



2020 Annual Report

The Lower Raritan Watershed Partnership (LRWP) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. Federal EIN #47-3574185. The LRWP is based in New Brunswick, NJ.

2020 Board

Amy Braunstein, Esq

Johnny Quispe

Heather Fenyk, Ph.D., AICP/PP

Alex Zakrewsky

Missy Holzer, Ph.D.

Doriann Kerber

David Tulloch, Ph.D

Nandini Checko

Anton Getz

The LRWP has no staff. We are grateful to our Board and the dozens of Rutgers, County and other volunteers who help coordinate and provide oversight for our work.

2020 Interns

With thanks to undergraduate intern Emily Koai for 2020. Emily worked through the Rutgers Scholar Internship Program coordinated by Professor Dan Van Abs.

External Grants Administration

In 2020 Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Middlesex County administered a grant provided by Rutgers University Research Council to support research into water quality, pathogens and genetics. With thanks to Rutgers Professor Michele Bakacs for partnering on this project, and for grant administration and management. Thanks also to Rutgers Professor Nicole Fahrenfeld and graduate student Aishwarya Deshpande for providing lab space and assistance with analysis and reporting.

Rutgers Courses Help Us Understand our Watershed

Despite COVID, dozens of Rutgers students conducted research and analyses and contributed to LRWP program and/or project development through courses taught or coordinated by Heather Fenyk, Karen O'Neill, Mary Nucci, and Michele Bakacs. Many thanks to these educators for course coordination and project oversight. Student work is included on the [LRWP website under "Reports"](#) and on the [Rutgers Bloustein School Website under "Signature Courses"](#).

Lower Raritan Watershed Partnership

www.lowerraritanwatershed.org

info@lowerraritanwatershed.org

PO Box 446 / New Brunswick, NJ 08903

#908.349.0281

2020 Program Highlights

Assessing Water Quality

Raritan River Pathogens Monitoring



2020 marked the second year of our pathogens monitoring program of the tidal portion of the Raritan River. Conducted in partnership with Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Middlesex County, and the Interstate Environmental Commission, our pathogens monitoring program helps us identify problems including high pathogens counts, fish kills, and red tide, and to report out when the Lower Raritan is unsafe for boating, fishing or primary contact recreation. Sampling was conducted every week for 14 weeks. Weekly results are reported on the LRWP webpage and shared via the NYC River Network’s online data repository.

★ **Sitios de Monitoreo en el Río Raritan Inferior**

Bacteria is an issue in both wet and dry-weather conditions. Our 2020 data showed that water quality was generally best at South Amboy at Raritan Bay, with bacteria concentrations passing the state’s swimming standard most weeks at that site. At all other monitoring sites bacteria concentrations exceeded the standard more than 75% of the time.

Raritan River Pathogens Results for 11/6/2020:

Site Name	Time sampled	Enterococcus (CFU)/100ml	Status
Riverside Park	8:46am	160	☹️
Rutgers Boathouse	9:12am	250	☹️
Edison Boathouse	9:35am	210	☹️
Ken Buchanan Waterfront Park	10:25am	140	☹️
South Amboy Waterfront Park	10:53am	37	😊
2 nd Street Park	11:34am	260	☹️

These results are preliminary and awaiting Quality Control.
The EPA recommends that a single Enterococcus sample be less than 110 CFU for primary contact such as swimming.



Our monitoring team points to a school of bunker at Sayreville’s Ken Buchanan Boat Launch.

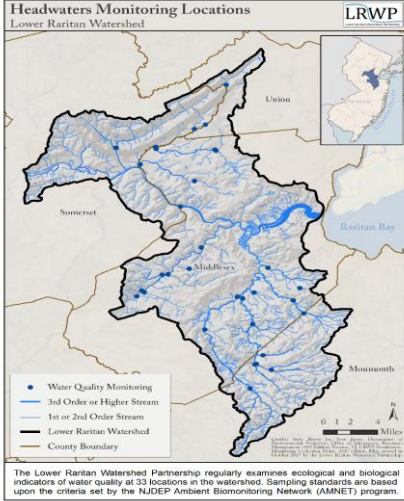
Pictured l to r: Michele Bakacs with Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Middlesex County, Americorps Watershed Ambassador Heather Miara, and LRWP volunteer Maya Fenyk.

THANK YOU TEAM!

