

New Jersey Conservation



OUR LEADERS: Past, Present & Future



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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Michele S. Byers



From Our Executive Director

Michele S. Byers

Dear friends,

This is my last message to you as Executive Director of this wonderful organization. It has been my good fortune and blessing to call this place home and to find a career of a lifetime. And it has been a true source of pride, happiness and satisfaction every single day of the last 22 years since I took over from Dave Moore. The term bittersweet is used way too often but I guess there is a good reason for it!

I am stepping down to take on some exciting new projects and to cheer on the new leadership team with excitement and anticipation. I am leaving the organization in exceptionally great hands. The new team is well prepared to launch critical new initiatives for the future health and sustainability of our state.

This is a place for aspiring land conservationists and tree huggers like me to learn, grow and use their strengths and talents to make a difference in the world. I love the variety of programs and strategies the NJ Conservation Foundation employs:

- Buying and permanently preserving land with as many layers of deed restrictions and covenants as possible to secure it for many future generations to come!
- Advocating for changes in how we use land to ensure its ability to support and protect clean air and water, reduce flooding and erosion, protect habitat for native wildlife and provide beauty, outdoor recreation and give a big boost to our health and wellbeing.
- Establishing and defending some of the best regional land use plans in the nation.
- Strategically preserving and managing land both to protect wildlife and water and for its ability to hold and sequester carbon, thus helping to mitigate the impacts of climate change.
- Ensuring that New Jerseyans have nature in every neighborhood. We and many others are working to address inequalities across communities in access to nature and high environmental quality. Every New Jerseyans deserves the opportunity to explore nature in creeks, trails, fields, forests and meadows within a few minutes' walk from home.

These core nuts and bolts strategies along with the wonderful staff and board are why I have stayed for almost 40 years!

Please join me in supporting and lifting up the new leadership team of Alison Mitchell, Jay Watson and Tom Gilbert as they take the reins. They are following in the footsteps of Helen Fenske and Dave Moore, like I did. I am now adding in my footsteps.

With huge appreciation and love for every one of you for supporting this work and making New Jersey a better place for everyone.



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 or call us at 1-888-LANDSAVE. Our mailing address is 170 Longview Road, Far Hills, New Jersey 07931.



LISA MACCOLLUM HONORED for work in Sourlands

New Jersey Conservation Foundation's newest preserve, the 1,150-acre Rainbow Hill at Sourland Mountain Preserve in Hunterdon and Somerset counties, was the culmination of 17 years of efforts led by Lisa MacCollum, assistant director of land acquisition.

Lisa was honored for her extraordinary contributions at a recent hike on the preserve's newly-blazed loop trail in October. The surprise of the day was the unveiling of a plaque thanking Lisa for her work on the project. The plaque was mounted on a restored springhouse on the preserve's former farmstead.

"The restoration of this old springhouse was done to recognize New Jersey Conservation Foundation staff member Lisa (Puleo) MacCollum for her outstanding dedication, diligence and excellent work in preserving all of these lands for people, plants and wildlife forever," the plaque reads.

Lisa was joined at the event by her husband Marty, daughter and son-in-law Melissa and Taylor, and their infant son, Wesley. Special thanks went out to Marty, who with friends restored the stone springhouse using wood and hardware reclaimed from the remnants of a farmhouse on the property.

Rainbow Hill straddles the border of East Amwell Township in Hunterdon County, and Hillsborough Township in Somerset County. The preserve includes farmland, forests and a scenic lake.





VICTORY

FOR PRESERVED OPEN SPACE!

PennEast drops plans for gas pipeline

Upper photo: Tom Gilbert and Michele Byers at October celebration of the victory over PennEast.

Lower photo: Celebrating the pipeline defeat were, from left, Nina Dixon, NJ Conservation board president, and staff members Tom Gilbert, Alix Bacon and Amy Hansen.



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Who says a small community of committed homeowners and their allies can't overcome the massive force of five billion-dollar energy companies, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and the U.S. Supreme Court?"

- VINCE DIBIANCA

Seven years after proposing a nearly 120-mile natural gas pipeline from the fracking fields of northeastern Pennsylvania, across the Delaware River and through Hunterdon and Mercer counties, the PennEast Company has abandoned the unneeded and unwanted project.

In late September, PennEast officially announced the cancellation of plans to seize public and private lands along the pipeline route - despite a U.S. Supreme Court ruling allowing the condemnations. The threatened lands included 42 state-preserved open space and farmland properties in Hunterdon and Mercer counties, several of which were preserved in partnership with New Jersey Conservation Foundation.

"PennEast has ceased all further development of the Project," the company said in a statement citing lack of required state permits as the reason.

