



October 2006 Highlights

- Park Your Vote on November 7th
- Fall Beach Sweeps: October 21, 9am-12:30pm
- A Sensational Sunset at Sandy Hook

*****Eco-Tip of the Month*****
 Reduce Your Waste: Each year in the US, we toss out 2 billion plastic razors, 1.5 million tons of paper towels and 12 billion disposable diapers, which require about 100,000 tons of water and 250,000 trees to manufacture, and decades to decompose.
From "Our Environment," Vol 12, No. 3, by Ingrid Justick

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 RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

COA PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

Featuring... *The New York State Marine Educator's Association*

While the summer days at the beach are now memories, students are back to school and, if they're lucky, their teachers are members of **The New York State Marine Educator's Association (NYSMEA)**. The NYSMEA promotes marine awareness and encourages the growth and exchange of instructional resources within the scientific, commercial, and educational communities.

Members of NYSMEA include educators from all levels: museum, aquarium, and environmental center staff, research scientists, laboratory technicians, and those with interests in SCUBA, fishing, boating, maritime history, folklore, archeology and the arts.

The NYSMEA organizes and host an annual conference, monthly meetings, and field and boat trips. The association produces a monthly news page – "Newlinks" – a periodic list serve, and a quarterly Journal, "Ripples." Members are available to assist new or veteran teachers interested in developing laboratory, lecture, and fieldwork. The NYSMEA is a local chapter of the National Marine Educators Association.

"It is very important to teach people of all ages about marine science because here in New York, we are surrounded by many bodies of water," said Ed Wilensky, NYSMEA President. "We must all be aware of our surroundings, how it changes, and the impact that we have on them."

The NYSMEA works with other groups in the region to educate people about the marine environment and the importance of protecting our coastal waters. The association is a supporting group of the Clean Ocean Zone.

For more information about NYSMEA, visit www.nysmea.org.

PARK YOUR VOTE ON NOVEMBER 7TH!

Ballot Referendum Question #2

Our parks are essential to ensuring a healthy quality of life for people, critters, and plants. Whether in the heart of the city or along the shore, parks are extraordinary places for us to recreate and find solitude. Importantly, they are increasingly the only refuge for wildlife. It is safe to say we all cherish these places. Not only are they natural sanctuaries, but open space also helps reduce pollution by filtering and absorbing runoff. In short—open space protection is pollution prevention.



Students explore the marine environment at Island Beach State Park.

Unfortunately, over the past two decades a lack of funding has resulted in a severe decline in maintenance and services at state parks, including a \$250 million backlog in repairs, fewer conservation officers, closure of park facilities, uncontrolled spread of invasive species, and lost educational and economic opportunities. To stem this decline, Clean Ocean Action (COA) joined the Outdoor Recreation Alliance (ORA) and the Common Ground for Parks Campaign. This coalition of over 60 statewide environmental organizations, sportsmen's groups, affordable housing advocates, and environmental justice activists is working to secure a stable source of funding for capital projects, operation, stewardship, and maintenance of state/local parks & natural areas.

Thanks in part to ORA, the State Legislature passed a concurrent resolution in July that allows New Jersey voters to determine future funding for capital projects at these sites. Though this is technical, here is how it will work. The resolution places a proposed constitutional amendment on the November 7, 2006, ballot to create an ongoing, stable source of funding for capital repairs, improvements, construction, and renovations at state and local natural areas. The amendment would reallocate a surplus of existing, already environmentally dedicated funds from the Corporate Business Tax (capped at 4% and, today, is roughly \$100 million). Specifically, \$15 million per year would be dedicated through 2015, and \$32 million per year thereafter, to improving these areas across the state. The majority of the funds will come from a surplus of underground storage tank removal funds. **In short, there are no new taxes, but rather a shifting and clarification of funds already available.**

Importantly, allocations for water quality projects will change. Currently, the funds can be allocated with an adjustable rate that ranges from 16.66%, to no less than \$5 million (roughly 5%). Under the proposed amendment, water projects will get a dedicated 15%. Theoretically this could mean a reduction of 1.66%, however, over the past several years water projects have been receiving less than 15% of the funds. For example in 2005, the actual appropriated amount was 12.15%, in 2006 it was 14.3%, and in 2007 it was 12.76%.¹ Thus, this referendum, if passed, guarantees that no less than 15% goes to water projects, which is actually an increase over the last few years.

Our parks are in trouble and there are no easy answers; the referendum offers a fair solution. We urge you to review the ballot question and consider the value of our state parks and water quality.

