

Jacques Cousteau

Volunteer Newsletter



UPCOMING EVENTS:

July 15th:

Creature Feature -
Stupendous Sharks
9:30 - 11:00 am

July 17th:

Summer Fun -
Build an Underwater Robot
10:00 - 11:30 am

July 22th:

Creature Feature-
Fancy Fish
9:30 - 11:00 am

July 29th:

Creature Feature-
Crazy Crabs
9:30 - 11:00 am

July 30th - Aug 1st:

Professional Development-
Barnegat Bay Ecology
8:30 am - 4:30 pm

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SUMMER 2014

JC NERR Happenings

Greetings Volunteers and Happy Summer! Here at JC NERR we are excited to be done with what seemed like an exceptionally long winter! Summer here at the Education Center means summer education programs and we have a full schedule! Teacher Julie Shutz will again be heading up our popular Creature Feature program for children in 1st through 5th grade. We also have a number of other programs for the whole family as well as professional developments designed for formal and informal educators. Melanie, our Education Coordinator has planned a number of professional development programs this season including two upcoming ones: Barnegat Bay Ecology (July 30 - Aug 1st) and Sand Surge and Sea Level: a Teachers on the Estuary workshop for Mid-Atlantic Educators (Aug 11-14).

The response received from volunteers for our summer programs was amazing - thank you to all of our enthusiastic volunteers who signed up to assist with this season's programs & workshops! Again, as an integral part of our JC NERR team, volunteers are most welcome to attend upcoming professional development trainings. Whether you're interested enhancing your personal knowledge or would like to gain a more detailed understanding about a specific topic to supplement your volunteering experience, please talk to either Melanie or myself.

This spring, in conjunction with the Tuckerton Seaport, we finished up our last Lunch n' Learn program for the season - a hands-on demonstra-

tion by the Tuckerton Seaport Director, Paul Hart and Assistant Director, Tim Hart on the history of life saving stations in New Jersey. The Lunch n' Learn program will start up again this coming September.



Aerial view of Great Bay-Mullica River Estuary

Last newsletter we introduced new members of the JC NERR staff - Chris Huch and Jenna Gatto - who are working with our Coastal Training Program (CTP) coordinator, Lisa Auermuller, with coastal resilience and hazard mitigation work. Lisa, Jenna and Chris have been working diligently since Hurricane Sandy with towns and municipalities on sustainable planning and future hazard mitigation.

A newly updated online tool developed by the NJ DEP and JC NERR is being used by our CTP staff to help communities take action to become less vulnerable and more prepared for future storm and weather events.

This tool - Getting to Resilience (GTR) - assists communities in assessing how prepared they are for flooding, coastal storms and sea-level rise and provides recommendations to reduce vulnerability and

increase preparedness, by linking planning, mitigation and adaptation. Actions taken as a result of the process can also help increase a town's FEMA Community Rating System (CRS) score and thus reduce flood insurance costs.

The process produces a report with recommended actions as to how to improve a town's resilience and preparedness. Recommendations may include physical improvements, such as dune grass planting/stabilization, updating ordinances and plans, making information on flooding risks more available to elected officials and the public, incorporating sea-level rise projections into town/municipal plans, and creating a mitigation plan for properties that are regularly damaged from flooding.

As our CTP staff facilitate the 'Getting to Resilience' process, they have been hosting numerous meetings and programs here at the JC NER Education Center with our local town/municipal officials and floodplain managers. We have had, and continue to have a host of volunteers who assist staff with program preparation, logistics and food set-up, ensuring that every meeting and program is successful. Thanks to all who provide such integral support to the Reserve!

Read on to find out more about what our volunteers and staff have been involved with!

~ Kim Capone
Volunteer Coordinator

Volunteer Dinner

On March 26th, 2014 we held our annual Volunteer Recognition Dinner to honor our volunteers who gave 10 or more hours of service in 2013. This year's dinner was held at the newly opened Cuisine on the Green restaurant at the Atlantis Golf Course in Little Egg Harbor. The restaurant is the new Ocean County Center for the Culinary Arts and is part of the Ocean County Vocational Technical School.

With a focus on locally sourced foods, responsibly caught seafood and environmentally conscious practices, Cuisine on the Green was a perfect choice for the Reserve and we were happy to support their efforts to provide local and sustainable practices to our community.

The evening was enjoyed by all with great food and attentive staff. Once again, our volunteers had a chance to try their hand at trivia with interactive

questions about current research and education programs and what projects staff and volunteers are working on.

Rutgers University Marine Field Station (RUMFS) Director, Ken Able, highlighted our volunteers that assist with research and field work, while JC NERR's Coastal Training Program Coordinator, Lisa Auermuller, recognized our volunteers that provide support for our education programs and day to day activities at the Education Center. Ida Scott, JC NERR's Interpretive Coordinator, expressed her appreciation for all of the hard work our volunteers put in at the Life on the Edge exhibit and how enthusiastic all have been since the recent exhibit renovation.

We were very proud to honor **Kara Schwaller** with the Volunteer of the Year award

for 2013. Kara joined us last year and has jumped into numerous JC NERR and RUMFS programs full-steam ahead, particularly in our new Life on the Edge Exhibit where she has enthusiastically embraced learning as much as possible. She participated in multiple education programs including Creature Features, Estuary Explorers, & Summer Fun programs and has been willing and eager to assist in any programs where volunteers are needed. Kara also assisted with Great Bay seining research and again proved willing to jump in last minute to fill-in when needed.

