

# New Jersey Conservation



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#### A POIGNANT HOMECOMING

The Native American community reunited with 63 forested acres in Salem County where the ancient Cohanzick Lenape tribe once lived.

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#### A PINE BARRENS PRESERVE GROWS

The Michael Huber Prairie Warbler Preserve expanded by almost 700 acres with the addition of a former cranberry farm.

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#### NEW BOARD PRESIDENT WELCOMED

Louise Currey Wilson of Princeton was elected to lead New Jersey Conservation's Board of Trustees, succeeding Rosina "Nina" Dixon.



New Jersey Conservation  
FOUNDATION

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## ABOUT THE COVER

New Jersey Conservation Foundation had a lot to celebrate during 2023! At left, our friend and former trustee Penelope Ayers captured this image of a rare snowy owl. At top right, Sam Huber visits the new section of the Pine Barrens preserved named in honor of his late father, Michael Huber. Pictured from left are Sam, staff biologist Dr. Emile DeVito, Co-Executive Director Alison Mitchell, and Co-Executive Director Jay Watson. Photo by Co-Executive Director Tom Gilbert. Bottom right, visitors to the 20th anniversary celebration of the Franklin Parker Preserve enjoy a sunset nature walk.



## From Our Co-Executive Directors

Tom Gilbert | Alison Mitchell | Jay Watson

Since preserving the first acres of what would become the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge in the early 1960s, New Jersey Conservation Foundation has been on a mission to protect natural lands as sanctuaries for wildlife, sources of clean air and water, and places for people to connect with nature.

This past year, we've been excited to bring a variety of extraordinary land protection projects to fruition throughout the state. Collective efforts have helped to protect about 30% of New Jersey – but of course there is more work to be done!

In South Jersey's Burden Hill Forest, we were honored to help citizens of the Nanticoke Lenni-Lenape Nation - descendants of the Cohanzick Lenape people – acquire 63 acres of their ancestral home. The land is now called the Cohanzick Nature Reserve, and will serve as a place the public can enjoy and where Indigenous people can pass their knowledge and traditions on to future generations.

In the Pine Barrens, we purchased a former cranberry farm that is exceptional for its pristine waterways and rare Atlantic white cedar forests; it also expands our existing Michael Huber Prairie Warbler Preserve. In Vineland, we significantly increased the size of our Menantico Creek Preserve by acquiring 85 acres of adjacent forest from the family of two Holocaust survivors who bought it about 50 years ago.

Near the Delaware River, we helped the Borough of Frenchtown acquire the last remaining large parcel of open space within its borders, creating a new nature preserve. We also assisted the Hunterdon County townships of Readington and Raritan in preserving critical lands on both sides of their common border, the South Branch of the Raritan River.

You can read more about these land-saving projects, and other New Jersey Conservation Foundation initiatives such as planting trees in urban areas and our work to prevent warehouse sprawl, in the pages of this newsletter.

As the year draws to a close, we want to express our deepest gratitude to you, our members and donors, for making this work possible. We cannot thank you enough for your unwavering generosity and support, and we hope you will continue to partner in this vitally important mission!

Best wishes from New Jersey Conservation Foundation's staff and trustees for a joyful holiday season, and a happy and healthy 2024!



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.

Since 1960, we have preserved more than 140,000 acres of open space, farmland, and parks. We also manage more than a dozen nature preserves, conduct public outreach and education programs, and advocate for sensible land use and climate policies that will protect the health of New Jersey communities for generations to come.

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, New Jersey 07931.



*Thomas A. Gilbert Alison Mitchell John S. Watson, Jr.*



New Jersey Conservation Foundation staff and volunteers have been busy! Throughout the year, we offer a variety of events and programs to showcase the state's incredible natural resources.



Pictured Clockwise from Top:

Bill Lynch, Director of Engagement & Communications, helped lead a hawk-watching trip to Raccoon Ridge to observe migrating raptors. The hike was hosted in partnership with the Feminist Bird Club of Jersey City, whose goal is to make birding and the outdoors more inclusive. The groups also co-led a trip to Richard W. DeKorte Park in Lyndhurst, pictured below.

