Chris Wible, Scotts MiracleGro, made a presentation regarding the Chesapeake Memorandum of Understanding and how it relates to New Jersey’s situation. One notable difference is that the NJ signatories included a broader spectrum of the fertilizer manufacturers (Lebanon Seaboard, United Industries). When Scotts MiracleGro is included, it represents over 90% of New Jersey Do-It-Yourselfers (DIY) fertilizer sales.

According to Wible, changing the lawn fertilizer formula to reduce phosphorus as indicated in the MOU can achieve a 70% reduction in phosphorus application. Additional phosphorus reductions could be achieved by relabeling “Lawn and Garden” or “Commodity” fertilizer as garden fertilizer, so that consumers will be much less likely to use it on their lawns. Currently, 85% of consumers who buy commodity fertilizer use it on their lawns. The phosphorus, nitrogen and potassium content is much higher on this type of fertilizer than lawn fertilizer.

In reviewing sales of Scotts MiracleGro lawn fertilizers in NJ on a county basis, Wible noted that 31% of fertilizer sales were in Middlesex County. It was unclear if this was because of a high concentration of stores or perhaps warehouse and/or distribution center. Wible recommended excluding potting soil sales from these figures due to the different nature of the product.

Sandy Simon, United Industries, discussed tonnage reporting, which can be sorted by county or FIPS code. For January through May 2008, United Industries sold 7500 tons of products, including fertilizers and potting soils. This means 173 tons of phosphorus. Simon also noted that potting soils should be removed from the reporting requirements. These numbers are dramatically different from previous years since these numbers reflect the reduced phosphorus formulas. Simon also stressed the need to educate consumers about using lawn fertilizer rather than commodity fertilizers for their lawns.

Brian Feldman, representing the lawn care professionals, noted that most professional lawn care companies no longer regularly use phosphorus in their lawn fertilization programs. It is only used if soil tests indicate a need. There are professional trade organizations that can be used to communicate with the many companies operating in New Jersey. Feldman will provide Kerry Pflugh, NJDEP, with the contact information. This network could provide training and education for its members. Feldman also noted that the NJDEP model fertilizer ordinance does not coincide with Rutgers turf grass recommendations.

Florida’s capping of maximum soluble nitrogen in lawn fertilizer was discussed. The fertilizer industry developed fertilizers specifically to meet these new requirements. A five year study is underway to examine at what levels nitrogen does start enter waterways. One problem with reducing nitrogen levels is that too little nitrogen does not provide the consumer with a green lawn. The consumer is then likely to apply more in order to get a response.
Minnesota institution of a phosphorus ban for lawn fertilizers was discussed by the group. A three year report indicated that they did not see a change in phosphorus in water quality. This may indicate a number of things ranging from increased soil erosion due to decreased lawn health, or a build-up of phosphorus in the soil that will take time to deplete.

Pflugh noted that one of the preliminary and immediate goals of this group is to determine reporting requirements. A secondary more long-term goal is to examine product formulation and nitrogen content, especially as it relates to estuarine effects.

Lawrence Baier, NJDEP, requested that the fertilizer manufacturers provide the county-based fertilizer distribution information that is available. This information should be provided to Kimberly Cenno, NJDEP. Concern was expressed by fertilizer industry representatives that the reporting requirements were not too onerous in consideration of smaller industries that will need to report same info and may not have same abilities. Using this data in addition to land use/land cover data and phosphorus TMDL watersheds, the goals will be to relate the potential phosphorus loading from fertilizer to the receiving rivers. Simon noted that phosphorus from lawn fertilizer does get used by the lawn and other sources of phosphorus, such as leaves and pollen, must also be considered.

The NJ Department of Agriculture also receives fertilizer data from manufacturers. Feldman provide Pflugh with the contact information to see if this data can be shared.

Pflugh requested that attendees provide her with contact information for any organizations that should be invited to future meetings.

The next meeting will be scheduled in September 2008.

**Attendees:**

- Larry Baier, NJDEP
- Tom Belton, NJDEP
- Michael Borgatti, Save Barnegat Bay
- John Buechner Lawn Doctor/NJGIC
- Jeanine Cava, BBNEP
- Kimberly Cenno, NJDEP
- Willie De Camp, Save Barnegat Bay
- David Ertile Ocean County Utilities
- Authority
- Brian Feldman TruGreen
- Stan Hales, BBNEP
- Helen Henderson, American Littoral Society
- Kyra Hoffmann, NJDEP
- Bill Kelso, Lebanon Seaboard Corp
- Ken Klipstein, NJWSA
- Martha Maxwell-Doyle, BBNEP
- Robert Miskewitz, Rutgers
- Jennifer Noblegas, NJDEP
- Kerry Kirk Pflugh, NJDEP
- Pat Rector, DEP
- Nancy Sadlon, NJ Green Industry Council
- Sanford Simon - United Industries
- Amy Weaver, Stony Brook Watershed Association
- Chris Wible, Scotts MiracleGro