

**2018-2022  
New Jersey  
Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation  
Plan**

New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection  
**Green Acres Program**

# STATE OF NEW JERSEY

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## Executive Summary

The provisions of the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965 (Pub.L. 88-578) mandate that states prepare and revise every five years a Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) is the agency authorized to represent the State of New Jersey and act for the State Government for the purposes of the federal act. NJDEP Green Acres Program prepares and updates the SCORP in order to maintain the State's eligibility to receive funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) administered by the National Park Service. The SCORP also serves as a framework for open space preservation and recreation planning in New Jersey.

The 2018 SCORP has been prepared to meet the following goals:

1. To assess the amount of open space available for current and future public recreational use and for the conservation of natural resources important to protecting New Jersey's biodiversity and quality of life.
2. To provide close-to-home park and recreation opportunities for residents statewide.
3. To present current information on the supply and demand for recreation and open space in New Jersey.
4. To implement open space and recreation planning policies and projects that are consistent with NJDEP goals.
5. To encourage open space and recreation planning by local governments and conservation organizations.
6. To effectively use funds from the Preserve New Jersey Act, LWCF, Forest Legacy Program and other sources of funding which may become available.

The 2018 SCORP also contains findings based on research and the public participation and planning processes. The findings presented in the 2018 SCORP are:

1. New Jersey has 1,573,467 acres of preserved land comprising of 34% of the state.
2. Preserved open space provides many amenities including water resource protection, biodiversity, recreation and tourism.
3. The State shall continue to make the protection of water resources, preservation of biodiversity and the provision of park and recreation opportunities statewide priorities.

The SCORP is comprised of six sections that discuss New Jersey's open space and recreation program and its various elements of planning, preservation and funding. The 2018 SCORP is organized as follows:

Policy Plan discusses the role of the SCORP, goals, findings and the public participation process used to formulate SCORP issues and policies.

Supply and Demand provides current data on the supply of open space in the state and addresses current trends with respect to demand.

Issues and Policies identifies five statewide issues. The issues and policies are the result of the public participation and resource assessment process. These policies and issues will provide direction for open space and recreation funding decisions during the next five years.

The Project Priorities Selection process covers the methodology used to award funding through a series of priority ranking systems. It also discusses the Green Acres application and project management processes.

Action Plan contains policies to achieve SCORP goals. It details strategies that support and implement statewide open space and recreation policies.

New Jersey's Wetlands Plan updates the State's efforts to protect wetlands. It discusses current wetland regulatory programs and non-regulatory initiatives designed to preserve the State's wetland resources.

### **The Policy Plan**

Open space and recreation are cornerstones of New Jersey's quality of life. New Jersey is a national leader in open space preservation and in funding park and recreation facilities, as evidenced by 13 Green Acres referendums totaling \$3.32 billion since 1961. New Jersey's investment in this regard has protected its water resources, preserved biodiversity, enhanced communities, created greenways and provided a broad array of recreational opportunities. These efforts have helped to sustain New Jersey's nearly \$40 billion tourism industry, and have served as an effective means of environmental protection.

In 2014, New Jersey residents approved a 14<sup>th</sup> referendum that permanently dedicates 4% of the State's Corporate Business Tax (CBT) for open space, farmland and historic preservation purposes. It is estimated that approximately \$75 million a year will be generated by this dedication. The CBT dedication will increase to 6% in FY 2019. A notable feature of the 2014 referendum and the subsequent enabling legislation, the Preserve New Jersey Act, is the provision of funding for stewardship projects for the NJDEP's Division of Parks and Forestry and Division of Fish and Wildlife in addition to local governments and conservation organizations.

The 2018 SCORP is the tenth plan prepared by the State since the passage of the LWCF in 1965. The SCORP is New Jersey's framework for open space preservation and recreation. The purpose of the plan is to provide guidance to the State, local governments and conservation organizations in the preservation of open space and the provision of public recreation opportunities. The National Park Service requires each state to prepare a SCORP in order to remain eligible for LWCF monies.

The 2018 SCORP has been prepared to meet the following goals:

1. To assess the amount of open space available for current and future public recreational use and for the conservation of natural resources important to protecting New Jersey's biodiversity and quality of life.
2. To provide close to home park and recreation opportunities for residents statewide.
3. To present current information on the supply and demand for recreation and open space in New Jersey.
4. To implement open space and recreation planning policies and projects consistent with the State's environmental missions and goals.
5. To encourage open space and recreation planning by local governments and conservation organizations.
6. To effectively use funds from the Preserve New Jersey Act, LWCF, Forest Legacy Program and other sources of funding which may become available.

## **Legal Authority**

New Jersey receives authorization to participate in the LWCF Program under provisions of N.J.S.A. 13:1B-65 and 13:1D-9(r). These state in part that “the Department of Environmental Protection shall in addition to the power and duties vested in it by this act or any other law have the power to, with the approval of the Governor, cooperate with, apply for, review and expend funds for the Federal Government.”

The LWCF is administered in New Jersey, by a State Liaison Officer (SLO) who is appointed by the Governor. The SLO for New Jersey is the Assistant Commissioner for Natural and Historic Resources within NJDEP. As SLO, the Assistant Commissioner has the authority and responsibility to apply for, accept and administer funds received from the federal government and used to pay for approved LWCF projects.

## **Maintenance of the Plan**

The Green Acres Program in NJDEP is responsible for both the programs and studies necessary for plan maintenance and the allocation of LWCF grant monies to qualified recipients.

As part of the SCORP process, NJDEP Green Acres Program engaged in a review of planning objectives to determine future directions of conservation and recreation New Jersey and has established the following:

### **Green Acres Program Strategic Planning Objectives:**

- To create an interconnected system of public and private lands to preserve open space and provide recreation opportunities;
- To protect New Jersey’s water resources, biodiversity, scenic landscapes and historic resources;
- To foster partnerships with the State’s local governments, conservation community and private sector, and the federal government through cooperative projects, funding, planning, and technical assistance;
- To promote the quality of life in the State’s communities by providing assistance for open space preservation and park development as integral statewide components of sustainable growth and resiliency;

- To complement natural resource-based businesses such as tourism, agriculture, forestry, recreational and commercial fishing and outdoor recreation equipment retailing;
- To maintain and enhance New Jersey's quality of life by providing accessible recreation, retaining community character and preserving important natural and historic resources and;
- To implement open space and recreation policies that are consistent with NJDEP goals and account for population growth and future development.

**State Land Acquisition Strategies:**

- Willing Sellers: Acquire land from willing sellers;
- Partnerships: Seek public and private sector partners for open space preservation projects;
- Blue Acres Program: Continue property buyout program as a statewide hazard mitigation and resiliency tool;
- Geographic Information System: Use GIS technology for mapping, planning, data sharing, and the maintenance of a statewide open space map;
- Preservation Tools: Use open space acquisition and preservation techniques including fee simple, easement, and development rights purchases, and donations;
- Federal Funding: Seek federal funding such as the LWCF, Forest Legacy Program, and the North America Wetlands Conservation Act grants;
- Planning: Coordinate preservation and planning activities with federal and local governments and the nonprofit community. Continue to provide technical assistance in open space planning to local governments and nonprofit organizations;
- Public Information: Publicize State land acquisition efforts to increase public awareness and participation in open space preservation activities.

**Strategies for State Assistance to Local Governments:**

- Funding Assistance: Provide funding for county and municipal open space preservation and recreation projects;
- Partnerships: Work cooperatively with local governments in an effort to increase local government participation in regional open space projects;
- Technical Assistance: Provide technical assistance for open space and recreation planning. Green Acres encourages dedication of local funds for open space protection and park development.

### **Strategies for State Assistance to Nonprofit Conservation Organizations:**

- Funding Assistance: Provide funding for nonprofit open space preservation and recreation projects;
- Partnerships: Green Acres encourages nonprofits to participate in regional open space projects and initiatives and to work with local governments;
- Technical Assistance: Green Acres provides technical assistance to nonprofit organizations for open space and recreation projects.

### **Public Participation**

Recognizing the importance of public involvement in open space and recreation planning, Green Acres requires that local governments applying for Green Acres funding hold a public hearing on their application. This requirement ensures that local governments are providing an opportunity for residents to discuss open space and recreation issues. Green Acres staff also participate in conferences and other public events that address open space and recreation concerns statewide.

The preparation of the SCORP has provided opportunities for public participation. Copies of the draft plan were sent to a variety of federal, state and regional agencies for review and comment. County park and planning agencies also were sent copies for their input. Every New Jersey municipality received notification of the availability of the draft plan for comment. Interested parties such as nonprofit land trusts and conservation organizations were also sent copies for comment. The draft SCORP was also available on the Green Acres website for public review and comment. Comments submitted by these various agencies, organizations and individuals have been incorporated into the 2018 New Jersey SCORP.

### **Summary of Findings**

Since New Jersey began its open space preservation efforts nearly 60 years ago, New Jersey has successfully preserved over 1.5 million acres of open space and farmland. Preserved open space in New Jersey (including farmland) accounts for 34% of land in the State, nearly equal the almost 33% of land that is developed (Table 1).

According to Census data, New Jersey's population in 2017 was 9,005,644, an increase of 213,691 since 2010. With 1,224 persons per square mile, New Jersey is the most densely populated state in

the nation. This population density, it will create increased demand for additional park and recreation facilities within the State. The preservation of additional acres will help to satisfy this demand.

With population growth comes land development, reflected by over 138,000 residential building permits issued between 2013 and 2017. Table 2 shows statewide land cover changes based on NJDEP land use data for 2007-2012. Table 3 shows the counties with the greatest urban land increases during the same period.

Climate change and sea level rise in particular, have the potential to negatively impact public open space and park and recreation resources. In October 2012, Hurricane Sandy inflicted unprecedented damage to New Jersey. The State sustained nearly \$37 billion in damage, with 346,000 homes and housing units destroyed or damaged. The impact of Sandy upon New Jersey's parklands was considerable. Statewide nearly 184,000 acres of federal, state and local public open space was inundated by the Sandy storm surge. Approximately, 75% of NJDEP park facilities sustained damage from the storm, including serious damage to the two most visited parks in the State park system.

Public parklands and recreation facilities can expect to be subjected to increasing impacts of climate change and sea level rise. Rising temperatures, heat waves, more heavy rain and stronger storms, including hurricanes and northeasters are anticipated as a result. Warming temperatures may affect water temperatures, both freshwater and marine, and could impact recreational fisheries.

Given the affinity people have for the water, many recreation facilities such as marinas, docks and boardwalks are vulnerable to sea level rise. New Jersey is a peninsula, the State is bordered on the west by the Delaware Bay, the Hudson River to the east and the Atlantic Ocean to the southeast. Only the northern border with New York is land. The State's 239 coastal communities, 42% of all New Jersey municipalities, provide water associated park and recreation opportunities. These communities will need to address sea level rise that could range from 1 to 1.8 feet by 2050 and 2.4 to 4.5 feet by 2100. Adapting to sea level rise will require communities to plan for resilience by engaging a wide variety of constituencies. The NJDEP has prepared a planning guide for coastal communities, *Building Ecological Solutions to Coastal Community Hazards*, which details ways local governments can plan for resiliency.

**Table 1**  
**County Preserved and Developed Acreages**

<u>County</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Preserved acres*</u>	<u>Developed acres</u>
Atlantic	390,814	111,314	67,416
Bergen	153,490	21,932	111,448
Burlington	525,001	184,962	109,484
Camden	145,650	27,076	76,206
Cape May	183,126	81,766	34,151
Cumberland	321,149	105,689	44,814
Essex	83,035	10,313	64,135
Gloucester	215,166	19,293	76,105
Hudson	32,982	3,311	23,840
Hunterdon	202,148	39,831	69,985
Mercer	125,865	27,730	70,934
Middlesex	191,669	22,357	116,429
Monmouth	277,000	49,699	145,390
Morris	296,335	89,585	120,745
Ocean	479,604	161,825	111,882
Passaic	126,467	67,016	47,289
Salem	143,259	29,390	28,056
Somerset	167,774	27,065	89,197
Sussex	307,961	143,645	54,334
Union	67,352	6,306	55,756
Warren	<u>178,386</u>	<u>50,472</u>	<u>40,666</u>
	4,614,232	1,280,577	1,558,260

\*Does not include preserved farmland, Pinelands Development Credits acreages

Source: NJDEP 2012 Land Use/Land Cover Updated. Green Acres Program

**Table 2**  
**New Jersey Statewide Land Use**  
**2007-2012 Acreage Change**

<u>Land Use</u>	<u>2007 Acres</u>	<u>2012 Acres</u>	<u>Acreage Change</u>
Agriculture	556,045	545,818	-10,227
Barren Land	51,329	47,960	-3,369
Forest	1,526,330	1,527,487	1,157
Urban Land	1,532,295	1,558,260	25,965
Wetlands	996,783	992,613	-4,170

Source: NJDEP GIS 2012 Land Use/Land Cover

**Table 3**  
**Highest County Urban Land Increases**  
**2007-2012**

<u>County</u>	<u>2007 Acres</u>	<u>2012 Acres</u>	<u>Acres Change</u>
Ocean	109,146	111,882	2,736
Gloucester	73,492	76,105	2,613
Burlington	107,181	109,484	2,303
Somerset	87,138	89,197	2,059
Cumberland	42,787	44,814	2,027
Atlantic	<u>65,553</u>	<u>67,416</u>	<u>1,863</u>
Totals	485,297	498,898	13,601

Source: NJDEP GIS 2012 Land Use/Land Cover

## **Findings**

1. New Jersey has preserved 32% of its land area, nearly as much as the 34% of land that has been developed. Excluding farmland, there are 1,286,711 acres of public open space in New Jersey.
2. Open space preservation is a tool of smart growth that results in amenities including water resource protection, biodiversity, recreation, agriculture, and tourism.
3. The State shall continue to make the protection of water resources, preservation of biodiversity and the provision of park and recreation opportunities statewide priorities.

**Table 4**  
**New Jersey Preserved Land Acreage Summary**

	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Federal</b>	<b>115,100</b>	<b>7.30%</b>
<b>State</b>	<b>839,682</b>	<b>53.25%</b>
<b>Local Government</b>	<b>257,134</b>	<b>16.30%</b>
<b>Nonprofit</b>	<b>68,660</b>	<b>4.35%</b>
<b>Farmland</b>	<b>230,040</b>	<b>14.60%</b>
<b>Pinelands Development Credits</b>	<b>52,194</b>	<b>3.30%</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>14,229</b>	<b>0.90%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,577,039</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

**Notes:**

Does not include lands preserved by local government or nonprofits without Green Acres assistance.

**Sources: Green Acres Program, State Agricultural Development Committee, NPS, US Fish and Wildlife Service**

**Federal, State, Local and Nonprofit as of 12/31/2017**

**Farmlands as of 3/18/2018**

**Pinelands Development Credits 6/30/2016**

**Other - Acreage preserved by local government without Green Acres funding assistance**

**State acreage includes 2,452 acres of Palisades Interstate Park Commission acreage**

## **Supply and Demand**

There are 1,573,467 acres of land statewide being used for public conservation and recreation purposes (Table 4). This total includes preserved farmland acreage of 226,468 acres. State, federal, county and municipal agencies have preserved 1,211,916 acres of land for public recreation and open space uses. Table 5 details New Jersey's preserved land acreage.

State government agencies administer 837,230 acres of public open space, 53% of the total. The amount of public open space administered by the State has increased by 19,338 acres since the 2013 SCORP. County and municipal governments are responsible for 257,134 acres of public parkland across the state. New Jersey's 21 counties manage 125,413 acres of parkland. The State's municipalities are responsible for 131,721 acres of parkland. These lands comprise 16% of New Jersey's public open space and recreation land.

Nonprofit conservation organizations have preserved 68,660 acres of land statewide. Nonprofits manage 5% of New Jersey's open space. The National Park Service and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service manage 115,100 acres of land, or 7% of the State's open space.

The increases in the statewide supply of open space and recreation lands are the result of land preservation efforts of government agencies and conservation groups. New Jersey's increasing population and urbanization (Tables 6-8) show that demand for open space is likely to increase. New Jersey's population will likely exceed 9 million before 2020.

