

# New Jersey Conservation



Capturing sunrise during a Pine Barrens  
photography workshop

4

#### A NEW TOOL LAUNCHED IN CAMDEN

Interactive map will help residents improve their health and quality of life with information about parks, community services and more.

8

#### LAND PRESERVED IN THE SOURLAND MOUNTAINS

A preserve spanning the border of Somerset and Hunterdon counties is about to reach the goal of encompassing over 1,150 acres.

12

#### TWO LANDMARK LAWS PASSED

A new state law advances the cause of environmental justice for overburdened communities, while a new federal law provides more funding for parks and green spaces across the U.S .



New Jersey Conservation  
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**Michele S. Byers**

## ABOUT THE COVER

A photographer waits for the perfect opportunity to capture the sunrise during a Pine Barrens photography workshop hosted by NJ Conservation. Landscape photographer Richard Lewis led this series of programs over the course of the fall at the Franklin Parker Preserve, and hopes to continue offering them in 2021. View his incredible work at [richardlewisphotography.com](http://richardlewisphotography.com)



## From Our Executive Director

**Michele S. Byers**

It was early March and the New Jersey Conservation Foundation staff was shifting into high gear for a 60th anniversary celebration. We envisioned a fun, festive night with 400-plus members enjoying great food, live auctions, and dancing to the hits of the past six decades.

As we know, it didn't turn out that way. In the span of weeks, New Jersey's COVID-19 cases exploded and instead of a party we cancelled all events, closed offices and sent staff home to work.

As we and others worked remotely and the state got quiet, the importance of parks and nature to people skyrocketed. For months, people turned to the outdoors and nature for fresh air, exercise, solace and peace of mind.

The pandemic highlighted the lack of equitable access to open space and nature. For example, most suburbanites and residents in more rural areas of the state were able to easily get to parks, and even just enjoy their own backyards. But many residents in highly urbanized areas without back yards and transportation were stuck indoors.

This year, 100 percent of the Franklin Parker Community Conservation Grants were directed to support organizations working to address environmental challenges and improve quality of life for African American communities and other communities of color. Read about grant recipients and their projects on page 10.

Land preservation and advocacy work continued in 2020 despite many challenges. Two of 2020's most outstanding land preservation successes were the Higgins and Wertsville properties in East Amwell Township – key additions to a new preserve being created in the beautiful Sourland Mountains of Somerset and Hunterdon counties. Read all about it on pages 8 and 9!

We don't know what the coming months will bring, but New Jersey Conservation Foundation will continue to preserve land and natural resources throughout the state for the benefit of all.

On behalf of the trustees and staff, I want to thank you, our loyal members and supporters, for your incredible generosity during these tough months. We are so grateful for your gifts, and for your desire to make New Jersey a better place.

Happy holidays, and all our best wishes for a healthy, safe and happy 2021!

*Michele S. Byers*

All maps were created by Tanya Nolte, GIS Manager, NJ Conservation



New Jersey Conservation Foundation is a private, non-profit organization whose mission is to preserve land and natural resources throughout New Jersey for the benefit of all.

We protect strategic lands through acquisition and stewardship, promote strong land use policies, and forge partnerships to achieve conservation goals.

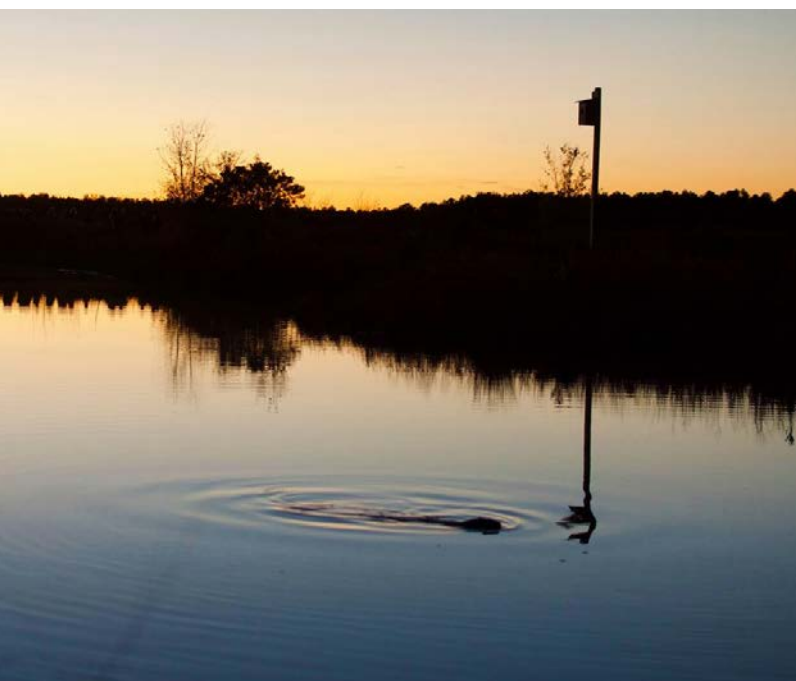
For membership information, please visit our website at [www.njconservation.org](http://www.njconservation.org) or call us at 1-888-LANDSAVE. Our mailing address is 170 Longview Road, Far Hills, NJ 07931.







## Screening of “Pine Mud” at Franklin Parker Preserve



On a brisk Saturday evening in October, we hosted a screening of Jared Flesher's new documentary *Pine Mud* at the Franklin Parker Preserve. The night began with sunset hikes through the restored cranberry bogs, which were highlighted by calling screech owls, a swimming beaver, and an incredible concert put on by a pack of distant coyotes. ■ The film explores the issue of illegal off-road vehicle use in the Pine Barrens, and was followed by a Q&A with Jared, NJ Conservation biologist Dr. Emile DeVito, and Jason Howell of Pinelands Preservation Alliance. You can sign up for updates on the film at [hundredyearfilms.com](http://hundredyearfilms.com)





# A new tool for Camden

**Where can you find a walking trail or bike path in Camden?**

*Which city parks have playgrounds and picnic tables?*

**Where's the nearest farmers' market?**

*Where could new parks and community gardens be created on vacant lots?*

**Which neighborhoods would benefit most from planting shade trees?**





## NJ Conservation Foundation launches Camden Conservation Blueprint

That information – and much more – is available on a newly-launched interactive mapping tool designed to help improve the health and quality of life of Camden residents.

The online mapping tool, known as the Camden Conservation Blueprint, was created by a partnership of New Jersey Conservation Foundation, Rowan University and The Nature Conservancy; and supported by a grant from New Jersey Health Initiatives (NJHI), a statewide grantmaking program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

“This conservation- and health-focused interactive mapping tool was made especially for Camden,” said Michele S. Byers, executive director of New Jersey Conservation Foundation. “In addition to helping city residents find places to exercise and get fresh foods, the Camden Blueprint has a huge amount of information to guide local organizations that provide facilities and services for the community.”

