

LABEL

CLEAN OCEAN ADVOCATE
August 2020



- **Virtual Student Summit is back for fall, and more!**
- **Help NJ Ban Balloon Releases!**
- **Offshore Wind Webinar**

Inside this Issue

Clean Ocean Action
49 Avenue Blvd.
Long Branch, NJ 07740
www.CleanOceanAction.org
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Tributes

Photo courtesy of Joe Reynolds

In Memory of:
Peter Cauterucci
Gordon N. Litwin
Margaret Lopez
Carol Anne Ross
Bill Simmons

In Honor of:
Congratulations Amanda Cusack
Matthew Goley
Kelly, Noah & Ann Mascarenhas
Congratulations Chris Small

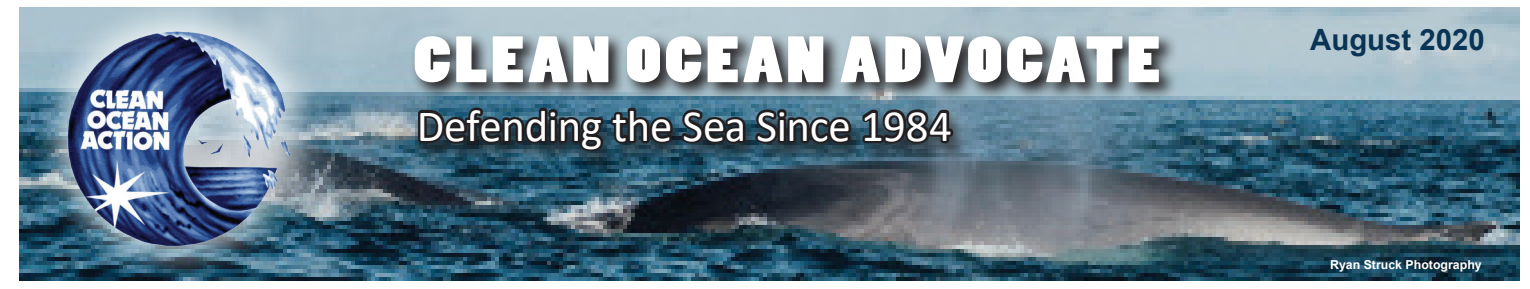
Save the Date

COA Open Surf Contest
Stay tuned for details.

Rally for the Rivers Eco-Fest
Saturday, October 3
Stay tuned for details.

Beach Sweeps
Saturday, October 24
Stay tuned for details.

Virtual Ocean Celebration
Thursday, October 22
Stay tuned for details.

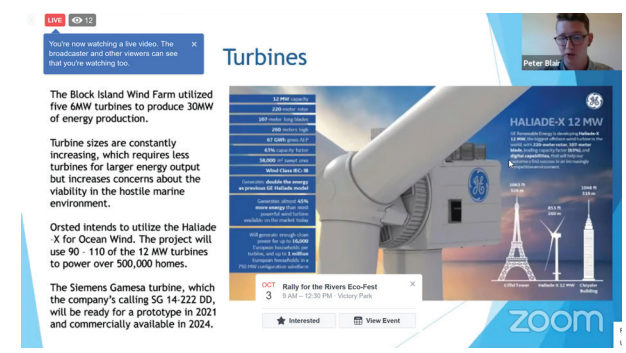


POLICY Kari Martin, Advocacy Campaign Manager, Citizens@CleanOceanAction.org; Peter Blair, Esq., Policy Attorney, Policy@CleanOceanAction.org

Learning More: Offshore Wind

Offshore wind energy has become a prominent option for states looking to address and design pathways to achieving climate and clean energy goals. The issue is complex, however, and Clean Ocean Action (COA) wants to ensure that people and decision-makers are fully informed of the facts as the NY/NJ region considers and moves forward on largescale offshore wind energy facilities.

