

Dear Raritan Water Region Stakeholder,

You are cordially invited to participate in an informal work group to discuss water quality in the Raritan Water Region (WMAs 7, 8, 9, 10). The purpose of this work group is to share information about water quality issues and actions that will inform the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's (Department's) assessment of the Raritan Water Region. This assessment will be conducted as part of the Department's Integrated Water Quality Assessment Report (Integrated Report) for the State of New Jersey. Under the federal Clean Water Act (CWA), states are required to submit a report to USEPA every two years describing the quality of their waters, identifying waters that do not meet water quality standards, and describing efforts underway to improve and restore water quality.

The Department's Division of Water Monitoring and Standards is responsible for preparing New Jersey's Integrated Report (<http://www.state.nj.us/dep/wms/bears/assessment.htm>), which includes the CWA Section 303(d) List of Water Quality Limited Waters (303(d) List) and the CWA Section 305(b) Integrated List of Waters. The 2016 Integrated Report will focus on the Raritan Water Region and will similarly build upon the ten-year effort that resulted in the Raritan River Nutrient TMDL, that was recently approved by USEPA and adopted by the Department (<http://www.state.nj.us/dep/wms/bears/tmdls.html>) and depicted the extensive work of the watershed partners. Stakeholder input will help the Department develop a more comprehensive assessment of water quality in the Raritan Water Region and to communicate a more meaningful message about water quality issues, impacts and solutions for the Raritan Water Region as part of the water quality "story" that will be delivered through the 2016 Integrated Report.

This initial work group meeting will be held on **Thursday, June 30, 2016 9:30-12:30 at the Stony Brook Millstone Watershed Association, 31 Titus Mill Road, Pennington** (<http://thewatershed.org/>). Our objectives for this meeting are to:

- Identify and involve all active stakeholders in the Raritan Water Region
- Discuss comprehensive assessment
- Present our initial findings on current water quality within the Raritan Water Region
- Informally solicit stakeholder input on water quality issues of concern, causes and sources
- Take inventory of actions already taken or underway
- Seek recommendations on goals and strategies for water quality restoration

Additional work groups may be convened to focus on specific issues that arise through the assessment process. The Rutgers Sustainable Raritan Initiative (<http://raritan.rutgers.edu/>) has graciously offered to assist us with this endeavor. If you plan to attend the June 30th meeting, or if you would like to be added to the stakeholder list to participate in future work groups, please reply to Ms. Dian Smith at dian.smith@dep.nj.gov and provide your name, organizational affiliation, and contact information. For additional information about the work group or the assessment process, please contact me directly at Kimberly.cenno@dep.nj.gov or 609 633-1441.

Sincerely,

Kim

Kimberly Cenno, Section Chief
Bureau of Environmental Analysis, Restoration and Standards