Congratulations Kara!

All of us at JC NERR and RUMFS would like to extend our sincere thanks and gratitude to all of our volunteers for your hard work, dedication and support!



Above: Volunteers, JC NERR staff and RUMFS staff & students enjoy a night at Cuisine on the Green to honor our 2013 volunteers.

Right: Rain barrel display on the 'Stewardship' table at the Life on the Edge exhibit
(Photo courtesy of Lou Cafiero).

Life on the Edge Update - School groups galore!



Our interpretive exhibit, Life on the Edge (LOE), located at the Tuckerton Seaport has been a buzz with activity this spring and early summer. Traditionally a time when schools have field trips, starting at the end of April and going through to mid-June, the Seaport and the LOE exhibit received almost daily visits from children of all ages on educational school trips.

During this busy time, volunteers at LOE interacted with and assisted each school group in touring the exhibit, teaching them about our estuaries and making sure that they had a positive and fulfilling experience. With the end of the school year, this summer will bring increased visiting tourists, summer day camps and senior citizens' groups to the LOE exhibit. Thank you to our volunteers and the hard work that they put in representing our Reserve at the exhibit and assisting others in learning about the importance of our estuaries and natural resources!

Below: 'I pledge' booth where children and adults alike can write a pledge about what they would like to do to help the environment and take a photograph of themselves for rotating display at the exhibit
(Photo courtesy of Lou Cafiero).



Volunteer Work out in the Field

Volunteers have been involved with an assortment of research projects this past spring. As summer gets into full swing, new student interns and technicians are working at RUMFS for the season. With this seasonal influx of people, there is less work for volunteers during this time, but still research opportunities available.

This past April, JC NERR volunteers again joined Stockton students and local commercial crabbers to assist in processing crab pots for a 2 year funded study 'Derelict Crab Trap Removal in the Mullica-River Great Bay Estuary'. The goal of this project was to identify and map lost crab pots in the Mullica River-Great Bay Estuary with sonar surveys, remove and dispose/recycle retrieved crab pots, return usable pots to the commercial crabbing community, identify areas of frequent crab pot loss, and educate recreational and commercial fisherman and boaters about crab pot loss and hazards of this type of marine debris.

With over 1,000 crab pots retrieved, JC NERR volunteers assisted with breaking down, recycling and the inventory and processing of pots for data - including condition, cause of loss, weight and fish or crab bycatch. Stay tuned for the next Volunteer Newsletter to learn more details and final results of this successful collaborative project!

RUMFS has received a third year of funding to continue larval fish sam-



Top: A crabber retrieves a lost crab pot from the Mullica River-Great Bay Estuary
Bottom: Retrieved crab pots stacked and ready for processing (Photos courtesy of M. Reding and K. Unkert)

pling under the NJ DEP's 10-point plan to address the ecological health of Barnegat Bay. 'Ultimate Bridgenetting' - as it is colloquially termed because RUMFS expanded the scope from one site (Little Sheepshead Creek of off Great Bay Blvd) to three additional sites in the Barnegat Bay, and the plankton net that collects these larval fish is hung off of a bridge - is conducted at Oyster Creek Generating Station, the Rt. 72 bridge in Manahawkin, and Rt. 37 Bridge in Toms River.

Volunteers have continued to show immense support for this research

initiative that takes place during nighttime hours. 'Ultimate' sampling sets can take up to 6-8 hours a night with 4 crews of technicians and volunteers sorting samples to extract larval fish. Ultimate Bridgenet sampling this past April garnered 61 combined volunteer hours in one night!! Thank you to all of our volunteers who provide support and for your continued dedication to the project!

As part of a RUMFS research project initiated in Summer 2012, volunteers again began seining this May at the 1st bridge beach off of Great Bay Blvd in Tuckerton and at Graveling Point in Little Egg Harbor. Seining collects juvenile fish and crabs and data collected are added to RUMFS' long-term data set for analysis. This year we have a volunteer lead who is heading up the field work portion of the project - thanks to Alison Shepherd who has enthusiastically taken on leadership for this project! And thank you to all the volunteers who work through cold, heat, gnats & greenheads to come out and seine! Sampling takes place two times a month and will continue until October. If you are interested in volunteering for seining, please let me know.



Top: Highlight of May 2014 Graveling Point seining - a Northern puffer fish (*Spoeroides maculatus*). (photo courtesy of Terry Moore)

Bottom: Volunteers carry the seine net out to a designated sampling area at Graveling Point (Photo Courtesy of Steve Luell)

JC NERR Current Events - RUMFS Open House Update

A number of volunteers have inquired about RUMFS Open House this year. Last year in 2013, we unfortunately had to cancel the event due to ongoing challenges from Hurricane Sandy. This year, we again are uncertain as to if holding the Open House will be possible. We did not put the Open House on our Spring/Summer Program Schedule due to that uncertainty. As we get closer to September,



Open House 2012 at the Rutgers University Marine Field Station

when we usually host the event, we will be better able to make an informed decision as to how we will proceed.

Thanks to all who look forward to volunteering at Open House - we truly appreciate your support and commitment! We will update everyone as soon as we have a definitive decision on scheduling.

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**“Where the Mullica River Meets the
Sea”**



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