On July 22, COA hosted a “Lunch and Learn” webinar on offshore wind energy development off NY/NJ, with hundreds of interested people participating via Zoom and Facebook Live. The event was well-received and featured an informative presentation by Peter Blair, COA Policy Attorney. Attendees responded to three polls during the webinar, and over 50 questions were submitted during the “Question and Answer” session. The webinar informed the public about what is being proposed for offshore wind, how the state plans to undergo this development, and what COA is doing to ensure the development does not come at the expense of the marine and coastal environment. To read COA’s position statement on offshore wind energy development, view the webinar recording, and review Peter’s presentation slides, go to CleanOceanAction.org.



In August, NJ residents can raise questions and share their thoughts about offshore wind. In releasing its “Draft NJ Offshore Wind Strategic Plan,” the NJ Board of Public Utilities (NJBPU) is hosting a virtual public hearing on August 3 (pre-registration is required) and will accept public comments by 5pm on August 17. Also, NJBPU released the “Draft NJ Offshore Wind Second Solicitation Guidance Document,” which includes information about the timeline and mechanics of the second offshore wind solicitation. The NJBPU invites the public to an August 5 virtual public meeting to discuss the Guidance Document. See <https://www.nj.gov/bpu> for these aforementioned documents and hearing notices, and to get involved.

Atlantic Ocean Gets a "Pass" on Offshore Blasting & Drilling

Another great day for the Atlantic Ocean thanks to the leadership of US Congressman Frank Pallone (D-NJ) on the House Appropriations bill, which bans offshore oil drilling in the Atlantic Ocean. The decision follows a letter Mr. Pallone wrote to the House of Representatives in May 2020, requesting bipartisan support to block offshore drilling. The amendment restricts any and all funding for drilling activities, which COA trusts also includes ocean seismic blasting. For over 30 years, a similar bi-partisan moratorium led by Mr. Pallone protected the ocean from drilling. Offshore oil and gas drilling is now opposed by nearly every coastal Governor. The bill awaits action in the US Senate.



Help NJ Ban Balloon Releases!



COA salutes NJ Assemblyman Eric Houghtaling (D-Neptune) and NJ Assemblywoman Joann Downey (D-Freehold) for introducing a bill (A4322) on June 25 to prohibit the outdoor release and tethering of balloons and other floating devices. Balloons are festive and fun, but released outdoors they can be lethal extremely harmful to birds, turtles, whales, and many others. Balloons litter the ocean and are one of the most lethal forms of marine debris. In fact, 70,055 balloons were removed from NJ beaches by volunteers on just 40 days during the 20-year period (1999-2019) of COA’s bi-annual Beach Sweeps! Also, a recent study in the journal Marine Policy ranks balloons as #3 of the 20 deadliest forms of trash in the ocean.

COA reminds residents to “Mind Your Décor, For Shore.” Citizens can make better choices with fun balloon alternatives and show support for this balloon ban bill by contacting their state legislators and signing our petition. In less than one month, COA’s petition collected over 9,500 signatures. Help us soar past 10,000 by signing and sharing the petition at CleanOceanAction.org.

POLICY

Kari Martin, Advocacy Campaign Manager; Citizens@CleanOceanAction.org
Peter Blair, Esq., Policy Attorney; Policy@CleanOceanAction.org

Beaches & Bacteria



Water pollution can put swimmers' health at risk and close beaches. In 2019, bacteria levels at NJ beaches indicated that water was potentially unsafe for swimming on at least one day 73 times, according to a new nationwide report "Safe for Swimming?" released by Environment NJ Research & Policy Center. New Jersey's coastal water quality is not perfect, but it has come a long way – vastly improving since the late 1980s when hundreds

of beaches were closed for weeks. Over the years, COA has worked together with many people at the federal, state, and local levels to successfully identify and stop sources of what we call "poo-llution" in our coastal waterways. Thanks to a recent grant from the NJDEP, COA, Save Barnegat Bay, and the Marine Academy of Technology and Environmental Science (MATES) are teaming-up to find and slow the flow of poo-llution in Barnegat Bay, a hotspot highlighted in this recent report.