**Table 5****New Jersey Preserved Recreation Land and Open Space**

County	Federal Recreation Open Space Areas	Interstate and Regional Areas	State Parks and Forests*	State Wildlife Management Areas	New Jersey Natural Lands Trust	New Jersey Water Authority	State Subtotal	County Parks	Municipal Parks	Total Public Recreation Open Space	Nonprofit Preserved Open Space	Total Preserved Open Space
Atlantic	20,318		13,949	56,881	6,692		77,522	7,222	4,573	109,635	1,679	111,314
Bergen	0	2,452	3,332	208	10		3,550	9,190	5,878	21,070	862	21,932
Burlington	2,582		149,160	6,941	3,913		160,014	2,738	11,157	176,491	8,471	184,962
Camden	0		14,865	5,211	1,133		21,209	2,354	3,513	27,076	0.34	27,076
Cape May	12,064		20,830	38,887	504		60,221	1,970	4,958	79,213	2,553	81,766
Cumberland	0		5,796	75,699	226		81,721	156	2,773	84,650	21,039	105,689
Essex	21		608	0	39		647	5,854	3,752	10,274	39	10,313
Gloucester	0		110	9,658	998		10,766	2,352	5,389	18,507	786	19,293
Hudson	45		1,227	519	0		1,746	693	824	3,308	2.50	3,311
Hunterdon	0		11,831	5,957	1,927	108	19,823	7,791	8,621	36,235	3,596	39,831
Mercer	0		4,318	1,513	231		6,062	9,570	8,431	24,063	3,667	27,730
Middlesex	0		3,878	0	135		4,013	10,500	7,796	22,309	48	22,357
Monmouth	1,733		6,338	10,611	91	1,779	18,819	14,299	14,468	49,319	380	49,699
Morris	9,297		21,553	15,509	614		37,676	16,370	21,039	84,382	5,203	89,585
Ocean	24,653		33,704	73,820	4,841		112,365	11,934	7,061	156,013	5,812	161,825
Passaic	26		51,811	2,320	1,098		55,229	3,912	4,906	64,073	2,943	67,016
Salem	3,351		2,300	19,527	393		22,220	112	922	26,605	2,785	29,390
Somerset	188		6,240	423	19	152	6,834	10,626	8,486	26,134	931	27,065
Sussex	31,490		78,723	21,335	3,870		103,928	539	3,107	139,064	4,581	143,645
Union	0		9	0	0		9	5,688	609	6,306	0.59	6,306
Warren	9,332		19,282	11,052	2,523		32,857	1,543	3,458	47,190	3,282	50,472
Total Acreage	115,100	2,452	449,863	356,071	29,257	2,039	837,230	125,413	131,721	1,211,916	68,660	1,280,577

\* Includes recreation areas, natural areas, marinas, historic sites, reservoir sites and conservation easements

Acreage of State Parks July 1, 2017

Acreage of NJ Natural Lands Trust and Wildlife Management Areas as of June 12, 2017

Municipal Parks Acreage from NJDEP Green Acres GIS mapped data as of 7/1/2017

County Parks Acreage from NJDEP Green Acres GIS mapped data as of 7/1/2017. Mercer County information from ROSI.

NP Profit Acreage is from NJDEP Green Acres GIS mapped data as of 7/1/2017. Properties co-owned with the State of NJ have been excluded.

\*\* Does not include all lands preserved without Green Acres funding assistance.

New Jersey's population in 2017 was 9,005,644 an increase of 213,691 since 2010 with a population density of 1,224 persons per square mile. This represents a growth rate of 2.4 percent. New Jersey remains the most densely populated state in the nation and has been so for close to 60 years. According to data compiled by the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (NJLWD), Hudson County had the highest rate of population growth in New Jersey since the 2010 census with a 9 percent increase, which was substantially larger than the 2.4 percent rate of statewide population growth. Other counties that exceeded the statewide growth rate between 2010 and 2017 were Union (5.1%), Bergen (4.7%), Middlesex (4%), and Somerset (3.7%). Ten counties experienced population declines including, Salem (-4.9%), Sussex (-4.8%), and Cape May (-3.7%)

Hudson County had the largest numeric increase of 57,399 between 2010 and 2017. Other large increases were in Bergen (43,259), Middlesex (32,934), and Union (27,444) counties. Bergen County, with 939,151 residents, has the largest population, while Salem County remains the least populated county with 62,792 residents. Hudson County's population density exceeds 15,000 people per square mile while Salem County's is less than 200 people per square mile.

**Table 6****New Jersey County Population Changes**

<u>County</u>	<u>2010 Population</u>	<u>2017 Population</u>	<u>Change Percent</u>
Atlantic	274,549	269,918	-1.6
Bergen	905,116	948,406	4.7
Burlington	448,734	448,596	- 0.03
Camden	513,567	510,719	-0.5
Cape May	97,265	93,553	-3.8
Cumberland	156,898	152,538	-2.7
Essex	783,969	808,285	3.1
Gloucester	288,288	292,306	1.3
Hudson	634,266	691,643	9.0
Hunterdon	128,349	125,059	-2.5
Mercer	366,513	374,733	2.2
Middlesex	809,858	842,798	4.0
Monmouth	630,380	626,351	-0.6
Morris	492,276	499,693	1.5
Ocean	576,567	597,943	3.7
Passaic	501,226	512,607	2.2
Salem	66,083	62,792	-4.9
Somerset	323,444	335,432	3.7
Sussex	149,265	141,682	-5.0
Union	536,499	563,892	5.1
Warren	<u>108,692</u>	<u>106,798</u>	<u>-1.7</u>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>8,791,894</b>	<b>9,005,644</b>	<b>2.4</b>

Source: US Census Data, NJLWD 2017 population data

**Table 7****New Jersey County Characteristics**

<u>County</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Land</u>	<u>Density</u>
Atlantic	269,918	556	485
Bergen	948,406	233	4,070
Burlington	448,596	799	561
Camden	510,719	221	2,310
Cape May	93,553	251	372
Cumberland	152,538	484	315
Essex	808,285	126	6,414
Gloucester	292,206	322	907
Hudson	691,643	46	15,035
Hunterdon	125,059	428	292
Mercer	374,733	225	1,665
Middlesex	842,798	309	2,727
Monmouth	626,351	469	1,335
Morris	499,693	460	1,086
Ocean	597,943	629	950
Passaic	512,607	184	2,785
Salem	62,792	332	189
Somerset	335,432	302	1,110
Sussex	141,682	519	272
Union	563,892	103	5,474
Warren	<u>106,798</u>	<u>356</u>	<u>299</u>
Totals	8,944,469	7,354	1,224

Land area in square miles

Density is persons per square miles

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, NJLWD 2017 population data

**Table 8**  
**New Jersey Residential Building Permits Authorized**  
**2013-2017**

<u>County</u>	<u>Total Permits</u>
Atlantic	4,136
Bergen	14,890
Burlington	4,602
Camden	5,788
Cape May	3,263
Cumberland	918
Essex	12,169
Gloucester	3,671
Hudson	22,500
Hunterdon	1,611
Mercer	3,540
Middlesex	11,731
Monmouth	8,031
Morris	9,123
Ocean	13,500
Passaic	2,847
Salem	223
Somerset	5,938
Sussex	963
Union	7,846
Warren	<u>1,240</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>138,530</b>

Source: NJLWD

The NJLWD has projected that by 2034, the State's population will be 9.7 million people (Table 9). As a result, it is expected that the need for additional open space and recreation facilities in the future will continue.

The increasing populations of senior citizens will pose challenges to park and recreation providers. It is expected that future senior citizens will be an active class of people and more physically fit, which means that they will continue to demand recreation programs and services. Recreation planners will need to consider design features and programs that accommodate the physical capabilities and recreation preferences of this population. Wellness and fitness related recreation programs are likely to be in demand. Additionally, less physical activities such as educational programs and historic and environmental interpretive programming will be popular.

Between 2013 and 2017 138,530 residential building permits were authorized, an average of 27,700 per year. While some of the permits were issued for redevelopment projects, many consisted of construction on undeveloped lands. In addition, building permits for 45.3 million square feet of office and retail space was also authorized between 2013 and 2017.

**Table 9**  
**New Jersey Population Projections**

<u>County</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2034</u>
Atlantic	270,991	282,900
Bergen	939,151	1,065,500
Burlington	449,284	472,700
Camden	510,150	525,600
Cape May	94,430	93,400
Cumberland	153,797	164,400
Essex	796,914	840,100
Gloucester	292,330	312,500
Hudson	677,983	766,500
Hunterdon	124,676	119,800
Mercer	371,023	406,300
Middlesex	837,073	965,000
Monmouth	625,846	665,200
Morris	498,423	548,000
Ocean	592,497	665,700
Passaic	507,945	542,500
Salem	63,436	59,800
Somerset	333,751	378,700
Sussex	142,522	136,600
Union	555,630	620,000
Warren	106,617	102,100
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>8,944,469</b>	<b>9,733,400</b>

Source: NJLWD, US Census Data

In addition to open space dedicated to public recreation purposes, open space that is protected for environmental or agricultural purposes through conservation easements, land use regulation or other means that may not provide for direct public use still are of considerable outdoor recreation value. This land protects important natural and historic resources that are essential high quality recreation experiences. A comprehensive public park system requires the preservation of both conservation and recreation lands.

Funding requests by local governments and nonprofits and, attendance at State Parks and Forests remains high, indicating a continued demand for open space. Attendance at state parks during Fiscal Year 2017 (July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017) was over 17.1 million (Table 10). Between fiscal years 2013 and 2017, more than 83 million people visited New Jersey State parks. Local parks also experience heavy public use. For example, in 2016, the Monmouth County Park System had more than 6.5 million park visits. Nationally, according to the Outdoor Foundation's 2016 report on outdoor recreation participation over 48% of all Americans participated in at least one outdoor recreation activity in 2015. In New Jersey, the Outdoor Industry Association reports that 46% of state residents participate in outdoor recreation each year.

Another trend indicator is the demand for Green Acres recreational facility funding shown in Table 11. Funding requests made to the NJDEP's Recreational Trails Program also show increasing funding demand and interest in trails (Table 12). It is likely given this participation rate, that New Jersey residents will continue to engage in outdoor recreation activities. Considering the increased public attention to the link between health and parks, the demand for recreation facilities in New Jersey will likely continue.

**Table 10**  
**State Park and Forest Attendance**  
**July 1, 2016– June 30, 2017**

<u>State Park (SP) / State Forest (SF)</u>	<u>Attendance</u>
Allaire SP	527,753
Barnegat Lighthouse SP	617,023
Bass River SF	90,773
Belleplain SF	414,883
Brendan T. Byrne SF/Wharton SF	945,266
Cape May Point SP	638,749
Cheesequake SP	516,629
D & R Canal SP/Washington Crossing SP	1,387,778
Farley Marina	503,125
Forked River Marina	10,613
Fort Mott SP/Parvin SP	443,890
Fortescue Marina	79,214
Hacklebarney SP	173,510
High Point SP/Swartswood SP	383,473
Hopatcong SP	427,247
Island Beach SP	773,156
Kittatinny Valley SP/Jenny Jump SP	180,400
Leonardo Marina	147,337
Liberty SP	4,763,709
Monmouth Battlefield SP	335,998
Ringwood SP/Wawayanda SP	1,360,977
Round Valley Recreation Area	509,382
Spruce Run Recreation Area/Voorhees SP	569,776
Stokes SF/Worthington SF	<u>1,386,565</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,187,226</b>

**Note:** Total includes all areas and or historic sites that are assigned to the state park or forest.

**Source:** 2017 Fiscal Year Attendance Report, Division of Parks and Forestry.

**Table 11**  
**Green Acres Recreation Facility Requests**  
**2015-2017**

<u>Recreation Facility</u>	<u>Requests</u>
Field Sports	74
Pathways	65
Court Sports	40
Playground	46
Waterfront	36
Picnic	26
Swimming	25

**Table 12**  
**Recreational Trail Grant Requests**  
**2012-2016**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Applications</u>	<u>Funding Request</u>
2012	151	\$3,305,195
2013	103	\$3,047,068
2014/2015	205	\$4,888,354
2016	97	\$2,050,363

## **Issues and Policies**

During the preparation of the 2018 SCORP five issues were identified as being necessary to meet the current and projected future public open space and recreation demand in New Jersey. The issues presented in this SCORP are:

1. Land Preservation
2. Recreation
3. State Resource Areas
4. Greenways
5. Stewardship

These issues and their associated policies provide the framework which New Jersey will use to satisfy the significant and diverse recreation and open space needs of its residents and visitors during the following five years. Public open space and recreation areas are part of the public infrastructure, not unlike roads, schools and bridges. It is the goal of these policies to ensure that the State's open space and recreation infrastructure remains a critical element of the quality of life in New Jersey.

### **Issue: Land Preservation**

New Jersey's traditional land preservation efforts seek to preserve open space and farmland. Both types of land protect important natural, recreational and agricultural resources. The perception that open space is simply undeveloped land is deceiving. Open space preservation serves a variety of functions, helping to sustain and enhance New Jersey as a desirable place to live and work. Open space can protect the quality and quantity of surface and groundwater resources, guide development and growth, preserve natural and historic resources, shape community character, and provide land for recreation.

Recent research has documented the very substantial economic impact of outdoor recreation and open space. The Outdoor Industry Association's 2017 Outdoor Recreation Economy report shows that outdoor recreation in the United States generates \$887 billion in consumer spending annually, supports 7.5 million jobs and provides a total of \$124.5 billion in federal, state and local tax revenue each year. In New Jersey, the report showed \$18.9 billion in consumer spending annually, 143,000 jobs and \$5.9 billion in salaries as a result of outdoor recreation according to the report. The

National Park Service reported that in 2015, national park visitors provided a \$32 billion benefit to the nation's economy and supported 295,000 jobs. The report stated that each tax dollar invested in the Park Service returns \$10 to the national economy. In 2013, the National Recreation and Park Association reported that local parks and recreation agencies generated nearly \$140 billion in capital spending and supported almost 1 million jobs. In the report, New Jersey's local park agencies were shown to generate \$2.2 billion in economic activity and, \$815.3 in income and provided 17,700 jobs. Tourism spending in New Jersey was \$38.2 billion in 2016 and supported 321,000 jobs. In Cape May County, the County saw \$6.27 billion in tourism expenditures that supported over 26,000 jobs. Nature based tourism alone in Cape May County created more than 6,000 full time jobs, expanded the tourism season beyond the summer and generated more than \$600 million in expenditures in 2016 in Cape May County. These totals are consistent with the findings of the 2011 survey of hunting, fishing and wildlife associated recreation which estimated that 2.7 million people, both New Jersey residents and nonresidents, participated in recreational activities related to wildlife. These activities generated \$2.2 billion in economic activity in New Jersey.

In addition to traditional land acquisition, the State uses two other approaches to land preservation. One is the Blue Acres Program that acquires flood damaged and flood prone homes, demolishes them and creates open space that helps reduce flooding impacts. Over 600 homes have been acquired with Blue Acres funding and almost 500 homes have been demolished as part state and federally funded buyout of homes as a result of Hurricane Sandy. The Blue Acres Program received \$6.4 million in Green Acres funding in 2017 to continue buyouts.

The other approach the State uses to preserve land is the Tax Exemption Program, also administered by the Green Acres Program. Created in 1974, the program provides an exemption from local property taxes for a renewable period of three years to eligible nonprofit organizations that make lands that they own accessible for public recreation and conservation purposes. Over 79,000 acres of land are enrolled in the program statewide.

Open space preservation and planning plays an important role in New Jersey's efforts to protect its surface and groundwater resources. The identification of critical natural resources is necessary for the continued environmental and economic viability of New Jersey. Over the last four years, 22,492 acres of open space have been preserved for public conservation and recreation purposes (Table 13).

**Table 13**  
**New Jersey Open Space Preservation**  
**2013-2016**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Open Space</u>
2013	4,902
2014	6,702
2015	3,472
2016	<u>7,416</u>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>22,142</b>

**Source: NJDEP Green Acres Program**

There is a total of 4,614,232 acres of land in New Jersey according to NJDEP 2012 land use data. There is a total of 1,573,467 acres of preserved open space and farmland, comprising 34% of New Jersey. Another 1,558,260 acres or 33%, consisted of developed lands, according to DEP 2012 land use analysis. Some of the remaining lands include important natural and recreational resources that could meet the current and future open space and recreation demands. Tables 14-17 detail recent land preservation in New Jersey. Tables 18-20 provide a historic overview of statewide land preservation funded by the Green Acres Program.

