

# 2021 Annual Report



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## OUR MISSION

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

Through acquisition and stewardship, we protect strategic lands from the Highlands to the Pine Barrens to the Delaware Bayshore. We promote strong land conservation policies at the local, state and federal levels, forge partnerships to achieve conservation goals, and provide support and technical assistance to partner groups. Since 1960, we have helped protect more than 125,000 acres of natural areas, farms, parks and water resources.

## FROM OUR LEADERSHIP

### The year 2021 was an exciting time of transition and transformation for New Jersey Conservation Foundation.

After serving for nearly 40 years at New Jersey Conservation Foundation – more than half as executive director – Michele Byers announced her intention to step down at the end of the year. The Board of Trustees immediately began the thoughtful process of charting a new course for the future.

Ultimately, the board decided to draw on the organization's existing strengths, adopting a new leadership model with three co-executive directors sharing executive responsibilities. Three senior leaders in the organization with decades of experience were chosen: Alison Mitchell, our longtime policy director and assistant director; Tom Gilbert, who led our successful campaign to stop the PennEast pipeline and promote a transition to clean energy; and Jay Watson, who heads our land protection program following a long career at the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.

Alison, Tom and Jay worked closely with Michele and the Board of Trustees during the second half of 2021 to ensure that the transition would be smooth and seamless.

More than 100 well-wishers from various partner organizations and funders joined us at the end of the year in celebrating Michele's many accomplishments at a festive gathering at Duke Farms. In addition to toasting Michele, the event launched the Michele Byers Legacy Fund, which will support land conservation, climate and urban initiatives near and dear to Michele's heart. See page 17 to find out more about the Legacy Fund and see photos from the retirement party.

The past year also solidified New Jersey Conservation Foundation's commitment to expanding our work in urban communities, including Camden and Trenton. We are committed to ensuring that our programs and projects serve New Jerseyans of all cultures, races and ethnic groups - whether they live in cities, suburbs or rural towns.

Please see the following pages for stories about a sampling of New Jersey Conservation Foundation's initiatives to increase urban residents' access to nature, parks and gardens, to enable them to share in the agricultural bounty of the Garden State's preserved land, and to enjoy the many benefits of more trees and micro-forests.

Thank you to our members and friends for your generous support. We are so grateful for your unwavering faith in New Jersey Conservation's mission to preserve land and natural resources throughout our state for the benefit of all.



*Thomas A. Gilbert*

**Tom Gilbert**  
Co-Executive Director

*Alison Mitchell*

**Alison Mitchell**  
Co-Executive Director

*Jay Watson*

**Jay Watson**  
Co-Executive Director

*Nina Dixon*

**Nina Dixon**  
President



## ON THE COVER

Liberty State Park, located on over 1,200 acres in Jersey City at the mouth of the Hudson River, offers biking, fishing, birding, and many other recreational opportunities in the heart of metropolitan northeast New Jersey.



## JOIN US

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# Nature, fresh food and a healthy environment *FOR ALL!*

Everyone needs clean air to breathe, clean water to drink, healthy foods to nourish our bodies, and outdoor places to exercise and enjoy nature. We all want to be safe from flooding, extreme heat and other impacts of a changing climate.

Sadly, not all New Jersey communities have equal access to nature, a clean environment and fresh produce. New Jersey Conservation Foundation is working to help change this situation!

In the following pages, learn about several recent initiatives, including building microforests in urban Union County, organizing events in Camden to expose more city residents to nature, using preserved farmland to provide food to underserved communities, nurturing a budding young naturalist in Trenton, and an urban farm lifting community spirits by giving away fresh flowers.



# This kid's a **NATURAL** at being a naturalist

During a time when many children barely look up from their phones, 10-year-old Maverick Henry of Trenton prefers to keep his eyes on the natural world around him.







Cedar Waxwing by Bill Lynch

“Maverick loves everything in nature: insects, animals, gardening, marine life, astronomy ... and the list goes on,” said his mother, Shae’ Campbell-Henry.

This past spring, Shae’ brought her son, now in fifth grade at Princeton Day School, to a bird walk in Trenton organized by New Jersey Conservation Foundation to celebrate Black Birders Week. As bird experts Jordan Parham and Dr. Emile DeVito led participants around Cadwalader Park, they were impressed by Maverick’s enthusiasm.

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**“My favorite thing is to try to find new things in nature, and just look around and see what I can see.” — Maverick Henry**

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“He knew his birds pretty well,” recalled Emile, New Jersey Conservation Foundation’s staff biologist. “The common city birds you’d expect to see, he knew. He was also very good at spotting birds moving around.” And full of curiosity.

Emile spontaneously decided to gift Maverick his *Field Guide to the Birds East of the Rockies* by Roger Tory Peterson – a book he had carried with him on birding adventures since he bought it in September 1981.

“This book served me well for 41 years,” explained Emile. “I figured this kid needs the book because he’s at the stage in birding where he needs to go to the next level.” Emile inscribed the well-worn book, “To Maverick. Never stop learning. Learn everything you can!”

Maverick and his mother were touched. “I was not expecting that on that day,” said Maverick. He has every intention of learning all he can - but he said he might leave the vintage field guide safely at home to preserve it.

“I try not to use it too much because the pages are falling apart,” he explained. “Dr. DeVito told me that after 41 years, he wants me to hand that off to someone else.”

