The 2015 National Urban Extension Conference (http://urbanextension2015.com/) was hosted May 4–7 in Atlanta, Georgia by the University of Georgia (UGA) and UGA Extension. Extension has the objectivity and the research base to bring to the urban communities; Extension has the knowledge and the history of developing and provide great educational programming. This conference is centered around what Extension is doing nationally so that we can all learn from each other and move forward with even better ideas and programming.

The conference began on Monday with the National Urban Extension Leaders (NUEL) Meeting which was open to all. NUEL began at the last Galaxy meeting (Joint Extension meeting) in Pittsburgh born of an earlier urban movement and frustration with lack of cohesive program and funding. NUEL began framing within Extension the Urban questions again and has representation from 27 land grant Universities. The meeting at the 2015 conference was to formulate where to go within the next 12–18 months.

NUEL is looking at specific agenda items such as:

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The Rutgers Cooperative Extension (RCE) Water Resources Program in partnership with the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions, developed a computer-based application or eLearning tool for New Jersey municipal officials. The aim of this eLearning tool is to assist municipal officials charged with reviewing stormwater plans for their New Jersey municipality. The eLearning tool is designed to help municipal officials better understand their role in reviewing stormwater management plans and provides reviewers with questions to ask during the review process to ensure compliance with stormwater regulations. The eLearning tool is available for download at:

http://water.rutgers.edu/Projects/MunicipalOfficialTraining/MOT.html

The eLearning tool was developed with content from the Rutgers Cooperative Extension Water Resources Program and the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions’ “Asking the Right Questions in Stormwater Review” workshop series funded by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection in 2014. The workshop assessment survey results show an increase in knowledge gained. Participation for the workshop series was high and the results generally positive; however the workshop material was only available to a small percentage of the municipal officials serving on boards, commissions, and in other capacities contributing to stormwater plan review. The eLearning tool allows the workshop material and information presented during the workshop to be available to all of New Jersey municipal officials and any other interested citizens.
Rutgers VETS Program (Veterans Environmental and Technology Solutions) was featured in a segment on Fox News in November.

The segment can be viewed here: http://video.foxnews.com/v/3886388313001/program-helps-train-vets-to-become-small-business-owners/?#sp=show-clips

More information on the VETS program can be found in this Rutgers Newsroom article: http://sebsnjaesnews.rutgers.edu/2015/03/rutgers-vets-program-graduates-inaugural-class/
In an effort to develop public awareness of the Cohansey Watershed, the Cohansey Area Watershed Association (CAWA) is installing signs along the Cohansey River and many of the streams that feed it. Some of the signs are sponsored by local businesses or organizations and others are dedicated in memory or honor of an individual.

Local environmental activist Nancy Ridgeway has donated two signs identifying Indian Fields Branch, a stream that runs behind her home. "I really care about the health of this stream and want to remind people not to pollute it by throwing trash on the ground," she explained. "In fact, I am ready to donate two more signs where Indian Fields crosses Burlington Road." Last year she shared her backyard with a group of CAWA members who spent a Saturday learning how to evaluate the health of a stream.

Bruce Peterson has donated two signs for the Cohansey River at Broad Street in Bridgeton in memory of his great grandfather John C. Peterson and his grandfather Christian John Peterson. "My family and that waterway have a lot of history together," explains Bruce. He relates the story of the devastating flood of 1934 that caused great damage to the downtown area. Bruce’s grandfather had taken over as captain of his father’s fleet of oyster schooners which had the misfortune of being moored in downtown Bridgeton on August 2, 1934. On that day a relentless rainstorm washed out the Raceway and Sunset Lake, flooding downtown and toppling buildings. Three of the 75-foot schooners broke free of their moorings and crashed into the bridge, destroying both the bridge and the schooners.

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CWA has installed signs at a dozen locations and has plans to identify 10 more. The signage program got its start based on donations from the Bridgeton Rotary Foundation in memory of one of their members, James R. Owens, Jr. A sign at Sunset Lake which honors Jim’s memory was donated by his friends Burt and Jeanne Doremus.

