



21st Annual New Jersey Land Conservation Rally

March 17, 2017

Report on Attendee Evaluations

Methodology

Three methods of evaluation were used for the 2017 Rally. The most frequently used was the traditional written form with sixty-five (65) submissions. In addition, the new (this year) on-line scheduling tool (sched.com) has an abbreviated feedback form which was used by twenty-six (26) people. Lastly, a link was provided to an online Google Forms survey that was used by twenty-four (24) people. The two on-line surveys used a sub-set of the questions on the printed form, so it is possible that one person responded more than once. The exhibitor evaluation was conducted using a separate paper form, and had nine responses.

The workshop-specific evaluations were only from the printed form and sched.com. Since the scoring systems of the two are different, the evaluation data is tabulated separately. The evaluations of the keynote speaker were from all three sources. Again, the sched.com data used a different scale, so is tabulated separately. All other data collected from the three sources are comparable, and so no further characterization is made.

There were about four hundred people attending the Rally. This number includes Presenters, but does not include Exhibitors that did not attend workshops. Thus, the response rate of evaluations is about sixteen percent.

Table of Contents

1. Demographics

- a. Organization
- b. Frequency of Attendance
- c. Methods of Communication

2. Keynote Speaker

3. Workshops

- a. 9:00 a.m. Session
 - i. How to Make Federal Funding Work for Farmland Preservation
 - ii. Resident Stewardship Programs
 - iii. Trails in New Jersey
 - iv. Environmental Due Diligence
 - v. Targeting Land Conservation & Stewardship for Water Quality
 - vi. Engaging Urban Communities on Sustainability Issues
 - vii. Partnerships that Advance Community Health
 - viii. Historic Resources on Preserved Land
 - ix. Young and Urban Professionals Roundtable
- b. 10:30 a.m. Session
 - i. Making Municipal Conservation Easements Work
 - ii. Improving Water Quality Through Land Use in Developed Areas
 - iii. Hot Topics in Farmland Preservation
 - iv. Landscaping for Healthy Water with Jersey-friendly Yards
 - v. Welcome to the Wonderful World of Green Acres
 - vi. The NJ Healthy Communities Network Grant Program
 - vii. Building Resilient and Healthy Communities through Land Use Strategies
 - viii. The NJ Lands Blueprint: A New Tool to Accelerate Conservation
 - ix. Social Media Roundtable
- c. 2:00 p.m. Session
 - i. Partnering Stormwater Controls and Parkland
 - ii. Clean Water Supply for New Jersey
 - iii. Municipal Funding for Open Space
 - iv. Land Stewardship through the River-friendly Programs
 - v. Prioritizing and Planning Targets for Water Resource Protection
 - vi. Economic Development & Land Conservation
 - vii. Management Strategies for Success in Preserving Natural Resources
 - viii. Moving from Pipeline to Renewables
 - ix. North Jersey Health Collaborative Roundtable
 - x. Conversation with Keynote Speaker Roundtable
 - xi. Crafting A Strategy to Enhance Trails Funding Roundtable

