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2017 ANNUAL REPORT

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OUR MISSION New Jersey Conservation Foundation is a private, nonprofit organization whose mission is to preserve land and natural resources throughout New Jersey for the benefit of all. Through acquisition and stewardship, we protect strategic lands from the Highlands to the Pine Barrens to the Delaware Bayshore. We promote strong land conservation policies at the local, state and federal levels, forge partnerships to achieve conservation goals, and provide support and technical assistance to partner groups. Since 1960, we have helped protect more than 125,000 acres of natural areas, farms, parks and water resources.

On the Cover

The beautiful and docile corn snake, an endangered species in New Jersey, is found in the Pine Barrens. The coloration of corn snakes is highly variable, with upperparts ranging from brown to light orange or red, and brick red markings outlined in black, as seen in this close-up photo detail. Go to page 6 for a story about a unique “head start” program aimed at boosting the survival rate of vulnerable baby corn snakes during their first year.



NEW JERSEY CONSERVATION LEADERSHIP

Understanding and exploring nature through science goes back thousands of years of human history. The exciting thing is that there are still new discoveries every day! Learning about nature on preserved lands is a great way to utilize these beautiful places and find ways to better manage and protect New Jersey's diverse natural heritage.

In this report, we'll examine some of the ways we're using science on our 25,000 acres of preserved land – and beyond. We'll also feature some of the talented researchers and professors leading the work. We hope you'll enjoy the stories and photos.

As always, thank you for your generous support of New Jersey Conservation. With the help of our members, friends and partners, our work saving land and protecting rare plants and animals will continue stronger than ever!



MICHELE S. BYERS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



KENNETH H. KLIPSTEIN II
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Living laboratories for scientific study

New Jersey Conservation Foundation's 25,000 acres of preserved land not only provide recreational opportunities for outdoor enthusiasts and protected habitat for native flora and fauna, they also serve as living laboratories for scientific research. University professors, students, science professionals and citizen scientists are studying rare and endangered species, the impacts of climate change and even the effects of fire.

The Franklin Parker Preserve in the Pine Barrens of Burlington County is our most prominent living laboratory. This former cranberry and blueberry farm covers 11,379 acres, or nearly 18 square miles. Only a small percentage of the land was used for agriculture, and most of the old cranberry bogs have been restored to functioning wetlands. Many plant, animal and mushroom species never before documented in New Jersey have been found at the Franklin Parker Preserve.

Other lands also contribute to the body of scientific research, including the Wickecheoke Creek Preserve in western Hunterdon County, near the Delaware River. This 4,000-acre patchwork of preserved land straddles a pristine water supply stream and is rich in plant and animal diversity.

"We're excited to provide scientists great places to conduct research, and we're always amazed at the new discoveries," said Michele S. Byers, executive director. "The ultimate goal is to better protect New Jersey's biodiversity and our state's rarest species."

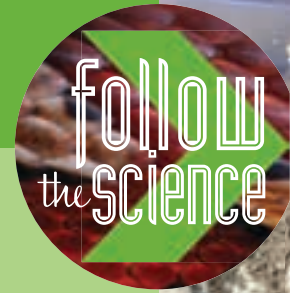
RESEARCH PROJECTS INCLUDE:

- An inventory of mushrooms and other fungi at the Franklin Parker Preserve by members of the New Jersey Mycological Association;
- A genetic study of long-tailed salamanders in New Jersey's Piedmont and Ridge & Valley regions by Columbia University graduate student Neha Gajendra Savant;
- Studies on how the "prescribed burning" – or controlled burning – of thousands of acres at the Franklin Parker Preserve affects Pine Barrens habitats;
- Research on how highways in the Pine Barrens impact the genetic isolation of Northern pine snakes, a threatened species in New Jersey;
- An inventory of rare and endangered species along the route of the proposed PennEast pipeline in Hunterdon and Mercer counties;
- Research into how two endangered Pine Barrens plants – American chaffseed and Pickering's morning glory – can be grown in greenhouses and transplanted to new sites;
- A study to determine whether the odds of survival for vulnerable corn snake hatchlings can be improved by disrupting their normal hibernation;
- A Kean University study on the results of restoring cranberry bogs to natural wetlands at the Franklin Parker Preserve;
- An inventory of rare moths in the Pine Barrens.

For more information, visit www.njconservation.org

Boosting the odds for endangered corn snakes

The beautifully-colored endangered corn snake faces many threats. Natural threats include birds of prey, foxes, coyotes, raccoons and other snakes, and man-made threats include road traffic and poachers.



Corn snake eggs are incubated in laboratory conditions so that hatchlings can become part of an experimental “head start” program to improve their survival odds.

INSET: Juvenile corn snake in head start program.

A unique research project in the Pine Barrens is aimed at improving the survival odds for baby corn snakes, which are extremely vulnerable during their first year.

With permission from the New Jersey Endangered and Non-Game Species Program, two corn snake experts – Robert Zappalorti of Herpetological Associates and Howard Reinert from The College of New Jersey – started a “head start” program for baby corn snakes.

Bob, Howard and volunteers radio-track egg-laying females and search forests – including those at the Franklin Parker Preserve – for freshly laid eggs in nests. When the eggs hatch in late summer, hatchlings are tagged with microchips just below the skin.

Some hatchlings are released into the wild, not long before their winter hibernation. But the “head-start” hatchlings are kept in a warm lab and fed regularly over the winter and don’t hibernate.

“They really grow a lot when they’re kept over the winter,” said Zappalorti. “By the time they’re released in the spring, they’re about twice the size of a normal snake of that age. We want to see whether this head start gives them an advantage in survivorship.”

In 2016 and 2017, about 80 corn snake hatchlings were microchipped. Forty-three were head-started, while the rest were released into Wharton State Forest. This year, the researchers hope to head-start at least 20 more hatchlings.

Only time will tell if the program works. So far, Zappalorti and his colleagues have only recaptured one head-started young snake. “That means they’re hard to find or subject to predation,” said Zappalorti. “But if we spend more effort looking for hatchlings, we might get better returns. It’s intensive searching and it takes a lot of time.”

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Saving the rare American chaffseed

One of the rarest plants in the northeastern United States may be saved from extinction, thanks to determined scientists and experimental plantings at the Franklin Parker Preserve.



American chaffseed (*Schwalbea americana*) is a wild perennial in the snapdragon family and a federally-listed endangered species. A decade ago, the only known population in the northeast was along a road in Brendan Byrne State Forest in the Pine Barrens. Its existence was precarious.