Over 200 pipeline opponents toasted the victory over PennEast on October 17 at a celebration at the Prallsville Mills in Stockton, a short distance from many of the affected properties.

"This is a great victory for the communities, organizations and elected officials that fought this unneeded, polluting project for years," said Tom Gilbert, campaign director for New Jersey Conservation Foundation and ReThink Energy NJ. "Our public and private lands won't be seized and scarred, and our water and air won't be polluted. New Jersey stayed strong and will be healthier and safer without PennEast. Fossil fuel projects such as this have no place as we transition to a clean energy future."

PennEast's decision to drop the project came three months after a ruling from the U.S. Supreme Court affirming the company's right to condemn state-owned land to build the pipeline. But without permits from state authorities to build the pipeline in areas protected by New Jersey's stringent environmental regulations under the Clean Water Act, the ruling was not enough to salvage the project.

PennEast was also increasingly vulnerable to scrutiny for its "self-dealing" business structure. The energy companies invested in the pipeline would mainly sell the gas to their own affiliated utilities, reaping guaranteed profits at ratepayer expense. New Jersey's Ratepayer Advocate found no public need for the project and called it "unfair to ratepayers" who would foot the bill.

"We battled this self-dealing project at every turn with economic data and science showing why PennEast would harm New Jersey ratepayers and its environment," said Jennifer Danis, senior fellow at Columbia University Law School's Sabin Center for Climate Change Law. "PennEast's cancellation should send a strong signal to other proposed but unneeded gas infrastructure projects."

"My children and I are overcome with sheer joy and gratitude that the fight against the PennEast Pipeline is finally over!" said Jaqueline Evans, a landowner whose home was threatened by the pipeline route. "For the past seven years we have fought this unneeded and unwanted pipeline that has threatened the state of



“

New Jersey stayed strong and will be healthier and safer without PennEast.”

- TOM GILBERT



New Jersey and the towns on the proposed line. We protected our children, their future, our land, pristine C1 streams, endangered wildlife species, our local economy, history.”

“I’m grateful for all of the work that has been accomplished by the advocacy groups on the ground these last years, fighting this unnecessary and dangerous proposal. I also thank the residents and communities on the front line of the proposed route for their tireless efforts,” said Congresswoman Bonnie Watson-Coleman. “My work is not done. I will continue to commit to this fight for comprehensive oversight by FERC. We must have accountability when it comes to proposed projects and take a cumulative approach of the need and the environmental impact when pipelines are put forth into consideration. Make no mistake though, today is a great win.”

“Today we celebrate a major victory for landowners, for the environment, and for the dedicated advocates who have spent years fighting the destructive and unnecessary PennEast pipeline — our hard work paid off,” said Congressman Tom Malinowski. “Through litigation, legislation, and enforcement of environmental rules, we mustered a force that could not be resisted. I hope that the affected landowners will finally enjoy the peace of mind they deserve, and the satisfaction of knowing that when local communities come together to protect their rights, they can still beat corporate power.”

“Who says a small community of committed homeowners and their allies can’t overcome the massive force of five billion-dollar energy companies, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and the U.S. Supreme Court?” said Vince DiBianca, a founder of

HALT PennEast (Homeowners Against Land Taking). “Homeowners are deeply grateful to the New Jersey Conservation Foundation, the State of New Jersey and the Delaware Riverkeeper Network. Chalk-up a heartwarming win to people and the planet!”

“Today, water, the environment and people spoke louder than fossil fuels,” said Jim Waltman, executive director of the Watershed Institute. “The Watershed Institute congratulates and thanks the many local, state, and federal officials of both parties and thousands of residents for their determined opposition to this unnecessary and destructive proposal.”

“PennEast’s cancelation of this unneeded, dangerous fracked gas pipeline is a momentous win for the communities that have fought hard for years to defend their property and the environment,” said Joseph Otis Minott, Clean Air Council executive director and chief counsel.

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Others who seek to exploit the residents and natural resources of New Jersey and Pennsylvania should take note: we are not easy-take states and we will continue to resist.”

- JOSEPH OTIS MINOTT

Meet NJ Conservation's NEW LEADERSHIP TEAM!

Alison Mitchell, Tom Gilbert and Jay Watson to replace Michele Byers

In preparation for longtime Executive Director Michele S. Byers' retirement at the end of the year, the Board of Trustees of New Jersey Conservation Foundation has announced a new leadership structure with three co-directors at the helm.

For only the fourth time in 62 years, the leadership of New Jersey Conservation Foundation is changing hands. The Board of Trustees of New Jersey Conservation Foundation has appointed a dynamic and innovative team of three co-directors to head the organization.

