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DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
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DEP AWARDS \$10 MILLION IN GRANTS TO IMPROVE WATER QUALITY IN THE BARNEGAT BAY WATERSHED

TRENTON – The Department of Environmental Protection has awarded \$10 million in grants for local water-quality improvement projects in the Barnegat Bay watershed, an important ecological and economic resource for the state, Commissioner Catherine R. McCabe announced today.

The projects to be implemented by nonprofit groups, local governments, and state colleges and universities target ways to reduce impacts from stormwater runoff, also known as nonpoint source pollution. Although highly developed, the 660-square-mile watershed is rich in wildlife habitats that help drive the region's economy.

“The restoration, enhancement, and protection of a healthy Barnegat Bay is a DEP priority,” Commissioner McCabe said. “Reducing the impacts of stormwater runoff is one of the biggest challenges we face in the Barnegat Bay watershed. We applaud these grant awardees for the passion they have for enhancing and protecting a natural resource that is truly a New Jersey treasure.”

Projects receiving funding include watershed restoration and protection planning, restoration of wetlands, creation of living shorelines, stewardship and education, stormwater infrastructure mapping, stormwater-basin retrofits, restoration of aquatic vegetation and shellfish, and protection of the bay's most sensitive habitats. These projects are a key part of the state's implementation of the [Barnegat Bay Restoration, Enhancement and Protection Strategy](#).

Stormwater runoff carries pollutants into waterways, such as nutrients from fertilizers and animal waste. Excessive nutrients can cause algae blooms that impact the ecological health of waterways and diminish recreational enjoyment. Long, shallow and narrow, Barnegat Bay is particularly susceptible to this type of pollution.



Grant awards are as follows:

- Brick Township MUA, \$950,000 for the design and installation of green infrastructure and nutrient reduction practices in the Metedeconk River watershed;
- The South Jersey Resource Conservation and Development Council, \$325,000 for a stormwater basin retrofitting project in Lakewood Township;
- Rutgers University, \$775,000 to develop a watershed restoration plan for southern Barnegat Bay, including Little Egg Harbor Tributaries;
- Barnegat Bay Partnership, \$220,000 for a watershed restoration and protection plan for Cedar Creek;
- Barnegat Bay Partnership, \$200,000 for a watershed restoration and protection plan for the Oyster Creek watershed;
- Barnegat Bay Partnership, \$700,000 for a watershed restoration and protection plan for the Toms River watershed;
- ReClam the Bay, \$30,000 for Barnegat Bay restoration and enhancement;
- The borough of South Toms River, \$155,000 for the stabilization of the Crabbe Point Pier shoreline;
- The American Littoral Society, \$1 million for a living shoreline and oyster reef project to improve water quality along Forked River Beach;
- Ocean County Planning Department, \$3 million for a living shoreline restoration project at Cattus Island County Park;
- Tuckerton Borough, \$350,000 for a living shorelines project at Tuckerton Beach;
- Barnegat Bay Partnership, \$100,000 for a “Bay Friendly” stewardship program;
- Save Barnegat Bay, \$100,000 for nonpoint source education for local government and municipal stormwater outreach;
- Berkeley Township Underwater Search and Rescue Unit, \$300,000 for sea nettle outreach and assistance;
- Lacey Township, \$70,000 for stormwater mapping expansion;
- Point Pleasant Beach Borough, \$30,000 for storm sewer mapping;
- Clean Ocean Action, \$600,000 to identify and eliminate pathogens from sanitary sewage sources in the Toms River watershed;
- Montclair State University, \$300,000 for restoration and enhancement of submerged aquatic vegetation in the bay;
- Stockton University, \$225,000 for a project modeling restoration of submerged aquatic vegetation;
- Stockton University, \$300,000 for creation of oyster reefs in the bay;
- Ocean County Sheriff's Department, \$270,000 for Barnegat Bay education and enforcement.

The DEP's Water Quality Restoration grants are made possible through funds from the federal Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Water Act Section 319(h) program, Natural Resource Damage settlements the state has secured with polluters, and the state's Corporate Business Tax. Additional funding for water quality projects is also available in low-interest and principal-forgiveness (grant-like) loans through the New Jersey Water Bank, administered by the DEP in partnership with New Jersey Water Infrastructure Bank.

The watershed encompasses all or parts of 37 municipalities in Ocean and Monmouth counties and is an important driver of tourism-related activities. The 42-mile long bay is renowned for its fish and shellfish resources, as well as for wildlife-related activities such as fishing, crabbing, bird-watching and exploring nature.

A study commissioned by the nonprofit Barnegat Bay Partnership estimates that the water, natural resources and ecosystems in the Barnegat Bay watershed contribute between \$2 billion and \$4 billion in annual economic value to the state.