



## **2019 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.

### **2019 Board**

Amy Braunstein, Esq

David Tulloch, Ph.D.

Heather Fenyk, Ph.D., AICP/PP

Johnny Quispe

Missy Holzer, Ph.D.

Alex Zakrewsky.

Doriann Kerber

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.

### **2019 Interns**

The LRWP hosted two Rutgers undergraduates in 2019, TaeHo Lee and April Callahan. TaeHo and April worked through the Rutgers Scholar Internship Program coordinated by Dan Van Abs.

### **External Grants Administration**

In 2019 Rutgers EARTH Center of Middlesex County and Center for Remote Sensing and Spatial Analysis each administered grants provided by Rutgers *Sustainable Raritan River Initiative* to support LRWP research. Data gathering and mapping through these grants was conducted by Rutgers graduate student Julie Blum and Rutgers undergraduate Colin Marx. With thanks to Rutgers Professors Michele Bakacs and David Tulloch for grant administration and management.

### **Rutgers Courses Contribute to Understanding of our Watershed**

During the Spring and Fall semester dozens of Rutgers students conduct research and analyses and contributed to LRWP program and/or project development through courses taught or coordinated by Karen O'Neill, JeanMarie Hartman, Mary Nucci, Michele Bakacs, Dan Van Abs, Frank Gallagher and Heather Fenyk. Many thanks to these educators for course coordination and project oversight. Student work is included on the LRWP website under "Reports."

## **2019 Highlights**

### **Assessing Water Quality**

#### *Raritan River Monitoring*

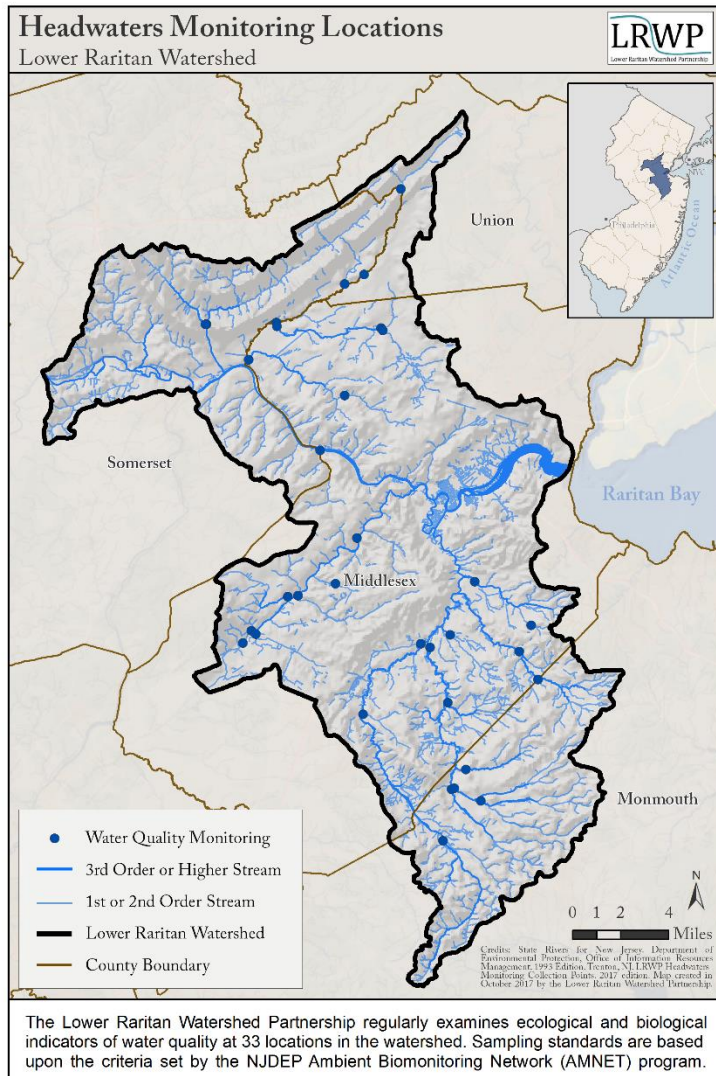
2019 marked the first year of our pathogens monitoring program of the tidal portion of the Raritan River. Conducted in partnership with the EARTH Center of Middlesex County, Rutgers University, and the Interstate Environmental Commission, the LRWP's water quality monitoring programs enable us to determine river and tributary health, to identify problems and to report out when the Lower Raritan is unsafe for boating, fishing or primary contact recreation. We are working to build a long-term data set that will allow us to analyze trends over time— analyses that are increasingly important with climate change. Through our pathogens monitoring program, sampling was conducted every week for 20 weeks, and the results are compiled in the LRWP and NYC River Network's online data repository.

