultation with the CEC to develop new outreach materials	New materials that address current Strategic Plan Actions and issues	Ongoing	Sponsorship & Faculty Advisement for OCC based Water Watch Group would allow continuation of program on OCC campus under BBNEP direction using non-paid volunteers	
CPA# 1.3 SPA# P4 SPA# P8 SPA# P9 SPA# P10	Reviving Citizen Involvement	Redefine and strengthen Citizen Member Position on the Policy Committee	Take formal action on proposal of the Communication and Education Committee	Re-engage citizen participation and input	2009 --2010	BBNEP MOA	Evaluation by BBNEP AC and CEC after first term of new Citizen member Position ends

CPA# SPA#	Priority Action	Recommendations	Next Steps	Outcomes	Timeline	Suggested Tools/Resources	Status & Evaluation
SPA# P11 SPA# WQ6G SPA# WQ7 SPA# WQ8D SPA# WQ10 SPA# WS5	Reviving Citizen Involvement	Establish new partnerships	Strengthen relationship with area Chambers of Commerce	New partnerships and opportunities	2009-2011	http://www.acb-online.org/b4b/downloads/Pollution_Prvention_Workbook.pdf	# of Chamber membership
			Support the expansion of Bay Buddy Program	Greater individual awareness and stewardship	2010-2011		# of new businesses joining Bay Buddy program
		Establish mechanism for people to submit comments and suggestions to program office	Development of website tool and other web-based opportunities i.e. Facebook	Increased two way interaction with interested members of the public	2010	BBNEP website and potentially other partner website tools	Not yet initiated. Evaluation: automatically-generated evaluation can be sent to users to provide feedback on effectiveness of these tools.
		Create and maintain program office system to support constant communication with E&O partners and ability to forward information to their email lists	Creation of new tool to share partner communications via email or website	Enhanced communication between all partners	2010-2011	A BB Watershed Calendar of Events (*Be sure to coordinate w/ OC Travel & Tourism) BBNEP website technical support (SunGuard HE)	Status: Not yet started. Evaluation: Partners are able to post appropriate events and information to BBNEP website or emailed to BBNEP distribution lists within 48

CPA# SPA#	Priority Action	Recommendations	Next Steps	Outcomes	Timeline	Suggested Tools/Resources	Status & Evaluation
							hours of notification.
CPA# 1.4 SPA# P1 SPA# P2 SPA# P11 SPA# H7	Establishing a Trust or Foundation to support expansion of Program Office outreach	Develop fundraising strategy and plan	Facilitate transition from BBWEF to new (501c3) – establish & manage/ BOD, IRS requirements	Establishment of a fundraising arm to the Program. Improved ability to generate unrestricted funds	2009-2010		Ongoing
		Establish mechanism and procedure for large donations	Approved Donation Policy	Transparent policy on the acceptance and use of outside funding	Completed 2009	Completed	“Give a Buck for the Bay– people pay \$1 “Businesses for the Bay” (B4B) (Appendix 7) Develop a recognition program for businesses that donate Chesapeake Alliance – B4B
CPA# 1.5 SPA# P4 SPA# P7 SPA# P11	Creating and Maintaining Consistent and Straightforward Messaging from BBNEP Program Office	Build a “ Brand” for the BBNEP Program Office that would support consistency in all education and outreach materials as well as strengthen image of BBNEP to potential donors, supporters, new	Develop new logo and brand style guide for use in all BBNEP communications	Consistent message and image from BBNEP that would be shared by all partners in their communications as well	In Process- Completion Date Spring/Summer 2010	Professional branding consultants Media/press relations following completion of new brand	Nov. 2009- Contract Awarded Expected completion Spring/ Summer 2010

CPA# SPA#	Priority Action	Recommendations	Next Steps	Outcomes	Timeline	Suggested Tools/Resources	Status & Evaluation
1.5 (con't)		partners				Unveiling of outreach tools with new brand at signature event.	
		Re-design Website	Redesign website; Improve system capabilities; facilitate inclusion of all reports, case studies, research, committee meeting minutes, resources, events, etc. from BBNEP Program and partners. Establish reciprocal links with all municipalities; establish home page message	Updated website for all BB related information provides broader outreach	(Spring/Summer 2010) Weekly Maintenance and Update	BBNEP website technical support (SunGuard HE)	In Process
		Evaluate/assess current BBNEP Program Office Public Outreach Initiatives through formal and informal survey methods	Newsletter evaluation	Better understanding of Barnegat Bay Beat readership and their interests	(Summer 2009)	Survey Monkey online survey tool.	Completed
			Obtain Festival feedback from participants, vendors, exhibitors	Evaluation of Festival activities and strengths/ weaknesses	Annually after the Festival	Personal contact, surveys and email follow-up	Ongoing