Maverick also received a sincere compliment from the mother of Jordan, a well-respected Black birder. “As I was walking with Jordan’s mom,” said Shae’, “she mentioned that Maverick reminded her of Jordan when he was younger.”

Here’s to many years of birding and learning!

New Jersey Conservation Foundation’s Dr. Emile DeVito presents his inscribed field guide to Maverick Henry.



Photo by Jay Watson



# Bringing **FLOWERS** and **SMILES** to NJ's capital city



Vicky Vega with ready-to-go  
flower bouquets at Capital City Farm.  
Photo by Jay Watson



Everyone needs healthy, nutritious foods  
to fuel their body. But people also need  
beauty in their lives to nourish their souls.



That's why Capital City Farm in Trenton – an urban farm that provides fresh produce for free to local families in the community – decided this year to start growing flowers to give away.

This spring, the staff of New Jersey Conservation Foundation joined with the Capital City Farm staff and volunteers to plant rows and rows of flowers - seed, corms and seedlings. By early summer, the farm was awash in colorful sunflowers, zinnias, snapdragons, gladiolus, strawflowers and more.

Vicky Vega, a neighborhood resident who's a horticulture student at Mercer County Community College, was hired to run the flower operation with support from New Jersey Conservation Foundation.

"People are very happy with the flowers," said Vicky, who hopes to become a florist. "They usually say, I never knew you were growing all this."

The bouquets Vicky created typically consisted of 15-20 stems of whatever flowers were in bloom at Capital City Farm. To fill out the bouquets, she added sprigs of flowering basil, lavender and sage, and stems of various types of foliage from around the farm.

Guests were welcomed Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday to come pick their own flowers. Vicky either arranged the flowers for visitors, or assisted them in creating their own masterpieces. On Saturday, the farm's busiest day, she put out pre-made bouquets for those in a hurry, but also encouraged those who were so inclined to exercise their creativity.

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***"The community loves having fresh flowers - it's like a surprise. They come for the produce and leave with an extra - a smile."*** — Vicky Vega

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Opened in 2016, Capital City Farm was created on 2 acres of former railroad siding next to the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen, which it now supplies with fresh vegetables and fruit. The farm not only grows produce and flowers, but also seeks to grow a sense of community for those who visit or volunteer. The farm is currently managed and operated by the Mercer County Park Commission as part of their commitment to urban open space projects.







# ***MICROFORESTS:*** **Small but mighty eco-helpers**

*You may think of forests as being expansive - big enough for a hiker to wander around for hours. But a forest doesn't have to cover hundreds or thousands of acres to deliver important ecological benefits.*





Staff, partners and supporters of Groundwork Elizabeth celebrate the completion of its first microforest and the receipt of grant funding to create additional tiny forests.

As people around the world are learning, tiny forests – also known as “microforests” – can be a mighty force in urban areas lacking green space. Like their bigger cousins, they cool the air, soak up storm water, prevent erosion, filter pollutants from the air, and provide habitat for birds, insects and other wildlife.

Within the past year, two microforests have been planted in urbanized Union County with the assistance of New Jersey Conservation Foundation. Several more are planned in the coming years.

The tiny forest movement began in Japan over 40 years ago, when botany professor Akira Miyawaki discovered that accelerated growth is possible with proper soil preparation and a dense planting. A microforest can reach maturity in a few decades rather than a century or more.

New Jersey’s first microforest was completed in December 2021 in Elizabeth, a city with a history of flooding problems and excessive summer heat. It was built by the nonprofit Groundwork Elizabeth and its partners – including New Jersey Conservation Foundation – on a vacant 30-by-50-foot lot behind a branch of the Elizabeth Public Library.

“It’s perfect – it really checks all the boxes for us,” said John Evangelista, Groundwork Elizabeth’s director of operations. “Elizabeth has a flooding situation, and the heat islands are really a big problem. Right away, we’re creating a lot of shade.”

Following closely behind the Elizabeth microforest was the tiny forest created in Summit. The city’s Environmental Commission built the forest this spring in a flood plain behind the municipal baseball fields.

“We have five old oak trees that form a natural border for the tiny forest,” explained Donna Goggin Patel, chair of the Environmental Commission. The quarter-acre property was fenced, and over 500 native trees, shrubs and understory plants were added.

*“The idea is to have a fully-formed forest in 20 to 30 years, as opposed to 200 to 300 years in the wild.” — Donna Goggin Patel*

A walking path for visitors loops through the center of the forest.

Both young microforests have been well received by the public, and have inspired others. Goggin Patel recently gave tours of the Summit tiny forest to three nearby organizations that are now interested in building their own.

And Groundwork Elizabeth was recently awarded a \$367,000 Bezos Earth Fund grant to create four more microforests. Evangelista hopes the first will be built by the end of 2022, ideally near a school. “In my opinion, the educational value is priceless, especially in the inner city,” he said.



Photo by Jay Watson





# Helping farmers, **FEEDING COMMUNITIES**

Putting food on the table has become an increasing challenge for many households in New Jersey, as inflation keeps taking a bigger bite out of budgets. At the same time, waste is a problem throughout the food system, including farms where excess crops go unpicked and rot in the field.

The Foodshed Alliance, a Warren County-based nonprofit that partners with New Jersey Conservation Foundation, is tackling both issues at once.

This summer, the Foodshed Alliance started a new program that uses volunteers to “glean” vegetables and fruits from farms that end up with more produce than they can harvest and sell. The fresh-picked produce is then delivered to nearly 100 locations in northern New Jersey, including church pantries, senior citizen centers, and programs to help single mothers and low-income families.

