



RUTGERS UNIVERSITY

Water Resources Program

New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station



FEBRUARY 2025

WATER PAGES eNEWSLETTER

Rutgers Cooperative Extension Annual Meeting

On January 14, 2025, Rutgers Cooperative Extension (RCE) held its annual meeting on the Busch Campus in Piscataway, New Jersey. It was one of the best turnouts for an annual meeting with over 200 faculty and staff in attendance. The meeting provided 4-H youth educators the opportunity to meet veteran Extension Specialists and County Agriculture Agents and Family & Community Health Sciences staff the chance to talk with the folks from the RCE Continuing Education office. The diversity of the organization is quite impressive. People of all races and ages are part of Extension. The veteran Extension professionals spent some time reminiscing about the good old days while the young Extension professionals only saw unlimited possibilities that the future will bring. You must remember that the concept of “cooperative extension” is simply to extend the knowledge of the university out to the people of the state to help solve their problems. Young and old Extension professionals at Rutgers take this mission to heart.

The theme of the RCE Annual Meeting was *Cultivating Connection: Building a Culture of Communication*. Communication is vital for maximizing the impact of Extension, ensuring that research translates into practical applications that benefit communities. Effective communication ensures that valuable research and educational resources reach farmers, families, and communities. Good communication fosters relationships between the Extension service and local communities. Extension aims to reach diverse populations, and clear communication helps make programs more accessible. Communication is also key in building collaborations with other organizations, businesses, and government agencies. These partnerships can enhance the impact of Extension services and leverage additional resources. Even though most of the RCE faculty and staff are great speakers, presenters, and story tellers, the annual meeting provided workshops on how to continue to hone these skills.

The meeting provided plenty of opportunities for faculty and staff to engage with each other. The meeting also provided RCE the chance to recognize the outstanding personal and team achievement of the RCE faculty and staff through annual awards. These awards include: 2024 RCE Faculty of the Year Award, 2024 RCE Excellence Awards for staff and volunteers, 2024 RCE Mary Jane Willis Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Award, and 2024 RCE Best of the Best Team Award.

After the annual meeting, attendees went over to the Brick House Tavern for happy hour drinks and appetizers. There were many more discussions about collaborating on projects over drinks and wings. Is there a better way to solidify a new partnership?

NJ Watershed Conference Registration is Open!

Resiliency through Restoration

February 20-21, 2025

at The College of New Jersey and Online

Who Should Attend:

**Planners • Engineers • Floodplain Managers
Elected Officials • Environmental Advocates**

Non-Profits • You

Earn CEUs!

Speakers from:

NJ Department of
Environmental Protection
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
National Oceanic and
Atmospheric Administration
Rutgers • The College of NJ
NJ League of Conservation
Voters and more



Learn more:
bit.ly/watershedconference2025



8th Annual NJ Watershed Conference

February 20-21, 2025



Kelley Curan

(Moderator)
Science Manager,
New Jersey Highlands Water
Protection and Planning
Council

Session: Watershed Plans as a Roadmap for Protection



Kristi MacDonald, Ph.D.

Director of Science,
Raritan Headwaters Association



Christopher C. Obropta, Ph.D., P.E.

Director of the New Jersey Water Resources
Research Institute, Extension Specialist in
Water Resources with Rutgers Cooperative
Extension, and a Professor with the
Department of Environmental Sciences at the
School of Environmental and Biological
Sciences, Rutgers University



Kathy Hale

Principal Watershed Protection
Specialist, New Jersey Water
Supply Authority



Learn more:
bit.ly/watershedconference2025



2025 HACKENSACK RIVER NATION SUMMIT

Tuesday, February 25, 10 am to 6 pm
Fairleigh Dickinson University, Student Union Bldg
Sub Lane, Teaneck, New Jersey

Learn a lot. Make great connections. Get inspired. Share your knowledge.

The 2025 HRN Summit is a gathering of environmental leaders, public officials and others working to protect the health of the Hackensack River Watershed and connect more people to the Hackensack River.

