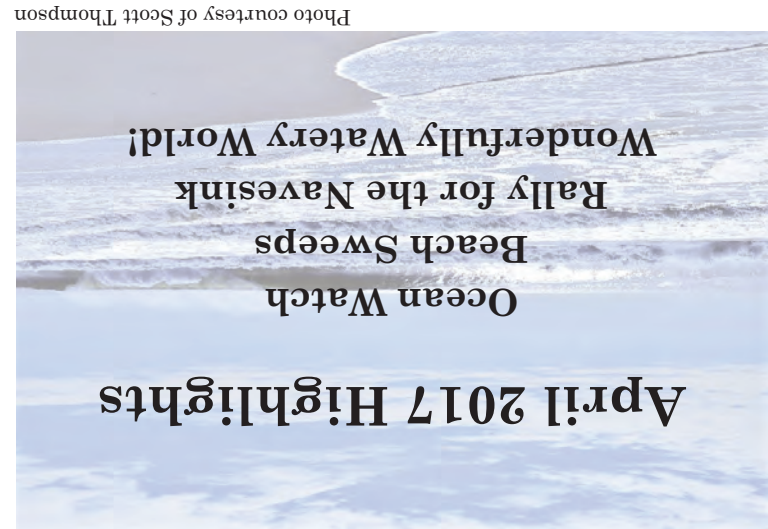


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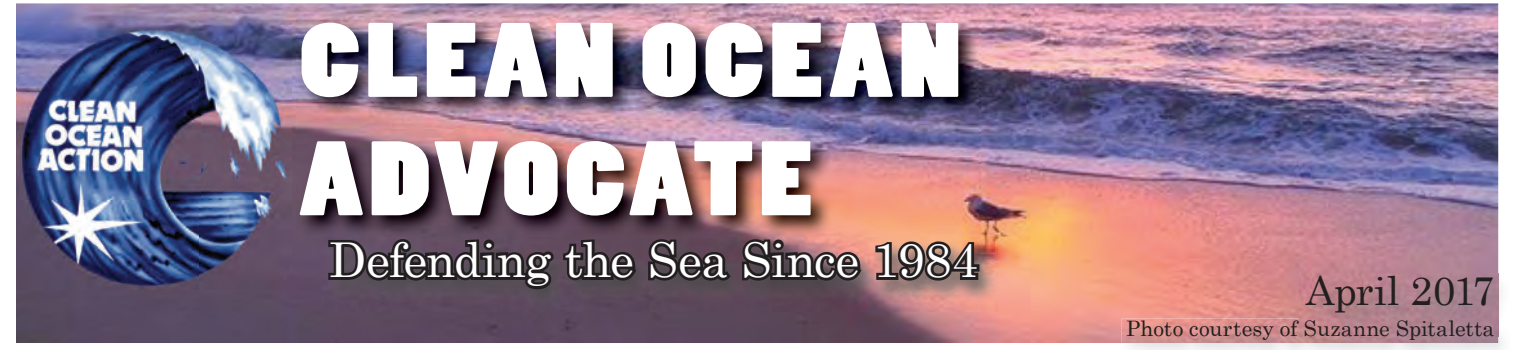
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LABEL



CLEAN OCEAN ADVOCATE
April 2017

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Ocean Watch!

COA continues to monitor and summarize federal and regional actions that affect our Mid-Atlantic region. These weekly updates are featured on our blog at <http://cleanoceanaction.blogspot.com/> as "Ocean Watch". In the last several weeks, we have written about a federal budget proposal that would be incredibly damaging to water quality protection in our region, with a proposed 31% budget cut to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), 17% cut to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) budget (including a 5% cut to the National Marine Fisheries and National Weather Service), and 10% cut to the US Coast Guard. This "skinny" budget proposal would eliminate funding for estuary and wetland restoration and protection programs, coastal nonpoint source pollution reduction efforts, contaminated site cleanup, beach water testing during summer, and much more. These programs have direct impact on our coastal economies, and on activities ranging from boater safety, surfing, fishing, weather forecasting, superfund site remediation, and coastal zone management.

boss Tillerson and Oklahoma AG (and industry friend) Scott Pruitt hold at the State Department and EPA. COA's blog recaps the impact and process surrounding these high level department nominees, including the current process by which Supreme Court nominee Judge Gorsuch is moving toward confirmation. The League of Conservation Voters wrote that Judge Gorsuch holds a "demonstrated hostility toward the regulatory power of federal agencies [that] could undermine the ability of the United States Environmental Protection Agency to enforce community safeguards against corporate polluters."