Four of our staff traveled to Portland, OR to attend the Land Trust Alliance's Rally. The conference is an annual gathering of inspired and passionate land conservation practitioners from around the world who are dedicated to conserving cherished places in our communities. From left to right: Jay Watson, Co-Executive Director; Jess Fasano, Communications Manager; Richard Dodds, Black River Project Manager; Bill Lynch, Director of Engagement & Communications.

Debra Watson, one of our fantastic volunteers, gifts gorgeous flowers to visitors of Capital City Farm in Trenton.



## Staff

**Thomas Gilbert**, Co-Executive Director  
**Alison Mitchell**, Co-Executive Director  
**John S. Watson Jr.**, Co-Executive Director  
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**Richard Dodds**, Regional Manager, Black River Greenway, Highlands, & Wickecheoke Greenway  
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**Allison Williams**, Stewardship Coordinator

New Jersey Conservation Foundation is an equal opportunity employer and we are committed to building a diverse workforce and Board of Trustees.



# A HOMECOMING *like no other*

Sixty-three acres of pristine forest in Cumberland County – the traditional homeland of the ancient Cohanzick Lenape people, who cherished and cared for the land for thousands of years – were rematriated to the Indigenous community this past summer.



Above, Tyrese Gould Jacinto stands with her husband, Victor Jacinto, and her father, former Chief Mark “Quiet Hawk” Gould, at the doorway to the new Native American Advancement Center (NAAC) longhouse, which will serve as an educational and cultural center. Left, visitors to the Cohanzick Nature Reserve check out a pond surrounded by pine trees.

In a unique and poignant land preservation project, New Jersey Conservation Foundation and its partners helped the Native American Advancement Corporation (NAAC) acquire the former Morningstar Fellowship Church property in Quinton Township.

The land, located within the larger Burden Hill Forest, is now the Cohanzick Nature Reserve. A former church building on the property, now known as the New Longhouse, is being transformed into an educational, cultural, and environmental center.

“The acquisition of the Cohanzick Nature Reserve is a monumental step toward preserving this ancestral homeland and sharing its significance with the broader community,” said Tyrese Gould Jacinto, president and CEO of NAAC. “We are committed to creating a haven for individuals, a place where traditions are deeply rooted in conservation, and the public can learn about the rich cultural heritage of the Cohanzick Lenape people.”

Jacinto and her father, former Chief Mark “Quiet Hawk” Gould, are

citizens of the Nanticoke Lenape Nation and have direct ancestral ties to what they consider sacred land. The acquisition marked a long-awaited homecoming for the pair, whose grandparents were born and raised on that very land.

“It’s been an honor to work with all of the partners to see the Cohanzick Nature Reserve come to fruition,” said Rob Ferber, who led the project as New Jersey Conservation Foundation’s Regional Manager for the Delaware Bay Watershed. “NAAC’s past, present, and future work is a testament to the ways conservation can be guided by Indigenous values.”

New Jersey Conservation Foundation and NAAC partnered with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection’s (DEP) Green Acres Program, The Nature Conservancy and the Open Space





“

*For centuries, we Native American communities have suffered under the unjust loss of our ancestral lands, which has resulted in the disruption of our spiritual practices and traditions. Now, we can support our community and all local individuals as we work to steward our traditional homelands and restore our connection to the land.”*

- TYRESE GOULD JACINTO

Institute to make the Cohanzick Nature Reserve a reality.

The return of the land was celebrated at a dedication ceremony in September.

“Land rematriation is a cause that strikes at the very heart of social justice and human dignity,” noted Jacinto. She expressed gratitude to all partners who helped to preserve and rematriate the land: “Your tireless efforts, from attending meetings to volunteering your time and expertise, have left an indelible mark on this journey. Each step taken, each idea shared, and each act of kindness shown played a vital role in making our rematriation a resounding success.”