**Table 14**  
**Green Acres Program**  
**State Land Acquisition Project Funding**  
**2015-2017**

<u>Project</u>	<u>Funding</u>
Barnegat Bay Watershed	\$ 300,000
Blue Acres	\$ 6,436,000
Cape May Peninsula	\$ 4,300,000
American Revolution Crossroads	\$ 5,300,000
Delaware and Raritan Canal	\$ 400,000
Delaware Bay	\$ 3,500,000
Delaware River Watershed	\$ 4,002,805
Highlands	\$ 5,000,000
Historic Resources	\$ 500,000
Natural Areas	\$ 3,400,000
Non Profit Camps	\$ 1,000,000
Pinelands	\$ 1,548,000
Ridge and Valley Greenway	<u>\$ 7,700,000</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$43,386,805</b>

**Table 15**  
**Green Acres Program Land Preservation**  
**2013-2016 Acres Preserved**

	<u>State Land</u>	<u>Local Government</u>	<u>Nonprofit</u>	<u>Total</u>
2013	3,409	1,226	267	4,902
2014	4,911	977	814	6,702
2015	2,225	377	870	3,472
2016	<u>4,206</u>	<u>750</u>	<u>2,460</u>	<u>7,416</u>
Totals	14,751	3,330	4,411	22,492

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**Table 16**  
**Green Acres State Land Acquisition Program**  
**2013-2016 Acres Preserved**

<u>County</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Cost</u>
Atlantic	1,657	\$ 1,699,832
Bergen	2	\$ 3,520,490
Burlington	749	\$ 1,646,043
Camden	632	\$ 1,176,590
Cape May	1,213	\$ 4,154,173
Cumberland	1,930	\$12,246,853
Essex	22	\$ 798,892
Gloucester	120	\$ 1,060,500
Hunterdon	748	\$ 8,529,761
Mercer	147	\$ 1,358,150
Middlesex	81	\$78,494,827
Monmouth	508	\$10,211,425
Morris	1,691	\$ 7,332,964
Ocean	320	\$ 3,923,069
Passaic	103	\$ 9,326,899
Salem	826	\$ 4,902,091
Somerset	20	\$15,909,990
Sussex	3,071	\$19,934,279
Union	10	\$11,186,921
Warren	<u>900</u>	<u>\$ 7,575,945</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,751</b>	<b>\$204,989,693</b>

**Table 17**  
**Green Acres Land Preservation**  
**State Land, Local Government and Nonprofit Programs**  
**2013-2016 Acres Preserved**

<u>County</u>	<u>State Land</u>	<u>Local Government</u>	<u>NonProfit</u>	<u>Total</u>
Atlantic	1,657	45	0	1,702
Bergen	2	114	50	166
Burlington	749	0	2,819	3,568
Camden	632	0	0	632
Cape May	1,213	2	0	1,215
Cumberland	1,930	243	228	2,401
Essex	22	5	0	28
Gloucester	120	238	0	357
Hudson	0	0	0	0
Hunterdon	748	487	274	1,508
Mercer	147	202	107	456
Middlesex	81	92	0	173
Monmouth	508	122	156	786
Morris	1,691	287	119	2,096
Ocean	320	153	293	765
Passaic	103	224	177	504
Salem	826	106	0	932
Somerset	20	559	28	608
Sussex	3,071	117	28	3,217
Union	10	0	0	10
Warren	<u>900</u>	<u>334</u>	<u>133</u>	<u>1,367</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,751</b>	<b>3,329</b>	<b>4,412</b>	<b>22,491</b>

**Table 18**  
**Green Acres Funded Preserved Acreage**  
**Local Government and Nonprofit Programs**  
**January 1, 1962- July 1, 2017**

<u>County</u>	<u>Local Government</u>	<u>Nonprofit</u>	<u>Total</u>
Atlantic	4,786	229	5,015
Bergen	5,264	80	5,344
Burlington	6,656	4,193	10,849
Camden	1,251	147	1,398
Cape May	1,352	1,645	2,997
Cumberland	613	11,243	11,856
Essex	691	13	704
Gloucester	2,944	339	3,283
Hudson	74	15	89
Hunterdon	12,159	4,065	16,224
Mercer	10,020	3,396	13,416
Middlesex	8,215	61	8,276
Monmouth	12,642	945	13,587
Morris	17,072	2,760	19,832
Ocean	6,489	6,739	13,228
Passaic	3,683	1,440	5,123
Salem	695	1,742	2,437
Somerset	7,969	613	8,582
Sussex	2,710	2,766	5,476
Union	798	1	799
Warren	<u>3,546</u>	<u>2,871</u>	<u>6,417</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>109,916</b>	<b>45,303</b>	<b>155,219</b>

Total includes 287 acres not assigned to local government acreage.

**Table 19**  
**Green Acres State Land Acquisition**  
**Preserved Acreage and Funding**  
**January 1, 1962- July 1, 2017**

<u>County</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Funding</u>
Atlantic	53,227	\$ 46,411,197
Bergen	3,726	\$ 22,456,228
Burlington	57,920	\$ 46,395,348
Camden	4,727	\$ 11,726,687
Cape May	44,955	\$ 55,593,266
Cumberland	42,692	\$ 64,701,565
Essex	1,611	\$ 28,630,851
Gloucester	13,530	\$ 20,224,863
Hudson	1,155	\$ 21,077,481
Hunterdon	12,379	\$121,319,330
Mercer	4,005	\$ 34,037,989
Middlesex	2,400	\$101,843,413
Monmouth	14,548	\$ 73,632,430
Morris	30,985	\$115,371,751
Ocean	64,684	\$ 67,083,634
Passaic	33,142	\$ 86,483,108
Salem	19,660	\$ 51,069,170
Somerset	2,817	\$ 27,211,005
Sussex	55,551	\$174,346,909
Union	10	\$ 12,387,407
Warren	<u>24,534</u>	<u>\$119,363,664</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>504,468</b>	<b>\$1,306,051,278</b>

**Total acres included 16,210 acres and \$4,940,533 in funding unassigned by county. Funding includes Green Acres, Land and Water Conservation Fund, Forest Legacy and other sources.**

**Table 20**  
**Green Acres Preserved Acreage**  
**State Land, Local Government, Nonprofit Programs**  
**January 1, 1962 – July 1, 2017**

<u>County</u>	<u>Acres Preserved</u>	<u>Percentage of County</u>
Atlantic	58,242	16%
Bergen	9,069	6%
Burlington	68,769	13%
Camden	6,125	4%
Cape May	47,951	30%
Cumberland	54,549	18%
Essex	2,315	3%
Gloucester	16,812	8%
Hudson	1,244	4%
Hunterdon	28,603	10%
Mercer	17,422	12%
Middlesex	10,675	5%
Monmouth	28,135	9%
Morris	50,818	17%
Ocean	76,819	19%
Passaic	38,265	32%
Salem	22,097	10%
Somerset	11,399	6%
Sussex	61,027	18%
Union	2,189	3%
Warren	30,952	14%
Unassigned Statewide	<u>16,210</u>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>659,687</b>	

## **Policy:**

**It shall be the policy of the State of New Jersey to continue to preserve land to protect water resources, biodiversity, historic resources and provide statewide public recreation opportunities.**

## **Issue: Recreation**

Recreation and parks improve the quality of life in New Jersey. Public and private recreation providers offer a wide array of opportunities, programs and facilities to satisfy the recreation demand of residents and visitors.

This demand is being driven largely by the State's increasing and aging population. Increased usage translates into greater operational and maintenance costs. To satisfy demand and maintain existing facilities, State and local governments will continue to work together to provide for the parks and recreation facilities, and to identify appropriate lands for recreational development. Local government open space and recreation plans can guide the acquisition and development of public conservation and recreation areas to provide a balanced park system.

The Green Acres Program has provided funding for park and recreation development since 1974. In 2015 and 2017, the Green Acres Program awarded a total of \$72.8 million in grant and loan funding for park and recreation projects to local governments and conservation organizations. In addition, New Jersey has funded over 237 park and recreation projects with \$61 million from the LWCF.

The need to develop and maintain urban park and recreation areas is a continuing issue in the State. The recognition of the problems encountered by urban communities led to the establishment in 1978 of the Urban Aid funding category within the Green Acres Program. This category provides grants, zero percent and low interest loans to legislatively designated urban aid communities for open space and recreation projects. Since the start of the program, the Green Acres Program has provided over \$430 million in Urban Aid funding.

The Green Acres Program also uses a project funding formula to further advance open space and park and recreation initiatives in New Jersey's older and urbanized municipalities. Green Acres

established categories of Highly Populated Municipalities that have a population of at least 35,000 people and Densely Populated Municipalities with a population density greater than 5,000 people per square mile. Funding for these municipalities is derived through the application of a multiplier that recognizes a municipality's or county's population data. This results in increased funding for these local governments in excess of the base award. Between 2015 and 2017, the Green Acres Program awarded a total of \$83.5 million in Urban Aid and Densely and Highly Populated community projects. In addition, the Garden State Preservation Trust Act specifies that a percentage of Green Acres State Land Acquisition funding be spent in counties with a population density of 1,000 people per square mile or more. Based on 2010 Census data, 11 New Jersey counties currently exceed this population density. Over 3,200 acres was preserved in urbanized counties between 2013 and 2016.

Two recent projects demonstrate the ability of NJDEP to preserve open space and provide recreation opportunities in the State's urban communities. The Green Acres Program purchased an 8.5 acre tract of land near the Paterson Great Falls National Historic Park to preserve the viewshed and support public use of this important land mark. The property is adjacent to the National Historical Park and is partially within the National Historic Landmark District. The Green Acres Program purchased the property for \$5.7 million. NJDEP will partner with the City of Paterson regarding improvements to and management of the property. Paterson is also using a LWCF grant to build a trail along the Passaic River. These projects will provide the opportunity for expanding public access and use, historic interpretation and other parks amenities.

Another major initiative in the State's urban communities is within the watershed of the lower Passaic River and the Newark Bay complex. In 2016 NJDEP's Office and Natural Resource Restoration awarded more than \$53 million in grants to improve public access and restore wetlands to reconnect the public to these urban waterways. The grants are the result of a 2014 natural resource damage settlement. The grants were awarded as part of a competitive application process, with \$47 million earmarked for public access enhancements and an additional \$6 million provided for wetland restoration. Twelve projects were funded including \$17.9 million for the City of Newark's Riverfront Park, \$13.2 million for the Borough of Careret's marina and 1.4 mile walkway along the Arthur Kill and \$5 million for the construction of a boathouse, boat launch and dock as an extension to Newark's Riverfront Park.

**Policy:**

It shall be the policy of the State of New Jersey to continue the funding of resource based recreation facilities on State open space and recreation areas and to provide funding to local governments and conservation organizations for park and recreation projects.

**State Resource Areas**

State Resource Areas contain critical natural resources. The most critical resource, water, is found in all these resource areas, and is a force in their ongoing protection. In addition, recreation, wildlife, tourism, and agriculture combine to make these areas even more significant.

The following summarizes the preserved acreages of Highlands, Pinelands and Coastal Zone regions of New Jersey.

**State Resource Areas Preserved Lands**

<b><u>Area</u></b>	<b><u>Total Acreage</u></b>	<b><u>Preserved Acreage</u></b>	<b><u>Percent Preserved</u></b>
Highland	839,358	312,217	36%
Pinelands*	938,000	463,000	49%
Coastal Zone**	<u>616,428</u>	<u>232,451</u>	<u>37%</u>
Total	2,413,786	1,007,668	41%

\*State designed Pinelands Area

\*\*Comprises Coastal Area Facilities Review Act (CAFRA) region

Sources: New Jersey Highlands Council, New Jersey Pinelands Commission, Green Acres Program

**Highlands**

In New Jersey, the Highlands Region includes 860,000 acres encompassing 88 municipalities in seven counties in the northwestern part of the state. In 2004 the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act was passed in recognition of the importance of the region’s water supply and diverse natural resources. The Act also created the Highland Council and charged it with planning for the protection and stewardship of the Highlands Region. In 2008, the Council adopted the Highlands

Regional Master Plan which was developed to protect natural and recreational resources and accommodate appropriate economic growth.

The Highlands Region comprises less than 15% of the state, but it is the source of water for more than 300 municipalities that are home to 70% of the State's population. The Highlands generate nearly 900 million gallons of water daily for potable water and, industrial and agricultural uses. Reservoirs in the Highlands supply 115 billion gallons of drinking water annually to meet the water supply demands of not only the greater New Jersey Metropolitan Area, but also portions of Burlington, Camden, Gloucester, Mercer and Middlesex counties. Land preservation is a key component in protecting these water resources.

In 2016, the Highlands Council released a land preservation status report. The report found 312,217 acres of the Highlands Region, or 36%, was preserved. This includes 207,200 acres in the Preservation Area and 105,509 acres in the Planning Area. The report also identified a total of 153,509 acres available for development and stated that 37,551 acres had been preserved between 2010 and 2015. The Highlands Council has also released a draft Monitoring Program Recommendation Report which provides an examination of progress made toward achieving the goals of the Highlands Regional Master Plan.

Green Acres committed \$13 million in State Land Acquisition funding to Highlands land preservation projects between 2013 and 2016. Almost 4,400 acres in the Highlands were preserved by the State between 2013 and 2016. Another 1,368 acres were preserved by local governments and nonprofits during the same time with \$17.5 million of Green Acres funding assistance.

### **Coastal Zone**

The State's 127 miles of Atlantic coastline together with the Barnegat, Delaware and Raritan Bays, contain estuaries, rivers, beaches and wetlands that provide abundant opportunities for recreation and tourism. As a peninsula, New Jersey offers residents and visitors a wide variety of water resources for sailing, boating, fishing, swimming, hunting, canoeing and birding. Tidal wetlands provide breeding and nursery habitat for fish and shellfish, provide flood control and, pollution abatement and have tremendous natural resource values. More than 50 species of fish and shellfish support commercial and recreational fisheries. Recreational and commercial fishing creates 65,000 jobs in New Jersey and contribute \$2.5 billion to the state's economy. Tourism in New Jersey's

coastal communities is a multibillion dollar industry. The economic power of the Jersey Shore, however, does not stop at the beach or boardwalk. There is no place in the United States with the concentration of migrating raptors in the fall or shorebirds in the spring than Cape May's Delaware Bayshore.

Coastal municipalities can see their summer population double and even triple. More than 1.8 million people visited Island Beach, Barnegat Lighthouse and Cape May Point State parks in FY2016. Another 688,733 used the State's marinas.

Some of the most sensitive coastal ecosystems in the State are also the most heavily used recreational resources. New Jersey's Barnegat Bay is a critically important natural, recreational and economic resource. The 660-square-mile Barnegat Bay watershed encompasses most of the 33 municipalities in Ocean County and four towns in Monmouth County. Its 75-square-mile, environmentally sensitive estuarine system consists of aquatic vegetation, shellfish beds, finfish habitats, waterfowl nesting grounds and spectacular vistas. Since 2011, more than 11,000 acres in Barnegat Bay's watershed have been preserved by the Green Acres Program and the Ocean County Natural Lands Trust. Preserving open space helps to protect the Bay's water quality.

If operated carelessly, boats and personal watercraft can harm environmentally sensitive areas of Barnegat Bay by damaging submerged aquatic vegetation and disturbing habitats. A map depicting important habitat areas was produced by NJDEP and made available for public use. Boaters can use an online interactive map on mobile devices and computers to locate 16 designated ecologically sensitive zones around Barnegat Bay. The map also shows the locations for marinas, pump out facilities, bait and tackle shops and boat ramps.

In addition to the land preservation and recreational boating actions, the following are some of the other positive actions implemented by NJDEP to protect Barnegat Bay:

- Negotiating closure of the Oyster Creek Nuclear Generation Station in Lacey Township by the end of 2019, ten years ahead of license expiration;
- Dedicating tens of millions of dollars for local government stormwater infrastructure projects;
- Teaming with research organizations to fund 10 studies that will assist the NJDEP restoration of the Bay;
- Launching a new watershed-wide water quality monitoring network;

- Barnegat Bay Blitz annual watershed-wide clean ups;
- Implementing the strictest fertilizer law in the nation; and
- Release of the Barnegat Bay Restoration, Enhancement and Protection Strategy.

A study by the nonprofit Barnegat Bay Partnership estimates the Barnegat Bay watershed contributes more than \$4 billion to the state's economy each year through outdoor recreation and natural resource activities and directly or indirectly supports more than 60,000 jobs.