To save chaffseed, researchers wanted to grow it elsewhere. But it wasn't as simple as collecting and planting seeds. Chaffseed is notoriously picky about where it grows.

It needs open, sunny areas—historically created and maintained by wildfires. Research by Dr. Jay Kelly of Raritan Valley Community College revealed that chaffseed also requires specific soil and water conditions and a “host” plant like the Maryland golden aster.

Kelly and fellow researchers found a site at the Franklin Parker Preserve with ideal conditions. They collected wild seeds and germinated them in greenhouses with host plants. In 2006 and 2008, they planted 61 young plants. A decade later, they're doing well!

Since then, three more sites with suitable habitat—including one at Franklin Parker—were identified. Partnering with the NJ Forest Service and Duke Farms, Kelly collected seed in 2017 and grew 250 plants. Half were planted this spring, with the rest to be planted this fall.

“Ultimately, the goal is to secure the plant so it doesn't have to be listed (as endangered) anymore,” he said.

Watching a new wetlands forest grow

A project to restore old cranberry bogs to natural wetlands was launched in 2007, shortly after New Jersey Conservation Foundation bought a former cranberry farm from Garfield DeMarco and named it the Franklin Parker Preserve.



During the first phase of the project, man-made water control systems like dikes and drainage canals were removed to allow branches of the Wading River to flow freely again. Flat, compacted soils were recontoured to add mounds and depressions for a more natural landscape.

For the second phase of the project in 2008, staff and volunteers planted more than 25,000 Atlantic white cedar seedlings in the new wetlands.

What has happened since? That's what Dr. Daniela Shebitz, an environmental science professor at Kean University, wanted to find out.

Shebitz and her students studied the site and its plants, soil chemistry and water chemistry to see how the restored wetlands are faring. "What we did was look at how the cranberry bogs are progressing as functioning wetlands again," she explained.

The researchers found that most of the Atlantic white cedars survived and are now healthy trees over 20 feet tall. Eventually, trees in this young forest could reach heights of 80 to 115 feet.

The restored wetlands habitat is maturing in other ways, too. In places where cedars weren't planted, red maple trees have "volunteered" and are now thriving. And in drier spots – some of which get less water due to beaver activity – pitch pine trees now dominate.

"It really is special to see," said Shebitz, who will soon publish the results of her study. "If you could fast-forward 100 years, it would be really interesting to see what happens."



Dr. Daniela Shebitz (in shirt with striped sleeves) and her Kean University students identify plants growing in restored wetlands at the Franklin Parker Preserve.

Would pipeline construction harm salamanders?

Long-tailed salamanders, a threatened species in New Jersey, have two main strongholds. One is in western Hunterdon County near the Delaware River, and the other is in the ponds of Sussex County.



What would happen if long-tailed salamander habitat in Hunterdon County was disturbed by pipeline construction? How might this affect the genetic diversity and connectivity of long-tails across the state? To answer these questions, we first need to figure out what the current genetic diversity of New Jersey long-tails looks like and how its distributed.

That's what researcher Neha Gajendra Savant, a graduate student in the conservation biology program at Columbia University, wanted to find out.

Savant collected and analyzed DNA samples from 266 long-tailed salamanders in the two counties. She found that those living in Hunterdon County streams have more genetic diversity than the other group.

"We've been working to understand how threatened long-tail salamanders are different based on where they live," she explained. "In Hunterdon County, where the salamanders live in streams, they are more connected and there's more variety in their genes. We think that's because there's a lot of flooding in Hunterdon county streams which might move salamanders and their eggs around!"

"But in Sussex County," Savant added, "salamanders live mostly in ponds and we think that makes salamanders more isolated. Understanding more about New Jersey salamanders is important to figure out how to best protect these animals!"

To Dr. Emile DeVito, staff biologist, these findings are a strong argument against the current pipeline route through dozens of streams and thousands of acres of preserved open space and farmland. "With climate change and diseases that affect salamanders, you want to keep as much genetic diversity as possible," he said. "That will help the salamanders stay resilient."



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Discovering rare mushrooms in the Pine Barrens

Mushrooms by nature are ephemeral. One day there's nothing, and the next day a patch of ground may be covered. Then they're gone.



That's why dedicated mycologists – those who study mushrooms and other fungi – can visit the same site repeatedly and always make new discoveries.

“With fungi, you may have only one day – or even one hour,” said New Jersey mycologist Jenifer “Nina” Burghardt. “They’re very fleeting.”

Burghardt and her husband John, also a mushroom expert, make regular forays to the Franklin Parker Preserve in the Pine Barrens. Over the past year, they and fellow members of the New Jersey Mycological Association have been working to create an inventory of fungi at the preserve.

So far, they have identified 782 species, 170 of which have never been identified in New Jersey before.

Some fungi grow only in certain habitats, such as boggy areas, and some are even more particular. “Many fungi are tree specific,” noted Nina. “Some fungi only like conifers and some are very specific and only like American white cedars.”

The Burghardts and their colleagues visit Franklin Parker Preserve every month of the year to discover what changing weather conditions will yield. “The more you go, and the more people you go with, the more you’ll find,” said Nina.

To learn about the New Jersey Mycological Association and its mushroom forays throughout New Jersey, go to www.njmyco.org.

Studying endangered pine snakes

The Franklin Parker Preserve and surrounding protected state forest lands provide the perfect opportunity to research endangered and threatened reptiles. The state-threatened northern pine snake is now the subject of studies which may be helpful in developing conservation strategies that will aid their long-term survival.



Dr. Joanna Burger of Rutgers University and her graduate student Kelly Ng are currently working on pine snake behavioral studies. Kelly is observing the behaviors of nesting female adults, and hatchlings as they leave the nest.

Pine snakes like to nest in small sand dunes scattered within the forest. The exact nature of nest site selection is unknown. Some nests are dug on bare sand, but most have heather or grasses holding the sand together. Many females visit the same nest site year after year. Do young females become more selective about nest sites as they age? What can land managers do to make nest sites safe from predators, off-road vehicles and other disturbances?

When pine snakes hatch, they are on their own. They dig themselves up from nests and poke their heads out, observing their surroundings for the first time. Perhaps they are detecting predators, the nearest safe hiding places, or imprinting on the nesting location. When they crawl away, they usually seek refuge beneath vegetation. Kelly is documenting their behavior using video cameras and long hours of observation. This research will lead to better understanding of pine snakes and how nesting sites can be managed to make them as productive as possible.