Trump Attacks States' Authority

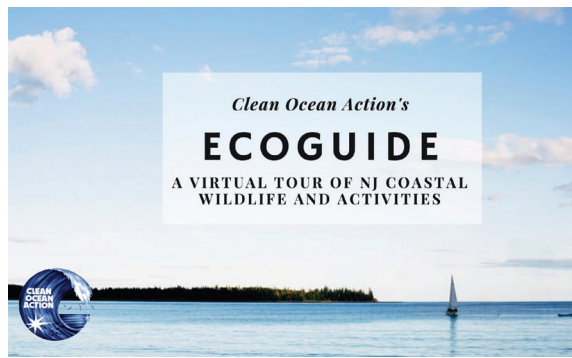
On July 13, President Trump followed through with his promise to strip environmental protections on key water laws to expedite fossil fuel energy projects. The recent rule rollback will significantly undermine a state's authority under the Clean Water Act to control large federally-backed infrastructure projects that impact waterways. For example, NJ Governor Murphy and NY Governor Cuomo used this law to stop the NESE project.



In response, COA led a coalition of forty-four NJ-based organizations to submit a joint letter urging New Jersey to sue the USEPA over the new regulations to ensure the state retains its authority to regulate these projects. Our message was received and on July 21, NJ Attorney General Grewal joined a coalition of twenty states that are suing USEPA to invalidate the rule that unlawfully restricts their authority to protect the waters on which NJ residents depend from pollution. COA applauds the leadership of Governor Murphy and Attorney General Grewal. NY is also one of the states joining the lawsuit.

Clean Ocean Action's Virtual EcoGuide is Here!

COA is excited to announce the release of the Virtual EcoGuide! Published in previous years to promote the eco-friendly enjoyment of the Jersey Shore, COA has now taken this mission virtual so that it can be accomplished on-the-go. This comprehensive tool serves as a fun database of the best ways to enjoy marine ecosystems while also protecting them. This includes eco-friendly activities for all ages, educational information on issues that COA addresses, and tips on the best places to appreciate nature in NJ. So, whether you are looking for a family adventure or some fun ideas for school projects, COA's EcoGuide "shore-ly" has something for everyone! Find the EcoGuide ready for mobile or pc use by visiting CleanOceanAction.org.



Emily Ross, COA's Communication and Resource Intern, worked diligently to share the wonders of the Jersey Shore in the EcoGuide

SCIENCE

Swarna Muthukrishnan, PhD, Staff Scientist, Science@CleanOceanAction.org
Alison McCarthy, Watershed Protection Coordinator, Outreach@CleanOceanAction.org

Going With the Flow: Updates on the Two Rivers

Last month, COA resumed its bimonthly public Rally for the Navesink meetings by hosting a virtual meeting for the first time since January. At the virtual meeting, a new citizen science opportunity was debuted: the Two Rivers Water Quality Reporting Form. This online reporting tool provides a platform for citizens to report water quality concerns to COA.



Attendees of the meeting learned about various water quality conditions that might be observed in the Two Rivers and how these can be documented and reported using the form. Dr. Swarna Muthukrishnan also gave an overview of the DEP's shellfish classification reappraisal report, which determined an upgrade would not be recommended, as three of the eight monitoring stations in the downgraded area do not meet the criteria for the upgraded classification. However, improvements in water quality are evident; five stations are now meeting the criteria. Since horse waste has been identified as contributing to elevated pathogen levels in the Navesink, COA is developing an innovative on-site horse waste composting program, in collaboration with the NJ Composting Council.

Assessing Marine Debris During a Pandemic



This summer, COA's Marine Debris and Water Quality Intern Jacob Sorrentino has begun work on a new project, Wrackline Assessments. The line of debris left along the beach following high tide, known as the wrackline, is often a combination of seaweed, seashells, litter, and plastic debris.

During a wrackline assessment, the recorder walks along the most prominent wrackline on the beach, recording and collecting all marine debris that is present. This achieves two goals: 1) removing

debris from the marine environment and 2) collecting data on marine debris.