Featuring presentations and workshops on:

- Cleaning up the Hackensack River Superfund site
- Stormwater management planning
- Building strong watershed alliances
- Building trails in urban and suburban communities
- Troubleshooting issues with green infrastructure

Summit exhibitors

There are so many organizations doing great things to protect New Jersey's environment. Learn more about them – and how you can get involved with them at the Hackensack River Nation Summit. Here are just some of the organizations you can meet:

- Jersey Water Works
- New Jersey Future
- New York/ New Jersey Trails Conference
- Northern New Jersey Community Foundation
- Ramapo College
- Sewage Free Streets and Rivers

Become a Sponsor – Your sponsorship helps grow greener, cleaner and healthier places through the Northern New Jersey Community Foundation. Contact us to learn more about becoming a sponsor.



Contact Leonardo Vazquez:
leo@nnjcf.org • 201-568-5608, x2



TICKETS

General public **\$80**

Government & Nonprofit, Environmental Commission and Green Team members **\$40**

Rutgers University students **\$20**
(Must register with RU email address)



REGISTER:
[NNJCF.ORG/HRN](https://nnjcf.org/hrn)

THE 2025 HACKENSACK RIVER NATION SUMMIT
IS MADE POSSIBLE BY:



DID YOU KNOW YOU COULD STILL REGISTER?

Become a leader, become a Green Infrastructure Champion in 2025!

It's not too late to attend the five or more classes required for certification!

The next Green Infrastructure Champions



Training Program will be offered every other Friday from 10AM to 12NOON starting January 10, 2025!

All sessions for the 2025 training program will be offered via an online format.

Generous support from our funders is allowing us to offer the 2025 training for FREE.

Here is what we can offer as part of the program:

- Training on green infrastructure planning and implementation
- Technical support to develop a design for a green infrastructure demonstration project
- Networking opportunities with other certified Green Infrastructure Champions for mutual support
- Assistance with grant writing

2025 Training Program Class Schedule:

1. How to identify green infrastructure projects in your town (January 10)
2. Moving from planning to implementation of green infrastructure (January 24)
3. Maintaining green infrastructure practices/projects (February 7)
4. Stormwater management regulations, policies, and ordinances (February 21)
5. Green infrastructure planning and implementation for Sustainable Jersey points (March 7)
6. Green infrastructure projects for targeted audiences (March 21)
7. How to design and build a rain garden (April 4)
8. Retrofitting traditional detention basins with green infrastructure (April 18)
9. Developing green infrastructure master plans for an entire site or neighborhood (May 2)
10. Using green infrastructure to promote climate resiliency (May 16)

Registration is required and OPEN!

[Go to water.rutgers.edu](https://water.rutgers.edu) today to learn more and register!

Attendance at a minimum of five (5) classes is needed for certification.

This program is partially funded by the **New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station** and **New Jersey Sea Grant Consortium**.

The Future of Stormwater Management Under a New President

If you haven't noticed, we have a new president. The Trump administration does not seem to be concerned with climate change. I am not sure if they have any



serious concerns for the environment at all. Even so, water pollution and flooding transcend political parties. Both republicans and democrats do not want their houses to flood or their local waterways to be polluted. Flooding and poor water quality have a harmful effect on our health and suppresses property values. Nobody wants to buy a house that is in jeopardy of flooding. Nobody wants

to live on a lake that has harmful algal blooms. I believe that protecting communities from flooding and polluted waterways is one issue the red and blue teams can come together on.

I sense that some of you are skeptical that the two parties can rally behind any issue, and maybe you are right. But in the end, stormwater management is a local issue so maybe we don't need the politicians in Washington to help address these important problems. We have local leaders who can help us address these stormwater problems, and we can empower the Rutgers Green Infrastructure Champions to work with these local leaders (*We have a program for that!*).

The Rutgers Cooperative Extension Water Resources Program will continue to work with communities to address stormwater problems to improve the quality of life of New Jersey's residents regardless of what happens in Washington DC. If our elected officials would rather bicker with each other than lead, we will lead the effort, and the politicians will have to follow.



~ Christopher C. Obropta, Ph.D., P.E.,
Extension Specialist in Water Resources



Rutgers Cooperative Extension Water Resources Program

water@envsci.rutgers.edu
www.water.rutgers.edu

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