



Ocean County Pumpout Boat Program



1. OVERVIEW OF THE OCEAN COUNTY PUMPOUT BOAT PROGRAM

- **Ocean County’s highly successful Ocean County Pumpout Boat Program has been operating for over 20 years.** There are now six full-time boats that operate regularly in the Greater Barnegat Bay region. A 7th boat, the “Circle of Life,” was the first pumpout boat in New Jersey and now this boat is being used as a back-up for busy weekends.
- As of the 2020 boating season, the pumpout boat program has broken through the milestone of 2 million gallons of effluent (2.1 mil. gal.), removed from more than 98,500 recreational boats. This is pollution that could otherwise have been discharged directly into the Barnegat Bay National Estuary and the Little Egg Harbor Bay.

The Ocean County Pumpout Boat Program is the recipient of a number of awards, including the Governor’s Environmental Excellence Award in the area of Water Resources and a Program Excellence Award from the National States Organization for Boating Access (SOBA).



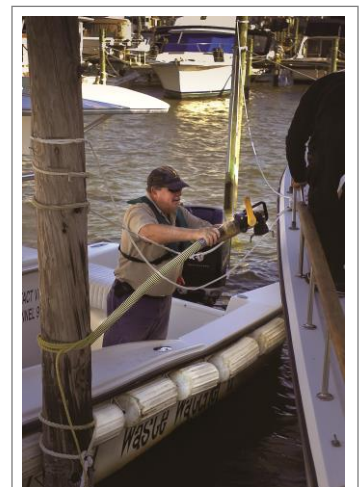
Pumpout boats gather for the 10-year anniversary ceremony at Berkeley Island County Park.¹

- Because of successful public outreach and word-of-mouth, the demand for pumpout services has been steadily increasing.

- The “Bay Saver” (2003) and “Bay Defender” (2014) are operated by Brick Township and serve the northern Barnegat Bay. The “Pollution Solution” (2016) joined the “Water Warrior” (2008)

and the “Circle of Life” (1997) in the central Barnegat Bay, operated by Seaside Park Borough. The “Waste Watcher” (2001) and “Bay Sweeper” (2010), serve the southern Bay and Little Egg Harbor Bay areas and are operated by the Tuckerton Seaport.

- Ocean County’s intercoastal waterways are home to about 30,000 recreational boats and the County is committed to ensuring that boaters have a safe and environmentally friendly method of disposing of on-board wastewater.
- In addition, in June 2003, Barnegat Bay and Little Egg Harbor Bay were designated federal No-Discharge Zones. While the release of untreated sewage is prohibited within three miles of the coast, it is illegal to discharge even treated effluent in No-Discharge Zones.



Captain George Ward, Bay Sweeper, pumping out a vessel in the lower Barnegat Bay. Photo by Dick Gouldey.

¹ Photos are by the Ocean County Division of Public Information, unless otherwise noted.

2. MEETING NEEDS

The pumpout boat program got its start in the mid 1990's when the State of New Jersey decided to participate in the federal Clean Vessel Act Program. An early advocate of the program, Pete McLain, a former deputy director of the NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife, convinced the NJ CVA committee, Ocean County and the Borough of Seaside Park of the need for a pumpout boat in the Barnegat Bay. Prior to the pumpout boat service, boaters would just discharge the contents of their holding tanks directly into the water. This resulted in waters that were unacceptable for recreational activities, particularly in those areas where boaters congregate, such as Tices Shoal.



*Tices Shoal in the central Barnegat Bay, circa 1995.
Photo by Pete McLain.*

- The main challenges involved with establishing and maintaining a pumpout program included finding operators willing to make a long-term commitment to the operation, staffing and maintenance of the boat(s), and making the public aware of the existence and benefits of utilizing the service.

- Seaside Park was the first to move forward to purchase and commit to operating a pumpout boat. The purchase was made with 100% reimbursement through the NJDEP and with the assistance and support of the County. The Ocean County Freeholders (now Board of Commissioners) agreed to provide the operational funds from the very beginning, to assist with the operational costs and to ensure that the service was provided free of charge. As the popularity and need for the program became evident, the Tuckerton Seaport and Brick Township also made commitments to operating and maintaining pumpout boats to service their portions of the Bay.



Captain Jerry Golembeski, Circle of Life, pumping out a vessel in the central Barnegat Bay. ¹


- It was important to make it as convenient and accessible as possible for boaters to take advantage of the pumpout boat services. High priority areas were identified, such as those areas with busy boat congregation areas and few or no land-based pumpout facilities.
- The pumpout boats fulfill those goals by providing a convenient method for emptying the wastewater holding tanks and portable toilets of boats. They have been highly successful in addressing the needs of non-marina based boats, such as those moored in open waters or in lagoon developments.
- The vessels typically operate during the times of greatest demand to serve the boating public, from Memorial Day weekend into October, and from Friday through Monday, holidays and special events. They can be contacted on Marine VHF radio channel 9 and by contacting the captains directly on dedicated cell phones. Although a fee up to \$5.00 is allowed to be charged per CVA rules, services are provided free of charge.

