



**Barnegat Bay Partnership**  
**Communication and Education Committee Meeting**  
Minutes of Meeting on May 14, 2025

**Attending Members:**

Joel Mott (Chair, NJ Pinelands Commission), Becky Laboy (Co-Chair, OCSCD), Chris Claus (Ocean County Parks & Recreation), Toni Heater (NJDEP), Murray Rosenberg (BBP Citizen Representative), Wes Dalzell (RCTB)

**Absent CEC Members:**

Kelly Scott (IBSP), Angela Anderson (Long Beach Township), Chelsea Kulp (NJ American Water), Peter Brandt (USEPA), Barbara Spinweber (USEPA Alternate), George Murnyak (BBP Citizen Representative Alternate), Dr. John Wnek (OCVTS), Kaitlin Gannon (JCNERR), Shari Kondrup (BTMUA)

**BBP Staff in Attendance:** Stan Hales (Director), Caroline McFarland (BBP Stewardship Specialist), Nina Sassano (Associate Director of Outreach)

***Welcome and Introductions***

The meeting was called to order at **9:38AM**, followed by introductions.

***Review/Approval of Meeting Minutes***

**Previous minutes were not reviewed and not approved**

***BBP Outreach Report***

*Master Naturalist Program*

- Thank you to the partners who are involved in the program. There are 16 naturalists and two students from Kean University supported by Kean receiving credit to do the program. The program has been successful so far

### *Social Media & Event Updates*

- Nina will be asking partners to help build out a schedule of blogs for the next few months to years. Please share any stories, news or updates with Nina. An email with all blog posts for the month will also be sent out to BBP followers.
  - Becky asked with there's a page on the website where all partners are listed and linked to their websites. There is a page with a scroll of all partner logos across the bottom, and each logo links to the partner page. If its hard to find, let Nina know and changes can be made.
  - Becky asked if Nina wants a heads up on when they'd send stories and information for a blog post. Nina said you can just send it and she'll decide when it posts. Current projects will be posted in the appropriate time frames, while informational post will be scheduled for later. The goal is to build out a schedule that will have blog posts ready to automatically post.

### *Paddle for the Edge*

- Murray asked if Paddle for the Edge registration is open. Nina said registration is open and in person training will be required even if you've done the program in the past. The data collection process has been simplified and will be extended into August as well as extending assignment areas into the Egg Harbor watershed

### *Grants Update*

- BBP got reviews back from EPA on the communications plan in January. Nina has made revisions and will be sending it out after the meeting. The document has changed substantially due to the executive order. Please review and make sure the plan still makes sense for our mission and let us know if it still contains language that will raise flags that we missed.
- BIL work plan is now called IIA (Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act). The plan needed to be submitted to DOGE for review and has been there for 2 months now.
- The CCMP was approved in 2021 and is supposed to be updated every 5 to 10 years. Stan has suggested setting up a working group to review the document, and if nothing is agreed to require change, he suggests leaving it the way it is until the 10-year review. EPA is discussing this option internally and will get back to BBP before the next Advisory Committee meeting.
- AmeriCorps programs have been cut. The AmeriCorps portion of the New Jersey Watershed Ambassador Program has been discontinued as of May 9<sup>th</sup>. The State of New Jersey has agreed to pay the current ambassadors to finish their contracts for this year, but the future of the program is uncertain.

### *Jersey-Friendly Yards*

- Becky has continued to do classroom programs for schools. Becky finished the report for January through March quarter and will be sending that out tomorrow.
- Becky wasn't sure if the schools would be able to complete their planting in the spring. Nina says the purchase order to buy the plants for some schools to finish their certification should be through by the end of the week.
- Becky has asked that the partners come together on JFY to provide components to the program for the schools to become certified. JFY may be able to use existing partner classroom programs to count as credit for the program.

### *General BBP Update*

- BBP launched the new website. Some of the website is not up to date yet. Nina will be updating sections of the new website and asks for recommendations for updates or fixes for the website. BBP will be relying on committee members to help guide the direction of the website moving forward.
- Stan tracked down some materials and will have something for Murray and George to take a look at and talk about advertising for new citizen representatives.

