

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release – February 6, 2008

OCEAN COUNTY SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT RECOGNIZED AS A STATEWIDE LEADER IN EDUCATION

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The Ocean County Soil Conservation District (OCSCD) received the “*Friend of Education*” award at the New Jersey Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development’s (NJASCD) Annual Conference on January 31st held at the Holiday Inn and Conference Center in East Windsor. NJASCD is New Jersey’s premier education organization and is a trusted voice in influencing both policy and practice in New Jersey’s schools. The NJASCD is a community of educators (superintendents, supervisors, principals and teachers) who collectively advocate sound policies and share best practices to achieve the success of each learner in New Jersey. OCSCD is honored to have received this recognition by such a prestigious and respected organization in education.

The Friends of Education Award recognizes individuals, agencies, organizations or corporations outside formal education that have played a critical role in contributing toward leadership or quality in education. These “Friends” have impacted upon the lives of the children in our schools in some significant way, either through personal services, financial backing, or programs offered,” according to Marie Wolanin Gdula, Committee Chair. The prestigious award was presented to David Friedman, Director and Christine Raabe, Education Outreach Specialist from OCSCD by Dr. William Pollock, Rutgers Center for Effective School Practices, Rutgers University and OCSCD District Supervisor at the NJASCD conference. Previous award recipients over the past 20 years have included Governor Thomas Kean, Senator Bradley, Wakefern/ShopRite Corporation, Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, Johnson & Johnson and New Jersey Network Public Television and Radio, to name a few. OCSCD shared the lime light this year with L’Oreal USA, who was also recognized at the Awards Ceremony and luncheon.

The OCSCD was recognized for their numerous educational programs for both students and teachers. The OCSCD has created multi-disciplinary education programs that strive to connect schools, teachers and students with an intimate knowledge and hands-on understanding of the functions of soil and water resources in the Barnegat Bay Watershed. Initially, funding for education programs was provided through seedling and plant sales. In later years, the District aggressively pursued a number of public and private grants, as well as developing unique cooperative initiatives with other agencies and organizations. The OCSCD is proud to be considered a “friend” of education and continues to strive to provide innovative and exemplary opportunities for both teachers and students to better understand the natural resources of the region and become stewards of the environment.

The following list is a sampling of education programs and services that OCSCD developed and currently implements: the Barnegat Bay Environmental Educators’ Roundtable, Rain Gardens, Discovering Barnegat Bay Workshops, The Barnegat Bay Watershed Educational Resource Guide, and a number of other professional development and in-service opportunities and students programs. Additionally, OCSCD has sponsored 33 Outdoor Classrooms to date on school campuses throughout Ocean County and has a goal of having 50 completed by 2010. Outdoor Classrooms provide a meaningful way for students to get directly involved in stewardship of their local environment, as well as provide an opportunity to integrate natural resource and environmental topics into existing school curricula.

The latest initiative that OCSCD implemented this school year is “Trout in the Classroom.” The “Trout in the Classroom” program is a national hands-on program sponsored primarily by Trout Unlimited and their local chapters. Through the program, students raise Brook Trout from eggs in special tanks in their classrooms beginning in October, and release the fish later in the spring. During the school year, students engage in monitoring the fish and water quality, recording data, journal keeping, and various interdisciplinary activities related to healthy water and healthy soils.

Visit OCSCD website for more information about any of these educational initiatives at www.ocscd.org <<http://www.ocscd.org/>> or contact the District at 609-971-7002.