CPA# SPA#	Priority Action	Recommendations	Next Steps	Outcomes	Timeline	Suggested Tools/Resources	Status & Evaluation
CPA# 1.6	Develop an Annual Report that would focus on accomplishments, explanation of financials, photos, partner highlights, and what lies ahead and how interested parties can help.	Evaluate publishing a special edition of Barnegat Bay Beat	Discuss with Communication and Outreach subcommittee; set date for publication	An annual report to keep the public and interested parties better informed of progress within the watershed between State of The Bay report.	Beginning in 2011		

BBNEP Communications Plan Action Items – Supports BBNEP Strategic Plan Actions (SPA) for Priority Areas 2 through 4

PRIORITY AREA #2: WATER QUALITY AND EUTROPHICATION

Strategic Objective: Improve our recognition and understanding of the bay’s condition, and address the causes of water quality degradation within the ecosystem, especially eutrophication in the bay and stormwater and nonpoint source pollution in the watershed.

Strategic Plan Action	Subject Matter	Action/Tasks (Suggested)	Outcomes	Partners & Opportunities	Timeline	Ideas and Resources
WQ5	Inclusion of education and outreach component in the science and research underway by partners	Generate non-technical articles for public consumption	Guidelines for obtaining information for public from BBNEP partners: the “bottom line.” (link to scientific resources on BBNEP website)	STAC grant recipients, other partners	Ongoing	
		Additional staff training in science communications	Staff ability to clearly and effectively relay science to the general public	BBNEP Program Office	Ongoing	“Communicating Science Effectively” @JCNERR
		Require education and outreach component in all BBNEP funded activities	Creation of project specific education and outreach material	All BBNEP funded projects	Implemented Ongoing	
WQ8D WQ10	Gather existing outreach materials from partners specific to water quality and eutrophication	Request copies of BB-related publications from partners.	BBNEP awareness of related outreach initiatives	E&O Partners: Esp. RCE, ALS, SBB, COA NJDEP – DWM, etc.	Ongoing	
		Organize and store materials for BBNEP staff reference	Available materials centralized in one location	BBNEP PO	OCC intern to catalog (winter 09-10)	Create BB E&O Publications Library
		Link to web-based materials via revised website	Electronically available materials centralized in one location	BBNEP PO	Ongoing with launch of redesigned website	

PRIORITY AREA #2: WATER QUALITY AND EUTROPHICATION (con't)

Strategic Plan Action	Subject Matter	Action/Tasks (Suggested)	Outcomes	Partners & Opportunities	Timeline	Ideas and Resources
WQ8 WQ8D WQ10 WQ6G	Phase II Coordination with Municipalities	Support participation in NEMO program	Greater awareness at the local municipal level	Local municipalities	Ongoing	NEMO – Nonpoint Education for Municipal Officials – Rutgers University
		Coordination w/ OCPD & Partners to provide training and assistance to municipalities	All BB municipalities receive training and have met Phase II requirements	ANJEC, OCPD, CRSSA, RCE/Water Resources, JCNERRS, BBNEP Stormwater Steering Committee		
		Support the implementation of municipal outreach sessions with local planning departments /agencies	Greater awareness at the local municipal level			“mini-summits”
		Conduct joint projects with municipalities	Greater awareness at the local municipal level and a stronger relationship with BBNEP	ANJEC, OCPD, CRSSA, RCE/Water Resources, JCNERRS, BBNEP Stormwater Steering Committee		Funding: stormwater implementation grant program, BBNEP Mini grants
WQ5 WQ6G WQ10C	Soil Health Issues	Soil Health/Blue Card Training workshops Demonstration Sites	Guidelines and specifications for soil restoration County-wide Soil Restoration Ordinance BMPs for soil restoration	OCSCD - Lead, JCNERRS, NJDEP, BBNEP, RCE, State Soil Health Committee	2010-11	King County, WA soil restoration guide

PRIORITY AREA #3: WATER SUPPLY AND INPUT

Strategic Objective: Address water supply and flow issues that affect the bay and watershed.

