



RUTGERS UNIVERSITY

Water Resources Program

New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station



NOVEMBER 2024

WATER PAGES eNEWSLETTER

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# GIVE THANKS

FAMILY • FRIENDS • GRATITUDE

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## Long Branch Fall 2024 Homeowner Rain Garden Program

On Wednesday, September 18th, the RCE Water Resources Program held a homeowner rain garden education session at the Long Branch Township Senior Center in Long Branch, New Jersey. Christopher Obropta provided an informative presentation about green infrastructure and homeowner rain gardens to the 43 attendees. This session was organized by Green Infrastructure Champion, Faith Teitelbaum, of the Whale Pond Brook Association and the Long Branch Green Team.

Following the presentation, attendees had the opportunity to sign up for a rain garden design session scheduled for the following Wednesday, September 25th. Six individuals attended to receive personalized designs for their properties, which were created by RCE Water Resources Programs engineer, Matt Leconey and landscape architect, Chris Perez.

The combined impervious cover for the six properties was calculated to be 3,087 square feet with a total rain garden area of 635 square feet. Additionally, approximately 198 native plants will be introduced into these spaces once the gardens are built.

This program aims to empower homeowners to take action in reducing stormwater flooding in their neighborhoods by capturing and redirecting runoff to recharge local aquifers.



*Education session*  
*[Photo credit: Hollie DiMuro]*



*Design session*  
*[Photo credit: Hollie DiMuro]*

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## A Unique Learning Opportunity for the Staff of the RCE Water Resources Program

The RCE Water Resources Program staff was fortunate to be able to attend the Great Swamp Watershed Association Gala on October 24, 2024.

The Gala was an unforgettable evening complete with fine dining and great conversation. The theme this year was a Green Gathering, which featured 40 esteemed environmental experts who mingled with guests throughout the evening and lead informal table discussions based on their area of

expertise during dinner. Some of the lively discussions included native gardening, environmental art and education, sustainable farming and landscaping, ESG investing, local history and government policies, and much more. It was a wonderful evening and an outstanding learning opportunity from a diverse group of experts.



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## The Training of a New Batch of AmeriCorps NJ Watershed Ambassadors

On Monday, November 4, 2024, I held a training program for this year's AmeriCorps NJ Watershed Ambassadors, a great group of young professionals who are destined to make this world a better place. They spent three hours learning about green stormwater infrastructure, where it should go, and how easy it is to design a rain garden. All of the Ambassadors were engaged and eager to take what they learned back to their area of New Jersey. By the way, if you are interested working with an Ambassador, go to: <https://dep.nj.gov/wms/bears/ameri-corps-nj-watershed-ambassadors/#current-ambassadors> to find the Ambassador for your area or contact Amanda Baksa at [amanda.baksa@dep.nj.gov](mailto:amanda.baksa@dep.nj.gov).

Let's face it, my generation and my parents' generation really messed up this planet. It is on the shoulders of these young professionals to fix the problems we created and to think outside of the box to come up with unique and innovative solutions. At the end of the training, I hope the Ambassadors saw the hope in my

eyes. I believe they will be successful or bust their butts trying. Thank goodness for the youth of America and this year's Ambassadors! ~ *Christopher C. Obropta, Ph.D., P.E., Extension Specialist in Water Resources*

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## **Restoring the Eroding Shoreline at Memorial Lake, Woodstown, NJ**

The RCE Water Resources Program had a great opportunity to implement a lake restoration project these last two weeks at Memorial Lake in Woodstown, NJ. This project was funded by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. We worked with one of our favorite contractors, Ernie Davis Landscaping, who regraded the shoreline while the RCE Water Resources Program staff installed 310 feet of coir coconut fiber logs at the toe of the slope, and over 6,400 square feet soil erosion control blanket on the regraded slope. A riparian native seed mix was placed under the blanket, and 1,700 herbaceous plugs were planted through the blanket and in the coir logs. We also installed native shrubs throughout the project including buttonbush, redbud, dogwood, and summersweet. Davis Landscaping constructed several access locations throughout the project so the local residents can continue to enjoy fishing in lake. Temporary goose fencing was installed around the entire project to allow the plants to grow without being devoured by geese. The project may not look like much now, but in the spring when the blue flag iris, Joe Pye weed, and milkweed start to bloom, the butterflies will be plentiful, and with a little luck, the lakeside buffer will alter the goose habitat just enough to get the geese to seek other refuge.