For more information about the ORA Common Ground for Parks Campaign visit www.outdoorrecreationalliance.org.

¹ Data from the NJ Department of Treasury, Office of Management and Budget, Fiscal Year Appropriation Handbooks.



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 _____

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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.

October 2006

October 1, Sunday

- **Nature Festival**, Cooper Environmental Center, Cattus Island County Park, Toms River, 9am-4pm. Call Anne to volunteer.

October 4, Wednesday

- **Fall Student Summit, Sponsored by Commerce Bank**, Island Beach State Park. See next month's newsletter for pictures.

October 7, Saturday

- **By Land & Sea Shark River Cleanup**, 9am kayakers launch, 12:30pm lunch, & 1:30pm beach cleanup. Meet at Memorial Park Beach, Riverside Avenue, Neptune City. Call 732-681-0059 or check out www.sharkriver.org.

October 8, Sunday

- **COAST Day NJ**, hosted by the Marine Sciences Consortium, Lobster House Restaurant & Dock, Cape May, 11am-4pm. Call Anne to volunteer.

October 21, Saturday

- **COA's Fall Beach Sweeps**, 9am-12:30pm, over 50 locations in NJ. For sites, meeting locations, and information, see flyer inside or click "Beach Sweeps" on our website.

CLEAN OCEAN ZONE

Keith Rella, 732-872-0111, Policy@cleanoceanaction.org

Federal Offshore Drilling Plan Released

On August 24, the US Department of the Interior released the Proposed Program and Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), against numerous comments. This Proposed Program and Draft EIS is the next step in the development of the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) drilling plan for the years 2007-2012. New Jersey remains vulnerable with a region off Virginia's coast still open to leasing. Clean Ocean Action will submit comments.



As a review, the Draft Proposed Program released this past February proposed drilling activities in the Mid-Atlantic region, which provoked strong opposition from a bipartisan group of New Jersey lawmakers. Only one public hearing, in Virginia, was held on that document, even though the proposed drilling area was less than 100 miles from the coast of New Jersey.

In a letter to Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne, US Senators Robert Menendez (D-NJ) and Frank R. Lautenberg (D-NJ), and Congressmen Frank Pallone (D-NJ), Frank LoBiondo (R-NJ), Jim Saxton (R-NJ), and Chris Smith (R-NJ) stressed their opposition to the Minerals Management Service's (MMS) plan to conduct lease sales for drilling in the Mid-Atlantic planning region off the coast of Virginia, and urged public hearings in New Jersey on the matter.

Organizations and citizens can submit comments on the Proposed Program and Draft EIS to MMS by November 24, 2006. The MMS will accept comments submitted to its electronic commenting system, which may be accessed at <http://www.mms.gov/5-year/2007-2012main.htm>. Also, comments can be mailed to: Renee Orr, 5-Year Program Manager, Minerals Management Service (MS-4010), Room 3120, 381 Elden Street, Herndon, Virginia 20170.

Oil, Oil, Everywhere...



Hearings held on Capital Hill in September helped shine light on the appalling spill that caused the shutdown of a major oil pipeline in Prudhoe Bay, Alaska, by the BP Corporation. During the hearings, US Senators told company officials that BP's claim of a gold standard for environmental stewardship was "shattered."

BP's problems have not been confined to Alaska's North Slope. In August, the company also admitted that an oil well valve about 20 miles off the Louisiana coast that was damaged during Hurricane Katrina was still leaking oil. It was just one of 15 badly damaged drilling structures that the company still had not decommissioned a full year after the storm. In addition, BP reported that it is cleaning up about 43,000 gallons (1,000 barrels) of oil product that spilled in the Port of Long Beach, California.

At the same time as the BP Hearings, House and Senate leadership were trying to "conference" together a perilous House drilling bill with a less extensive Senate offshore oil drilling bill. The House bill includes the elimination of the 25 year old moratorium protecting New Jersey and other Atlantic Coast states from offshore oil and gas drilling, while the Senate bill is confined to the Gulf of Mexico. At the time of this publication, no compromise had been reached, meaning no new drilling had been approved, but the threat remains.

However, US Senator Robert Menendez (D-NJ) continues to lead the fight against a backroom compromise and to call upon other lawmakers to help break America's dangerous addiction to oil through faster, cheaper, and cleaner choices, such as energy efficiency and making cars go farther on a gallon of gas. Stay tuned for updates on the debate of offshore oil and gas drilling.