Strategic Plan Action	Subject Matter	Action/Tasks (Suggested)	Outcomes	Partners & Opportunities	Timeline	Ideas & Resources
WS5	Connect BBNEP to all water purveyors and MUAs	BBNEP request water supply details from water purveyors and MUAs	Detailed inventory of water supply data	OCPD, OCUA, NJDEP, USGS, Municipalities	TBD	State Water Supply Plan
		Examine Master Plans for OC & Municipalities	Coordinated water conservation initiatives	OCPD, OCUA, Municipalities		Utilize NJDEP outreach materials
WS5	Support county-wide water conservation initiatives	Broadcast key message “Make Every Drop Count”	Shared and consistent water conservation message	OCUA, BTMUA, OCSCD, RCE, OCLWV, SJRC&D – RISE network	TBD	See Culver Co. for water related PR ideas.
		Provide Rain Barrels/Workshops	Increased water conservation by homeowners			
WS5	Maximize infiltration of stormwater to allow for recharge of groundwater and stream flow	Provide information regarding the benefits of storm basin retrofits	Increased interest and activity in basin retrofits	OCSCD, NRCS, RCE, ALS, USGS, NJDEP, OCPD	Ongoing	
		Provide outreach to homeowners regarding actions they can take	Increased opportunity to let rainwater soak in; increased homeowner participation	OCSCD, RCE		Rain Garden Team “Make Yard a Sponge”

PRIORITY AREA #4: HABITAT LOSS AND HABITAT RESTORATION

Strategic Objective: Prevent habitat loss, especially of submerged aquatic vegetation, and support habitat restoration.

Strategic Plan Action	Subject Matter	Action/Tasks (Suggested)	Outcomes	Partners & Opportunities	Timeline	Ideas & Resources
H8	Eelgrass Loss	Initiate an Eelgrass Restoration Project and Public relations Campaign	<p>Volunteer Eelgrass monitoring program</p> <p>Eelgrass Restoration Group</p> <p>Outreach Program on the importance of eel grass</p>	BBNEP, OCPD, NOAA, Boating Community	TBD	<p>Include Status and Trends data in “State of the Bay” reporting</p> <p>“The Grass is Greener Beneath the Surface”; Grasses for Classes (IMCS)(e.g., the Bronx/ NOAA)</p> <p>Cornell Cooperative Extension Eelgrass Restoration www.SeagrassLI.org</p>
H9	Watershed Stewardship	Identify Existing Stewardship Projects	Stewardship List of all BB Projects	BBNEP RCE, SBB, RCTB, MATES, Trout Unlimited		<p>LISS Stewardship Initiative Atlas http://www.longislandsoundstudy.net/stewardship/</p>
		Support existing and develop new Stewardship Program and Projects	A Stewardship participation drive to be held annually. Match projects with people.	Various BBNEP partners	TBD	<p>Coordinate w/ RCTB Annual beach grass plantings/scouts</p> <p>School stewardship projects (i.e. Potter Creek Crusaders)</p> <p>Revisit “Give Back to the Bay” (S. Gingras) as a slogan for Bay Stewardship Projects</p>

H7	Land Preservation	Promote and utilize the Century Plan & Beyond the Century Plan – from Trust for Public Land	Provide list of priority areas to preserve by municipalities	BBNEP, OCPD, TPL, Mayors Association, Municipal Planners	TBD	
		Relate land preservation efforts to BBNEP objectives (<i>i.e.</i> , More open space = cleaner and healthier bay)	Increased public awareness of the importance of land preservation/acquisition			
H3 H4 H5	Shoreline Erosion	Develop a systematic approach to priority shoreline stabilization projects	List of priority areas/projects for future implementation funding	OCSCD, NRCS/Plant Materials Center, ALS, NOAA	TBD	Extensive materials available: https://habitat.noaa.gov/restorationtechniques/public/shoreline_tab4.cfm
		Develop an organized program for training volunteers.	Increased capacity to obtain funding and undertake successful restoration projects			

PROIRTY AREA #5: FISHERIES DECLINES

Strategic Objective: Improve understanding of, and address, fisheries declines.

