



PRESS RELEASE

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Local Student Soars with Belmar Park Picnic Area and Bird Sign Eagle Scout Project

(Sandy Hook, NJ)..... The New Jersey Marine Sciences Consortium/New Jersey Sea Grant (NJMSC/NJSG) recently advanced its mission to foster marine and coastal education and outreach by collaborating with an enterprising student from the Sandy Hook based Marine Academy of Science and Technology (MAST). The partnership simultaneously helped sophomore Matthew Orgill earn prestigious Eagle Scout status.

More than a year ago, Orgill was looking for a focus for a unique community project to help him earn Eagle Scout status, the highest ranking attainable in the Boy Scouts of America program. Because the project was required to benefit a non-profit group, Matt decided to focus on the Friends of Belmar Harbor (FOBH), a club he's belonged to and sailed with for 8 years. He conceived a plan to create a waterfront picnic area at MacLearie Park in Belmar, adjacent to the FOBH clubhouse. Matt had noticed the educational Treasure Trail Signs all around Belmar, which were created by NJMSC/NJSG as part of its Coastal Communities Interpretive Sign Initiative and thought it would be a good idea to place an additional one at his proposed picnic spot so people could learn something while they relaxed and enjoyed the area. Birds seemed like the ideal sign subject because Matt noticed a lot of them when he was out sailing in the area and always wondered about the species he saw.

The Borough of Belmar and its Public Works Department served as the conduit to connect Matt and NJMSC/NJSG Coastal Communities Agent Jenny McCormick. Matt worked closely with

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Jenny and NJMSC/NJSG graphic designer Rory Joyce to research and develop the information and art for the Shark River Birds sign. NJMSC/NJSG paid for half the cost of producing the interpretive sign and donated McCormick and Joyce's time to the project. Matt was responsible for raising half the sign-production costs plus the money for all materials, supplies and services needed to build the picnic area. That included ground cover materials, picnic tables and seats and lumber and other building materials to frame the sign. He received substantial contributions from local businesses to cover the costs including Surf Taco, NJ Gravel and Sand Co, J. F. Kieley Construction, Avcon, Jaeger Lumber, MRC and The Order of the Friendly Sons of the Shillelagh of the Jersey Shore.

Matt, who is considering a career in engineering or architecture, found the experience rewarding and enlightening and enjoyed learning business and finance basics and how to manage an entire project from start to finish. Because he found it took a lot longer to complete than he originally thought, just under a year, he also learned a valuable life lesson in patience.

Matt's hard work, creativity and persistence paid off. His project was reviewed and approved early this year by the Boy Scout council and he will be officially designated as an Eagle Scout at a special ceremony on February 6th in Wall, NJ.

NJMSC/NJSG is an affiliation of colleges, universities and other groups dedicated to advancing knowledge and stewardship of New Jersey's marine and coastal environment. It meets its mission through its innovative research, education and outreach programs. The NJMSC/NJSG Education Department also conducts and participates in a number of special Scout and Youth Organization programs. For more information, visit http://www.njmssc.org/Education/Scout_Programs.htm

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