4. Exhibitors' Responses

5. Lunch/Breaks

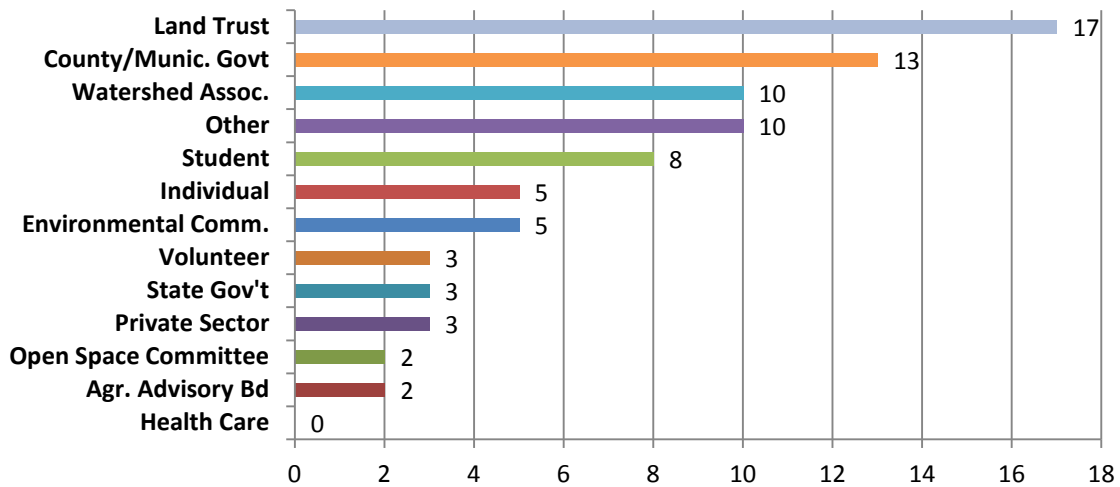
6. Networking Event

7. Additional Participant Comments

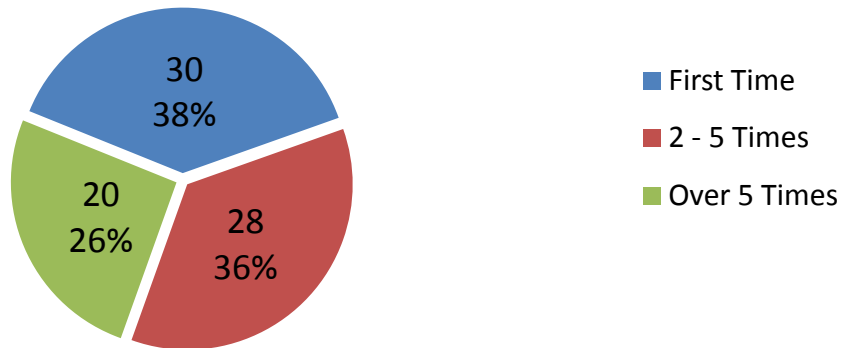
8. Appendix

1. Demographics

Describe Your Organization or Affiliation

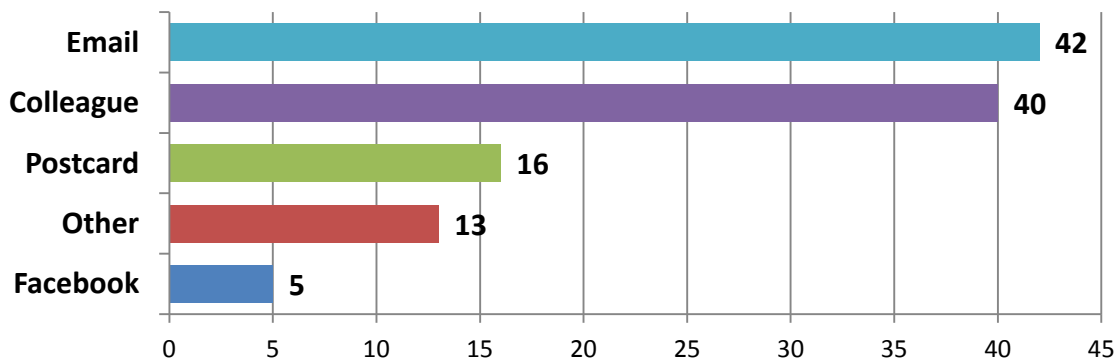


How Many Times Have You Attended the NJ Land Conservation Rally?



How Did You Hear About The Conference?

Multiple Responses Allowed




2. Keynote Speaker

Paper + On-line

Average = 4.4



■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ 5

Sched.com  = 0

 = 1

 = 12

Comments

- Blend of knowledge applicable for land, water, climate protections, and mitigation
- Clear explanation of complex subject
- Enjoyed visuals
- Funny, great slides, very specific
- Good info session, stayed as far as possible from politics as possible, excellent samples
- Great engaging speaker
- Great explanation of complex topic
- Informative and scary
- Nice to hear from an academic that could talk about how it is with no political agenda
- Outstanding talk
- Relevant, well-done
- Top notch
- Used lay language and explained info very well
- Very engaging knowledgeable, humorous
- Very informative, well-spoken
- Very relevant to our missions
- Complicated topic to present within time frame, excellent info
- Great speaker, but definitely preaching to the choir with climate talk
- Really interesting, but maybe a little outside conference mission
- Speech was amazing, but wish it was more inspirational and focused on the conservation surrounding the challenges in the field
- Great speaker, very important and relevant topic - Climate Change. Last year you had a young person speak. I liked that the younger generation had a voice. Maybe next year, split the Keynote to offer both a young and an "experienced" voice to express themselves on the same topic.
- I thought the info was very relevant to our field of work. I don't have a suggestion for next year.
- Good topic, made it very understandable
- He was great. He gave a very good argument that climate change is real.
- The keynote was great. Very interesting, very broad approach to the subject. I find that keynote speakers from allied but not directly related fields can be very interesting.
- I thought the speaker was fantastic but I wonder at the direct applicability to land conservation as a whole. Yes, the climate is changing, but how can we use that fact to get more conservation dollars to concert that into more and better preserved lands? How do our preserved lands help? Is NJ doing better/worse at reducing climate affects than other states because of preserved lands?
- I was afraid it would be boring, but the speaker made it quite interesting and injected just enough humor to keep his audience's attention. Very timely subject!
- He was interesting and funny. Didn't scare the audience too much.

- "Dr. D. A. Robinson is an excellent presenter. I attended his workshop at last year's rally and found him very informative, enjoyable, and engaging. As Keynote Speaker however, I feel he fell a little flat in the end. We understand the connection between preserving natural resources (land/water), and the effects on climate change, due in most part to loss of our natural resources, however, for me, I always find(as in past rally's), the Keynote speaker inspires, rejuvenates, and uplifts us and restores ones outlook, in recognition of our mission, which is to preserve lands for parks, recreation, farms, natural resource conservation, and for the benefits of same as it relates to the overall health and wellness of the general public. I feel Dr. Robinson in conclusion could have made a better cohesive connection/conclusion between LAND and CLIMATE as it relates to our work efforts to preserve land in many areas of NJ, which has driven climate events as evident on his charts/models. Keynote address, in my opinion should inspire us to continue on, as well as recognize all the good our efforts have done in past and will do for future generations. Climate is cyclical and ever changing, while land preservation is in perpetuity!
- I would recommend for Keynote someone with background in a life career of conservation, preservation, private foundation, or naturalist in education; or other who has faced adversity and challenges in life and career, who can inspire us to fight the good fight (as we know is often the case), and who may not necessarily be from NJ. While it may be expensive to hire on a Keynote, they are just that, Key to Rally, whose main objective in my opinion is to encourage us, our spirit and souls to carry on in the name of all the good we do."
- Didn't need an inconvenient truth presentation again; would have loved an actual climate story
- He gave much information the audience already knew. Would have been better to have someone speak on political needs and challenges
- Too academic, I prefer inspiration
- Very qualified and personable, but less lecture on climate.
- The speaker was obviously an expert but the presentation was too generic for the audience; a primer on climate change in this day and age is more suitable for an audience of science skeptics.
- A bit boring; preaching to the choir. Something more motivating, inspiring, upbeat to get us excited about being environmentalists.
- Good but not dynamic
- He is a good speaker, and I am sure a great teacher. I would have preferred something more timely and inspiring. It was more of a classroom lecture than a keynote.
- The keynote speech felt like an introductory lecture about climate change. While I appreciated the refresher, it would have been helpful if there were more specific examples. I liked that he gave hard data to use, but it was difficult to stay engaged.
- Very boring and felt like I was at school. Although interesting, very niche topic but there was only a basic overview, in which I knew most of the content.

