

Jacques Cousteau Volunteer Newsletter

VOLUME 6 ISSUE 1-12

FALL/WINTER 2015



JC NERR Happenings

Hello Volunteers!

I hope everyone is having an enjoyable holiday season!

At JC NERR & RUMFS things have quieted down as we head into winter, but read on about volunteer involvement with education and research over this past spring, summer, and fall.

Starting in June, the JC NERR Education Center became a flurry of activity with Summer Fun programs, Ecological Evenings, and our ever popular Creature Feature programs. These programs are geared toward children and this past summer focused on a number of estuarine issues, underwater technology, and organisms, including, sandpipers, redknots, clams and oysters, horseshoe crabs, macroinvertebrates, seals, and how Remotely Operated Vehicles (ROVs) explore the underwater world.



Volunteers have been integral in assisting with our education programs, particularly Creature Features which regularly had an attendance of ~25 children per session!

Volunteers have also been heavily involved with beach seining this spring, summer, and fall. Seining increased in scope this year, with expanded research interests from Ken Able, the director of RUMFS. With that, sampling was extended to 5 sites in the Great Bay-Mullica River estuary system.

Read on to find out more about volunteer involvement with seining, as well as the progress on our new interpretive walking trail, and our annual volunteer recognition dinner that was held this past spring.

~ Kim Capone
Volunteer coordinator



Center Photos

Top: Participants in the Summer Fun - Build and Underwater Robot program, proudly display their robot creations and get ready to test them out in the pool

Middle: Presenters from ReClam the Bay discuss the ecology of clams and oysters in Barnegat Bay

Bottom: Participants in the Summer Fun - Sandpiper Flatties program show their painted sandpiper creations

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

JC NERR Happenings	1
Upcoming Programs	1
JC NERR Volunteer Recognition Dinner	2
JC NERR Interpretive trail update	3
Beach seining in the Great Bay-Mullica River	4

Upcoming programs

The beginning of Fall brought the start of our Lunch n' Learn series at the Tuckerton Seaport, which included 'sell-out' programs on the Jersey Devil and Delaware Bay's 'Oyster Capital of the World' on the Maurice River, to name a few. Lunch n' Learn programs take place every 2nd Wednesday of the month from September to May.

January 13th:
Lunch n' Learn -
'A Party in you own Backyard'
12:30 - 1:30 pm

February 9th
Ecological Evening -
Removing Ghost Pot's from NJ's Bays
7:00 - 8:00 pm

February 10th:
Lunch n' Learn -
'Station 119: From Lifesaving to Marine Research'
12:30 - 1:30 pm

March 8th:
Ecological Evening -
Pinelands: NJ's Suburban Wilderness
7:00 - 8:00 pm



JC NERR Volunteer Recognition Dinner

On April 16th, 2015, we held our annual Volunteer Recognition Dinner to honor our volunteers who gave 10 or more hours of service in 2014.

This year's dinner was again held at the Cuisine on the Green restaurant at the Atlantis Golf Course in Little Egg Harbor.

Professor Mark Sullivan from Stockton University treated everyone to a presentation on the Mullica River-Great Bay derelict crab trap (Ghost Pot) removal project. Mark discussed this successful two year collaborative project with local commercial crabbers that worked to remove ghost crab pots/debris from the Great Bay - Mullica River estuary. Mark also highlighted the important work that JC NERR volunteers did to assist with this project, and discussed future work that will be conducted in other estuaries.

Roland Hagan of the Rutgers University Marine Field Station (RUMFS), highlighted our volunteers that assist with research and field work, while Ida Scott, JC NERR's Interpretive Coordinator, expressed her appreciation for all of the hard work our volunteers put in at the Life on the Edge exhibit.

We recognized three volunteer awards for 2014 - Distinguished service award, 2500 cumulative volunteer hours, and Volunteer of the Year.

Betty Leshner received our Distinguished Service Award. Over the past 6 years that Betty has been volunteering with us, she has expanded her horizons and progressively gotten involved with more aspects of volunteering at JC NERR & RUMFS. Since 2013, Betty has been involved in every single facet of our work – education and outreach programs, admin-

istrative support at the JC NERR Education Center, research & field work support at RUMFS, and most recently as a volunteer educator at JC NERR's

and RUMFS!