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***“A few years ago, a lot of pantries didn’t want anything but shelf-stable foods. Now they want the fresh produce all the time.”***

**— Eric Derby**

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“We also do free pop-up markets in communities where there’s a need,” added Eric Derby, program manager for the Foodshed Alliance.

Local farmers have gotten into the habit of calling the Foodshed Alliance when they have excess crops, and some have even set up a regular schedule for the volunteer harvesters.

The Foodshed Alliance also runs the Sustainable Agriculture Enterprise program, or SAgE for short, to help would-be farmers realize their dreams. High land prices are one of the biggest obstacles to beginning farmers in New Jersey, Derby explained, so SAgE offers affordable long-term leases on preserved land.

In 2021, the Foodshed Alliance was deeded the 333-acre Muckshaw Farm in Sussex County, which includes 66 farmable acres. The land is now home to eight farm enterprises, including the Munsee Three Sisters Medicinal Farm, run by

the Turtle Clan of the Ramapough Lenape Native American tribe.

All farmers leasing land at Muckshaw must agree to use sustainable and organic farming methods, and some go a step farther by using climate-friendly “regenerative” practices.

Now that the Muckshaw Farm is fully leased out, the Foodshed Alliance is partnering with New Jersey Conservation Foundation to expand the SAgE program to NJ Conservation-owned preserved farmland in Hunterdon County. Recognizing a need for more inclusivity in the farming community, Derby said the Foodshed Alliance’s goal with the program’s expansion is to engage farmers from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. New Jersey Conservation Foundation is excited about this partnership to provide farmland to the next generation of farmers that reflect the diversity of our state, and to advance sustainable and climate-friendly agriculture practices.



# Camden park programs: **MORE** nature, **MORE** fun!

New Jersey Conservation Foundation has a mission to preserve land and natural resources “for the benefit of all,” and that includes urban residents who may face challenges finding access to nature close to home.

Our team in Camden – Stephanie Kreiser, Rudisha Okezie and Jalisa Hernandez – are working to improve public access to parks and green spaces, and develop programs to invite residents of all ages into the great outdoors.

“We’re definitely trying to get people to come out,” said Stephanie, who serves as director for South Jersey. “We’ve done some surveys asking people what they want – our programs have to be community-driven.”

One popular program this summer was fishing at Cramer Hill Waterfront Park, where the Cooper River meets the Delaware River. Using grant funds, New Jersey Conservation Foundation and the Center for Aquatic Sciences were able to buy state fishing licenses for participants, provide fishing rods and tackle for them to borrow, and provide instruction to those without fishing experience.

Yoga in the Park, held at Farnham and Gateway Parks, has also been well received. It’s free, mats are provided and advance reservation isn’t required. “People out walking in the park can just pop in,” said Rudisha, a Camden native who serves as regional manager for the Camden Area. “The residents really love it; they’re asking for more.”

Another new program was a bicycle maintenance and repair program taught by Jalisa in partnership with REI, followed by a bike ride on local trails. “I used to be on a biking team, so I learned how to do basic repairs,” explained Jalisa, who grew up in Camden and serves as urban parks coordinator. “I think it’s good for the community to learn about bicycle safety and repair.”

New Jersey Conservation Foundation regularly leads bird walks in Camden parks to help the public learn about the migrating and year-round birds that can be spotted in the city and along the rivers. “We purchased binoculars for

the public to use, and we put together a guide to common birds in both English and Spanish,” said Rudisha.

“We’re hoping to engage more people who aren’t primarily English speakers,” added Stephanie.

In addition to organizing outdoor programs for the Camden community, the New Jersey Conservation team manages Gateway Park and looks for opportunities to acquire or secure new green spaces. For example, many neighborhoods have vacant or abandoned lots that could potentially be used for a community garden or pocket park.

Much of New Jersey Conservation’s work is done in partnership with other groups working to improve lives in Camden.

*“No one can do it alone, so building relationships and trust is very important.” — Stephanie Kreiser*





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After nearly 40 years with New Jersey Conservation Foundation, Michele Byers bid adieu to the organization at the end of 2021. She celebrated her retirement and incredible legacy with friends and supporters at Duke Farms on a beautiful autumn evening.

The Michele S. Byers Legacy Fund was started to support the initiatives closest to Michele's heart. If you are interested in making a special, one-time gift honoring Michele, please return the enclosed envelope with "Legacy Fund" in the memo line or contact Alison Mitchell ([alison@njconservation.org](mailto:alison@njconservation.org), 908-997-0711) to arrange your gift.



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*Rutgers University, Stewardship work at the new Rainbow Hill at Sourland Mountain Preserve*

### Miroslav Bergam

*Harvard University, Capturing NJ Conservation's history*

### Joseph Girnium III

*Stockton University, Stewardship work at the new Rainbow Hill at Sourland Mountain Preserve*

### Amber Loomis

*Stockton University, Stewardship work at Apshawa Preserve*

### Estefano "Paolo" Mora

*Rutgers University, Stewardship work at the new Rainbow Hill at Sourland Mountain Preserve*

### Jeanette Myers

*Stockton University, Stewardship work at the new Menantico Preserve*

### Ben Yaskulka

*Ramapo College of New Jersey, Improving NJ Conservation's volunteer program*



Snowy Egret  
by Bill Lynch

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Axanthic green frog at the Franklin Parker Preserve by Bill Lynch



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Michael F. Gallaway  
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Joseph Basralian  
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## DON'T SEE YOUR NAME? LET US KNOW!