Bacteria is an issue in both wet and dry-weather conditions. LRWP's 2019 monitoring 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.



In October the Raritan River was “honored” for having the worst performing waters in terms of bacteria levels of any of the civic science monitoring projects in the NY-NJ Harbor Estuary, receiving the 2019 “Golden Toilet” award from NYC’s The River Project.

## Stream Monitoring



2019 marked the second year of our newly organized stream monitoring program. We train volunteers how to conduct water quality monitoring, and these volunteers serve as Streamkeepers for stream segments throughout the watershed.

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 2020, and are seeking volunteers!

***LRWP stream monitor Margo Persin tells us how volunteering with the LRWP is meaningful to her:  
"Thanks again for sponsoring, being part of this my environmental journey. The beauty of the place  
has sustained me."***

### ***Special thanks to:***

Amy Braunstein, Mile Run Brook Streamkeeper

Greg Cosentino, Green Brook Streamkeeper

Jon Dugan, Bound Brook Streamkeeper

Susan Edmunds, Mill Brook Streamkeeper

Margo Persin, Ambrose Brook Streamkeeper

### **Keeping the Lower Raritan Watershed Clean**

Approximately ten (10) tons of trash were removed in 2019, thanks to over 500 volunteers who volunteered at public clean-ups in Jamesburg Park, South River, Mile Run Brook, Highland Park floodplain, Donaldson Park floodplain, Green Brook, Piscataway floodplain, New Brunswick Conservation zone and several additional smaller clean-ups throughout the watershed. Clean-up partners included Middlesex County Division of Parks and Recreation, Central Jersey Stream Team, South River Shade Tree Commission, South River Environmental Commission, Highland Park High School, Esperanza Neighborhood Project, New Brunswick Environmental Commission, Franklin Township Environmental Commission, Green Brook Town Council, Hackensack Riverkeeper, New Brunswick Department of Public Works, Highland Park Department of Public Works and many others.



### **2019 Program activity engaged more than 1,500 individuals. Activity included:**

8 public clean-ups of area streams	8 general meetings
1 BioBlitz of Elmwood Cemetery	10 special events (workshops, field trips, special lectures)
1 rain garden installation	8 environmental festivals or other outreach events
1 pollinator garden installation	34 stream segments monitored (visual habitat assessment)
1 rain barrel build	6 River sites monitored (bacteria monitoring)
4 water quality monitoring trainings	30+ research/internship projects
4 multi-week environmental education programs in K-12 schools	
2 “Hidden Streams” watershed walks	

### **Total Approximate Volunteer Hours:**

4,300



## **Looking Forward in 2020**

In January we expand our Board - welcome Dini Checko and Anton Getz!

Throughout the year we will continue with our stream and River monitoring work, our clean-ups, and outreach. Streamkeeper training is scheduled for May 2 and 3. We will clean-up Seeley's Brook in partnership with the Franklin Township Environmental Commission. Volunteers for clean-ups and monitoring are always welcomed!

In 2020 we will launch #lookfortheriver in partnership with the New Jersey Council for the Humanities, providing outreach sessions throughout the state on how to understand changes made to our urban streams and hydrology over time.

Our coastal planning work with Middlesex County, Old Bridge, Perth Amboy, Sayreville, South River and Woodbridge will kick off in earnest, including a Rutgers Bloustein Graduate School of Planning Spring Studio focused on health impacts of buyouts on the South River community.