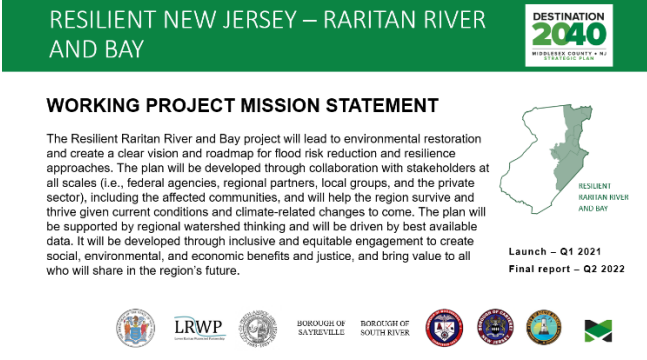
[See our website for a summary of our Pathogens Monitoring Program.](#)

2020 Program Highlights

Assessing Water Quality

	<h4>Streamkeepers & Stream Monitoring</h4> <p>Our Streamkeepers conduct visual habitat assessments, and some sample for macroinvertebrates. They report out annually on the health of their stream segment and identify locations for clean-ups, removal of invasive vegetation and streambank restoration. We will expand our Streamkeeper Program in 2021, and seek new volunteers! See our website for more information.</p> <p>Thank you Streamkeepers!</p> <p>Amy Braunstein, Mile Run Brook Greg Cosentino, Green Brook Jon Dugan, Bound Brook Susan Edmunds, Mill Brook Margo Persin, Ambrose Brook</p>
---	--

Resilience

<h4>#ResilientNJ</h4> <p>Through grant support from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, the LRWP is working with local partners to develop a comprehensive coastal resilience plan for our Lower Raritan Watershed communities. Other team members include Middlesex County Office of Planning, Old Bridge, Perth Amboy, Sayreville, South River and Woodbridge.</p>	 <p>RESILIENT NEW JERSEY – RARITAN RIVER AND BAY</p> <p>WORKING PROJECT MISSION STATEMENT</p> <p>The Resilient Raritan River and Bay project will lead to environmental restoration and create a clear vision and roadmap for flood risk reduction and resilience approaches. The plan will be developed through collaboration with stakeholders at all scales (i.e., federal agencies, regional partners, local groups, and the private sector), including the affected communities, and will help the region survive and thrive given current conditions and climate-related changes to come. The plan will be supported by regional watershed thinking and will be driven by best available data. It will be developed through inclusive and equitable engagement to create social, environmental, and economic benefits and justice, and bring value to all who will share in the region's future.</p> <p>Launch – Q1 2021 Final report – Q2 2022</p>
--	---

Improving Access to the Raritan River

New Brunswick's Municipal Public Access Plan

In 2020 the New Brunswick City Council approved a [City of New Brunswick Municipal Public Access Plan \(MPAP\)](#), developed through a grant secured by the LRWP and the City of New Brunswick Environmental Commission. A MPAP is an opportunity for municipalities to voluntarily ensure that public access to the River is provided in a manner consistent with local conditions and planning objectives. This report documents and reviews existing public access, assesses needs of new or improved public access opportunities, and creates a plan for meeting those needs through implementation of enhancements.

2020 Program Highlights

Watershed Restoration & Clean-ups

With grant support from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation administered by Princeton Hydro, the LRWP joined project partners to launch the South River Ecosystem Restoration & Flood Resiliency Enhancement Project. This project is designed to restore a 165-acre coastal eco-park along the South River. [A video of the kickoff workshop is available on youtube.](#)



Despite more than a dozen clean-ups on our calendar at the start of the year, due to COVID social distancing limitations the LRWP only conducted three public clean-ups in 2020. We still removed approximately four tons of garbage and refuse from area streams!

Thanks to the approximately 150 volunteers who volunteered at public clean-ups in Mile Run Brook, Franklin Township and Green Brook. And thanks to clean-up partners including Middlesex County Division of Parks and Recreation, Central Jersey Stream Team, City of New Brunswick, Franklin Township Environmental Commission, Green Brook Town Council, Hackensack Riverkeeper and many others.

Please save Saturday April 10, 2021 for our annual Earth Day clean-up with Franklin Township Environmental Commission.

Watershed Sculpture Project

#FRAMES

The LRWP #FRAMES project is supported by a grant from the New Jersey Council for the Humanities with funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and the federal CARES Act.



