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PRESS RELEASE

Barnegat Bay Festival includes important announcement from NJDEP Commissioner

Island Heights-

Happy crowds, fabulous weather, distinguished awards, and an important announcement about progress on bay restoration marked the 11th Annual Barnegat Bay Festival at the water-front festival grounds in Island Heights this past Sunday.

It's doubtful that anyone who attended the Barnegat Bay Festival didn't walk away with new information on how they can be a steward of the estuary and watershed. In addition to the wealth of information on sustainable practices from the festival exhibitors, there was a native plant sale sponsored by Save Barnegat Bay and a storm water education display by the Estuary Program.

New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Lisa P. Jackson spoke about everyone's individual responsibility to protect and improve the bay. Commissioner Jackson also announced a stepped-up initiative to determine the extent of the bay's degradation and new protection efforts.

The main points of this initiative include:

1. the development of biological indicators of the bay's ecological health,
2. more diligent enforcement of the state's municipal storm water regulations throughout the watershed,
3. working with the BBNEP to increase public education on stormwater pollution, particularly from misuse of lawn fertilizers,
4. establishment of a technical workgroup to reduce nutrient inputs from fertilizer to the bay, and
5. development of a model fertilizer ordinance for municipalities in the Barnegat Bay watershed.

Other speakers at the festival were Freeholder Joseph Vicari, Ocean County College President Jon Larson, Island Heights Councilman Michael Frankovich, Tom Fote, and BBNEP Director Stan Hales.

Dr. Hales presented the 2008 Guardian of Barnegat Bay award to Dr. Michael Kennish, a Rutgers University professor and researcher whose passionate dedication to studying the bay and speaking out about the importance of protecting it was honored by his peers.

Visitors of all ages found something fun and enlightening to do. Children and adults learned about marine life at the Atlantic City Touch Tank, and the pontoon boat rides on the bay filled up to capacity throughout the day. Keeping with the festival's theme: GO GREEN WE ALL WANT OUR BAY CLEAN, eight festival goers won environmentally-friendly raffle prizes. Prizes ranged from a kayak lesson to a compost bin.

The Barnegat Bay Festival is sponsored by the BBNEP, and co-sponsored by Ocean County College and the Ocean County Board of Chosen Freeholder. Corporate sponsors include JCP&L and New Jersey Natural Gas.

If you would like more information, please visit our website at www.bbnep.org or call 732.255.0472.