

NJ Bay Islands Initiative Communications Plan

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Objective: The objective of our communications is to inform, educate, and engage our audiences to raise awareness of why the islands in the Barnegat, Little Egg, Great, and Absecon Bays have a critical role to ensure resilience of our communities and the natural habitats of the bays.

Slogan:

Long-term Interest Audiences (See Audience Actions Chart). In priority order:

- Residents
- Business owners
- Local decision-makers
- Nonprofit partners
- Visitors to the Region
- Aquaculture farmers and fisheries businesses
- Press/media
- Congressional decision-makers
- State and National conferences/workshops

Sound Bites/Elevator Speech Ideas:

- Many partners are working together in the NJ Bay Islands Initiative to restore islands in Ocean and Atlantic County bays to ensure they are functioning as a part of our environment for years to come.

NJ Bay Islands Talking Points

- The NJBII was formed in 2020 by a variety of partners to address the lack of focus on the bay islands in Ocean and Atlantic Counties.
- Partners include Long Beach Township, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Barnegat Bay Partnership, The Nature Conservancy, Stockton University's Coastal Research Center, Save Barnegat Bay, American Littoral Society, Ocean County Soil Conservation District, US Army Corps of Engineers, and the NJ Department of Transportation's Office of Maritime Resources.
- The long-term goal of the NJBII is to manage bay islands as a system and pursue a variety of habitat restoration projects to address multiple needs.

- NJBII wants to improve resilience and sustainability of the Region by ensuring islands are protected, enhanced and ecologically functional in the future.
 - We define resiliency as a healthy Bay, both economically and ecologically, that includes secure housing and business for the area's residents, and ensures long-term habitat for wildlife.
 - The most common definition of sustainability comes from the 1987 Brundtland Commission report for the United Nations. It defines the concept as "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." This takes into account economic, environmental and social needs.
- NJBII has developed an online site called the NJ Bay Islands Restoration Planner (NJBIRP) that can be used by practitioners to plan island restoration projects.
<https://maps.coastalresilience.org/nj-bay-islands/>
- What we know:
 - There are over 160 islands in the Barnegat, Little Egg, Great, and Absecon Bays of Ocean and Atlantic Counties.
 - There are a variety of island features and environments, including saltmarshes, forested areas, and those that have been augmented by dredged material.
 - Island sizes range from less than 1 acre to over 300 acres.
 - The types of vegetation you may see on islands include marsh vegetation like smooth cordgrass and seaside goldenrod; shrubs like high-tide bush and groundsel tree; and trees like eastern red cedar.
 - The types of birds you may see include common terns, American oystercatchers, black skimmers, herons and egrets.
 - Islands are primary nesting locations for colonial birds like egrets, herons, ibis, terns and gulls.
 - Other wildlife that use islands include: mink, otter, fox, muskrat, diamondback terrapin, fiddler crabs, and blue mussels.
 - Islands act like speed bumps to reduce the impacts of wave action on the mainland and barrier islands where many people live and work.
 - Storms, boat wakes, wind and wave action, and big tide differentials erode bay islands' shorelines, and we have lost about 7% of island acreage since the late 1970's with at least 13 becoming submerged in that time.
 - About 30% of the islands are privately owned; 25% are parts of several NJDEP wildlife management areas; and 20% are part of the USFWS' Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge. The remaining are municipal, non-profit or unidentifiable.
 - Native Americans were the first to use the bay islands as evidenced by a wooden structure and 2 shell mounds on Middle Island. Subsequent users of the islands included gunning clubs, a fish processing plant, fox hunters, hotels, the Coast Guard, private homeowners and the railroad.
 - Private gunning clubs built structures and docks on the islands to support recreational and commercial hunting of waterfowl.
 - Remnants of a fish processing plant remain on Crab Island (5 plants on 5 islands). It operated from the 1930's to the 1950's. Menhaden were processed there for fish oil and fish meal.