NAAC plans to launch Indigenous conservation education programs at the reserve, providing a unique opportunity for the public to engage with and learn from the land’s original stewards. These programs will offer hands-on experiences, workshops, and guided tours to foster a deeper understanding of Indigenous conservation and the importance of environmental stewardship.



Tyrese Gould Jacinto and New Jersey Conservation staff biologist Dr. Emile DeVito walk the trails of the nature reserve and check out native plants.



# New 71-acre preserve established in Frenchtown

A 71-acre wooded property directly across the street from Borough Park in Frenchtown, Hunterdon County, has been permanently preserved as public open space, effectively completing a green belt around the town.

The new preserve, near the borough's population center, will provide space for passive recreation and habitat for native plants and wildlife.



“

*The establishment of this preserve is a triumph for both the environment and the local community.”*

- ZACH RICH, Hunterdon County Commissioner

New Jersey Conservation Foundation assisted the Borough of Frenchtown in acquiring the property, using funds from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's Green Acres Program and Hunterdon County Open Space Trust. The property on Creek Road was previously owned by the Thompson Realty Co. of Princeton.

The newly-preserved property was one of the last remaining large tracts of land identified as a priority for preservation in the borough's open space plan. Its preservation was a longtime goal of the borough, and eases concern among residents that the property would be developed.

“We are very excited to see the permanent preservation of this long sought-after property,” said Lisa MacCollum, New Jersey Conservation's director for North & Central Jersey. “We are pleased to have helped secure this land for the borough's residents and visitors to enjoy.”

The new preserve contains a tributary of the Nishisakawick Creek and provides habitat for endangered and threatened

species, including the long-tailed salamander. The property also will provide climate change resiliency through flood control, groundwater protection, and its ability to recharge groundwater supplies.

“Opportunities for preservation in the county's smaller municipalities are rare, especially ones of this magnitude and in a prime location,” noted Hunterdon County Commissioner Zach Rich. “New Jersey Conservation and the Borough of Frenchtown deserve recognition for their role in securing this property and making it available to the public.”

“The Mayor and Council are grateful for the assistance from New Jersey Conservation to acquire what has always been a strategic open space priority for Frenchtown,” said Frenchtown Council President Michele Liebttag. “Due to this coordinated effort, we will achieve the long-standing goal of creating a green belt and preserving the open space critical to the sustainability of Frenchtown's natural resources and amenities.”







Photo by Bill Lynch

# MEMORIAL GIFT

## benefits urban birding, land stewardship

The late Dr. Ogden Carter and his wife, Hannah Corbin Carter, were longtime New Jersey Conservation Foundation members with a passion for the outdoors.

In memory of Ogden and Hannah, a member of the Carter family has made a generous contribution to New Jersey Conservation to establish an urban birding program for underserved populations, and to support the critical work of stewarding the 25,000 acres of NJ Conservation Foundation nature preserves around the state.

“Like many members of New Jersey Conservation Foundation, they spent as many days of their lives as possible enjoying pastimes in the outdoors, and they had wonderful opportunities beginning in childhood for hiking, fishing, and birding,” recalled one of their children. “They were always avid daily walkers in city parks as well as undeveloped woodlands.”

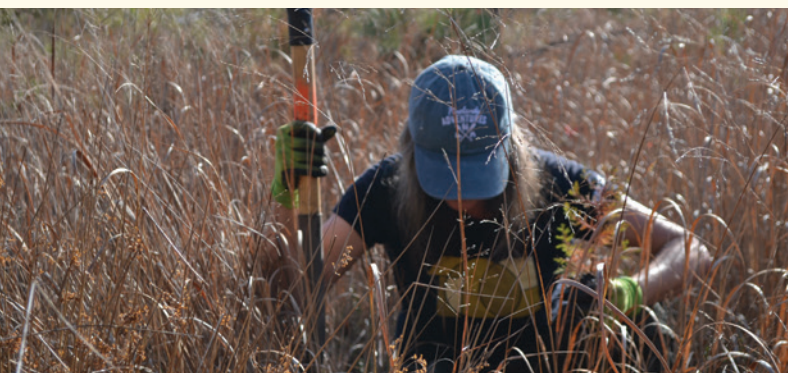
“Along with their friends, my parents trusted New Jersey Conservation to push hard and effectively to protect opportunities for the public to participate in the same kind of

activities they had valued so much throughout their lives in the Garden State,” said the family member.