The newly appointed team includes Alison Mitchell, current assistant director and acting development director Tom Gilbert, campaign director for climate, energy and natural resources, and John S. "Jay" Watson, director of statewide land protection and community relations.

Board President Dr. Rosina "Nina" Dixon said the board chose the shared leadership model to take full advantage of the deep talent and expertise already existing within the staff.

"We think this is the best model and approach for NJ Conservation Foundation's future," said Dixon. "Mitchell, Gilbert and Watson are all strong, experienced leaders with complementary skill sets," Dixon noted. "Sharing executive responsibilities will allow the co-directors to draw on their areas of expertise to propel us forward on our visionary strategic plan."

Michele Byers, who has worked at New Jersey Conservation Foundation since 1982 and served as executive director since 1999, is retiring at the end of the year.

"We have a strong team of senior staff at New Jersey Conservation Foundation right now," said Byers. "I am thrilled with the board's decision and confident that Alison, Tom and Jay will do an outstanding job running the New Jersey Conservation Foundation and advancing the organization's mission into the future."

Mitchell, Gilbert and Watson bring deep and broad experience in nonprofit management, environmental and energy policy, land conservation, urban parks and natural resource management. Their combined talents and expertise will advance the strategic plan goals to expand protection of key conservation lands, provide equitable access to high quality natural areas and parks in all communities, implement science-based land-use policy including natural solutions to climate change, and build a more diverse and engaged constituency for conservation.

**ALISON MITCHELL**

Alison currently serves as Assistant Director and Acting Director of Development. Before becoming Assistant Director, she served as the Policy Director for over a decade, advocating in Trenton and Washington for key environmental protections and funding for New Jersey lands and natural resources. Earlier in her career she led various land protection projects around the state, focused on protecting key natural resource areas and important farmland. Alison has played a leadership role in the organization's farmland preservation efforts and farmland policy work. She is the author of two of the Conservation Foundation's major publications - "The New Jersey Highlands: Treasures at Risk" and "Gaining Ground: A Farmland Policy Report."

**TOM GILBERT**

Tom has served since 2015 as Campaign Director for Energy, Climate and Natural Resources and has led the statewide "Rethink Energy NJ" campaign to stop the unneeded PennEast pipeline and advance landmark new clean energy and climate policies. Previously, he served as Senior Conservation Finance Director with the Trust for Public Land where he chaired the NJ Keep It Green Coalition and led successful campaigns to secure approval of a \$400 million bond measure in 2009 and constitutional amendment in 2014 to fund state preservation programs. As Executive Director of the NY/NJ/PA/CT Highlands Coalition, he led successful campaigns to pass federal and New Jersey state legislation to protect critical lands and waters in the Highlands region.

**JOHN S. "JAY" WATSON, JR.**

Jay has been working to protect New Jersey's lands and environment for over 40 years. Prior to joining the nonprofit land conservancy community, Jay spent nearly 30 years in various roles in the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, where he led the agency's Green Acres Program and culminated his state service in 2010 as the Department's Deputy Commissioner. During his career he has managed conservation and environmental projects across New Jersey's diverse landscape and played a part in the protection and enhancement of many of its special places. He has been an outspoken advocate for enhancing the environment and quality of life in urban areas and communities of color.



Photo by Sandy Stuart Perry

Five NJ Conservation executive directors – past, present and future – gathered at a retirement party for Michele Byers in early November at Duke Farms in Hillsborough. From left are Tom Gilbert, Michele, Jay Watson, Alison Mitchell and David Moore.

Last unpreserved farm in Rosemont Valley protected

The last unpreserved working farm in Hunterdon County's scenic and historic Rosemont Valley – 64 acres of agricultural fields and wooded wetlands – finally has the same strong protections as neighboring farms.

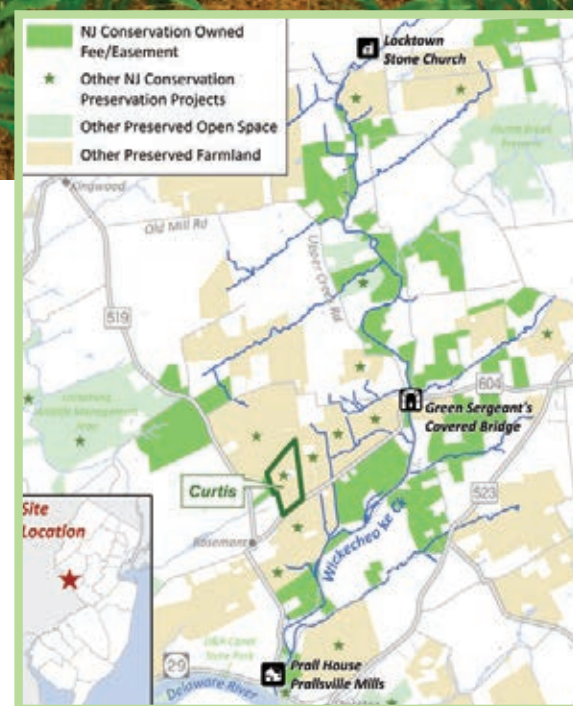
This past summer, New Jersey Conservation Foundation purchased the development rights on the Curtis farm in Delaware Township, ensuring that it remains farmland forever.