For more information about this program, contact Blake Maloney, CAWA President (www.cohansey.org/who-we-are/).
I am fortunate that I live near Dukes Farm and even more fortunate that Rutgers Cooperative Extension offers an Environmental Stewards class there every Thursday night. I happened to stop by tonight to say hello to Pat Rector and found Rachael Lyons there to speak about conflict management. Since I have some conflict in my life, I decided to stay. While I have taken several workshops on conflict resolution, I found Rachael’s version to be one of the best I have ever attended.

The most remarkable part of the evening was watching Rachael engage the 10 environmental stewards that evening. They were enthralled by what Rachael had to say and the activities she lead them through. The stewards worked together to solve the conflict resolution exercises that Rachael provided, laughing and learning. They had great questions and could link the situations presented in the exercises to situations in their lives.

As I worked alongside the Environmental Stewards, I quickly remembered why Rutgers Cooperative Extension is so important to the residents of New Jersey. I remembered that this course was almost cancelled due to lack of enrollment but Pat worked hard to recruit participants. These stewards seem extremely grateful and I am sure that the knowledge they gain from this course will enable them to be great environmental leaders. I couldn’t think of a better way to spend a Thursday evening.
“River's Journey” is a new film produced in 2014 about the tribulations of the Whippany River's pollution problem in the mid to late 1900s. The film title means two things to members of WRWAC, the Whippany River Watershed Action Committee. One journey is the path the river takes through the 16 municipalities of the watershed, from Clyde Potts Reservoir in the west to the Rockaway and Passaic Rivers to the east. On its journey, it picks up hitchhikers along the way, in other words, non-point source pollution, like lawn products, car fluids, plastic bags and soda cans. When the river is in a hurry during hurricanes, it smashes into stream banks. The soil that is not fastened down by tree roots falls into the flow in hunks. The sediment is carried downstream and piles up by the old dams at Speedwell Lake and Whippany. The floating trash snags onto downed trees that have fallen due to bank erosion from the constant side swiping of the water. Summertime low base flows cause a sultry mix of algae and weeds in ponds and lakes, keeping fish in a low oxygenated state until the next rainfall.

The other journey is a brief one compared to the age of the Whippany River. This is the journey of an idea. Many WRWAC members have been involved with the original NJDEP pilot project from the 1990s to address the water pollution problem. During the pilot program, a Project Advisory Group was formed, where information was collected and put into the “Whippany River Watershed Characterization Report” in 1995. Committees were formed, ideas discussed, and plans were made to continue fording ahead with the project. During the first few years, representatives from the 16 towns gathered at round tables, exchanging information. A mayor’s committee was formed and representatives from each town were appointed. What an exciting adventure we were beginning together! Watershed festivals, canoe trips, fishing derbies, litter clean up after river clean up – things were hap-
pening. The state passed the pilot program to the mayors with $25,000 in seed money. A checking account was opened, by-laws were passed, officers elected and this organization became the Whippa-
ny River Watershed Action Committee.

The young committee applied for and received grants through the 319h program. A lakeside buffer at Burnham Park in Morristown was created and expanded upon, and still exists and is cared for by the Burnham Park Association, keeping goose droppings and other pollutants from rolling right into the pond. Water quality in the streams, lakes and ponds was tested. More river clean ups – several a year – were performed, and still continue today. Alliances were formed with organizations and corporations throughout the watershed, as well as a partnership with Rutgers Water Resource Program, who developed and is implementing the Troy Brook Sub-watershed Regional Stormwater Management Plan. WRWAC has sponsored hikes, kayak trips and mini-bus trips to promote awareness of non-point source pollution and best management practices. Many activities occurred where the members formed bonds; coming early to meetings, and lingering afterwards, discussing projects throughout the meetings. What can we do to make this watershed an excellent resource, a healthy, clean wholesome place for all of us to boat, or play, catch fish, or turn over stones to find salamanders? How can we make this place a treasure and not a collection dump? Can we build so many rain gardens, and disconnect enough outfalls that our storm water will recharge our aquifers? Will our water become clean enough to support more species of fresh water mussels to further filter the pollutants from the river? Can the one million people who get their drinking water from the watershed, whether from a municipal well or a reservoir continue to receive potable water? How many people can we educate about water pollution with our outreach and education program? How can we help each town to fulfill storm water management plans, or green team initiatives?