Established earlier this year, the Hannah Corbin Carter and Ogden B. Carter Urban Birding Program is sponsoring free bird walks in cities led by NJ Conservation, including Trenton and Jersey City.

In May, the program celebrated Black Birders Week with two well-attended bird walks at Cadwalader Park in Trenton. Later the same month, NJ Conservation joined forces with the Feminist Bird Club of Jersey City for a “Big Day” of birding at Liberty State Park in Jersey City.

“We’re very grateful for the gift honoring Ogden and Hannah, because it allows us to introduce birding to urban residents, and allows us to improve our preserves for both wildlife and people,” said Jay Watson, Co-Executive Director.



Staff and volunteers planted Atlantic white cedars at the Franklin Parker Preserve

**“ It is not enough to preserve the land, we must continue to care for it in perpetuity to protect the natural resources that make it special.”**

- ALISON MITCHELL, CO-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



2023

GAINING  
GROUND

## 10 Projects

March 2023

—  
Sept. 20231,081 acres  
preserved

- ★ NJ Conservation Owned: 786 acres  
(Fee or Easement)
- ▲ Preserved in Partnership: 295 acres
- Urban Action
- Transfers

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

New Jersey Conservation Foundation and its partners permanently preserved 1,081 acres from March 2023 through Sept. 2023. These lands include the Cohanzick Nature Reserve, returning land to the ancestral home of the Cohanzick Lenape people. Lands also include natural areas that safeguard clean drinking water, protect wildlife habitat, offer scenic beauty and outdoor recreation, in addition to our work in urban communities.

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



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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!







## Pine Barrens preserve expands by 691 acres

New Jersey Conservation Foundation's Michael Huber Prairie Warbler Preserve in the Pine Barrens has grown 50 percent larger, thanks to the acquisition of a former cranberry farm.

In August, we purchased the property in Woodland Township, Burlington County, from the United Talmudical Academy Torah of Lakewood (UTA), which had received the land as a donation nearly six years earlier. The acquisition increases the size of the Huber Preserve from 1,227 to 1,918 acres.

"This is a beautiful property crossed by several tributaries of the Burrs Mill Brook, and containing mature stands of Atlantic white cedar, a native tree that has been greatly reduced over the centuries in New Jersey due to logging and mismanagement," said Stephanie Kreiser, NJ Conservation's director for South Jersey. "Acquiring this land as open space provides an excellent opportunity in the future to restore Atlantic white cedars in places they historically grew."

Approximately 65 acres of mature cedar remain on the property, and protecting and restoring this resource is critical for wildlife habitat and carbon sequestration. The property provides connectivity to large swaths of protected land and likely habitat for threatened and endangered species. It is also of the highest importance for protecting water quality, with 8.6 miles of stream and 29 acres of open water.

The preserve is named for the late Michael Huber, a dedicated conservationist who served on NJ Conservation's Board of Trustees for many years. The pitch pine/scrub oak forests of the original section of the Huber Preserve are prime breeding habitat for the prairie warbler, a migratory songbird that spends summers in the northeast and winters in the islands of the West Indies.

Funding for the UTA purchase came from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's Green Acres Program, Open Space Institute (OSI), and a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service North American Wetlands Conservation Act – Ducks Unlimited grant.

## Garden State or Warehouse State?

While it's estimated that there are more than 1 billion square feet of warehouse space in NJ, it's not too late to prevent future negative impacts from poorly-planned warehouse development.

