



November 2006 Highlights

- Citizens Speak Up! Public Hearing on Offshore Oil & Gas Drilling
- Sea Scenes: Support a Cleaner & Greener New Jersey
- Save the Date: Polar Bear Plunge

CLEAN OCEAN ZONE

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Citizens Speak Up! Public Hearing on Oil & Gas Drilling Plan

On November 13, New Jersey residents and visitors will have the only opportunity in the state to provide verbal comments to the US Department of the Interior's Minerals Management Service (MMS) on the proposed five-year oil and gas leasing program (<http://www.mms.gov/5-year/2007-2012main.htm>). The proposed program includes provisions to drill for oil and gas off the coast of Virginia, less than 100 miles from NJ's coast.

Organizations and citizens are urged to attend this public hearing and rally your voices in opposition to this ocean drilling plan that threatens our environment, economy, and quality of life. The hearing will be held on Monday, **November 13, 2006**, in Atlantic City at the Sheraton Atlantic City Convention Center Hotel. The public's comments will be accepted at two sessions: 2-5PM and 6-9PM. To submit written comments by **November 24, 2006** (via mail or electronically), go to the above referenced website.

Officials Fend Off Oil & Gas Drilling--For Now

Thanks to the nearly unanimous opposition from NJ's US Representatives and to the strong leadership shown by US Senator Robert Menendez (D-NJ), the threat of abandoning the moratorium on drilling off the Atlantic coast has been averted, for now. Despite backroom efforts, leaders were unable to compromise on a far-reaching House bill on offshore oil and gas drilling with a less expansive Senate version. The entire Congressional delegation in NJ, with exception Rep. Scott Garrett (R-5), opposed both versions and any weakening of the moratorium.

In addition, US Senators Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ) and Robert Menendez (D-NJ) showed leadership in their opposition to the bill by threatening to filibuster any compromise that included provisions from the imposing House version.

Call your elected officials to thank them for their support and to tell them to keep NJ's guard up, as the threat of oil and gas drilling is expected to return following the election during the lame duck session and in the new year.

New Jersey to Develop an Energy Master Plan

New Jersey Governor Jon Corzine recently announced the beginning of a year-long, multi-agency process to develop an energy master plan for the state. This plan would create a long-term energy vision to deal with the state's energy needs through 2020. A series of public meetings to introduce the planning process were held in mid-October throughout the state.

There are several upcoming opportunities for public comment and participation throughout the process, including an opportunity to comment on the draft Goals and Objectives (due **November 3**), and suggestions on strategies and actions for specific objectives (due **November 15**). For information on the development of the Energy Master Plan, go to <http://www.nj.gov/emp>.

Clean Ocean Action (COA) plans to provide input and recommendations that focus on making environmentally-sound energy choices.

For more articles related to the Clean Ocean Zone, see page 2.

COA PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS Featuring...

The Coastal Jersey Parrot Head Club



What group has fun in the sun, sand, and surf, and volunteers for the environment and community?

The **Coastal Jersey Parrot Head Club (CJPHC)**, of course. The CJPHC, a nonprofit organization, is a chartered member of Parrot Heads In Paradise, Inc.

The group's mission is to live-out the philosophies of the Parrot Heads and assists and supports other nonprofit organizations in the community. The CJPHC organizes social activities for Jimmy Buffett fans that also celebrates the lifestyle portrayed in his music.

"Coasties," as they call themselves, have a commitment to improve the community and environment through volunteer work and devote hundreds of hours to various causes. Most recently, CJPHC members have volunteered for cancer awareness, multiple sclerosis, and hurricane Katrina relief, as well as for Arc of Ocean County, Friends of Island Beach State Park, and, of course, COA.

Each year, CJPHC regularly leads COA's Beach Sweeps in Seaside Park. Also, Coasties volunteer for the Clean Ocean Action Shore Tips (COAST) campaign, speaking to hundreds of beach-goers about ocean pollution issues and taking action for the ocean.

"Through our involvement with COA, we know how important it is to have an awareness of the environment," said **Grace Peck**, CJPHC President. "We want to leave the world a better place and that's why we do what we do."

Membership to CJPHC is open primarily to residents of Monmouth & Ocean Counties. CJPHC's quarterly newsletter, The Rhumb Line, provides news, event details, and opportunities for fun and volunteering. To learn more about CJPHC, visit www.cjphc.com, or write to CJPHC, PO Box 568, Lanoka Harbor, NJ 08734, or email president@cjphc.com.