### *Partner Updates*

Joel Mott (Chair, NJ Pinelands Commission)

- March, April and May were very busy with education programs.
- He spent last month talking to third graders in South Brunswick and will be going to Port Republic Elementary.
- The Summer Short Course is scheduled for July 18th and will have a variety of programs, including Jersey-Friendly Yards, fossils and dinosaurs, live animals, research with cranberries and blueberries, and art components.

Toni Heater (NJDEP)

- Toni just got transferred and replaces Bob Shuster now, so things might change with them.
- Toni is doing to program with the Scout Camp this evening in Barnegat, and has also been doing a lot of urban fishing programs this year.

Becky Laboy (Co-Chair, OCSCD)

- The New Jersey Envirothon is Saturday, May 17<sup>th</sup>. It's a program where students train all year long on different stations (wildlife, soil, etc), and do a written test and hands on test.
- The round-table has concluded and the board report is finished. Becky will send it out.
- It was suggested that the Round Table Committee be reconvened to plan for next year at the retreat in August. Nina will send out information and the date for the retreat.

#### Wes Dalzell (RCTB)

- ReClam upwellers are starting to come online. There are no new baby clams yet for this year. They will probably have them around the first part of July. ReClam over-wintered clams down in Beach Haven and will be distributing them to the upwellers, so they can get online and can have people start to visit. The schedule for cleaning and when members are on location is on the website: [reclamthebay.org](http://reclamthebay.org)
- The shellfish in the classroom programs are winding down at the end of the school year. He will have the summary of the full year of programs at the next meeting.
- ReClam will be at ocean fun day May 17<sup>th</sup> at Island Beach State Park.
- If anyone is interested in the Rutgers Coastal Stewardship Course, sign up by May 23<sup>rd</sup>. The course starts May 27<sup>th</sup> and runs until July 29<sup>th</sup>, one day a week.

#### Chris Claus (Ocean County Parks & Recreation)

- He is still doing Borrow a Naturalist programs. He is currently working with Brick Pre-K and almost done the program for the school year.
- The Ocean County Fair runs from July 9<sup>th</sup> to July 13<sup>th</sup>. July 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> will be from 5pm to 11pm. July 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> will be from 11am to 11pm. July 13<sup>th</sup> will be from 11am to 5pm.

#### Murray Rosenberg (BBP Citizen Representative)

- Murray presented a master naturalist class last week. The field trip was canceled due to rain and rescheduled for tomorrow.
- He has a classroom presentation Friday and group of 50 kids going out to Island Beach State Park for naturalist sessions, beach profiling, climate change and sea level rise discussions on the beach.
- He will be giving a presentation on June 16<sup>th</sup> to the Native Plant Society.

**Adjournment: 10:33AM**

**Next Meeting:** July 23, 2025 (In Person)

**2025 Meeting Dates:** September 24, November 19

**Date:** Wednesday, July 23, 2025

**Meeting called to order:** 9:01 AM by Becky Laboy

**Adjourned:** ~9:30 AM

**Location:** Virtual

## Attendees

- Becky Laboy — Education Coordinator, Ocean County Soil Conservation District (Co-chair, acting)
  - Nina Sassano — Associate Director of Outreach, Barnegat Bay Partnership
  - Joel Mott — New Jersey Pinelands Commission (Chair / Co-chair)
  - Caroline McFarland — Stewardship Specialist, Barnegat Bay Partnership
  - Caitlin / Kaitlin Gannon — Jacques Cousteau Reserve (name spelled both ways in transcript)
  - Shari Kondrup
  - Sherry Conner — Brick Township Municipal Utilities Authority (mentioned)
  - Toni Heater (Toni) — New Jersey DEP
  - Others: Charlie (mentioned)
- 

## Summary

The meeting was a short, partner-check in focused on member introductions, approval of the May minutes, recruiting new citizen representatives, logistics and promotion for the Keck retreat, partner program updates, and coordination on outreach/education programs. Nina noted an EPA site visit earlier in the week; Becky and others covered partner activities and upcoming events. The meeting ended early to transition into the next scheduled meeting.

