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- What was that Muck on the Beach?
- COA Premieres Public Service Announcement
- Volunteer at the Beach for a Clean Ocean

July 2005 Highlights

WHAT WAS THAT MUCK ON THE BEACH?

Algal Bloom & Water Quality Questions

Early June's hot and humid temperatures brought people to the shore, but a massive algal bloom from June 9-16 kept them out of the water. Run-off from a rain event carried fertilizers, pet wastes, and other nutrients into the water, combined with a rapid increase in water temperature and an onshore wind made conditions right for the algae, specifically diatom and dinoflagellate populations, to explode. The result was a slick of mucky brown water and foam extending from Sandy Hook to Long Branch. When the bloom began to die off and float to shore, beach-goers experienced smelly brown mats of algae in the surf and on the beach. Clean Ocean Action (COA) received many calls as people wondered what was impacting water quality. Although unpleasant, blooms of this algae do not cause any human health issues for beach-goers.

Continued Concerns for Ocean Water Quality

At the same time, COA also learned that weekly monitoring results for those same beaches (conducted Mondays from Memorial to Labor Days) revealed bacteria levels were as high as seven times the state standard. Re-sampling on Tuesday showed bacteria levels below the state standard. The same conditions that trigger an algal bloom, including runoff after a significant rain event, can also result in high bacteria counts in the water.

This incident strongly supports COA's ongoing call for more frequent testing (especially after rain events) and immediate posting at beaches that exceed bacteria limits. The current program in NJ only requires closing the beach after two consecutive days of high bacteria levels, but due to the 24+ hours it takes to get results, water quality is unacceptable and unhealthy for at least three days before beaches are closed.

COA is researching other states' programs and, specifically, is looking into new testing procedures that can provide results in a few hours and continues to urge NJ Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) to adopt monitoring procedures more protective of human health.

For COA's recommendations to improve beach monitoring, check "Issues and Campaigns" on our website and follow links for "Coastal Water Quality." To review weekly bacteria monitoring results from NJ beaches (available by Tuesday afternoon), go to <http://www.state.nj.us/dep/beaches/index.html>.

MAST Student to Investigate Stormwater Discharge

Kayla Conner, a student at the Marine Academy of Science & Technology (MAST), is assisting COA in developing a program to help track down potential sources of bacteria in our waterways. The program involves monitoring streams impacted by stormwater discharge by placing a device in the water that can detect Optical Brighteners (OB). OBs are fluorescent white dyes that are added to laundry soaps and detergents to make clothing appear "whiter". Detection of OBs in a water body indicates the presence of laundry effluent, which may have entered the water body from an illegal connection of a sewage pipe to a stormwater system, runoff from a failing septic system, ineffective sewage treatment, or from leaky sewage pipes. OB monitoring will coincide with bacterial monitoring by MAST students at the same locations. The combination of bacterial and OB data can be used by state and local officials to identify and investigate potential sewage contamination problems. COA intends to make the OB Monitoring program available once procedures have been established.



COA PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

Featuring...Staten Island Tuna Club

One of the many fishing clubs that are active COA Participating Organizations is the **Staten Island Tuna Club**. The club has been in the coalition since the early 1990s, working on issues to improve water quality for tuna and other fish.

The Staten Island Tuna Club, with a membership of 70, was formed in the 1950s to fish for tuna and build camaraderie and competition with members and between other clubs. Club members primarily fish for tuna, but over the years gained interest in fishing for other fish. Now the club organizes their own fluke, tuna, bass, and bluefish tournaments. They also have fishing programs and sponsor the participation of other fishing clubs' in tournaments. In addition, the club teams-up with other local organizations and supports fishing days for children with autism and children from troubled families.



Club members became steadfast advocates for clean water and have taken action on issues that threaten water quality. For years, the club fought against the dumping of toxic mud at the old Mud Dump Site, now the Historic Area Remediation Site (HARS). Club members attended meetings and hearings and pushed for the end of ocean dumping. The club also rallied to fight a proposed containment island in Lower New York Bay for the disposal of wastes.

"Staten Island Tuna Club is in favor of a clean ocean," said John Malizia, Vice President of the club. "We need clean water to allow fish to propagate."

Currently, the club is acting to lock-in the progress made in improving ocean water quality by supporting the Clean Ocean Zone (COZ) and being represented on the committee to develop the legislation to designate the COZ.

The club meets the first Wednesday of the month at 8PM at the Great Kills Yacht Club. To RSVP to attend a meeting or for more information about the club and its events, contact John at 718-984-3653 or j.malizia@worldnet.att.net.

RETURNS SERVICE REQUESTED

Clean Ocean Action
PO Box 505
Sandy Hook, NJ 07732-0505
732-872-0111
www.CleanOceanAction.org
Institute of Coastal Education
Wildwood, NJ 609-729-9262



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Clean Ocean Action, PO Box 505, Highlands, NJ 07732
To pay with MasterCard or Visa, please call 732-872-0111.

COA is a 501(c)(3) organization and contributions are tax deductible.

July 2005

July & Mid-August, Weekends
- Clean Ocean Action Shore Tips
(C.O.A.S.T.) Campaign. For beach club and beach sites, see schedule inside newsletter.