WRWAC has formed partnerships with government, education, religious, private organizations and corporations that continue to develop, leading to successful planning for current and future projects.

One corporation in particular, Bayer Healthcare, headquartered on Whippany Road in Hanover Township, donated $45,000 in 2013 to fund the film “River’s Journey” to tell the story of the Whippa-
ny River, focusing on a tough time for the river in the mid-1900s up to the 1980s, when the river was so polluted, its smell overwhelmed the town. The 30-minute film was produced and directed by Oscar-nominated film-maker Glenn Silber, and narrated by actor, author, director and screenwriter Peter Coyote.

The journey of WRWAC has just started, and there are many endeavors ahead. As more possibilities for projects, learning experiences, and partnerships arise, WRWAC will achieve the ultimate goal of a healthy and prosperous ecosystem in the Whippany River Watershed.

For more information about the committee, or to obtain your own DVD of “River’s Journey” visit our webpage at www.wrwac.org.
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Policy Action - development of an Urban Extension Station(s);

Resource and Action - including a resource rich platform and three levels of funding, including looking at external funding sources and the potential of legislation;

Professional Development - the need for staff who work in urban centers to be trained or search committees to be seeking candidates who are relevant to urban areas; the identification of these competencies. Ohio seems to have moved the furthest in the process of identifying these competencies;

Communications - The website site for National Urban Extension Leaders http://www.nuelaction.org/#!/protect-the-environment/c1i0d has been developed by the Rutgers Water Resources Program and features the full goals, objectives and success criteria for their action plan, updates and success stories across the nation. Submission of success stories is on a rolling basis, keep them coming!

Other topics included promoting Urban Extension from within and gaining institutional standing. Urban opportunities vary as there are a considerable number of partners in an urban environment and needs assessments are needed to provide critical information regarding what the community sees as their highest priorities. It was understood by all that simply walking in with existing Extension programs was not the answer, rather it required applying the Extension model (Figure 1). Different regions may

Figure 1. The Extension Program Model.
also require different versions; Regional Urban Centers may be the model that best suits Urban Extension. Questions still abound. Simply to define “urban” is not simple. Ohio Extension has wrestled with the complexities of this definition and currently applies a tiered approach for urban and suburban. The complexities and emerging issues to be faced include staff ratios that may be on the order of 4 Million people to 5 Staff; multi-jurisdictional; major infrastructure, multi-diversity; and multi-groups/partners. It seemed there might be sufficient work to provide Urban Extension Agents, staff, directors, et al. sufficient work and opportunity for a time.

The meeting was well-attended, a representative from the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIIFA) attended, and the administrative voice of Extension was well represented. As organization and planning is an important component, NIFA has agreed to assist with facilitation, convening meetings and assisting with partnerships with other federal agencies. NUEL will also advise the planning and guidance committee of NIFA on urban area concerns.

It is apparent that the time is now; not only is the percent of our population in rural areas surpassed by the population living in cities and suburbia, but the United States surpasses the world in having a higher percent of the population living in urban/suburban areas. The United States is the third most populous country in the world (321,362,789 people) (retrieved May 9, 2015 http://www.census.gov/popclock/) and 81% of the population resides in cities and urban areas. Globally 56% of the popula-

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The presentations and workshops began officially on Tuesday and included a variety of professional development and improvement opportunities. Topics ranged from aging in the 21st century, to zoonosis, to internships creating the next generation of Extension to revamping traditional eating patterns of African American women, growing 4-H science in urban communities, SUPER (Strategies for Urban Programs and Educational Resources), wellness work. Urban Extension's response to workplace health and wellness, reducing barriers: a program to introduce minority students to the fields of veterinary medicine and agriculture, Alabama’s YEeS Program (Youth Exploring Environmental Science), a culturally appropriate, research-based information, in Spanish including topics on every area covered by Extension educators and clientele-specific (e.g. immigration laws) developed by Alabama Extension (www.aces.edu/urban/spanish/).