We will continue outreach through the Watershed Sculpture Project, including a #helpinghands public sculpture-making session at the Milltown Senior Center on March 8. This session will be provided in partnership with the Middlesex County Board of Chosen Freeholders through a grant award from the Middlesex County Cultural and Arts Trust Fund Program. It is funded by Middlesex County, a partner of the New Jersey State Council on the Arts. Additional public Sculpture Project outreach sessions will be at the monthly New Brunswick Mercado in Joyce Kilmer Park, Rutgers Day on April 25 and library and school sessions.

We will also install our first Watershed Sculpture Project "frame" in New Brunswick's Boyd Park. This is a collaborative project with coLAB Arts and Rutgers Cooperative Extension Water Resources and is also supported through a grant award from the Middlesex County Cultural and Arts Trust Fund Program funded by Middlesex County, a partner of the New Jersey State Council on the Arts.



**Raritan Frame Sculpture and Citizen Science Device**

... to creatively adapt our presence in the floodplain to work with other species of plants and animals

## **2019 Budget**

Profit & Loss January - December 2019 (pending)

## **2019 Fundraising**

Total Individual Contributions: \$18,205

Total Individual Contributors: 59

Corporate / Foundation Contributions and Grants: \$1,123

Grants: \$3,200

**2019 TOTAL Fundraising Revenue: \$22,528**

## **Corporate / Nonprofit Donations**

Duke Farms Foundation, Hillsborough NJ  
Elmwood Cemetery Association, New Brunswick, NJ  
Raices Cultural Center  
No Water No Life

## **Grants**

NJ Council for the Humanities (#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)

## **Goods and services donations**

EntchevDotCom  
Somerset Patriots Baseball Club  
State Theater  
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

## **The LRWP thanks the following individual donors:**

### *Anonymous*

Ed & Deborah Bort, Dunellen NJ  
Amy Braunstein, New Brunswick NJ  
Bill Cesanek, East Brunswick NJ  
Chris Chappell, Lansdale PA  
Ted Chase, Princeton NJ  
Nandini Checko, Green Brook NJ  
Ed & Susan Clerico, Hillsborough NJ

Barbara Delarosa, Green Cove Springs FL  
Ayesha Dolasa, Bridgewater NJ  
Susan & Lowell Edmunds, Highland Park NJ  
Heather Fenyk, New Brunswick NJ  
John & Dianne Fenyk, Golden Valley MN  
*Anonymous*, Alexandria VA  
Matthew Flannery, Highland Park NJ  
George & Leona Fluck, Robbinsville NJ

Lois & Jim Fruen, Minneapolis MN  
Phil George, Highland Park NJ  
Anton Getz, Edison NJ  
Marsha & Yair Goldberg, Highland Park NJ  
Ann D. Gordon, New Brunswick NJ  
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Stanislav Jaracz, Franklin Twp. NJ  
Raymond Johnson, Dayton NJ  
Joan Kaplan, Plainsboro NJ  
Doriann Kerber, Milltown NJ  
Tammy Knorr, Highland Park, NJ  
Ellen Lambeth, Vienna VA  
Nancy LaParo, Highland Park NJ  
Mary Lauko, Somerset NJ  
Dafna & Peter Lemish, Piscataway NJ  
Dominik Loeffler, New Brunswick NJ  
Bill Meier, West Orange NJ  
Kirt Mills, Green Brook NJ  
Claudio Mir, Kendall Park NJ  
Eleanor Molloy, Basking Ridge NJ  
Daniel Ogilvie, Piscataway NJ  
Johnny Quispe, Highland Park, NJ  
Pramila Ramteke, NJ

Jens Riedel, Branchburg NJ  
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Judy Shaw, Kent OH  
Gerald Silver, East Brunswick NJ  
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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  
Barbara Walter ten Broeke, Millstone NJ  
Tina Weishaus, Highland Park NJ  
Allan Williams, Highland Park NJ  
Donna Wilson, Laurence Harbor NJ  
Michelle Yanche, New Brunswick NJ  
Alex Zakrewsky, New Brunswick, NJ  
Lydia Zakrewsky, Milltown NJ

*In Memoriam:* Manulal Maganbhai Patel

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### **Social Media and Web**

Facebook: 967

Twitter: 379

Instagram: 337

Website Page Views: 22,520

Newsletter distribution: 1,800