New Jersey Conservation biologist Dr. Emile DeVito, Herpetological Associates, students from the Rutgers Environmental Stewardship Program, and a cast of dedicated volunteers are now radio-tracking adult pine snakes in the Franklin Parker Preserve to find winter hibernation and nesting locations close to busy highways. Many snakes are killed as they attempt to cross highways, and traffic may be isolating populations into "islands" between highways.

Dane Ward, formerly of Drexel University, and Isabel DeVito, a high school senior, are conducting DNA studies of pine snakes near highways and building a database to show whether snakes living on opposite sides of highways are becoming genetically isolated. Even if isolation isn't serious yet, at some point traffic may become so heavy that snakes on opposite sides of the road won't be able to breed unless safe passages beneath highways are provided.



Isabel DeVito, 17, has been interested in pine snakes all her life. Now a high school senior at the Pingry School, she is working on a DNA study of pine snakes. Inset: Isabel at age 3 with her father, New Jersey Conservation staff biologist Dr. Emile DeVito.



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Those who donated in 2018 will be included in next year's annual report, so stay tuned!

Share your thoughts and questions with Kathleen Ward, Director of Development and Communications, at Kathleen@njconservation.org

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YOUR LAND, YOUR WATER, YOUR FOOD, YOUR FUTURE

For 58 years, New Jersey Conservation Foundation has been dedicated to strategically and steadfastly conserving New Jersey's special places. In November 2015, we launched the *Campaign for Conservation: Your Land, Your Water, Your Food, Your Future* to secure \$30 million in private and public funds to preserve key properties throughout New Jersey. Thank you to the 325 individuals and organizations who helped us meet our goal to save 13 signature properties across New Jersey!

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Suzanne Nash
Ned and Greenie Neuburg
Lee and Sydney Neuwirth

Hunt and Margaret Stockwell
Jacqueline Strigl
Elizabeth Sutte
Russell and Lois Swanson
Susan and Thompson Swayne
Richard and Laura Szwak
Mr. and Mrs. Pete Taft
Taft Communications
Alexandra Tatnall
Becky Taylor
Christopher J. Teasdale
Ted and Penny Thomas
Tewksbury Land Trust
Elizabeth Thompson
Lise Thompson
Kathi and John Thonet
James and Barbara Tiesi
Kathryn Trenner
Mr. and Mrs. Adrian D. Trevisan
James and Susan Trowbridge
Mr. and Mrs. Eric Turnquist
Dr. Lynda Gail Tussey
Adrienne Tymiak and David Ackerman
Kyle L. Van Arsdale
Victoria Foundation, Inc.
Peter Villa
Joseph and Carolyn von Meister
Jeanne Walden
Mr. and Mrs. John D. Wallace
Kathleen Ward
William C. Ward, Jr.
John Watson
Barbara and James Webb
Fred and Elizabeth Weber
Rachel Webster
Jeffrey Weinstein
Mr. and Mrs. James O. Welch, Jr.
Caron Wendell
Peter Wester
Ginny, Todd, & Emily Whitaker
Clarissa and Alan Willemssen
The David and Ellen Williams
Foundation
Brooke Williams
Harry and Joannah Wilmerding
Louise and Cliff Wilson
Susan Wilson
The Winslow Foundation
Bob and Barbara Wolfe
William and Elizabeth Wolfe
Leslie Miller and Richard Worley
Foundation
Mr. James P. Wyse and
Dr. Elizabeth Garcia
Glenda S. Yu
Mr. Jerome Zeldis and
Mrs. Sharon Stamm
William Zick
Ali and Waldburg Zomorodi

*denotes deceased members

Impact of prescribed burns studied in Pine Barrens

Fire is essential in maintaining the ecology of the Pine Barrens. But in the absence of wildfires – which are suppressed to protect lives and homes – fires on natural lands must be planned, or “prescribed,” under controlled conditions.



In February and March 2017, New Jersey Conservation collaborated with the New Jersey Forest Fire Service to conduct prescribed burns on about 1,800 acres of the Franklin Parker Preserve. The purpose was to reduce the risk of wildfires and renew iconic Pine Barrens habitat.

The burns, and their aftermath, were of great interest to researchers. The fires burned the tops off shrubs and scorched mature trees. The new openings in the forest canopy let more sunlight through, allowing plants previously shaded out to re-emerge.

According to Russell Juelg, senior land steward with New Jersey Conservation and instructor of the Pinelands Plant Course, botany student Lan-Jen Tsai found white-fringed orchids growing in the burn area. Another student, Robyn Jeney, is monitoring a population of Knieskern's beaked-rush that hadn't been documented before at the Franklin Parker Preserve.

Researchers are also studying a wildflower known as turkey beard, a member of the lily family, to see how it's benefiting from the additional sunlight. In one experiment led by Dr. Daniela Shebitz of Kean University, five patches of turkey beard were fenced to find out how well these plants survive with and without deer browsing.

Another unanticipated effect of the burn was to encourage “dodders,” parasitic plants that grow on shrubs like blueberries, huckleberries and sheep laurel. After the fires, Juelg said, dodder vines began attacking the tender new shoots of the shrubs whose tops had burned off. He and Lan-Jen are monitoring them to see which plants win out.

Dr. Nicholas Skowronski of the U.S. Forest Service brought a team of international researchers to learn about the behavior of fires and how they spread. They caught embers in pans to determine how far they traveled and if they were still burning when they landed. They used thermometers with GPS trackers to collect temperatures throughout the burn site, and also collected three-dimensional wind data to find out how the fire's heat affected air flow.



Photo by Christopher Magarelli

A member of the New Jersey Forest Fire Service supervises a prescribed burn at the Franklin Parker Preserve in March 2017.

INSET: Turkey beard plant in bloom.

2017 GAINING GROUND

NEARLY 1,700 ACRES
PRESERVED THROUGHOUT
THE STATE

LEFT: Corn grows on part of the former Diocese of Trenton property in Hamilton Township.

CAMDEN COUNTY

GATEWAY PARK 3, 4, 5 4+ acres, City of Camden

These three properties along Admiral Wilson Boulevard were transferred to the Camden County Municipal Utilities Authority (CCMUA) from the Delaware River Port Authority to become part of Gateway Park along the Cooper River. Additional parcels in Gateway Park were preserved in 2018. The soon-to-be 25-acre park will be managed by New Jersey Conservation in partnership with the Camden County Municipal Utilities Authority, providing outdoor recreation, environmental education, river access, wildlife habitat and scenic enjoyment.