- o Historically, there were (hundreds) cottages on islands that were bases for hunting, ... and family outings.....
 - o Flooding along back bays is increasing each year as sea level rise accelerates. While islands cannot prevent flooding, they can provide a buffer to energy impacts and fetch.
 - o Islands are a functional part of the bay ecosystem and defines the natural landscape of our “home.”
 - o We can restore and protect islands, primarily using nature-based strategies.
 - o It takes many partners, community members and municipalities to work together on these important projects.
- Why you should care (Reasons you need to care):
 - o Islands are an important part of our history: The Native Americans were the first to use the bay islands as evidenced by a wooden structure and 2 shell mounds on Middle Island. Subsequent users of the islands included gunning clubs, a fish processing plant, fox hunters, hotels, the Coast Guard, private homeowners and the railroad. In the past, dredge spoils were dumped on the islands. (e.g.,)
 - o Use of the islands by wildlife and birds indicates the health of our environment.
 - Ghost forest – changes to soil composition from saltwater intrusion
 - Saltwater intrusion into groundwater supply - does this impact well drilling for drinking water for those on “the edge” [Cape May constructed a desalination plan in the 1990s to deal with this type of issue]
 - o Changes on the landscape – aesthetic beauty, what we’re used to seeing, and the speed of change.
 - o Islands and the sea grass beds around them are home to many fish and shellfish that we consume. Elvers shelter in seagrass.
 - o Approximately 75% of seagrass beds in NJ occur in Barnegat Bay
 - o SAV density has had major declines in Barnegat Bay due to several factors including shading from algal blooms, increased eutrophication, siltation, and over-development.
 - o SAV provides valuable habitat but also has a significant role in wave dampening, carbon sequestration, and water quality.
 - o The areas around many of the islands have been fertile grounds for clamming, oystering, scalloping (bay) and fishing. Eel grass beds near the islands also support the commercial industry (e.g., blue crabs, oysters, bluefish, summer flounder, and striped bass).
 - o Islands promote resiliency of natural and developed areas of the Bay Region that can reduce wave action that damages homes, businesses, and habitat.
 - o Legacy for future generations
 - Help protect the developed areas and lifestyle we engage in everyday and want our children to inherit
 - Economic stability - much work in our area is in the hospitality/tourism industry. Nature drives those jobs so we must keep habitat healthy
 - Let’s use history as our guide: Over-fishing of oysters led to dramatic losses in jobs and the balance of nature. Let’s not repeat history and be more strategic about our future
 - We love seeing bird rookeries and roosts, fish jumping, and healthy marshes. Let’s keep them that way!
 - Nature is inspiring and beautiful. It teaches us too (think books, literature, art).

- o Flooding along back bays is increasing each year as sea level accelerates.
 - Over \$36 billion of damage occurred from Hurricane Sandy.
 - The TNC-Santa Cruz study found that Coastal wetlands prevented more than US\$625 million in property damages during Hurricane Sandy
 - Other ways to SHOW the story: Exposition having people share their flooding story; show change on the landscape; use our website to highlight the lowlights; get public engaged – Floodmapper: <https://www.njfloodmapper.org/> use to show – great documentation from the public.
 - Economic impact of “regular” flooding: where are the worst places now?
- o As plants and vegetation grow each year, they capture carbon that would otherwise be released into the air and contribute to greenhouse gas emissions. They capture carbon from the air, but also carbon that is released by soil microbes under the growing plant. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3f1NNbi3JsY>
- o We can make a difference.
 - Nature-based restoration projects benefit us in NJ (e.g., hundreds of acres of dune restoration has occurred here).
 - Another example is the ongoing restoration projects on Mordecai Island where new techniques have been implemented to help improve and stabilize the site.
 - The NJBII received a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to test the NJBIRP on islands that need restoration to begin the process of island restoration.
- What you can do to help:
 - o Increase your knowledge of the importance of bay islands.
 - Learn about which islands are near where you live
 - Use the Flood mapper to document flooding where you see it.
 - o Follow the Shell---Oyster collection program?
 - o ReClam the Bay – their ask.
 - o Reduce your boat speed when within xx feet of all islands and shorelines.
 - o Take time to observe what animals and birds are using the islands you see in the bay.
 - o Donate to Orgs doing this work
 - o Volunteer to do projects (e.g., shell bag filling, litter clean-ups, xx)
 - o Attend presentations we give about the importance of islands
 - o Go to municipal meetings where land use decisions are being made
 - o Volunteer for community science project (e.g., Conserve Wildlife Foundation – terrapin, eagle spotters; Project Terrapin – terrapin and ghost crab pots, Holgate – summer interpretation of the beach)

NJBII Core Partners

Like, post, tweet, watch and chat with your partners to give our project the attention it deserves!

