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Monmouth County Environmental Newsletter: October 2020 Edition

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Swimming River Reservoir, Lincroft. Source: Kyle Clonan



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MCEC Webinar Series: Nature Friends and Foes

This October, the Monmouth County Environmental Council (MCEC) is holding a webinar roundtable series focused on nature's Friends and Foes: Native Plants and Invasive Plants and Critters.

The two-part series will kick off on Tuesday, Oct. 27, from 7 to 8 p.m. with an introduction to Jersey Friendly Yards. Tune in to learn about how you can be a steward of the environment right from your own backyard by planting native plants and using water and soil wisely. Then there will be a presentation on how to be vigilant against invasive insects like the Spotted Lanternfly and Emerald Ash Beetle. [Register for session 1.](#)

On Thursday, Oct. 29 from 7 to 8 p.m. attendees will learn about a pesky aquatic invasive plant, hydrilla, how it is being controlled in the Manasquan Reservoir, and how we can be a part of keeping water ecology healthy. Next we will learn how the Monmouth County Park System tackles invasive plants to restore the land. [Register for session 2.](#)

Questions? Contact Amber.Mallm@co.monmouth.nj.us.

Upcoming Environmental & Outdoor Events in Monmouth County:

Some activities require registration and/or fees:

- [Oct. 5, 6:30 -7:30 p.m. Defensive Driving to Avoid Wildlife Vehicle Collisions](#)
- [Oct. 10-26, Virtual Ocean Fun Days](#)
- [Oct. 13 & 20, 6 -7 p.m. Naturalists Exploration: Ecology of the Night](#)
- [Oct. 13, 6:30 -7:30 p.m. What is an Energy Audit and Do You Need One?](#)
- [Oct. 19, 6:30 -7:30 p.m. Ten Ways to Adapt to Coastal Flooding.](#)
- [Oct. 22, 6:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m. Clean Ocean](#)

Webinar: What Do the Stormwater Management Rules Mean for My Town?

This spring, the New Jersey Department of environmental Protection (NJDEP) adopted amended the Stormwater Management Rules, which are set to take effect in March 2021. The Rules require new major developments to manage stormwater with green infrastructure and require municipalities to revise their municipal stormwater control ordinances. To help engineers and municipalities understand and implement the new rules, the Monmouth County Division of Planning is hosting a webinar with presenter Gabe Mahon, Bureau Chief of NJDEP's Bureau of Nonpoint Pollution Control.

The event will take place via WebEx on Oct. 15 at 10 a.m. On the day of the event join by clicking [here](#), meeting number: 173 720 9745, password: Ji5qVU8HmQ9.

You may join by phone at: +1-408-418-9388 United States Toll, access code: 173 720 9745

Questions can be directed to Bridget.Neary@co.monmouth.nj.us or Amber.Mallm@co.monmouth.nj.us.

- [Action's Virtual Celebration](#)
- [Oct. 24, Clean Ocean Action Beach Sweeps](#)
- [Oct. 22, 7- 8 p.m. Nature Lecture Series: Raccoons in Your Backyard](#)
- [Oct. 26, 6:30-7:30 p.m. Demystifying Iconic Halloween Animals](#)
- [Oct. 27, 2 -3 p.m. Snakes-n-Scales Presents: A Virtual Halloween Animal Adventure!](#)
- [Oct. 28, 10 -11:30 a.m. Awesome Autumn Amble, Clayton Park, Upper Freehold](#)
- [Oct. 29 & Nov. 5, 6 -7 p.m., Naturalist Explorations: Nature Journaling](#)

Help Map Local Plastic Bag Collection Points



The Monmouth County Division of Planning, in coordination with the Sustainable Jersey's Monmouth Hub, has released a survey to catalog plastic shopping bag recycling collection points throughout the County. The data will be used to publish an interactive map that will be updated regularly. Visit the [survey](#) and submit information on locations you know including the address, whether it is indoors or outdoors and the time it is accessible. The survey is mobile friendly. If you are standing next to a collection point it can use your phone's GPS unit to share that location with the survey.

Environmental Education Resources for Parents and Teachers

Last spring this newsletter reported on several nature-based and environmental programs being offered virtually for those homeschooling their children or looking for fun activities during quarantine. With the variety of options for returning to school this Fall, even more people may be looking for these resources. Here are a few websites to visit:

- [New Jersey Sea Grant Consortium](#) provides free [Resources for Educators](#) such as lesson plans, worksheets, videos and additional nation-wide tools for remote learning. Several 'for fee' virtual field trips are also available. Their [field trip webpage](#) offers K-12 programs that can be modified to be age appropriate and can accommodate a class of up to 25 students. They also offer family learning opportunities. Woods Hole Sea Grant offers additional programs for [remote learning](#).
- The [Alliance for New Jersey Environmental Education](#) (ANJEE) continues to offer their [online hub of resources](#).
- [Duke Farms](#) has a number of free, weekly virtual learning experiences scheduled this fall. Presentations include a look at local wildlife such as reptiles during a [Halloween Animal Adventure](#), [black bears](#), [bobcats](#) and [bats](#). Activities can be found on their [events web page](#).
- [The Watershed Institute](#) offers many educational events and programs for pre-school through high school, teacher development and families. Check their website for schedule, fees and class availability.
- NJDEP Division of Parks and Forestry provides a [webpage](#) with links to State Parks and Historic Sites with interpretive centers. Check the links before visiting to learn about programs, closings and any special COVID restrictions at each site. The Division

also provides a Pre-K through Grade 12 Environmental Education curriculum called [Project Learning Tree](#) (PLT). Teachers and Scout/Club advisors can reserve a PLT Trunk filled with resources including lessons, worksheets, games, DVDs and tools.