Strategic Plan Action	Subject Matter	Action/Tasks (Suggested)	Outcomes	Partners & Opportunities	Timeline	Ideas and Resources
F4	Estuary as Nursery	Utilize existing venues for public education about estuarine ecology	Outreach materials focused on the bay as a nursery	BBNEP, JCAA, NJMSC, OC Schools	TBD	“Bay Babies Campaign”
F4	Importance of habitats to fish/shellfish	Develop materials/campaign on the importance of wetlands and eelgrass to a viable fisheries	Development of Outreach materials	NOAA, MAWWG	TBD	
F4	Shellfish Restoration	Compile existing materials or develop new materials updated to reflect recent activity.	Enhanced BBNEP library for education and outreach purposes	ReClam the Bay Baymen, NJDEP, Commercial shellfish industry	Ongoing	Focus on current and expanded restoration efforts
		Shellfish “White Paper” and subsequent BB Beat article	A document containing a review of shellfish trends and status, including current stressors and impacts	RU - HSRL	FY10 STAC RFP	
		Identify and obtain funding support	Increase in the number of shellfish restoration projects			. Delaware Bay Oyster Project model

PROIRTY AREA #5: FISHERIES DECLINES (con't)

Strategic Plan Action	Subject Matter	Action/Tasks (Suggested)	Outcomes	Partners & Opportunities	Timeline	Ideas and Resources
F4	Improve our collective understanding of Barnegat Bay fisheries	Compile existing outreach materials related to fish and other estuarine species (clams, crabs)		Lead: JCAA & Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission www.asmfmc.org	Ongoing/annual	Work with fisheries groups and local bait shops.
		Campaign for BB/Coastal NJ: Teach a man to fish. Teach a man to be a steward of the bay, and generations will fish.		Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation http://www.rbff.org/ NJDEP – DF&W NOAA/NMFS USEPA, JCNERR, RCE, SeaGrant, Garden State Seafood Association		Article in “Barnegat Bay Beat”.
F4	Increased interaction with the Commercial Fishing Industry	Survey commercial fishermen & assess their willingness to be involved in the BBNEP	Increased commercial involvement in BBNEP program	BBNEP & Commercial Fishing Industry Viking Village Fishing Co-ops	TBD	
F4	BBNEP interaction with the recreational angling community:	Provide Fishing clubs, Bait and Tackle shops, etc. with BBNEP materials	Increased awareness of BBNEP mission and programs within the fishing community	BBNEP, JCAA, Fishing Clubs	TBD	Speaking engagement at club meetings
F4	BBNEP interaction with the boating community	Develop a voluntary program to reduce boating impacts to sensitive habitats	Better monitoring and assessment of boating impacts	NJ Marine Trades, yachting and sailing clubs, boat manufacturers	TBD	

Closing Remarks

Effective communications is a hallmark to the success of any organization or initiative. Through the work of the Estuary Program and our many partners and stakeholders we are collectively continuing to protect and improve our critical natural resources through the implementation of the CCMP and Strategic Plan. The BBNEP Communications Plan serves as another tool to facilitate cooperation, collaboration, coordination, and effective communication among all of the partners working to a better Barnegat Bay Watershed.

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Additional Resource Materials (Will be provided as a separate companion document)

1. BBNEP Strategic Plan
2. BBNEP Partners – Official Committee Membership
3. Table of BBNEP partner activities (or link to website)
4. Useful Websites
5. E&O Groups
6. Funding Strategies from NEP website
7. Target Audiences
8. Multimedia Relations – Contact List
9. Businesses for the Bay (B4B) – Chesapeake example
10. Ocean County Bait and Tackle Shops
11. Sample Fundraising Activities and Event Ideas for BBNEP
12. Directory of Adult Communities in Ocean County
13. Golf Courses in Ocean County
14. Guide to Common Stakeholder Participation Techniques
15. Community-Based Watershed Management Handbook
16. Range of Publications Flyer – OC Gazette
17. Network Health Scorecard – Cause Communications
18. CAC Guidelines – LISS
19. CAC By-Laws – LISS
20. Cause Collaboration Tools Matrix
21. Reaching Local Officials
22. Program Evaluation Matrix
23. Evaluation Tools
24. Funded Minigrants