



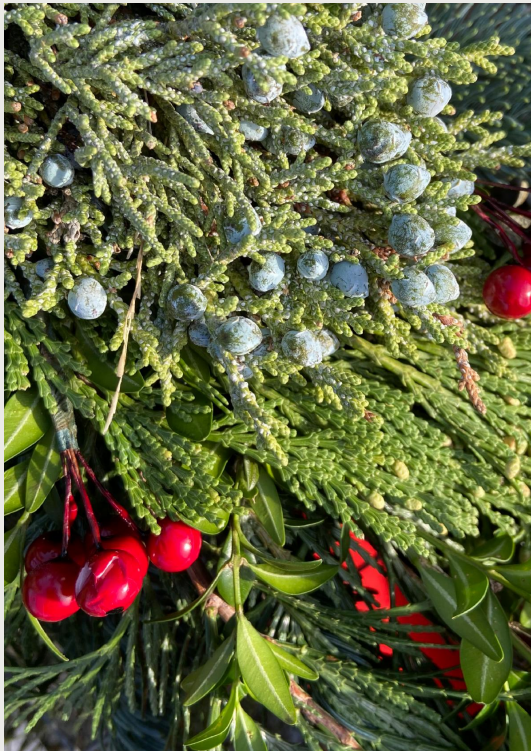
December 2020

## WATER PAGES eNEWSLETTER

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### A Message from Christopher Obropta

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We started 2020 with great aspirations. In January we started our second year of Green Infrastructure Champions training, and it was sold out with 40 participants signed up for each of the 10 sessions at Duke Farms. We plugging away at designing rain gardens for our project partners with the intent of working with communities to install 50 rain gardens this year in honor of the 50th anniversary of Earth Day. We were preparing green infrastructure plans for municipalities across the state with the goal of presenting plans to towns and helping them jump start implementing green infrastructure projects. Then it happened – COVID hit. Everything was shut down. We all started working remotely. We could no longer deliver face-to-face educational programs. We could not run our summer undergraduate student intern program.

We did not give up. We adapted. The RCE Water Resources Program staff was amazing. Green Infrastructure Champions became a series of online courses. We went from 40 participants per session to 140. We certified more Green Infrastructure Champions this year than last year! It worked. We could not hire students for our summer intern program, but this loss of labor did not stop us from achieving our rain garden goal. We partnered with the New Jersey Tree Foundation, hired local contractors, and worked more closely with the departments of public works. We worked with communities to install over 60 rain gardens this year, exceeding our goal of 50. We completed green infrastructure plans for over 25 municipalities without the help of student interns and began presenting these plans via a virtual format.

It just goes to show you. Even during a pandemic, environmental activities can

continue. We can still make a difference through persistence and hard work. I want to thank the RCE Water Resources Program Staff for all their hard work this year, and I want to thank our project partners for continuing to work with us through these trying times. Have a happy holiday. Before you know it, spring will be here, and we need to get back to work with our green infrastructure planning, design, and construction! We look forward to working with all of you in 2021.



*Best wishes for a safe, healthy, and happy holiday season  
from the  
Rutgers Cooperative Extension  
Water Resources Program!*

*Chris, Lisa, Sara, Chris,  
Hollie, Matt, Liz,  
Toby, Alex, Rich, & Zack*

## Municipal Action Team Green Infrastructure Initiative Updates - Spring through Fall 2020

**Camden SMART** (Stormwater Management and Resource Training) has met via a virtual format on a fairly regular basis throughout the pandemic.

- December - Camden SMART did not meet in December. The next monthly meeting is scheduled for January 13th at 2PM via Zoom.
- November - Camden SMART did not meet in November.
- October - Cooper's Ferry held a focus group with

Municipal action teams have been formed to foster collaboration and collective action that helps the municipality speak with a common voice and achieve a common goal while advocating for green infrastructure. Updates on the

residents regarding the stormwater utility. The major finding was that these groups felt that all properties should be charged the fee, including those currently tax exempt since all create stormwater runoff equally. The City Council also authorized a stormwater utility feasibility study, so development of a possible stormwater utility continues to move forward. The CSO LTCP was submitted to NJDEP and is available to view on the CCMUA website.