3. Workshops

a. 9:00 a.m. Session

i. How to Make Federal Funding Work for Farmland Preservation

<u>12 Attendees</u> (as reported by room monitors)	<u>Content</u>	<u>Presenter(s)</u>
Paper Eval (1 resp)	4	5
Sched.com (1 resp.)		+1

Comments:

- Panel went into great detail about the ins and outs of Federal funding (ALEP).

ii. Resident Stewardship Programs

<u>20 Attendees</u>	<u>Content</u>	<u>Presenter(s)</u>
Paper Eval (4 resp)	4.8	4.8
Sched.com (2 resp.)		+1

Comments:

- Good overview but short on detail
- All 3 speakers sold me on the value of involving residents in a stewardship program. I can envision using some their ideas not only for native plants, but also for deer management and conservation easement inventories in my Borough. I wish Michael and Jared could move to Bernardsville.

iii. Trails in New Jersey

<u>29 Attendees</u>	<u>Content</u>	<u>Presenter(s)</u>
Paper Eval (5 resp)	4.4	4.4
Sched.com (3 resp.)		+1

Comments:

- Very good Q & A session, all presenters were informative
- Learned some new things
- Workshop was great. The presenters were fantastic. I learned a lot from them
- The presentation was informative and the presenters left plenty of time for a great discussion. Attendees from various backgrounds really added to the Q&A. Thanks for the trails map handout.

iv. Environmental Due Diligence

<u>? Attendees</u>	<u>Content</u>	<u>Presenter(s)</u>
Paper Eval (2 resp)	5	5
Sched.com (2 resp.)		+1

Comments:

- I appreciated the perspective of an environmental company explaining the procedures to be followed and the need for why it is necessary to conduct environmental due diligence when conducting a land transaction. I liked that they provided their sources for reviewing historic use of the property as I had not been aware of these tactics. The pictures from the 'case studies' were helpful in explaining the tools used to conduct the tests - I did not know what a ground penetrating radar looked like!

v. Targeting Land Conservation & Stewardship for Water Quality

<u>53 Attendees</u>	<u>Content</u>	<u>Presenter(s)</u>
Paper Eval (5 resp)	4.6	4.8
Sched.com (4 resp.)		+0.75

Comments:

- Inspiring report on Sussex County OS Trust Fund referendum, and grassroots advocacy; OSI funding; N. Sajdak's leadership of watershed association planning and working with residents.
- Good overview of the Penn program. "Stewardship" from on high (engaging non-profits and land owners). Would have liked to hear more about roles for folks who are not land holders: what can folks in more urban areas do?
- All three were extremely informative - lots of good ideas.
- Awesome, inspirational workshop
- Good examples of how to apply
- Good info on available resources
- So knowledgeable, wonderful, attainable program, great visuals

vi. Engaging Urban Communities on Sustainability Issues

<u>40 Attendees</u>	<u>Content</u>	<u>Presenter(s)</u>
Paper Eval (9 resp)	4.2	4.5
Sched.com (2 resp.)		+1

Comments:

- Cape May County and Bivalve presentations were wonderful.
- I felt that the first speaker was not offering anything tangible or useful to take away. The second speaker offered more in terms of children education and what gets them motivated but I think the third offered the most in terms of her experiences and what works and doesn't work. This is what I was most interested in. If Ms Miller wasn't part of the mix, I would have checked off the neutral face above.
- Nicole Miller gave an excellent presentation
- Enjoyed the range of qualifications ea. Speaker had
- Very engaging and informative
- Could have been more interactive
- Great info for non-profits to reach our near demographics
- Varied, didn't need watershed ambassador, great speakers, but ambassador not needed in the space
- Very interesting and relevant... watershed ambassador conflicted w Nicole's presentation

vii. Partnerships that Advance Community Health

<u>20 Attendees</u>	<u>Content</u>		<u>Presenter(s)</u>
Paper Eval (4 resp)	4.8		4.8
Sched.com (2 resp.)		+1	

Comments:

- I thought this was a great workshop. The presenters all worked well together and were very prepared for their presentations. It was nice to hear about the health aspects of preserving land and how we can use it in our work.
- It was helpful by providing ideas for inspiration and vehicle to help pay for it.
- It was good because I could connect it with work for my org.

viii. Historic Resources on Preserved Land

<u>25 Attendees</u>	<u>Content</u>		<u>Presenter(s)</u>
Paper Eval (5 resp)	4.0		4.0
Sched.com (1 resp.)		0	

Comments:

- The title didn't convey target audience, it was gov't agencies

ix. Young and Emerging Professionals Roundtable

<u>? Attendees</u>	<u>Content</u>		<u>Presenter(s)</u>
Paper Eval (4 resp)	5.0		5.0
Sched.com (1 resp.)		1	

Comments:

- It ended up better than we thought it would. There was no official facilitator, so we sort of just winged the whole thing. I will gladly/formally take this role on for next year's rally, as I know this particular session was very helpful for the students/soon to be graduates in the room.
- Really helpful and valuable
- There wasn't a presenter but it was valuable to speak with my age in the conservation field
- Wonderful roundtable, good place to meet fellow emerging prof.
- Really good

b. 10:30 a.m. Session

i. Making Municipal Conservation Easements Work

<u>18 Attendees</u>	<u>Content</u>	<u>Presenter(s)</u>
Paper Eval (4 resp)	3.7	4.0
Sched.com (2 resp.)		1

Comments:

- Better on defining problems than feasible options
- Speakers were all passionate about the topic
- Great workshop with many great tips for creating an inventory of conservation easements. Informative Q&A as well.
- The speakers and Dave P.'s PowerPoint helped make tackling a tedious and overwhelming project a little easier. All three underscored the importance of documenting and inventorying conservation easements. Very motivating.

ii. Improving Water Quality Through Land Use in Developed Areas

<u>32 Attendees</u>	<u>Content</u>	<u>Presenter(s)</u>
Paper Eval (8 resp)	4.4	4.4
Sched.com (1 resp.)		1

Comments:

- I thought the whole workshop was really good. However, what would have made it even better was slowing it down a bit and not racing through so many case studies or demonstration projects and instead look at a few in depth. I would have learned more that way.
- Great info
- Good speakers
- Extremely informative

iii. Hot Topics in Farmland Preservation

<u>20 Attendees</u>	<u>Content</u>	<u>Presenter(s)</u>
Paper Eval (2 resp)	3.5	3.5
Sched.com (0 resp.)		-

Comments:

None provided.

iv. Landscaping for Healthy Water with Jersey-Friendly Yards

<u>? Attendees</u>	<u>Content</u>	<u>Presenter(s)</u>
Paper Eval (1 resp)	5	5
Sched.com (3 resp.)		1 @ -1; 2 @ +1

Comments:

- Super useful info to bring into the classroom, will start using jerseyyards.org
- Taught to the level of 5th graders. Completely inappropriate for the attendees. The Jersey-Friendly yards tools and resource material is great, but the presentation should have focused on how to engage others in using it. Instead the presentation was 5th grade earth science. Ugh.
- Another wonderful workshop with two very prepared and interesting speakers. I would really like to see their program expand beyond Ocean County and maybe the Rally can help spread the word.
- I went to a different presentation, which was fabulous. "Improving Water Quality through Land Use..."

v. Welcome to the Wonderful World of Green Acres

<u>49 Attendees</u>	<u>Content</u>	<u>Presenter(s)</u>
Paper Eval (7 resp)	4.4	4.4
Sched.com (2 resp.)		+1

Comments:

- Good content, explanation was okay and presentation was clumped
- First part very useful, but the rest not applicable to land trust
- Conference room noise level too high

vi. The NJ Healthy Communities Network Grant Program

<u>21 Attendees</u>	<u>Content</u>	<u>Presenter(s)</u>
Paper Eval (2 resp)	4.5	5.0
Sched.com (0 resp.)		-

Comments:

- Would have been nice to know what group they were targeting for grants in advance
- Good information

vii. Building Resilient and Healthy Communities Through Land Use Strategies

<u>36 Attendees</u>	<u>Content</u>	<u>Presenter(s)</u>
Paper Eval (9 resp)	4.0	4.1
Sched.com (1 resp.)		+1

Comments:

- The workshop was very informative, but didn't really apply to me.
- Didn't really apply to my interests
- Really interesting presentation, not enough time for questions
- Too generic, too general, too backward focused

viii. The NJ Lands Blueprint: A New Tool to Accelerate Conservation

<u>46 Attendees</u>	<u>Content</u>	<u>Presenter(s)</u>
Paper Eval (9 resp)	4.6	4.6
Sched.com (7 resp.)		+1

Comments:

- Absolutely outstanding. Great work and informative presentations.
- NJCF, Nature Conservancy and Rowan's roles in NJ Lands Blueprint to enhance selection of priority sites for conservation of water resources, rare species, natural heritage areas, core forests, wildlife corridors and human habitat. Bring on the mapping.
- Very informative and well attended.
- At first I was confused as to what the presentation was about having not previously heard about NJ Map web tool, but as the presentation went on, it made sense and I was intrigued by this new way of exploring conservation targets based upon specific criteria.
- Great update.....this tool just keeps getting better with feedback and added functionality!

ix. Social Media Rountable

<u>46 Attendees</u>	<u>Content</u>	<u>Presenter(s)</u>
Paper Eval (9 resp)	4.2	4.3
Sched.com (0 resp.)		-

Comments:

- This was very motivating and helpful
- Presenters extremely knowledgeable, great format
- Very basic info, good for beginners
- Simon not very polished, used harsh language, seemed productive in genera;
- Seemed poorly organized, but allowed great interaction
- Great presenters/facilitators, loved open conversation format, very inviting

c. 2:00 p.m. Session

i. Partnering Stormwater Controls and Parkland

<u>16 Attendees</u>	<u>Content</u>	<u>Presenter(s)</u>
Paper Eval (1 resp)	4	3
Sched.com (1 resp.)		0

Comments:

- Would have been helpful to go more in depth on the case study
- Good information, pretty well disseminated. Presenters could have talked more about how to replicate, or had a portion of the session sharing ideas on how to replicate.

ii. Clean Water Supply for New Jersey

<u>18 Attendees</u>	<u>Content</u>	<u>Presenter(s)</u>
Paper Eval (2 resp)	4.5	5.0
Sched.com (1 resp.)		+1

Comments:

- I thought the geologists were very qualified. I did not anticipate as much time on salt infiltration, (which does not directly affect me), however, this is an important topic and I did learn a lot.
- Great info
- More discussion on infrastructure needed

iii. Municipal Funding for Open Space

<u>10 Attendees</u>	<u>Content</u>	<u>Presenter(s)</u>
Paper Eval (4 resp)	4.0	3.5
Sched.com (1 resp.)		0

Comments:

- I did not wind up attending this session ... but the Economic development session was fantastic and worth coming out for just for that!
- Misunderstood purpose of their goal - thought it would be about hands on stewardship restoration

iv. Land Stewardship Through the River-Friendly Programs

<u>? Attendees</u>	<u>Content</u>	<u>Presenter(s)</u>
Paper Eval (9 resp)	4.3	4.6
Sched.com (0 resp.)		0

Comments:

- Good examples of how to apply
- Good info on available resources
- So knowledgeable, wonderful, attainable program, great visuals

v. Prioritizing and Planning Targets for Water Resource Protection

<u>42 Attendees</u>	<u>Content</u>	<u>Presenter(s)</u>
Paper Eval (12 resp)	4.8	
Sched.com (5 resp.)		1

Comments:

