



OCEAN COUNTY BOARD OF CHOSEN FREEHOLDERS

# BARNEGAT BRANCH TRAIL

DEPARTMENTS OF PLANNING, ENGINEERING AND PARKS & RECREATION

# WELCOME TO OYSTER CREEK GENERATING STATION



Ocean County Planning Board

Oyster Creek Generating Station is a single-unit boiling water nuclear reactor power plant located on a 700-acre site, which first came online on December 23, 1969. Oyster Creek is the oldest operating nuclear power plant in the United States. The plant produces 637 MW of electricity, enough to provide energy to 600,000 average American homes. To put this into perspective, Ocean County has 278,113 housing units (2010 Census). Oyster Creek uses a once-through or open-loop cooling system, which uses over one million gallons per day of the brackish waters of the Barnegat Bay to cool the plant.

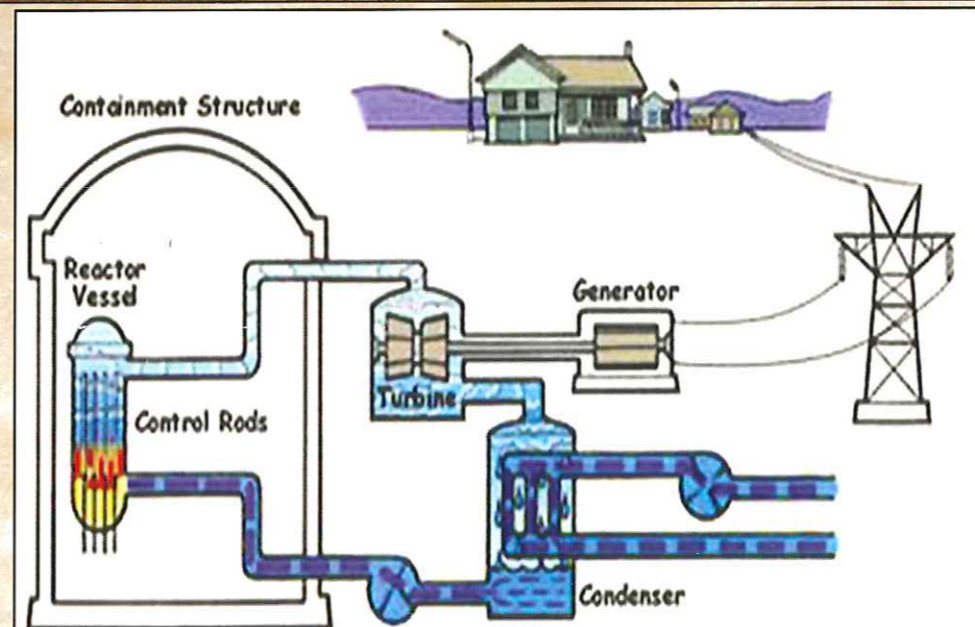
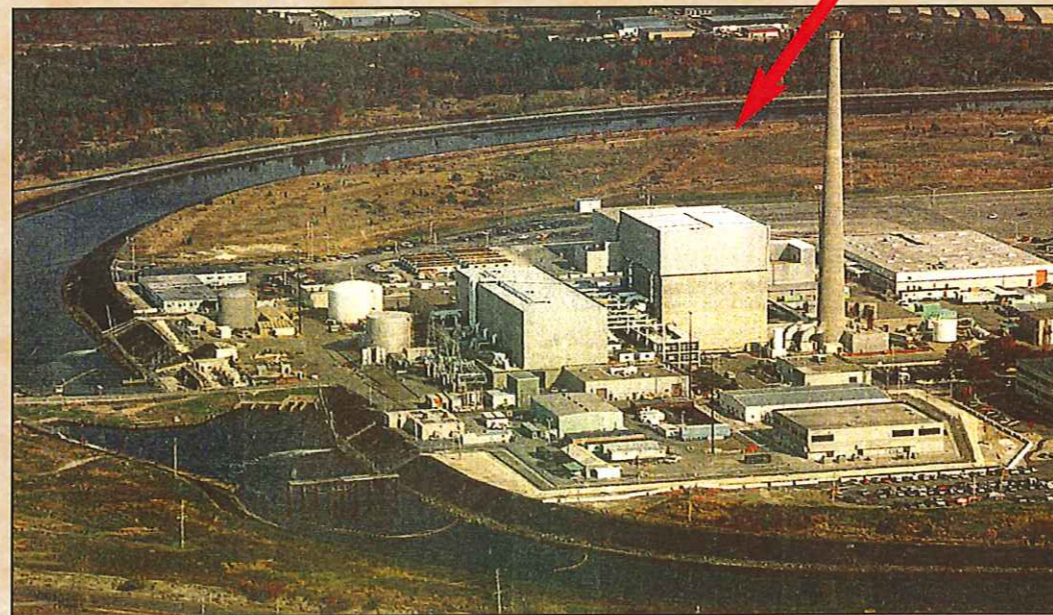
The facility originally cost \$96 million to construct and since construction the owners have spent hundreds of millions of dollars in upgrades. Every twenty-four months or so the plant is shut down to replace fuel assemblies and do maintenance to the facility that can only be done when the unit is not in operation, a process that requires between 500 and 1,000 additional employees.

In December 2010, Exelon announced that it would be retiring the plant in 2019, 10 years earlier than the licensed 2029. The decision is based on the cumulative effect of negative economic factors, which has caused Oyster Creek's value to decline. Due to Exelon's decision to retire the plant early, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) will not require the company to install cooling towers at Oyster Creek. While the plant is scheduled to close in 2019, the future use of the property is still unknown.

On the east side of Route 9, across from the plant, is the approximately 600-acre Finninger Farm, also owned by Exelon. The old fields serve as grassland habitat for a number of species. "This site is composed largely of uplands consisting of old agricultural fields, along with smaller areas of pine-oak woodlands. Although salt marshes are the only natural, self-sustaining grasslands along the Eastern Seaboard, agriculture has helped to create extensive open areas — grain fields, pastureland, and orchards, which provide habitat for such avian species as upland sandpiper, vesper, grasshopper, savannah and Henslow's sparrows, horned lark, bobolink, eastern meadowlark, short-eared owl, northern harrier, and, to a lesser extent, eastern bluebird (a tree cavity nester in open areas). With the decline of agriculture in New Jersey and the Northeast, habitat for these birds has become increasingly scarce." (Trust for Public Land, The Century Plan, 1995)



Yellow-rumped Warbler.  
Photo by Don Frieday/USFWS



Supplied by Exelon Corporation.

## KEY DATES

- 1960 - JCPL plans to build coal plant in Ocean County
- 1963 - JCPL changes plans from Coal to Nuclear
- 1969 - Becomes operational December 23
- 2000 - GPU sold the plant to AmerGen Energy for \$10 Million
- 2003 - Exelon purchases AmerGen Energy
- 2009 - In April, the plant is relicensed to operate until 2029
- 2010 - In December, Governor Chris Christie announces along with Exelon an agreement to cease operations 10 years early on December 31, 2019

The Barnegat Branch Trail logo was explicitly designed with history in mind: Lady Liberty's silhouette is reminiscent of the Central Railroad of NJ (CNJ) logo, adopted by the railroad in 1944 to reflect the close proximity of the CNJ terminal in Jersey City to the Statue of Liberty. The BBT logo also includes a ghost locomotive, as well as Ocean County's most recognizable environmental features.