- September - The Camden Reports website has been relaunched and allows residents and visitors to report flooding and illegal dumping at [www.camdenreports.com](http://www.camdenreports.com). An environmental justice bill has passed in the state which will require NJDEP to account for the effect pollution has on a community's health before a pollution-creating facility can be built or expanded.
- August - Camden SMART did not meet in August.
- July - Discussions included looking at Camden's Complete Streets policy to update it to more recent guidance, and discussions were held on how to approach implementing a green street in Camden. The CSO Long Term Control Plan Selection of Alternative report is due to NJDEP on October 1, 2020. The plan includes a 10% disconnection of impervious surfaces from the collection system which is approximately 185 acres as well as expansion of the wastewater treatment plant to a capacity of 150 million gallons/day. These actions will help meet NJDEP requirements while also addressing street flooding in the city.
- June - Cooper's Ferry Partnership, through a grant from the NJ League of Conservation Voters, is working on a resident feedback program for a possible stormwater utility fee for Camden. The Camden Reports website is also being revamped and expected to launch in July to help identify areas of flooding. American Water is continuing sewer cleaning of clogged inlets and other parts of the sewer system. Ideas of how to potentially reduce litter reaching the sewer system was discussed. Possibly implementing an adopt-a-catch basin program like in Newark and Trenton was proposed as a possible solution.
- May - Education and outreach on lead in drinking water continue, and efforts are being made to determine why residents are not drinking tap water. The idea of a stormwater utility in Camden continues to move forward in partnership with the League of Conservation Voters. They will soon begin conducting outreach to residents about wastewater management and utility fees. The idea of a modified stormwater ordinance was also

various municipal action teams across the state are listed in this newsletter.

Technical assistance provided to these municipal action teams by the RCE Water Resources Program is funded in part by the Surdna Foundation, the Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission with support from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), and our local partners.

Camden SMART

Gloucester City Green Team

Harrison TIDE

Jersey City START

Newark DIG

Paterson SMART

Perth Amboy SWIM

Trenton Green Infrastructure Partners

discussed due to the fact that redevelopment projects are largely exempt from the current stormwater regulations. This modified stormwater ordinance could require even redeveloped sites to meet some minimum standard of stormwater management which is especially helpful in Camden where much of the city is already developed land.

**Gloucester City Green Team** has met via a virtual format on a fairly regular basis throughout the pandemic.

- December - The Gloucester City High School project has been completed and everything came out great and is working as intended. The limited remaining funding in the 319(h) grant is being reviewed to see how it will be used. NJ Tree Foundation assisted with volunteers to prune and mulch 37 tree on Brown and Paul street. They are also planning to schedule a spring planting due to lost commitments due to COVID restrictions. The Community Forestry Management Plan work is complete except for the inventory that is to be completed in the spring. The next monthly meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 13th at 1:30PM via Zoom.
- November - Gloucester City Green Team did not meet in November.
- October - There was a quick discussion about the status of the Gloucester City High School project which is mostly complete. An additional area of pavers was proposed due to issues with stone dust being tracked into the building. Depending on the budget, this additional work will be done with the help of Eric's Nursery.
- September - The Gloucester City High School project was a primary focus with discussions about how the project is proceeding with good progress. NJ Tree Foundation also discussed how tree plantings have gotten pushed back, but a tree planting is planned for the spring on the 800 block of Mercer Street.
- August - Miles Owen and Keri Klinges from Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission shared the results of the Community Forestry Management Plan Goal Prioritization Survey which provided insight into how urban forestry education and implementation should be approached. The final design of the logo was also shared and approved.
- July - Gloucester City Green Team did not meet in July.
- June - The group discussed the Gloucester City High School project where preliminary tree work has been completed. The continuation of the work is on hold until the contractor can fit it in their

schedule. The updated logo for the group was also shared. Everyone was happy with the near finalized version.