CAPE MAY COUNTY

CAPE VIKING DEVELOPMENT 477 acres, Middle Township

New Jersey Conservation assisted with the early efforts to preserve this property and congratulate the Nature Conservancy and American Littoral Society in their acquisition of this exceptional forest habitat as an addition to the Cape May National Wildlife Refuge. The land is classified by the state as a Natural Heritage Priority Site, providing habitat for barred owls, Eastern tiger salamanders and Copes gray tree frogs. The property is largely surrounded by preserved open space and farmland.

CUMBERLAND COUNTY

SHEPPARDS MILL GIRL SCOUT CAMP 424 acres, Greenwich Township

New Jersey Conservation advocated and helped build public support for this acquisition by the New Jersey Green Acres Program. The property is an outstanding forest with a 50-acre



Photo by Fran Rapa

Upper Pittsgrove celebrates over 10,000 acres of preserved farmland in June 2017. A press conference was held at the 65-acre Brooks farm, which put the township over the 10,000-acre mark. New Jersey Conservation has helped to preserve 13 farms in Upper Pittsgrove totaling 1,197 acres.

PICTURED: Michael Brooks; NJ Senate President Stephen Sweeney; Salem County Freeholder Benjamin Laury; Upper Pittsgrove Township Mayor Jack Cimprich; NJ Secretary of Agriculture Douglas Fisher; Salem County Freeholder Director Melissa DeCastro.

lake that is part of the Burden Hill forest complex. The Girl Scout organization owned the property for many decades and kept the forest and habitat in excellent natural condition. It is critical bald eagle habitat, with old growth trees, high biodiversity and few invasive species.

HUNTERDON COUNTY

COLE 21 acres, Readington Township

In the late 1700s, a German indentured servant named Casper Berger repaid his debt, became a free man and settled in the village of Readington. Eight generations later, the farm is in the same family. And it is likely to remain a family farm, now that the land is permanently preserved. The development rights

were purchased using New Jersey Conservation's funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Readington Township's funding from the State Agriculture Development Committee.

HIGGINS 3 152 acres, East Amwell Township

This property in the Sourland Mountains is part of a new preserve that eventually will include over 1,200 acres. The property contains farm fields and woodlands, with panoramic mountain views. The new preserve is open to the public for passive recreation, including, hiking, horseback riding, birding and nature observation. New Jersey Conservation acquired the land with the assistance of East Amwell Township, Hunterdon County, New Jersey Green Acres Program, Raritan Headwaters, 1772 Foundation and Hunterdon Land Trust.

JOHNSON 45 acres, Delaware Township

New Jersey Conservation purchased this property from two members of a local farming family that had owned it for over 60 years. Grover Johnson and his sister-in-law, Alice Johnson, wanted to see it remain undeveloped and open to the public for walking and hiking. It is now part of the Wickecheoke Creek Preserve, an ever-growing patchwork of more than 1,100 acres of preserved open space and farmland. Funding came from New Jersey Green Acres and Hunterdon County grants to New Jersey Conservation. The New Jersey Water Supply Authority covered a portion of the ancillary costs.

KLIPSTEIN, DAVID & TARA 6+ acres, Tewksbury Township

A vision for a 10-mile trail winding through Tewksbury's rural countryside and connecting preserved parks and farms is now a step closer to reality. New Jersey Conservation provided technical assistance to our longtime partner, the Tewksbury Land Trust, to help them acquire 5.5 acres of farmland on the east side of Old Turnpike Road and a 2,100-foot pathway easement across an adjacent residential property. The land and pathway easement connect to other preserved lands. Funding came from grants to the Tewksbury Land Trust from Green Acres and Hunterdon County.

SARGENT 5 acres, Tewksbury Township

The "greenbelt" surrounding historic Oldwick village was enhanced by the donation of a 5-acre conservation easement on the south side of Hill & Dale Road. The property includes a trail that could eventually connect to the nearby Hill & Dale Preserve.

SKALSKI 48 acres, Tewksbury Township

New Jersey Conservation bought the development rights on 48 acres of the historic Finderne House Farm. The horse farm will continue in private ownership, but future uses are limited to agriculture. The farm is located near the Cold Brook, which helps protect water quality and wildlife habitat. The easement will be held by Hunterdon County. Funding was provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resource Conservation Service, the State Agriculture Development Committee and the 1772 Foundation.

MERCER COUNTY

CHOWDHURY 32.8 acres, Hamilton Township

New Jersey Conservation assisted Mercer County in preserving this farmland along Sawmill Road. The farm is in the Crosswicks Creek watershed, and its soils are 14 percent Prime and 85 percent Statewide Important, the two highest classifications of soil quality for agricultural production.

DIOCESE OF TRENTON 19 acres, Hamilton Township

Once proposed for a cemetery and mausoleums, the property at the edge of the North Crosswicks village historic district is now permanently preserved as open space. The property was acquired by Save Hamilton Open Space from the Diocese of Trenton and is nearly surrounded by preserved farmland and open space. It will be used for passive public recreation such as hiking, bird watching and nature observation. Agriculture to attract grassland bird and pollinator habitat will continue on a section of the property that has been farmed for hundreds of years. Funding came from a Green Acres grant to Save Hamilton Open Space, Mercer County, a North Crosswicks Friends of Open Space grant and private donations. The property will be transferred to North Crosswicks Friends of Open Space who will own and manage it.

DIOCESE OF TRENTON 13 acres, Hamilton Township

As part of a package deal with the Diocese of Trenton, the purchase of the 19-acre property was bundled with a separate 13-acre property with frontage along Doctors Creek. This property, which has wetlands and steep slopes, is a bald eagle foraging area and will be kept in its natural state to protect wildlife. It is now owned and managed by Hamilton Township. Funding came from a Green Acres grant, a grant from Mercer County and funds from Hamilton Township.

OCEAN COUNTY

PALMER 0.08 acres, Lacey Township

The donation of a small, undeveloped parcel expands the nearly 4,000-acre Candace McKee Ashmun Preserve at Forked River Mountain. Over the years, New Jersey Conservation has received many similar donations of small parcels.

SALEM COUNTY

BROOKS 65 acres, Upper Pittsgrove Township

New Jersey Conservation helped permanently preserve this part of the Dusty Lane Farm, owned by Michael Brooks. Salem County purchased the development rights in partnership with New Jersey Conservation, the State Agriculture Development Committee, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service, Upper Pittsgrove Township and Pittsgrove Township.

HARRELL 89 acres, Upper Pittsgrove Township

The Harrell farm was preserved by Salem County with the help of New Jersey Conservation's federal Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service. It is comprised of 100 percent Prime, Statewide Important and Unique soils – the highest classifications for soil quality – and therefore contributes to the agricultural viability of the area. It is contiguous to other preserved farmland and is in close proximity to several other farms preserved by New Jersey Conservation. The farm also contains a tributary to Kettle Run, a headwater stream of Oldmans Creek.