---

## Key Discussion Points & Notes

### 1. Opening & Introductions

- Becky called the meeting to order at 9:01 AM and confirmed recording.
- Nina noted the BBP had an EPA site visit that week; EPA staff visited South Toms River Elementary (garden project).

### 2. Approval of May Minutes

- Joel moved to approve the May minutes; Shari seconded. Joel believed a quorum was present. Motion carried (no objections recorded on the call).

### 3. Citizen Representative Application / Recruitment

- Current citizen reps George and Murray are stepping down.
- Members asked to circulate the Citizen Representative application broadly.
- Joel recalled a nomination deadline of **July 31** (he said “I think that deadline is July 31st”).
- Toni / others suggested contacting the Master Naturalist list and other volunteer pools.
- Nina reported Murray may remain involved in some work; George likely less so.
- Suggestion raised to consider a recognition/award for George and Murray.

### 4. Keck Retreat (Logistics & Promotion)

- **Date / Location:** August 21, 2025 — FREC, 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM.
- Registration link is in the agenda; participants should register (bring-your-own lunch; no lunch provided).
- Programs/demos planned: Trout in the Classroom, macroinvertebrate activities, sensory-awareness trail, forest management/silviculture, “Being Doctor Dolittle” (bird calls and forest mammal sounds — Duffy Barrow likely presenting).
- Becky noted a Soil District newsletter on **August 1** will promote the retreat; partners asked to share the registration with their networks (teachers, social media).

### 5. Partner Updates (high-level)

- **Shari Kondrup**
  - 319(h) grant: waiting on NJDEP review for detention basin retrofit.
  - Downtown Lakewood green infrastructure (three modular bioretention planters) set to go out to bid in August.
  - Microbial source tracking continues.
  - Developing a road-salt toolbox for municipalities.
  - Mascot & Slogan contest winners announced (Todd the Toad; slogan by Morgan Scott).
  - Multiple outreach events and presentations (Georgian Court Univ., Brick Garden Club, Master Gardeners, Rutgers Environmental Stewards).
  - Weekend at the reservoir program suspended due to reservoir closure (10–12 month renovation).
  - Planning rain barrel workshops (Howe, BRIC) tied to stormwater projects.
- **Joel Mott**
  - Summer speaker series ongoing.
  - Upcoming programs: Aug 21 (Gretchen Fowler on wildlife mapping / NJ Change), Sept 4 (Ty Ellis — Lenape topics), Sept 26 (outdoor painting demo).
  - March 7, 2026 short course — seeking presenters.
- **Caitlin / Jacques Cousteau Reserve**
  - “Creature feature” kids programs running (popular).

- Estuary boat tours in collaboration with Tuckerton Seaport.
- Open mic / microscope night Aug 21 (6 PM).
- Teachers on the Estuary workshop (TOTE) Aug 13–15 (~16 teachers registered).
- Rutgers Marine Field Station open house planned for Sept 20 (ticketed windows due to space).
- **Toni Heater (NJDEP)**
  - Youth inclusion program & rain barrel instruction scheduled (today/tomorrow referenced).
  - Working with a community market fair in Princeton offering free kids' environmental classes Tuesday mornings.
- **Becky / Ocean County Soil Conservation District**
  - New Jersey Envirothon results discussed — local teams performed well; one team representing NJ at nationals.
  - Jersey Friendly Yards school certifications — five schools now certified; additional schools anticipated next year.
  - Becky, Nina, Caroline, Steve Yergeau, Stan and Kaylee met with EPA at South Toms River Elementary to showcase the garden project.

## 6. Adjournment & Next Items

- Joel moved to adjourn; Caitlin seconded. Meeting officially ended at ~9:30 AM to allow participants to join the next meeting (program evaluation meeting at 10:30 AM).

