

## NJWSA STAFF NEWS

The NJWSA staff bid farewell to Tom Stanuikynas in March 2003. After four years with the Raritan Project, Tom accepted a position with the American Automobile Association in Hamilton, NJ. He is missed by both staff and stakeholders!

Debbie Newcomb and her husband welcomed Jenna Elizabeth Newcomb to the family on April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2003. Jenna weighed in at 10 lb., 4 oz. Mom and baby are both doing well. Congratulations and all our best to Debbie and her family!

Welcome to Henry Patterson, III, NJWSA's new Executive Director. Henry comes to NJWSA from Elizabethtown Water Company, where he oversaw administrative functions and supervised the business development and corporate communication departments. He's been traveling around the NJWSA service area and meeting many of the Raritan Project stakeholders.

## Raritan Basin Watershed Alliance

The May 21<sup>st</sup> leadership workshop will mark a transition from the Raritan Project to the **Raritan Basin Watershed Alliance**. The new name reflects our move to watershed management plan implementation: building partnerships and a foundation of support for Raritan Plan implementation.



NJ Senator Leonard Lance; Christine Todd Whitman, USEPA Administrator; Jane Kenny, EPA Region II Administrator; George Hawkins, SBMWA Exec. Director; Fran Varacalli, SBWA Exec Director; and Dan Van Abs, NJWSA Watershed Unit Manager at the Watershed Initiative press conference.



# The Basin Bulletin

*Newsletter of the Raritan Basin Watershed Alliance*



USEPA Administrator Christie Whitman announcing the Watershed Initiative grant recipients at SBMWA

## Raritan Basin Receives \$1,000,000 EPA Grant!

The Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association and the NJ Water Supply Authority are pleased to announce that the Raritan Basin has received a \$1 million, three-year grant from USEPA under the President's Watershed Initiative to implement parts of the Raritan Basin Watershed Management Plan. EPA Administrator Christie Whitman announced the awards at the SBMWA Nature Reserve on May 2nd. The Raritan project is one of 20 projects that received a total of \$15 million in grants. EPA's Web site has information on the overall Initiative and national awards, at <http://www.epa.gov/owow/watershed/initiative/>.

The Raritan grant will focus on three areas: The Millstone Watershed (SBMWA lead); the South Branch Raritan watershed upstream of the Spruce Run and Round Valley Reservoirs (with South Branch Watershed Association as a partner with NJWSA); and the area just upstream of the Raritan River water supply intake (NJWSA lead). The table on page 4 provides an overview of project activities for each target area. The overall project focuses on a combination of restoration, protection and pollution prevention. NJWSA and SBMWA will match the EPA funding dollar for dollar, yielding a total project budget of \$2 million! Watch the Raritan Basin website this fall for details on project activities.

## The Plan is Done! May 21<sup>st</sup> Leadership Workshop: "Turning the Plan Into Projects"

The Raritan Basin Watershed Management Plan was completed December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2002, and was formally released to the public at a March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2003 press conference at the Somerset County Parks Commission Headquarters at North Branch Park in Bridgewater. The implementation strategies that comprise the Raritan Plan focus on six critical water resource issues:

- surface water quality
- stream habitat health
- stream corridor protection
- water supply
- stormwater management, and
- ground water.

At the press conference, Bob Colburn, North & South Branch WMA Chair, highlighted the rural nature of that area: "Trout production streams, steep slopes and the Basin's two major reservoirs are here, along with large areas of farms and forests. However, low and medium density growth is coming into the area along the major highways." He also emphasized the importance of strategies to protect water resources in these areas from damage.

Steve Barnes, Lower Raritan WMA Chair, pointed out that the variety of land uses in the Lower Raritan, including highly developed centers and suburbs and significant agricultural regions, required strategies that both restore damaged water resources and protect those high quality resources that still exist. "We can't afford to lose ground on some issues while solving others – both approaches are needed."