### **Historic Resources**

That New Jersey has consistently identified the protection of its historic heritage in previous SCORPs should not be a surprise. As one of the 13 original colonies, the landscape of New Jersey is steeped in American history. New Jersey's role in the American Revolution was pivotal as more battles and skirmishes occurred in New Jersey than in any other colony during the war. Monmouth and Princeton Battlefield State Parks are both testaments and memorials to this fact. The Division of Parks and Forestry is the steward of 57 historic sites and districts which attracted nearly 1 million visitors in FY 2016. Another 487,700 people visited Morristown, Paterson Great Falls and Thomas Edison National Historic Parks. These historic sites are some of the over 1,600 sites listed on the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places. New Jersey's Historic Preservation Office provides technical assistance to individuals, organizations and government agencies in the identification, evaluation and protection of historic resources. The Green Acres Program provided \$5.3 million for land preservation between 2015 and 2017 to preserve sites related to New Jersey's Revolutionary War history. The relationship among historic preservation, open space, recreation and tourism creates opportunities that demand it be a statewide planning issue.

### **Pinelands**

The National Parks and Recreation Act of 1978 created the Pinelands National Reserve and, with the subsequent establishment of the Pinelands Commission in 1979 and the Pinelands Preservation Act, New Jersey has been reaping the benefits of the preservation and growth management of this 1.1 million acre region. The Pinelands landscape is a patchwork of pine and oak forests containing an aquifer with 17 trillion gallons of water, five major river systems, two of which, the Maurice River and three of its tributaries, and the Great Egg Harbor River have been inducted into the Wild and Scenic Rivers System. The Pinelands also supports a rich diversity of plants and wildlife species and thriving cranberry and blueberry industries. The Pinelands contain over 463,000 of

preserved open space, 94% of which is located in conservation oriented management areas such as the Preservation Area District, according to the Pinelands Commission. The Pinelands are an enormous recreation asset providing opportunities for camping, hiking, canoeing, fishing, hunting and birding, among other activities. The State has several major open space holdings in the Pinelands and has preserved over 218,000 acres in the Pinelands with Green Acres funding. A total of \$9.5 million in Green Acres state land acquisition funds was committed for Pinelands land preservation projects between 2015 and 2017. Almost 7,900 acres were preserved by the State, local governments and conservation organizations between 2013 and 2016 but there remain areas that still require protection. The Pinelands Development Credit Program has preserved 52,194 acres. The protection of the Pinelands has been a feature of New Jersey's SCORP planning for decades. The permanent protection of Pinelands resources was a fundamental principle mandated by the Pinelands Protection Act. Only continued comprehensive regional planning can ensure the vision of protecting critical Pinelands resources and sustaining economic growth.

### **Natural Heritage Priority Sites**

Natural Heritage Priority Sites are sites identified by NJDEP's Office of Natural Lands Management (ONLM) as areas that contain some of the best remaining habitat for rare species and ecological communities in the State. The ONLM uses the information found in its Natural Heritage Database to identify these sites. The boundaries for Natural Heritage Priority Sites are developed to encompass critical habitat for rare species or ecological communities. Often the boundaries extend to include additional buffer lands that should be managed to protect the habitat. The ONLM has identified over 300 Natural Heritage Priority Sites within the State. The protection of New Jersey's biodiversity is dependent upon the preservation of New Jersey's Natural Heritage Priority sites.

**Policy:** It shall be the policy of the State of New Jersey to continue the protection of State Resource Areas through land preservation, land use planning, participation in regional projects, and continued funding and planning assistance to local governments and conservation groups.

**Issue: Greenways and Trails**

The Green Acres Program’s Mission Statement speaks to the significance of greenways in the State’s open space and recreation planning. As greenways can offer close to home recreational activities, they can be an economical and efficient way to preserve public open space throughout New Jersey. Greenways also can protect environmentally sensitive areas, link public open space, provide wildlife habitat and preserve community character.

The New Jersey Trails Plan Update, prepared in 2009, revises the 1996 Trails Plan through a comprehensive analysis of trail issues in the State. The plan was prepared as a cooperative partnership between the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT), which funded the plan, the United States Department of Transportation, and NJDEP. The plan update reflects the efforts of the New Jersey Trails Council, Trails Plan Advisory Committee, NJDOT and NJDEP staff along with public agency trail managers and trail users.

A key finding and theme of the trails plan that emerged from the public participation process and staff work was that trails today play a critical role in the quality of life in New Jersey. Trails can link municipalities provide transportation networks, provide close to home recreation, fitness and wellness opportunities and protect natural and historic resources. Trails are also an element of a sustainable community.

NJDOT’s Scenic Byways Program is an example of the relationship between transportation, open space, and recreation. The seven Scenic Byways in New Jersey highlight transportation corridors that have scenic, natural, recreational, cultural, historic or archeological significance. Byways represent some of the best opportunities to interpret New Jersey history and provide recreation to a variety of people.

NJDOT also updated and implements the New Jersey Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan in 2016. The plan identified five goals including improving safety, enhancing connectivity and sustainable communities. NJDOT also published several bicycle tour guides that are available online, including the 238 mile High Point to Cape May bike route and the East Coast Greenway Multi Use Trail Guide. Other geographically diverse tour guides for bicyclists are available online as well.

NJDOT is also promoting Complete Streets, an initiative aimed at having streets be designed and operated to enable safe access for pedestrian, bicycling, motor vehicle and transit uses and users.

Complete Streets seeks to improve safety for all road users and provide connections to bicycling and walking trip generators such residential, recreation and retail facilities.

Camden County is working on constructing a bicycle and pedestrian trail across the county. Covering a distance of approximately 33 miles, the Cross Camden County Trail will begin at the Delaware River Waterfront in Camden and end in Winslow Township. The trail will be part of a future county wide trail and bike network planned with the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission. Nearly two miles of the trail are complete with another 1.5 miles completed but requiring widening to meet design standards set for the trail. Approximately 62% of the land needed for the trail is publicly owned or within a utility easement. A planning study has been prepared that defines trail routes and design options.

The Regional Plan Association has proposed the development of an integrated regional trail network of nearly 1,650 miles in the New Jersey, New York and Connecticut tri-state region. The plan calls for five trail systems in New Jersey totaling nearly 420 miles. Three of these trails, the Morris Canal Greenway, East Coast Greenway and Henry Hudson Trail already exist and would see additional trail mileage and improvements made. The remaining two, the Jersey Shore Trail and the Shore to Somerset Connector would require further planning and work to make them available for public use.

**Policy:**

**It shall be the policy of the State of New Jersey to promote greenway and trail planning and implementation.**

**Issue:        **Stewardship****

Caring for the lands and resources after they are put into public ownership is as important as the State's preservation effort. Over the past 50 years, New Jersey citizens have invested \$3.3 billion in State funds and \$4.5 billion in local tax dollars for land preservation and park and recreation facilities. However, in order for these lands to sustain the open space and recreation needs of New Jersey, now and into the future, ongoing stewardship is needed.

The State, local governments and conservation organizations face pressing challenges to meet the goal of proper stewardship of the public's lands and recreational resources. Among these challenges

are increasing private development, limited fiscal resources, increased public land acreage to be managed, forest fragmentation and threats from invasive species. Some local governments use open space taxes for recreational development and maintenance expenditures associated with their park systems. In these cases, dedicated funding has given these jurisdictions some predictability and flexibility to acquire open spaces, maintain their recreation infrastructure and meet the needs of visitors. The constitutional dedication of Corporation Business Tax (CBT) monies has enabled NJDEP to make long term investments in the state park and wildlife management area systems. With over 837,000 acres of land administered by the Division of Parks and Forestry, the Division of Fish and Wildlife and the Natural Lands Trust, the use of this funding for capital projects will improve the visitor experience and enhance the stewardship of the State's natural, historic and recreation resources. From FY2012 to FY2016, NJDEP spent \$55 million in state park projects and \$18.1 million in fish and wildlife projects. (Table 21)

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**Table 21**  
**STATE PARK AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA**  
**CAPITAL PROJECTS FY 2012-FY2016**

<b>STATE PARKS/FORESTS – Projects more than \$500,00</b>	
<b>Allaire</b>	<b>\$ 1,741,787</b>
<b>Belleplain</b>	<b>\$ 2,045,157</b>
<b>Brendan Byrne</b>	<b>\$ 639,294</b>
<b>D&amp;R Canal</b>	<b>\$ 1,380,353</b>
<b>Forest Fire Service</b>	<b>\$ 530,522</b>
<b>Forest Resource Education Center</b>	<b>\$ 501,290</b>
<b>Historic Sites</b>	<b>\$11,133,173</b>
<b>Hopatcong</b>	<b>\$ 710,502</b>
<b>Island Beach</b>	<b>\$ 6,474,165</b>
<b>Leonardo Marina</b>	<b>\$ 3,862,693</b>
<b>Liberty</b>	<b>\$15,090,774</b>
<b>Monmouth Battlefield</b>	<b>\$ 2,506,221</b>
<b>Ringwood</b>	<b>\$ 1,890,091</b>
<b>Stowe Creek</b>	<b>\$ 832,787</b>
<b>Wharton</b>	<b>\$ 670,637</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$55,007,272</b>

**Total includes projects less than \$500,000.**

**WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREAS – projects more than \$100,000**

<b>Assunpink</b>	<b>\$ 2,062,080</b>
<b>Belvidere</b>	<b>\$ 154,889</b>
<b>Black River</b>	<b>\$ 101,847</b>
<b>Clinton</b>	<b>\$ 4,410,274</b>
<b>Colliers Mills</b>	<b>\$ 629,489</b>
<b>Dix</b>	<b>\$ 230,867</b>
<b>Drag Island</b>	<b>\$ 219,233</b>
<b>Flat Brook</b>	<b>\$ 602,611</b>
<b>Higbee Beach</b>	<b>\$ 115,151</b>
<b>Millville</b>	<b>\$ 368,118</b>
<b>Peaslee</b>	<b>\$ 227,125</b>
<b>Pequest</b>	<b>\$ 3,395,630</b>
<b>Reigelsville</b>	<b>\$ 554,041</b>
<b>Rockport Game Farm</b>	<b>\$ 1,128,780</b>
<b>Salem River</b>	<b>\$ 173,157</b>
<b>Spicers Creek</b>	<b>\$ 296,037</b>
<b>Tuckahoe</b>	<b>\$ 657,241</b>
<b>Union Lake</b>	<b>\$ 226,110</b>
<b>Winslow</b>	<b>\$ 508,909</b>
<b>Wittingham</b>	<b>\$ 875,000</b>
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$18,129,605</b>

**Total includes projects less than \$100,000**

**State Park/Wildlife Management Area Total: \$73,136,877**

**Table 22 depicts capital projects on state lands for FY2018-FY2022**

**Table 22**  
**STATE PARK AND WIDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA**  
**CAPITAL PROJECTS FY2018-FY2022**

<b>Dams</b>	<b>\$ 5,000,000</b>
<b>Demolitions, Safety</b>	<b>\$ 5,450,000</b>
<b>Road/Bridge Repairs</b>	<b>\$ 3,250,000</b>
<b>Building Repairs/Enhancements</b>	<b>\$ 5,000,000</b>
<b>Historic Resources</b>	<b>\$ 2,400,000</b>
<b>Recreational Development</b>	<b>\$13,150,000</b>
<b>Sanitary Facilities</b>	<b>\$ 5,000,000</b>
<b>Habitat Improvement</b>	<b>\$ 2,750,000</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$42,000,000</b>

For the first time, the Preserve New Jersey Act established funding for local governments and nonprofit organization for stewardship activities on lands held by public recreation and conservation purposes. Stewardship grants are awarded as a 50% matching grant. In 2017, \$1.3 million was awarded to 13 local government stewardship projects and nearly \$748,000 for 8 nonprofit stewardship projects.

Conservation planning is another stewardship element and the Conservation Blueprint is providing the groundwork for the future of land preservation in New Jersey. With funding from the William Penn Foundation, The Nature Conservancy, the New Jersey Conservation Foundation and Rowan University are leading a multi-agency effort to create a shared statewide agenda for land preservation in New Jersey. The Conservation Blueprint is an online, interactive mapping tool, available at [www.njmap2.com](http://www.njmap2.com) and provides detailed natural resource information essential for open space planning.

**Policy: It shall be the policy of the State of New Jersey to provide stewardship funding and continue stewardship planning.**

## **Action Plan**

The successful implementation of the policies of this plan depends on outlining a plan framework through which strategies can be formulated to advance New Jersey's open space and recreation program. Organized according to the issues and policies previously presented, the Action Plan offers a basis for future direction.

### **Issue: Land Preservation**

#### **Actions**

1. Continue to provide Green Acres funding for the acquisition of land for state parks, forests, wildlife management areas, historic sites and natural areas. (NJDEP)
2. Continue to provide funding to local governments and conservation organizations for open space preservation projects. (NJDEP, local governments, conservation organizations)
3. Focus open space preservation projects on protecting water resources and biodiversity. (NJDEP, local governments and conservation organizations)
4. Support federal open space preservation by the National Park Service and US Fish and Wildlife Service in New Jersey. (NJDEP, local governments, conservation organizations)
5. Continue to provide programs such as the Green Acres Tax Exemption Program as a way to preserve private open space and recreation areas. (NJDEP, local governments, private providers)
6. Promote the preservation of open space and farmland through cooperative projects. (NJDEP and Farmland Preservation Program)
7. Continue to provide funding for Blue Acres projects. (NJDEP)
8. Promote the statewide use of the New Jersey Conservation Blueprint for open space planning. (NJDEP, local governments, conservation organizations)

### **Issue: Recreation**

#### **Actions**

1. Continue to acquire land for recreational open space. (NJDEP, local governments, conservation organizations)
2. Continue to provide Green Acres funding to local governments and nonprofits for the development of park and recreation facilities on municipal, county and state parkland or nonprofit-owned land. (NJDEP, local governments, conservation organizations)

3. Continue the Green Acres Tax Exemption Program to provide for public access to private lands and recreation facilities. (NJDEP, local governments, private recreation providers, private land owners)
4. Implement the recommendations of the New Jersey Trails Plan through funding, planning and technical assistance programs. (NJDEP, NJDOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Programs, federal and local governments, trail user organizations and conservation organizations)
5. Foster cooperation between state, local governments and nonprofits to promote the health benefits of outdoor recreation. (NJDEP, local governments, nonprofits)
6. Continue local government and nonprofit funding for urban open space and recreation projects. (NJDEP, local governments, conservation organizations)
7. Continue the preservation of land for conservation and recreation purposes in urbanized counties by the State. (NJDEP)
8. Implement urban river initiatives that include public access, habitat protection, restoration and partnerships. (NJDEP, local governments, conservation groups)

### **Issue: State Resource Areas**

#### **Actions:**

1. Continue to preserve important natural resource areas of the Pinelands consistent with the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan and the Pinelands Land Protection Plan. (NJDEP, Pinelands Commission)
2. Continue funding for local governments and conservation organizations to preserve land and develop recreation facilities in the Pinelands. (NJDEP, local governments, Pinelands Commission, conservation organizations)
3. Continue to protect important water resources and other natural resources in the Highlands. (NJDEP, Highlands Council, local governments, conservation organizations)
4. Continue funding for local governments and conservation organizations to preserve land and develop recreation facilities in the Highlands (NJDEP, local governments, Highlands Council, conservation organizations)
5. Utilize funds from the Forest Legacy Program and the Federal Highlands Act to protect lands in the Highlands. (NJDEP, United States Forest Service)
6. Continue to provide Green Acres funding to improve public access to local government and conservation organizations to improve public access to coastal and waterfront projects. (NJDEP, local governments, conservation organizations)
7. Continue to provide Green Acres funding to improve local government and conservation organization acquisition projects for Barnegat Bay, Delaware Bay and the Hudson-Raritan Estuary. (NJDEP)

8. Continue to provide Green Acres funding for the protection of Natural Heritage Priority Sites. (NJDEP)
9. Continue to provide Green Acres funding for the preservation of historic sites.
10. Continue to preserve and protect State Resource Areas through planning, regulation and acquisition efforts. (NJDEP)
11. Promote ecotourism to provide sustainable economic development and protect important natural, recreation and historic resources. (NJDEP, New Jersey State Planning Commission, Highlands Council, local governments, conservation organizations)

### **Issue: Greenways and Trails**

#### **Actions:**

1. Support greenway and trail projects through Green Acres local government funding and technical assistance. (NJDEP, local governments, environmental commissions, conservation organizations)
2. Implement recommendations of the New Jersey Trails Plan. (NJDEP, New Jersey Trails Council, local governments, trail user organizations and conservation organizations)
3. Encourage local governments to adopt greenways and trails as part of municipal master plans. (NJDEP, local governments, conservation organizations, environmental commissions)
4. Continue to work with the New Jersey Department of Transportation on open space and recreation projects. (NJDEP, NJDOT, State Planning Commission, local governments, conservation organizations)
5. Work with Farmland Preservation Program to provide trails on preserved farmland. (NJDEP, State Agricultural Development Committee)

### **Issue: Stewardship**

#### **Actions:**

1. Continue Green Acres funding for stewardship, land preservation, park, recreation and historic preservation projects. (NJDEP, local governments, conservation organizations)
2. Increase public access to public open space and recreation areas. (NJDEP, local governments and conservation organizations).
3. Provide technical assistance to local governments and conservation organization on natural resource protection, restoration and open space and recreation planning. (NJDEP)
4. Support environmental education facilities and programs through funding and technical assistance. (NJDEP, local governments, conservation organizations)

## **Project Priorities Selection**

The selection of project priorities for the preservation of open space and the development of outdoor recreation facilities is a crucial feature of the 2018 SCORP. New Jersey is fortunate that there is an ongoing effort by all levels of government and by conservation organizations to identify areas and regions of significance in the state.