- While super informative, this workshop was a lot of info squeezed into a small amount of time. I think Chris and John could have had their own individual workshops to talk about their projects in more depth.
- Dr. Obropta's use of humor especially at the end of the day was the way to go in explaining Green Infrastructure, the new buzz word for stormwater management.
- The Watershed as an example in using the NJ Map for prioritizing preservation and to hear the thought process in how it was implemented was useful. The further highlighting of NJ Map as a resource for planning and storytelling shows how we who work in land acquisition (even though we may not have the ultimate decisions in what to buy) can present more information about a parcel over what is simply found on a tax card. "
- All three were great, especially Chris and John - quite entertaining as well as informative.
- Great presentation!
- Stimulating session, creativity
- Great info
- Lots of great tools were introduced
- Speakers are well informed and the presentation was on point
- Informative and interactive
- Loved learning about the NJ map-will be able find ways to use it in my work

vi. Economic Development & Land Conservation: Partnerships that Work

<u>? Attendees</u>	<u>Content</u>	<u>Presenter(s)</u>
Paper Eval (7 resp)	4.3	
Sched.com (2 resp.)		1

Comments:

- Cape May County and Bivalve presentations were wonderful.
- Really inspired me to expand our partnerships!
- good selection of topic covering eco-tourism and economic development in non-traditional areas

vii. Management Strategies for Success in Preserving Natural Resources

<u>20 Attendees</u>	<u>Content</u>	<u>Presenter(s)</u>
Paper Eval (2 resp)	4.5	
Sched.com (0 resp.)		-

Comments:

- Great all around info

viii. Moving from Pipelines to Renewables

<u>35 Attendees</u>	<u>Content</u>		<u>Presenter(s)</u>
Paper Eval (7 resp)	4.9		4.9
Sched.com (1 resp.)		+1	

Comments:

- Very informative
- Far more interesting than expected
- Great content, presenters were prepared

ix. North Jersey Health Collaborative Roundtable

<u>? Attendees</u>	<u>Content</u>		<u>Presenter(s)</u>
Paper Eval (3 resp)	4.0		5.0
Sched.com (0 resp.)		-	

Comments:

- I think they could have used more visual aids to organize the talk
- Interesting Roundtable, questions lead to good conversation

x. Conservation with Keynote Speaker

<u>? Attendees</u>	<u>Content</u>		<u>Presenter(s)</u>
Paper Eval (1 resp)	5		5
Sched.com (1 resp.)		+1	

Comments:

None provided

xi. Crafting a Strategy to Enhance Trails Funding Roundtable

<u>? Attendees</u>	<u>Content</u>		<u>Presenter(s)</u>
Paper Eval (1 resp)	4		4
Sched.com (1 resp.)		+1	

Comments:

4. Exhibitors' Responses

There were a total of seven (7) exhibitors out of thirty (30) who submitted evaluations.

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Attended last year's rally?	4	3
Consider attending next year?	7	-

	<u>Too High</u>	<u>About Right</u>	<u>Too Low</u>
Exhibit space price	-	7	-

How did you hear about the Rally?

Email	4	Colleague	2
Social media	1	Previous year participant	1

As an Exhibitor, what were the strengths of this year's Rally?

- Great opportunity for networking
- Presenters and speakers were informative and easy to understand
- Exhibitors area was large, good for accommodating everyone
- Great turnaround of people
- Excellent communication with exhibitors, excellent tech support
- Attendance seemed very good, vendor area full, fan of reduced waste program
- Space was very well organized and adequate room to view all exhibits

How can the rally be better for you as an exhibitor

- Have someone in the main hall to announce when breaks end and workshops begin
- Checked off key success factors, everything worked perfectly
- More space for exhibitors; felt squished at times
- More ways to get visitors to vendor areas, people didn't know what the tickets were for or where to bring them

Comments on Facility

- Clean, restrooms easily accessible, meeting rooms easy to find
- The location was very easy to reach
- Great!
- Excellent
- Hotel nice, parking easy
- Great facility and layout

Others that should be invited as exhibitors next year

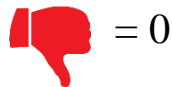
- Outdoor gear like REI
- Urban community groups

Other comments/suggestions about likes and areas for improvement

- Suggest outdoor tour, combining two workshop sessions, to see Raritan and hear about work being done there.
- Are the presentations available online?

5. Breaks/Exhibits

22 Responses

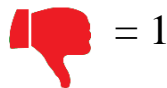


Comments:

- Loved the diversity of exhibits, especially Ed Vaeth and Lorette Cheswick's booths. Green In '17 as well.
- I didn't get a chance to check out the exhibits.
- The exhibits/vendors were great. It was a good time to network and get to know some of our peers. I especially liked being able to get some personal advice on appropriate seeds for my yard and connect with a local beekeeper. I learned that he sells honey at our local Agway and then actually ran into him over the weekend.
- Picked up field guide from Audubon Society.
- Delicious Rueben sandwich!
- A good group of exhibitors.
- CAN I COMMENT ON LUNCH? There should be better vegan options. And perhaps next year one of the programs can be on the impact of animal agriculture on water quality, water use, land use, pollution, etc. Animal agriculture is worse for global warming than all cars, trains, and planes combined, and being vegan saves more water (I think by an order of magnitude) than all of the water saving tips of the ""water friendly"" house. Go to cowspiracy.com/facts (and fact check, Please) - or even better, watch the film to see why major environmental groups are afraid to speak the truth about animal agriculture - the REAL inconvenient truth. Honest.

6. Networking Event

16 Responses



Comments

- Beer, wine, and great folks are always good. Should have had more prizes. Thanks for moving it up earlier.
- Didn't make it
- Good to catch up with past acquaintances and their work projects.
- The band was great!
- Was unable to attend but it sure looked like a good time
- Liked to see this was offered. Continue doing so in the exact same manner. I did not stay but hope I can do so in the upcoming years!
- Vegan snacks? There are lots of nut cheeses that are fabulous...

7. Additional Participant Comments

Suggestions for Future Rallies

Land Use and Conservation

- More on land-use and conservation
- Urban Land Use and conservation
- Maybe one directly into application of programs through environmental commissions. A Commissions role in land conservation.
- Bike trails, Greenways, Partnerships for Conservation, Recreation and Health initiatives
- Workshop on restoring watersheds
- Biodiversity conservation
- I want to hear from organic farms and specific helpful tips for any individual to be sustainable
- Public transit and land use (parks, trails, open space) connections
- I would like to see more farming-related presentations and exhibitors at the Rally.