Those who donated in 2022 will be included in next year's annual report, so stay tuned!  
Share your thoughts and questions with Alison Mitchell, Co-Executive Director at  
[alison@njconservation.org](mailto:alison@njconservation.org).

Red-spotted Purple  
by Bill Lynch







## BURLINGTON COUNTY

### BLUEBERRY ACRES

205 acres, Southampton Township

New Jersey Conservation Foundation's Evert Trail Preserve in the Pine Barrens more than doubled in size with the addition of Blueberry Acres. The property is almost entirely wooded wetlands with some former agricultural and blueberry fields. Preserving the land helps protect water quality in the Rancocas Creek, the only Pine Barrens watershed that drains west to the Delaware River.

### COOPER ESTATE

21 acres, Woodland Township

Thanks to a family's generosity, New Jersey Conservation Foundation added 21 forested acres to its Franklin Parker Preserve in the Pine Barrens. The family of the late Charles R. Cooper Jr. sold the forested wetlands just outside the village of Chatsworth to New Jersey Conservation for half of its true market value. The land was in the Cooper family since 1965, and had been used for hunting and enjoying nature.

### PEPPER

47 acres, Woodland Township

This forested property will be managed as an addition to NJ Conservation's Franklin Parker Preserve. It provides habitat for threatened species and we are working with partners to enhance natural areas on the property that harbor unique Pine Barrens plants and animals.



## CUMBERLAND COUNTY

### DETULLIO

29 acres, Fairfield Township

New Jersey Conservation purchased the development rights on the scenic DeTullio farm along the Cohansey River, ensuring that it stays farmland forever. The farm features tidelands, riparian woods and a Cohansey River tributary stream, and is surrounded on two sides by the state's Cohansey River Wildlife Management Area. The property has high quality soils, provides habitat for a wide variety of wildlife, and is valuable for its ability to recharge groundwater supplies.



## HUNTERDON COUNTY

### CURTIS

60 acres, Delaware Township

The last unpreserved working farm in the scenic and historic Rosemont Valley now has the same protections as neighboring farms. New Jersey Conservation purchased the development rights on the Curtis farm, ensuring that it will remain farmland forever. The farm was the proverbial "hole in the donut" that, if developed, would have compromised the integrity of the Rosemont Valley, listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The valley stretches from New Jersey's last original covered bridge, Green Sergeant's Bridge, to the tiny hamlet of Rosemont.

### TREANOR

63 acres, Tewksbury Township

Once approved for a residential subdivision, the Treanor property was permanently preserved as open space with the assistance of New Jersey Conservation. It is now managed by the Tewksbury Land Trust as a natural area with public hiking trails. The land also has high conservation value as wildlife habitat, groundwater recharge area and steep slope protection area. It is mostly wooded and contains pristine tributaries of the Rockaway Creek, a trout-producing stream that flows into the Raritan River.



## MERCER COUNTY

### LANWIN 3

153 acres, Princeton

The largest remaining undeveloped property in Princeton is now permanently protected, thanks to a partnership among several government agencies and nonprofits. New Jersey Conservation Foundation provided financial support and technical assistance to Princeton, the Friends of Princeton Open Space, The Watershed Institute and Ridgeview Conservancy to preserve this forested property filled with mature beech, oak and hickory trees. The property provides habitat for endangered and threatened species, as well as a critical wildlife corridor and potential hiking route to the Sourland Mountains.



**VAGNOZZI****17 acres, Hamilton Township**

NJ Conservation Foundation staff negotiated with the Vagnozzi Family Partnership on behalf of Hamilton Township to acquire this small, but strategic parcel of mature wooded wetlands. The property is a critical component of the headwaters of the Back Creek, a tributary of the Crosswicks Creek, providing high-quality, connected habitat for a variety of species. This transaction is very consistent with municipal and county open space plans, as well as the ongoing efforts of our nonprofit partners in the area, Save Hamilton Open Space and North Crosswicks Friends of Open Space. While the Township will own and manage this site as wildlife habitat with very limited, passive recreational access, 90% of the cost of the acquisition was paid for by NJDEP Green Acres and Mercer County. The Township's Rural Conservation Zone project area is a part of one of the Garden State's largest concentrations of preserved farmland and open space in Mercer, Burlington, Monmouth and Ocean Counties.

**MORRIS COUNTY****PEACH****15 acres, Washington Township**

New Jersey Conservation Foundation assisted the township in preserving this property on the western slope of Schooley's Mountain – the highest point in Washington Township. The land is one of several properties in the "Linking Open Space in Washington Township" initiative, which seeks to create a new township-owned nature and hiking preserve. The property is entirely forested and ranks highly for climate resilience, water recharge and wildlife habitat.