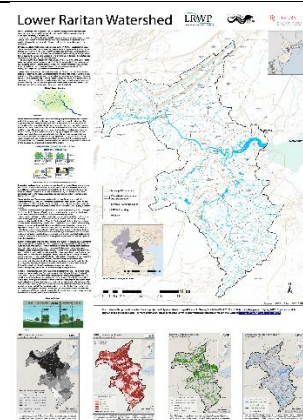
Virtual Public Events

COVID notwithstanding, the LRWP held several successful “virtual” events, including a headwaters to bay” flyover tour of the Raritan, a trivia night, and a very special annual holiday party!

Environmental Education

Project WADES Poster Distribution

In 2020 all high schools in the Watershed received a laminated poster of the watershed, along with a curriculum guide and video. The poster is designed to introduce students to their watershed address and to watersheds in general, and to encourage students to make the connection between community impacts on our local watershed, environmental health, and freshwater supplies. The poster was developed with the assistance of Professor JeanMarie Hartman and her “Tracing the Raritan” students. With thanks to Rutgers Sustainable Raritan River Collaborative and McIntire Stennis (the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station) for funding for production, and to generous LRWP donors for distribution.



#lookfortheriver

With support from the New Jersey Council for the Humanities, the LRWP launched #lookfortheriver. This public outreach program allowed us to connect with New Jersey residents across the state to bring attention to the hidden world of streams and rivers that once flowed across the landscape, and the relationship of these “lost” waterways to intensified stormwater runoff and flooding.

Virtual Summer Camp

Working with our friends at Lazos America Unida and Columbia University’s Lamont Doherty Observatory, the LRWP hosted two weeks of summer school programming with high school youth.

Environmental Advocacy



East Brunswick “Hidden Oaks” Amicus Brief

In 2019 the East Brunswick Planning Board overwhelmingly voted down the Alfieri Hidden Oaks development project – proposed for freshwater wetlands in a Pinelands Outlier in the Lawrence Brook subwatershed near Tices Lane / Harts Lane. The Middlesex County Superior Court overturned that decision, East Brunswick appealed, and the Lower Raritan Watershed Partnership and the Lawrence Brook Watershed Partnership joined the appeal as amicus parties to bring attention to the flooding and Environmental Justice issues of development at this site.

LRWP Financials

2020 Budget

Profit & Loss: January - December 2020 (pending)

2020 Fundraising

Total Individual Contributors: 72

Total Contributions from Individuals: \$25,199

Corporate / Foundation Contributions and Grants: \$10,860

2020 TOTAL Fundraising Revenue: \$35,609

Foundation / Other Donations

Duke Farms Foundation, Hillsborough NJ

The First Reformed Church of Highland Park

East Brunswick Unitarian Society

Okeanos Foundation

Grants

NJ Council for the Humanities (#FRAMES: lookfortheriver)

NYNJ Harbor Estuary (water quality monitoring)

Middlesex County Board of Chosen Freeholders through a grant award from the Middlesex County Cultural and Arts Trust Fund (Watershed Sculpture Project: Frames)

Rutgers – The State University of New Jersey (water quality monitoring)

Hudson River Foundation (environmental education)

Goods and services donations

EntchevDotCom

Global Metrics, LLC

NY/NJ Interstate Environmental Commission

Center for Remote Sensing and Spatial Analysis at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey through a grant award from the Sustainable Raritan River Initiative

EARTH Center of Middlesex County through a grant award from the Sustainable Raritan River Initiative

Joseph M. Hyland Architect

Middlesex Apartments, LLC

Total Approximate Volunteer Hours and Equivalent Dollar Amount

9,200 volunteer hours: \$248,400 in donated labor!

Social Media and Web

Facebook: 1,064

Twitter: 429

Instagram: 423

Website Page Views: 40,000+

Newsletter distribution: 1,996

2021 Calendar

For all in-person events we will require proper COVID protocol, including masks and social distancing. Please check the LRWP events page for updated scheduling.

<https://lowerraritanwatershed.org/events/>



Rowing on the Raritan Boat Building

Calling volunteers to participate in boat-building to provide the inaugural fleet of a community-based rowing program on the Raritan River! The goal is to construct two cedar strip rowing boats during a 90-day building period beginning the week of January 24, 2021. No experience required. Volunteers will have the opportunity to learn through hands-on activities, as well as through live-streaming and recorded instructional sessions.

Boat building will take place in our “shop” at 100 Kirkpatrick Street, New Brunswick (former Fresh Grocer site across the street from the New Brunswick train station). Observers are welcome to watch boat building through the street level windows on Kirkpatrick.