*****Eco-Tip of the Month*****
Fall Back on Energy Use: It will be darker earlier, but to save energy and money, use compact fluorescent light bulbs in your home and office, consider using solar-powered outdoor lights, and turn off lights when room is not being used.
Adapted from "Our Environment," Vol 11, No. 8, by Ingrid Justick

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 RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

November 2006

November 7, Tuesday
 - Election Day. Get out and vote!

"PARK" YOUR VOTE ON NOVEMBER 7!
SEE POSTCARD INSIDE FOR DETAILS.

FALL BEACH SWEEPS 2006



Beach Captain Amanda Alden of Jenkinson's Aquarium piles the bags of debris collected by volunteers in Point Pleasant Beach

*****SEE INSIDE FOR MORE PICTURES AND HIGHLIGHTS*****

Please clip and send to COA.

STAY INVOLVED IN YOUR COALITION!

MAILING LIST RENEWAL OR SIGN-UP FORM

- ➔ If you received a message on your address label, it's time to renew.
 - ➔ Your contribution will ensure that you receive this monthly newsletter, action alerts, and notices of events for one year.
 - ➔ To renew, please detach this form and enclose with your check.
- Thank you.

Enclosed is my check for (please check one):

\$25 Individual/Family \$15 Student/Senior
 \$50 Participating Organizations

Name _____

Street _____ City _____

State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

Email _____

Please include organization name & contact, if applicable:

Please make check payable to
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.

CONTAMINATED SEDIMENTS

Jennifer Samson, Ph.D., 732-872-0111, Science@cleanoceanaction.org

Working to Manage Sediments in NY/NJ Harbor

Since February, COA has been participating in a **Regional Sediments Management Workgroup** for the New York/New Jersey Harbor to develop a set of recommendations to manage and improve sediments in the harbor. The goals established by the workgroup are as follows: "The sediments of the NY/NJ Harbor will support and sustain both a healthy ecosystem and a robust regional economy and sediments will be managed as a resource to achieve this goal." To that end, the workgroup has tackled issues such as sediment quality, sediment quantity, and dredging with an emphasis on addressing them from a regional perspective.

Participants in the workgroup include the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), US Army Corps of Engineers, Port Authority of NY/NJ, NJ Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), NJ Department of Transportation (NJDOT), NY Department of Environmental Conservation (NYDEC), New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC), Monmouth University, and NY/NJ Baykeeper. The workgroup has made significant progress and expects to have recommendations completed by early next year. The document will be reviewed by the Policy Committee of the NY/NJ Harbor Estuary Program (HEP). This committee is ultimately responsible for the approval of HEP's goals and objectives, and establishes priorities and direction for the development and implementation of the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP). The committee also approves resource and funding allocations for the Program.

To relay your comments or to learn more, contact Jennifer Samson.



SAVE THE DATE!
New Year's Day 2007
To benefit Clean Ocean Action
and Challenged Youth Sports

Clean Ocean Zone (continued from page 1)

Offshore LNG Island Moving Forward

Atlantic Sea Island Group LLC is moving forward in their attempt to construct a Liquid Natural Gas Facility in the Atlantic Ocean off Long Island and Sandy Hook. The company submitted an application to the US Coast Guard under the Deep Water Ports Act.

The project calls for the construction of a 100+ acre island to be built between the shipping lanes, very near or on Cholera Banks. Despite its name, Cholera Banks is a premier fishing ground. The source and quality of the hundreds of millions of tons of material needed to build such a massive island is not clear. The application process is in the early stages and is currently being reviewed for completeness by several relevant federal agencies, including the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). The application is not currently open for public comment.

Stay tuned for details as more information becomes available.

COASTAL WATER QUALITY

Bacteria Plagues Branchport Creek

Clean Ocean Action continues to follow the problem of fecal contamination of Branchport Creek from the Monmouth Park Racetrack. For the past **three years**, fecal coliform concentrations in the water on the grounds of and around the racetrack were unacceptably high. This summer these concentrations of bacteria consistently reached into the millions (the state limit is 104 colonies/100 mls water).

Since that time, the racetrack hired an environmental consultant who looked in the underground pipe system designed to carry stormwater runoff from the track to the local sewage treatment plant and immediately noticed it was completely clogged with sediment and horse manure, causing the bacteria-loaded water to be diverted to the creek.

In late August, the lines were cleared and a partially opened valve was properly closed-off. Both of these problems were contributing to the pollution of the creek. It is not clear why it took three years for these relatively simple procedures to occur. Although these actions did improve water quality, the numbers still show a problem. Follow-up samples taken by the Monmouth County Health Department indicated concentrations as high as 17,000 colonies/100 mls, still well-above state standards.