- The [Monmouth County Park System](#) has scheduled a number of tours, hikes and activities for the fall season. Check their [online calendar of events](#) or visit the Park Systems [Fall Activities page](#) for ideas on how to enjoy the fall season close to home this year. See the list of upcoming events in this newsletter for a sample of Park System activities. Some programs require fees and advanced registration.

USDA to Provide More Aid to Farmers

Below: Apples for sale at the Downtown Freehold Farmers Market. Source Linda Brennen. Support our local farmers by shopping at farmers markets and pick your own fields found in the [Grown in Monmouth Directories](#).



The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) recently approved approximately \$14 billion additional aid to farmers affected by COVID-19 related price declines. The money funds [Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 2.0 \(CFAP 2\)](#), replacing the first program that ended in September. Program information and the application can be found on the USDA [CFAP webpage](#). For CFAP 2, the time frame for loss and the list of commodities eligible for payment have been expanded. For more information, filing assistance or to submit an application, farmers can call 732-462-0075 to reach the Farm Service Agency in an office at the County Agriculture Building. The deadline for applications is Dec. 11.

EPA Moves HABs Research Forward

The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced recently that nearly \$6.5 million will be provided to seven institutions to research current and new technologies for control and prevention of harmful algal blooms (HABs). HABs are overgrowths of algae with potential to harm human health and aquatic ecosystems and have been seen in New Jersey in various waterbodies including the Manasquan Reservoir. There are several factors that can cause HABs including excess nitrogen and phosphorous. The EPA funding was issued through the Science to Achieve Results (STAR) program. The funding recipients were Oklahoma State University, San Jose State University Research Foundation, University of Idaho, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, University of South Florida, Washington University in St. Louis and the Water Research Foundation. EPA is hopeful that this research will lead to a reduction in the occurrence of blooms across the country. More information on [HABs research](#) is available on the EPA website. On a related topic, join the MCEC on Thursday, Oct. 29, at 7 p.m. to learn about hydrilla at the Manasquan Reservoir.

Ocean Fun Days is Going Virtual!



From Oct.10 through 26, New Jersey Sea Grant Consortium is holding its annual Ocean Fun Days on an all virtual platform. Ocean Fun Days is a free eco-friendly educational event celebrating 17 years of ocean discovery, coastal stewardship, and energy conservation. There will be fun [activities](#), educational videos, printable handouts, tutorials, [educational resources](#) and more from over 30 exhibitors. Visit the [Ocean Fun Days](#) website for more information.

Be sure to check for a story map prepared by the Monmouth County Division of Planning to learn about watersheds and resources to keep our water clean.

Clean Ocean Action Plans Fall Beach Sweeps

Sustainable Jersey Energy Grants and Toolkits

Clean Ocean Action (COA) has been holding The Gardiner Environmental Fund beach sweeps annually for 35 years. The [2019](#) contributed \$100,000 to Sustainable Jersey to [report](#) notes that since, "...1985, over 144,114 finance eight municipal and school projects volunteers have participated and removed and focused on energy conservation, energy

tallied 7,239,232 million pieces of debris from efficiency and renewable energy. Two \$20,000 New Jersey's beaches and waterways." The grants and six \$10,000 grants are expected to be awarded. The grant funded projects may be used to gain points toward certification. Sustainable Jersey offers a [promotional flyer](#) and provides details on their [website](#). The application deadline is Oct. 30. An [application information packet](#) is also available.

NJ PACT Seeking Input on Rule Proposals

NJDEP has embarked on a regulatory reform effort that will modernize environmental laws to *Protect Against Climate Threats* (PACT). To achieve this, NJDEP is holding stakeholder meetings and seeking input on possible rule changes. The issues being considered in the changes include sea level rise, chronic flooding, and supporting green infrastructure and renewable energy. Visit the [NJ PACT website](#) regularly to see meeting schedules, videos of past meetings, meeting materials and draft rule proposals. A [survey](#) is available for comments on specific topics and separate links for comments on rule proposals are also posted.