The State, local government and nonprofit funding priority systems presented in this chapter are based on information obtained from State agencies, county and municipal governments, conservation organizations, and the general public. The issues presented, along with the priority systems, provide a framework to determine the projects funded with the resources available and result in an effective and coordinated implementation program. The systems are reviewed on an annual basis and revisions are made on an as needed basis to reflect emerging trends, issues and priorities and to improve the evaluation criteria.

The primary basis for NJDEP policies regarding the allocation of LWCF monies throughout the state is described in this plan. The LWCF is an important segment of New Jersey's open space and recreation program. Despite having one of the strongest State open space and recreation funding programs in the nation, New Jersey's public conservation and recreation demand exceed funding availability. Land preservation and recreation project costs will continue to grow. New Jersey has some of the highest per acre land values in the nation. The LWCF translates into more land being preserved and more recreation facilities built for public use. The LWCF has had a substantial impact on the New Jersey park and recreation scene. In New Jersey, 311 projects have received LWCF monies representing an investment of nearly \$122 million since the inception of the LWCF in 1965. The LWCF has been used to the great public benefit of New Jerseyans.

In order for the State to address the concerns identified in the 2018 SCORP in an equitable manner, funding is divided into state, local government, and nonprofit assistance programs. Funding for local government projects consists of grants and low interest loans and for nonprofit projects, matching grants. Local governments and nonprofit projects are further divided into acquisition and development. State projects are direct land acquisition by the Green Acres Program. State and local government projects also receive funding from federal funding assistance such as the LWCF and the Forest Legacy Program.

The Green Acres Program accepts applications throughout the year and funding is awarded depending on availability. Correspondence inviting participation in the current funding round is forwarded to each of the State's 21 counties and 565 municipalities and to over 150 eligible nonprofit conservation organizations. Green Acres staff provide technical assistance and public information at a variety of forums. From meetings with local officials, speaking engagements and conferences, staff continually offer input on open space and recreation issues in New Jersey.

Once an application has been received, it is categorized according to type and entered into the Green Acres database. Each application is reviewed for completeness, additional information is solicited as needed, and an individual pre-ranking in accordance with the appropriate project priority system is performed. The next step entails ranking, with each proposal competing only against others within the same category. Information reviewed and analyzed include service area, population, demand, cost, recreation potential, environmental impact and natural resource value. For staged projects, each phase is ranked separately as an independent project.

The allocation of LWCF monies is limited to State Land Acquisition projects. The list of potential state land projects eligible to receive LWCF assistance is further refined by a number of factors, including:

- Future use and management of the project area may deem a specific proposal ineligible for federal funds.
- The projected schedule for completion of a project, or the complexity of its scope, may indicate an extended project period and thus render a particular proposal less desirable for LWCF assistance than other proposals.

In all instances, efforts are always made to select LWCF projects which promise to be of regional or statewide significance or which best exemplify one or more of the policies set forth in New Jersey's 2018 SCORP.

The Green Acres State Land Acquisition program serves as the land acquisition agent for NJDEP. It acquires land for state parks, forests, natural areas, preserves, historic sites and wildlife management areas. Recommendations for acquisition are made by NJDEP's Division of Fish and Wildlife, the Division of Parks and Forestry, and the Office of Natural Lands Management. Recommendations for preservation are also made by conservation organizations, local

governments and the general public. Lands are also brought to the attention of the State through property offerings of sale or donation by property owners. LWCF monies are also used with state land monies for acquisition projects throughout New Jersey.

The appropriation bills which authorize monies for state land acquisition allocate the funding to specific “project areas” and designate the funding level for each project area. These project areas may be geographically based such as “Pinelands” or based on a specific demand like “Urban Parks”. Green Acres then adheres to the funding levels appropriated for these project areas. The necessity to identify an agency willing to accept management responsibility for the property is also an important consideration before starting an acquisition. There are legal considerations as well, such as ensuring that clear title to the property can be obtained.

In acquiring land for the State, Green Acres uses the following nine step project process:

Step 1 - Project Approval/Funding: Project areas are submitted to the Garden State Preservation Trust for approval. The New Jersey Legislature appropriates the project funds. Amounts for funding for each project area are based on policy initiatives, ongoing projects, funding demand and land costs.

Step 2 - Project Identification: Green Acres receives offers throughout the year to sell land to the State from landowners statewide. Green Acres can target land in a project area. Additionally lands are recommended for preservation by the Division of Fish and Wildlife, Division of the Parks and Forestry or the New Jersey Natural Lands Trust, as well as by conservation organizations and other interested parties.

Step 3 - Project Evaluation: Land offers are mapped in the Green Acres GIS open space map. Project parcels are evaluated using the GIS portion of the State Land Acquisition Priority System. The offers are then submitted for agency review.

Step 4 – Division Review: The offers are circulated to the Division of Parks and Forestry, Division of Fish and Wildlife and the New Jersey Natural Lands Trust to ascertain potential ownership and management interest. If an offering is of interest, then it will be further evaluated by the Green Acres Program using the Priority System. The combined point value derived from both evaluations will represent the final point score for a project. Information on parcels where there is no State

interest is shared with local governments and conservation organizations. Opportunities for cooperative management are explored as appropriate.

Step 5 - Project Assignment: Once interest has been shown by an agency the project is assigned to a Green Acres project manager. Assignments are based on the geographic location of the property.

Project management staff are organized into the following six teams:

Central Team: Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth and Somerset counties

North East Team: Bergen, Morris and Passaic counties

North West Team: Sussex and Warren counties

South Central Team: Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, and Ocean counties

South Team: Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester and Salem counties

Park Development and Urban Acquisition Team: Hudson, Essex and Union counties, statewide park development and acquisition in designated urban centers and communities.

These teams are responsible for state land, local government, and nonprofit project management. The project manager contacts the land owner to begin the state land acquisition process.

Step 6 - Technical Work: The project managers order title and two appraisals for properties with an estimated value in excess of \$250,000. Preliminary site assessment work to investigate previous land uses and the potential for hazardous waste concerns is performed by Green Acres staff. Appraisals are reviewed by Green Acres appraisal staff to determine the fair market value of a property.

Step 7 - Purchase Decision / Purchase Offer: Upon the completion of Step 6, the project managers can continue the negotiation and make a purchase offer based upon satisfactory terms to the State and the property owner. A contract of sale is prepared by a Deputy Attorney General upon the acceptance of the purchase offer by the property owner. At this time, a survey of the property is ordered and when completed, reviewed by Green Acres survey staff.

Steps 8 and 9 - Closing and Property Assignment: After the survey review is completed, closing occurs between the Green Acres Program and the property owner. After closing, the property is assigned to either Division of Parks and Forestry, Division of Fish and Wildlife, or the New Jersey Natural Lands Trust for operation and management.

The Green Acres state land priority system evaluation process is based on 11 factors. Each property under consideration is evaluated with respect to each of these factors, and assigned points for each factor.

## **State Land Acquisition Priority System**

### Factor I. Groundwater Protection

#### A. Wellhead Protection Area Water Supply – 2 points maximum

1. Feature evaluated: Whether, or the extent to which, the property is located within a Wellhead Protection Area (WHPA) delineated by the New Jersey Geological Survey (NJGS)
2. Information source: NJGS WHPA coverage in the Department's GIS
3. Points are assigned as follows:
  - a. If the grid cell data from the GIS is converted to a grid cell format, which each grid cell measuring 100 feet by 100 feet; and points are assigned to each of a property's grid cells, on a grid cell basis lies within or intersects with a WHPA - 2 points
  - b. If the grid cell lies outside any WHPA – 0 points

#### B. Groundwater Recharge Area – 5 points maximum

1. Feature evaluated: Groundwater recharge capacity of the property's grid cells relative to that of other grid cells in the Watershed Management Area (WMA), as established by the NJGS
2. Information source: NJGS Groundwater Ranking Recharge Area by WMA GIS coverage in the Department's GIS
3. Points are assigned, as follows:

- a. If the grid cell is ranked in the top third of all grid cells in the WMA – 5 points
- b. If the grid cell is ranked in the middle third of all grid cells in the WMA – 3 points
- c. If the grid cell is ranked in the lowest third of all grid cells in the WMA – 0 points

C. Aquifer Productivity Statewide – 3 points maximum

1. Feature evaluated: The NJGS Aquifer Productivity Ranking
2. Information source: NJGS Aquifer Rank GIS coverage
3. Points are assigned, as follows:
  - a. If the grid cell has an Aquifer Productivity Ranking of A, B or C (100+ gallons per minute [gpm]) – 3 points
  - b. If the grid cell has an Aquifer Productivity Ranking of D (25 to 100 gpm) – 2 points
  - c. If the grid cell has an Aquifer Productivity Ranking of E (less than 25 gpm) – 1 point
  - d. If the grid cell has no identified aquifer productivity – 0 points

Factor II. Surface Water

A. Public Surface Water Supply Watersheds (intakes) – 3 points maximum

1. Feature evaluated: Distance from an existing water intake supply

2. Information source: NJDEP GIS

3. Points are assigned to a grid cell, as follows:

a. If the grid cell is located within 300 feet of the edge of a water body used for public water supply purposes; and if it is located either no further than 1,500 feet upstream of an existing public water supply intake, or no further than 500 feet downstream of an existing public water supply intake (or above a downstream dam that is closer than 500 feet to the intake) – 3 points

b. If the grid cell is located within 300 feet of the edge of a water body used for public water supply purposes; and if it is located more than 1500 feet upstream from an existing public water supply intake – 2 points

c. If the grid cell is located more than 300 feet from the edge of a water body used for public surface water supply, but is located within a watershed that serves an existing public water supply intake – 1 point

d. If the grid cell is not located within a watershed that serves an existing public water supply intake – 0 points

B. Watershed Lands Draining to “Special Surface Water Resources” -  
4 points maximum

body

1. Feature or characteristic evaluated: Proximity to a “special surface water

2. Information source: NJDEP GIS

3. Points are assigned to a grid cell, as follows:

a. If the grid cell is located within 300 feet of the edge of a surface water body – 1 point

- b. If the grid cell is located further than 300 foot from any surface water body – 0 points
- D. Planned Public Water Supply Facility Sites – 2 points maximum
  - 1. Feature evaluated: Location in relation to a planned water supply facility site
  - 2. Information source: NJDEP State Water Supply Master Plan.
  - 3. Points are assigned as follows:
    - a. If the grid cell is located within a planned water supply facility site – 2 points
    - b. If the grid cell is located within a watershed which drains to a planned public water supply facility site – 1 point
    - c. If the grid cell is not located within a watershed which drains to a planned water supply facility site – 0 points

Factor III. Flood-prone Areas

- A. Flood Hazard Areas – 10 points maximum
  - 1. Feature evaluated: Location in relation to flood hazard area
  - 2. Information sources: NJDEP GIS, the New Jersey Flood Hazard Maps
  - 3. Points are assigned as follows:
    - a. If the grid cell is located within a Flood Hazard Area except within the portion of the Flood Hazard Area identified as Zone A– 10 points
    - b. If the grid cell is located within the portion of the Flood Hazard Area identified as Zone A – 5 points
    - c. If the grid cell is not located within a Flood Hazard Area – 0 points

Factor IV. Natural Resource Features

- A. Freshwater and Saltwater Wetlands – 5 points maximum
  - 1. Feature evaluated: Location in relation to wetlands

2. Information source: NJDEP GIS

3. Points are assigned as follows:

a. If the grid cell is located within wetlands and/or within a 300-foot wide wetlands buffer area adjacent to wetlands- 5 points

b. If the grid cell is not located within wetlands and/or within a 300-foot wide wetlands buffer area adjacent to wetlands – 0 points

B. Forests – 5 points maximum

1. Feature evaluated: Presence of forests

2. Information source: NJDEP GIS

3. Points are assigned as follows:

a. If the grid cell contains forestland– 5 points

b. If the grid cell does not contain land – 0 points

C. Additional Unique Resources from an Open Space Preservation, Wildlife Conservation, or Botanical or Ecological Perspective – 5 points maximum

1. Feature(s) evaluated: Presence of notable natural resources, such as distinctive scenic views, old forests and exceptional wetlands from an ecological or botanical perspective

2. Information sources: NJDEP staff knowledge of site.

3. Criteria for assigning points: Points are assigned as follows:

a. If the property has unique resources of significant value from an open space preservation, wildlife conservation, or botanical or ecological perspective – 5 points

b. If the property's resources are moderately important from an open space preservation, wildlife conservation, or botanical or ecological perspective – 2.5 points

c. If the property's resources are insignificant from an open space preservation, wildlife conservation, or botanical or ecological perspective – 0 points

A. Critical Habitat for Imperiled and Priority Wildlife Species Threatened Endangered Animal Species – 10 points maximum

1. Feature evaluated: Presence of habitat for animal species that have been determined to be endangered or threatened or classified as a species of special concern, pursuant to the Department's Endangered, Nongame and Exotic Wildlife rules at N.J.A.C. 7:25-4.

2. Information source: NJDEP Landscape Project Maps

3. Points are assigned as follows:

a. If the grid cell includes land or waters that are classified as habitat for an animal species that is Federally-designated as threatened or endangered, based on documented sightings of the species – 10 points

b. If the grid cell contains land or waters that are classified as habitat for an animal species that is State-designated as endangered, based on documented sightings of the species – 8 points

c. If the grid cell contains land or waters that are classified as habitat for an animal species that is State-designated as threatened, based on documented sightings of the species – 6 points

d. If the grid cell contains land or waters that are classified as habitat for an animal species that is State-designated as a Species of Special Concern, based on documented sightings of the species – 4 points

e. If the grid cell contains land or waters that are classified as habitat that appears suitable for endangered or threatened animal species, but it is unconfirmed as to whether any such species uses the habitat – 2 points

f. If the grid cell does not contain land or waters that are classified as containing habitat that is suitable for endangered or threatened animal species – 0 points

A. Natural Heritage Priority Site – 10 points maximum

1. Feature evaluated: Presence of a Natural Heritage Priority Site

2. Information source: Natural Heritage Priority Sites.

3. Points are assigned as follows:

a. If the grid cell is within or includes any portion of a Natural Heritage Priority Standard Site that is ranked B1, B2, B3 or B4 for biodiversity – 10 points

b. If the grid cell is within or includes any portion of a Natural Heritage Priority Standard Site that is ranked B5 for biodiversity; or is within or includes any portion of a Natural Heritage Priority Macrosite that is ranked B1, B2, B3 or B4 for biodiversity – 5 points

c. If the grid cell is within or includes any portion of a Natural Heritage Priority Macrosite that is ranked B5 for biodiversity – 2 points

d. If the grid cell is not within or does not include any portion of a Natural Heritage Priority Macrosite or Standard Site – 0 points

B. Occurrence of Rare Plant or Rare Ecological Community – 10 points maximum

1. Feature evaluated: Occurrence of a rare plant or rare ecological community

2. Information source: NJDEP GIS

3. Points are assigned as follows:

a. If the grid cell includes an occurrence of a rare plant or rare ecological community that is ranked S1, G1 or G2 – 10 points

b. If the grid cell includes an occurrence of a rare plant or rare ecological community that is ranked S2 or G3 – 8 points

c. If the grid cell includes an occurrence of a rare plant or rare ecological community that is ranked S3 – 3 points

d. If the grid cell does not include an occurrence of a rare plant or rare ecological community – 0 points

C. Suitability of Location for Rare Plant or Rare Ecological Community – 10 points maximum

1. Feature evaluated: The property's suitability as habitat for a rare plant or rare ecological community

2. Information sources: NJDEP Natural Heritage Database and staff assessment of property

3. Points are preliminarily awarded to a property pursuant to the criteria in a. below; then the number of points awarded is adjusted pursuant to the criteria in b. below to determine the number of points assigned:

a. Habitat suitability:

- 1) If the property includes habitat that is suitable for a rare plant or rare ecological community ranked S1, G1 or G2 – 10 points
- 2) If the property includes habitat that is suitable for a rare plant or rare ecological community ranked S2 or G3 – 8 points
- 3) If the property includes habitat that is suitable for a rare plant or rare ecological community ranked S3 – 3 points
- 4) If the property does not include habitat that is suitable for a rare plant or a rare ecological community – 0 points

b. Quality and extent of the habitat on the property:

- 1) If the quality or extent of the habitat on the property is assessed by ONLM to be significant for rare plants or a rare ecological community – 100 percent of the points awarded under a. above
- 2) If the quality or extent of the habitat on the property is assessed by ONLM to be moderately significant for rare plants or a rare ecological community – 50 percent of the points awarded under a. above
- 3) If the quality or extent of the habitat on the property is assessed by ONLM to be insignificant for rare plants or a rare ecological community – 0 percent of the points awarded under a. above

A. Presence of Significant Features – 10 points maximum

1. Feature evaluated: Significance of historic or cultural features on the property

2. Information sources: Historic Preservation Office (HPO); HPO staff knowledge of site.

3. Points are assigned as follows:

a. If the property has feature(s) that are on or are eligible for listing on the State or National Register of Historic Places and have statewide significance – 10 points

b. If the property has feature(s) that are on or eligible for listing on the State or National Register of Historic Places that have local significance – 5 points

c. If the property has feature(s) that are eligible for listing for State or National Registers of Historic Places and have local significance –3 points

d. If the property has no feature(s) eligible for listing for State or National Registers – 0 points

A. Open Space– 10 points maximum

1. Feature evaluated: greenways, trails, and/or continuity of preserved open space

2. Information source: Green Acres Open Space Planning Map

3. Points are assigned as follow:

a. The extent to which the property represents an integral component of an existing or planned greenway, trail or project area; or connects to an existing preserved open space area – up to 3 points

b. The extent to which the property enhances a designated or proposed component of the State Trails System or a Federal or State designated Wild, Scenic or Recreational River – up to 3 points

c. The extent to which the property contributes to the establishment of a greenbelt around an urban or suburban center – up to 2 points

d. The extent to which the property acts as a physical or visual buffer between a sensitive area and development – up to 2 points

A. Recreational Benefit – 14 points maximum

1. Feature evaluated: The population that could benefit from recreational opportunities afforded by the property

2. Information sources: Site characteristics, as given in the Open Space Planning Map developed by Green Acres and/or in municipal, county and regional park and open space master plans and site recreation master plans; and the most recent dicennial U.S. Census from which the relevant data is available.

3. Points are assigned as follows:

a. Urbanization

1) If the municipality in which the property is located is a qualifying municipality eligible for urban aid – 3 points

2) If the municipality in which the property is located is an urbanized municipality with a population density equal to or greater than 5,000 people per square mile; or has a population of 35,000 people or greater – 2 points

3) If the municipality in which the property is located is a municipality with a population density less than 5,000 people per square mile; or has a population of less than 35,000 people – 1 point

b. Density of county population

1) If the county in which the property is located is heavily urbanized and has a population density equal to or greater than 5,000 people per square mile –3 points

2) If the county in which the property is located is urbanized and has a population density equal to or exceeding 1,000 people per square mile, but less than 5,000 people per square mile – 2 points

3) If the county in which the property is located has a population density of less than 1,000 people per square mile –1 point

c. Access to open space

1) If the distance from the property to existing State open space areas with similar recreation potential is more than 20 miles – 3 points

2) If the distance from the property to existing State open space areas with similar recreation potential is more than 10 miles but less than 20 miles –2 points

3) If the distance from the property<sup>20</sup> to existing State open space areas with similar recreation potential is within 10 miles – 0 points

d. Potential recreational opportunities

1) If the property offers the potential to provide a wide variety of outdoor recreation opportunities, many of which are not available in the county – up to 5 points

2) If the property offers the potential to provide a limited number of outdoor recreation opportunities that are generally not available within the county – up to 3 points

3) If the property offers the potential to provide only outdoor recreation opportunities that are already generally available within the county –0 points

#### Factor X. Development Threat/ Property Size/Acquisition Cost

##### A. Cost, Size and Development Threat – 10 points maximum

1. Feature evaluated: The immediacy of the threat that the property will be developed; the size of the property; and the cost of acquiring the property compared to other properties

2. Information sources Green Acres “Application for Sale of Real Estate” Green Acres staff knowledge of site;

3. Points are assigned as follows:

##### a. Development potential -- 4 points maximum

1) If the property has local subdivision or site plan approval – 4 points

2) If the property has a pending local subdivision or site plan application – 3 points

3) If the property includes developable land but a local subdivision or site plan application has not been submitted – 2 points

4) If the property has no development potential under State regulations – 0 points

b. Size of the property

1) If the property is 100 acres or greater – 4 points

2) If the property is 50 acres or greater but less than 100 acres – 3 points

3) If the property is 25 acres or greater but less than 50 acres – 2 points

4) If the property is less than 25 acres – 1 point

c. Purchase price of the property

1) If the price of the property is 25% less than its appraised fair market value – 2 points

2) If the price of the property is less than its appraised fair market value by less than 25% – 1 point

3) If the price of the property is equal to or higher than its appraised fair market value – 0 points

Factor XI. Planning

A. Planning – 7 points maximum

1. Feature evaluated: Consistency of acquisition with applicable plans

2. Information sources: State Plan, Green Acres Land Preservation Plan, New Jersey Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, Garden State Greenways, Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan, and Highlands Regional Master Plan.



deficits. The service area for the project will be defined on the basis of population density, scope and type of project, and consideration of the project's relation to an existing redevelopment plan. Facility needs will be based on a comparison of recreational demand and a site specific inventory of recreation facilities for the municipality(ies) in which the project is located (submitted by the applicant).

**FACTOR #3 ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION (Acquisition only) Up to 3 pts. each**  
This factor is used to determine to what extent a proposed acquisition meets key conservation and environmental protection goals.

- a) Lands that are of sufficient size and located so as to:
  - 1. Protect critical wildlife habitat;
  - 2. Enhance or preserve a critical site identified in the State Plan, New Jersey Meadowlands Master Plan, the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan, and Highlands Regional Master Plan, as applicable, and or another unique natural area or land type (for example, steep slopes, dunes, beach, wetlands, forest lands);
  - 3. Provide additions to or link between existing public recreation and/or open space areas;
  - 4. Support a regional open space and/or conservation initiatives (for example, shore protection or the preservation of landscape ecology, biodiversity, wildlife corridors and/or greenways; and
  - 5. Protect documented endangered and/or threatened species habitat.
  
- b) Greenways and water resource protection projects, including forests, shorelines, and stream corridors that are of sufficient size and located so as to:
  - 1. Establish an integral link in an existing or planned local, regional or statewide conservation initiative, or a component of a Wild and Scenic Rivers system under the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, 16 U.S.C. § 1271-1287 and/or the New Jersey Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, N.J.S.A. 13:8-45 et seq.;
  - 2. Facilitate water resource protection efforts;
  - 3. Provide significant natural flood protection;
  - 4. Act as a physical or visual buffer between a significant natural resource or feature and development, or provide visual or physical access to the water; and
  - 5. Protect headwaters, tributaries, or corridors of any waterbodies classified as "Category One Waters," pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:9B, and associated special water resource protection areas established pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:8, as well as other streams or rivers.

**FACTOR #4 HISTORIC RESOURCE PRESERVATION (Acquisition only) Up to 3 pts. each**

This factor is used to determine to what extent a proposed acquisition meets key historic resource preservation goals.

- a) If the project is on, contained within, or adjacent to a site included on or eligible for inclusion in the New Jersey Register of Historic Places under N.J.S.A. 13:IB- 15.128 et seq. and/or the National Register of Historic

Places under 16 U.S.C. §470 et seq., or is a Critical Historic Site identified in the State Plan, New Jersey Meadowlands Master Plan, Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan, or Highlands Regional Master Plan, as applicable.

- b) If the project is an historic project that provides an extension or linkage between existing public recreation and/or open space areas.
- c) The degree to which the project is a significant and/or contributing component of an historic district designated as such under N.J.S.A. 13:IB-15.128 et seq.
- d) If the project is part of an ongoing historic preservation or restoration project or historic study or investigation.
- e) The extent to which the project is one with historic integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

**FACTOR #5 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION/SUPPORT/PLANNING (Acquisition and Development)**  
This factor evaluates public involvement and support in the planning process beyond the minimum requirement of a public hearing.

- a) **Support** Up to 5 pts.  
Public support for a project is encouraged and should be demonstrated through letters from the municipal and county planning boards, park agencies, recreation departments, environmental commissions, user groups and the general public.
- b) **Planning** Up to 10 pts.  
Applicants should demonstrate consistency with the New Jersey State Plan, New Jersey Meadowlands Master Plan, Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan, or Highlands Regional Master Plan, as applicable; the New Jersey Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan; and local and county land use plans, especially open space and recreation elements thereof, as demonstrated in excerpts from or specific references to such plans in the project application; and whether proof of an approved petition for plan endorsement by the State Planning Commission or, for a local government unit in the Pinelands, certification from the Pinelands Commission that its master plan and land use ordinances or regulations are consistent with the minimum standards of the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:50-3 Part II or IV, as applicable.

**FACTOR #6 PROJECT QUALITY (Acquisition and Development)**  
This factor evaluates project elements and features.

- a) **Accessibility (Acquisition and Development)** 1 pt. each  
The site location:
  - 1. Is close to population centers;
  - 2. Is accessible by public transportation;
  - 3. Is accessible by walking and bicycling; or

4. Creates public access where none exists or where existing access is undeveloped or restricted.

b) Recreation Potential (Acquisition only) Up to 2 pts. each

The site:

1. Is suitable for major outdoor recreation facility development;
2. Is suitable for the use and/or development of appropriate water dependent recreation activities or facilities;
3. Represents part of a planned or existing waterfront development or redevelopment plan;
4. Provides environmental and/or historic interpretive opportunities; or
5. Improves management or expansion of recreation facilities.

c) Water Access (Acquisition and Development) Up to 6 pts. (see table 2)

This subfactor evaluates the extent to which a project improves needed visual and/or physical public access to water.

d) Design Quality (Development only) Up to 2 pts. each

The design:

1. Includes multiple recreation and conservation purposes;
2. Uses effective landscaping;
3. Provides opportunities for various active and passive recreational uses by diverse user groups; and
4. Includes significant shade tree plantings.

e) Cost Effectiveness (Acquisition and Development) Point range: +8,

This subfactor evaluates the quality of conservation or recreation opportunities provided by a project in comparison to the anticipated cost. Considerations include:

1. Cost of alternative locations and facilities;
2. Whether the land is available at lower cost due to bargain sale, easement, donation of land value, or partnerships (acquisition) or donation of labor, equipment, or materials or partnerships (development);
3. Cost of future operation and maintenance; and
4. Whether the project site has development approvals from local planning board (Acquisition only).

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FACTOR #7 PROJECT PRIORITIES (Acquisition and Development) 1 pt. each

The following acquisition and development project elements are encouraged:

- a) Private investment and/or ecotourism potential, public/private sector venture, and/or supports municipal and county (urban complex) strategic revitalization plans and programs consistent with the State Plan, New Jersey Meadowlands Master Plan, Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan, or Highlands Regional Master Plan, as applicable;
- b) Waterfront development or redevelopment;

- c) Trails, bike paths, or greenways;
- d) Historic or archeological resource enhancement or preservation;
- e) Wildlife habitat protection;
- f) Protection of any waterbodies classified as "Category One Waters," pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:9B, and associated special water resource protection areas established pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:8; or protection of other water resources;
- g) Multiple uses and provides active and passive recreation opportunities;
- h) Addition to or the development of a prior Green Acres-funded acquisition or development project;
- i) Private donation of land, equipment, labor, or cash, etc.;
- j) Likelihood or threat of private development for other than recreation and conservation purposes, (Acquisition only);
- k) Design and construction that utilizes clean and renewable energy and maximizes energy efficiency (Development only);
- l) Rehabilitation or redevelopment of an existing recreational facility (Development only);
- m) Supports a school construction initiative in an Abbott District established pursuant to N.J.A.C.6A:10A;
- n) Reclamation of a former brownfields site;
- o) A project undertaken by a municipality in the Highlands that has amended its development regulations in accordance N.J.S.A. 13:20-13 to establish one or more receiving zones for transfer of development potential from a sending zone in the Highlands); and
- p) A project undertaken by a municipality that has amended its development regulations in accordance with the State Transfer of Development Rights Act (P.L. 2004, c. 2 N.J.S.A. 40:55D-137 et seq.) to establish one or more receiving zones for the transfer of development potential.

FACTOR #8 FIRST TIME APPLICANT (Acquisition and Development) 5 pts.  
 Applies to a project sponsored by a county or municipality that previously has not received Green Acres funding.

FACTOR #9 FACILITY DESIGN SENSITIVITY AND SITE SUITABILITY (Development only)

- a) General recreation facilities Up to 4 pts. each  
 The environmental features of the site will be used to determine the design sensitivity of the project. Projects that will have a significant negative impact on the site's natural resources will not be considered. Project design should minimize adverse impacts on the environmentally sensitive features of the site by:
  1. Locating proposed facilities in already cleared areas, to minimize additional clearing of trees and vegetation;
  2. Locating proposed facilities where topography and soil conditions are suitable, to minimize grading, excavation, fill, and drainage of a site; and
  3. Retaining, enhancing, or establishing vegetative buffers, or incorporating other site-sensitive techniques, to minimize impacts on sensitive areas such as shellfish beds, beach/dune systems, forests, wetlands, steep slopes, endangered or threatened species habitat, and aquifer recharge areas.

b) Structures/Buildings

1 point

For projects involving structures, project is designed and constructed to meet the U.S. Green Building Council's (USGBCs) Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED™) Green Building Rating System for New Construction and Major Renovations Version 2.1.

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**TABLE 1**

**BALANCED LAND USE**

<b>County</b>	<b><u>Municipal Pts</u></b>	<b><u>County Pts</u></b>
<b>Atlantic</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Bergen</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Burlington</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Camden</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Cape May</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Cumberland</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Essex</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Gloucester</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Hudson</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Hunterdon</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Mercer</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Middlesex</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Monmouth</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Morris</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Ocean</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Passaic</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Salem</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Somerset</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Sussex</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Union</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Warren</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>

**TABLE 2**  
**PUBLIC ACCESS TO WATER**  
**Need for Access**

<u>Water Body Type</u>	<u>HIGH</u>	<u>MEDIUM</u>	<u>LOW</u>
Ocean	6	5	4
Bay			
River			
Large Lake	5	4	3
Stream			
Lake	4	3	2
Small Stream			
Pond	3	2	1

**Nonprofit Project Priority System**  
**Acquisition And Development Projects**

This priority system is used to evaluate the relative merits of proposed acquisition and development projects. The system is designed to reflect the degree to which proposed projects conform with findings, recommendations and priorities of the New Jersey Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, the New Jersey State Plan and with statewide goals that are consistent with the Garden State Preservation Trust Act. The system uses a set of factors to evaluate each project's conservation and recreation features.

NOTE: EACH APPLICABLE FACTOR SHOULD BE ADDRESSED, IN ORDER, IN NARRATIVE FORM.

FACTOR #1 OPEN SPACE NEEDS (Acquisition only)  
This factor evaluates the extent to which a proposed acquisition project will satisfy local open space deficits.

- (see table 1)
- a) **Balanced Land Use Deficit.** Up to 5 pts.  
This factor takes into consideration the amount of additional open space needed in each municipality or county in order to satisfy the open space goals derived through the balanced land use method.
  - b) **Service Area Needs.** Up to 25 pts.  
Because countywide figures do not necessarily represent the needs of a particular community or neighborhood, please discuss the needs of the

population to be served. The service area for each project will be defined based on population density and the type and size of the project.

FACTOR #2 SERVICE AREA FACILITY NEEDS (Development only) Up to 20 pts.  
Please discuss the needs of the population to be served and evaluate the extent to which the proposed development project will satisfy local recreation facility deficits. The service area for the project will be defined on the basis of population density, scope and type of project, and consideration of the project's relation to an existing redevelopment plan. Facility needs will be based on a comparison of recreational demand and a site specific inventory of recreation facilities for the municipality(ies) in which the project is located (submitted by applicant).

FACTOR #3 ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION (Acquisition only) Up to 3 pts. each  
This factor is used to determine to what extent a proposed acquisition meets key conservation and environmental protection goals.