Ryan Struck Photography

Climate Change-related actions in the first 60 days of the Trump Administration are extensive, including the forward progress of fossil fuel infrastructure projects such as Keystone XL, the dismantling of environmental regulations such as the Clean Power Plan, methane emissions from natural gas drilling, and stream protection rules related to coal mining.

There is a tenuous relationship the current administration has with the Paris Climate Accord and climate science, including the highest level positions that former Exxon

COA will continue to monitor and report on federal actions that impact the Mid-Atlantic coastal region.



A Plastic Ocean

At press time, COA and the Urban Coast Institute at Monmouth University were hosting the NJ premier of *A Plastic Ocean*. Stay tuned for details about the event. In the meantime,

check out our social media and future newsletters for screenings near you from Cape May to NYC!

- April/May – New York City
- May – Atlantic/Cape May County
- June – Long Beach Island, Ocean County
- July – Southern Monmouth/Northern Ocean County

TRIBUTES



Photo courtesy of Joe Reynolds

In Memory of:

- Eileen Bassler
- William Lavin
- Carol Anne Ross

In Honor of:

- Mingchich Chiu
- Valerie Montecalvo

Recognizing Climate Change



In a bit of good news in the fight to prevent the worst impacts of climate change from becoming a reality, a group of Republican Congressional members, led by NJ Congressman Frank LoBiondo (NJ-2nd), NY Congresswoman Elise Stefanik, FL Congressman

Carlos Curbelo, and PA Congressman Ryan Costello, have joined forces to put forth a resolution "expressing

the commitment of the House of Representatives to conservative environmental stewardship" and pushing for action on climate change. The resolution requests the House of Representatives to commit to economically viable solutions that address the risks of climate change by way of "American ingenuity, innovation, and exceptionalism." These congressional representatives should be applauded for moving beyond partisan politics, and standing up for action on Climate Change. (Note: Congressman LoBiondo cosponsored the same resolution last Congress, introduced by former Congressman Chris Gibson of NY.)

POLICY

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Trash Free Waters

As COA is dedicated to fighting marine debris, a partnership with Trash Free Waters (TFW) is a perfect fit. TFW is a coalition of government, business, environment and civic organizations in New York and New Jersey that meet under the auspices of the EPA's initiative. This past month COA staff, Catie Tobin, Swarna Muthukrishnan, and Mae Henry met with other members of TFW at the New School in New York City.

Catie Tobin is the coordinator of the microplastics workgroup which recently coordinated a webinar on microfibers, the fine synthetic threads that are released from clothes during washing. Though tiny, these fibers can pollute waterways and impact aquatic food chains. Swarna Muthukrishnan is on the steering committee and is coordinating the efforts of all the workgroups. Mae Henry is the coordinator of the straws workgroup. This sub-committee is working with aquariums, zoos, parks and restaurants to encourage the facilities to go straw free, or at least initiate a "straws upon request" policy.

New Municipal Stormwater Permits Fall Short

Stormwater pollution, also called stormwater runoff, or nonpoint source pollution, is one of the leading causes of water quality impairment in NJ. This form of pollution is insidious; the source is each and every one of us, and the footprints we create through development, construction of roads, and alteration of the natural water cycle. As stormwater flows over impervious surfaces, such as streets, parking lots, sidewalks, and compacted ground, it picks up pollutants, including animal waste and other pathogens, excess fertilizers, pesticides, litter, and other toxic substances.