SAVE THE DATE

August 20-21, Saturday & Sunday
- Clearwater Festival, 11:30am-7pm, Sunset Park & Main Street, Asbury Park. For information or to volunteer, contact Monmouth County Friends of Clearwater at (732) 872-9644.

September 16, Friday
- Sunset at Sandy Hook, Seagull's Nest, 6-10pm. Invitations to be mailed shortly. Call COA for details.

September 29, Thursday
- 4th Annual Ocean Golf Classic to Benefit COA, Navesink Country Club. Call COA for details.

CLEAN OCEAN ZONE

COZ Legislation Complete

After more than three years, the Clean Ocean Zone (COZ) proposed written legislation is final. Now, supporters of the COZ will bring the "NJ/NY Clean Ocean Zone Act" to ocean champions in Washington, DC. To date, over 10,000 citizens have signed petitions for the COZ and 78 groups and 28 municipalities and environmental commissions support the COZ. For information, visit www.cleanoceanzone.org.



Offshore Wind Update

The Blue Ribbon Panel finished the first set of hearings and has broken into three subcommittees to discuss specific issues, including Subcommittees: Energy (Jeanne Fox, Chair), Ocean Uses & Environmental Issues (Bradley Campbell, Chair), and Economics & Tourism (Virginia Bauer, Chair). The Panel is determining if it is appropriate to develop offshore wind turbine facilities off New Jersey's coast and whether the benefits of offshore wind power to the state are sufficient to outweigh the costs. A draft report will be published for public comment and hearings before the final draft is submitted to the Governor.

Proposal by Long Island Power Authority (LIPA)

LIPA has applied to the US Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE), NY District, for a permit to install an offshore wind energy generating facility and submarine electric cables 3.6 miles offshore of Jones Beach Island. The application was publicly noticed on June 9, 2005, and an electronic copy is available at <http://www.nan.usace.army.mil/business/buslinks/regulat/pnotices/200500365.pdf>.

Comments are due July 22, 2005. Public hearings are scheduled.

The proposed project consists of 40 wind turbine generators on individual steel tower monopiles, with interconnecting submarine electric cables, an offshore electric substation platform, and a submarine electric transmission cable leading from the offshore electric substation to the mainland of Long Island, and then to an existing upland electric substation. In addition, scour control mats would be placed on the ocean floor around the base of the towers.

The ACOE's preliminary determination states that the project may affect four species of sea turtles -- leatherback, loggerhead, green, and Kemp's Ridley -- or their critical habitat; four species of whales -- North Atlantic right whale, humpback whale, fin whale, minke whale; as well as, piping plover, roseate tern, and seabach amaranth. COA is reviewing the application.

The proposed project consists of 40 wind turbine generators.

The Ocean Loses Big in the US Senate Energy Bill

Despite efforts by NJ and NY's US Senators, especially US Senator Jon Corzine (D-NJ), to remove a harmful amendment, the Senate energy bill includes provisions allowing offshore oil and gas exploration in ocean areas that have been under moratoria for almost 25 years. The inventory includes seismic testing that is equivalent in impact to underwater artillery, causing serious damage to fish, reefs, and other marine life, and could pave the way for permanent rigs in areas currently covered by the offshore drilling moratorium, including the waters off NJ and NY. Joint House-Senate conference committee deliberations will be held on this bill later this year. The establishment of the Clean Ocean Zone would prohibit offshore oil and gas activities.



Oil & Water Don't Mix

Last month, COA, US Public Interest Research Group (USPIRG), Atlantic Audubon Society, and League of Conservation Voters held an event to protest oil drilling in the Arctic Refuge in Alaska and the precedence it would set for drilling in other parts of the US, including off the coasts of NJ and NY. COA's Tony Totah highlighted the hundreds of species that would be threatened off NJ's coast and the importance of a clean and healthy marine environment.

COASTAL WATER QUALITY ISSUES

Nicole Simmons & Chris Ackerman, 732-872-0111, policy@cleanoceanaction.org

Municipal Stormwater Rules & The Ocean

In 2003, New Jersey adopted a package of regulations to address stormwater runoff. The regulations require municipalities to develop control plans for stormwater runoff resulting from both existing and new development and implementation of "Statewide Basic Requirements." Specifically, the Stormwater Management Rule requires:

- implementing Best Management Practices (BMPs) for new development to reduce pollution runoff levels from total suspended solids by 80%
- reducing the nutrient load to the maximum extent feasible
- protecting special resource areas by requiring vegetative buffers around vital streams and reservoirs
- stressing new performance standards for groundwater recharge requiring maintenance of 100% of the average annual groundwater recharge.

COA is drafting useful tips for municipalities to use as they finalize their stormwater plans and begin implementation of the rules. COA's tips focus on ways to comply with the Rule to best reduce pollution impacts on the ocean.

Attention Town Officials, Planners, and Engineers

SAVE THE DATE

August 16, 2005

Workshop: "Putting Communities in Charge: Storm Water"
Burlington County College, Pemberton, NJ

For more information, contact mweinstein@njmsc.org.