- May - The group discussed the Gloucester City High School project that has begun with initial tree work in the courtyard area completed, and work on the project will continue through the summer. Additional projects are also being looked into with the remaining grant funding. A logo for the group was also shared that everyone was happy with, and after some minor modification, the group will have a final logo!

**Harrison TIDE** (Transforming, Infrastructure and Defending our Environment) last met via a conference call on March 18th. Harrison TIDE has not met during the pandemic.

**Jersey City START** (Stormwater Treatment and Resiliency Team) has meet via Zoom during the pandemic and continues to work on providing education and gaining community input on the CSO Long Term Control Plan. The city is currently planting 330 trees as part of their effort to increase the urban tree canopy. Several green infrastructure projects have been put on pause this year, due to the pandemic, such as Columbia Park.

- December - Agenda items include LTCP discussion, ongoing construction projects, and plans/goals for 2021.
- November - Members discussed ongoing construction projects throughout the city and also the LTCP.
- October - There was no monthly meeting but an RCE Water Resources Program senior design student began designing a rain garden in Canco Park for the Canco Park Conservancy.
- September - Members discussed the details of the LTCP and drafted a letter to the Jersey City MUA to request more green infrastructure be implemented as part of the LTCP.
- August - There was no monthly meeting, but the city's planning office released the Jersey City Master Plan vision and a survey to collect public feedback at [www.jcnj.org/ourjc](http://www.jcnj.org/ourjc).
- July - Members discussed the details of the Long Term Control Plan and how best to distribute the information in the plans to the public for feedback; RCE Water Resources Program and Canco Park Conservancy installed a rain garden adjacent to a Supremo Grocery store parking lot.

**Newark DIG** (Doing Infrastructure Green) has been holding virtual meetings at 11:00 AM on the fourth

Tuesday of the month throughout the pandemic. Please contact [newarkdig@gmail.com](mailto:newarkdig@gmail.com) for information.

- November - Partners discussed the selection and location of future green infrastructure projects as a part of the CSO (combined sewer overflow) Long Term Control Plan (LTCP). Partners discussed the need for a methodology for site prioritization and selection.
- October - Partners discussed the CSO LTCP and partner organizations programming and events.
- September - The City of Newark and Newark DIG partners shared and discussed a proposed citywide green infrastructure consultant RFQ (request for qualifications) to assist in the management of existing and future municipal green infrastructure projects, including those in the CSO LTCP. The Water Resources Program shared and took feedback for draft plans for a green infrastructure/green streets conceptual plan for the Cityplex 12 site and adjacent streets.
- August - Newark DIG did not meet in August.
- July - Newark DIG, Sewage-free Streets and Rivers, and Jersey Water Works announced a workshop to review the CSO LTCP on August 18, 2020. Newark DIG partners developed a list of existing and proposed green infrastructure projects in the city to incorporate into the City of Newark's green infrastructure maintenance training program.
- June - Newark DIG, Sewage-free Streets and Rivers, and Jersey Water Works hosted a workshop to review the CSO LTCP on Tuesday, June 9, 2020.
- May - Partners discussed ongoing programming and events, including the City of Newark's Love Your Block mini-grants program, Greenworks green infrastructure trainer program, and a "Health, Climate, Equity and Cities" grant opportunity from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. DIG partners also discussed ongoing green infrastructure projects including the imminent construction of porous pavement and rain gardens for the Urban League of Essex County's Fairmount Street Model Block Project.
- April - Partners discussed the effects of COVID-19 on the City of Newark and partner organizations programming and events, including COVID-19 related aid efforts. Public meetings to gather feedback about the LTCP and CSO issues originally scheduled for April 2020 will be rescheduled due to COVID-19. Green Infrastructure Reformers is transitioning their door-to-door small business outreach campaign to virtual outreach. The City of Newark Office of Sustainability reported that over twenty applications for the Love Your Block program community

clean-up projects. The green infrastructure training program hosted by the City of Newark and Ironbound Community Corporation is preparing for a “train the trainer” program for its second year. Other programs and projects discussed included the Essex-Hudson Greenway project, Newark’s Food Policy Council, and a grant opportunity from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, “Health, Climate, Equity and Cities.”