One example of this pollution problem is the Navesink River Watershed, where high bacteria levels triggered and exacerbated by stormwater runoff have recently closed shellfish beds and impacted recreational enjoyment on the river. While COA has worked at the local and watershed level in the Navesink, and found great success engaging communities to take action, statewide management and regulatory strategies are essential in the fight against toxic stormwater runoff. Unfortunately, we have made little progress since 2004, when the first municipal stormwater permits were issued. These permits were renewed in 2009, and expired in February of 2014, although the requirements continued to be in effect. However, for over 3 years, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) has been regulating stormwater using expired and outdated municipal permits (called "Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System" permits, or "MS4" permits).

These MS4 permits require each municipality to undertake specific actions related to stormwater mitigation and maintenance, and review potential development plans, such as a new condo unit or strip mall, for stormwater impacts. Yet, with the continued degradation of waterways like the Navesink River, it is clear that stronger MS4 permits are needed. However, when NJDEP had the chance to redraft and issue an improved MS4 permit, they largely punted, and, except for some small improvements related to restructuring the permit, clearer language, and training requirements, the new MS4 permits are nearly the same exact permits that have been so ineffectual for all these years. COA is working with an alliance of organizations to review and provide comments on these permits, and will continue to work at the local, state and regional level on stormwater pollution solutions. Clearly, these new MS4 permits are the same old, same old, and not a solution to our statewide water quality problems.



COA Coastal Policy Attorney, Zach Lees, collecting water samples from an outfall pipe after a rain storm in Red Bank, NJ

OUTREACH & EDUCATION

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Amanda Wheeler, Volunteer & Education Coordinator; citizens@CleanOceanAction.org

Rally for the Navesink Update

If you missed the last Rally for the Navesink meeting on Wednesday, March 8th about Oysters and Pump-out Boats, don't worry – the full meeting is available to view on the Rally for the Navesink Facebook page. While 60 citizens from the Navesink Watershed attended the meeting in the All Purpose Room at Viola Sickles School, Fair Haven, many others chose to watch the meeting through Facebook LIVE. This was the first meeting where this application was used and it was a huge success! Currently, the meeting video has over 1,000 views, and we plan to continue to stream Rally for the Navesink meetings live to spread the message and grow involvement.

Christopher Merkel, Monmouth County Health Dept. Public Health Coordinator Officer presented on The Royal Flush: Past Present, and Future. The pump out boat works to stop the spread of sewage and the diseases associated with improperly disposed sewage in Monmouth County waterways. Last season the boat operated for 31 days with the help of NY/NJ Baykeeper and serviced 558 boats, properly removing 17,900 gallons of sewage. Debbie Mans, Baykeeper and Executive Director, and Meredith Comi, Oyster



Left to Right: Pim Van Hemmen, State Assemblyman Eric Houghtaling, Cindy Zipf, Meredith Comi, Debbie Mans, and Tim Dillingham, Executive Director of ALS

SPRING OPPORTUNITIES FOR VOLUNTEERS

Throw off the memories of those wicked winter winds and volunteer at some spring-y events to represent Clean Ocean Action! We are sending information tables all around the region to remind festival-goers that, although "every day should be Earth Day," Earth Month is the official time to help keep our waterways free of contamination and plastics. Educational tables are the fun way to reach thousands of citizens of all ages about these issues and more!

If you have never hosted a table for COA, feel free to contact the office and we can arrange a quick training session. It's easy and fun! If you are a returning member of the COA Citizen Education Tabling Team, we have a new sign up procedure that you will love! Look for our recent e-mail. Sign-ups are going on

Restoration Program Director, at NY/NJ Baykeeper presented about the history of oysters and the Baykeeper's Oyster Restoration program. The decline in population of oysters is due to overharvesting, pollution, dredging, disease, and lack of knowledge about the oyster life cycle. Since 1997, NY/NJ Baykeeper has restored almost 3 million oysters to the estuary ecosystem. Pim Van Hemmen, Assistant Director, American Littoral Society (ALS) continued the oyster conversation with his presentation answering the question: Can Oysters Clean Our Rivers? Pim emphasized that due to the oysters' biology as a phenomenal filter each oyster is able to clean 50 gallons of water a day. As well as filtering nutrients and pollutants, oysters create habitat and improve biodiversity, provide a food source for other species, protect shorelines, and create clearer and cleaner waters.