Also in August, COA was told that after the horses leave, a camera would be used to inspect all the sewer lines to assess their condition and identify any problems. However, in a recent conversation with NJDEP officials, it is not clear what, if any, additional actions will be taken by racetrack managers to further eliminate the sources of contamination.

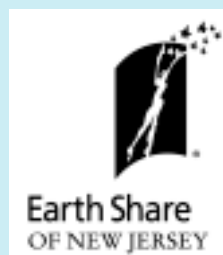
COA urges NJDEP to require the racetrack to fully investigate all possible sources of contamination and eliminate them prior to the next racing season, so the citizens of



Long Branch and Oceanport will not have to spend another summer off the water, but can instead enjoy all that Branchport Creek (see left) has to offer without compromising their health.

SEA SCENES

Support a Cleaner & Greener NJ



Clean Ocean Action is a founding member of Earth Share of New Jersey (ESNJ), which raises funds for NJ's environmental nonprofits through collaborative workplace giving campaigns. This is a simple and efficient way to support your environment. ESNJ represents 23 NJ-based and 38 national environmental organizations. Participating employees can choose to designate a small portion of their paycheck to a specific organization, such as Clean Ocean Action, or to ESNJ to be divided among its 61 member nonprofits that work on a wide variety of environmental conservation and education issues affecting our land, air, water, and wildlife.

Today, employers are offering their employees a greater choice in giving and COA salutes the efforts of these corporate leaders. This fall, thousands of NJ employees in businesses, large and small, will designate a portion of their paychecks to directly support a variety of nonprofits working on issues from healthcare and hunger to the environment and education.

Check with your employer for participation in ESNJ. If your employer does not currently offer ESNJ as an option in your workplace contribution program or if you have any questions, call Paula Aldarelli, ESNJ's Executive Director, at (609) 989-1160.

For more information, visit www.earthsharenj.org.

**"One Environment...
 One Simple Way
 to Care For It."**

EVENTS

Jennifer Smiga, 732-872-0111, Events@cleanoceanaction.org

Clean Ocean Action: A Wise Fishcal Investment

During the holidays, COA calls upon Fishcal Agent S.W. Fish to appeal to citizens to invest in our ocean. You will receive a letter from Mr. Salt Water Fish shortly, describing ways you can help protect our watery world.



"As your 'ofishial' ocean investment advisor, marine water quality continues to look uncertain. Political and financial uncertainties create a high-risk environment. Current state and federal budget realities threaten to undermine current assets via lackluster infrastructure investments. However, the ocean dollar is still strong and with the watchful analysis and swift response by Clean Ocean Action, your 'fishcal' investments will be well guarded." - S.W. Fish

Every dollar donated supports COA's ocean protection efforts, and 89 cents of each dollar funds programs and activities such as education, research, policy development, and advocacy. Call Jennifer for ocean investment portfolio options.

EDUCATION

Anne Grimes, 732-872-0111, Education@cleanoceanaction.org

Students Get Sandy at Student Summit

Nearly 260 students were scientists for a day in an outside classroom at COA's 8th Annual Student Summit at Island Beach State Park on October 4th.

Ten schools from four of New Jersey's southern counties attended and enjoyed a beautiful sunny day learning about the marine environment. Students actively participated in field trips within the park, led by volunteer educators. The students also experienced a series of hands-on learning stations, which included touch tanks with live animals, a coastal nonpoint source pollution model, shell identification, and, the favorite station, live horseshoe crabs (see right) and terrapins!



Students measure a horseshoe crab

Volunteer educators from Island Beach State Park, Jenkinson's Aquarium, American Littoral Society, Alliance for a Living Ocean, and the Marine Academy of Technology and Environmental Science (MATES) led field trips focused on crustaceans and mollusks, marine water quality testing, beach cleanups and marine debris, and coastal ecosystems. Students from MATES also volunteered as peer teachers at the learning stations. COA thanks all of the dedicated

volunteers and supporters of the Student Summit who worked so tirelessly to make this a special day. Special thanks to Kathleen Gasienica (see left) for her excellent lecture about horseshoe crabs and leading the seining field trip. Many thanks also to Griffin Littel for leading the birding field trip.

COA thanks **Commerce Bank** for providing employees to serve as volunteers at the event. These hard-working volunteers welcomed students and teachers, and assisted at stations. Also, waves of thanks to Commerce Bank for donating water and lunch for those students and adults who worked to ensure a successful Student Summit.