LICCIARDELLO

122 acres, Pilesgrove Township

The State Agriculture Development Committee preserved this farm along the Oldmans Creek in March 2017. Working with several partners, New Jersey Conservation helped the landowner to identify and evaluate various options before choosing farmland preservation.

STRANG

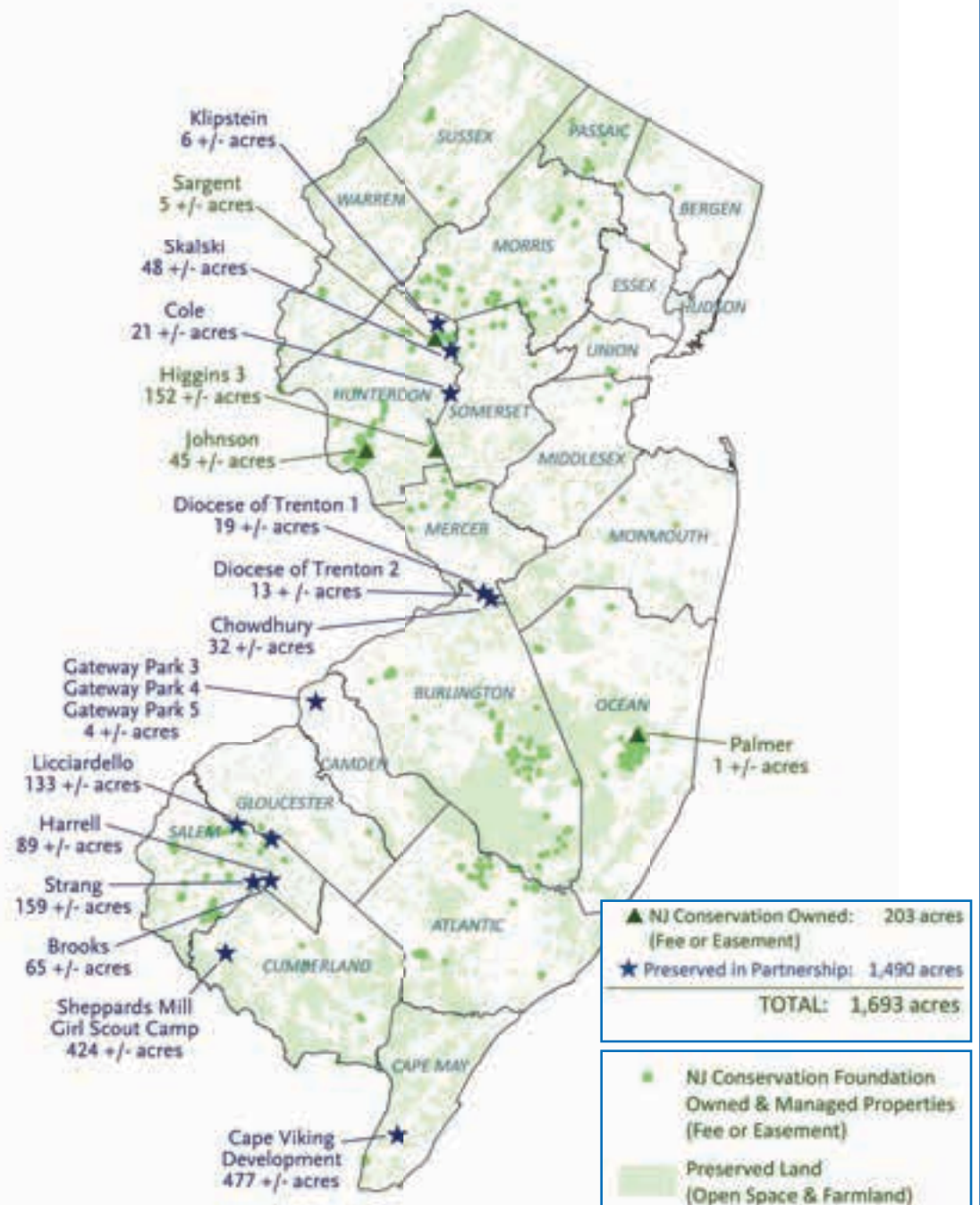
159 acres, Alloway and Upper Pittsgrove Townships

New Jersey Conservation assisted the landowners in preserving this farm through the State Agriculture Development Committee Direct Easement Purchase Program. The property is comprised of 100 percent Prime and State Important farmland soils.

2017 PUBLIC FUNDING PARTNERS

Camden County	NJ Water Supply Authority
Camden County Municipal Utilities Authority (CCMUA)	Mercer County
Cumberland County	Salem County
Delaware River Port Authority	State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC)
East Amwell Township	Upper Pittsgrove Township
Hamilton Township	USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
Hunterdon County	US Fish & Wildlife Service
NJDEP Green Acres Program	

19 PROJECTS • 1,693 acres



2017 POLICY UPDATE

OUR POLICY TEAM WORKS
TO DEFEND NEW JERSEY'S LAND,
WATER, AIR AND WILDLIFE.



U.S. Senator Cory Booker, center, signs the “Principles to Protect our Public Lands, Water, Air, & Wildlife” at a ceremony in April 2017. Surrounding him are, from left, Elliott Ruga of the NJ Highlands Coalition, Amy Hansen and Alison Mitchell of New Jersey Conservation, Ed Potosnak of the NJ League of Conservation Voters, former NJ Assemblywoman Maureen Ogden, Mike Pisaro of the Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association, Tom Gilbert of New Jersey Conservation and Bill Kastning of Monmouth Conservation Foundation.

LAUNCH OF THE *Principles to Preserve Land, Air, Water and Wildlife*

Former governors Brendan Byrne, Tom Kean, Jim Florio and Christie Whitman, widely known for their environmental advocacy and achievements, joined former Congressman Rush Holt and former Assemblywoman Maureen Ogden to ask New Jersey's congressional delegation to stand up for and defend Principles to Protect our Public Lands, Water, Air & Wildlife. Nine of our 14 delegation members signed on, including both Senators Menendez and Booker, Congresswoman Watson Coleman, and Congressmen Lance, Norcross, Pallone, Pascrell, Payne, and Sires. Action alerts to our members on conservation issues resulted in thousands of letters to congressional representatives urging them to adhere to the principles as they voted on key pieces of legislation throughout the year. New Jersey Conservation took action on the Principles – to protect and defend public lands – by urging New Jersey's Congressional Delegation to oppose legislation that further weakens environmental review of natural gas pipelines and other fossil fuel infrastructure. Seven of New Jersey's twelve House members opposed the bill (H.R.2910). It was approved by the House but never taken up by the Senate.