"The Curtis farm was the proverbial hole in the doughnut that, if developed, would severely compromise the integrity and scenic beauty of the Rosemont Valley, which is on the National Register of Historic Places," said Michele S. Byers, executive director. "Preserving this beautiful farm was a priority of New Jersey Conservation Foundation and our partners for 40 years, and it is wonderful to finally see it happen."

The Rosemont Valley stretches from New Jersey's last original covered bridge, Green Sergeant's Bridge, to the tiny hamlet of Rosemont. It's an important scenic and historic feature of New Jersey Conservation's Wickecheoke Creek Greenway, a mosaic of preserved open space and farmland in western Hunterdon County.

New Jersey Conservation acquired the development rights from owners Richard Curtis and his son, Michael Curtis, using funding from the State Agriculture Development Committee and Hunterdon County. The Curtis family still owns the farm, and the 64 acres are now permanently restricted to agricultural uses.

"It's been in my family for well over 100 years, and my father grew up there," said Richard Curtis.



"I never lived there myself, but it's always been the family farm and it's nice to know it will be there forever," Curtis added. "And the area still looks the way it did many years ago, which is neat."

The Curtis farm is adjacent to the Fisher and Plesher farms, among the first farms preserved in New Jersey. Both were protected in the 1980s with the help of New Jersey Conservation Foundation.

The preservation of the Curtis farm helps protect clean drinking water by safeguarding the headwaters of the Lockatong Creek and local well water. It also protects the viewshed of the Rosemont Valley, which encompasses agricultural land use patterns and farmsteads dating back to the 18th and 19th centuries.

2021

GAINING GROUND

New Jersey Conservation Foundation and its partners permanently preserved 476.50 acres from May 2021 through October 2021. 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!