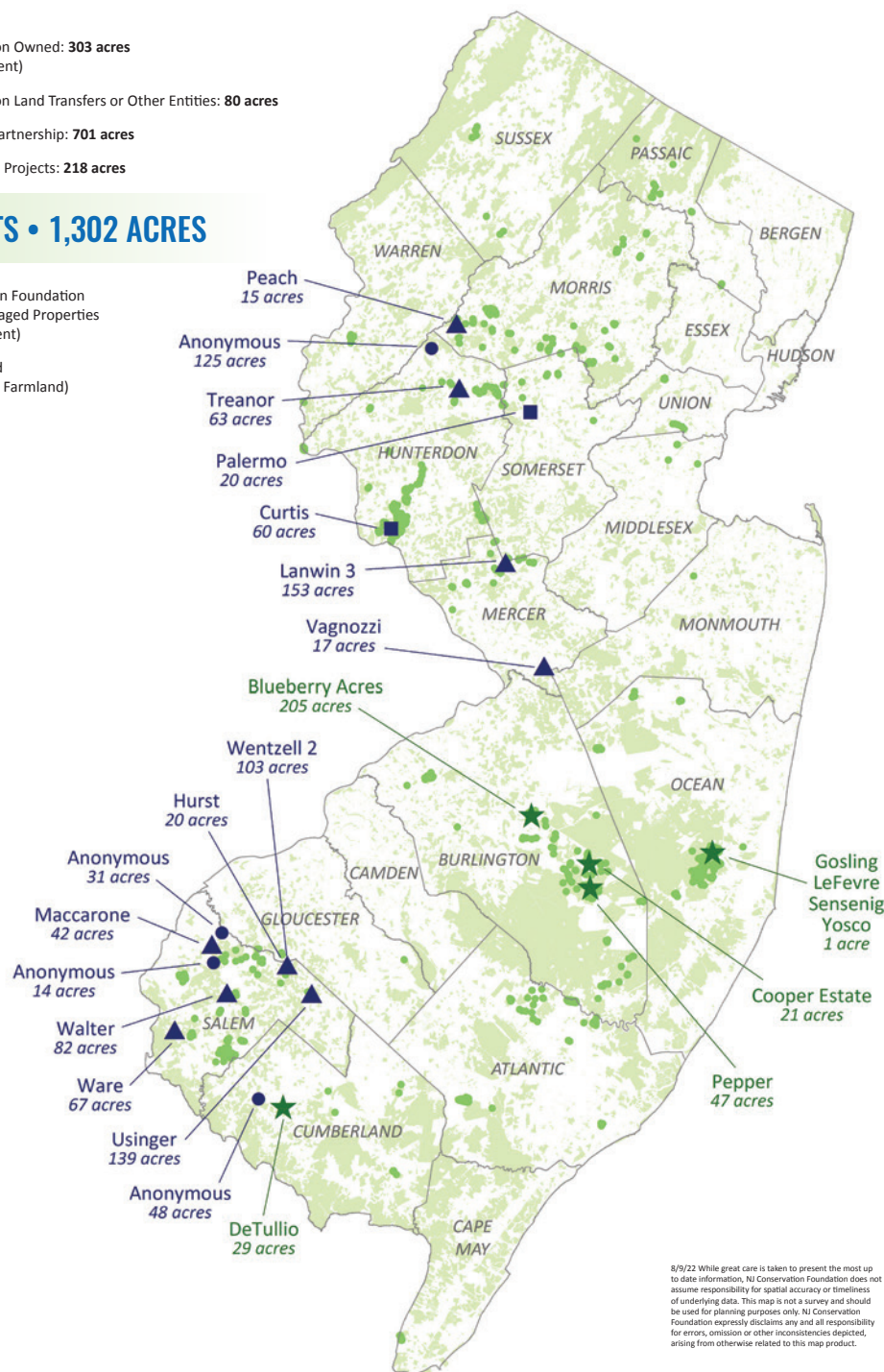




- ★ NJ Conservation Owned: **303 acres**  
(Fee or Easement)
- NJ Conservation Land Transfers or Other Entities: **80 acres**
- ▲ Preserved in Partnership: **701 acres**
- Other Assisted Projects: **218 acres**

## 24 PROJECTS • 1,302 ACRES

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



8/9/22 While great care is taken to present the most up to date information, NJ Conservation Foundation does not assume responsibility for spatial accuracy or timeliness of underlying data. This map is not a survey and should be used for planning purposes only. NJ Conservation Foundation expressly disclaims any and all responsibility for errors, omission or other inconsistencies depicted, arising from otherwise related to this map product.



## OCEAN COUNTY

### GOSLING, LEFEVRE, SENSENIG, YOSCO

0.35 acres, Lacey Township

The donation of these small, undeveloped parcels expands the nearly 4,000-acre Candace McKee Ashmun Preserve at Forked River Mountain, and are part of an unbuilt subdivision called Barnegat Pines, dating back to the early 20th century. The area is a mix of pine/oak uplands, pitch pine lowlands, and cedar swamps. Ownership enables New Jersey Conservation Foundation to better manage and protect natural resources.



## SALEM COUNTY

### HURST

20 acres, Upper Pittsgrove Township

The Hurst farm is part of a group of three contiguous family-owned farms totaling 53 acres that New Jersey Conservation Foundation is working to preserve. This farm features about 10 acres of riparian forest along the Oldmans Creek, and is also contiguous to the Sottile farm that NJ Conservation Foundation helped preserve in 2015. The Hurst farm is nearly 75 percent prime and statewide-important soils, the two highest classifications of soil quality.

### MACCARONE

42 acres, Piles Grove Township

The Maccarone farm is part of the large agricultural grassland habitat called the Sharptown Grasslands, where New Jersey Conservation Foundation has preserved nearly 2,100 acres since 1990. The Maccarone farm is a grain, hay and soybean farm with high quality soils. It is contiguous to the Atanasio farm, which New Jersey Conservation Foundation preserved in 2018.



## USINGER

139 acres, Upper Pittsgrove Township

This large important property is contiguous to New Jersey Conservation Foundation's Joyce farm easement and the Camden-Bridgeton trail alignment. The property contains segments of the Muddy Run Tributary and is upstream from the state's Elmer Lake Wildlife Management Area. NJ Conservation worked very closely with the landowner to find the best preservation program for their property. The State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC) took on the project to purchase the easement.

## WALTER

82 acres, Mannington and Alloway Townships

This picturesque farm is located within William Penn Foundation's Lower Salem River, Delaware River Watershed Initiative (DRWI) focus area. The property is 90 percent prime soil, the highest quality classification, on which grain crops are raised. New Jersey Conservation Foundation worked with the State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC), Salem County and Mannington Township to explore farmland preservation options. The SADC completed the project as a direct easement purchase.

## WENTZELL 2

103 acres, Upper Pittsgrove Township

While working with the Wentzell family to preserve two other farms, New Jersey Conservation Foundation was asked to help preserve a third. As part of NJ Conservation's working partnership with the State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC), the SADC agreed to directly purchase the property's development rights. The Wentzell farm has excellent soils and is contiguous to other preserved farms in an important agricultural neighborhood.



## SOMERSET COUNTY

## PALERMO

20 acres, Bedminster Township

An iconic horse farm known for hosting shows and camps is now permanently preserved as farmland. New Jersey Conservation Foundation purchased the development rights on the Palermo Show Stable property, ensuring that it remains farmland in perpetuity. The Palermo property is located between two other preserved farms, and its preservation creates an unbroken swath of over 500 protected acres in the heart of Bedminster farmland. New Jersey Conservation secured matching federal and state farmland grants to preserve the farm.



Lanwin Preserve

## 2021 PUBLIC FUNDING PARTNERS

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Bedminster Township  
Burlington County  
Cumberland County  
Delaware Township  
Fairfield Township  
Hamilton Township  
Hunterdon County  
Mannington Township  
Mercer County  
Morris County  
NJ Water Supply Authority  
NJDEP Green Acres Program

Pilesgrove Township  
Princeton  
Upper Pittsgrove Township  
Salem County  
Somerset County  
Southampton Township  
State Agriculture  
Development Committee  
(SADC)  
Tewksbury Township  
USDA Natural Resources  
Conservation Service (NRCS)  
Washington Township  
Woodland Township



### VICTORY OVER PENNEAST PIPELINE

After a nearly seven-year battle against the proposed PennEast pipeline, New Jersey Conservation and its partners emerged victorious. In the fall of 2021, PennEast announced that it would no longer pursue development of a nearly 120-mile pipeline from the fracking fields of Pennsylvania, across the Delaware River and through western New Jersey, threatening wildlife, pristine streams and historic communities. The lengthy delays and legal challenges wrought by our campaign ultimately took a financial toll on the PennEast partners. After PennEast's withdrawal, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission vacated its earlier conditional approvals of the project. The pipeline would have traversed miles of preserved open space and farmland, including many properties preserved by NJ Conservation and our partners. We toasted the victory by organizing a grand celebration at the Prallsville Mill in Stockton with our nonprofit, community and landowner partners.

### SOUND SOLAR SITING

The New Jersey Legislature passed, and Governor Murphy signed, a bill creating a new utility-scale solar incentive program that includes provisions advocated for by New Jersey Conservation. The new law requires sound siting of solar facilities that largely avoids prime farmland, forests and other sensitive natural resources. Another solar-related victory in 2021 involved a utility-scale solar proposal on prime farmland in Pilesgrove Township, Salem County. Following our opposition over many months, the township's Planning Board rejected Dakota Power's request for a zoning variance to develop solar energy on more than 800 acres of prime farmland.



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



## STEWARDED FORESTS FOR CLIMATE CHANGE

Forests are an important ally in the fight against climate change, as they absorb and sequester carbon from the atmosphere. But many New Jersey forests are threatened by overabundant deer, which eat seedling and saplings before they can grow to maturity. We held an online symposium with Duke Farms staff to discuss new research conducted at the 2,740-acre Duke Farms property in Somerset County on deer management programs and their implications for forest regeneration and carbon sequestration.

In our role as co-chair of the Natural and Working Lands group of the New Jersey Climate Change Alliance, we are partnering with Rutgers University and various stakeholder groups. We provided data and analysis to inform the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's development of strategies to defend and enhance carbon stored in forests and other lands. The DEP is developing a statewide carbon sequestration strategy under the Global Warming Response Act.

## 'NEONIC' PESTICIDE BAN

We supported a bill to ban non-agricultural uses of neonicotinoid ("neonic") pesticides, along with many of our partners, and it was passed by the New Jersey Legislature in early 2022. Neonics harm bees, butterflies, birds, and pollinators. The new law is a great first step toward reversing that damage.

## PROTECTING PUBLIC LANDS

New Jersey Conservation Foundation joined the local community in Egg Harbor City, Atlantic County, in opposing the "diversion" of city-owned parkland for commercial use. The city's Land Use Board recommended rezoning about 50 acres of the 400-acre Egg Harbor City Lake Park, a popular recreation area in existence for 150 years, as a redevelopment zone to build a warehouse and outlet store. Facing huge resistance from the public, the City Council rejected the plan. The park includes forestlands in the Pinelands Preservation Area.

Also in 2021, we successfully opposed several ill-conceived bills in the New Jersey Legislature that would have led to an increase in inappropriate timber harvesting on public lands. Our advocacy efforts included testimony before a special hearing of the Senate Environment and Energy Committee.