To learn more about the Principles,
go to [www.njconservation.org/
EnvironmentalPrinciples.htm](http://www.njconservation.org/EnvironmentalPrinciples.htm).

NATURAL RESOURCE DAMAGES BALLOT QUESTION

A huge success this year was the overwhelming passage of the statewide ballot measure dedicating all funds from Natural Resource Damages settlements to the protection and restoration of natural resources. These funds have historically been used to preserve important lands, but a portion of the money has repeatedly been diverted to plug holes in the State budget. Passage of Question 2 this year – which had the support of nearly 70% of voters – will ensure that all funds resulting from pollution settlements will be dedicated to environmental protection and restoration.

CLEAN ENERGY REPORT

On September 28th, Rethink Energy NJ and New Jersey Conservation released a new report, New Jersey's Pathway to Clean Energy, detailing several affordable options for the state to reduce emissions from the electric sector 50% by 2030, to meet the long-term emissions reduction targets under the Global Warming Response Act.

GREEN IN '17

We were an active partner in the Green in '17 initiative, a collaborative effort spearheaded by NJ League of Conservation Voters to educate the gubernatorial candidates and the Governor elect about current environmental issues. We then contributed our expertise to the "Environmental Agenda '18" which lays out specific policy recommendations for the new administration.

LG HEADQUARTERS GROUNDBREAKING

We celebrated the groundbreaking of LG's new corporate headquarters on the Palisades in Englewood Cliffs. The new office is the result of a settlement with LG and our partners after a successful campaign to prevent the high rise building originally proposed that would have marred the iconic landscape of the Palisades.

ONGOING ISSUES

PIPELINE PROJECTS

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection denied PennEast's premature application for permits. PennEast continues to press for the unneeded pipeline, seeking court approval to condemn and seize nearly 150 properties in New Jersey, including 50 preserved properties.

Despite enormous public opposition, the Pinelands Commission and NJ Board of Public Utilities approved both the South Jersey Gas and Southern Reliability Link pipelines through the Pinelands National Reserve. The approvals now face legal challenges by the Pinelands Preservation Alliance and other partners.

MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC LANDS

We called on the incoming Murphy administration to advance a comprehensive planning process for the management of public lands. Comprehensive planning based upon current science is needed to protect the state's rare animals, plants and critical habitats, as well as scenic, historic, and recreational resources.

STAFF

Michele S. Byers, *Executive Director*
Jennifer Amorese, *Development & Communications Coordinator*
Erica Arlès, *Administrative Assistant, Land Acquisition & Stewardship*
Alix Bacon, *Regional Manager, Western Piedmont*
Mark Barrick, *Information Technology / Office Manager*
Tucker Birmingham, *Camden Fellow*
Tim Brill, *Central Jersey Project Manager*
Jack Brownstein, *Camden Fellow*
Marcus Burrell, *Camden Fellow*
Beth Davisson, *Project Manager, Black River Greenway*
Justin Dennis, *Camden Land Steward*
Emile DeVito, Ph.D., *Manager of Science & Stewardship*
Kavon Eslambolchi, *Camden Fellow*
Wilma Frey, *Senior Policy Manager*
Jane Gardner, *Campaign Project Assistant*
Tom Gilbert, *Campaign Director – Energy, Climate & Natural Resources*
Olivia Glenn, *South Jersey Regional Manager*
Amy Hansen, *Policy Analyst*
Maria Hauser, *Personnel Manager / Executive Assistant*
Steven Jack, *Associate Land Steward*
Russell Juelg, *Senior Land Steward*
William Lynch, *Assistant Director, Education Programs & Communications*
Lisa MacCollum, *Assistant Director of Land Acquisition*
Kelly Martin, *Development Associate*
Melanie Mason, *Land Steward*
Alison Mitchell, *Director of Policy*
Stephanie Monahan, *Pine Barrens Regional Manager*
Timothy Morris, *Director of Stewardship*
Marie Newell, *Project Coordinator, Acquisition*
Tanya Nolte, *GIS Manager*
Sandy Stuart Perry, *Staff Writer*
Francis Rapa, *Regional Manager, Delaware Bay Watershed*
Karen Richards, CPA, *Director of Finance & Administration*
Heidi Marie Roldan, *Corporate & Foundation Relations Manager*
Greg Romano, *Assistant Director & Director of Statewide Land Acquisition*
Gerard Sauchelli, *Associate Land Steward*
Neha Savant, *Herpetologist*
Susan Schmidt, *Administrative Assistant / Receptionist*
Bill Scullion, *Land Steward, South Jersey*
Connor Stone, *Special Project Manager*
Laura Szwak, *Director of Outreach & Education*
Ingrid Vandegaer, *Manager, Highlands Region*
Kathleen Ward, *Director of Development & Communications*
Allison Williams, *Easement Steward*

New Jersey Conservation Foundation is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, age, national origin, ethnic background, disability or any other characteristic protected by law. We are committed to building a diverse team and strongly encourage all qualified professionals to apply.

2017 GRANT AWARDS

FRANKLIN PARKER CONSERVATION EXCELLENCE GRANTS

21 PROJECTS;
TOTAL AWARDED \$52,825

The Franklin Parker Conservation Excellence Grants provide funding for nonprofit conservation organizations working in New Jersey. The grants are designed to enhance proficiency in land conservation, develop long-term viable programs, and support creative, innovative projects that can serve as models for other communities and projects. Since its inception in 1989, the Franklin Parker Conservation Excellence Grants Program, previously administered by Conservation Resources Inc., has awarded more than \$1,729,571 for 449 nonprofit conservation projects throughout the Garden State. Funding for the grants is provided by Victoria Foundation and Mary Reinhart Stackhouse Foundation.

BROOKDALE PARK CONSERVANCY **Brookdale Park Section Goes Native!**

\$2,500

The project will engage students from Montclair State University to remove invasive plants and plant native vegetation and return a section of this Essex County park to the original design by Frederick Law Olmsted.

CONSERVE WILDLIFE FOUNDATION OF NJ **\$3,000** **Bat Behavior Becomes Less Mysterious**

The grant will fund an assistant to help Conserve Wildlife Foundation staff lead a team of volunteers in gathering more comprehensive information about bat species' habitat choices and distribution using acoustic surveys.