The Camden Conservation Blueprint was developed with the help, direction and input of the community. The map is loaded with more than 80 data sets related to public health and the built environment,

including demographics, wellness statistics, places to find healthy food and community services, and detailed information on parks and amenities. It’s simple to use and intended for everyone, from residents to professional planners.

### Helping Community Organizations

Local organizations are already finding ways to enhance their work using the Camden Conservation Blueprint.

The New Jersey Tree Foundation, for example, will use the map to plan future tree planting projects and assess the impact trees make in Camden. “We look forward to using the Conservation Blueprint to check local demographics, asthma rates, urban heat island effect, and more,” said Meredith Brown, program coordinator for the NJ Tree Foundation. “We thank New Jersey Conservation Foundation and partners for creating the Conservation Blueprint, and look forward to strategizing where trees are most needed in Camden using this important tool.”

*continued next page*





The New Jersey Tree Foundation is using information from the Camden Conservation Blueprint to determine which neighborhoods need more trees planted along their streets.

The Hispanic Family Center of Southern New Jersey (HFC) will use the Camden Conservation Blueprint to help clients improve their health. “The Conservation Blueprint empowers the community to access parks to better their health and wellness,” said Nicole Wismer, the organization’s director of program analysis and development.

“HFC clients continually express the desire to improve their family’s health through exercise and spending time outdoors,” said Wismer. However, she added, they sometimes don’t use Camden’s parks and green spaces due to questions about conditions, location, access barriers and safety.

“With the help of the interactive Conservation Blueprint tool and NJ Conservation Foundation, HFC trains individuals to use data to decide which parks meet their family’s needs, concerns, and goals,” said Wismer. “Families navigate the Conservation Blueprint tool to find the closest park with amenities like a community grill, walking trail, splash pad, or shade trees.”

The Camden Conservation Blueprint can also be used to gain a better understanding of neighborhood residents and whether their recreation needs are being met. For example, in neighborhoods with lots of children, are there enough playgrounds and is the equipment safe? In neighborhoods where many households don’t own cars, are there enough parks and green spaces within walking distance?

“We know one approach that community leaders can take to address the deep-rooted issues known to influence health is to make better use of available data and share it with other community stakeholders, partners and residents to guide their decision-making,” said Bob Atkins, PhD, RN, FAAN, director of NJHI. “By leveraging the expertise of a cross-sector coalition of Camden partners, the Camden Conservation Blueprint takes data that might have been previously inaccessible and places it at residents’ and community leaders’ fingertips to help them locate available resources and advocate for policy, systems and environmental change that can improve health for all.”

In order to develop the Camden Conservation Blueprint, NJ Conservation worked in close partnership with Rowan University.

“Collaboration was key to the blueprint’s success,” according to John Hasse Ph.D. AICP, director of Rowan’s Geospatial Research Lab where the mapping technology was developed and is hosted. “We adjusted and customized our statewide mapping resources to serve the unique needs of Camden’s urban environment and network of city parks. Rowan’s expertise in GIS mapping developed the interface to be intuitive and easy to use for Camden users. NJ Conservation’s community outreach facilitated input from a broad coalition of stakeholders. The result is a mapping tool that can be used for a variety of purposes to serve a broad array of Camden residents.”

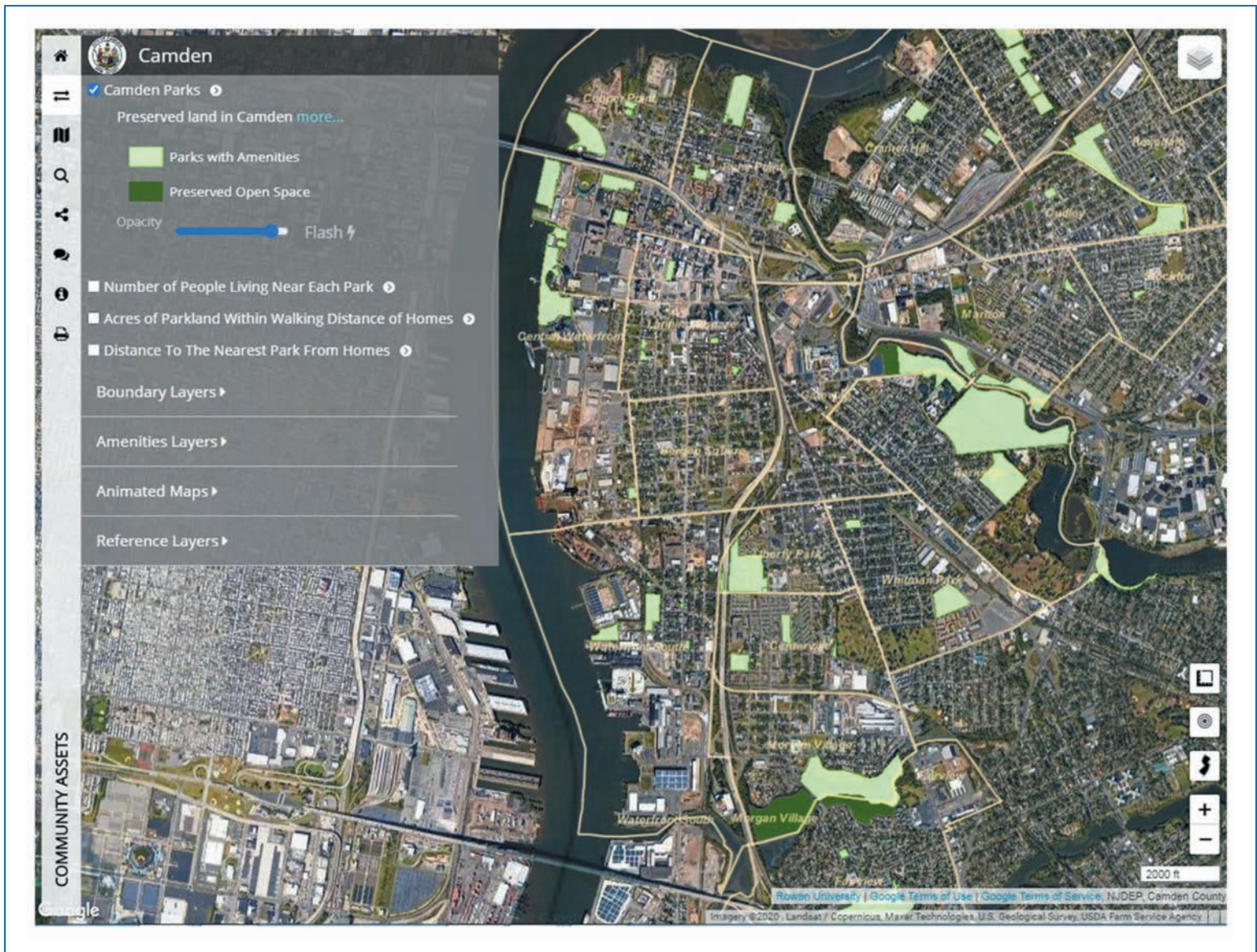
## Long history in Camden

New Jersey Conservation began working in the City of Camden in 1986, with the long-term vision of establishing a greenway along the Cooper River. More than 30 years later, the Foundation is playing an active role in the city’s renaissance, working with numerous community partners to provide access to nature and waterways, education programs and recreation opportunities.

## About New Jersey Health Initiatives

New Jersey Health Initiatives is a statewide grantmaking program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF). Established in 1987 in honor of the New Jersey philanthropic legacy of RWJF’s founder, General Robert Wood Johnson II, NJHI supports innovations and drives conversations to build healthier communities through grantmaking across the State of New Jersey. To meet the many health needs of our state’s diverse populations, regions and communities, the NJHI program encourages collaboration across sectors to foster deep relationships committed to long-term change affording all New Jerseyans the opportunity to live the healthiest life possible. [Learn more about NJHI at www.njhi.org.](http://www.njhi.org)





## How to use the Camden Conservation Blueprint

To use the interactive map, go to [www.njmap2.com/communityassets/camden](http://www.njmap2.com/communityassets/camden).

An aerial map of Camden will appear on the screen, with the city's 20 neighborhoods outlined.

A menu on the left can be used to switch on and off dozens of “layers” of information, including:

■ **Parks and open space** – The map’s first option shows the locations of parks and preserved open space lands in the city. Other menu boxes can be clicked to find out the number of people living within walking distance (a quarter-mile) of each park, acres of parkland within walking distance of homes, and distance to the nearest park from various neighborhoods.

■ **Amenities layers** – Clicking on this layer allows users to find parks with the features they’re looking for, such as playgrounds, basketball courts, bike racks, multi-use trails, grills, drinking fountains, water play features and more. The amenities layer also includes information on the conditions of park facilities.

■ **Reference layers** – These layers can be switched on and off to show locations of farmers’ markets, hospitals, urgent care centers, bus stops, train stations, community resource sites like food pantries and soup kitchens, schools and more. Other layers show tree canopy, vacant parcels, industrial sites, known contaminated sites, flood-prone areas and priority lands for conservation. Demographic information is also available, including median age, single headed households with children, and households without a car.



# 1,150-acre preserve in Sourlands becoming a reality!

**NJ Conservation and partners acquire 378 acres in East Amwell**

A DECADES-LONG VISION OF ESTABLISHING A NEW 1,150-ACRE NATURE PRESERVE IN THE SOURLAND MOUNTAINS IS ABOUT TO BE REALIZED THIS FALL, WITH THE PRESERVATION OF THE FINAL 378 ACRES IN EAST AMWELL TOWNSHIP, HUNTERDON COUNTY. THE PRESERVE STRADDLES THE BORDER OF HUNTERDON AND SOMERSET COUNTIES IN ONE OF CENTRAL JERSEY'S MOST SCENIC AND ECOLOGICALLY IMPORTANT AREAS.



On Oct. 26, New Jersey Conservation Foundation and its partners acquired 268 acres from landowner John Higgins for \$4.15 million. The purchase of 110 adjoining acres in East Amwell for \$1.62 million from Wertsville Industries is expected to be completed in December.

The two parcels connect 150 previously-preserved acres in East Amwell to over 600 preserved acres in neighboring Hillsborough Township, Somerset County.

"With these acquisitions, the new preserve in the beautiful Sourland Mountains now totals over 1,150 contiguous acres for public enjoyment and wildlife habitat protection," said Michele S. Byers, executive director. "We're very grateful to all of our partners for making this purchase possible, and we are thrilled to make this spectacular land available to the public."

The Higgins property includes woodlands, farm fields, a scenic lake and several tributaries of the Neshanic River. The Neshanic flows into the Raritan River, a source of drinking water for over a million New Jerseyans. The land is identified as a "Core Habitat Area" for wildlife by the NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife. The Wertsville property includes wooded and agricultural land with a beautiful tributary of the Neshanic River.

The new preserve will be available for passive recreational activities including hiking, horseback riding, birding and nature observation. The properties include some existing trails and a formal trail system is planned for the future.

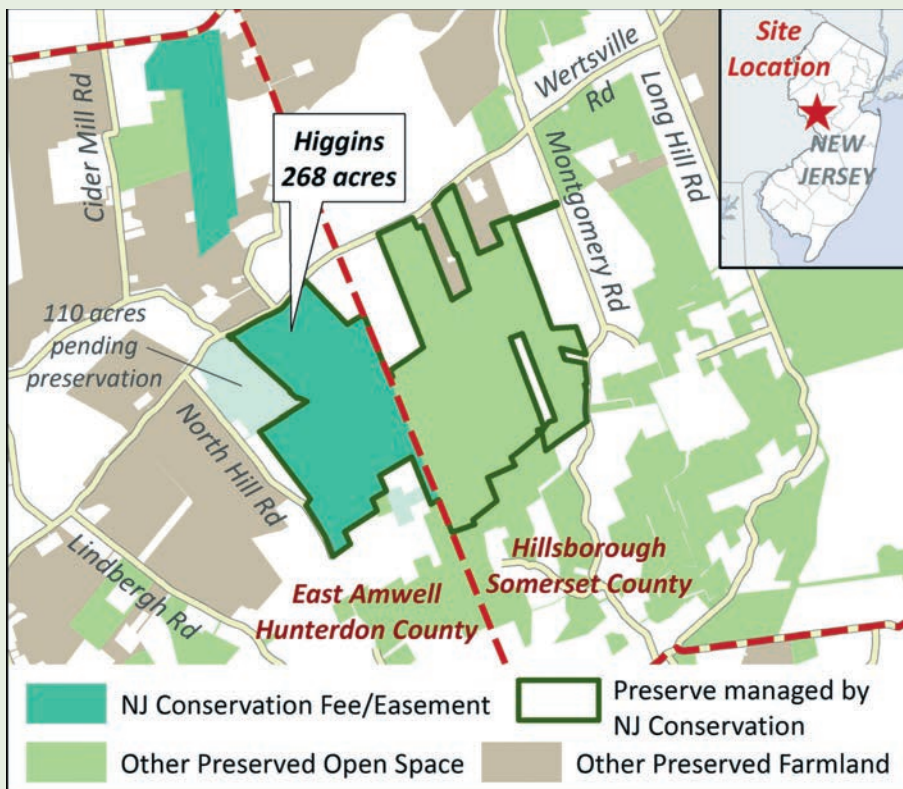
A multimillion-dollar settlement with the State of New Jersey over longstanding pollution in Central Jersey paid for a large portion of the newly-preserved properties. Wyeth Holdings, a subsidiary of Pfizer, agreed to pay \$4.2 million to compensate for natural resource damages related to groundwater pollution at the American Cyanamid Superfund site in Somerset County.

"I applaud Wyeth for working cooperatively with DEP's Office of Natural Resource Restoration to amicably resolve their liability

and to enhance natural resources in the Raritan River watershed," said NJ Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Catherine McCabe. "Cooperation like this ensures that our time is better spent restoring and improving outdoor spaces for the enjoyment of all New Jerseyans."

New Jersey Conservation Foundation spearheaded a partnership of public and private agencies to preserve the Higgins and Wertsville Industries properties, including the state Office of Natural Resource Restoration, the New Jersey Green Acres Program, Hunterdon County, East Amwell Township, Hunterdon Land Trust, Raritan Headwaters Association, The Nature Conservancy, 1772 Foundation and an anonymous foundation donor.

**"The Department of Environmental Protection is proud to be a partner in the acquisition of this very important parcel in the treasured Sourlands," DEP Commissioner Catherine R. McCabe said. "In linking together existing preserved lands across Hunterdon and Somerset counties, the Higgins property will help combat current and future climate threats and remain a vital habitat for wildlife, a protected source of drinking water, and a serene place for future generations to enjoy New Jersey's great outdoors."**



## Central Jersey's Green Swath

The Sourland Mountain region is an expansive green swath of intact forest and farmland spanning parts of Hunterdon, Somerset and Mercer counties. It extends from the central part of Hillsborough Township southwest to the Delaware River in West Amwell, Hunterdon County, and Hopewell Township, Mercer County.

The region contains over 20,000 contiguous forested acres, which protect the headwaters of streams flowing to the Millstone, Raritan and Delaware Rivers and the Delaware & Raritan Canal.

The Sourland Mountains' forests and wetlands provide habitat to threatened and endangered animal species including the barred owl, bobcat, Cooper's hawk, grasshopper sparrow, savannah sparrow, upland sandpiper and wood turtle.

In addition, the region serves as a stopover for migratory birds that travel between South America and the boreal forests of Canada, and for those that travel from Central America to New Jersey to breed. The area also supports a large population of forest interior birds such as scarlet tanagers, Kentucky warblers and red-shouldered hawks.



# Grants awarded to help communities of color

Safe and accessible outdoor spaces, and access to fresh local food, clean water and clean air, are essential to the health of every New Jersey community. ■ This past summer, New Jersey Conservation Foundation directed 100 percent of Franklin Parker Community Conservation grants to support organizations working to address environmental challenges and improve quality of life for communities of color throughout New Jersey. The grants are funded by Victoria Foundation. ■ Conservation organizations across the state responded with proposals to effect change and inspire the next generation of conservationists. Grants were awarded to the following organizations and programs:



The Stoutsburg Sourland African-American Museum in Montgomery Township.

**American Littoral Society, Virtual SeaQuest-Camden** – This program is a virtual supplemental marine science education program for students at the UrbanPromise School with an elevated interest in the marine science and environmental fields.

**Boys & Girls Clubs of Cumberland County, “Guardians of the Green” Initiative** – This project educates young people on the environment around them including the open space, forests and waterways of Cumberland County.

**Camden Lutheran Housing, Inc. (CLHI), “Blight to Bright – Transforming Abandoned Places to Green Spaces”** – CLHI will perform vacant lot stabilization and maintenance projects in at least five locations in North Camden – increasing access to safe, healthy green space – while beautifying publicly accessible spaces through urban horticulture and/or art installations.

**Foodshed Alliance, “Affordable Farming Opportunities for Communities of Color on Preserved Farmland”** – The project intends to increase the number of farmers of color operating organic farm businesses by providing affordable long-term leases on New Jersey preserved farmland.

**Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space, “FoHVOS Avian Tracking Internship”** – The funding will provide 15 students from communities of color with the knowledge of local avian diets, nesting and incubation habits, bird banding and migration. In addition to STEM education, the internships will cultivate contacts with conservation professionals, discuss green job prospects, and build resumes for future job opportunities in conservation.

**Grow It Green Morristown, “Teaching about Regenerative Agriculture”** – The grant will expand knowledge of regenerative agriculture and help foster a more equitable food system by creating a new paid apprenticeship program at The Urban Farm to provide

opportunities for two diverse young applicants to learn about farming utilizing sustainable methods and potentially inspiring new innovative growing methods in an urban setting.

**New Jersey Highlands Coalition, “Turtle Clan of the Ramapough Lunaape Nation promotes traditional farming on newly-leased Munsee Farm at Muckshaw Preserve”** – The project will support teaching and interpretation by the Turtle Clan at its 9-acre Munsee Farm, where they are growing traditional foods and medicinal plants, regaining tribal knowledge and values, fostering self-sufficiency, and encouraging food security and environmentally sound practices.

**Ridge and Valley Conservancy, “Munsee Three Sisters Medicinal Farm Fencing Project”** – This project will help fund the purchase and installation of deer fencing around the Munsee Three Sisters Medicinal Farm project at RVC’s Muckshaw Farm (a part of the Foodshed Alliance’s Sustainable Agriculture Enterprise program) in order to increase crop yield by at least 40 percent.

**Stoutsburg Sourland African American Museum, “Cultural and Natural History in the Sourlands”** – This project will engage audiences that previously may not have been interested in learning about the environment by preparing interpretive signs, with video links, at African American history sites in the Sourlands, and by providing educational experiences at these sites, focused on the symbiotic relationship between the heritage of the African American community in the Sourlands and the unique and critical ecology of the region.

**Teaneck Creek Conservancy, “Racial Antibias Training for NJ Environmental Centers”** – The grant will engage local New Jersey nature centers in racial antibias training in order to create an understanding of systemic racism and give their staff and board the resources to create equitable and inclusive natural spaces for people of all races, religions, sexual orientations, and creeds to enjoy, experience, and learn.



# 2020 GAINING GROUND

New Jersey Conservation Foundation and its partners permanently preserved 978.5 acres from March 1, 2020 through October 31, 2020. These lands include family farms, grasslands for grazing horses and cattle, and natural areas that safeguard clean drinking water, protect wildlife habitat and offer scenic beauty and outdoor recreation.

**THANK YOU TO ALL  
MEMBERS, VOLUNTEERS  
AND PARTNERS FOR  
HELPING TO PRESERVE  
THESE LANDS!**

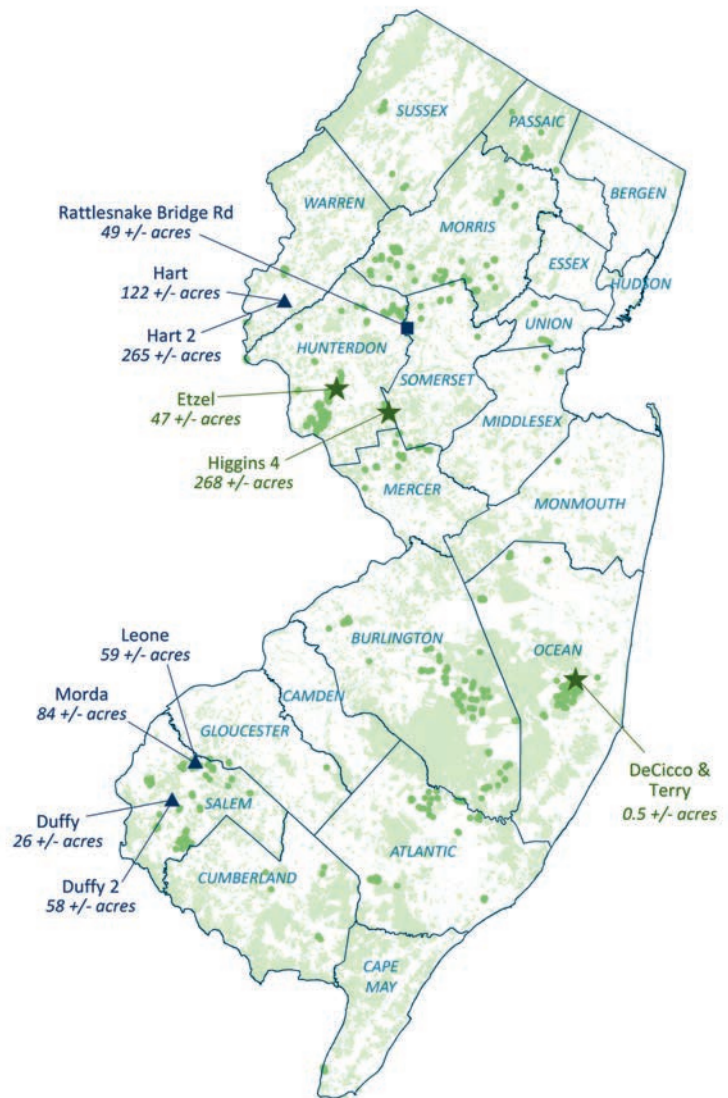
## 11 Projects

(March - Oct 31st, 2020)

- ★ NJ Conservation Owned: 315.50 acres (Fee or Easement)
- ▲ Preserved in Partnership: 614 acres
- NJ Conservation Land Transfers to Other Entities: 49 acres

- NJ Conservation Foundation Owned & Managed Properties (Fee or Easement)
- Preserved Land (Open Space & Farmland)

**TOTAL: 978.50 acres**



It's easy to join New Jersey Conservation Foundation online – visit the website at [www.njconservation.org](http://www.njconservation.org)

**Become a Member Today!**





## POLICY UPDATE:

## Two landmark laws



Surrounded by environmental justice advocates, Governor Phil Murphy in September signed landmark legislation to protect public health and quality of life in communities that have been subject to disproportionate levels of pollution. At right, the Trenton community benefits from fresh food grown at the Capital City Farm.



## Environmental justice law passed in New Jersey

**Growing up in Camden, Olivia Carpenter Glenn suffered from asthma and allergies. She wasn't alone: many of her family members, friends and neighbors also had respiratory ailments, a result of breathing the polluted air in their industrial city.**

Respiratory health issues were so common in Camden that Olivia gave them little thought until her freshman year at Dartmouth College in New Hampshire.

"That first fall, being around such fresh air, and just seeing the beauty of the White Mountains of New Hampshire and the Green Mountains of Vermont, really made me start to ask a lot of questions: Why is this beauty here and it's not where I'm from? Why do I have persistent respiratory issues when I'm home, but when I'm here I don't have them?" she recalled.

Olivia is a former New Jersey Conservation Foundation staff member who now serves as deputy director of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, in charge of advancing the state's environmental justice and equity efforts.

Questions like hers will be addressed, now that New Jersey has a powerful new environmental justice law aimed at ending environmental health disparities between the state's urban, industrial and low-income areas, and its wealthier suburbs and rural communities.

The law was signed in September by Governor Phil Murphy, after over 100 environmental justice and conservation groups – including New Jersey Conservation Foundation – advocated on its behalf.

Environmental justice is defined as the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people and communities – regardless of race, color, national origin or income – in the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies. The environmental justice movement emerged in the 1980s and has been gaining momentum in recent years.

New Jersey's landmark law enables permitting agencies to consider "cumulative impacts" when reviewing applications to construct or operate facilities that pollute. Prominent activists like Dr. Nicky Sheats of the John S. Watson Institute for Public Policy, describe the ability to consider cumulative impacts the "Holy Grail" of the environmental justice movement."

The bill would require certain applicants seeking permits from the Department of Environmental Protection to submit an environmental justice impact statement stating the consequences their project would have on neighboring "overburdened communities." The Department would then gather public input and weigh the cumulative impacts of pollution on communities when deciding whether to grant permits for new or expanded facilities.

For Olivia, who worked on parks and open space in Camden during her stint with NJ Conservation, the implications of New Jersey's environmental justice leadership work go beyond the Garden State.

"We are taking bold steps on behalf of environmental justice communities nationwide," she says. "We hope this empowers leaders and advocates everywhere to better protect some of our most vulnerable neighbors."



# passed

## More funding provided for public parks and open spaces

**In a year with so much bad news, one bright spot has been the passage of a law boosting federal funding for parks and open spaces.**

With strong bipartisan support in Congress, the Great American Outdoors Act was signed into law in August. The law has been hailed as the most significant federal conservation law since President Jimmy Carter doubled the size of the national park system 40 years ago.

The Great American Outdoors Act guarantees \$900 million a year – double the current spending – to the Land and Water Conservation Fund, a goal that New Jersey Conservation Foundation and its partners have been working toward for many years.

The Act also provides up to \$9.5 billion over five years to tackle a backlog of maintenance at national parks and federal lands, and particularly important during the pandemic, is expected to create some 100,000 new jobs nationwide.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund, established in 1964 by President Lyndon B. Johnson, provides outdoor recreation for millions of people at no cost to taxpayers. It's funded entirely through royalties from offshore oil and gas projects.

Since its inception, the Land and Water Conservation Fund has helped preserve iconic landscapes in every state, including Rocky Mountain National Park in Colorado, Mount Rainier National Park in Washington, the Gettysburg National Military Park in Pennsylvania and George Washington's Mount Vernon in Virginia.

In New Jersey, this fund has provided more than \$346 million to help establish, expand and improve public parks in all 21 counties, from small community parks to national recreation areas and wildlife refuges like the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area and the Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge.

Other special places benefiting from the Land and Water Conservation Fund include the New Jersey Highlands region, which protects the clean drinking water of more than 6 million people, Wharton State Forest in the Pine Barrens, Paterson's Great Falls National Historic Park, Liberty State Park, the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge and Island Beach State Park.



Congresswoman Mikie Sherrill, right, and Jo Schloeder, left, deputy chief of staff for Congressman Chris Smith, celebrated the full, permanent funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund during a ceremony at the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge.