**Paterson SMART** (Stormwater Management and Resource Training) has not met during the pandemic, but the Paterson Green Team has been working with the Water Resources Program, NJ Future, and ANJEC to continue promoting the Adopt-a-Catch Basin effort in the city. NJ Future provided another round of materials including safety vests, gloves, and bags at a sign-up event in East Side Park on September 12, 2020. The city is currently working to host an interactive map so that residents can sign up and report their work on the city website.

- December - monthly virtual meeting with Green Team, ANJEC, NJ Future, and Paterson City Council members; presentation and sign-up info session for Adopt-a-Catch-Basin via Zoom with new Paterson residents on December 16
- November - monthly virtual meeting with Green Team, ANJEC, NJ Future, and Paterson City Council members; presentation and sign-up info session for Adopt-a-Catch-Basin via Zoom with new Paterson residents on November 9
- October - monthly virtual meeting with Green Team, ANJEC, NJ Future, and Paterson City Council members
- September - RCE Water Resources Program and NJ Future attended a Paterson Green Team Adopt-a-Catch-Basin sign-up event in East Side Park on September 12, 2020; monthly virtual meeting with Green Team, ANJEC, NJ Future, and Paterson City Council members
- August - site visit and survey completed for Paterson Public School 30
- July - designs for a rain garden at Clinton Street Park completed for Paterson Habitat for Humanity

**Perth Amboy SWIM** (Stormwater Infrastructure Management) has not met via a virtual format during the pandemic, but there have been green infrastructure projects installed, including a rainwater harvesting cistern at the St. Peter's Food Pantry building in November. On December 16th there was a meeting between the Perth Amboy Department of Public Works and several members of SWIM to discuss the opportunity to build a tree farm on an empty property, which may also serve

another purpose as a collection location for stormwater to be reused on the farm.

**Trenton Green Infrastructure Partners (GIP):** The Trenton Green Team and Green Infrastructure Partners have held meetings via Zoom during the pandemic. Efforts to keep projects moving forward have been made by all members including the Brunswick Avenue Green Street designs by the Water Resources Program with collaboration by the Trenton Health Team and the Trenton Planning Board. A rain garden project is planned for the newly renovated Hetzel Pool in the parking lot, which will be installed in 2021. The planning board continues to work on finalizing the Stormwater Management Plan for the city and has been working with the Water Resources Program and the Watershed Institute to ensure that the plan works for the city and its residents. Trenton Cycling Revolution held the second annual Ciclovía event on September 19, 2020, where sections of downtown were closed off to car traffic and bikers took priority. COVID safety measures were taken to allow for gardening and bike maintenance workshops to be held for attendees.

- December - monthly meeting via Zoom with green team; MLK Elementary Designs completed
- November - monthly meeting via Zoom with green team; Zoom meeting with RCE Water Resources Program and French & Parello Associates discussing collaboration opportunities for green infrastructure projects in the city, including Hetzel Pool which will be a project in early 2021
- October - monthly meeting via Zoom with green team
- September - Trenton Cycling Revolution held the second annual Ciclovía event on September 19, 2020
- August - monthly meeting via Zoom with green team; RCE Water Resources Program met via Zoom with members of the Trenton Planning Board and the Watershed Institute discussing fee structures for enacting different elements of the Trenton Municipal Stormwater Management Plan
- July - monthly meeting via Zoom with green team; survey completed of Brunswick Avenue corridor from the Trenton Battle Monument up to and including MLK Elementary School

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Registration is still open  
for the 2021 Green  
Infrastructure  
Champions Training



## Green Infrastructure Champions Program

*This program is partially funded by the Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station, The Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, and NJ Sea Grant Consortium and is a collaboration of the Rutgers Cooperative Extension Water Resources Program and the Green Infrastructure Subcommittee of Jersey Water Works.*



Program!

**Register HERE!**

Sessions start on Friday,  
January 15, 10AM -  
12NOON, via a virtual  
format.



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