In 2021 and 2022, building permits were authorized for a total of 64.2 million square feet of "storage" space, primarily warehouses. Every one million square feet of warehouse space consumes 23 acres of land for the building alone, plus approximately two to three times the building area required for loading, parking and stormwater facilities.

The need to proactively address development across the state is clear, and New Jersey



# Holocaust survivors' land added to Vineland preserve

Brothers Henry and Abe Feigenbaum hid in the forests of their native Poland to escape the Nazis after losing most of their family. The brothers survived World War II and eventually made their way to Vineland, New Jersey.

There, they started families and became partners in a successful real estate development firm.

This past summer, the two brothers' heirs honored their memory by selling 85 wooded acres to expand New Jersey Conservation Foundation's Menantico Creek Preserve.

"Thanks to this great partnership, the Menantico Creek Preserve now stands at 685 acres of protected open space," said Rob Ferber, NJ Conservation's Regional Manager for the Delaware Bay Watershed. "The preserve is near population centers in downtown Vineland and Millville, and we're creating a trail system to make it a valuable resource for the community."

The Feigenbaum property's old-growth forest provides excellent wildlife habitat, and filters rainfall to help recharge the Kirkwood-Cohansey

Aquifer, South Jersey's main source of clean drinking water.

New Jersey Conservation Foundation partnered with The American Littoral Society, allocating funds from the New Jersey Green Acres Program, Cumberland County, and the Open Space Institute to acquire the property.

Edna Feigenbaum, one of Henry's three children, believes her father and uncle would have been pleased to see their land permanently preserved. "They believed in giving back to their community and would have been thrilled and honored," she said.

The preserve features 2.2 miles of the Menantico Creek and its tributaries, part of the federally-designated Maurice Wild and Scenic River system.



Henry Feigenbaum

Menantico Creek Preserve  
Photo by Rob Ferber

Conservation Foundation (NJ Conservation) is looking at strategies to prevent irresponsible warehouse development. The goal is to provide better data and tools to guide development without sacrificing NJ's most productive agricultural lands and environmental resources, and without adding to pollution levels in already overburdened communities.

After receiving input from many individuals and organizations, including NJ Conservation, the New

Jersey Office of Planning Advocacy developed Warehouse Siting Guidelines which were adopted by the State Planning Commission in September 2022. NJ Conservation's Central Jersey Project Manager Tim Brill then assembled an ad hoc Garden State Warehouse Siting Study group to join NJ Conservation in looking at the impacts of warehouse development.

The study group encourages municipalities and counties to review and update their master plans and

zoning regulations to help manage warehouse sprawl. NJ Conservation is also working with partner organizations on new legislation that would require county and state review for large-scale development projects.



Photo by Phil Parker



# thank you!

New Jersey Conservation Foundation welcomes new members and gratefully acknowledges donors who made contributions between January 1, 2023 and September 30, 2023. With your support, we preserve and protect New Jersey's lands.

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(from January 1, 2023  
through September 30, 2023)

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(from January 1, 2023  
through September 30, 2023)

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## Gifts in Honor of Sam Lambert and the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Franklin Parker Preserve

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Landon and Sarah Jones  
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Kevin and Leslie Kuchinski  
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Margaret H. Parker  
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Julia Pettit  
Theodore S. and Elizabeth A.  
Peyton  
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Barbara B. Wolfe  
Gary Zockoll and Karen A.  
Richards

## Memorials

(from January 1, 2023  
through September 30, 2023)