3. OPERATIONAL FUNDING and PARTNERSHIPS

- Ocean County is dedicated to maintaining and improving the health of its coastal waters and the Barnegat Bay Estuary. The County provides the operational funds and administration for the pumpout boats, up to \$20,000 per full-time boat per year.
- The vessels were purchased by the County with grants provided through the Clean Vessel Act Program with Federal and State funds, with the exception of the “Circle of Life,” which was purchased by Seaside Park with the assistance and support of the County.
- The County partners with other organizations, including the Ocean County Utilities Authority, which generously provides up to \$65,000 annually to help offset about half of the operating costs.



Commissioner Joseph H. Vicari and former Planning Director David J. McKeon at the 10-year ceremony in 2007.¹

- The County is a member of the NJ State Clean Vessel Act Steering and Advisory Committees and works with the NJ Department of Environmental Protection, the Barnegat Bay Partnership and other partners towards the goal of a healthy Bay.
 - In 2011, the Ocean County pumpout boat program was awarded the Governor’s Environmental Excellence Award in the area of Water Resources.
 - In 2010, the NJ Clean Vessel Act Program was recognized and received a national award. The States Organization for Boating Access (SOBA) recently awarded the NJDEP Division of Fish and Wildlife and the NJ Clean Vessel Act Program its “Program Excellence Award” for “excellence in pumpout services through partnerships, innovative approaches, and thoughtful planning.” With the latest boat, Ocean County owns 7 of the 9 pumpout boats operating in New Jersey.
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- The Ocean County Pumpout Boat Program has had a positive long-term impact on the economic vitality and quality of life of the County, region, State and greater surrounding areas. Major economic factors such as tourism, eco-tourism, fishing industries and related fields depend on the quality and environmental health of the County’s coastal waters. The quality of life for the County’s 614,237² residents and the millions of visitors who flock to the shore also depends on the vitality of the coastal waters. The tourism industry brings visitors from within and outside the State to enjoy boating, fishing, swimming, crabbing and water sports in the Bay, ocean and riparian waters.

² Source: U.S. Census Bureau, July 1, 2020 Estimate, Population Estimates Program (PEP), May 2021.

5. EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

- Ocean County educates and outreaches to the public about its pumpout boat program via many methods and activities. A convenient rack card is printed annually with tips and captains' contact information, and is distributed by the captains and by County staff at events. In addition, Clean Vessel Act staff exhibit program info at marine trade shows and other events. The pumpout boats participate in environmental events, such as the Barnegat Bay Festival, to provide demonstrations and information to the public. The captains provide innovative items to promote the service as well as person-to-person education and goodwill. The Coast Guard Auxiliaries in the area have also enthusiastically supported the program and include it in their safe boating classes and outreach activities.



Lavallette Elementary 7th-graders celebrate winning the boat-naming contest for the new Brick pumpout boat, the "Pollution Solution."

- As part of environmental curriculum in County schools, the children learn about the importance of the unique ecology of the Bay and of keeping the Bay clean and healthy. Naming the pumpout boats has become an opportunity to expand the curriculum and get the local schoolchildren involved. The children enthusiastically participate in boat naming contests and the winning classes are recognized at the boat dedication unveiling ceremonies.
- Additional methods of education and outreach include signage, such as the pumpout boat pennant, boat signs and decals. The County puts out media and press releases at the onset of and during the boating season to alert the boaters to the service. The County also hosts press conferences and commemorative ceremonies at certain milestones or for the purchase of a new boat.
- In addition to partnerships with the operating entities, CVA Committee and the OCUA, the Captains are a major key to the success of the program, from Val Varga and Bob Cardwell in Seaside Park, Mario Riccio and Charles Duddy in Brick Township, and George Ward, Dick Gouldey and a team of seven captains at the Tuckerton Seaport. Our captains are professional, conscientious and are the best in the state. They are the "face" of the program.
- More information about the Ocean County pumpout boat program is available on the Planning website: www.planning.co.ocean.nj.us/frmEPPumpoutBoats. In Spring 2018, the County launched a new FaceBook page (@PumpoutOceanCounty) to provide updates and current information to the boating public. Additional partner pumpout boat websites include Clean Vessel Act, NJ Marine Trades, NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife, etc. Photos are available upon request.