## Action Items (who / what / when)

1. **Circulate Citizen Rep Application** — All partners / CEC members
  - Share broadly (Master Naturalist list, volunteer bases).
  - **Potential deadline:** July 31 (per Joel) — confirm if needed.
2. **Promote & Register for Keck Retreat (Aug 21, FREC)** — All partners; BBP / Soil District to promote
  - Ensure registration via the agenda link.
  - **BBP/Soil District:** include partner details/photos in the Aug 1 newsletter push.
3. **Bid Process for Lakewood GI Planters** — Shari / Brick Township / project leads
  - Send to bid in August (as noted).
4. **Microbial Source Tracking & Road Salt Toolbox** — Shari / project leads
  - Continue tracking and develop toolbox for municipal use.
5. **Teachers on the Estuary / TOTE logistics** — Caitlin / Cousteau Reserve
  - Continue planning for Aug 13–15 workshop (finalize details).
6. **Youth Rain Barrel Programs** — Toni / DEP
  - Continue scheduled sessions & market fair programming.
7. **EPA Site Visit Follow-up** — Nina / Becky / BBP staff
  - Compile and share highlights or requested follow-up from the EPA visit (particularly the South Toms River Elementary garden).

8. **Consider recognition for George and Murray** — CEC members to discuss / nominate method (award, plaque, etc.)
9. **Short course presenters (Mar 7, 2026)** — Joel to recruit; partners to consider presenting.



**Barnegat Bay Partnership**  
**Communication and Education Committee Meeting**  
Minutes of Meeting on September 24, 2025

[Full Transcript and Recording](#)

**Attending Members:**

Joel Mott (Chair, NJ Pinelands Commission), Becky Laboy (Co-Chair, OCSCD), Nina Sassano (BBP), Amy Johnson (NJWAP), Sandra Blain-Snow (OC Solid Waste Management), Caroline McFarland (BBP), Margaret Deleon-Rivera (OC Solid Waste Management), Kaitlin Gannon (JC NERR), Shari Kondrup (Brick MUA), Toni Heater (NJDEP), Stan Hales (BBP), Barbara Spinweber (US EPA), Wes Dalzell (ReClam the Bay)

**BBP Staff in Attendance**

Stan Hales (Director), Nina Sassano (Director of Outreach), Caroline McFarland (Stewardship Specialist)

**Welcome and Introductions**

The meeting was called to order at 9:38AM, followed by introductions.

**Review & Approval of Minutes**

**Motion:** Becky Laboy moved to approve the minutes from the September meeting.

**Second:** Kaitlin Gannon seconded the motion.

**Outcome:** The minutes were approved unanimously.

**Jersey Friendly Yards (JFY) School Certification Program Update**

Caroline McFarland and Nina Sassano introduced a major program update to transition the existing JFY School Certification into a virtual curriculum.

- **Rationale for Change:**
  - Teachers reported feeling overwhelmed by the current manual checklist and OneDrive/Google Drive upload process.
  - The current model requires significant logistical coordination for in-person expert visits, which can delay progress.
  - The goal is to streamline the process, empower teachers to work at their own pace, and utilize tools they already use, such as Google Classroom.
- **Proposed Virtual Model:**



- The curriculum will be modeled after a successful Georgia Sea Grant program titled "[Water Shapes Our Planet and Our Lives](#)."
- It will feature short, tailored videos (under 2 minutes) hosted by experts to guide students through lessons directly on their devices.
- **Automation:** The system will include built-in pre- and post-lesson knowledge checks. Progress will be automatically tracked, notifying BBP when a class is ready for the final in-person project (e.g., planting a garden).
- **Partner Contributions:**
  - Partners are requested to serve as the "face" of their specific expertise (e.g., soil, composting) in the videos.
  - BBP will handle all video production, filming, and technical integration into Pear Deck/Google Classroom.
  - Partners are asked to provide scripts (following BBP templates), assessment questions, and a "free or almost free" follow-along activity.