During this time Steve has been a dependable and reliable volunteer and is always willing to do the smallest and largest of tasks no matter time of day or night, the weather, or how strenuous or mundane the work is. Over the past 10 years, Steve has not only been a volunteer, but a friend to JC NERR & RUMFS staff and technicians, and is truly a part of our family and we thank him for his incredible contribution of time to JC NERR & RUMFS.

Our final award, Volunteer of the Year for 2014, was presented to **Phil**

Dzugan.

Phil joined us in 2012 and has diligently been involved with field and research work within the Reserve

Phil jumped into volunteering with quite possibly one of the most arduous tasks of making eel collectors for an American Eel project in Barnegat Bay and was involved with this project further with monitoring and eel collection and counting. Phil has been involved with the DEP Barnegat Bay larval fish sampling as well as RUMFS' long term larval fish sampling at Little Sheep-

shead Creek, and has participated in the beach seining project since it started, as well as consistently assisted with data entry for RUMFS.

Phil has a keen interest in learning about marine/estuarine fish and the ecology of our local area and is a committed volunteer who drives from eastern PA to volunteer with us. JC NERR was proud to honor Phil with our Volunteer of the Year award for 2014.

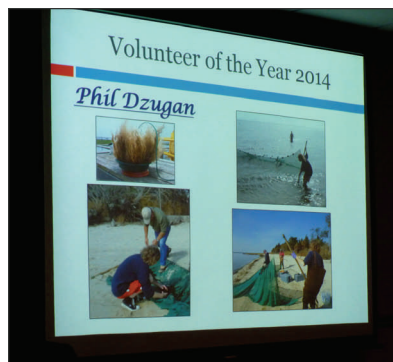
All of us at JC NERR and RUMFS would like to extend our sincere thanks and gratitude to all of our volunteers for your hard work, dedication, and support!

Above: Powerpoint presentation at the Volunteer Recognition Dinner showcasing Phil Dzugan, the 2014 JC NERR Volunteer of the Year. Phil was unable to be with us that evening so instead he was with us electronically!

Center Left: Mark Sullivan of Stockton University giving a presentation on derelict crab pot removal in the Great Bay-Mullica River Estuary

Center Right: Volunteers and JC NERR staff enjoying the evening

Below: Reserve Manager Mike DeLuca (Left) and Volunteer Coordinator Kim Capone (Right) pose with our honorees - Volunteers Steve Zeck & Betty Leshner (center).



interpretive exhibit, Life on the Edge (LOE).

Betty has enthusiastically embraced learning as much as she can, and with her commitment to the LOE exhibit, also sharing that learning and knowledge with the public.

The 2500 cumulative volunteer hour award is a significant award for us at JC NERR as it is the first time we have honored a volunteer who has reached 2500 hours of service. **Steve Zeck** is our first volunteer to achieve this honor. Steve has been with us since 2004, making it over 10 years that he has been volunteering for JC NERR

Update on the interpretive walking trail on the Grassle Marsh

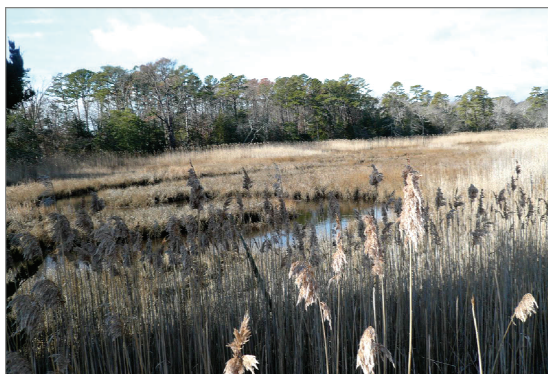
Last newsletter we introduced JC NERR's proposal to build an interpretive walking trail on part of our newly acquired 15 acre parcel of land adjacent to the JC NERR Education Center - The Grassle Marsh. We are happy to report that we have received the grant to move forward and make this trail a reality! This trail will complement JC NERR's 'Life on the Edge' interpretive exhibit that is located in the Tuckerton Seaport, and will be open to the public to support onsite teacher professional development workshops, coastal decision-maker trainings, and family and public

vegetation - strenuous work in the hot

weather of the early summer months, but our volunteers were truly great and powered through with a good sense of humor as usual!