COASTAL WATER QUALITY

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

Oyster Creek Draft Environmental Document Fails to Protect Barnegat Bay

As part of the re-licensing process, COA and the American Littoral Society (ALS) recently submitted joint comments on the Draft General Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS) for Oyster Creek Nuclear Generating Station (OCNGS). The Draft GEIS, prepared by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), failed to take a "hard look" (as required by law) at the many environmental impacts caused by OCNGS and its antiquated once-through cooling system.

The NRC determined that continued operations of OCNGS would only result in "small" impacts on the Barnegat Bay ecosystem. However, these conclusions were reached without any recent data on mortalities from impingement (organisms get trapped against racks and screens) and entrainment (organisms pass through screens and are subjected to numerous insults), or population surveys of fish and invertebrates in Barnegat Bay. The Draft GEIS conclusions are inaccurate, inappropriate, and unscientific.

The document also fails to adequately review the implementation of a closed-cycle cooling system as an alternative to the current once-through system at OCNGS, which creates significant, adverse impacts to the Barnegat Bay ecosystem, including the death of trillions of fish and invertebrates each year. For these reasons, COA and ALS urged the NRC to deny the OCNGS' application for re-licensing. For a copy the comments, visit www.cleanoceanaction.org (click "Issues/Campaigns," "Oyster Creek"), or call Jennifer.

FALL INTO VOLUNTEERING!

COA seeks volunteers to educate citizens about ocean pollution issues. Volunteers are needed at the Cattus Island Nature Festival on October 1, from 9am-3pm, and COAST Day on October 8 from 11am-4pm. To sign-up, call Anne at 732-872-0111.

CREATURE FEATURE



Sea Lettuce
Ulva lactuca

The August Creature Feature was **Sea Lettuce**. This green alga grows in rocky or sandy areas in oceans and estuaries. The thin, bright green frond can provide food and shelter for aquatic organisms, but it also grows especially well in waterways that are nutrient-rich or polluted, where it can form mats that are 2-3 feet deep. When these dense blooms begin to break down, oxygen levels can drop to levels that kill fish and invertebrates. There were several correct entries for this creature. Congratulations to **JP Vincenti**, South Plainfield, who was chosen at random and will receive a COA T-shirt!

This "pearl" of a shellfish is the focus of significant restoration efforts throughout estuaries in NJ and in Delaware Bay. Once a dominant commercial and recreational fishery along the east coast, this filter-feeding species has been decimated by water pollution and disease. They are easily identified by their white, crusty outer shell and smooth inner shell. You can often find them sticking out of the estuarine mud during low tide. **To enter for a chance to win a COA T-shirt**, send your guess for the **October Creature** by mail, fax, or e-mail (PO Box 505, Sandy Hook, NJ 07732; FAX 732-872-8041; Education@CleanOceanAction.org).



October
Creature

(Coastal Creature Feature appears every other month in the *Clean Ocean Advocate*.)



2006 Golf Committee (L to R): Sean Clifford, Peder Hagberg, Jeannette Yorke, Michael Dunigan, Ann Rossbach, Lisa Pritchard, Kurt Bruckmann, and Jennifer Smiga of COA

At press time, players were golfing "fore" a cleaner ocean at the Fifth Annual Ocean Golf Classic at Deal Golf & Country Club on September 25. Stay tuned for pictures from the event in next month's newsletter.

FLOTSAM & JETSAM

"Ernesto" Brings Slick of Garbage to NJ's Beaches

Local surfer and COA Beach Sweeps Captain Mark Woldseth, looking to celebrate his birthday by catching a few waves in early September, instead encountered a huge swath of trash that washed ashore near the entrance to Sandy Hook on September 7. The half-mile long, several feet-wide garbage slick revealed evidence of its origin. Among the plastic bottles and bags, wrappers and tampon applicators was a parking summons from the City of Jersey City, suggesting the slick came from the NY/NJ Harbor after heavy rains from the remnants of tropical system Ernesto, as well as full moon high tides. With a quick and heavy flush, the debris made a journey down streets, into storm drains, through combined sewer pipelines, into nearby waterways, out the harbor, into the ocean, and onto beaches.

The Flap about FAP

Every year, COA must fight to ensure proper funding is provided for the US Army Corps of Engineers' Drift Removal Program, an important part of the Floatables Action Plan (FAP). The funding provides for, among other things, boats that skim trash and debris off the surface of harbor waters.

These skimmer boats prevent trash slicks from escaping the harbor and fouling beaches.

Funding for the program is in question again this year. Citizens should contact their federal elected officials and urge them to support full program funding.

Heavy rains after "Ernesto" and full moon high tides washed garbage ashore in Sandy Hook. Park officials and cleanup crews responded quickly.