## Discussion & Questions

- **Target Audience:** Nina Sassano clarified that while the materials will be tailored to a middle-range (roughly 4th-6th grade), BBP can provide tiered quiz materials for different age ranges.
- **Video Logistics:** Sandra Blain-Snow inquired about filming. Nina confirmed BBP would provide either a stationary or mobile set and manage all production.
- **Activity Examples:** Rebecca Laboy shared an example of a soil texture test using sieves and a texture triangle that could be adapted for the curriculum.

## Partner Updates

- **Jacques Cousteau National Estuarine Research Reserve (Kaitlin Gannon):**
  - Staff recently attended individual sector meetings; the Education Coordinators met in the Jacksonville/St. Augustine area of Florida.
  - Preparations are underway for the upcoming eel monitoring season. There is potential for a collaborative New York/New Jersey monitoring meeting hosted by the Hudson River Reserve.
  - Noted potential upcoming DEP permit changes regarding eel monitoring.
- **Reclam the Bay (Wes Dalzell):**
  - Celebrated the organization's 20th anniversary last week.
  - Published an anniversary book, *20 Years of Barnegat Bay*; a copy will be provided to the BBP office.
  - Summer shellfish data will be distributed to the committee once finalized.
- **Brick MUA (Shari Kondrup):**
  - **319(h) Grant Status:** Scheduling pre-construction meetings for two bioretention systems in Lakewood; awaiting soil permits for the Howe Bioretention Basin.
  - Ongoing work includes the Road Salt Toolbox and wrapping up the microbial source tracking project.



- **Education:** Hosted a rain barrel workshop on October 25th; the next workshop is scheduled for January 17, 2026. Shari will also lead two workshops at the Barnegat Bay Educators Roundtable in April.
- **Ocean County Soil Conservation District (Becky Laboy):**
  - **Barnegat Bay Educators Roundtable (April 22, 2026):** The event coincides with Earth Day. Partners are requested to promote the event in their respective newsletters.
    - *Confirmed Presenters:* Shari Kondrup, Kaitlin Gannon, Nicole Broadwater (NJ Dept. of Ag), and Deb Summers. Workshops include Bluebird nest box monitoring and outdoor classroom management.
  - **NJ Envirothon (May 9, 2026):** The District is hosting the high school competition at the Lighthouse Center. It will feature the return of overnight camping; Rebecca may reach out to partners for evening activity support.
- **NJ Pinelands Commission (Joel Mott):**
  - Currently finalizing the lineup for the Pinelands Short Course scheduled for March 7, 2026.
  - Openings for presenters remain available through December; interested partners should contact Joel.
  - Stan Hales and Joel discussed potential future alternative venues for the course, including the Gateway building.

## 7. Administrative & Adjournment

- **2026 Schedule:** Nina Sassano will distribute a full-year meeting schedule via calendar invites. The committee intends to continue meeting on the third Wednesday of the month.
- **Next Meeting:** January 2026 (Date TBD).
- **Adjournment:** The meeting concluded at 4:02 PM.



**Barnegat Bay Partnership**  
**Communication and Education Committee Meeting**  
Minutes of Meeting on September 24, 2025

Full Transcript and Recording: [Recap: CEC Meeting Wednesday, September 24 | Meeting | Microsoft Teams](#)

**Attending Members:**

Joel Mott (Chair, NJ Pinelands Commission), Becky Laboy (Co-Chair, OCSCD), Nina Sassano (BBP), Kaitlin Gannon (JC NERR), Shari Kondrup (Brick MUA), Toni Heater (NJDEP), Stan Hales (BBP), Chris Claus (OC Parks), Barbara Spinweber (US EPA), Amy Plantarich (JC NERR)

**BBP Staff in Attendance**

Stan Hales (Director), Nina Sassano (Director of Outreach), Caroline McFarland (Stewardship Specialist)

**Welcome and Introductions**

The meeting was called to order at 9:33AM, followed by introductions.

**Review & Approval of Minutes**

Chris pointed out a misspelling in the previous meeting minutes. Nina will update accordingly. Minutes were then reviewed and approved.

