



Eileen Keenan, manager of the New York Sea Grant NEMO (Nonpoint Education for Municipal Officials) Program addresses coastal managers, engineers, construction industry executives, media, and interested citizens at the first annual Long Island Green Infrastructure Conference held at Brookhaven National Laboratory in June 2012. Photo by Rory MacNish

## New York Sea Grant at the Forefront of First Annual Long Island Green Infrastructure Conference

New York Sea Grant was one of several cosponsors of the June 2012 First Annual Long Island Green Infrastructure Conference & Expo organized by the Nassau and Suffolk County Soil and Water Conservation Districts and hosted by Brookhaven National Laboratory (BNL). The conference provided municipal officials and engineers, planners, consultants, property owners, landscape architects, and business leaders with information on how green infrastructure can be an effective means of protecting Long Island's valuable groundwater and coastal resources.

NYSG Director **Jim Ammerman** noted, "This conference was an important vehicle for disseminating the up-to-date technical information that is needed by the land use decision makers and engineers whose responsibility it is to stay current with the latest approaches to water resource protection."

One of several key speakers, NYSG's **Eileen Keenan** gave a presentation on improving water quality with green infrastructure. As program manager of New York Sea Grant's Nonpoint Education for Municipal Officials (NEMO) Program, Ms. Keenan works with over 100 Long Island municipalities and assists them in complying with state and federal municipal (MS4) stormwater regulations. Showing examples of various green infrastructure practices, Ms. Keenan explained how such practices can be used to mitigate the impacts of polluted storm water. Such impacts include closure of shellfishing beds, poor water quality, declining shoreline aesthetics, reduced navigability, impaired recreational opportunities, and degraded wetlands and wildlife habitats.

Ms. Keenan emphasized how green infrastructure practices such as riparian buffers, rain gardens, and

porous pavement can help capture and reuse stormwater, preserve natural vegetative features and be used to retrofit facilities and achieve required pollutant discharge limits known as Total Maximum Daily Loads, or TMDLs.

Following Ms. Keenan was **Kathryn Macri**, Environmental Policy Coordinator of the NYS Environmental Facilities Corporation, who discussed the various grant programs that are available for green infrastructure projects and why such practices are a priority for New York State.

Additional speakers included **Lanny Bates** and **Sam Aronson** of BNL; **Andrew Mellina**, USEPA Region 2 Senior Policy Advisor; **Brian Schneider** of the Nassau County DPW; **David Kvinge** of Westchester County Department of Environmental Protection; **Neil Rosen**, Director of Sustainable Development at North Shore LIJ Hospital; **George Proios**, Chairman of the NYS Soil and Water Conservation Committee, and **Margot Walker** of the NYC Department of Environmental Protection Green Infrastructure Division.

In addition to New York Sea Grant, other cosponsors included the Hempstead Harbor Protection Committee, the Long Island Chapter of the United States Green Building Council, the Manhasset Bay Protection Committee, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County, and the Oyster Bay / Cold Spring Harbor Protection Committee.

Continuing education credits were offered by both Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County and the Long Island Chapter of the United States Green Building Council.

Having had a very responsive turnout in 2012, plans are underway already for the second annual (2013) Long Island Green Infrastructure Conference.

—Barbara A. Branca