Diversity

- Supporting diversity
- Supporting diversity and fostering diverse community in NJ enviro. How to meaningfully engage young professionals in the space, especially of diverse backgrounds
- Understanding culture and the environment (people from different cultures view the environment differently - might be interesting topic to explore, a way to appeal to everyone and understand where people are coming from)
- The intersection between diversity, privilege, and bias in the environmental profession

Financial

- More topics on fundraising
- Leveraging different public funding sources in brownfield/urban park development
- How current politics drives funding and programs
- Dilemma of attracting people to natural resources and the resulting damage - need for dedicated funding and expertise to maintain natural resources experiencing human impact
- Grants, grants, grants
- More topics on Fundraising, Outreach

Keynote Speakers

- Laura Skolar - Jersey City Parks Coalition; how government could work successfully with Community non-profit groups or park conservancies (i.e. Essex County - Weequahic Park communities)
- Jay Kelly of Raritan Valley Community College
- Eric Fuchs-Stengel would be a great keynote speaker or workshop speaker - he is very enthusiastic and has done some great work in Northern Jersey with his group MEVO
- What if the keynote spot was turned into a main plenary? Highlight women and people of color doing work around environmental justice issues throughout the state and connecting it to land and water conservation.

Other

- Workshops for young professionals
- Focus on actual policy
- Biodiversity
- Community engagement strategy, not just org's speaking about what they've done. Effective science communication
- Role of the middle manager, techniques for becoming a good leader/dept. director
- Non-profit mergers and/or partnerships. Lobbying by 501c32 orgs.
- Possible farmers who come in to talk from experience about their needs, struggles. Same for urban youth.
- Inclusion and relationship with health and engaging public health and healthcare
- Performing ecological service assessments (training); tips for better negotiation during preservation
- I would like to see workshops offered on the application process for SADC, Green Acres, as well as trail grants, and any changes to the process from previous years.
- More topics covering Development.
- Consider a round table lunch discussion for government employees (local and County) since much of the conference focuses on NGOs, but the govt. employees have other issues/items.
- How can GIS be used/leveraged to track what is preserved or share with the public what is preserved that they can visit/volunteer at/etc. that is close to them.
- More on link between conservation and economic development
- Someone from NJ future
- State Pan V.s ??

Rally Strengths

The comments on the Rally strengths could be grouped into eight areas. The comments below were typical.

- Structure – Well run, start time, well organized, time for sessions and breakouts, great schedule, Friday.
- Workshops – Diverse, great topics, quantity, great range of topics, roundtables were engaging,
- Speakers – Great variety, great speakers
- Keynote speaker
- Attendees – Number of attendees, diversity of veterans and newcomers, good group of good people, young.
- Networking opportunities
- Exhibitors
- Facility – Great location, great venue, polished, easy to get to, food
- One presenter found the sched.com list of workshop attendees helpful. “It helped to see what types of groups (municipal, nonprofit, private sector) were represented.

Areas for Improvement

The comments in this category did not have as many recurring themes as the Strengths category. The two areas that were specifically mentioned several times were:

- Announce when the workshops are starting
- Make sure there is adequate parking.

The following are other areas addressed (the comments are not recurring themes):

- Workshops – More varied, more natural history, more roundtables, no roundtables, more on urban issues, beginner programs, more diverse workshops, site visits or walking tours, Need new material – some workshops are the same as previous years, ensure workshops talk more about how they did the work, rather than what they accomplished.
- Networking – More time between speakers, Icebreakers,
- Structure – Have a plenary session during breakfast, more about presentations and less about exhibits, breaks, lunch – have 50+ presentations during the day.

Reason for colleague not attending

There were eighteen (18) responses to this question.

- Cost was mentioned four (4) times.
- Work or other scheduling conflict (5)
- Employer does not support, or only allows limited attendance (3)

Comments on the Facility

The comments on the facility were overwhelmingly positive. Respondents found the location convenient and well run. Most had no problems with parking. The food was very good.

There was one comment about the food being the worst ever, with insufficient vegan choices. There were a few comments about parking challenges, either the voucher, or the full garage.

Story or Inspiration

These comments focused mostly on what benefit the attendee got from attending.

Please see the full list of individual responses in the Appendix.

Other Comments or Suggestions

There were only twelve (12) responses in this category. Several repeated comments made previously (i.e. great food, more vegan food, etc.). Others expressed suggestions for future rallies (more social media, include parking in the fee).

Please see the full list of individual responses in the Appendix.

APPENDIX

I. Strengths

- "Spiritual" incentive to keep up the good work
- Amount of people and various classes
- As a presenter, having an idea of who would be attending my session was helpful. I knew it was subject to change, but it helped to see what types of groups (municipal, nonprofit, private sector) were represented.
- Collaboration
- Content excellent. Food services excellent, great exhibitors
- Diversity of veterans and newcomers.
- Easy to get to, close parking, nice facility, loved the chairs, good food everyone was in good mood.
- Engaging round table discussion and a large variety of panels
- Excellent facility, well run, well organized
- Excellent workshop/speakers
- Facility, organization, lunch
- First rally
- Good group of good people
- Good roundtable options and good diversity of workshops
- Great location - central to state
- great networking
- Great range of topics. Great location.
- Great schedule - hard to choose topics
- great speakers
- Great speakers, good organization.
- great topics
- Great topics, great speakers - also great mobile website, super helpful!
- Great variety of speakers and sessions
- Great venue
- Great venue, great workshops
- Great venue, knowledgeable speaker
- I immensely enjoyed all my sessions, which educated me on stewardship needs, Land use strategies, and economic benefits of partnership. And always nice to see fresh, young faces, students who bring another aspect to it all..
- I really enjoyed the diversity of sessions, and how interdisciplinary it was this year.
- Keynote Speaker - facility -workshops. I wanted to be in 3 places at once.
- Location
- Location - necessary in today's political climate
- Location!
- Location!
- Networking opportunities, exhibits, keynote speaker
- Networking, workshops, exhibits
- organized
- Organized, food was great.
- Organized, smooth, parking was great.
- Polished venue - reflective of the rally's growth, smooth transitions between sessions, great atmosphere
- programming diversity
- So many cool topics to choose from! I really enjoyed the networking and space to explore new ideas
- Start time, structure (time in between sessions), separation of lunch and keynote speaker
- Strong theme on water quality. Very good advanced topics.
- The diversity of topics being presented. There were several that I wanted to go to at the same time.
- The exhibitor's hall was great. The setup made it great to see what others were doing and also socialize
- The facility was very nice and it felt like it was well organized. The speakers/workshops were great, I wanted to be in more than one place at one time.