D&R GREENWAY LAND TRUST **\$3,000** **Ecotone Shields Forest in Cedar Ridge Preserve**

D&R Greenway will create a buffer, or ecotone, between forest and meadow habitats in their 216-acre preserve. A transition area with native sun-loving shrubs and small trees between the open meadow and forest will buffer the forest and avoid negative edge effects.

DELAWARE RIVERKEEPER NETWORK **\$2,000** **Videos Feature Innovative Urban Preservation Activities**

The Network will produce a minimum of 4 videos that highlight stories about innovative preservation projects taking place in more developed areas in New Jersey.

FRIENDS OF HOPEWELL VALLEY OPEN SPACE **\$5,000** **Updating Invasive Species Tracking App**

The Friends will contract with the University of Georgia to update and improve the NJ Invasive Species Strike Team data collection, management and distribution system, the cornerstone of all Strike Team activities. The app has been downloaded to over 6,000 phones!

FRIENDS OF PRINCETON OPEN SPACE **\$1,400** **Children Explore a Neighborhood Forest**

The Friends have used previous Franklin Parker grants to improve the forest environment of their Mountain Lakes Preserve. They now plan to invite youth groups to spend a day in the forest. Grant funds will be used to purchase nets, gloves and other outdoor equipment.

LEFT: Second grade students from Haddonfield Friends School enjoy environmental science programs in Saddler's Woods, one of the hands-on activities funded by the Franklin Parker Conservation Excellence Grant.

GREAT SWAMP WATERSHED ASSOCIATION (GSWA) \$2,400

Salamander Habitat Created and Explained

GSWA will create three vernal pool habitats and design new interpretive natural history signs throughout their Conservation Management Area in Harding.

HUNTERDON LAND TRUST \$2,025

Improving Bird Habitat at Dvoor Farm

The Land Trust will remove invasive species and plant native species to create a healthy vegetated buffer along the Walnut Brook in order to attract a variety of birds.

ISLES, INC. \$2,500

Cleaner and Greener Vacant Lands in Trenton

With previous Franklin Parker grants, Isles cleaned up nearly 150 vacant lots in Trenton with labor supplied by neighborhood volunteers. Isles will offer recreational programs on some of these lots and engage neighborhood residents to become stewards.

MONMOUTH CONSERVATION FOUNDATION \$2,500

Farmland Owners Encouraged to Keep Farming

Established farmers and owners of farm assessed land in Monmouth County will share strategies for keeping land in agricultural or conservation use rather than development.

MONTGOMERY FRIENDS OF OPEN SPACE \$1,400

Trail Kiosk and Signs Invite People to Explore

The Friends will install a kiosk and trail markings for a multiple use trail. The signs will invite the public to explore and learn about the importance of natural areas.

PINELANDS PRESERVATION ALLIANCE \$2,500

Volunteers Corps for the Pinelands

The Alliance will organize a network of 300 volunteers to assist public and nonprofit managers with projects that deter activities such as dumping, poaching and off-road vehicle use.

RARITAN HEADWATERS ASSOCIATION \$5,000

Accreditation Assistance

The grant will pay application fees and a consultant to help the organization with their first-time accreditation process.

RIDGE AND VALLEY CONSERVANCY \$2,500

Implementing the Management Plan for Pine Pond Preserve

The management plan for the Conservancy's Pine Pond Preserve in Frankford, Sussex County will be based on the results of a botanical survey funded by the grant.

SADDLER'S WOODS CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION \$2,500

Engaging the Public in Stewardship of Old Growth Forest

Fifteen acres of urban old growth forest in Saddler's Woods, Haddon Township, Camden County will be restored while engaging the community in hands-on activities like removing invasive plant species and cultivating native species.

SOURLAND CONSERVANCY \$2,000

Support for the Sourland Stewards

The Sourland Stewards are volunteers trained to carry out ecological restoration. The habitat restoration project supported by this grant will take place at Baldpate Mountain in partnership with the Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space and Mercer County Park Commission.

SOUTH JERSEY LAND AND WATER TRUST \$1,000

Developing a Management Plan for New Preserve

The Trust recently took ownership of a 73-acre property in Carneys Point, Salem County. The grant will assist with developing a management plan and marking property boundaries, in conformance with accreditation requirements.

STONY BROOK-MILLSTONE WATERSHED ASSOCIATION \$4,000

Acquiring 19 Acres on Mt. Rose Ridge

A Franklin Parker grant last year assisted with the soft costs in acquiring this property. The property is adjacent to the 930-acre Watershed Preserve and contains habitats recognized by Hopewell Township to be among the most environmentally sensitive and biologically diverse in the area.

TEWKSBURY LAND TRUST \$2,500

Trail Training for Land Trusts

A segment of a ten-mile trail system developed by the land trust needs to be moved and improved. The grant will be used to hire a consultant to do the trailwork. Other conservation groups will be invited, through the NJ Land Trust Network, to learn basic trailbuilding techniques with the consultant.

WAGNER FARM ARBORETUM FOUNDATION \$600

Invasive Plant Removal in Children's Garden

In the process of replacing invasive plants with native plants, the Foundation will offer education programs to families about how this activity is beneficial to the environment. The Arboretum is in Warren Township, Somerset County.

BERGEN SWAN \$2,500

Organizational Support

Bergen SWAN (Save the Watershed Action Network) celebrates 30 years of preserving and protecting the reservoir region of the Hackensack River Watershed next year. To assist this all-volunteer organization in recovering from a tragic loss of leadership, the grant will fund a part-time assistant to rebuild membership and support.

2017 INTERNS

DANNY LOGATTO
Drew University
Winter 2017
Rally

AMANDA COLOMBO
St. Peters University
Winter 2017
Rally

CHRISTINA ALLEX
Morris County Community College
Winter 2017
Rally

BRINT BARKER
Georgian Court University
Fall 2017
Somerset Open Space Plan and FPP Stewardship Work

