



September 2006 Highlights

- Chronic Health Risk in Waterway Exposed
- Yet Another Delay in GE's Cleanup of Hudson River PCBs
- US Senators from NJ Take a Stand Against Oil & Gas Drilling

*****Eco-Tip of the Month*****
 Be Free of Pesticides: You can reduce exposure to pesticides in food by buying organic produce. (For reducing pesticides in communities & waterways, see inside article.)
 From "Our Environment," Vol 12, No. 1, by Ingrid Justick

Clean Ocean Action
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 www.CleanOceanAction.org

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 To pay with MasterCard or Visa, please call 732-872-0111.

COA is a 501(c)(3) organization and contributions are tax deductible.

September 2006

- September 15, Friday**
 - **Sunset at Sandy Hook to benefit COA**, Seagulls' Nest, 6-11pm.
 For tickets, call Jennifer at COA.
- September 25, Monday**
 - **Ocean Golf Classic to benefit COA**, Deal Golf & Country Club.
 To register, call Jennifer at COA.

"Sea" inside for volunteer opportunities with COA this fall at fun festivals.

Save the Date

- October 4-5, Wed.-Thurs.**
 - **Fall Student Summit, Sponsored by Commerce Bank**, Island Beach State Park. Schools must apply by September 18.
 For information, call Anne at COA.
- October 21, Saturday**
 - **Fall Beach Sweeps**, 9am-12:30pm, over 50 locations in NJ.
 For sites and information, click "Beach Sweeps" on our website.

COA PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

Featuring... **The Hudson River Fishermen's Association**

Fall is a fabulous time for fishing and members of the **Hudson River Fishermen's Association** (HRFA) are sure to be on the waters. The HRFA represents the interests of recreational anglers along the river. The club's objectives are "to encourage the responsible use of aquatic resources and protection of habitat."

"In the mid-1960s, a diverse group of hearty fishermen banded together to fight for the Hudson River. Through craft and determination, they set a course against the accepted standards of the hopelessly polluted waterway," said **Gil Hawkins**, who works on environmental issues for HRFA. "The battle to clean the river has become the rallying cry to clean streams, estuaries, and oceans."

The struggle continues with many polluters, large and small, up and down the river. One major polluter, General Electric (GE), is dragging its feet to clean-up millions of pounds of PCBs it dumped into the river (see inside article). The HRFA has been a leading voice pressing for the cleanup.

"The Hudson is a limelight microcosm of the global pollution issue. With America's largest city as a witness, the river has gotten cleaner," said **Carl Bruger**, HRFA President. "GE can honor that progress by moving forward with the cleanup."

The HRFA is also active with various public awareness programs and projects, including fish tagging, public access, and habitat protection. In addition, the club informs and updates members on laws on fisheries and the environment.

With the obvious connection to coastal waters, HRFA is also a long-time friend of the ocean, fighting to close the Mud Dump Site, opposing sand-mining proposals, and, now, supporting legislation for the Clean Ocean Zone.

For more information about HRFA, monthly meetings, membership, and programs, visit www.hrfanj.org.

Portions adapted from HRFA website

CHRONIC HEALTH RISK IN WATERWAY EXPOSED

Bacteria Levels "Off the Charts"

On August 15, a concerned and frustrated citizen alerted Clean Ocean Action (COA) to information that showed extremely high levels of bacterial pollution in Branchport Creek, a tributary of the Shrewsbury River in Monmouth County, NJ. According to officials, this problem has been known for years.

"The fact that this has been going on for two years, or more, shakes the foundation of our belief in NJ's water quality testing program to protect public health and the marine environment," said Cindy Zipf, COA Executive Director.

Data show levels of bacteria in the creek thousands of times higher than is acceptable to protect human health. Specifically, tests performed by the Monmouth County Health Department document bacteria levels in an outfall pipe located on the grounds of Monmouth Park Racetrack adjacent to the stable area in the *millions* – which is orders of magnitude greater than the level safe for humans (104 colonies of enterococci per 100 milliliters). Also, contamination affects marine life with excessive nutrients and other pollutants.

"The test results suggest that the likely source of this bacteria is the racetrack," said Dr. Jennifer Samson, COA Principal Scientist. "The bacteria levels are off the charts and warrant immediate investigation and action."

COA, NY/NJ Baykeeper, and American Littoral Society sent a joint letter to NJ Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) Commissioner Lisa Jackson on August 17, demanding:

- ◆ Immediate testing of waters in the region to determine the extent and magnitude of the contamination beyond Branchport Creek,
- ◆ Substantial and visual signage posted in affected areas on land and in water, including all public access points; Marine Police to patrol the region informing people to stay out of the contaminated water,
- ◆ Tests to determine the species source (horse or human) to confirm sources of pollution,
- ◆ A meeting with all agencies, officials, and interested citizens to: (a) review information, (b) identify source of pollution, (c) take action to eliminate continued release of bacteria, (d) understand how this happened, and (e) adopt state, county, and local policies to eliminate similar future circumstances.

