

# Jacques Cousteau Volunteer Newsletter



VOLUME 4, ISSUES 8-11

AUTUMN 2013

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### December 7th:

#### Family Fun -

Sea Creatures with  
Amazing Features  
10:00 - 11:00 am

### December 11th:

#### Lunch n' Learn -

New Jersey Shipwrecks  
12:30 pm @ the Tucker-  
ton Seaport

### January 8th:

#### Lunch n' Learn -

Blue Crabs, Boats and the  
Bay: Restoring Balance  
12:30 pm @ the Tucker-  
ton Seaport

### January 23rd:

#### Ecological Evening -

ALO's (Alliance for a  
Living Ocean) Role in  
Sandy Recovery  
7:00 - 8:00 pm

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## JC NERR Happenings

Greetings volunteers and Happy Fall!

Here at JC NERR we finished up our summer season with our Creature Feature programs for children in 1st-5th grade, led by teacher Julie Shutz. Julie is an integral addition to our staff in the summer and along with Melanie, our Education Coordinator, organizes, plans and leads each Creature Feature session that focuses on a different oceanic/estuarine creature each week. Our children's programs are usually where we need more intensive volunteer help and we certainly received it! This year due to increasing interest in the program, we held two Creature Feature sessions each week with volunteers assisting Julie and Melanie with preparation, set-up and program activities. Thank you to all who volunteered and for your continued enthusiasm!

During the summer Melanie also conducted a professional development course - Estuaries 101 - a national curriculum developed by

the NERRS (National Estuarine Research Reserve System) with the goal of teachers and students becoming more ocean literate by increasing their knowledge of coastal and estuarine science and how estuaries affect our daily lives. This is one of many professional develop-



**Marsh plants change color through the fall season as well. This photo showcases the marsh plants in the genus of *Salicornia* which exhibit a seasonal color change (photo courtesy of JC NERR SWMP technician Gregg Sakowicz)**

ment courses that Melanie conducts throughout the year. We receive a great amount of assistance executing

these programs, with volunteers providing necessary help to prepare educational materials and food set-up for programs. As an integral part of our JC NERR team, we would like to make sure that all volunteers know that you are most welcome to attend any professional development training regardless of if you are volunteering for that particular training or not. Whether you are interested in learning more about coastal and estuarine environments for your own personal knowledge or would like to delve deeper into learning about specific resource to enhance your volunteering experience, please don't hesitate to contact myself or Melanie for more details on upcoming programs and trainings!

Read on to find out more about new members of the JC NERR staff, volunteer involvement in research, the Life on the Edge exhibit, an update on Shore Bowl and upcoming fall/winter public programs!

## JC NERR Current Events

Here at JC NERR we are pleased to welcome three new members to our Reserve team. The JC NERR Education Center is a host agency for the Ameri-corps Watershed Ambassador Program, and Steve Luell joined us in September representing the Mullica River watershed. The Ambassador program is an environmental community service program administered by the NJ Department of Environmental Protection to raise public awareness about water and watershed issues and to promote

stewardship through direct community involvement. Ambassadors, along with community volunteers, conduct visual and biological monitoring on their watershed and visit schools and community organizations to educate students and residents about watershed issues in NJ. Steve's term of service as watershed ambassador will be until September 2014.

We are also happy to announce that we have two new Coastal Training

Program Assistants - Chris Huch and Jenna Gatto. Chris and Jenna will assist our Coastal Training Program coordinator, Lisa Auermuller, with coastal resilience and hazard mitigation work specifically related to Hurricane Sandy effects. Chris comes to us from ALO (Alliance for a Living Ocean) and Jenna from the BBP (Barnegat Bay Partnership). They will be working with us for a year and we are all looking forward to having them on board!

## Volunteer Involvement with research - seining , jellyfish & more!



**Top:** Volunteers set the seine net to pull to shore at Graveling Point.

**Middle:** Pulling the seine net onto the beach.

**Bottom:** Volunteers sort through the catch.

Volunteers have been involved in a variety of research projects this summer and fall. Building on the RUMFS (Rutgers University Marine Field Station) research project initiated last spring/summer, volunteers began seining in late May at the 1st bridge beach off of Great Bay Blvd in Tuckerton and at Graveling Point in Little Egg Harbor. This project, initiated by the director of RUMFS, Ken Able, aims to get a more detailed look into juvenile fish and crabs, particularly of more southern species. Data collected is added to RUMFS' long-term data set which includes seine data at the same locations from the early 90's. Volunteers have done a phenomenal job of sampling monthly. Starting in May and ending in October, the weather conditions can be quite varied and this year was no exception. Volunteers took on heat, greenheads, and unseasonably cold October temperatures with enthusiasm and a good sense of humor. Thank you to all that came out to seine and enter the sample data - your commitment is truly appreciated! I look forward to continuing this project next year.