- a) Lands that are of sufficient size and located so as to:
  - 1. Protect critical wildlife habitat;
  - 2. Preserve sites identified in the State Plan, Meadowlands Master Plan, Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan, and Highlands Regional Master Plan Critical Environmental Sites, unique natural areas or land types (steep slopes, dunes, scenic overlooks, wetlands, forest lands);
  - 3. Provide additions to or linkages between existing public recreation/open space areas;
  - 4. Support regional open space/conservation initiatives such as shore protection or the preservation of landscape ecology, biodiversity, wildlife corridors and/or greenways; and
  - 5. Protect documented endangered and/or threatened species habitat.
- b) Greenways and water resource protection projects, including forests, shorelines, and stream corridors that are of sufficient size and located so as to:
  - 1. Establish an integral link in an existing or planned local, regional or statewide conservation initiative, greenway, or designated or potential Wild and Scenic River;
  - 2. Assist water resource protection efforts;
  - 3. Provide significant natural flood protection;
  - 4. Act as a physical or visual buffer between a significant natural resource or feature and development, or provide visual or physical access to the water; and
  - 5. Protect an aquifer; headwaters, tributaries or the corridor of a designated Category One stream; or other streams or rivers.

FACTOR #4 HISTORIC RESOURCE PRESERVATION (Acquisition only) Up to 3 pts.  
each

This factor is used to determine to what extent a proposed acquisition meets key historic resource preservation goals.

- a) If the project is on, contained within, or adjacent to a site included on or eligible for inclusion in the New Jersey Register of Historic Places under N.J.S.A. 13:IB- 15.128 et seq. and/or the National Register of Historic Places under 16 U.S.C. §.§470 et seq., or is a Critical Historic Site identified in the State Plan, New Jersey Meadowlands Master Plan, Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan, or Highlands Regional Master Plan, as applicable.
- b) If the project is an historic project that provides an extension or linkage between existing public recreation and/or open space areas.
- c) The degree to which the project is a significant and/or contributing component of an historic district designated as such under N.J.S.A. 13:IB-15.128 et seq.,
- d) If the project is part of an ongoing historic preservation or restoration project or historic study or investigation.
- e) The extent to which the project is one with historic integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

**FACTOR #5 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION/SUPPORT/PLANNING (Acquisition and Development)**  
 This factor evaluates public involvement and support in the planning process beyond the minimum requirement of a newspaper notice.

- a) **Support** Up to 5 pts.  
 Public support for a project is encouraged and should be demonstrated through letters from the municipal and county planning boards, park agencies, recreation departments, environmental commissions, user groups and the general public.
- b) **Planning** Up to 10 pts.  
 Applicants should demonstrate consistency with the New Jersey State Plan, the New Jersey Meadowlands Master Plan, the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan, the Highlands Regional Master Plan, as appropriate; the New Jersey Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan; and with local and county land use plans, especially open space/recreation elements as demonstrated in excerpts from or specific references to such plans in the project application.

**FACTOR #6 PROJECT QUALITY (Acquisition and Development)**  
 This factor evaluates project elements and features.

- a) **Accessibility (Acquisition and Development)** 1 pt. each  
 The site location:
  1. Is close to population centers;
  2. Is accessible by public transportation;
  3. Is accessible by walking and bicycling; or

4. Creates public access where none exists or where existing access is undeveloped or restricted.

b) Recreation Potential (Acquisition only) Up to 2 pts. each

The site:

1. Is suitable for major outdoor recreation facility development;
2. Is suitable for the use and/or development of appropriate water dependent recreation activities or facilities;
3. Represents part of a planned or existing waterfront development or redevelopment plan;
4. Provides environmental and/or historic interpretive opportunities; or
5. Improves management or expansion of recreation facilities.

c) Water Access (Acquisition and Development) Up to 6 pts. (see table 2)

This subfactor evaluates the extent to which a project improves needed visual and/or physical public access to water.

d) Design Quality (Development only) Up to 2 pts. each

The design:

1. Includes multiple recreation and conservation purposes;
2. Uses effective landscaping;
3. Provides opportunities for various active and passive recreational uses by diverse user groups; and
4. Includes significant shade tree plantings.

e) Cost Effectiveness (Acquisition and Development) Point range: +8,

This subfactor evaluates the quality of conservation or recreation opportunities provided by a project in comparison to the anticipated cost. Considerations include:

1. Cost of alternative locations and facilities;
2. Whether the land is available at lower cost due to bargain sale, easement, donation of land value, or partnerships (acquisition) or donation of labor, equipment, or materials or partnerships (development);
3. Cost of future operation and maintenance; and
4. Whether the project site has development approvals from local planning board (Acquisition only).

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FACTOR #7

PROJECT PRIORITIES (Acquisition and Development)

1 pt. each

The following acquisition and development project elements are encouraged:

- a) Private investment and/or ecotourism potential, public/private sector venture, and/or supports municipal and county (urban complex) strategic revitalization plans and programs consistent with the State Plan, New Jersey Meadowlands Master Plan, Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan, or Highlands Regional Master Plan, as applicable;
- b) Waterfront development or redevelopment;
- c) Trails, bike paths, or greenways;
- d) Historic or archeological resource enhancement or preservation;
- e) Wildlife habitat protection;

- f) Protection of any waterbodies classified as "Category One Waters," pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:9B, and associated special water resource protection areas established pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:8; or protection of other water resources;
- g) Multiple uses and provides active and passive recreation opportunities;
- h) Addition to or the development of a prior Green Acres-funded acquisition or development project;
- i) Private donation of land, equipment, labor, or cash, etc.;
- j) Likelihood or threat of private development for other than recreation and conservation purposes, one point. Examples of actions that may indicate a possible impending development may include whether the property is on the market or is the subject of local planning board action, or if any development permits or approvals have been sought for the property (Acquisition only);
- k) Design and construction that utilizes clean and renewable energy and maximizes energy efficiency (Development only);
- l) Rehabilitation or redevelopment of an existing recreational facility (Development only);
- m) Supports a school construction initiative in an Abbott District established pursuant to N.J.A.C.6A:10A; and
- n) Reclamation of a former brownfields site.

FACTOR #8 FACILITY DESIGN SENSITIVITY AND SITE SUITABILITY (Development only)

a) General recreation facilities Up to 4 pts. each  
 The environmental features of the site will be used to determine the design sensitivity of the project. Projects that will have a significant negative impact on the site's natural resources will not be considered. Project design should minimize adverse impacts on the environmentally sensitive features of the site by:

1. Locating proposed facilities in already cleared areas, to minimize additional clearing of trees and vegetation;
2. Locating proposed facilities where topography and soil conditions are suitable, to minimize grading, excavation, fill, and drainage of a site; and
3. Retaining, enhancing, or establishing vegetative buffers, or incorporating other site-sensitive techniques, to minimize impacts on sensitive areas such as shellfish beds, beach/dune systems, forests, wetlands, steep slopes, endangered or threatened species habitat, and aquifer recharge areas.

b) Structures/Buildings 1 point  
 For projects involving structures, project is designed and constructed to meet the U.S. Green Building Council's (USGBCs) Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED™) Green Building Rating System for New Construction and Major Renovations Version 2.1.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROJECT PRIORITY SYSTEM STEWARDSHIP PROJECTS

This Priority System is used to evaluate the relative merits of a proposed stewardship project and its conservation and recreation features.

NOTE: EACH APPLICABLE FACTOR SHOULD BE ADDRESSED, IN ORDER, IN NARRATIVE FORM.

### FACTOR #1 NATURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION

Up to 3 pts. each

This factor is used to determine to what extent a proposed project meets key conservation and environmental protection goals.

- a) Enhance or restore a site identified in the State Plan, New Jersey Meadowlands Master Plan, the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan, and Highlands Regional Master Plan, as applicable, and or another unique natural area or land type (for example, steep slopes, dunes, beach, wetlands, forest lands);
- b) Provide link between existing public recreation and/or open space areas;
- c) Support a regional open space and/or conservation initiatives (for example, shore protection or the preservation of landscape ecology, biodiversity, wildlife corridors and/or greenways; and
- d) Protect, enhance, or restore documented endangered and/or threatened species habitat.
- e) Facilitate water resource protection efforts;
- f) Provide significant natural flood protection;
- g) Site is a physical or visual buffer between a significant natural resource and development, or provide visual or physical access to the water;
- h) Protect, restore, or enhance headwaters, tributaries, or corridors of any waterbodies classified as "Category One Waters," pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:9B, and associated special water resource protection areas established pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:8, as well as other streams or rivers; and
- i) Enhance or restore a historic landscape.

### FACTOR #2 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION/SUPPORT/PLANNING

This factor evaluates public involvement and support in the planning process beyond the minimum requirement of a public hearing.

- a) Support  
Up to 5 pts.  
Public support for a project is encouraged and should be demonstrated through letters from the municipal and county planning boards, park agencies, recreation departments, environmental commissions, user groups and the general public.
- b) Planning  
Up to 5 pts.  
Applicants should demonstrate consistency with the New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan (State Plan), New Jersey

Meadowlands Master Plan, Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan, or Highlands Regional Master Plan, as applicable; the New Jersey Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan; and local and county land use plans, as demonstrated in excerpts from or specific references to such plans in the project application.

**FACTOR #3 PROJECT QUALITY**

This factor evaluates project elements and features.

- a) Accessibility  
1 pt. each

The site location:

1. Is close to population centers;
2. Is accessible by public transportation;
3. Is accessible by walking and bicycling; or
4. Creates public access where none exists or where existing access is undeveloped or restricted.

- b) Site Suitability  
Up to 2 pts. each

The site:

1. Is suitable for water dependent recreation activities or facilities;
2. Provides environmental and/or historic interpretive opportunities; or
3. Improves management of conservation lands.

- d) Project Quality  
pts. each

Up to 2

The proposed project:

1. Includes multiple recreation and conservation purposes;
2. Uses effective landscaping with native species;
3. Provides opportunities for passive recreation;
4. Includes significant plantings of native tree species; and
5. Removes impervious surfaces.

- e) Cost Effectiveness  
Up to 2 pts. each

This subfactor evaluates the quality of conservation opportunities provided by a project in comparison to the anticipated cost. Considerations include:

1. Partnerships or donation of labor, equipment, or materials; and
2. Cost of future operation and maintenance.

**FACTOR #4 PROJECT PRIORITIES**

1 pt. each

The following project elements are encouraged:

- a) Private investment and/or ecotourism potential or public/private sector venture;
- b) Trails or greenways;
- c) Historic or archeological resource enhancement or preservation;
- d) Wildlife habitat protection, restoration, or enhancement;

- e) Provides passive recreation opportunities;
- f) Project site is a prior Green Acres-funded acquisition or development project;
- g) Private donation of land, equipment, labor, or cash, etc.;
- h) Reclamation of a former brownfields site; and
- i) Retaining, enhancing, or establishing vegetative buffers, or incorporating other site-sensitive techniques, to minimize impacts on sensitive areas such as shellfish beds, beach/dune systems, forests, wetlands, steep slopes, endangered or threatened species habitat, and aquifer recharge areas.

FACTOR #5

FIRST TIME APPLICANT

5 pts.

Applies to a project sponsored by a municipality that previously has not received Green Acres funding.

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## NONPROFIT STEWARDSHIP PROJECT PRIORITY SYSTEM

This Priority System is used to evaluate the relative merits of proposed stewardship projects and its conservation and recreation features.

NOTE: EACH APPLICABLE FACTOR SHOULD BE ADDRESSED, IN ORDER, IN NARRATIVE FORM.

FACTOR #1 NATURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION Up to 3 pts. each  
This factor is used to determine to what extent a proposed project meets key conservation and natural resource protection goals.

- a) Enhance or restore a site identified in the State Plan, Meadowlands Master Plan, Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan, and Highlands Regional Master Plan Critical Environmental Sites, unique natural areas or land types (steep slopes, dunes, scenic overlooks, wetlands, forest lands);
- b) Provide link between existing public recreation/open space areas;
- c) Support regional open space/conservation initiatives such as shore protection or the preservation of landscape ecology, biodiversity, wildlife corridors and/or greenways; and
- d) Protect, enhance or restore documented endangered and/or threatened species habitat;
- e) Projects located on State or local government owned public land;
- f) Facilitate water resource protection efforts;
- g) Provide significant natural flood protection;
- h) Site is a physical or visual buffer between a significant natural resource and development, or provide visual or physical access to the water;
- i) Protect, restore, or enhance headwaters, tributaries, or corridors of any waterbodies classified as "Category One Waters," pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:9B, and associated special water resource protection areas established pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:8, as well as other streams or rivers; and
- j) Enhance or restore a historic landscape.

FACTOR #2 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION/SUPPORT/PLANNING  
This factor evaluates public involvement and support in the planning process beyond the minimum requirement of a newspaper notice.

- a) Support  
Up to 5 pts.  
Public support for a project is encouraged and should be demonstrated through letters from the municipal and county planning boards, park agencies, recreation departments, environmental commissions, user groups and the general public.
- b) Planning  
Up to 5 pts.  
Applicants should demonstrate consistency with the New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan (State Plan), the New Jersey Meadowlands Master Plan, the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan, the Highlands Regional Master Plan, as appropriate; the New Jersey

Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan; and with local and county land use plans, especially open space/recreation elements as demonstrated in excerpts from or specific references to such plans in the project application.

**FACTOR #3 PROJECT QUALITY**

This factor evaluates project elements and features.

a) Accessibility

1 pt. each

The site location:

1. Is close to population centers;
2. Is accessible by public transportation;
3. Is accessible by walking and bicycling; or
4. Creates public access where none exists or where existing access is undeveloped or restricted.

b) Site Suitability

Up to 2 pts. each

The site:

1. Is suitable for water dependent recreation activities or facilities;
2. Provides environmental and/or historic interpretive opportunities; or
3. Improves management of conservation lands.

c) Project Quality

Up to 2 pts. each

The proposed project:

1. Includes multiple recreation and conservation purposes;
2. Uses effective landscaping with native species;
3. Provides opportunities for passive recreation;
4. Includes significant planting of native tree species; and
5. Removes impervious surfaces.

d) Cost Effectiveness

Up to 2pts. each

This subfactor evaluates the quality of conservation opportunities provided by a project in comparison to the anticipated cost. Considerations include:

1. Partnerships or donation of labor, equipment, or materials;
1. Cost of future operation and maintenance;

**FACTOR #4 PROJECT PRIORITIES**

1 pt. each

The following project elements are encouraged:

- a) Private investment and/or ecotourism potential or public/private sector venture;
- b) Trails or greenways;
- c) Historic or archeological resource enhancement or preservation;
- d) Wildlife habitat protection; restoration, enhancement;

- e) Provides passive recreation opportunities;
- f) Project site is a previously Green Acres-funded acquisition or development project;
- g) Private donation of land, equipment, labor, or cash, etc.;
- h) Reclamation of a former brownfields site.
- i) Retaining, enhancing, or establishing vegetative buffers, or incorporating other site-sensitive techniques, to minimize impacts on sensitive areas such as shellfish beds, beach/dune systems, forests, wetlands, steep slopes, endangered or threatened species habitat, and aquifer recharge areas.

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## **New Jersey Wetlands Plan Update**

This update contains a review of the Freshwater Wetlands Protection Act, information on other regulatory programs affecting wetlands, and an outline of some of New Jersey's wetlands conservation strategies. This wetlands plan update was prepared in consultation with the Division of Land Use Regulation, Coastal Management Office and the Division of Fish and Wildlife. The Division of Land Use Regulation is responsible for the administration of the Freshwater Wetlands Protection Act, Wetlands Act of 1970, and other land use regulatory programs. The Division of Fish and Wildlife acquires and manages wetland areas throughout New Jersey for wildlife management and outdoor recreation purposes. There are 993,985 acres of wetlands in New Jersey comprised of 792,859 acres of freshwater wetlands and 201,126 acres of tidal wetlands based on NJDEP Land Use/Land Cover data.