Peter Evert  
Lorraine Blazewicz  
Philip and Florence  
Boulton  
Nancy Cascioli  
Donald Chambers  
Heather Corbett  
Karen and Jim Eubank  
Carol and Phil Fuoco  
Mike and Pam Hawes  
Jack Imperato  
Ken Jacobson  
Patricia Janiszewski  
Karen Janiszewski  
Nancy and Joe Jones  
Steven Kemp  
Kim and Sara Ketchel  
Carol Kirschenmann  
Elizabeth Lacey  
Cathy Malizio and Barry  
Faulkner  
Gayle Miner  
Thomas E. Moorhouse  
Elizabeth Nef  
Janice W. O'Connell  
Barbara Repsher  
Riverton Fire Co., Inc.  
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Mr. Robert C. Roy  
Karen Schwing  
Norma Semple  
Marcella Tony Sosnoskie  
Susan Thress  
Mary Therese Weimert  
Shirley A. Wunsch  
Charles Flatt III  
Sarah Connelly  
Melodie Flatt  
Cynthia Fuller  
Hester Fuller  
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Tracey Basista  
Carol and Jack Bernstein  
Tom Friel  
Davida and Martin Ross  
Mary Jo Glaser  
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Joan G. Hassard  
Patricia Miller  
Gary Introne  
Don Florio  
Marion Kingsford  
Anonymous Donor  
Margaret Dillon  
Brendan Linard  
Mary and Michael Manley  
Thomas and M. Christine  
Winmill  
Ed Lloyd  
Judith Glassgold  
David Moore  
Verna P. Urbanski

Teresa R. Stahl  
Anthony and Glorianne  
Robbi  
Jeff Van Varick  
Alex O'Brian  
Harold Wachtel  
Pamela and Howard Hirsch  
Mark Kevin Wynn  
Deborah J. Anderson  
Andrew Laporte  
James Wyse  
Gerald Faber

## Tributes

(from January 1, 2023  
through September 30, 2023)

Berkeley Heights Environmental  
Commission  
Richard Leister  
Gary Borkes  
Jean Earle  
Michele S. Byers  
David L. Hansen and Ruth  
Charnes  
Emile DeVito  
Michael and Marilyn R.  
Dee  
Mark Pensiero  
Beryl Doyle  
Lois K. Stewart  
William Flemer  
Louise Gross  
Frances  
Katherine Russo  
Gates Hawn  
Mark and Cynthia Coleman  
Mom and Dad  
Jack Segal  
NJ Conservation Foundation  
Mr. Robert Jonas  
Philippa Reist  
Estate of John J. Fitzpatrick  
John Sacco  
George Eckelmann and  
Jane Engel  
Sofia  
Gayatri Joshi  
Shirley Troha  
Eleanor Rowe  
Jay Watson  
Ray Falls  
Mary and Charles Leck  
John Thurber and  
Constance Cloonan  
Richard Wheeler  
Mackenzie Piggott





# 16 RIVERFRONT ACRES PRESERVED in Hunterdon County

In a cornerstone acquisition for a green corridor along the South Branch of the Raritan River in Hunterdon County, 16 acres were permanently preserved this past summer by New Jersey Conservation Foundation and a coalition of partner organizations.



In August, we joined with nonprofits Raritan Headwaters Association and Hunterdon Land Trust to acquire four parcels – two in Readington Township totaling 12 acres, and two in Raritan Township totaling 4 acres – to preserve the land in its natural state for wildlife and watershed protection. The three nonprofits then transferred sole ownership to Readington Township.

The four parcels flank both sides of

the South Branch, are adjacent to the state's South Branch Wildlife Management Area, and contribute to the overall protection of the river. The newly-acquired lands play a pivotal role in the river ecosystem, nurturing species like bald eagles, ospreys, waterfowl, wading birds, songbirds, and vital fisheries resources.

The land was purchased using funds from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's (NJDEP) Green Acres Program, matched by funds from the Hunterdon County Open Space Program. In addition, both Readington and Raritan townships contributed funds raised by their municipal open space taxes.

"We expect to see many positive benefits, including improved habitat for fish and wildlife and enhanced water quality, here along the South Branch thanks to this remarkable

preservation effort made possible by a dedicated team of organizations," said Richard Dodds, NJ Conservation's Black River Greenway Regional Manager.

