

Belmar Borough

Situation



Belmar Borough is in Monmouth County, New Jersey and has a total area of 1.7 square miles, of which 1.0 square mile is land and 0.7 square miles is water. Belmar beach is one of the most popular surf spots on the East Coast. Belmar's annual events are the Belmar 5k Run, New Jersey Seafood Festival, New Jersey Sand Castle Contest, St. Patrick's Day Parade, and Belmar Pro Surf Contest.

For more than a decade, Belmar has been redefining its reputation as a summer party destination to a family-friendly, four-season community that is a great place to raise a family, retire, invest in, or visit. This effort included starting the process of revitalizing the downtown area with substantial emphasis on sustainability. There are many summer rental properties, some motels, and bed-and-breakfasts. However, as with many communities, the economic recession has stalled the process. Belmar Borough has a yearly population of approximately 6,000, and Belmar has 70,000 visitors annually.

Currently, the Englishtown Aquifer provides water to the borough. Similar to other coastal communities, Belmar's water supply is in Critical Area 1. This area is defined as a Critical Area because the ground-water withdrawals from the Coastal Plain aquifers of southern New Jersey have increased steadily since 1900, lowering water levels by more than 200 feet in some areas. Every five years, the United States Geological Survey (USGS), in cooperation with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, measures water levels in more than 1,000 wells in the Coastal Plain over a two month period to prepare a "snapshot" of ground-water conditions. The water levels in this aquifer have recovered as a result of reductions in ground-water withdrawals initiated by the state in the late 1980s. The yearly average of gallons of water used per capita per day (gpcd) is 117, and during the peak it increases to 194 gpcd.



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Action

New Jersey Water Savers implemented the following efforts in Belmar Borough over the last three years:

Demonstration projects

- Belmar Elementary School Retrofit
- Irrigation Efficiency Study at the Magical Garden
- E Street Playground Water Conservation Demonstration Site

Outreach efforts

- Renter Education Program
- Self-guided MP3 Bike/Walking Tour
- Conservation Awareness Program at the Beach
- Fix a Leak Week
- Smart Irrigation Month
- Belmar Kids Run
- Sandcastle Building Contest
- Build Your Own Rain Barrel Program
- Turf Management for a Healthier Lawn Program
- Garden Seminars



Impact

Over the last three years, New Jersey Water Savers successfully developed and implemented programs that have been designed to encourage local stakeholders to change their behavior, ultimately saving water. Over the next two years, the project partners will expand this effort and use the information and knowledge that was gained from the first project and develop tools that can be used by municipalities throughout the state to conserve drinking water.

New Jersey Water Savers Partnership

New Jersey Water Savers is a partnership between the Rutgers Cooperative Extension Water Resources Program, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, and the United States Environmental Protection Agency. This partnership was created to provide leadership to promote water conservation throughout New Jersey. For more information on our partnership efforts, visit us at www.water.rutgers.edu.