An Update: Shark River Dredging

The Shark River Bay Environmental Planning Committee (SRBEPC), which includes the Mayors of Avon, Belmar, Neptune, Neptune City, and Wall, continue to host meetings to present the "Regional Plan for Environmental Enhancement of the Shark River Bay - Preliminary Phase." The next meeting is in Belmar on June 30. For details, contact Belmar Boro Administrator Richard Lynch at (732) 681-3700 or rlynch@boro.belmar.nj.us. Also, COA will tour the potential de-watering facility at the old Camp Evans site on June 29. For information about this tour, contact Nicole Simmons at (732) 872-0111.

Shark River Receives Added Protection

The Shark River Brook and its tributaries received Category One (C1) protection by NJDEP. The announcement was published in the June 20 NJ Register. This achievement for the Shark River was led by the Shark River Cleanup Coalition and made possible by the citizens, organizations, and elected officials that defended the river by submitting comments and making telephone calls to NJDEP and Acting Governor Codey. Please commend Gov. Codey (call 609-292-6000) and NJDEP Commissioner Bradley Campbell (609-292-2885 or commissionercampbell@dep.state.nj.us).



What's Cool About I.C.E.?

Beachcombing is a fun and relaxing pastime for summer visitors and residents at the shore. Stop by the Institute of Coastal Education (ICE) in Wildwood to see the beach display and learn about all the cool treasures that nature leaves along the shore. The display has a variety of shells, bones, and other artifacts both common and unusual to New Jersey's beaches. If you find something on the beach and want to know what it is, bring it with you to ICE and we will identify it.



Institute of Coastal Education
Pacific Avenue, Wildwood
Tony Totah, 609-729-9262
Wildwood@cleanoceanaction.org

(What's Cool at ICE and Coastal Creature Feature appear every other month. Please see last month's newsletter to guess the June Coastal Creature Feature.)

C.O.A.S.T.

Lisa Kiwak, 732-872-0111, Coast@cleanoceanaction.org

Volunteer at the Beach for a Clean Ocean

Join fellow ocean enthusiasts along the NJ shore this summer to volunteer for the 15th year of the annual C.O.A.S.T. (Clean Ocean Action Shore Tips) campaign. Shore visitors and residents at locations in Monmouth and Ocean Counties are waiting to hear from COAST volunteers about current ocean pollution issues and actions they can take to help the ocean.



The COAST campaign relies on ocean advocates (like you) to volunteer their time to educate beach goers. There are still opportunities to volunteer this summer (see schedule below). Volunteers are needed for four hours on a weekend in July or early August between 10:00am and 3:00pm. Each volunteer will receive a complimentary T-shirt and a great day by the sea.

This summer's COAST campaign focuses on building support for the Clean Ocean Zone and educating citizens on the federal legislative process.

To sign up for COAST or other volunteer opportunities, complete and send the volunteer form located on the enclosed insert, or contact Lisa.

2005 SCHEDULE

Look for C.O.A.S.T. tables or volunteer at these locations:

July 2-3: Bradley Beach and Asbury Park

July 9-10: Elberon Beach Club, Deal, and Loch Arbour

July 16-17: Driftwood Beach Club, Ship Ahoy Beach Club, Surfrider Beach Club, and Sands Beach Club

July 23-24: Chapel Beach Club and Sea Bright

July 30-31: Breakwater Beach Club and Monmouth Beach Bathing Pavilion

August 6-7: Risdan Beach Club and Spring Lake

August 13-14: Seaside Park, Lavallette, and Island Beach State Park

FLOTSAM & JETSAM

Recycle, Recycle, Recycle



NJDEP is accepting public comments on a new solid waste management plan for NJ that focuses on boosting municipal recycling rates. For the proposed plan, go to www.state.nj.us/dep/dshw.

Written and e-mail comments on the Plan update may be submitted by July 15, 2005 to: Robert Goodwin, NJDEP, Site Remediation and Waste Management, Division of Solid and Hazardous Waste, Bureau of Recycling and Planning, PO Box 414, Trenton, NJ 08625, or Robert.Goodwin@dep.state.nj.us.

COA STAFF NEWS

Welcome Summer Interns

COA welcomes **Chris Ackerman**, a native of Fair Haven, NJ, to our team as a summer 2005 legal intern. Chris has his Masters of Studies in Environmental Law from Vermont Law School (VLS), and will complete his Juris Doctor at VLS in Spring 2006. Chris is researching the scope and enforcement options of the Clean Water Act section 401 Water Quality Certificates. Throughout the summer Chris will be researching municipal stormwater plans, the effects of offshore wind development on marine water quality, land use policies to reduce sedimentation of waterways, as well as investigating other environmental enforcement and regulatory compliance issues.

Emily Jack-Scott also joined COA's team this summer as an intern at the Wildwood office. A native Philadelphian, she is a sophomore at Yale University as an Ecology and Evolutionary Biology major. This summer, Emily will help coordinate and lead marine education programs, organize volunteers and media outreach, as well as assist with the daily duties at the office, also home of the Institute of Coastal Education (ICE).