"The stars aligned for us on this project, this is a big win for the Raritan River watershed," said Raritan Headwaters Association's Associate Director Mara Tippet. "Preserving these critical watershed lands brings great benefits to the broader ecological community and directly benefits the watershed's residents who depend on clean water."

The preservation project builds upon prior acquisitions in the watershed by Readington Township, Raritan Township, Hunterdon County, and NJDEP. The NJDEP Division of Fish & Wildlife oversees the South Branch Wildlife Management Area, and other downstream properties totaling over 1,800 acres.



## Louise Wilson elected new board president

**Louise Currey Wilson, a member of New Jersey Conservation Foundation's Board of Trustees since 2011, has been elected as the organization's new president, succeeding Rosina "Nina" Dixon, who had headed the board since 2019.**

A resident of Princeton and now retired, Louise spent her career working in the public, private and nonprofit sectors, including retail, higher education, communications, fundraising, policy development, governance and advocacy.

She chairs Princeton's municipal Planning Board, serves as a trustee of the New Jersey League of Municipalities' Educational Foundation, and is an advisor to Nurturing Minds. She previously served in local elected office in Montgomery Township for 10 years, including six years as mayor, and served on the New Jersey State Planning Commission.

During her career, Louise was director of green infrastructure at New Jersey Future, transition manager for Sustainable Jersey, finance director for U.S. Rep. Rush Holt, director of communications and public affairs at the Rutgers/NJ Agricultural Experiment Station, and public information officer at the NJ Department of Higher Education. Her passions include women's rights, social justice, the natural world (especially plants, birds and bugs), clean water, land preservation and sustainable development in a rapidly changing world. A graduate of Georgetown University, she is married with two grown children.

Welcome, Louise, and many thanks to Nina for her years of dedicated service!



LOUISE WILSON

## Three staff members honored for achievements

**Three current and former New Jersey Conservation staff members were honored this fall for their achievements in preserving land, protecting natural resources, improving urban environments, and planning for future land preservation projects.**

**CO-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR JAY WATSON** received the 2023 J. Sterling Morton Award from the New Jersey Forest Service and New Jersey Community Forestry Council on Oct. 27 for his years working to bring tree and forest planting projects to urban areas. The award is given to recognize an individual for their advocacy on behalf of New Jersey's urban and community forests, and their commitment to securing a healthier tree and forest resource for future generations. Award recipients exemplify "a commitment to advancing tree planting, canopy improvement, conservation, education, research or organizational leadership over their lifetime or professional career."

**FORMER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MICHELE BYERS** was inducted into the Pine Barrens Hall of Fame on Oct. 14 by the Pinelands Preservation Alliance. The Hall of Fame recognizes individuals who have played a significant role in preserving the natural and cultural resources of the Pinelands region. During Michele's nearly 40-year tenure with the New Jersey Conservation Foundation – including 22 years as executive director – the organization preserved over 60,000 acres and established new nature preserves throughout New Jersey, including the flagship Franklin Parker Preserve in the Pine Barrens.

**LAURA SZWAK**, who before her retirement served for many years as Director of Outreach and Education, accepted a Smart Growth Award from New Jersey Future for Somerset County's new preservation plan. Laura played a key role in helping create this first-of-its-kind plan. It combines open space, farmland, and historic preservation to provide funding and partnerships; it also balances reuse opportunities with economic development to attract business and tourism. The award was presented at a ceremony in New Brunswick on Oct. 3.



Jay Watson with Trenton tree planting coordinator Elijah Dixon.



Michele Byers surrounded by Carleton Montgomery and Jaclyn Rhoades of the Pinelands Preservation Alliance.



Laura Szwak, surrounded by Tom Gilbert and Louise Currey Wilson.





**New Jersey Conservation**  
F O U N D A T I O N

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

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



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

Please send your email 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.

### 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. Sign up online at [njconservation.org/donate-now](http://njconservation.org/donate-now)  
Then click "I would like my gift to repeat monthly"

Otter Photo by Tyler Christensen