

**MEDIA Release**

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**New Report on Protecting Delaware Bay Ecosystem**

Today, coastal conservation advocates released a report on the Delaware Bayshore highlighting the ecological significance of the region and recommending specific ecosystem based policy actions to protect the area from further degradation.

According to the report, the Delaware Bayshore region includes more than 400,000 acres of wetlands, supports more than 200 species of finfish and shellfish, has the largest population of spawning horseshoe crabs in the world, and is one of the four most important bird migration sites in the world. The watershed is also home to more than 6.4 million people and it houses the world's largest freshwater port complex. More than 3000 vessels per year and 70% of the oil shipped to the East Coast passes through the Delaware estuary.

"The Delaware Bayshore is a National Gem," said Jeff Tittel Director of NJ Sierra Club. "The Bayshore is one of the most important environmentally sensitive areas on the east coast that is unprotected."

The 200 page report, "Protecting the Delaware Bayshore: An Analysis of Existing Programs and Protections to Identify Opportunities for Ecosystem-based Management," offers a comprehensive review of the various laws and governmental entities with jurisdiction over the area. The full report is available at [www.shore11.com](http://www.shore11.com).

The report's author Susan Kennedy, says that some of the management programs are working and should be supported, while others are not and must be fixed: "My hope is that this paper will spark a high-level policy conversation about how to protect the Delaware Bayshore Region before it is too late." Ms. Kennedy will launch a weekly blog exploring policy issues in the region ([http://blog.nj.com/njv\\_susan\\_kennedy/index.html](http://blog.nj.com/njv_susan_kennedy/index.html)).

"A national spotlight is shining on the need to protect our coastal and bay ecosystems," said Bill Wolfe, Director NJ PEER "We owe it to the Delaware Bayshore communities to practice regional ecosystem based planning and strict regulation"

"The Delaware Bayshore remains the hidden jewel of the state, but its ecosystem is hurting," said Doug O'Malley, field director for Environment New Jersey. "We have made progress, but too many waterways are still polluted, and clean-up plans, if they exist, haven't been up to the job."

Tittel added, "the Bayshore is one of the most important areas in the world as a stopover for migratory birds, an oasis of beauty and open space in one of the most densely populated areas of the United States. This report shows that efforts by the state and local government are failing to protect this important area and its vital resources. Unless New Jersey moves to an eco-system based approach to save this area, it will die the death of a thousand cuts. We have plenty of places for sprawl but we have only one Delaware Bayshore.

According to Matt Blake the Manager of the Delaware Bay Program for the American Littoral Society, "The report clearly shows how existing state policies and regulations fall well short of what is needed to adequately protect and restore the Delaware Bay Estuary. There's a serious economic and environmental price associated with inaction. Just look at what's

happened in Barnegat Bay - two decades of unchecked suburbanization and other insults have brought the Bay to a tipping point where researchers now agree it's in severe crisis. Between, 2002-2007, we were losing on average over 16,000 acres of forest and farmland to development each year. As we recover from the recession, the growth boom that's finally found New Jersey's other coast will return. When it does, we'll need more tools to manage growth and protect the Bay, not less. The report shows us how to do that, and we hope the Christie Administration listens."

The following groups endorsed the report: Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions, American Littoral Society, Environmental Defense Fund, Environment New Jersey, New Jersey Audubon Society, New Jersey Chapter of Sierra Club, New Jersey Environmental Federation, New Jersey Environmental Lobby, NJ Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility, NY/NJ Baykeeper and the Surfrider Foundation.

A summary of the report recommendations can be found at [www.shore11.org](http://www.shore11.org).

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Shore11.org is a website dedicated to protecting the Jersey Shore from over-development, pollution, unsustainable fishing, and global warming impacts.

**The following experts will be available for interviews Thursday and Friday, 6/17 and 6/18.**

- Susan Kennedy, a former field biologist, New Jersey lawyer for nearly 20 years and author of the new report from state and national environmental groups "Protecting the Delaware Bay Environment."
- Benson Chiles, coordinator of the NJ Coastal Ocean Coalition
- Margo Pellegrino, a mother of two, who has paddled 500 miles in her kayak from NJ to DC via the Delaware Bay to promote ocean conservation, and just returned last week from another long distance paddle up the Jersey shore.
- Michael Pisauro, Legislative Director of the NJ Environmental Lobby
- Jeff Tittel, Director, NJ Sierra Club
- Doug O'Malley, Field Director, Environment New Jersey
- Matt Blake, Manager, Delaware Bay Program, American Littoral Society
- Bill Wolfe, Director, NJ Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility