

Garden State Preservation Trust



Saving New Jersey's Open Spaces, Historic Places and Farmland

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Trust Board Approves Large Conservation Funding Package

**\$225 Million to Preserve Farms, Repair Historic Sites, Acquire Land for Parks,
Fund Upgrades Statewide For Parks, Forests and Wildlife Refuges**

LARGEST APPROPRIATIONS SINCE VOTERS APPROVED CORPORATE TAX DEDICATION IN 2014

TRENTON – The board of the Garden State Preservation Trust today approved \$225 million for a vast array of projects to acquire or develop facilities at state and local parks, to preserve farms statewide and to save critical historic sites.

It is the largest funding package since the voters in 2014 approved a constitutional amendment to dedicate money from the Corporation Business Tax for these purposes. This year, a 6% share of the CBT goes to open space, conservation, historical and environmental programs.

The largest component of today's approvals was \$78 million in grants to counties, cities and towns to pay for 48 land-acquisition projects and 66 recreational development or stewardship projects. Meanwhile, the state's Green Acres Program will use about \$34 million for its own land acquisitions statewide, including \$4.6 million to continue buying out flood prone properties under the "Blue Acres" program.

A key element of the overall package is \$36 million for the improvement or rehabilitation of facilities and infrastructure at New Jersey's vast array of state parks, forests and wildlife refuges.

More than \$10 million is earmarked to provide matching grants to nonprofit land trusts who are helping finance their own projects in land acquisition, farmland preservation or recreational development. In addition, \$11.9 million was approved for grants to preserve historic sites owned by cities, towns and nonprofit groups.

The Farmland Preservation program will receive \$55 million, its largest funding package in a decade, to preserve farms at the state, county and local level. This will include matching grants to encourage landowners to improve soil conservation and irrigation on farms that have already been preserved.

The resolutions approved today by the six board members of the Trust will be introduced as appropriations bills in the Legislature. If approved by both houses, the bills will go to the Governor for his signature.

New Jersey taxpayers since 2000 have committed \$3 billion to state and local preservation and conservation efforts. More than 440,000 acres have been preserved under GSPT-funded programs while about \$550 million has been committed to the development of recreational facilities and the preservation of historic sites.