

# Self-guided MP3 Bike/Walking Tour

## Situation



Belmar's Rain Garden is featured as "Miss November" in the Rutgers Cooperative Extension Water Resources Program Calendar for 2010. It is located near the intersection of Eighth Avenue and North Lake Drive by Silver Lake.

As one of the Sustainable Jersey partners, Belmar Borough is leading the way to foster a community partnership and outreach project to increase awareness of environmental and cultural resources. Belmar Borough has a yearly population of approximately 6,000, and Belmar has 70,000 visitors annually.

## Action

The self-guided tour will be available Fall 2010. This tour will highlight the borough's two rain gardens, the Magical Garden co-op irrigation efficiency demonstration site, E Street Playground Low Maintenance demonstration site, the low flow bath facilities at the beach, and the bathroom retrofit project at Belmar Elementary School. The MP3 tour will reinforce the value of natural resources and help highlight the downtown redevelopment.

The tour will be cross-promoted at other Belmar Tourism events and outreach opportunities, information will be included in welcome packets for marina patrons and summer renters, and the borough will be working with restaurants, retailers, and bed-and-breakfast owners. The tour narrative and valuable links will be available on the borough's website along with a detailed map. This project will serve as a model for many other communities faced with the same challenges.



Rain Garden at E Street Playground

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### Impact

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. This project represents one of the largest collaborations to date. The project will benefit from the professional expertise of volunteers and pave the way for future joint endeavors that benefit Belmar socially, economically, and environmentally.

Belmar has fairly accessible sidewalks and streets, so the tour can easily be enjoyed by those with disabilities, seniors, and people with strollers. To help guide visitors, the Belmar Arts Council will design small markers that identify all the stops on the tour. The borough plans to take advantage of technology to make the tour fun, informative, and sustainable. This self-guided tour will be available through downloadable podcasts and MP3 players sponsored New Jersey Water Savers.

### 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](http://www.water.rutgers.edu).



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