Proposed additions and expansions of the trail include - interpretive signage placed along the trail that will describe the local living resources and explain the importance of estuaries, marsh habitats, and transitional zones between the wetland and upland habitats. The trailhead will also be marked with a Welcome and Orientation kiosk.

Additionally, we are working towards



education programs.

Currently, the trail has been cut and will be open to the public once some fallen trees have been removed and trail markers and signage have been installed. The trail is located directly adjacent to the JC NERR Education Center (see photo).

This existing deer trail was cut and marked this past spring and summer with the help of a Rutgers' undergraduate class and with continued maintenance by a number of volunteers who helped cut fallen branches/



building a boardwalk and observation deck over a portion of the wetland creek located in the Grassle Marsh, which would allow for extended interpretive, education/training, and monitoring uses.

We hope that as the trail project progresses we will have continued volunteer involvement and support with maintenance and monitoring of the trail condition. It's a great way to spend a day out in the woods and explore our local natural areas!

Above: View of the Grassle Marsh wetlands from Great Bay Blvd. **Center Left:** View of the Grassle Marsh wetlands from the newly cut interpretive walking trail. **Center:** Map of the interpretive trail (blue line) with paths back to the JC NERR Education Center (green lines). Great Bay Blvd is on the right in the photo. **Center Right:** JC NERR staff, Chris Huch, Jenna Gatto, Motz Grothues, & Rose Petrecca explore the newly cut trail. **Bottom:** JC NERR staff member, Rose Petrecca, walking and marking the new trail. (Photos courtesy of Rose Petrecca & Lisa Auermuller)

Beach Seining in the Great Bay-Mullica River Estuary



2015 marks the third consecutive year that RUMFS/JC NERR have been seining in the Great Bay-Mullica River Estuary. This project, initiated in 2012, aims to get a more detailed look at juvenile fish and crabs, particularly of more southern species that may be migrating farther north with changing water temperatures. Data collected are added to RUMFS' long-term data set which includes seine data from some of the same locations from the early 90's. These current data can now be compared to previous data from the 90's, in order to assess changes in water temperatures, and fish assemblages and distribution.

This year, the project grew from two sampling sites to five, that span the salinity gradient from saline to fresh water in the Great Bay and Mullica River estuary - the beach at the end of Great Bay Blvd on the Tuckerton peninsula, Graveling Point, Chestnut Neck, Clark's Landing, and Crowley's Landing. With this increase in sampling sites, volunteer involvement has increased to meet the demand, and every month from May to October volunteers joined RUMFS technicians and/or the Volunteer Coordinator to seine, sort, and measure fish and crabs - sometimes by the thousands!

Each sampling site posed different challenges, one of them being excessive amounts of mud at the Chestnut Neck and Clark's Landing sites on the Mullica River. We were all very lucky that no boots, shoes, volunteers, or staff were lost in the mud, as it was sometimes knee to thigh deep! In addition to mud, volunteers also braved the usual Jersey shore summer visitors - gnats and green-heads! Volunteers were not only integral in the field, but in the laboratory as well, entering and checking the majority of the seine data collected.

Thank you to all who assisted and made this seining project possible!

Left Column Top to Bottom: 1 & 2.) Volunteers pull the seine net in the early morning hours at the beach at the end of Great Bay Blvd. 3.) Volunteers pull the seine net up on the beach at Graveling Point. 4.) Staff and volunteers brave the onslaught of gnats at Graveling Point while measuring fish and crabs. 5 & 6.) Mud, mud, & more mud! The seine net is pulled onto the beach at Clark's Landing on the Mullica River. This site was known for quick sand-like mud and lots of it!

Right Column Top to Bottom: 1.) A volunteer waits to sort through the net as RUMFS technicians pull the seine net at Chestnut Neck Marina on the Mullica River. 2 & 3.) Seine net hauling and sorting at Chestnut Neck. 4.) Seine net hauling at Crowley's Landing on the Mullica River. 5.) Common fish caught (sometimes by the thousands!) while seining at Great Bay sites - *Menidia Menidia*, aka silversides. (Photos courtesy of Rutger Hagan & Terry Moore)

