

Having trouble viewing this email? [View it as a Web page.](#)



Monmouth County Environmental Newsletter: Fall 2024

New Brunswick Takes Action to Manage Flooding by Creating Stormwater Utility

It has been more than five years since the [Clean Stormwater and Flood Reduction Act](#) was signed into law. This Act allows local and county governments to establish stormwater utilities to fund stormwater management, as defined within the legislation. While several municipalities have considered this approach, New Brunswick is the first to fully implement a stormwater utility.

The Act was designed to provide a stable and equitable funding source exclusively for stormwater management. Stormwater from rainfall and melting snow not only has the potential to flood our communities, causing property damage and safety concerns, but also pollutes waterways, including our drinking water sources. Increased development leads to more impervious surfaces, such as large parking lots, which prevent stormwater from being absorbed into the ground. More intense storms and increased precipitation due to climate change further exacerbates these issues.

The assessed stormwater utility fee is based on a property's impervious coverage, including parking lots, driveways, roofs, and sidewalks. Notably, this law applies to all properties,

Upcoming Environmental & Outdoor Events in Monmouth County:

Some activities may require fees and/or registration.

• [Oct. 19, 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m., Fall 2024 Beach Sweeps, Clean Ocean Action, various locations, Pre-Registration Required.](#)

• [Oct. 24, 7 - 8 p.m., The Real Story of the Jersey Devil, nature lecture at Bayshore Waterfront Park Activity Center, Port Monmouth.](#)

• [Nov. 12, 9 a.m., Casual Birder, Dorbrook Recreation Area, Colts Neck, Meet at Basketball Court Parking Lot.](#)

• [Nov. 6, 1 - 2 p.m., Raccoons in Your Backyard, nature](#)

regardless of any property tax exemptions.

According to a [press release](#) on the City of New Brunswick website, 51% of landowners in New Brunswick are exempt from property taxes. Whereas hospitals and universities benefit from tax exemptions, they possess significant amounts of impervious surfaces. By implementing a usage fee instead of a tax, the law aims to generate a fair and sustainable revenue source to be used for stormwater management.

[Learn More about Stormwater Utilities](#)

NJDEP Releases its Natural and Working Lands Strategy to Reduce Greenhouse Gases

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) had recognized in its [New Jersey's Global Warming Response Act 80x50 Report](#) that carbon sequestration is one of the approaches that New Jersey can take to reduce its impacts of greenhouse gas emissions. [Carbon sequestration](#) is the process in which plants pull carbon dioxide from the air and use it for photosynthesis, and then store the carbon in the plant and in the soil. NJDEP has the launched an initiative titled "[A Strategy to Advance Carbon Sequestration on New Jersey's Natural and Working Lands](#)" which outlines how New Jersey can maximize carbon sequestration on its natural and working lands. The strategy demonstrates how farms, forests, wetlands, aquatic habitats, and developed land play a vital role in enhancing community health and resilience by boosting the capture of carbon dioxide.

[lecture at Freneau Woods Park Visitor Center, Aberdeen.](#)

• [Nov. 24, 10 a.m.-12 p.m., Thanksgiving Beach Clean-up in Leonardo, Middletown Township, NJ, Save Coastal Wildlife, Leonardo. Advance Registration Requested.](#)

• [Dec. 7, 10 a.m.-12 p.m., MCAS December Field Trip - Sandy Hook Winter Bird Walk - Lot B, Monmouth County Audubon Society, Sandy Hook National Recreation Area.](#)

• [Dec. 21, 10 a.m.-12 p.m., Holiday Beach Cleanup at Sandy Hook National Recreation Area, Parking Area D, Save Coastal Wildlife, Sandy Hook. Advance Registration Required.](#)

WTEAC's Inaugural Green Fair Was a Success!

The [Wall Township Environmental Advisory Committee](#) (WTEAC) held its inaugural Green Fair at The Historic Village at Allaire State Park in Wall Township on Aug. 2. The Green Fair was organized by WTEAC Chair, David Roberts, in coordination with Hance Sitkus, a committee member, and Executive Director of Allaire Village. The WTEAC's Green Fair successfully drew in a diverse group of practitioners, advocates, researchers, and vendors from the environmental sector.

During the Green Fair, Hance shared the preservation history of what is now [Allaire State Park](#). Ownership dates to its namesake, Mr. James P. Allaire, a steamboat industry leader. It is purported that Mr. Allaire contacted President Theodore Roosevelt in hopes of admitting the land

into the National Park System. The preservation honors, however, go to the State of New Jersey, as the property was officially established as a State Park in 1947. It is still a place to appreciate history, enjoy the outdoors, and was a natural choice to host the Green Fair.

The Green Fair participants were a group of environmentalists with different objectives, yet all had the same goal of making our environment a better and cleaner place for everyone. This event highlighted numerous ways for attendees to get involved with environmental organizations as they walked through the village on a warm, sunny day.