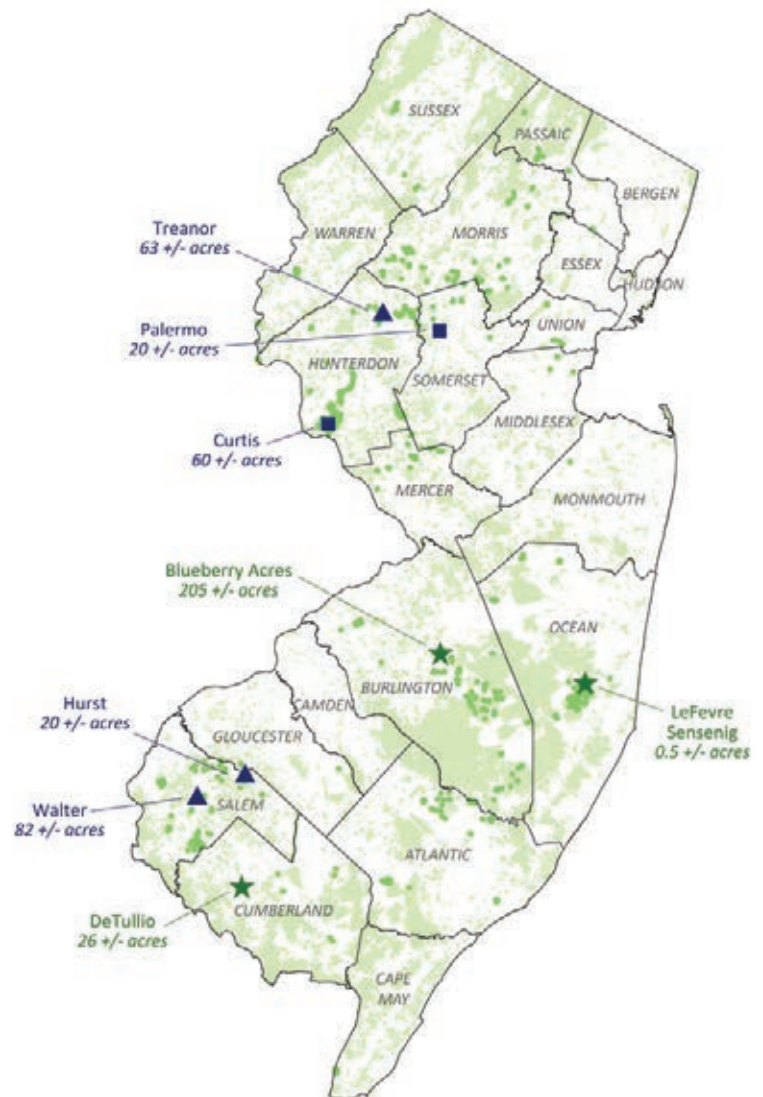
9 Projects

May - Oct 2021

★ NJ Conservation Owned Fee or Easement:	231.50 +/- acres
■ NJ Conservation Land Transfers to Other Entities:	80 +/- acres
▲ Preserved in Partnership:	165 +/- acres

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

TOTAL: 476.50 +/- acres



It's easy to join New Jersey Conservation Foundation online - visit the website at www.njconservation.org

Become a Member Today!



Reflections On 40 YEARS In Conservation



Q+A

WITH MICHELE BYERS, RETIRING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

At the end of the year, Michele S. Byers is retiring from her role as executive director of New Jersey Conservation Foundation after almost 40 years with the organization. She began in 1982 as coordinator of advocacy efforts in the Pine Barrens, was promoted to assistant director in 1988, and became executive director in 1999 upon the retirement of David Moore. With Michele at the helm, NJ Conservation permanently preserved about 60,000 acres of open space and farmland, significantly expanded its system of public nature preserves, and helped strengthen New Jersey's conservation community and partnerships.

Here, Michele shares thoughts about her conservation career, the challenges she faced, and her plans for the future:

What got you interested in a career in conservation in the first place?

My knowledge of a career in conservation was non-existent. I was interested in the outdoors and that meant being a forest ranger, ski instructor or horse trainer. I tried all sorts of jobs including mucking out horse stalls, animal warden for a local town, and taking care of champion old English sheepdogs. With no clue about what I would do, I finally managed to graduate with a degree in Biology. I landed a job in the Pine Barrens leading nature field trips for schoolchildren and writing a curriculum on recycling. Out of sheer chance I was hired by the Association of NJ Environmental Commissions to advocate for the preservation of the Pine Barrens. So, basically the career path unfolded before me.

Have you always loved nature and animals?

Growing up in a military family, I lived in Texas, Oklahoma, Germany, Colorado, Kansas, Pennsylvania, Virginia and New Jersey. My first memories of nature were from the Black Forest, Neckar River and Bavarian Alps in Germany. In Colorado I skied, rode horses, explored the Garden of the Gods and drew countless pictures of Pikes Peak. These experiences solidified my love of nature permanently. I cried the whole drive from Colorado east as I watched the mountains disappear out of the back window of my parents' car. The outdoors, nature, geology, natural landscapes and animals have been, and continue to be core passions.



What made you decide that now is the right time to retire?

I love the NJ Conservation Foundation and felt after 22 years as Executive Director, it was time for new, energized leadership. With an incredible team of experienced and skilled leaders ready to step up, it was a natural and satisfying decision. NJ Conservation is launching several new exciting programs and I'm excited to see the new team take off.

What was the greatest challenge you faced?

Stepping into the shoes of my predecessor and mentor, Dave Moore, was an enormous challenge and it was difficult to believe I could come anywhere close to his level of leadership and accomplishment. Other challenges included learning to handle employee relationships, and achieving the ever-elusive balanced budget. And there was convincing the board and donors to take on some seemingly insurmountable projects like stopping the PennEast pipeline, preventing the proposed demolition of Whitesbog Village, lowering the LG headquarters along the Palisades cliffs, and preserving the 10,000-acre DeMarco cranberry farm in the Pine Barrens, now the Franklin Parker Preserve.

What do you think is your greatest accomplishment at NJ Conservation?

There are many things I am very happy about. One is finding some of my strengths and talents, and putting them to use in making a difference. I think everyone feels empowered and happy when that happens. I am thrilled to see so much land permanently preserved and so many nonprofits I helped take off and succeed. Some very destructive projects will never happen and visiting places I helped preserve is incredibly satisfying.

Who were the most memorable people you met through your work?

I was thrilled to sit next to Millicent Fenwick at several board meetings in the early 1980s. I had fabulous hikes with Senator Cory Booker, and worked hand in hand with Larry Rockefeller on the LG building challenge. It has been extremely gratifying to work closely with NJ's Governors Byrne, Florio, Kean, Whitman, McGreevey and others on critical conservation projects. But some of the most memorable people I have ever known are on the board and staff of NJ Conservation. I would not have stayed with the organization for almost 40 years if not for them.