Thanks to Derek Hartwick-Head Rowing Coach- U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, and the New Brunswick Parking Authority for their partnership on this project.

Rowing on the Raritan Boat Building Volunteer Dates and Times:

Four (4) participants per time slot, pre-registration required.

Mon 2-5:00 p.m.	Wed 3-5:00 p.m.	Wed 5-7:00 p.m.	Sat 8-10:00 a.m.	Sat 10-12:00 a.m.
1/25	1/27	1/27	1/30	1/30
2/1	2/3	2/3	2/6	2/6
2/8	2/10	2/10	2/13	2/13
2/15	2/17	2/17	2/20	2/20
2/22	2/24	2/24	2/27	2/27
2/29	2/31			



Winter Shorebirds with the LRWP & Rahway River Watershed Association! January 30 @ 10:00 am - 11:30 am

WHERE: 201 John T O’Leary Blvd, South Amboy, NJ 08879
Pre-registration required

Photo: Joe Mish

SAVE THE DATE!

ANNUAL EARTH DAY CLEAN-UP with LRWP, Franklin Township Environmental Commission & The Watershed Institute: APRIL 10, 2021



The LRWP thanks the following individual donors:

Anonymous

Anonymous, Alexandria VA
Darvene Adams, South Plainfield NJ
Mirah & Murray Becker, East Brunswick NJ
Ed & Deborah Bort, Dunellen NJ
Amy Braunstein, New Brunswick NJ
Bill Cesanek, East Brunswick NJ
Chris Chappell, Lansdale PA
Ted & Victory Chase, Princeton NJ
Nandini Checko, Green Brook NJ
Ed & Susan Clerico, Hillsborough NJ
Frank Dahl, Helmetta NJ
Jasmine Dali, Highland Park NJ
John DeMaio, Green Brook NJ
Ayesha Dolasa, Bridgewater NJ
Susan & Lowell Edmunds, Highland Park NJ
Heather Fenyk, New Brunswick NJ
Julie Fenyk, Minnetonka MN
John & Dianne Fenyk, Golden Valley MN
Matthew Flannery, Highland Park NJ
George & Leona Fluck, Robbinsville NJ
Lois & Jim Fruen, Minneapolis MN
Anton Getz, Edison NJ
Ann D. Gordon, New Brunswick NJ
JeanMarie Hartman, Milltown NJ
Missy Holzer, Somerset NJ
Joseph M. Hyland, East Brunswick NJ
Stanislav Jaracz, Franklin Twp. NJ
John Jengo, Downingtown PA
Raymond Johnson, Dayton NJ
Skip Jonas, Hampton NJ
Joan Kaplan, Plainsboro NJ
Doriann Kerber, Milltown NJ
Tammy Knorr, Highland Park NJ
Emily Koai, New Brunswick NJ
John R. Krenos, New Brunswick NJ
Robert & Farrin Kopp-Anello, Highland Park NJ

Ellen Lambeth, Vienna VA
Nancy LaParo, Highland Park NJ
Mary Lauko, Somerset NJ
Dominik Loeffler, New Brunswick NJ
Christine Lutz, Highland Park NJ
Melanie McDermott, Highland Park NJ
William Meier, West Orange NJ
Claudio Mir, Kendall Park NJ
Eleanor Molloy, Basking Ridge NJ
Brittany Musolino
Daniel Ogilvie, Piscataway NJ
Organigaya Café, North Plainfield NJ
Sally & Steven Osman, Milltown NJ
Dushyant Patel, North Brunswick NJ
Johnny Quispe, Highland Park, NJ
Maya Robles
Janet Sacklow, Bloomfield NJ
Paul Sauer, Highland Park NJ
Judy Shaw, Kent OH
Gerald Silver, East Brunswick NJ
Anne W. Singer, Highland Park NJ
Kurt Spellmeyer, Plainfield NJ
Emilie Stander, Raritan NJ
Howard & Anne Swerdloff, New Brunswick NJ
Rosemary Szegada, Highland Park NJ
David & Tonya Tulloch, Highland Park NJ
Dan Van Abs, Princeton NJ
Craig Vogt, Hacksneck VA
Allan Williams, Highland Park NJ
Donna Wilson, Laurence Harbor NJ
Scott & Mary Jane Yaede, New Brunswick NJ
Michelle Yanche, New Brunswick NJ
Alex Zakrewsky, New Brunswick, NJ
Jim Zullo, Piscataway NJ

In Memoriam: KB Tammana