ASHVIN KUMAR
Rowan University
Summer 2017
NJ Conservation Nonprofit Directory

ADAM PALMER
Ursinus College
Fall 2017
Stewardship Work

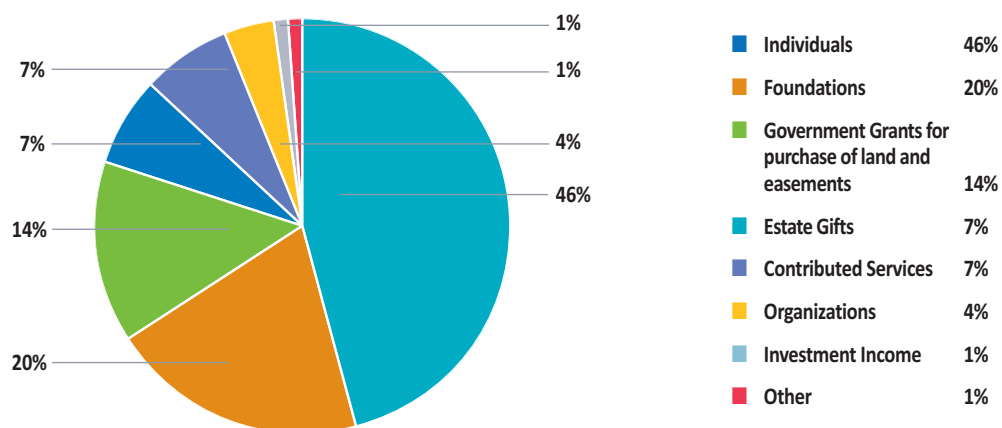
JUSTIN ARNOLD
Colorado State University
Summer 2017
FPP Stewardship and Research Report

CONNOR STONE
Pennsylvania State Univ.
Fall 2017
Rally and Somerset Open Space Plan

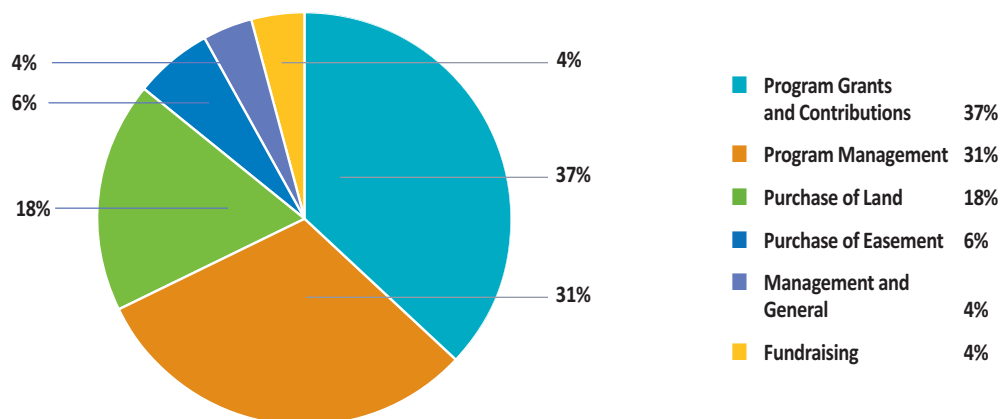
2017

FINANCIAL POSITION

2017 Support and Revenue \$13,445,396*



2017 Expenses and Land Purchases \$12,255,174*



DECEMBER 31
2017 (1)

DECEMBER 31
2016 (1)

Assets

Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$2,880,298	\$2,807,966
Investments	13,261,177	10,449,752
Unconditional Promises to Give, net	554,803	838,469
Note Receivable	—	100,000
Beneficial Interest in Split Interest Agreements	283,168	201,709
Land and Easements	36,569,773	35,579,940
Other Assets	223,898	134,558
Total Assets	\$53,773,117	\$50,112,394

Liabilities and Net Assets

Liabilities

Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses	199,236	\$290,363
Refundable Advances	243,000	—
Total Liabilities	\$442,236	\$290,363

Net Assets

Unrestricted	46,150,321	42,999,805
Temporarily Restricted	7,074,286	6,715,952
Permanently Restricted	106,274	106,274
Total Net Assets	53,330,881	49,822,031
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$53,773,117	\$50,112,394

(1) Extracted from the December 31, 2017 audited financial statements

*Unaudited financial information

To receive a copy of the complete audited financial statements and notes, please send a request to info@njconservation.org

Leaving a legacy for future generations

The Red Oak Society was founded in 2011 to recognize those who donate to New Jersey Conservation Foundation through planned giving. We thank the conservation-minded members of the Red Oak Society who are preserving New Jersey's natural resources and lands for future generations.

To become a member of the Red Oak Society, please let us know if you wish to support New Jersey Conservation Foundation's mission by:

- **Giving through your will or charitable trust**
- **Giving through IRAs, qualified retirement plans, insurance or donor advised funds**
- **Gifts of conservation easements, cash, securities and real estate**

To discuss how your planned gift will help ensure the permanence of preservation, contact Kathleen Ward, Development Director, at 908-997-0723 or kathleen@njconservation.org.

While it is not necessary to advise us in advance that you have included New Jersey Conservation Foundation in your estate planning, we encourage you to let us know of your plans so that we may thank you and learn more about your interests. If you wish to add us in your will or estate plan, please use the following listing: New Jersey Conservation Foundation/170 Longview Road / Far Hills, NJ 07931.

Our tax identification number is 22-6065456.



Members of the Red Oak Society

Fredrick A. Allis*
Eveyln Arcuni*
Carl Austin
Edward F. Babbott
Ira H. Beckman*
Louis C. Bodenheimer*
David Bolger
Andrea Bonette
Louise Bossert*
JoAnn Bowman
Rose M. Bracco*
Zella Brady*
C. Austin Buck*
Ann H. Bumsted*
Michele S. Byers
Sylvia S. Campbell*
Ogden B. Carter*
Nancy Castleman*
Catherine A. M. Cavanaugh
Sophia Chroscinski*
Tillie Chwat*
Jack and Ronnie Cimprich
Francis and Elizabeth Coles*
Beryl Robichaud Collins*
Jean K. Colvin*
John Connolly*
Warren P. Cooper*
Mary Lou Curran*
William D. Dana*
Rev. Julia S. Dawson
Michael Dawson and
Robert Tomaselli
Lillie R. DeBevoise*
William D. deCamp*
Hugo and Margaret
deNeufville*
Joseph Dlugach*
Nelson C. Doland, Jr.*
Theodore M. Edison*
Ann O. Edison*
Frank Eggert*
Richard W. Elbertson*
Charles and Eleanor Engel

Nicholas and Eleanor English*
Walter Brooks and
Dorothy Stewart Evert*
Sarah P. Fiske*
Elizabeth Ernst Fosbinder*
Barbara Galli*
Elizabeth K. Gardner*
Margaret Gardner*
Joan C. Gilson
Ruth Gleason*
Alfred R. Gnam*
Elsie B. Grove*
Stephen C. Gruber
Eleanor Gural*
Thomas B. Harvey
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Bamboo Brook | 170 Longview Road | Far Hills, NJ 07931
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“Ask the right questions, and
nature will open the doors
to her secrets.”

– C.V. RAMAN