Pine Barrens gentian by Patrick Law



## RARE PLANTS

New Jersey Conservation Foundation has been partnering with expert horticulturalists at Duke Farms to learn how to propagate rare plants known as Pickering's Morning Glory, Pine Barrens Gentian, and Climbing Fern, and assisted Dr. Jay Kelly of Raritan Valley College in his work to re-establish populations of the rarest plant of all, American Chaffseed, at Whitesbog and Franklin Parker Preserve. We now have experimental populations of Pickering's Morning Glory and Sickle Leaf Golden Asters growing at the Franklin Parker Preserve, and the asters have successfully seeded new plants in two populations in only a few years.

We are working closely with the NJDEP to manage the rare and sensitive natural morning glory populations throughout the Pine Barrens. We have virtually eliminated invasive Chinese Bush Clover from the Batsto morning glory population after 15 consecutive years of effort, and we have saved at least 4 populations from devastation by thwarting illegal off-road vehicular traffic for many years - those populations are recovering from the brink of local extirpation. We have successfully rescued one Pine Barrens Gentian population from accidental destruction by transplanting seedlings grown at Duke Farms from seeds collected at the site the previous year. We hope to continue and expand upon these efforts with the help of a cadre of many dedicated volunteers.



# 2021 GRANT AWARDS

Since 1989, the Franklin Parker Conservation Grants Program has awarded nearly \$2 million to 478 conservation projects throughout the state.

- In 2020, New Jersey Conservation added a racial equity lens to the grant program and has since awarded more than \$90,000 through 28 grants to benefit communities of color across the state and improve equitable access to quality open space and places to grow food locally.
- In 2021, ten nonprofits were awarded Franklin Parker Community Conservation Grants totaling \$30,000 to help provide essential resources for addressing environmental challenges and improving the quality of life for communities of color in New Jersey. Funding for the 2021 grants was provided by the Victoria Foundation.

Underrepresented communities in New Jersey face disproportionate hardships resulting from impacts of climate change and environmental degradation. Increasing access to green spaces in urban areas provides health and environmental benefits. Green spaces keep surrounding areas cooler, clean the air and water, and make urban areas more resilient to extreme weather from climate change, such as heat waves, floods and wildfires. Additionally, people with safe access to parks and trails exercise more and are generally healthier.



Agrihood Internship field trip to Capital City Farm



Learning agricultural skills at Grow It Green Morristown.



### BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF CUMBERLAND COUNTY - \$2,000

#### Ultimate Journey

Ultimate Journey is an environmental stewardship and cultural heritage program for young people which includes connecting them to local resources in the community and engaging them in fun and interesting science activities.

### DELAWARE RIVERKEEPER NETWORK - \$3,250

#### North Camden Basin Enhancement Project

This project improved a stormwater basin's function and appearance through the addition of new native plants and removal of trash and debris, thereby enhancing quality-of-life for North Camden residents and Camden County Circuit Trail users.

### FOODSHED ALLIANCE - \$3,500

#### Irrigation Upgrade on Sussex SAgE Preserved Farmland

The project upgraded the irrigation system at the Sussex County SAgE site in Andover to benefit seven leased farms, including those from BIPOC communities.

### FRIENDS OF HOPEWELL VALLEY OPEN SPACE - \$5,000

#### The Outdoor Equity Alliance Agrihood Internship

The Outdoor Equity Alliance Agrihood Internship project provided 20 students from underserved communities with an opportunity to get hands-on experience and to critically think about environmental stewardship, agriculture, and social welfare, guided by Leah Penniman's book titled *Farming While Black*.

### FUTURE CITY INC. - \$3,000

#### Accessing Our Public Spaces – It's Up To Us!!

This project informed residents, stewards, and stakeholders to recognize the personal and environmental benefits of accessing the City of Elizabeth's public spaces 24/7, and worked to methodically develop a city wide civic standard and collective conscience regarding the environmental benefits and utilization of our public spaces.

### GROW IT GREEN MORRISTOWN - \$4,680

#### Expanded Farm Apprentice Program

The program provided opportunities for two farmer apprentices from underrepresented populations to explore agriculture-based career pathways utilizing sustainable methods through innovative community food models in an urban setting.

### IRONBOUND COMMUNITY CORPORATION - \$2,254

#### Ironbound Environmental Justice Youth Leadership Program

The Ironbound Environmental Justice Youth Leadership Program enabled the next generation of environmental justice advocates to develop and advance a zero waste plan for Eastside High School in Newark.

### ISLES, INC. - \$1,050

#### Urban Agriculture as Public Land Stewardship

This project increased capacity of community members to reclaim, improve, and engage in green space on public land in Trenton through education and incorporation of conservation practices.

### NEW JERSEY AUDUBON - \$1,225

#### Camden Community Pollinator Green Space Project

This project improved environmental and educational transformation for the City of Camden by implanting a pilot project that creates Community Green Space that is resident-maintained and incorporates native plant and pollinator areas on abandoned property lots in residential neighborhoods through the City's "Adopt-A-Lot" program.