State Assemblyman Eric Houghtaling, Freeholder John P. Curley, Freehold Councilman Bob Marchese, and Freehold Councilwoman Susan Sorensen were also among those who attended the meeting in person. Freeholder John Curley noted the continued efforts of Chris Merkel and Monmouth County Health Department to better our water ways, as well as their conversations for a new boat. He also said, "It is my commitment to you that I will go back to the Board of Freeholders and emphasize the necessity for a second boat. I am going to put pressure on the Freeholders. What I ask you to do is go to the Freeholders, and tell them what you want, what we need."

The next Rally for the Navesink meeting will be Thursday, April 27th at 6:30pm at Bingham Hall in Rumson, NJ. At this meeting we will be discussing the citizen science water quality monitoring program and what role citizens can play in the "find it - fix it" approach. If you are interested in attending the Rally for the Navesink April 27th meeting or for more information, please contact Mae Henry at outreach@CleanOceanAction.org.

now for April and will soon be available for May and beyond! For more information about volunteering for our Citizen Education Tabling Team, contact Amanda Wheeler at citizens@cleanoceanaction.org



SCIENCE

Swarna Muthukrishnan, Staff Scientist; Science@CleanOceanAction.org

What a Wonderfully Watery World Water Day!

Classrooms throughout our region are still enjoying COA's March 22nd Facebook LIVE World Water Day Extravaganza at Jenkinson's Aquarium. We have received amazing feedback from many teachers and friends of the ocean. The analytics from Facebook, YouTube and TeacherTube in just 24 hours show that many people are tuning-in to find out about World Water Day, to meet a few critters that call Jenkinson's home, and most importantly, to learn about ways young people and their families can improve water quality. Please tune in yourself and take a tour of Jenkinson's with us: go to our website and follow the links!



COA extends sincere thanks to the many people who made the event a success! The flexibility, cooperation, expertise and professionalism of the staff at Jenkinson's were phenomenal. We are thrilled to partner with them on many events and programs, and look forward to working with them again in the near future. Cindy, Jen and Carol were fantastic hosts, and the curators made the event fun and special.

We would especially like to thank photographer, surfer and friend of COA, Bryan Zinski, who so kindly jumped into the role of our videographer. We could not have done it without you! Amazing job, everyone!!

Stay tuned for more Facebook LIVE events from COA, including responses to questions from students. You never know where we'll be next!

Delaware River Sweeps

This month Clean Ocean Action and Raritan Valley Community College (RVCC) will be heading back to the Jersey side of the Delaware River for a clean-up at a site within the Taylor Wildlife Preserve. In October 2016, COA and RVCC partnered for a clean sweep at a different location in Taylor Wildlife Preserve, where over 6,000 pieces of debris were collected. Almost 90% of the trash was plastic. Clean Ocean Action was able to capture this effort in a short video that can be viewed on YouTube: "Clean Ocean Action Delaware River Beach Sweep."

To address the overwhelming amount of plastic, COA is partnering with Terracycle, an innovative recycling company that has become a global leader in recycling hard-to-recycle waste. They will be recycling the plastics from the upcoming Delaware River sweep as part of their partnership with Proctor & Gamble to make recyclable plastic containers for their products. The goal of this initiative is to extend the life of recyclables that were once beach/river plastic debris.

The Delaware River cleanups are part of a COA pilot project funded by the Environmental Endowment of NJ in collaboration with Dr. Jay Kelly from RVCC, who identified the Friends of the Taylor Wildlife Preserve (FTWP) to work with for the clean-up. Thank you to New Jersey Natural Lands Trust for once again providing a dumpster for the debris.