Although this Spring's Beach Sweeps were not held due to COVID-19, citizen science volunteers are able to gather vital data during weekly wrackline assessments at two locations: Sea Bright and Sandy Hook. COA is particularly interested in examining the prevalence of facial masks, disposable gloves, and other pandemic-related waste on the beaches. Stay tuned for updates and ways to get involved.

Update from Microplastic Researcher Catie Tobin

Catie Tobin has been working with COA since 2013. In 2016, Catie moved to Boston to pursue her dream of earning a PhD in Environmental Science at University of Massachusetts. Inspired by her microplastics work with COA, Catie continued that line of research while in graduate school. Her dissertation, titled "Exploring the environmental, economic and social implications of microfiber ingestion by the Eastern Oyster," allows her to assess microfiber pollution from both the natural environment and social perspectives. This spring, in response to changes from COVID-19, Catie hosted virtual stakeholder workshops in order to evaluate stakeholder perspectives of microplastic pollution on oyster resources in Boston Harbor and coastal Massachusetts. Catie plans to publish her findings from these workshops as well as a commentary piece about the impacts of COVID-19 on social science research to highlight how stakeholder engagement can still happen virtually. Stay tuned for the release of the commentary piece and more updates from Catie!

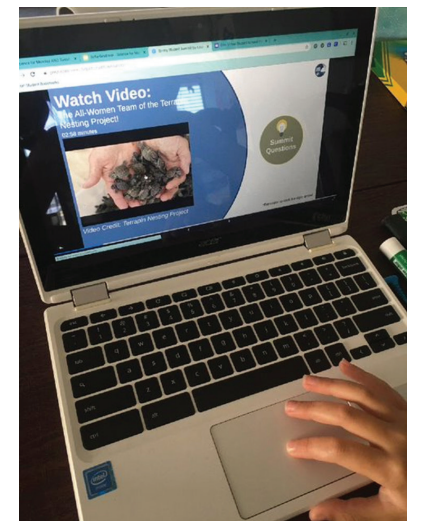


EDUCATION

Kristen Grazioso, Education Coordinator, Kgrazioso@CleanOceanAction.org
Kari Martin, Advocacy Campaign Manager, Citizens@CleanOceanAction.org

COA's Virtual Summit is Back For Fall!

Our Fall Student Summit typically takes place at Island Beach State Park, but this year we get to bring it to students virtually! Just like our popular in-person Summits, COA's Virtual Fall Student Summit will aim to expand learning beyond the classroom. The Summit will be designed to provide public and private middle school (Grades 5-8) students from southern NJ with an interdisciplinary marine and environmental education experience from home! Through virtual presentations from local scientists, teachers, and volunteers, this year's Fall Student Summit will bring students an interactive "day at the beach".



In May, our 32nd annual Spring Student Summit went virtual – and it was a huge success! Now, thanks to our sponsors OceanFirst Foundation and Eloise & John Pound, and a recent, very generous grant from The John Ben Snow Memorial Trust, our Virtual Fall Student Summit will have new additions and updates, creating the best experience possible for all attendees!

For information on participating in our Virtual Fall Student Summit, contact Kristen.

PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

Spencer Munson, Resource and Event Coordinator, Programs@CleanOceanAction.org
Laurie Bratone, Development Director, LBratone@CleanOceanAction.org

Making Waves: 36 Years of Victories and Achievements



Since 1984, Clean Ocean Action has worked to improve marine water quality by identifying and eliminating pollution sources, educating and motivating the public, and inspiring action for change. To view highlights from over 36 years of ocean advocacy work read COA's new publication, *Making Waves* available at CleanOceanAction.org.

The Ocean is Calling

Stay tuned for more information on COA's Virtual Celebration, The Ocean is Calling, scheduled to air Thursday, October 22 at 6:30pm. Content will include entertaining, educational and fun programming featuring an auction, and a chance to help celebrate the 35th Anniversary of COA's Beach Sweeps program. Join us!

Artwork by Stella Ryan was made from litter collected during the Beach Sweeps