[The America Littoral Society](#), [The Barnegat Bay Partnership](#), [Shark River Cleanup Coalition](#), [Jacques Cousteau National Estuarine Research Reserve](#), and [Prevent Balloon Litter.org](#) focus on watershed management, and the protection of sea life.



The [Monmouth Conservation Foundation](#), [The Green Yard Project](#), [Sea Girt Conservancy](#), and Wall Township High School Environmental Club focus on farmland and open space preservation, as well as protecting wildlife.



[Earth Friends](#) aims to educate small children by giving them a connection to their natural environments in their most formative years. Similarly, [Waterspirit](#) is a spiritual ecology nonprofit that informs, inspires, and empowers people of all beliefs to deepen their consciousness of the sacredness of water and the

interdependence of all earth's systems.

At the event, a recycled goods vendor and artistic vendor displayed their products. [Frank's Market & Refillery](#) highlighted products which are sustainable, eco-friendly, toxin-free and single use plastic free. Artistic Blend produced handmade gifts and environmental artwork. [NJVEG](#) promoted a plant-based diet and provided support for individuals transitioning to veganism.

With so many organizations available, it is possible to make a positive and significant impact on the environment, right here in Monmouth County. Depending on your interest or passions, you could engage in cleanup efforts, outreach programs, or advocacy work. *(Photos and article prepared by Ellen Smith, MCEC)*

Bird Photographers Flock to the Henry Hudson Trail for a Rare Sighting

The onset of the Fall weather brings residents outdoors, but birders and photographers had another reason to flock to the Henry Hudson Trail recently. A rare sighting of a [roseate spoonbill](#) caused dozens of Monmouth County

Monmouth County Highlights from ANJEC's 51st Environmental Congress

[The Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions \(ANJEC\) held its 51st Environmental Congress](#) on Sept. 27 at Rowan College in Burlington County, and

residents to camp out to observe and photograph the pink long-legged wader, as it flew about the marsh.

Roseate
Spoonbill,
*Photo
credit:
Wikipedia
Commons*



The roseate spoonbill is locally common in coastal Florida, Texas and Southwest Louisiana, according to the National Audubon Society. While it is unclear why the majestic pink bird made its way to New Jersey, one could speculate that it got caught in recent storms and landed in Union Beach.

However, according to the Asbury Park Press news article, "[A Roseate Spoonbill in Monmouth County? Why are Southern Birds Traveling to NJ?](#)", Andrew Farnsworth, a scientist with Cornell University's Lab of Ornithology, stated that "the frequency of their sightings is up dramatically. Warmer winters, hotter summers and increasing wetland areas that result from warming temperatures and environmental conservation efforts are bringing more of these birds north."

Whatever the reason, residents took advantage of this opportunity.

recognized several recipients within Monmouth County with their Environmental Achievement Awards.

- The [Spring Lake Heights Environmental Commission](#) received an Environmental Commission Award for their Logo Design Contest which was a partnership between the Environmental Commission, Spring Lake Heights Elementary School (K-8) staff and students. The winner of the contest designed a logo for the Environmental Commission which is now on their website.
- The [Fair Haven Borough Green Team](#) and their Third Street Trail Pollinator Garden received a Nonprofit Achievement Award for its land reclamation project. Invasive vines and shrubs were removed along a pathway that connected the borough's sports fields and recreation areas. Native trees were planted along with an educational pollinator garden.
- Sarah Pomphrey, [a Borough Council member in Rumson](#), was recognized for a Municipal Leadership Award for her work in facilitating the installation of green infrastructure projects, aiding the creation of speaker series at the Green Fair, and for championing for the borough's Environmental Resource Inventory to become part of its Master Plan.
- The AmeriCorps New Jersey Watershed Ambassadors Program, Projects in the Parks, was commended for its ongoing initiatives, which pairs ambassadors with State Parks to carry out essential projects, including trail maintenance, invasive species removal and cleanups. Each year, the Monmouth County Division of Planning hosts a Watershed Ambassador who actively participates in the Parks program. Last year, the Ambassador

completed two projects, including vital trail maintenance at Allaire State Park in Wall.

Meet the 2024-2025 Watershed Ambassador



This fall, the Monmouth County Division of Planning welcomed the 2024-2025 AmeriCorps New Jersey Watershed Ambassador, Caroline McFarland (pictured right). The AmeriCorps New Jersey Watershed Ambassadors Program provides free environmental education to schools, municipalities, and community organizations in each of New Jersey's 20 watershed management areas. Caroline will be representing the Monmouth Watershed for her term of service.

Ambassadors also monitor local freshwater streams and coordinate projects in the community, including cleanups and watershed restoration activities. Caroline grew up in Monmouth County and attended Saint John Vianney High School in Holmdel. While she was the Barnegat Bay Watershed Ambassador last year, she is ecstatic to be now serving in her home county. She currently lives in Oceanport and enjoys photography and indoor rock climbing in her spare time.