### NORTHEAST ORGANIC FARMING ASSOCIATION OF NEW JERSEY - \$4,041

#### Conservation of a New Jersey Wildlife Management Area with Organic Management Practices

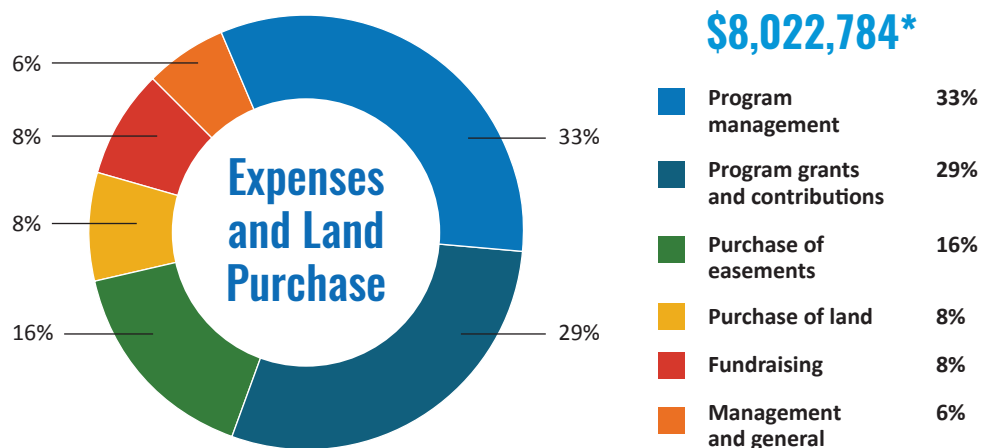
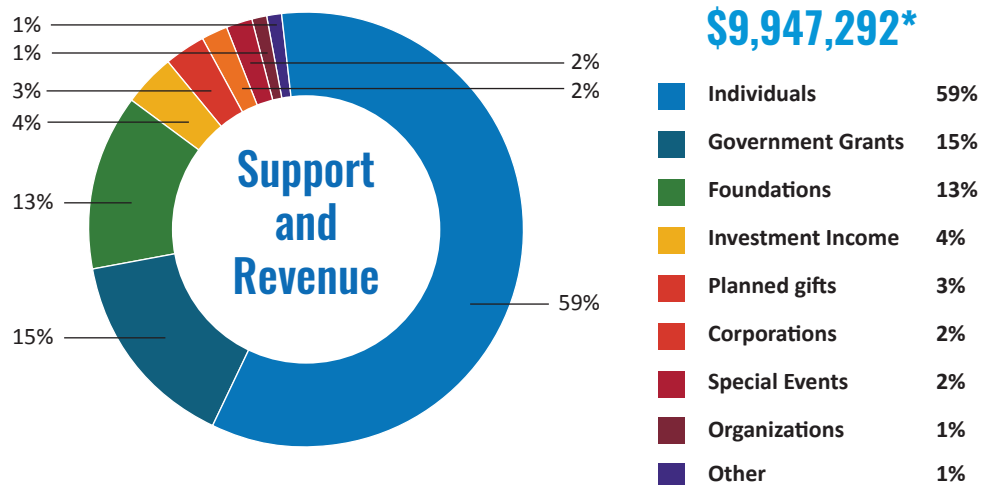
The project supported and mentored New Jersey farmers and the leaders of the Lenape Turtle Clan and demonstrated a new approach to land stewardship by leasing 10 acres of the Whittingham WMA from the Department of Fish and Wildlife, and profitably growing organic grain crops including historically relevant crops with organic management practices, without the use of deer fencing and irrigation.



Agrihood Internship field trip to the Howell Living History Farm.



# 2021 FINANCIAL POSITION



## Assets

	December 31 2021 (1)	December 31 2020 (1)
Cash and Cash Equivalents	3,187,209	1,430,962
Investments	17,471,096	16,282,378
Unconditional Promises to Give, net	387,250	283,580
Beneficial Interest in Split Interest Agreements	172,941	557,548
Land, Buildings and Easements	41,115,111	40,600,798
Other Assets	255,088	200,638
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$62,588,695</b>	<b>\$59,355,904</b>

## Liabilities and Net Assets

### LIABILITIES

Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses	\$271,094	\$265,602
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>271,094</b>	<b>265,602</b>

### NET ASSETS

Without Donor Restrictions	54,293,694	53,080,069
With Donor Restrictions	8,023,907	6,010,233
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>62,317,601</b>	<b>59,090,302</b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<b>\$62,588,695</b>	<b>\$59,355,904</b>

\*Unaudited financial information

(1) Extracted from the December 31, 2021 audited financial statements.

To receive a copy of the complete audited financial statements, please send a request to [info@njconservation.org](mailto:info@njconservation.org)





# LEAVE A LEGACY for Future Generations

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

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

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

To discuss how your planned gift will help ensure the permanence of preservation, please contact Alison Mitchell, Co-Executive Director, at 908-997-0711 or [alison@njconservation.org](mailto:alison@njconservation.org). While it is not necessary to advise us in advance that you have included New Jersey Conservation Foundation in your estate planning, we encourage you to let us know of your plans so that we may thank you and learn more about your interests. If you wish to add us in your will or estate plan, please use the following listing: New Jersey Conservation Foundation/170 Longview Road/Far Hills, NJ 07931. Our tax identification number is 22-6065456.

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**New Jersey Conservation**  
FOUNDATION

NEW JERSEY CONSERVATION FOUNDATION  
Bamboo Brook | 170 Longview Road | Far Hills, NJ 07931

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



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Joshua Shisgal

“ PARKS AND PLAYGROUNDS ARE THE SOUL OF A CITY. ”

- MARTY RUBIN, AUTHOR