

Piscataway Newsletter Summer 2011 New Jersey's Coastline

New Jersey's 130 miles of coastline are home to a wide variety of activities that I encourage all Piscataway residents to enjoy this summer. From Sandy Hook to Cape May, New Jersey's beaches boast an exciting array of fun for the entire family. Whether you prefer the entertainment culture of Point Pleasant, Seaside Heights, Ocean City, and Wildwood's boardwalks with rides and amusements, or quieter settings to enjoy swimming, surfing, fishing, and sun bathing, the shore has something for everyone.

An activity I recommend for people of all ages is a trip to one of our eleven historic lighthouses that are open to the public. The Cape May Lighthouse offers its visitors a spectacular view of the Cape May peninsula, as well as a history lesson of the Delaware Bay harbor defense system, used in World War II. As a National Historic District, Cape May is also home to the Emlen Physick Estate, Victorian B&Bs and the pedestrian friendly Washington Street Mall.

For a lighthouse closer to home, "Old Barney" provides panoramic views of Barnegat Bay, Island Beach, and Long Beach Island. Situated on the northern tip of Long Beach Island, Barnegat Lighthouse State Park offers visitors a chance to experience one of the last remnants of maritime forests on Long Beach Island, bulkheads for anglers to catch a unique assortment of fish native to New Jersey waters, and a nature trail to observe the home of migratory birds. The Barnegat Lighthouse Interpretive Center displays the history of the lighthouse and surrounding natural environment. To make this day trip complete, pack a lunch and picnic along the Barnegat Inlet!

Barnegat Light has been directing fishing vessels and recreational boats into the Barnegat Bay for decades. An ecological treasure in New Jersey, Barnegat Bay's unique ecosystem is home to one of the northernmost points of the Intracoastal Waterway, which stretches from the Manasquan River to the Florida Keys. Barnegat Bay generates \$3.3 billion of revenue every year in recreation and tourism for the State of New Jersey, while employing tens of thousands of New Jersey residents. Unfortunately, years of mistreatment and abuse of the Bay are leading to its demise. Last summer a package of bills were approved by the Senate Environment and Energy Committee and the Assembly Environment and Solid Waste Committee to establish several new environmental rules in an effort to reverse decades of environmental neglect.

The most important bill in this package was designed to restrict the use of fertilizer and to limit the nitrogen content in a bag of fertilizer. The increased amount of run-off containing fertilizer is causing the Barnegat Bay to undergo a process called eutrophication. Eutrophication results in the stimulation of algae growth and adversely changes the environment to the detriment of the clams, fish and other species and finally to the ultimate filling in of the bay. The Barnegat Bay is now classified as the second worst bay in America because of the extensive eutrophication occurring here. Signed into law on January 5, 2011, the legislation is an integral part to the rehabilitation of Barnegat Bay.

For the avid anglers, please remember that this is the first year New Jersey's Salt Water Fishing Registry is in effect to comply with national standards. The registry will allow fishermen and policy makers to work together to understand the impact of saltwater fishing on ocean ecosystems and coastal economies. The goal of the federal initiative, the

Marine Recreational Information Program, is to provide the most accurate and up to date information to determine the health of fish stocks. This registry will assist in ensuring the long-term sustainability of recreational fishing. For more information on the registry, or to register, please visit www.saltwaterregistry.nj.gov/.