On August 17, the racetrack's newly hired consultant told NJDEP that 75% of a pipeline carrying manure and runoff to the Twin Rivers Sewage Treatment Plant was blocked, causing manure to flow into the creek. Operations are underway to clear the pipe. Damage to the pipeline is suspected, so the next step is video inspection. Any damage needs to be repaired quickly to ensure that waste flow to the treatment plant is maintained and waterway discharge is eliminated. There are some indications pipeline inspection will be delayed until racing season ends in mid-September. The NJDEP must quickly and permanently fix the problem and stop this source of pollution.

The following day, more warning signs were posted by Monmouth County Health Department. People should not swim, water-ski, or jet-ski in, or have any contact with bacteria-polluted waters; doing so can cause illnesses and diseases.

Stay tuned for updates on this developing issue.



A family was enjoying Branchport Creek on August 16, including this boy on a jet-ski. The family did not see two faded signs warning of polluted water.

CONTAMINATED SEDIMENTS

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

COA Urges Denial of US Gypsum Permit

COA submitted comments urging the US Army Corps of Engineers to deny the permit application for the placement of 90,000 cubic yards of muck from US Gypsum's access channel (located in the Hudson River in Stony Point, NY) at the Historic Area Remediation Site (HARS) as remediation material.

Test results revealed high concentrations of contaminants in sediment and in tissues of benthic organisms. Significant bioaccumulation of 25 contaminants in clams and 36 in worms occurred, including an exceedance of the HARS-specific PCB Worm Tissue Criterion of 113 ppb (parts per billion), in two of the five replicates. COA's comments are posted on our website ("Issues and Campaigns" and HARS/Projects).

COASTAL WATER QUALITY

Yet Another Delay in GE's Cleanup of Hudson River PCBs

On July 27, US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Regional Administrator Alan Steinberg released a surprise, one-paragraph statement that set a six-month delay in General Electric's (GE) cleanup of PCBs or polychlorinated biphenyls in the Hudson River. Steinberg said, "We are now facing several obstacles beyond our control that make it unrealistic to begin dredging during the 2007 dredging season."

In response, COA sent a letter to EPA requesting the agency provide:

- 1) specific information on efforts undertaken by GE and EPA to date,
- 2) the obstacles and issues that could not be overcome in time for the scheduled 2007 start date, and
- 3) what is being done to eliminate these obstacles and ensure that the cleanup begins by 2008, if not sooner.

US Representative Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-6) also sent a letter requesting a formal explanation for the delay.



Winter Flounder
Photo by Herb Segars

This past spring, NJDEP issued advisories for winter flounder (pictured) caught in Raritan Bay, which have been contaminated with PCBs originating in the Hudson River.

Comments Regarding Oyster Creek Nuclear Generating Station

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is accepting comments through September 8, 2006, on the Draft Generic Impact Statement for Oyster Creek Nuclear Generating Station's license renewal. To sign onto COA's comments or to learn more about the ecological impacts of Oyster Creek, or for information to assist you in writing comments to MMS, review a position paper on COA's website ("Issues and Campaigns") or call COA at 732-872-0111.

CLEAN OCEAN ZONE

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

US Senators from NJ Take a Stand Against Oil & Gas Drilling

Last month, the US Senate voted to open eight million acres in the Gulf of Mexico to oil and gas drilling. This bill now has the potential to be combined with a dangerous bill already approved by the US House of Representatives, possibly opening the Atlantic Coast to drilling. US Senators Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ) and Robert Menendez (D-NJ) show continued leadership to stop offshore oil and gas drilling. The two Senators, along with Senators Barbara Boxer (D-CA) and Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), have written a bi-coastal letter to Senate majority and minority leadership promising to "object to any unanimous consent agreement to go to conference with the House," resulting in blocking the bill.

During offshore drilling debates, some members of Congress supported the argument that offshore drilling would pose little risk to waters and beaches. However, the recent exposure of BP's inability to maintain a critical oil delivery pipeline in Prudhoe Bay, Alaska, and official results of damage caused by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita have cast further doubt on the industry's safety and environmental capabilities. The hurricanes destroyed offshore oil and gas rigs, damaged hundreds of pipelines, and spilled 741,384 gallons of petroleum products into the sea.

Long Island Offshore Wind Park

COA submitted comments to the US Minerals Management Service regarding scoping for the Environmental Impact Statement to be submitted for the Long Island Offshore Wind Park. Comments requested the applicant address issues associated with the construction, operations, and decommissioning of a large-scale offshore wind facility as they relate to resident and migratory organisms and water quality concerns. The comments are posted on our website ("Issues and Campaigns" and Offshore Wind Energy).