- The location of the event in New Brunswick - much better than Trenton or Newark
- The variety of speakers
- The venue was very good, well organized.
- This was my first Rally, so I cannot comment
- Time for sessions and breaks and topics. Location great, easy and close
- Well organized
- Well organized, plenty of variety
- Workshop diversity
- workshops were diverse, the location was great
- Young participants
- Younger Participants, climate change talk, diversity of sessions, FRIDAY!! Instead of Saturday

II. Areas for Improvement

- More varied workshops
- Keep up the great work!
- I'd like more natural history topics
- More roundtables
- Roundtables weren't as full and effective. Lecture based is probably the way to go
- More workshops on urban issues (beyond CSO problems).
- As a "newbie" identify/create some beginner programs and identify them as such
- How about pushing the date into the spring (April/May) and adding a second day - a day that would include some cool field trips to protected areas (like the LTA Rally does each year).
- It would be nice if there could be some way to let attendees know when the sessions are about to start. I was late to sessions because I was talking to others
- Insure on-site parking is adequate. Use more directional signs in facility to workshops
- Good start and stop times, but somehow no time to chat in between. Nametags could have been much larger print on org'n and attendee names, and small logo
- Provide good parking; the keynote speaker should not have been right after lunch. It was hard to keep my eyes open.
- Social Media
- More students and young people invited or advertised for
- More discussion
- Definitely need new material for workshops, some workshops are the same as last year and the year before
- A way to signal the start of workshops - group texts or other forms of technology.
- More networking time between speakers
- Figure out way for icebreakers
- The Bee-Keeper exhibitor/vendor expressed his extreme enthusiasm for invasive Japanese Knotweed as one of the plants that are vital to his bee keeping business. I refuse to purchase honey from a bee keeper who promotes invasive species. He needs to be re-educated about environmental sustainability. Maybe vet your vendors better to ensure their practices align with those of NJCF.
- I would like to hear announcements that the workshops are starting. It seemed like people milled around too long.
- More diverse workshops; there was considerable overlap and duplication of topics
- Make sure conf. center parking is still available after 9 a.m.
- Have a plenary during breakfast. A bit of a pep talk to kick things off. Going into first sessions without a warm up isn't as pleasant.
- Better signage as to where some of the rooms are from the main area, I was going in circles trying to figure out how to get down to the Regency Ballroom...at least you could see the stairs going up to the conference rooms from the exhibitor area.
- Make it more about the presentations and less about the exhibits, the breaks, the lunch. Use the day more fully. You could have had 50+ presentations during the day. I would have felt my money was much better used if I had been able to attend more than 3 sessions.
- Keep location centralized. Nice facilities.

- Keep location central, with easy access, as accomplished this year.! Was a little dis-jointed with multi levels, but enjoyable surroundings and accommodations just the same!
- Announcing when workshops are starting, making sure name tags have the correct ribbons
- Keep up the good work, pick another good location
- Ensure the workshops talk more about how they did the work rather than what they accomplished.
- It would be great if a some of the workshops were able to be site visits or walking tours.
- Try to pull a more diverse audience of younger people, and not just Rutgers students (Young professional discount?)

III. Comments on Facility

- In general, this was very easy to access and get to. I don't know how you could do one of these without attendees hitting traffic and having to drive a certain distance.
- Great central location, really great layout for the rally, lunch was good too!
- Great, except for the limited parking
- All were fine and the attached parking facility was a real plus
- Comfortable, well-located centrally. The refreshments were cleared too soon after lunch! As we headed to the Roundtables that followed, the coffee/tea/dessert was gone. Should remain available longer.
- They should have had more tables for breakfast.
- Good location, good venue, good food.
- Very good
- Better signage as to where some of the rooms are from the main area, I was going in circles trying to figure out how to get down to the Regency Ballroom...at least you could see the stairs going up to the conference rooms from the exhibitor area. Otherwise, they were a great venue with plenty of space for exhibitors (which I thought was lacking last year).
- TERRIBLE. The parking lot attendants were clueless -- wasted our time, did not provide vouchers at the time they themselves indicated. Lunch was the worst I've had at any conference/event EVER. I'm vegan, and my only options were the salad and the pasta. There was only one nondescript dressing for the salad, which was so spicy I had to throw it out. I strongly suggest that you do NOT provide lunch; people will bring it or buy it around the hotel. Allocating a full hour for lunch (outside of the plenary speech) was a waste of precious time.
- Food was very good and the facilities were clean and comfortable. The IT guys stopped in several times to make sure we were okay, which I appreciated. I don't think a bottle of water should cost that much (at the bar at the end of the day), but it's a business, after all. The timeframe (8-3:15) worked well for travelling and avoiding major traffic. I'm sure it was also helpful that it was Rutgers' Spring Break.
- Loved it. See notes above
- Facility was great!, much space!, bright, cheery, comfy chairs, fresh, high quality delicious food; accessibility may be a problem with multi levels not handicapped friendly!
- Great everything! Location is great for after-conference socializing, access to the train, highways, etc.
- Great, do it there again or find another similarly great location
- Excellent
- Food was great. Location was okay but difficult to leave because of rush hour traffic
- Nice venue, but more maps inside would have been helpful to find rooms
- Great location
- Great location!
- Beautiful
- Great food
- WONDERFUL! Loved the use of real dishes, water in every room, lunch had non-carb options (breakfast didn't tho)
- Beautiful. Good food.
- Good venue, location
- Nice - shouldn't remove tables during networking
- While a bear to get to during rush hour, facility quite nice. Good, open space for exhibitors
- Good
- Good
- Excellent. The quality of the luncheon exceeded my expectations