## Projects in New Jersey supported by the Land and Water Conservation Fund include:

- Almost half a mile of additional trails, picnic areas and spots for sightseeing along the Delaware River backchannel in Camden Waterfront Park
- Continued revitalization of Jesse Allen Park as a vibrant space for community gathering, recreation and athletics. When completed, it will be Newark's second largest city-owned park, benefiting nearly 13,700 residents within a 10-minute walk, and surrounding communities.
- An addition to the Rockaway River Wildlife Management Area in Morris County, connecting 3,000 acres of preserved lands. This unique property flows into the Musconetcong and Rockaway River watersheds and protects water quality in both Lake Shawnee and Lake Hopatcong.
- Continued revitalization of Camden Waterfront Park, extending it by nearly half a mile with additional trails, picnic areas and spots for sightseeing along the Delaware River backchannel.
- Improvements at Liberty State Park, Spruce Run Recreation Area and Pequest Fish Hatchery.

**We thank the entire New Jersey Congressional delegation for their long standing support of the Land and Water Conservation Fund and for getting full and permanent funding over the finish line!**





Lynn Cremona



Kelsey Mattison



Veronica Rezende



Gabrielle Rosenthal

## Self-sufficient interns shine during pandemic

THEY REMOVED INVASIVE PLANTS, ANALYZED THE IMPACT OF FORESTS ON CLIMATE CHANGE, CATALOGED RESEARCH ON PINE BARRENS PLANTS AND STUDIED WAYS TO ENGAGE MORE PEOPLE IN CONSERVATION.

New Jersey Conservation Foundation's four summer/fall 2020 interns did all of that and more – an impressive feat during a pandemic that kept them from regular, in-person contact with their supervisors and other staff members.

"This year's interns had to be completely capable of working independently – and they were," said Michele Byers, executive director. "They really accomplished a lot of projects, and we're grateful to have had them."

**Veronica Rezende** of Trenton, a student at Stockton University, worked primarily at the Apschawa Preserve in Passaic County, removing invasive plants from land and water. During the course of her internship under the supervision of land steward Melanie Mason, she pulled an estimated 4,000 invasive plants, improving habitat for native plants and wildlife. Her duties included paddling into the reservoir at the center of Apschawa in a canoe to yank invasive water chestnut plants. "It was fun," she said, despite bugs and leeches.

**Gabrielle Rosenthal** of Highland Park, a student at Rutgers University majoring in ecology and evolutionary anthropology, worked with Dr. Emile DeVito, NJ Conservation's staff biologist. Gabrielle analyzed research on how proper forest management can mitigate climate change. She found substantial evidence that older forests with large trees accumulate the most carbon. The lesson? "Let the forests keep going, let the forests be," she said.

**Lynn Cremona** of Neptune, who is enrolled in the Rutgers Environmental Stewards program, worked on compiling a plant index of the Franklin Parker Preserve in the Pine Barrens. Under the supervision of Russell Juelg, who teaches Pine Barrens plant courses, Lynn began looking at students' research plots and figuring out how best to present the data they collected. Lynn learned a lot about prescribed burns, rare plants, impacts of beavers, geese, deer and off-road vehicles, and the preserve's history as a cranberry farm.

**Kelsey Mattison**, marketing coordinator for engineering consultant Princeton Hydro, volunteered to help develop a plan to increase engagement in the City of Camden and other places in the state. Kelsey assisted with the launch of the Camden Conservation Blueprint, an interactive map designed to improve wellness and quality of life in the Camden community. The positive outcome of increased engagement with diverse populations, she said, is more volunteers and greater community involvement with NJ Conservation Foundation projects.

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**A big thank you to Veronica, Gabrielle, Lynn and Kelsey, whose projects improved New Jersey Conservation Foundation preserves and helped us find new ways to carry out our mission!**



# Michele Byers receives Candace McKee Ashmun Environmental Legacy Award



Photo by Jay Watson

Candace Ashmun, Emile DeVito and Michele Byers

The late Candace McKee Ashmun, who passed away on May 23 at the age of 96, was well known as a mentor and inspiration to generations of environmental advocates. It was fitting, then, that an award named in Candy's honor was given this year to one of her earliest protégées.

On October 14, the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions (ANJEC) presented the Candace McKee Ashmun Environmental Legacy Award to Michele Byers, executive director of New Jersey Conservation Foundation.

"Candy was one of the most influential people in my life, and I'm so honored to be chosen for this award," said Michele, who joined New Jersey Conservation in 1982 and became executive director in 1999.

Michele first met Candy in the late 1970s when, as ANJEC's first executive director, Candy hired and trained a group of young conservationists. Michele was among those who got the opportunity to learn from Candy, who would become one of New Jersey's most respected defenders of the environment.

Candy was the last original member of the New Jersey Pinelands Commission, having served for over 40 years. She served on the State Planning Commission, the New Jersey Highlands Coalition, the Coalition for Affordable Housing and the Environment, the Fund for New Jersey and the Crossroads of the American Revolution Association.

Candy was a longtime volunteer for New Jersey Conservation Foundation, and in 2010 one of the foundation's preserves in the Pine Barrens was named for her: The Candace McKee Ashmun Preserve at Forked River Mountain.

Michele noted that almost every conservationist in New Jersey wanted to emulate Candy. "She was a hero to all of us: intelligent, fun, energetic, enthusiastic, shrewd, totally dedicated to protecting the environment, and with integrity beyond question. Youthful in mind and spirit, she could accomplish more in a day than most half her age.

"Candy taught me never to give up and to always find a way around every obstacle in the way of a conservation goal, and to be brave," added Michele. "With Candy's support behind me, I worked as hard as I could to protect the Pines – and lands throughout New Jersey."

## WEEVILS: PESTS or ALLIES?

Weevils are often thought to be pests, but they can also be allies in the fight to control invasive plants. This fall, beneficial weevils were released at the newly-preserved Higgins property in East Amwell to help eradicate Mile-a-Minute weed, an invasive vine that can grow 20 feet in a year and choke out native trees and vegetation. Land steward Melanie Mason holds weevils in her hand.







New Jersey Conservation Foundation welcomes new members and gratefully acknowledges donors who made contributions between October 2019 and December 2019. With your support, we work hard to preserve and protect New Jersey's lands.

## New Members

(from January 2020 through September 2020)

Robert Adamski  
Liping An  
LaVerne Anderson  
Ashley's Soccer Camp  
Kylie Bailin  
Carol Jean Ballantyne  
Joseph Basralian  
Lorna Bearn  
Andrea B. Bent  
Gregory G. Bernet  
Linda Bradley  
Mr. Edward and Mrs. Barbara Byrnes  
George Calandriello  
Arlene Ceterski  
Edward Champey  
Richard Chew  
Columbia University School of Law  
Conklin Family Fund  
Carrie Croton  
Kara De Smet  
The Dibianca Family Foundation  
Carolyn Fahey  
Mecheline Farhat-Roldan  
Florence Township Board of Education  
Friends of Forsythe  
National Wildlife Refuge, Inc.  
Laszlo Gere  
Devin Gingery  
Ralph Gioseffi  
Katharine H. Glynn and Eugene R. Clements  
Lascinda Goetschius  
Joshua Goldman  
Angie Gutermuth  
Heather Haberle  
Gabriel Harkov  
William Honachefsky, Jr.  
Tom and Katherine Hunt  
Claudia Ionescu  
John Kilcullen  
Jean Klerman  
Lou Kotsinis  
Leslie Jones Foundation  
Brian Lestini  
Ken Lockman  
Richard L. Magovern  
Andrew Major  
Alan Mann  
Michael Marra  
Elzbieta Maslowska  
Susan Matson  
Kenneth McGill

Robert Moore  
Wendy Neu  
Sharon Oley  
Outdoor Club of South Jersey  
Park Foundation, Inc.  
Paul Von der Heyden Foundation  
Eric J. Pedersen  
Kristin Redmond  
Spencer Rice  
Mike Richichi  
June E. Riddell  
Elizabeth Ritter  
Kenneth Rodgers  
Robert C. Ross  
Christine Roy  
Denise Sandy  
Laraine Sauer  
Stephanie Schrader  
Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education  
Dein Shapiro  
Christopher Spitaletto  
SSF Acquisition LLC  
Barbara W. Steele  
David Taylor  
The Center for Aquatic Sciences  
James Vogdes  
Carol Watchler  
West Morris Mendham High School  
Wildlife Information Center, Inc.  
Hugh D. Willig

## \$500 and Above Members

(from January 2020 through September 2020)

Anonymous Donors  
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Merrick G. and Linny Andlinger  
Ashley's Soccer Camp  
The Jacqueline Asplundh Family Fund  
Alexi Assmus  
Carl Austin  
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Michele S. Byers  
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Robert J. and Linda W. DeLap  
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Dr. Rosina B. Dixon  
Catherine Dodge  
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Robert H. and Stephanie Harris  
Healey Family Foundation  
Helen & William Mazer Foundation  
Tom and Jane Higgins  
Pamela and Howard Hirsch  
David Holman  
William Honachefsky, Jr.  
Caroline P. Huber  
Mark Huddell and Kerry L. Miller  
Johanette Wallerstein Institute  
Joseph Z. Duke and Jennifer Johnson  
Dave Jones  
The Justin & Lee Kellogg Sadrian Foundation  
Harold Kiel

Phoebe Weseley and David King  
Sybil B. Kramer  
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Joan Millsbaugh  
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Meredith Moore and Steve Rabbe  
Richard Moseley and Joanne Gusweiler  
National Audubon Society  
National Wildlife Federation  
Wendy Neu  
New Agency Partners  
Open Space Institute  
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Mrs. Langdon Palmer  
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Curtis and Ann P. Viebranz  
Heidi Wendel  
The Hon. Christine T. Whitman  
Wildlife Information Center, Inc.  
The William P. and Gertrude Foundation Inc.  
Harold P. and Joannah Wilmerding  
Louise Currey Wilson  
Barbara B. Wolfe

## Memorials

(from January 2020 through September 2020)

Candace M. Ashmun  
Pete Belcher  
Michele S. Byers  
Anne Fox  
Mark Huddell and Kerry L. Miller  
Hayes Wauford



Anne Gaus  
Julie C. Baron  
Michele S. Byers  
Rich Chey  
Clarissa Krumbiegel  
Pamela Lynch  
Jessica Millan  
Irene Preston  
Kristin Troche

James D. Kiel  
Beverly Hammett-Kiel

Richard MacCormack  
Hugh J. Snyder

Lucy Meyer  
Michele S. Byers  
Wilma E. Frey  
Friends of the Kinnelon Museum  
Megan McCarthy  
Wayne Rackoff

Mary W.T. Moore  
Catherine A. M. Cavanaugh  
Evelyn & Walter Haas, Jr. Fund  
Nicholas Gottscho  
Glenn Juelg  
Derek Koch  
Brenda Parr  
Debbie and David Yaskulka

Frank Palmieri  
Denise and Craig Feder

David Parry  
Joyce Lane  
Laurie Pasch  
Rita Petersen

Anita Richmond  
Marjorie A. Barrett

Bruce Vitale  
Sherry Forgash  
Christina Shiebler  
Mark Taylor  
Lila Vitale  
Diane Burgess

Robert Wolfe  
Michele S. Byers  
Lynda M. Clarizio  
Nancy Cunningham and  
Allison Accurso  
Richard A. and Elisabeth Ginman  
Lawrence & Sara Jane Gluckman  
Edgar L. Griffith  
Mark Canright and Amy Hansen  
Anne-Reneé Heningburg  
Walter H. Hill  
Elizabeth Kellogg  
Richard Kitto, Jr.  
Cheryl Lathrop  
Richard and Elizabeth Lilleston  
Ellen & Russ Miller  
Gretchen Oberfranc  
Betsy and Paul Sittenfeld  
Margery Slonaker  
Thompson and Susan Swayne  
Pete Taft and Mara Connolly  
Van Z. and Myra Williams  
Bob and Carol Wolfe  
Richard and Karen Woodbridge

## Tributes

(from January 2020  
through September 2020)

Dr. Emile DeVito  
Gregory Puchalski

Beryl Doyle  
Lois K. Stewart

Maria Kasparova  
Polina Kasparova

Cynthia and Peter Kellogg  
B. M. and Shelden O. Pisani  
Frederick L. and Laura S. Rhodes

Allison Lavallato  
Stephanie Lavallato

Richard MacCormack  
Hugh J. Snyder

Angeline and Nicholas Sabett  
Stephanie Sabetta

Betsy Schnorr  
Eric Schnorr

Dr. Daniela Shebitz  
Green Thumb Garden Club

# LEAVING A LEGACY FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

By becoming a member of the Red Oak Society, you can demonstrate your commitment to preserving and protecting New Jersey land.

An anonymous couple has generously created a Bequest Challenge to support land preservation. This couple will jointly donate \$500 for each bequest, new or re-affirmed, up to \$30,000 – that's 60 commitments!

All estate plan gifts qualify for this match.

Planned gifts provide the financial resources needed to acquire threatened land and maintain long-term stewardship responsibility. The bequest challenge ensures that your legacy gift goes even further!

To be a part of this generous challenge and become a member of the Red Oak Society, please let us know that you wish to support New Jersey Conservation Foundation's mission with a planned gift.

For more information, call 908-997-0727 or email [info@njconservation.org](mailto:info@njconservation.org).



## HOW IT WORKS

- Include or confirm NJ Conservation Foundation in your estate plans.
- Let us know your intent by calling 908-997-0727 or emailing [info@njconservation.org](mailto:info@njconservation.org)
- The anonymous couple will donate \$500 today in recognition of your intent!



# Welcome New Trustees



Jane E. Higgins



James W. Hughes



Meredith Moore



Stefani Schwartz



Meredith Taylor

## NEW JERSEY CONSERVATION FOUNDATION WELCOMED

FIVE NEW MEMBERS TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES THIS FALL –

JANE E. HIGGINS, JAMES HUGHES, MEREDITH MOORE,  
STEFANI SCHWARTZ AND MEREDITH TAYLOR.