As part of the NJ DEP's 10-point plan to address the ecological health of Barnegat Bay, RUMFS has been conducting a number of research initiatives within the bay for the past two years. One of the most notable of these is larval fish sampling, also colloquially known as 'bridgenetting', due to the fact that the plankton net that collects these larval fish is hung off of a bridge. Many of our volunteers are very familiar with this sampling as RUMFS has been bridgenetting at Little Sheepshead Creek bridge for over 20 years. For the DEP's 10-point plan research, RUMFS expanded the scope to include three additional sites in the Barnegat Bay. This sampling was dubbed 'Ultimate Bridgenetting' for the number of sites sampled - and the sampling effort was really nothing short of ultimate! For Ultimate Bridgenetting nights, four crews of technicians and volunteers coordinate to conduct sampling in the field and bring samples back to sort through at the Rutgers Marine Field Station. When all is said and done this can be a 6-8 hour night! Sampling during nighttime hours certainly

takes an extra commitment but our volunteers provided unflinching support and passion for this project. RUMFS is currently waiting to hear from the DEP regarding funding for another year of Ultimate Bridgenetting sampling and are cautiously optimistic that they will be able to continue 'Ultimate' sampling next year.

Jellyfish and ctenophore sampling also took place concurrently with bridgenetting (both 'regular and 'ultimate') much of the time this past year. Graduate student Talia Young collected jellyfish and ctenophores (commonly known as comb jellies) for her Masters thesis research. Volunteers assisted in collecting, measuring and counting specimens, which often proved quite challenging with these clear, gelatinous creatures!

A summation of volunteer involvement wouldn't be complete without highlighting the hard work that last year's Volunteer of the Year, Linda Dotts, has put in this past summer assisting our JC NERR field crew with nutrient, saltmarsh and seagrass sampling.

Thank you to all our volunteers for your continued dedication!

**Left:** A display table in the LOE exhibit highlights estuary functions and their importance.

**Middle:** Reserve Manager Mike Deluca, Congressman Frank Lobiondo, Interpretive Coordinator Ida Scott & Education Coordinator Melanie Reding pose for a photo in the 'I Pledge' booth.

**Right:** A rain barrel is the highlight of the exhibit table focusing on what you can do in your own backyard to promote ecological health.

## Life on the Edge (LOE) Update

An official grand opening of our newly renovated interpretive exhibit was held on August 21st with Congressman Frank Lobiondo, Tuckerton Mayor George 'Buck' Evans and numerous other JC NERR supporters and advocates in attendance!

The exhibit re-opened to the public in late May of this year and

we couldn't be happier about the increased and continued volunteer involvement there.

Existing and new LOE volunteers have jumped wholeheartedly into working together, with fresh ideas as to how to supplement visitors' experience.

Our Education Coordinator Melanie, Interpretive Coordinator

Ida Scott, and myself look forward to working with our LOE volunteers to have additional educational materials and activities to draw upon when interacting with exhibit visitors and school groups. A big thank you to all of our LOE volunteers for your passion and commitment to the exhibit that highlights the importance of estuaries.



## Shore Bowl Update

Many of our volunteers are familiar with and have previously volunteered for the JC NERR hosted Shore Bowl - the regional high school academic competition sponsored by the Consortium for Ocean Leadership which tests marine science knowledge. Students compete in teams to test their knowledge with hopes of advancing to the National Ocean Sciences Bowl, where they compete against other winning teams around the country.

Unfortunately, due to budget cuts and increased staff costs and time, it was no longer feasible for JC NERR to be the lead host for this event. BUT we are happy to announce that the Rutgers' Institute of Marine and Coastal Sciences (IMCS) of which we are a part of, has taken on the responsibility to fully organize and host this awesome event for the 2014 competition. We know how important

Shore Bowl is to students and teachers alike and are happy that our regional (NY, NJ & PA) bowl will be able to continue.

Our volunteers have played an integral



part in ensuring that previous Shore Bowl competitions were successful and we can't thank you enough for all of your hard work. This is an event that many of our volunteers look forward to, and with the

new change in hosts we wanted to let all know that you are still most welcome to volunteer for this event and will continue to receive JC NERR volunteer hours to do so. If you are interested in volunteering please contact Liz Sikes (sikes@marine.rutgers.edu or 848-932-3257) who is an associate professor with the Institute.

This years competition will be held in the Food Science Building on Rutgers University New Brunswick campus. If there are any volunteers who have not previously done Shore Bowl and are interested in doing so, I encourage you to participate in this rewarding event. It is inspiring to see how much the students know and how passionate they are about marine science.

## Looking Ahead

### Family Fun

**December 7th, 10-11 am:**

Sea Creatures with Amazing Features - fun for all ages with an interactive look at local sea animals with some hands-on time.

### Lunch n' Learn

**December 11th, 12:30 pm:**

New Jersey Shipwrecks presented by author Margaret Bucholz (at Tuckerton Seaport)

### Lunch n' Learn

**January 8th, 12:30 pm:**

Blue Crabs, Boats and the Bay: Restoring the Balance - Steve Evert of Stockton Marine Field Station discusses a derelict crab trap removal program that has been taking place in the Mullica River-Great Bay Estuary and Barnegat Bay over the last 2 years.

### Ecological Evening

**January 23rd 7-8pm:**

Alliance for a Living Ocean's (ALO) role in Sandy Recovery - Executive Director Chris Huch discusses challenges of clean-up and recovery and lessons learned to better prepare our communities and ecosystems for the next storm event.

*Wishing you and your family a joyous holiday season!*

