

New Jersey

Water and Environmental Programs • SEARCH Grant USDA Helps Delaware Bay Community

Downe Township is a small rural community located on the Delaware Bay with a population of approximately 1,600 residents. After Superstorm Sandy, this Bayshore community became prone to frequent flooding which caused on-site septic system failures that resulted in the contamination of the Delaware Bay, especially in the Fortescue and Gandy's Beach neighborhoods.

To help study the problem, USDA Rural Development provided Downe Township with a \$30,000 Special Evaluation Assistance for Rural Communities and Households Grant (SEARCH) to complete a study.

As a result of the feasibility study, it was determined that the existing on-site septic systems in Fortescue and Gandys Beach would need to be replaced with a new sanitary sewage collection and treatment facility that will meet New Jersey Department of Environmental (NJDEP) standards. The new wastewater system would cost an estimated \$16 million.

This large and costly project required funding from several sources. USDA awarded an additional \$30,000 Predevelopment Planning Grant which was used to begin an application for USDA Rural Development's Water and Environmental Program (WEP). USDA ultimately provided Downe Township with a loan in the amount of \$1.5 million and a grant totaling \$7 million. The Township also received funding and support from New Jersey Infrastructure Bank, New Jersey DEP and County of Cumberland.



Delaware Bay Community—Fortescue Beach located in Downe Township

“This project would not have been possible without the initial USDA SEARCH Grant that help identify all the issues and then propose solutions. After that first step, the local officials had a game plan and brought together resources from Local, State, and Federal Government via Rural Development to design, approve, and provide the necessary funding for this major infrastructure project. The project, when completed, will help keep the Delaware Bay clean, help homeowners retain their property values, allow jobs to stay in the area, and hopefully create more economic opportunities. This is the type of start to finish work Rural Development completes very well in New Jersey and across our country,” said New Jersey State Director Michael Thulen, Jr.

Investments like these not only help protect the environment along the Delaware Bay, they also improve the lives of rural residents in southern New Jersey. USDA continues to be a strong partner with rural communities, because we know that when rural America thrives, all of America thrives.

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| Obligation Amount: | \$30,000 grant (SEARCH) - \$30,000 grant (PPG) |
| Date of Obligation: | 9/30/2014—9/20/2016 |
| Congressional District: | 2nd Congressional District: Congressman Van Drew, Senators Menendez and Booker |
| Partner | State and Local Government |
| Demographics: | Cumberland County |
| Impact: | Provide solutions to ongoing community septic failures |