Shing-Fu Hsueh, Millstone WMA Committee Chair, said that in this area of forest, farms and the Route 1 corridor, "Management strategies... are split between protection and correction. Area streams too often need reduced pollution levels and stream bank restoration."

Nick Polanin, Raritan Basin Council Chair, noted that the cost of protecting and restoring water resources of the Raritan Basin will be high, though probably not as high as the earlier cost of upgrading wastewater treatment plants since 1972. He thanked the many participants in the Raritan Project, noting "The Raritan Plan and the technical reports are in hand, ready for use. Even better, they are already being used! It is our job and the job of our many partners to transform the Raritan Plan from paper to reality."

Ken Klipstein of NJDEP said "Commissioner Bradley M.

(Continued on page 3)

| Overview of the Raritan Basin EPA Watershed Initiative Project<br>2003-2006 |   |  |  |
|---|---|--|--|
| Geographic Target Area  | Restoration   | Protection & Preservation  | Pollution Prevention   |
| <b>Upper South Branch Raritan River</b><br>(NJWSA lead, with SBWA)          | * Full stream restoration in at least one high priority stream, preferably within the Spruce Run Reservoir watersheds                                     | * Adoption of municipal ordinances addressing riparian area protection, stormwater management and NPS management | * Comprehensive implementation of "River Friendly" programs<br>* Reduction of nutrient use in residential, commercial/office and agricultural areas<br>* Road salting controls |
| <b>Raritan/Somerville/Manville: Mainstem Raritan River</b><br>(NJWSA lead)  | * Stormwater system improvements to address turbidity at Elizabethtown Water Company intake   | * Adoption of municipal ordinances addressing riparian area protection, stormwater management and NPS management | * Comprehensive "River Friendly" programs<br>* Road salting controls<br>* Targeted intervention on sites identified as source water risks by NJDEP                             |
| <b>Route 1 Corridor: Millstone WMA</b><br>(SBMWA lead)                      | * Full stream restoration in at least one high priority stream based on the Action Plans for the Beden Brook, Rocky Brook and 2 other targeted watersheds | * Adoption of municipal ordinances addressing riparian area protection, stormwater management and NPS management | * Comprehensive "River Friendly" programs targeted at a full range of landowners<br>* Road salting controls  |

Many thanks to our contributors to this Basin Bulletin: Steve Yergeau, Mary Ace, Dan Van Abs, Kathy Hale, Amy Shallcross. If you have an article for the next Basin Bulletin, please contact Sally Kean at [skean@raritanbasin.org](mailto:skean@raritanbasin.org) or call 732/356-9344 ext. 23.



# Committee and Council Updates

## Raritan Basin Council

The Council members have focused on "Turning the Plan into Projects" which is also the subtitle of the May 21<sup>st</sup> Raritan Basin Leadership Workshop. Key Council steps for implementing the Raritan Plan include identifying the priority functions of the Council in 2003/2004, modifying the Council membership to make it more effective during Plan implementation, and funding the Raritan Basin Watershed Alliance (using funding proposals that don't compete with the efforts of existing organizations). Council members Teddy Murphy, Steve Barnes and Jeannine Der Bedrosian worked with NJWSA staff to plan the highly successful press conference of March 26<sup>th</sup>, when the Raritan Plan was formally released to the public. Thanks also to Karen Siletti who volunteered to assist with the press conference planning. Teddy, Steve and Karen also provided Council leadership on developing the Raritan Basin Leadership Workshop.

## North & South Branch WMA

The North & South Branch WMA Committee met on April 24<sup>th</sup> to discuss the strategies related to land acquisition for water resource protection. Bob Colburn, WMA Committee Chair for the past year, passed the chairmanship on to Geoff Knapp. Bob and Dave Peifer will serve as Vice-Chairs for the next year. The Stormwater work group has been working to evaluate their action plans in the context of NJDEP's new stormwater management rules. The Headwaters & Stream Management workgroup has had a busy spring—see "Watershed Improvement Projects" on page 3 for details. The next WMA meeting is scheduled for June 12<sup>th</sup>, 6:30 pm at the NJWSA Annex in Clinton, NJ.