Do you have a favorite preserved place in New Jersey?

I love all of our state's diverse landscapes and wildlife, but the Pine Barrens is super special. When I visit the Franklin Parker Preserve I am certain my heart rate and blood pressure drop and dopamine kicks in with the smell of the pines and soft beauty of the sand roads.

What advice do you have for the new leadership team?

Take time to love the land, the work and each other. Take good care of the wonderful people on the staff and make sure to make full use of and enjoy the heck out of the fantastic board!

What are your plans after retiring?

I plan to work independently as a consultant on land preservation issues and projects. But I will also work on improving my riding skills and training my two border collies to be successful herding dogs. Music is also on the list. I am hoping to dust off my violin and play with one or more groups, and find time for traveling to some new places!

Farmland FOREVER!

30 acres preserved along scenic Cohansey River

Daniel DeTullio bought his farm along the Cohansey River in Cumberland County in 1987 because of its scenic beauty and abundant wildlife. He always wanted to live along the river.

This fall, he and his wife, Raquel, preserved the nearly 30-acre property to protect it from future development after they're gone. "It's so peaceful and quiet and serene back there, it would be a shame to develop it," said Dan.

New Jersey Conservation purchased the development rights on the DeTullio farm, ensuring that it stays farmland forever.

The farm is surrounded on two sides by the state's Cohansey River Wildlife Management Area, and is bordered by a tributary called Rocaps Run. The Cohansey winds through a landscape of tidal marshes, woodlands and farms before emptying into the Delaware Bay. The area provides habitat for a wide variety of wildlife, including bald eagles.

"The eagles back there are like mosquitos," Dan joked. There are also many wild turkeys, ducks, geese, owls, deer and other creatures.

The DeTullios still own the farm, but the land is now permanently restricted to agriculture. Preserving the property maintains the rural and

scenic character of the area, protects wildlife, safeguards soil quality, and protects the land's ability to recharge groundwater.

Funding was provided by the State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Cumberland County also contributed to the project by paying for property appraisals.

Most of the DeTullio farm's soils are "prime" and "statewide-Important" soils, the two highest quality classifications for food production. Much of the newly-preserved land is in open field agriculture, with smaller forested areas on its northern and southern sides.

The DeTullio farm is located just south of Bridgeton, and a short distance from the Dutch Neck section of neighboring Hopewell Township, where New Jersey Conservation helped preserve several historic farms.



View of the Cohansey River from the DeTullio farm.



Photo by Jay Watson

“It’s so peaceful and quiet and serene back there, it would be a shame to develop it.”

- DANIEL DETULLIO

Protecting farms, nature and history in Salem County

History, agriculture and nature meet in the bucolic Sharptown-Seven Stars neighborhood of Pilesgrove Township, Salem County. New Jersey Conservation Foundation has been protecting family farms in this bucolic area for decades, along with our many partners.

The neighborhood's most prominent landmark is a red brick building that housed the Seven Stars Tavern during the Revolutionary War era. Surrounding the historic site are miles of rich and productive farmland – including vineyards, cattle ranches, vegetable farms and fields of grain - as far as the eye can see.

While the area is known for its farms, it's also famous for the Sharptown-Featherbed Lane grasslands complex, which supports critical nesting habitat for a wide variety of grassland birds, many listed as threatened or endangered.

Bird watchers come from around the country to look for the 183 species recorded at the state's Featherbed Lane Wildlife Management Area. Savannah sparrows, upland sandpipers, bobolinks, and American kestrels are among the rare birds nesting locally.

Efforts to protect the Sharptown-Seven Stars area began in late 1980s, when a large-scale development proposal threatened to change the neighborhood forever. Since then, over 2,000 acres of farmland and grasslands have been preserved to permanently protect the neighborhood's rural and scenic character.

The past three years have been banner years in farmland preservation! The Maccarone family farm, preserved earlier this year, was the latest; it followed the Leone and Morda farms in 2020 and the Westwood Knolls, Kelly, Sorbello, Harris and Schaffer farms in 2019.

Thank you to our many preservation partners over the years, including the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resource Conservation Service, the State Agriculture Development Committee, Salem County, Pilesgrove Township, New Jersey Audubon and The Nature Conservancy.

A very special thanks also goes out to Francis Rapa, who retired last year after more than a decade of leading New Jersey Conservation's preservation efforts in the Delaware Bay Watershed region. Fran's hard work led to the preservation of 15 neighboring farms in the Sharptown-Seven Stars area!





*thank
you!*

New Jersey Conservation Foundation welcomes new members and gratefully acknowledges donors who made contributions between January 1, 2021 and September 30, 2021. With your support, we preserve and protect New Jersey's lands.

New Members

(from January 1, 2021
through September 30, 2021)

Elizabeth Adams Eilers
Leon Alirangues
Talib Amir
Geraldine Andrews
Jane C. Anginer
Wilhelm D. Auer
Stacey Ayala
Patricia Bakay
Robert Bakley
Gregg Bangs
Claudette G. Barber
Robert Barel
Pamela Barroway
Ms Sharyn Barson
Lorena Bedoya
Sidney Bembridge
Ana Benitez
Daniel Bernier
Robert J. Billera
Judith Blinick
William C. Bohnert
Anthony Bonomo
Charles K. Bowman, Jr.
Lynn Branson
Ann L. Brenneman
Robert Brock
Leonard S. Brokaw
Lorraine M. Brown
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Lenora Caamano
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Daniel D. Chukurov
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Nancy G. Cochrane
Elliott Cohen
Robert Cohen
Jack Coldeweih
Columbia Bank Foundation
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Justine Cook
Rosemarie Cosgrove
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Jane Darton
Martha Davis
Anita T. Dazzo
Dorinda B. Dec
Elizabeth G. Devany
Ulana M. Diachuk
Betty C. DiDomenico
Michael DiSimoni
Joseph Dodd
James C. Domangue
Joseph and Allison Donahue
Christina Donnamaria
Jean C. Doris
Andrew V. Dorko
Kathryn K. Dorsey
Patricia B. Dougherty
Stephen D. Dudka
Christine Dunbar
Linda A. Egner
Robert Ehrhardt
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(from January 1, 2021 through September 30, 2021)

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 Charles Stek
 James Snow
 Judith Snow
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 Patricia Sodolak
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 Gretchen M. Oberfranc
 Randolph L. Wadsworth, Jr.
 Bob and Barbara Wolfe
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 Richard T. Zeman
 Jennifer Hager

Tributes

(from January 1, 2021 through September 30, 2021)

5-year Wedding Anniversary
 Vishal Balani
 Michele S. Byers
 David L. Hansen and Ruth Charnes
 Pat Dawson
 Kyle Dawson
 Emile DeVito
 Robert and Linda Walden
 Beryl Doyle
 Lois K. Stewart
 Jane Engel
 Jerry Burke
 Amy Hansen
 Carol Homeyer
 Robert Tommaselli
 Patrick Miller
 Samuel H. Bleier
 Tari Pantaleo
 Lori Pantaleo

STEWARDSHIP UPDATE:

Rare Cranefly Orchids Bloom!

Leaves of green stand out in a drab winter landscape of grays and browns. That's how cranefly orchids were discovered a few years ago at a preserved farm in Salem County.

Scott Breeman, then easement steward for New Jersey Conservation Foundation, spotted the bright leaves and thought they could be from orchids. Intrigued, the landowner fenced the area to protect the plants from deer. The efforts paid off this past summer when dozens of stalks emerged from the ground and bloomed with pale greenish-yellow flowers.

Cranefly orchids are different from most plants in that they don't have flowers and leaves at the same time. Each autumn, a single green leaf with a purple underside emerges from each plant and stays through spring, enjoying a long season without competition for sunlight.

If the orchid plants can store enough energy through photosynthesis, they will put up a flower stalk in mid to late summer. Their irregular-shaped blooms resemble the long-legged insects known as craneflies.

While the recently-discovered cranefly orchid population in Salem County is rare for New Jersey, globally the plant is doing well. Its status was recently upgraded from "vulnerable" to "apparently secure."

"It's an example of how we've succeeded in preserving enough habitat that we don't have to worry as much about them as we did in the past," said Russell Juelg, New Jersey Conservation's senior land steward. Cranefly orchids are one of about 50 wild orchids native to New Jersey, many of them rare.



Photo by Rob Ferber

Remembering James Wyse, attorney extraordinaire



James Wyse, a nationally respected environmental attorney who represented New Jersey Conservation Foundation for more than 30 years, passed away on October 11 after a short illness.

A Mendham resident, Jim dedicated his life and career to the preservation of natural land. Nationally recognized for his expertise in conservation easement law, he was instrumental in the preservation of well over 75,000 acres of natural and farmland in New Jersey.

Jim provided expert and invaluable help with the defense of conservation easements and many public parks and forests. He helped develop what is considered the national standard for conservation easements. Fellow attorneys often sought his guidance on conservation easements— advice and input he gave generously and humbly.

In addition to being essential to New Jersey Conservation Foundation's land-saving work for three decades, Jim also represented the Open Space Institute, Trust for Public Land, The Nature Conservancy, Raritan Headwaters Association, Harding Land Trust, Tewksbury Land Trust, Lamington Conservancy, and the Friends of Frelinghuysen Arboretum.