SEA SCENES: COA Makes "The Dean's List"



L to R: Ilene Winters of The Wellness Community, Joann Passantino of Emmanuel Cancer Foundation, Ursula Goetz of Monmouth County S.P.C.A., Jennifer Smiga of Clean Ocean Action, Dean Nelson of Dean's Natural Food Market

Through their passion for a natural organic lifestyle, Dean Nelson and his wife Loretta created **Dean's Natural Food Market** in 1996. Their goal was to create a health food store in New Jersey where people could ask questions and learn about organic foods, vitamins, and healthy lifestyles. Today, in an effort to improve their community the Nelson family created a customer loyalty program to support local groups.

"Raising awareness must not stop with ourselves, but should extend out to our community. I have lived by the ocean my entire life and could not, and would not ever be away from it. It only makes sense to support COA, a local group that looks after our community's most precious resource, the ocean," said **Dean Nelson**, Owner, Dean's Natural Food Market. "I want to be more than just a business in the community. I feel a natural food store's purpose is to create health and well-being. This extends beyond the four walls of our stores. We want to be a role model of social consciousness for individuals and other businesses. At the end of the day, I want people to know we really care and that we made a difference."

"The Dean's List": Dean's Customer Advantage Card Program: "When you reach 250 points (each point is a \$1 spent in the store), Dean's mails you a \$9 gift certificate and \$1 is donated and matched by Dean's. That's \$2 donated to local organizations (see above photo and caption). To join the "The Dean's List", apply for a Customer Advantage card at Dean's stores in Ocean and Shrewsbury. For more information and store locations, visit www.deansnaturalfoodmarket.com.

Celebrate Dean's 10th Anniversary Celebration on Sept. 30 at the Shrewsbury store.
Cooking demos, free massage and reiki, door prizes, and much more.

C.O.A.S.T. 2006

A Message of "Thanks"

Jessie Barrett, our 2006 C.O.A.S.T. Intern, is off to start her senior year at Rowan University. Before leaving COA, Jessie wrote this message of thanks:

"On behalf of COA, I thank all of the volunteers that lent their time and effort to this year's C.O.A.S.T. Campaign. With the help of extraordinary volunteers, thousands of citizens learned that they are the solution to ocean pollution. Also, special thanks to the great host towns and beach clubs who helped make the weekend events possible.

The 2006 C.O.A.S.T. campaign, stationed at 26 sites, was a great success, raising nearly \$3,500 to continue efforts to stop ocean pollution, and collecting more than 1,000 petition signatures and postcards from citizens in support of H.R. 5872, 'The NJ/NY Clean Ocean Zone' bill.

Over the 16 years of C.O.A.S.T., dedicated volunteers have reached an amazing number of beach-goers and shore visitors. With the continued support and cooperation of citizens, organizations, towns, and beach clubs, COA will continue the tradition and defend the ocean for years to come."

Fall Fun & Volunteering

Visit COA or volunteer for COA at a fall festival. Volunteers are needed to distribute information about ocean pollution issues and actions. Don't miss your chance to enjoy the outdoors while advocating for a clean ocean! To sign up, please call COA and ask for Anne or Kari:

- **September 9 – 28th Annual "Good Old Days" Festival**, John F. Kennedy Park, Somers Point, 11am-6pm (Anne)
- **September 10 – 9th Annual Beach Plum Festival**, Island Beach State Park, Seaside Park, 9am-4pm (Kari)
- **September 16 – Festival of the Sea**, Arnold Avenue, Point Pleasant Beach, 10am-7pm (Kari)
- **October 1 – Nature Festival**, Cooper Environmental Center, Catus Island County Park, Toms River, 9am-4pm (Anne)
- **October 8 – COAST Day NJ**, Lobster House Restaurant & Dock, Cape May, 11am-4pm (Anne)



FLOTSAM & JETSAM

Pesticide Free Lawns & Cleaner Waters

There is a movement to offset stormwater-related pollution and have a positive effect on the health of NJ's residents and waterways. A petition called the "Pesticide Free Lawn Declaration" is being circulated by the NJ Environmental Federation (NJEF), among other groups. The NJEF is working with local mayors and counties to establish Pesticide Free Zones as an extension of their Integrated Pest Management policies. For more information about the "Pesticide Free" program, visit www.pesticidefreelawns.org.

The US Geological Survey released a ten-year survey of the contamination caused by pesticide use in agriculture and urbanized areas. Findings show that 96% of all fish, 100% of all surface water samples, and 33% of major aquifers contain one or more pesticides at detectable levels, many at levels exceeding aquatic life standards. Pesticides contaminate streams, rivers, lakes, coastal waters as well as underground water and drinking water supplies.

COA is also finalizing a guide that municipalities can use to comprehensively address water quality issues from stormwater runoff. To obtain a copy when complete, contact Keith at COA.