## Lower Raritan WMA

The Lower Raritan WMA kicked off 2003 with a Watershed Summit in January. Speakers from NJDEP and the Lower Raritan-Middlesex County Water Resources Association explained their roles in the Lower Raritan. Subcommittees have been meeting on an as-needed basis, and will continue to do so as we move forward with implementation. Still confused about the difference among the WRA, the WMG and the WMAC? Check out the paper on the Lower Raritan website at [http://www.raritanbasin.org/WMA9\\_Committee.htm](http://www.raritanbasin.org/WMA9_Committee.htm) /. Steve Barnes, the Steering/WMA Committee chair for the past year, will be stepping down this summer. If you're interested in volunteering for the position, contact Kathy Hale ([khale@raritanbasin.org](mailto:khale@raritanbasin.org), 732-356-9344 x28) for more information. The next WMA meeting is scheduled for June 25<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 pm at the Elk's Building in New Brunswick.

## Millstone WMA

WMA and subcommittee activities have been on hold in the Millstone WMA over the past few months while committee leaders met with NJWSA to discuss the most efficient way for action plan implementation to move forward. Certain

activities will occur through the EPA Watershed Initiative Project. Stay tuned to [www.raritanbasin.org](http://www.raritanbasin.org) for details about coming activities in the Millstone WMA.

## Technical Advisory Committee

The TAC will be meeting on an as-needed basis to comment on technical issues in the Raritan Basin. In February, the TAC met to review and comment on 4phosphorus TMDLs developed for lakes in the Lower Raritan. In May, the TAC evaluated the 48 fecal coliform TMDLs developed for streams in the Raritan Water Region (WMAs 7, 8, 9, 10). TMDLs are surface water pollution control plans and are being developed by NJDEP under a Memorandum of Agreement with EPA. See <http://www.state.nj.us/dep/watershedmgt/hottopics.htm> for copies of the proposed TMDLs. The next meeting, yet to be scheduled, will most likely focus on prioritizing areas for bacterial source tracking to best utilize limited monetary resources.

## Basin Education & Outreach Committee

RBEO has been meeting on a (mostly) monthly basis. The committee is focusing on identifying current activities by Basin stakeholders that support the management plan strategies, and identifying activities that can be undertaken with limited funding. The committee is working on two important tasks — expansion of the Educational Materials Inventory prepared by the North & South Branch E&O workgroup in 2002, and a review of residential riparian area stewardship programs that could be implemented in the Basin. The next meeting is scheduled for July 2 at 3:00 pm.

## Basin-wide Stormwater Committee

Representatives from around the Basin began meeting in February 2003 to address the issue of regional stormwater management planning. Stakeholders developed a list of criteria to be used to rank the 136 subwatersheds in the Basin for development of regional stormwater management plans. A task group refined the criteria and used EVAMix, a decision support model developed by CDM, to apply the criteria to the subwatersheds. The group will review the results of the model application, finalize a list of priority subwatersheds and identify potential project partnerships at the June 5<sup>th</sup> meeting (6:00 pm at the Somerset County Administration Building).

## Spruce Run Initiative Named "Clean Water Partner"

The Spruce Run Initiative, a cooperative effort among NJWSA and 5 municipalities around Spruce Run Reservoir, was honored as a "Clean Water Partner for the 21st Century" by USEPA at a ceremony in Washington, D.C. in April. The goal of the project is to prevent water quality degradation and loss of water supply yields. The program focuses on acquisition of critical lands, better management of development, and restoration of damaged waters.