He also represented a wide range of other nonprofit and charitable organizations in New Jersey, and his practice included work in real estate, business, and corporate law. He was a well-respected lecturer at state and national conferences.

His colleagues and his clients remember Jim for the kindness, creativity, and sense of humor with which he approached his work. "Jim brought an enormous amount of dedication, special expertise and wisdom to the conservation community," said Alison Mitchell of New Jersey Conservation Foundation. "His humor and empathy made him a wonderful friend and colleague."

Jim's generosity, enthusiasm, and commitment to the natural world extended to his longtime volunteer service with the Boy Scouts. In 1996, Jim agreed to organize an outdoor high adventure program for Boy Scout Troop 8 in Chatham. Jim's efforts quickly built a model program. He enabled generations of older youth and adults in the troop to enjoy backpacking, kayaking and climbing in beautiful wilderness areas throughout the United States and internationally, including in the Scottish Highlands.

Jim was a renaissance man with many and varied interests. He loved poetry and opera; bicycling, fly fishing, hiking and camping; art and travel. He was an accomplished flutist, a longtime practitioner of Tai Chi Chuan, and a lifetime member of the Triple Nine Society. Jim's favorite animal was the raven, a bird known for its intelligence, and he was always thrilled to spot one while hiking.

Jim is greatly missed by his friends at New Jersey Conservation Foundation and throughout the statewide and national conservation community. We send our deepest condolences to his wife, Betty Garcia; his daughter, Melissa Wyse; and his extended family.

Welcome New Trustee!

New Jersey Conservation Foundation welcomes Matt Boss of Haddonfield as the newest member of the Board of Trustees.

Matt is Head of Consumer Products for TD Bank, responsible for leading the



MATT BOSS

operations and strategic direction across TD's Credit Cards and Unsecured Lending, Consumer Deposit and Payments Products, and Residential Lending businesses.

Prior to his current role at TD, Matt served as Head of Credit Cards and Unsecured Lending at TD Bank. Matt

joined TD in 2017 from Melbourne-based Australia & New Zealand Banking Group (ANZ), where he served as the Managing Director of Products and Marketing. Matt earned a bachelor's degree in business administration and finance from the University of Massachusetts.

Thanks to NJ Conservation's summer-fall interns!

New Jersey Conservation Foundation welcomed three student interns to assist with land stewardship projects at our preserves this summer and fall: Amber Loomis of Wharton, Joseph Girnius III of Philadelphia and Jeanette Myers of West Creek.

AMBER LOOMIS, a senior environmental science major at Stockton University, worked with New Jersey Conservation's stewardship team to implement the management plan for the 576-acre Apshawa Preserve in Passaic County. Her main tasks included identifying, monitoring and removing invasive plants, as well as maintaining the deer "exclosure" fence surrounding part of the preserve. Her internship was funded by the Garden Club of Morristown.

JOSEPH GIRNIUS III, a junior at Stockton University majoring in environmental science, worked with Land Steward Melanie Mason at the new 1,150-acre Rainbow Hill at Sourland Mountain Preserve in Hunterdon and Somerset counties. He helped to post the property's boundaries, develop a trail system and outreach materials, install a deer exclosure fence, and coordinate volunteers to help with a fall tree planting. His internship project was funded through a Don Palmer Internship Grant secured from the Morris Park Alliance. The internship program honors the late Don Palmer, a New Jersey Conservation Foundation trustee.

JEANETTE MYERS, A senior environmental science major at Stockton University, Jeanette worked with land steward Bill Scullion on the recently-acquired Menantico Preserve in Vineland, Cumberland County. Jeanette helped to post the 600-acre property's boundaries, plan and construct a trail system, and improve public access. This internship was funded by New Jersey Conservation's Babbott Conservation Intern Program, named for the late Edward Babbott, a longtime trustee.



AMBER



JOE



JEANETTE

Staff

Michele S. Byers, Executive Director

Adriana Amador-Chacon, Camden Fellow

Erica Arles, Land Acquisition & Stewardship Assistant

Alix Bacon, Regional Manager, Western Piedmont

Mark Barrick, Information Technology/Office Manager

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Melanie Mason, Land Steward

Alison Mitchell, Assistant Director & Acting Director of Development

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Marie Newell, Project Coordinator, Acquisition

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Rudisha Okezie, Outreach Manager, Camden Parks & Greenways

Sandy Stuart Perry, Staff Writer

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Bill Scullion, Land Steward, South Jersey

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Allison Williams, Stewardship Coordinator

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