****Encourage all partners to document (photograph and video) areas before and after. We can use these accounts as tools to build our success story.****

American Littoral Society

Website: <http://www.littoralsociety.org/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/American-Littoral-Society/30302622758>
Twitter: <https://twitter.com/littoralsociety>
Instagram: <http://instagram.com/littoralsociety>

Barnegat Bay Partnership

Website: <https://www.barnegatbaypartnership.org/>
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/BBayPartnership>

Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge

Website: <https://www.fws.gov/refuge/edwin-b-forsythe>
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ForsytheNWR>
Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/forsythenwr/>

Jacque Cousteau National Estuarine Research Reserve

Website: <https://jcnerr.org/>
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/JCNERR>
Twitter: <https://twitter.com/JCNERR>

Long Beach Township

Website: <https://www.longbeachtownship.com/>
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/longbeachtownship>
Twitter: <https://twitter.com/LongBeachTwp>
Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/longbeachtownship/>

Monmouth University Urban Coast Institute

Website: <https://www.monmouth.edu/uci/mspi/>
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/UrbanCoastInstitute>

Mordecai Land Trust

Website: <https://mordecailandtrust.org/>
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/MordecaiMatters/>

New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Fish and Wildlife

NJDEP Website: <http://www.nj.gov/dep/>
Fish and Wildlife: <http://www.nj.gov/dep/fgw/>
Fish and Wildlife Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/NJFishandWildlife>
Endangered and Nongame Species Program Website: <http://www.nj.gov/dep/fgw/ensphome.htm>

National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

Website: <http://www.nfwf.org/Pages/default.aspx>
Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/FishandWildlife>
Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/NFWFnews>
YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/NFWF>

Ocean County Soil Conservation District

Website: <https://soildistrict.org/>
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/OCSCDEducation>

Save Barnegat Bay

Website: <https://www.savebarnegatbay.org/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SaveBarnegatBay>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/SaveBarnegatBay>

Stockton University Coastal Research Center

Website: <http://www.stockton.edu/crc>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Stockton-University-Coastal-Research-Center-206916142703687>

The Nature Conservancy

Website: <http://nature.org/newjersey>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/NJConservancy>

Twitter: https://www.twitter.com/nature_nj

Instagram: http://instagram.com/nature_nj

United States Fish and Wildlife Service

Website: <http://www.fws.gov/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/usfws>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/usfwshq/>

Instagram: <http://instagram.com/usfws>

YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/usfws>

Flickr: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/usfwshq>

Useful resource: <http://www.fws.gov/hurricane/sandy/>

Social Media Guide

Social media is a tool that allows a collective voice to drive a conversation — and we would love for our partners to be a powerful voice in the resiliency space. By interacting with one another on social platforms (listed on previous page), our project and our message can reach a wide audience.

Hashtags:

#Islandlife, #islandvibes, #islandlove, #islandtime
#njbayislands, #njbayshore, #nj, #njfishing, #njlocal, #njshore
#bayisland, #bayislands

Unique new hashtags

#njbii

#bayislandsinitiative

#savebayislands

Development of Materials

Infographic development ideas:

Which orgs have infographics? BBP has?

Shoreline loss 1977-2015
Wetlands loss
Boat/jet skis wake vs. Natural erosion
Jet skis that ride over islands and marsh when high tide
Cross-section of island with human activity and nature
U of MD – College of Env Sciences – do a lot of graphics- public can understand

Website

Will be informed largely by this document

Brainstorm Story lines

For blog; what the islands mean to me?

Other materials

Testimonials/Quotes

Near-Term Communications Timeline

2022

Winter –

Spring –

Summer – Establish new website

Fall – Roll out website and messaging

DRAFT