# Watershed Improvement Projects

## Municipal Education About Headwaters Streams

The North & South Branch WMA's Headwaters & Stream Management Workgroup has begun implementing a set of management plan strategies intended to define and map headwaters streams and to "...develop a broad awareness of the critical nature of and the public and governmental responsibility for protecting headwaters...". In early 2003, the workgroup sent maps to each municipality that detailed the location of headwaters. A fact sheet developed by the workgroup was included with the maps, and municipalities were encouraged to field verify their headwaters streams and to begin working to protect those streams. Member Chris Teasdale and the workgroup have prepared a simplified headwaters stream evaluation worksheet; the focus is improved delineations of headwaters streams. Workgroup members also prepared a presentation for municipalities emphasizing the importance of headwaters and describing steps municipalities can take to protect these streams. To date, more than 10 municipalities have responded with interest for presentations — dates are being scheduled. The workgroup sees this response as an indication of municipal interest in stream protection. If your municipality is interested in a presentation from the workgroup about the importance of headwaters, please contact NJWSA at (732) 356-9344.

## Green Brook Multi-Use Trail Feasibility Study

For the past year, the City of Plainfield, NJDOT and Urbitran Associates have been studying the possibility of creating a 4-mile multi-use trail along the Green Brook in Plainfield. Central to this study is the Olmstead Brothers vision of non-motorized trails along the Green Brook. The study area included a 4-mile corridor parallel to the Brook, beginning at Jefferson Avenue (Dunellen/Plainfield border) to Terrill Road (Plainfield/Scotch Plains border). The proposed trail would provide transportation and recreation opportunities, and highlight Plainfield's place in American history. Urbitran developed a conceptual plan and alignment for the trail. The proposed alignment is comprised of a series of smaller neighborhood trails and urban promenades linked by connector routes along low-volume streets; due to land acquisition and easement issues, creation of a full brook-side trail is proposed for the very long-term (e.g. 20+ years). Urbitran and the City of Plainfield have worked closely with stakeholders throughout the study, and will continue to do so as the project moves toward the design and construction phases. A map of the proposed alignment is on display at Plainfield City Hall; for more information, contact the Plainfield Planning Division at (908) 753-3664.

## Beden Brook & Rocky Brook Characterization & Assessments

Completed in May 2003 by the Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association (SBMWA) in an independent project, the *Characterization and Assessment of the Rocky Brook Watershed* examined the health of this 15 square mile portion of the Millstone Watershed. Several recommendations of specific actions to preserve or restore the Rocky Brook Watershed will be made to municipal governments, state agencies and county regulators over the summer.



Following up on the *Characterization and Assessment of the Beden Brook Watershed* completed in June 2001, SBMWA has been busy implementing restoration and protection strategies to improve water quality. One such project was done during spring 2003, when township-owned land along Back Brook, a tributary to Beden Brook, underwent streambank restoration. Almost 350 feet of streambank was regraded, stabilized and covered in vegetation to reduce erosion observed along the Brook. Sixty-three volunteers from Montgomery and surrounding towns dug, planted and weathereared spring showers to get the project completed! Both the Beden Brook and Rocky Brook projects are funded by NJDEP (Section 319) and SBMWA.

## Watershed Management Plan Completed (Continued from page 1)

Campbell asked me to attend today's press event to formally commend the NJ Water Supply Authority for its leadership in facilitating the development and completion of the State's first watershed plan, and to thank all its partners who put countless hours into developing this plan. As the Raritan Project moves forward to implement the strategies laid out in the plan, the DEP looks forward to working on those projects that are results based in nature." Nearly all of the major newspapers in the Raritan Basin and a number of local and weekly papers covered the event and printed articles.

The watershed management plan is available on the project website at [http://www.raritanbasin.org/management\\_plan.htm](http://www.raritanbasin.org/management_plan.htm). A leadership workshop is scheduled for May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2003 to officially kickoff implementation. Workshop participants will identify measures they are already taking to implement key strategies of the Raritan Plan and discuss ways to increase governmental and non-governmental efforts over the next several years.