This project is the first of two that the RCE Water Resources Program is supporting. The second project will be at Fox Chase Pond in Hillsborough, New Jersey in the spring of 2025.



*Memorial Lake shoreline restoration, November 2024*

## Congratulations to the Municipal Sustainability Champions!



On Tuesday, November 19, 2024, Sustainable Jersey held their annual awards luncheon at the League of Municipalities Conference in Atlantic City. Sustainable Jersey is a network and movement of municipalities, schools, and school districts working collectively to bring about a sustainable New Jersey. Its mission is to empower New Jersey communities to build a better world for future generations with the tools,

training, and financial incentives necessary to pursue critical sustainability initiatives. Sustainable Jersey has a list of actions that municipalities can complete. Each action carries a certain number of points. Once a municipality gets 150 points, they become bronze certified, and at 350 points they become silver certified. There are also gold star standards in health, water, and energy, which are much more difficult to obtain. Over 80% of New Jersey's municipalities are participating in the Sustainable Jersey Program.

Every year Sustainable Jersey recognizes municipalities that have scored the most points in the Sustainable Jersey Certification Program in three population categories. The Sustainability Champions were awarded to Cape May City for municipalities with a population under 5,000; Madison received the award for municipalities with a population between 5,000 and 40,000; and Hillsborough was named the Champion for municipalities with a population over 40,000. The RCE Water Resources Program has had the opportunity to work with many of the municipalities in the Sustainable Jersey Program. We wholeheartedly congratulate these three champions and the other 208 municipalities who received bronze and silver certification this year along with those receiving the gold standards in health, water, and energy.

## HOLD THE DATES: Become a leader, become a Green Infrastructure Champion!



The next Green Infrastructure Champions Training Program will be offered every other Friday from 10AM to 12NOON starting January 10, 2025!

All sessions for the 2025 training program will be offered via an online format.

Generous support from our funders is allowing us to offer the 2025 training for FREE.

Here is what we can offer as part of the program:

- Training on green infrastructure planning and implementation
- Technical support to develop a design for a green infrastructure demonstration

- project
- Networking opportunities with other certified Green Infrastructure Champions for mutual support
- Assistance with grant writing

### **2025 Training Program Class Schedule:**

1. How to identify green infrastructure projects in your town (January 10)
2. Moving from planning to implementation of green infrastructure (January 24)
3. Maintaining green infrastructure practices/projects (February 7)
4. Stormwater management regulations, policies, and ordinances (February 21)
5. Green infrastructure planning and implementation for Sustainable Jersey points (March 7)
6. Green infrastructure projects for targeted audiences (March 21)
7. How to design and build a rain garden (April 4)
8. Retrofitting traditional detention basins with green infrastructure (April 18)
9. Developing green infrastructure master plans for an entire site or neighborhood (May 2)
10. Using green infrastructure to promote climate resiliency (May 16)

**Registration is required and OPEN!**

**[Go to water.rutgers.edu](https://www.water.rutgers.edu) today to learn more and register!**

**Attendance at a minimum of five (5) classes is needed for certification.**

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



**When:** Friday, December 13, 2024 from 8:00 a.m to 3:30 p.m.

**Where:** Brower Student Center at The College of New Jersey

Our collective efforts can have the potential to drive real impact for nature and communities, around key outcomes: improved water quality, affordability, flood resilience, and public health. Join the conversation at the Jersey Water Works Tenth Annual Conference on December 13! Register today!

**<https://www.jerseywaterworks.org/events/water-events/2024-jersey-water-works-annual-conference/>**

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