**JANE HIGGINS** serves as managing director and senior trust officer for the private bank at Bank of America, and is a member of the Estate Planning Council of Bergen County and Northern New Jersey. She graduated magna cum laude from Rutgers University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Finance and a Master's in Business Administration, and was elected to membership in the Phi Beta Kappa Society. A graduate of the American Bankers Association's National Graduate Trust School, Jane holds the Certified Trust and Financial Advisor (CTFA) designation. She serves on the board of the Paper Mill Playhouse in Millburn.

**JIM HUGHES** is the former dean of the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers University, and a current university professor. A nationally known expert on demographics, housing and regional economics, he is also a prolific author of books and articles. Jim has received numerous awards and honors for his work. He has been both a Woodrow Wilson and Ford Foundation Fellow, and was a Distinguished Fellow of the National Association of Industrial and Office Properties.

**MEREDITH MOORE** serves as vice-president of communications and marketing for the National Association of Water Companies and is a principal in the consulting firm Riverbridge Communications. Meredith holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from Kenyon College and an MBA degree from the Carlson School of Management at the University of Minnesota. She serves as vice president of the board of the Princeton Area Community Foundation, and chairs the Communications and Student Engagement Committee at the Philander Chase Conservancy at Kenyon College.

**STEFANI SCHWARTZ**, an attorney, is a founding partner at the Hatfield Schwartz Law Group in Morristown, with extensive expertise in areas of corporate, employment and labor law. She holds a bachelor's degree from Gettysburg College, and a Master's of Public Administration degree and law degree from Rutgers University. She was recognized by the New Jersey Law Journal and NJBIZ with a "Forty Under 40" Award, and was a 2012 recipient of the award for the "Best Fifty Women in Business."

**MEREDITH TAYLOR** is a research associate at Rutgers University's School of Environmental and Biological Sciences, currently serving in the Office of Urban Extension and Engagement. She is a co-founder of Ag in the City, a statewide network to support and advance urban agriculture and sustainable food systems. She holds a bachelor's degree from Dartmouth College, a master's degree in Food Studies and Nutrition from New York University, and a master's degree in Public Health from New York Medical College. She serves on the Environmental Justice Advisory Committee of the NJ Department of Environmental Protection and the advisory committee of the Rutgers Gardens Farmers Market.

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**Thank you to our all-volunteer Board of Trustees for their dedication to protecting New Jersey's land and natural resources for the benefit of all!**



# Remembering Mary W.T. Moore

**Mary W.T. Moore, a longtime member of New Jersey Conservation Foundation's Board of Trustees and the wife of former executive director David Moore, passed away on June 10 at the age of 80.**



An ardent conservationist and historic preservationist, Mary joined New Jersey Conservation Foundation's board in 1976 and served for many years, later becoming a member of the foundation's Advisory Council.

In addition to her work with New Jersey Conservation Foundation, Mary was an active supporter and partner with David's other conservation and historic preservation interests, including the Pinelands Preservation Alliance, New Jersey Future, and the Delaware River Mill Society.

Mary was a 40-year member of the Brookside Garden Club, and a former member of the Mendham Township Environmental Commission.

As conservation chair of the Morristown Junior League, she was instrumental in reactivating a trail project in 1971. Known as Patriots' Path in Morris County, this extensive trail system connects Jersey City with the Delaware Water

Gap. She worked for 20 years as an administrative assistant in the Delbarton School alumnae development office in Morris Township.

An enthusiastic gardener and outdoors person, Mary had gardens wherever she spent time. She liked to travel, visiting many places in the United States, Canada, Mexico, Costa Rica, Panama, Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, England, Scotland, The Netherlands, France, Switzerland and Italy.

She loved walking, hiking, boating and swimming. She was also an inveterate researcher, almost no matter what the subject, but most passionate on health matters, helping dozens of family members and friends with information to better understand their illnesses.

Our deepest condolences go out to Dave, and to Mary's children and other relatives and friends.

# Remembering Robert Wolfe

**Robert Jefferson Wolfe, a New Jersey Conservation Foundation Board of Trustees member who served as Treasurer, passed away on March 31 at the age of 72.**



A resident of Ringoes, Bob believed in contributing his time and expertise to the community. In addition to volunteering on the NJ Conservation board, he served on the boards of McCarter Theater in Princeton, the Stony Brook Millstone Watershed Association, and Princeton In Community Service.

Bob graduated from Princeton University in 1969 with a degree in philosophy. At Princeton, he participated in crew for two years, and sculling became one of his interests later in life. After graduation, he joined the Army Reserves and was on active duty at Fort Sam Houston in Texas from October 1969 until February 1970. He attended Stanford University Graduate School of Business, where he met his wife and fellow student Barbara Burgess. They were married in December 1973.

After earning his MBA, Bob worked for Stanford University before returning to New Jersey to work as assistant treasurer of Princeton

University. In 1976, Princeton launched a 2000+ acre mixed use real estate development project, the Princeton Forrestral Center. As a partner of the consulting firm K. S. Sweet Associates, Bob was instrumental in leading the development of this project throughout his career.

In 1993, he formed his own company, Picus Associates, which continues under new ownership to manage the Princeton Forrestral Center on behalf of Princeton University. Bob enjoyed seeing the physical results of his work materialize over time, and believed that real estate development should be concentrated in areas with appropriate infrastructure, while rural lands should be protected and the natural environment preserved.

He is remembered for his wonderful smile, optimistic approach to life, kindness and generosity. Our condolences go out to Barbara and Bob's other family members and friends.

## Staff

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**Mark Barrick, Information Technology/Office Manager**

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**Allison Williams, Stewardship Coordinator**

**New Jersey Conservation Foundation is an Equal Opportunity Employer and is committed to building a diverse workforce and board of trustees.**





NEW JERSEY CONSERVATION FOUNDATION

Bamboo Brook | 170 Longview Road | Far Hills, NJ 07931

[www.njconservation.org](http://www.njconservation.org)



### Join Our E-mail List

We'd like to have your e-mail address so we can keep you updated on New Jersey Conservation Foundation news, programs and events.

Please send your e-mail address to [info@njconservation.org](mailto:info@njconservation.org) or call 1-888-LANDSAVE (1-888-526-3728).

## Increase Your Impact: Become a Sustaining Member

**Maximize your impact to protect our state's most critical natural resources for today and tomorrow.**

Monthly giving is the easiest and most efficient way to support land preservation work.

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### Make a difference every single month

For as little as \$10 a month you can ensure a steady stream of support to protect the forests, farms, and natural lands across New Jersey.

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- It's convenient. Donate by credit card or bank.
- Start, change, or stop your gift at any time.
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### DOUBLE your impact!

This year, our Board of Trustees is offering a special match opportunity to double your gift's impact **if you become a monthly sustaining member.**

The Board will match new or increased monthly donations for the total yearly donation, up to \$25,000!

For example, if you become a sustaining member at \$25 a month, they will match the 12-month total of \$300.

## Be a part of the Trustee's Challenge match!