It is always hard to choose between great presentations, and of course it is not possible to see them all, but a couple really made the New Jersey delegation’s hit list. “Increasing Urban Opportunities for Physical, Restorative and Social Health” presented by Jamie Rae Walker, Extension Specialist and Assistant Professor, Urban and Municipal Parks, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension discussed partnering to increase community member’s knowledge of and access to urban environments supporting physical, mental and social health. The outreach focuses on implementing or teaching simple systematic planning techniques to inventory existing environments; innovative community development and communication techniques to improve knowledge; and park design and programming trends to increase access and opportunities. “Recruiting Political Audiences for Extension Programming” by Shannon Carnevale, Natural Resources and Conservation Extension Agent, University of Florida, IFAS Extension focused on the need for Urban Extension programs to engage with political audiences in order to stay relevant to the community and worthy of funding. To meet this need, University of Florida IFAS Extension's Polk County Water School seeks to educate elected officials, public offi-
cials, and community leaders on water resource issues for the purpose of building capacity to make informed water policy and management decisions. Session attendees learned what methods were used to attract the political audience, how to apply it to any outreach program in any region or state and a basic understanding of the Water School model for audience recruitment. Another favorite was “Interships-Recruiting the Next Generation of Extension Professional” by Dr. Rosalind Dale, Interim 4-H and FCS Program Leader, Central Region Program Coordinator, The Cooperative Extension Program at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, Greensboro, North Carolina. Dr. Dale’s presentation focused on the high correlation between the career paths students select and the internships in which they have served. Extension like other organizations must recruit and retain a viable workforce to remain relevant. Creating an internship program is similar to developing any new program. Participants will leave this session with an understanding of how to develop an internship program that will help staff reach new audiences; leverage resources; provide meaningful, community-based work experience; and perhaps recruit their next generation of Extension professionals. Other new ideas included posters that identified “Universal Design” making buildings easy to use for all populations and allowing for “aging in place”. These were of course just a small sampling of the great presentation and posters at the conference.

Rutgers Cooperative Extension was well represented at the conference.

Teaching Latino Immigrants Safe Soil Practices for Contaminated Urban Properties. Michele Bakacs,
Environmental and Resource Management Agent, Rutgers Cooperative Extension. Co-Presenter: Laura Eppinger, Program Assistant, New Brunswick 4-H youth Development. (Fig. 2).

New Jersey Rain Garden Rebate Program: Fostering Adoption of Stormwater Management Practices. Sara Mellor, Program Associate, Rutgers Cooperative Extension Water Resources Program, Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey. Co-Presenters: Jessica T.R. Brown, P.E., Program Associate, Christopher C. Obropta, Ph.D., P.E., Associate Extension Specialist in Water Resources.

Helping Urban Centers Address Combined Sewer Overflow Issues with Community-Based Green Infrastructure in New Jersey. Jeremiah D. Bergstrom, LLA, ASLA, Senior Research Project Manager, Rutgers Cooperative Extension Water Resources Program, Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey. Co-Presenter: Christopher C. Obropta, Ph.D. P.E., Associate Extension Specialist in Water Resources.

Engaging Undergraduate Students in Cooperative Extension Programs. Christopher C. Obropta, Ph.D., P.E., Associate Extension Specialist in Water Resources, Rutgers Cooperative Extension Water Resources Program, Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey. Co-Presenter: Nicole Del Monaco, Undergraduate Intern.

Proposal to Develop a National Urban Extension System: A Vision of the Future for Cooperative Extension. Christopher C. Obropta, Ph.D., P.E., Associate Extension Specialist in Water Resources, Rutgers Cooperative Extension Water Resources Program, Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey. (Fig. 3)


Helping Urban Centers Address Combined Sewer Overflow Issues with Community-Based Green Infrastructure in New Jersey. Jeremiah D. Bergstrom, LLA, ASLA, Senior Research Project Manager, Rutgers Cooperative Extension Water Resources Program, Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey. Co-Presenter: Christopher C. Obropta, Ph.D. P.E., Associate Extension Specialist in Water Resources. (Poster).

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What were people looking to get out of this particular conference? Travis Burke from North Carolina State felt he came away with “a lot of ideas and a better grasp of how we can do a better job of promoting and implementing urban extension. In North Carolina a significant part of the issue is staffing, with a population of over 10 Million people, much of the population resides in 3-4 counties. Less than a decade ago we were at 8 Million people. We have to funnel more of our Extension education programming to urban communities. Here [at the conference] people are on the same page; other states working it, doing it. We can talk ideas.