National Drive Electric Week

To celebrate [National Drive Electric Week](#) from Sept. 26 through Oct. 4, NJDEP Bureau of Mobile Sources offered a host of information on electric vehicles in New Jersey. The Bureau invited the public to post pictures on Instagram of electric vehicle charging stations with #EVChargerChallenge in the caption and tag @drivecleannj to participate in its "Find an EV Charger Contest." A randomly selected winner will receive a swag bag of DriveGreen items. The [Drive Green New Jersey webpage](#) offers information on New Jersey electric vehicle goals and programs. For a quick list of electric vehicle incentives, policy tools and resident resources view the [Electric Vehicle Resources for Local Government](#) guide.

What's in Your Water?

Jersey Water Works is a collaboration of organizations and individuals who embrace the common purpose of investing in sustainable, cost-effective solutions that provide communities with clean water and waterways. In February 2021, the collaborative anticipates launching an online dashboard called [Jersey Water Check](#). This online tool will offer data on water infrastructure from multiple sources in one place. According their website, the dashboard will:

- Include information about every drinking water and wastewater system in the State;
- Integrate data from publicly available sources and survey information in one easy-to-use website;
- Give water and wastewater utilities a way to demonstrate the value of their services and show the positive impact they have on New Jersey's water and public health;
- Provide our State's elected leaders the information they need to seek solutions to New Jersey's significant water infrastructure needs; and
- Provide communities a way to engage with their utilities and understand the vital public health role these systems play.

For more information and updates, check the [Jersey Water Works](#) webpage.

Recent Legislation

In August [Bill S855](#) was approved as P.L. 2020, c. 67. It requires that the title of "Chosen Freeholder" be changed to "County Commissioner" and "Board of Chosen Freeholders" be changed to "Board of County Commissioners." Counties will be required to update their letterheads, stationary and other papers, once exhausted, and update their websites within one year of the effective date. However, counties are not required to update or replace signs within one year if the action would require the use of county funds. Instead, the signs should be updated at the next ordinary course of business.

Two bills discussed in the last issue of this newsletter were signed into law in September. [Bill S349](#), approved as P.L.2020, c.80, on Sept. 19, 2020, will require developers to offer electric vehicle charging stations as option in certain new home construction. [Bill S232](#), approved as P.L.2020, c.92, on Sept. 18, 2020, will require DEP to evaluate

environmental and public health stressors of certain facilities on overburdened communities when reviewing certain permit applications.

In September, [Bill S2607](#) was approved in the Senate and referred to the Assembly Environment and Solid Waste Committee. It would require land use plan elements of municipal master plans to include climate change-related hazard vulnerability assessment.

[Bill A1978/S864](#), the Plastic Pollution Reduction Act, has been approved in both houses. If signed into law within 18 months, grocery stores, restaurants, convenience stores, and other food service businesses will be prohibited from distributing or selling single-use plastic carry-out bags and polystyrene foam food containers. If signed, within one year, restaurants would only be allowed to offer plastic straws upon request. The Bill also would ban grocery stores from providing single-use paper carryout-bags due to concerns with the high expenditure of energy, resources and emissions during manufacturing.

Clayton Park Fall Foliage Hikes

An August 2020 [article](#) in [Best of New Jersey](#), a lifestyle and tourism website, recommended Monmouth County Park System's [Clayton Park](#) as one of the best hiking trails to enjoy fall foliage in New Jersey. The park offers mature stands of red and white oak, beech, ash and birch trees, posing a colorful fall display. The Old Forge Trail is cited as a 1.5 mile hike through a "...beautiful older part of this diverse forest." During October, the park is open from 7 a.m. until 7:30 p.m. Some COVID-19 restrictions are in place so it is best to visit the [Clayton Park web page](#) for updates when planning a visit.



Take to the trails this fall, but remember to check your body for ticks to prevent disease.

Beware of Fall Tick Season

While you are out enjoying the fall weather and sights, remember to protect yourself against ticks. Be sure to wear long pants, tall socks and perform a "tick check" after being outdoors. The Monmouth County Park System warns in their brochure entitled "[Learn about ticks, disease, and prevention.](#)" that October through mid-December is the second peak for Black-legged tick season in our area, based on 15 years (2001-2015) of submissions to the Monmouth County Mosquito Control's [tick identification and testing program](#). It is important to stay vigilant against ticks into the fall season as they can be encountered any day the temperature is above 45 degrees. Furthermore, Black-Legged ticks are capable of spreading illnesses including Lyme disease, Babesiosis, and Anaplasmosis. For more information on tick borne diseases, bite prevention and tick biology, visit the [County Mosquito Control](#) website, or view the Monmouth County Planning Board's Eco-Tips brochure titled [Dealing with Ticks and Mosquitoes](#).

About This Newsletter

The purpose of the newsletter is to inform Monmouth County citizens on the health of their environment and list environmental outreach events in their community. The newsletter is produced by the Monmouth County Division of Planning Section of Environmental &

*Sustainability Planning in coordination with the Monmouth County Environmental Council.
The County of Monmouth and the Board of Chosen Freeholders do not necessarily share the
viewpoints of any environmental group mentioned in this newsletter.*

*If you have questions, comments, or wish to have an event listed in the newsletter, please
contact: Amber.Mallm@co.monmouth.nj.us*

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