- Silly to run A/C on such a cold day - air very distracting downstairs
- Excellent.
- Great venue.
- Excellent
- Excellent
- A+!
- Excellent! Don't change.
- Convenient location, clean, efficient staff, good food
- Excellent
- Beautiful and clean location. Very happy with vegan-friendly food.
- Good location!
- Food and ballrooms were great, love the location, perfect for the event.
- Good
- Good location for me. Nearby
- So much nicer and easier to get to than Trenton. Food was good, loved that I could safely walk from the train to get there.
- Very good
- Top notch
- Nice facility
- Great - need more location maps - abit hard to find halls.
- Great accomodations and space
- Easily accessible
- Very good location
- Good
- Excellent
- 5 stars
- Excellent
- Great facility
- Parking full! Had to go to expensive garage. Hard to find first floor.
- Great
- Great facility, easy parking, food very good; All good!
- Decent food and location
- 4 star - great service, good food for conference buffet
- The facility was great. Just difficult to navigate (need more signs)
- Great lunch service, clean and not too crowded. Bathrooms. Rooms set up nicely. Parking was challenging
- Good
- Great food and service
- Great facility, clean
- Great place. A+ bathrooms C- parking garage
- Good facility, location
- Good, however parking was limited
- Great location! Parking was very confusing
- Loved the room setup (tables included). Hyatt is great - free wifi and very comfortable
- Great location despite the Rt 18 traffic. Food was also good and glad they didn't use a lot of disposable cups, plates, utensils
- In general, this location was run smoothly, well staffed, virtually no tech issues that I saw
- Good food, nice lobby and rooms, need better parking
- Great. Love this place

IV. Story or Inspiration

- I'm inspired to use the NJ Conservation Blueprint tool to help my local municipality "re-think" their open space priorities.
- My second land rally. Excellent venue. Workshops chose were very valuable.
- "Moving from Pipelines to Renewables" gave me observable ways that policy needs to be shifted in order to stop pipelines from being built, and increase renewables
- it was inspiring to hear from all the different angles of environmental sustainability and justice. It's really neat to bring everyone together to empower one another
- John Hasse from the workshop on Prioritizing and Planning Restoration and Land Preservation. He had a great message about maps as a tool for storytelling and reconnecting with land.
- I like the young and emerging roundtable but needed more students
- As a member of a Community organization focused on open space efforts, this provides good info and potential contacts
- Really like NJMap - will it have an underground water flow feature capturing aquifer flow?
- Having an opportunity to meet other young professionals was so inspiring and really opened up a space to connect and discuss the challenges faced and how to overcome and navigate through them
- The panel from my first session gave me a great idea about how to incorporate stewardship planning into our master plan and its elements - very inspired after I left!
- I enjoyed the strategy of partnering with landowners discussed in the Conservation Easement workshop. I will definitely utilize the info in my current job.
- The keynote speaker conveyed a very strong message to work together to make a change. I feel more empowered
- Had a great time, always learn a bunch.
- Take more action w/local destination tourism office to promote eco-tourism of the properties I manage. Need to market and value-ate and promote indirect/direct benefits
- Inspired by keynote. Climate change is such an important topic. I need to learn some "solutions" or things that the average person can do on a daily basis to combat Climate Change.
- The presentation about the NJ Conservation Blueprint was terrific! I hadn't heard about the map but it's a great tool!
- would like to repave our driveway with porous asphalt
- I learned a lot about conservation easements.
- David Robinson gave very clear guidance about what we as individuals could do to address climate change: 1) reduce your carbon footprint; 2) support or volunteer with organizations doing this work; 3) let your governmental representatives know your position.
- I really enjoyed learning more about NJ Map and the work being done at Rowan.
- It was nice to meet students who are pursuing careers in conservation.
- The presentation by NJ Energy on pipelines was particularly timely, science-based, and advocacy-oriented. This is the tone that we need at our events in the times we're living in.
- I was inspired by how many first-time attendees Rally there were, and how many students. It is wonderful to know that the work we have been doing all our lives will continue, and it is in the hands of passionate young people.
- I liked listening to the story video you had last year. Not sure if anyone was collecting these stories with new faces??

- I had a very enjoyable time. Nice to see new faces, and old acquaintances as well. Mostly I learned how today, 'Partnerships' are vital to any project success. Inspired by Nat Sajdak who's project overcame many obstacles with stubborn land owners, proving perseverance pays off!
- I enjoyed the young professional roundtable workshop; we discussed the difficulties of being young in the workplace and it empowered me to "know my worth"
- I learned a lot more details about things I know exist but did not know the intricate details (Such as the NJ/NY Trails group and Green Acres). It was also good to meet people from a different region in NJ.
- Inspired by the first health session in the morning. I learned a lot and am pleased to see how much overlap there is in our goals.

V. Additional Comments

- Delicious lunch!
- Love it!
- Perhaps have a session where students can interact in small groups with leaders in conservation.
- It was a good time and I learned a lot. Although I did not like the keynote this year, I thought the panels and round tables that I went to were excellent.
- Please don't hold on St. Patrick's Day - for those who are Irish, it's a family holiday.
- Thanks for another great conference!
- The speakers should speak more on the topic of their session title. It seemed like some speakers were discussing something other than what I expected from the title
- Considering that this is an environmental event, I was very disappointed with the lack of vegan options
- The rally app was/is great. Good food.
- Please include parking fee in registration for event - would be much more convenient
- Now that there is new funding available for land preservation, I would like to see basic farmland preservation and green acres workshops for new volunteers and Open Space Council members
- We need more social media access. Put a# on the nametags, , have a social media area, perhaps near the job board