We cannot forget that agriculture is a $75 Billion dollar business and we cannot forget about the other 95 counties in the state where agriculture occurs and where Extension may be all they have. In the urban areas we have not done as good a job as we can but we have got to do it. NC Extension has completed a Strategic Plan identifying Food, Agriculture, Nutrition and Youth Development and we need to bring this to the urban areas. The 1890 Universities are bringing the Parenting, Family and Money Matters. I would like to see come out of this conference assistance with a formalized urban program for my state as quickly as possible, one that can mesh with our Strategic Plan and mirror the demographics of my state.”

Dr. William Hare, University of the District of Columbia felt that there were many different ways that food banks were being implemented in the nation and that having a conversation about how each land grant university was accomplishing this might be a great topic issue.

Our own Dr. Christopher Obropta would like to see further discussion centering on external funding for urban extension, even championing legislation for urban extension.
Conserving water in your home, May 19, 2015, Millville, NJ

Conserving water is easy, effective, and can save you money.

Learn about fun and simple ways to save water in your home!

Free and open to the public!

May 19th, 2015
5:00–7:30pm
Millville Public Library
210 Buck St., Millville NJ 08332

American Littoral Society
Phone: 856-825-2174
E-mail: meredith@littoralsociety.org

Or download the flyer:
A discussion about water supply and water use in the Cohansey watershed, June 4, 2015, Bridgeton, NJ

The Cohansey Area Watershed association will host a discussion about water supply and water use in the Cohansey River watershed.

Leading the discussion will be Sal Mangiafico of Rutgers Cooperative Extension.

Topics will include state methods to determine allowable water withdrawals without harm to streams, groundwater levels, and the need for a water supply plan for New Jersey.

June 4, 2015
10 am
Rutgers Sheppard House
31 W Commerce St, Bridgeton

http://www.cohansey.org/who-we-are/
Bus tour of stormwater best management practices, June 11, 2015, Parsippany-Troy Hills, NJ

The Whippany River Watershed Action Committee and Rutgers Cooperative Extension present an educational tour of the Whippany River Watershed.

- What will work in your municipality?
- Greening the department of public works
- What sites are best for which BMP?

June 11, 2015
9AM
Morris County Police and Fire Academy Building
Rain or Shine!!!

We will start with the acclaimed movie “River’s Journey”. We will leave there and visit stream restoration sites, naturalized detention basins, visit rain gardens, vegetated bioswales, turfstone roadways, pervious pavers, slope stabilization projects, Filterra® tree boxes and more.

To register, use the contact information on the flyer:
**NEWS AND UPCOMING EVENTS**


Come join in the removal of invasive water chestnut by canoe or kayak

Date: Saturday July 11th  
(Rain Date Sunday July 12th 2015)

Time: 10AM–2PM

Food provided after the event!

Meet up at Point Morris Park  
23 Washington Street, Landing NJ 07850

Please bring a reusable water bottle, sunscreen, and a personal boat and life jacket if you have one, if you need a boat or kayak please contact Dan for more information.

Contact Dan Ross at 908-537-7060, ambassador@musconetcong.org for more information, and register for the event through surveymonkey.com [https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/D2CLNN9](https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/D2CLNN9)

Or download the flyer:  
********** NEWS AND UPCOMING EVENTS **********

Rain Barrel Workshop, August 29, 2015, Millville, NJ

Rutgers Master Gardeners of Cumberland County invites you to a hands-on workshop designed to educate participants on the benefits of rainwater harvesting.

With optional Decorating Information Session following the workshop.

Workshop participants will build a rain barrel to take home!

Saturday, August 29th, 2015
10:00am - noon

Extension Education Center
291 Morton Avenue
Millville, NJ 08332

A $35 registration fee includes instruction and materials for building one rain barrel.

To register for the workshop, please download the flyer: https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/17999905/tumblr/2015_05/Rain_barrel.pdf
Blue Guide for Water Conservation: Reduce your water use at home, work and play

Blue Guide for Water Conservation: Reduce your water use at home, work and play. 17 pp.