**Barnegat Bay Outreach Report**

*Nina*

- Volunteer appreciation event
  - o We will be acknowledging George and Murray for their programmatic contributions
- BBVMN
  - o Wrapped up 2025 season, volunteers are seeking hours
- AmeriCorps NJWAP
  - o Welcomed our new ambassador Amy Johnson, a graduate of Kean Ocean County College
  - o JC NERR also welcomed their new ambassador who is very into carnivorous plants
- Comms
  - o Nina looking for blog post contributions
  - o Stan made a few suggestions including Conserve Wildlife



### ***Caroline***

- Invasive species webinar with Dr. Mike Van Cleff
- Saturday is the 2025 JFY Conference featuring Dan Duran and Sabrina Terpak
- Caroline has plans of getting JFY into more schools moving forward
- We have welcomed a special needs intern through a partnership with Moceans Center for independent Living that will be helping to build the JFY native plant catalogue.

### **Orders of Business – CEC Updates**

#### ***Joel Mott, NJ Pinelands Commission***

- We need to discuss our nomination process for the Citizen Representative.
- Tom Fote has raised questions about the process which caused discourse between members of both the CEC and STACs.
- Joel was under the impression that the purpose of the Citizen Rep was to get input from people outside of our circle, a way to reach into the community and hear what they have to say, and to have people interact with the community and give us feedback.
- Suggestion to come up with a list of candidates, take those to the AC to make the decision

#### ***Stan Hales***

- Agreed that we need to invite engagement from the public who wants to serve and work for the greater good, who is concerned with bay issues
- Provided overall background information on Tom, Murray and George's contributions

#### ***Joel Mott***

- Expressed that he is not entirely comfortable changing the process as it's always been done

#### ***Chris Claus***

- Proposed we continue the discussion with Tom Fote included to get his perspective as well
- Shari, Stan, Joel, Kaitlin and the whole group agreed that we will postpone continuing this conversation to a separate meeting with Tom and the CEC members

### **Other Updates**



- Kaitlin wants to know if the E/O retreat had any kind of participant survey to collect feedback
  - o this led to a discussion about the EPA's rules as they relate to surveying

### ***JC NERR***

- New watershed ambassador
- Communications internship with a biomedical student from Rutgers who is going to help JC NERR to revamp a sea level rise/flooding tabling activity
- Going to wrap up a lesson plan from an RU research project by Grothues about sand mining and offshore drilling, will debut the lesson at the Roundtable
- JC NERR had their open house, three locations including the Seaport, the JC NERR, and the Field Station
  - o Life on the Edge exhibit is finally open after the post-flood renovations
  - o Overall roughly 300 total people registered but not as many showed up
  - o Overall, successful event

### ***OC PARKS***

- Continuing naturalist in the classroom program, this year including pre-k and Lakewood schools
- Partnership between OC Parks and Master Gardeners could lead to wild gardens being maintained to be used as a teaching garden, excited about the prospect of that.

### ***RCTB***

- RCTB is starting to close up the upwellers around the bay
- Will have more data about the shellfish for next meeting
- Cranking up shellfish in the classroom program
- 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of RCTB, publishing a book about its history and will provide a copy to BBP
  - o Nina asked to feature RCTB's anniversary in the blog, we will circle back

### ***Brick MUA***

- Bids for high detention basin retrofit will go out in October
  - o NPS pollution and leaking municipal sanitary systems are impacting basin
- Reservoir closed for construction, so MUA hasn't had many programs this summer
- October 25, rainbarrel workshop at Echo Lake Park

### ***Pinelands***

- Oct 24 Batsto lake, annual Pinelands water monitoring day. 150 students coming.



- Station learning including sampling water for macros, water quality, well testing, all about water
- Open invitation to anyone who wants to come and help out
- Pinelands shortcourse March 7, 2026 at Stockton

### **Meeting Adjourned**

Meeting adjourned by Joel Mott at 10:17.