



# NEW JERSEY FIELD OFFICE FIELD NOTES

## JUNE 2015



### Environmental Contaminants Program

By Clay Stern

Cathy Marion is the newest member of the NJFO EC/NRDAR team. She joins us from the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, where she worked for 9 years as a stream ecologist and non-game fish researcher. Her expertise includes experimental design and statistical analysis; much of her past research has focused on the evaluation of biological/habitat response to large-scale environmental impacts (land alteration, contaminants, dam removal, *etc.*). She holds a BS from the University of Georgia, a MS from Clemson University (Wildlife and Fisheries Biology), and recently completed her PhD at Clemson University in Wildlife and Fisheries Biology. Cathy is excited to join the Region 5 NRDAR team, and is looking forward to advancing science-based natural resource management and restoration in the Northeast.



### Sustainable Raritan River Conference

Several staff members (EC/NRDAR, CPA) from the New Jersey Field Office participated in the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual "Two States-One Bay" Sustainable Raritan River Conference and Awards Ceremony on June 12. The Conference was well-attended by individuals representing governmental agencies, NGOs, academia, and private citizen groups. The Conference included break-out sessions to discuss how to prioritize and integrate efforts to address critical issues facing the Raritan

Bay, including resiliency, water quality, habitat restoration, public access, and fisheries management.





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### Ecological Risk Assessment of Transporting Energy Commodities



Clay Stern (EC/NRDAR) participated in several workshop sessions throughout June to develop an Ecological Risk Assessment for Rail Transport of Bakken and Dilbit crude oils coming into the Port of Philadelphia/Delaware River and Bay watershed. Clay is on the Project Committee and chairing the “Ecological Effects” subcommittee. There are approximately 90 workshop participants including the Coast Guard, NOAA, EPA, DOI, FWS, the States of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware, Philadelphia Office of Emergency Management, local firefighters, oil response contractors, NGOs, and rail line operators. A final report of the

workshop is anticipated to be issued in September 2015.

### Partners Program

#### By Brian Marsh

On June 3, Partners staff provided and helped a landowner plant 700 native trees and shrubs, such as elderberry and silky dogwood, along the Stony Brook to stabilize the banks and create foraging habitat for migratory birds such as Louisiana waterthrush. The Stony Brook is a Category One waterway and this private property is adjacent to land managed as a natural area by another partner of ours, D&R Greenways.

On June 4, Partners staff provided and helped a landowner plant 950 native trees and shrubs. This property lies near the mouth of the Pohatcong Creek and the plantings will help stabilize the mouth of this important creek and provide migratory bird habitat. The landowners are also partnering with NRCS and New Jersey Audubon on parts of the property. This property lies within our Highlands/Middle Delaware River Focus Area.

On June 5, Partners staff helped students plant approximately 2,400 wildflower plugs. Additionally, we provided and helped plant 200 shrubs, which are good for pollinators, in a 7-acre field at Hopewell Crest Middle School. Last year Partners started the conversion of the field to warm-season grasses and wildflowers. The project is a partnership with the school, the Township, the American Littoral Society, and the Service to turn some of the school’s grounds into an outdoor classroom. The project lies within our Delaware Estuary Focus Area.



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### **Endangered Species Program**

**By Eric Schrading**

On June 5, Wendy Walsh and Eric Schrading met with representatives from NJDFW, Corps, and NRCS to discuss initiation of a Programmatic formal consultation for red knot for the oyster aquaculture industry in NJ. The agency-only meeting will create a framework for discussion to work through the formal consultation process. Our goal will be to have this consultation completed prior to the stopover window for red knots in NJ spring 2016. (Congressional District 2).

### **New Jersey Project Leaders Meeting**

**By Eric Schrading**

On June 17, Forsythe NWR hosted an all New Jersey Project Leaders meeting that included Project Leaders in New Jersey from all 5 NWRs (Cape May, Supawna, Forsythe, Great Swamp, Wallkill), Fisheries (Delaware River Coordinator), ES (NJFO), and OLE. The focus of the meeting was sharing priorities and discussions about how to work more as One Service and opportunities available (e.g., details, training, shared positions, etc.). Andrew Milliken from the NALCC also came down to talk to the group about tools available to help in strategic planning in New Jersey.