Improving Wildlife Connectivity in New Jersey Through the CHANJ Program

At the Oct. 8 joint meeting of the Monmouth County Transportation and Environmental Councils, Gretchen Fowles and Brian Zarate wildlife biologists from New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), Division of Fish & Wildlife's Endangered and Nongame Species Program presented on the Connecting Habitat Across New Jersey (CHANJ) program.

From salamanders to black bears, the CHANJ program is dedicated to ensuring wildlife can move freely across the landscape. This connectivity is essential for animals to find food, shelter, and mates, which helps to maintain healthy populations and ecosystems. The CHANJ program is dedicated to preserving habitats, maintaining wildlife passages, and reducing barriers that impede animal movement.

The speakers discussed efforts to enhance wildlife movement across New Jersey's landscape and roadways. For example, bridges and culverts, when replaced, can be designed to permit a dry passage for aquatic and terrestrial animals underneath the roadway. The speakers highlighted two examples in Monmouth County: a reconstructed culvert along Sharon Station Road in Upper Freehold and a wildlife passageway installed at Assunpink Wildlife Management Area. Aiming to make the roadways friendlier to wildlife will reduce wildlife crashes and promote public safety. To learn more information on the CHANJ program and how to take action, volunteer or simply report

wildlife sightings by visiting the CHANJ website: [NJDEP| Fish & Wildlife | Connecting Habitat Across New Jersey \(CHANJ\)](#)

EPA Proposes Settlement at Superfund Site

Just northwest of Monmouth County lies the [Raritan Bay Slag Superfund Site](#), located along Raritan Bay in Old Bridge and Sayreville in Middlesex County. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) designated the area as a Superfund Site in 2009. On Sept. 4, 2024, the U.S. Department of Justice announced a proposed settlement to cover cleanup costs and to compensate for natural resource damages.

The \$151.1 million [proposed settlement, published in the Federal Register](#), will fund the remediation of soil, sediment, and surface waters contaminated with high levels of lead and other heavy metals. The contamination stems from the use of [slag and battery casings](#), which was an industrial byproduct manufactured at NL Industries in Perth Amboy. The contaminants were used to construct a seawall in Laurence Harbor and the western jetty at the Cheesequake Creek Inlet.

To safeguard public health, warning signs and fences are posted to limit public use of 1.5 miles of waterfront between Margaret's Creek and the areas just beyond the western jetty at the Cheesequake Creek Inlet.

Raritan Bay



Superfund Site, *Photo credit: NOAA*

The proposed settlement is subject to a 60-day public comment period which is open until

Blue Whale Spotted Off NJ Coast

There she blows! In early September, many news sources reported that the passengers and crew of the Cape May Whale Watch and Research Center saw the largest mammal in the world swimming off the coast of New Jersey – the [Blue Whale](#)! The [Cape May Marine Mammal Research Center](#) is dedicated to the conservation of marine mammals and their environment in Cape May, New Jersey through research, education, and outreach.



Blue Whale,
Photo Credit: Wikipedia Commons

It's a rare observation to catch a glimpse of the blue whale. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has reported that the blue whale is at best considered an occasional visitor in U.S., more commonly found in the Southern Hemisphere. [The Mingan Island Cetacean Study](#) noted that from 1980 to the summer of 2008, only a total of 402 blue whales were individually photo-identified, mainly in the St. Lawrence estuary and northwestern Gulf of St. Lawrence in Canada.

It is unknown why she was seen off the coast of New Jersey. According to NOAA, assessment reports of blue whales include data from various stocks, including areas of North Pacific and North Atlantic oceans. The blue whale is endangered under the Endangered Species Act and protected by the Marine Mammal Protection Act.

Nov. 12, 2024 and pending court approval.

The consent decree is available to read on the Department of Justice's website:

<https://www.justice.gov/enrd/consent-decree/us-et-al-v-nl-industries-inc-et-al>

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 Environmental & Sustainability Planning Section of the Monmouth County Division of Planning in coordination with the Monmouth County Environmental Council. The County of Monmouth and the Board of County Commissioners 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: Melissa Bezahler melissa.bezahler@co.monmouth.nj.us

Monmouth County Board of County Commissioners

Thomas A. Arnone, Director
Ross F. Licitra, Deputy Director
Susan M. Kiley
Dominick "Nick" DiRocco
Erik Anderson



STAY CONNECTED WITH US



Update your subscriptions, modify your password or email address, or stop subscriptions at any time on your [Subscriber Preferences Page](#). You will need to use your email address to log in.

If you have questions or problems with the subscription service, please visit subscriberhelp.govdelivery.com.

This service is provided to you at no charge by [Monmouth County, New Jersey](#).

This email was sent to Email Address using GovDelivery Communications Cloud on behalf of: Monmouth County, New Jersey
· One East Main Street · Freehold, NJ 07728

GOVDELIVERY 