### **New Jersey Freshwater Wetlands Protection Act (FWPA)**

Analysis of the existing wetlands protection programs at the local, state and federal government levels in the 1980s established that New Jersey needed a more comprehensive wetlands protection strategy. Prior to the FWPA, the regulation of freshwater wetlands was primarily the responsibility of the United States Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) under the authority of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, as amended by the Clean Water Act, and the Rivers and Harbors Act. Section 404 of the Clean Water Act in 1977 established the federal program to regulate and protect wetlands. Because the federal program focuses on navigable waters, it did not provide protection for several wetland types in New Jersey. Moreover, it limited the authority of the ACOE to the regulation of discharge of dredged or fill material and did not authorize the ACOE to regulate the draining of wetlands, the destruction of wetland vegetation or the use of pilings. There were extensive wetland losses with the self regulating ACOE Nationwide permit program which allowed the filling of up to one acre of wetlands without prior authorization. The FWPA was enacted on July 1, 1987 and became effective over a period of two years. The State's Act sought to close the gaps in the federal regulatory program. This was accomplished by taking jurisdiction over all activities in freshwater wetlands, providing protection for areas adjacent to wetlands through regulation as transition areas, and regulating activities in state open waters such as lakes and ponds. The FWPA requires permit authorization by NJDEP for every regulated activity. Water Quality Certification is also required where a discharge of dredged or fill material is proposed.

In addition to the discharge of dredge or fill material, The FWPA regulates the following activities in wetlands:

- (1) the removal, excavation, disturbance or dredging of soil, sand, gravel, or aggregate material of any kind;
- (2) the drainage or disturbance of the water level or water table;
- (3) the driving of pilings;
- (4) the placing of obstructions; and
- (5) the destruction of plant life which would alter the character of a freshwater wetlands, including the cutting of trees.

In addition, the FWPA regulates all of the following activities in transition areas, which are upland areas adjacent to wetlands, and receive no protection under federal law:

- (1) removal, excavation or disturbance of the soil;
- (2) dumping or filling with any materials;
- (3) erection of structures, except for temporary structures;
- (4) placement of pavement; and
- (5) the destruction of vegetation which would alter the existing vegetation community.

The discharge of dredged or filled materials into state open waters is also regulated.

To clarify and consolidate wetlands regulation in the state, the FWPA provides authority for NJDEP to become the sole regulator of freshwater wetlands in the state. It preempts regulation of freshwater wetlands by municipalities, counties or regional entities with the exception of the Hackensack Meadowlands District. The Pinelands Commission implements portions of the FWPA through an agreement with NJDEP.

In 1994, New Jersey assumed the Federal Section 404 Program, which made it the second state in the country to do so. Under the Clean Water Act, a state may take over the Section 404 Program when the state program incorporates all the federal law's requirements and receives United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) approval. Through its assumed program, NJDEP routinely coordinates certain permit reviews with the EPA, Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service and sometimes with the National Park Service and the State Office of Historic Preservation.

## **Division of Land Use Regulation**

In addition to the FWPA, the NJDEP administers three other programs that affect wetlands: the Coastal Management Program, the Flood Hazard Area Control Act Program and the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act Program. Each of these regulatory programs emphasizes the protection of critical natural resources within their areas of jurisdiction. These areas encompass flood plains, tidal waters, tidal wetlands, lands abutting the waterways, and upland areas.

The Coastal Management Program regulates development through four specific laws: the Coastal Area Facility Review Act (CAFRA), the Waterfront Development Law, the Wetlands Act of 1970 and the Freshwater Wetlands Protection Act. The purpose of CAFRA is to protect the coastal environment while accommodating compatible land use development. A CAFRA Permit is required for most types of large scale development in the approximately 1,370 square mile CAFRA area comprising portions of Atlantic, Burlington, Cape May, Cumberland, Middlesex, Monmouth, Ocean and Salem counties. The CAFRA area ranges in width from a few thousand feet to 16.5 miles inland. In 1993, CAFRA was amended to require that developments be subject to a tiered system based upon the proximity of that development to the mean high water line of tidal waters, a beach or dune. These amendments brought more development under CAFRA jurisdiction, particularly sensitive areas along tidal waterways.

The Waterfront Development Law concerns itself with development in and along tidal waters of the state. A Waterfront Development permit is needed for projects involving development in any tidal waterway. Waterfront development refers to docks, wharfs, piers, bridges, pilings, beach nourishment, dredging and construction of any structure below the mean high water line or removing sand or other materials from lands under all tidal waters. In addition, upland construction within 500 feet of tidal waters is regulated in areas outside the CAFRA zone. Water Quality Certification is also considered under the Coastal Zone Management Program when filling of a wetland or waterway is proposed.

The Wetlands Act of 1970 concerns itself with the protection and regulation of coastal tidal wetlands. Under this Act, all coastal wetlands that have been mapped by NJDEP are subject to regulation. A Coastal Wetlands Permit is needed to excavate, dredge, fill or erect structures on coastal wetlands. In New Jersey, coastal wetlands subject to this Act extend from the head of tide

at Trenton, south along Delaware Bay and up the Atlantic coastline to the mouth of the Raritan River.

The Flood Hazard Area Control Program is authorized by the Flood Hazard Area Control Act. This Act empowers the State to control development within flood hazard areas to reduce flood damage and to protect the environmental attributes of floodplains. A Flood Hazard Area Permit is required for the construction, installation or alteration of any structure or permanent fill along, in or across the channel or floodplain or any stream. A permit is also required for any alteration of a stream and for most impacts to a riparian zone, defined as the land and vegetation within and adjacent to a regulated water.

The Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act (HWPPA) program regulates “major Highlands development.” The purpose of the HWPPA is to protect the exceptional natural resources of the Highlands, including surface and ground waters, clean air, contiguous forest lands, wetlands, pristine watersheds, and habitat for fauna and flora, sites of historic significance, and recreational opportunities for the citizens of the State. A Highlands Preservation Area Approval (permit) is required for major Highlands development, as defined by the Act, in the designated Highlands Preservation Area comprising portions of Hunterdon, Morris, Bergen, Passaic, Somerset, Sussex and Warren Counties.

These permit programs, along with the permits authorized under the FWPA, have generated a considerable amount of regulatory review activity. Between 2011 and 2015, the Division of Land Use Regulation issued 3,038 wetland permit decisions.

Along with the State itself, regional authorities such as the Pinelands Commission and the Delaware and Raritan Canal Commission perform regulatory reviews of development projects within their respective jurisdictions. The Highlands Council also has some development review authority within its jurisdiction.

In addition to the passage and enactment of the NJFWPA and subsequent assumption of the Section 404 Program by the State of New Jersey, there have been other wetlands conservation initiatives.

1. **Freshwater Wetlands Protection In New Jersey, A Manual For Local Officials:** Written by the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions in cooperation with the

Department of Environmental Protection, the manual explains the provisions of the NJFWPA. It also discusses techniques local governments can use in land use planning to complement the state's program. Originally published in 1989, a second edition update was published in 1992. A third update was published in 2004. A fourth update is currently pending.

## **2. Office of Natural Resource Restoration**

The primary mission of the Office of Natural Resource Restoration (ONRR) is to provide for the assessment and restoration of New Jersey's natural resources that have been injured by the release of oil or other hazardous substances. Restoration projects must have a demonstrable link to injuries caused by specific releases. ONRR works closely with NJDEP's Site Remediation Program during oil spills and remediation of hazardous sites in assessing natural resource injuries. ONRR also works to implement restoration of injured natural resources with other natural resource agencies within NJDEP, such as the Division of Parks and Forestry, the Division of Fish and Wildlife, and the Green Acres Program.

Restoration for injuries to the States natural resources are pursued under the following laws and regulations:

Federal Law: Clean Water Act, 33 U.S.C. 1301 et seq., Comprehensive Environmental Response and Compensation Liability Act (Superfund), 42 U.S.C. 9601 et seq.(releases of hazardous substances) Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (OPA), 33 U.S.C. 2701 et seq. (discharges of oil to natural resources)

State Law and Regulation:

N.J.A.C. 7:26E - Technical Requirements for Site Remediation

The New Jersey Water Pollution Control Act N.J.S.A. 58: 10A-1 et seq.

Spill Compensation and Control Act N.J.S.A. 58:10-23.11 et seq.

The Public Trust Doctrine

## **3. State Freshwater Wetlands Mitigation Council Projects**

The Freshwater Wetlands Mitigation Council, created statutorily by the Freshwater Wetlands Protection Act, has elected to fund projects that contain several partners, including: a state agency that will acquire degraded wetlands that will be restored; a land owner that is willing to donate their land for wetland mitigation purposes and; a non-profit or governmental agency that will

develop and oversee the wetland mitigation project and will manage the land. The Council acts as the funding source for the mitigation work. The Council has funded several projects with these types of partnerships. In 2015, the Wetland Mitigation Council's authority was incorporated into an "In Lieu Fee" (ILF) program approved by the EPA. To become an ILF, the Department evaluated Council-funded projects over the years, and established a series of ecoregions for New Jersey. Under the ILF, as funds are collected, they are assigned to the appropriate ecoregion. Through a request for proposals, the funding is made available to government and non-profit entities to undertake wetland restoration projects located in the same ecoregion from which the funding was collected. Establishing an ILF helped realign the State's program with the Federal program and ensures that wetlands are mitigated within the appropriate ecologic proximity to where wetland impacts occur.

#### **4. Wetlands Preservation**

The preservation of wetlands is accomplished not only by regulation but also by acquisition. State, local government and conservation organizations are all active in acquiring wetlands. New Jersey slowed the loss of freshwaters wetlands by passage of a law in 1987 that is stricter than the federal law. However, given the increased focus on protecting water resources, the preservation of wetlands statewide will continue. New Jersey preserved 4,313 acres of wetlands between 2013 and 2016.

### **Wetland Conservation Strategies**

The State remains committed to the vigorous protection of its wetlands resources. The following strategies will serve as a framework for the continued protection of wetlands within New Jersey.

1. Through the implementation of the NJFWPA and other applicable regulatory programs, continue to regulate development in wetlands.
2. Continue to encourage non-regulatory methods of wetlands protection including planning, education and acquisition.
3. Continue to provide funding and technical assistance for wetland protection and wetland restoration projects to nonprofit conservation organizations and local governments.
4. Work with conservation organizations and local governments to coordinate wetland protection and restoration efforts.
5. Continue to preserve wetlands through participation in the Waterfowl Stamp Program, the North American Wetlands Conservation Act and the Coastal Land and Estuarine Conservation Program.

6. Continue to provide opportunities for wetlands protection through in the Green Acres Tax Exemption Program.
7. Coordinate wetland protection efforts with the Pinelands Commission, New Jersey Meadowlands Commission, New Jersey Highlands Council and the Delaware and Raritan Canal Commission.

## **Land and Water Conservation Fund**

Public conservation and recreation areas are part of our national heritage. The American people's love of the outdoors is a shared value of our nation. Since its establishment in 1965 the Land Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) has provided more than \$16.7 billion to acquire new federal recreation lands and as grants to state and local governments nationwide. Monies for the LWCF come from offshore oil and gas leasing revenues. The LWCF has funded over 40,400 state and local government projects since 1965. A 2010 Trust for Public Land study of 16 federal public land units found that each dollar of LWCF invested returned \$4 in economic value. The study also found that approximately 10.6 million people visited these 16 federal units each year and spent \$511 million in the surrounding local communities. The LWCF continues to be America's best investment for parks and recreation.

The LWCF has played an important role in New Jersey's open space preservation and recreation programs. New Jersey has enjoyed a long and successful partnership with the National Park Service through the LWCF. New Jersey has received over \$128 million in LWCF for open space acquisition and park and recreation projects. New Jersey's SCORPs have been prepared to retain New Jersey's eligibility to receive LWCF grants and to provide policy direction on the expenditure of federal and State open space acquisition and park and recreation development funds.

Projects that have benefited from LWCF assistance range from small municipal passive parks and tot lots to large county urban waterfront parks and athletic complexes. State projects that have received both LWCF acquisition and development funds include Liberty State Park, as well as the Pequest Fish Hatchery and Spruce Run Recreation Area.

Across the state, 312 projects have received LWCF financial support. Seventy-two state, county and municipal acquisition projects have used over \$60 million of LWCF funds toward preservation

of 75,697 acres. LWCF park development projects total 237 in number and have received over \$61 million in federal assistance.

In addition to funding state and local government projects, the LWCF also provides funds to the National Park Service and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service for the acquisition of lands for national recreation areas and wildlife refuges.

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## New Jersey Land and Water Conservation Fund Projects As of April 2018

<u>Projects Funded</u>	<u>LWCF</u>
237 Development Projects	\$ 61,391,650
72 Acquisition Projects	\$ 60,335,149
3 Planning Projects	\$ 547,500
312 Projects	\$122,274,299

### LWCF Projects Funded

<u>County</u>	<u># of Projects</u>	<u>Acres Acquired</u>	<u>LWCF Invested</u>
Atlantic	12	4,948	\$ 3,781,993
Bergen	22	2,136	\$ 3,696,023
Burlington	11	3,506	\$ 2,280,735
Camden	21	57	\$ 5,378,008
Cape May	15	4,692	\$ 3,126,786
Cumberland	9	14,273	\$ 2,970,689
Essex	24	0	\$ 6,797,574
Gloucester	3	39	\$ 858,508
Hudson	21	615	\$ 14,619,655
Hunterdon	8	966	\$ 11,698,544
Mercer	15	6	\$ 2,301,253
Middlesex	12	0	\$ 3,485,023
Monmouth	30	685	\$ 8,404,752
Morris	20	3,166	\$ 7,166,806
Multi **	17	27,923	\$ 15,318,828
Ocean	12	5,701	\$ 6,637,571
Passaic	12	0	\$ 4,162,860
Salem	4	2,217	\$ 977,327
Somerset	8	500	\$ 721,878
Sussex	11	3,315	\$ 8,600,927
Union	16	0	\$ 1,693,494
Warren	9	952	\$ 7,595,065
	312	75,697	\$122,274,299

\*\* Located in two or more counties.

**Green Acres Funding Summary 1961-2014**  
**Ballot Measures and Other Sources**  
**Total: \$3.32 Billion**

1961	<b>\$60 Million</b> \$ 40 million for State acquisition and development \$ 20 million for Local acquisition
1971	<b>\$80 Million</b> \$ 40 million for State acquisition \$ 40 million for Local acquisition
1974	<b>\$200 Million</b> \$100 million for State acquisition and development \$100 million for Local acquisition and development
1978	<b>\$200 Million</b> \$100 million for State acquisition and development \$100 million for Local acquisition and development
1983	<b>\$135 Million</b> \$ 52 million for State acquisition and development \$ 83 million for Local acquisition and development
1987	<b>\$35 Million</b> \$35 for Local acquisition and Development
1989	<b>\$230 Million</b> \$ 80 million for State acquisition and development \$140 million for Local acquisition and development \$ 10 million for nonprofit acquisition
1992	<b>\$200 Million</b> \$ 80 million for State acquisition and development \$100 million for Local acquisition and development
1995	<b>\$250 Million</b> \$105 million for State acquisition and development \$120 million for Local acquisition and development \$ 15 million for nonprofit acquisition \$ 30 million for Blue Acres acquisition

**1999 Garden State Preservation Trust**

\$621 million for State acquisition and development  
\$496 million for Local acquisition and development  
\$124 million for Non Profit acquisition and development

**2003 \$120 Million**

\$60 million for State acquisition and development  
\$48 million for Local acquisition and development  
\$12 million for Nonprofit acquisition and development

**2007 \$109 Million(plus \$24 million for Blue Acres)**

\$90 million for State acquisition and development  
\$110 million for Local grants and loans (acquisition and development)  
\$ 9 million for Nonprofit acquisition and development  
\$12 million for Blue Acres acquisition

**2009 \$218 Million**

\$90 million for State acquisition and development  
\$110 million for Local acquisition and development  
\$18 million for Nonprofit acquisition and development

**2014 Preserve New Jersey Act\***

Voters approved dedication of a portion of the Corporate Business Tax for preservation efforts. Preservation funding is 71% of 4% of collected tax until FY19, increasing to 78% of 6% in FY20 and thereafter. Annual amounts will vary based on tax collections.

60% to Green Acres:  
55% for State Acquisition and Development  
50% for land Acquisition  
50% for Development/Stewardship (administered by NJDEP Division of Parks and Forestry, Division of Fish and Wildlife and Office of Natural Lands Management)  
38% for Local grants and loans (acquisition and development)  
Up to 2% of which is for Stewardship activities  
7% for Nonprofit matching grants (acquisition and development)  
11% of which is for Stewardship activities  
4% to Blue Acres for State acquisition of flood-prone properties (administered by Green Acres)  
31% for Farmland Preservation – administered by the Department of Agriculture  
5% for Historic Preservation – administered by the New Jersey Historic Trust

**Supplemental Funding (not ballot questions)**

**1998 \$25 Million (FY 1999 budget)**

\$25 million for local acquisition

**2007 \$25 Million (FY 2008 budget)**

\$20 million for local acquisition and development

\$ 5 million for nonprofit acquisition and development

**\*Total does not include funding from the 2014 Preserve New Jersey Act**

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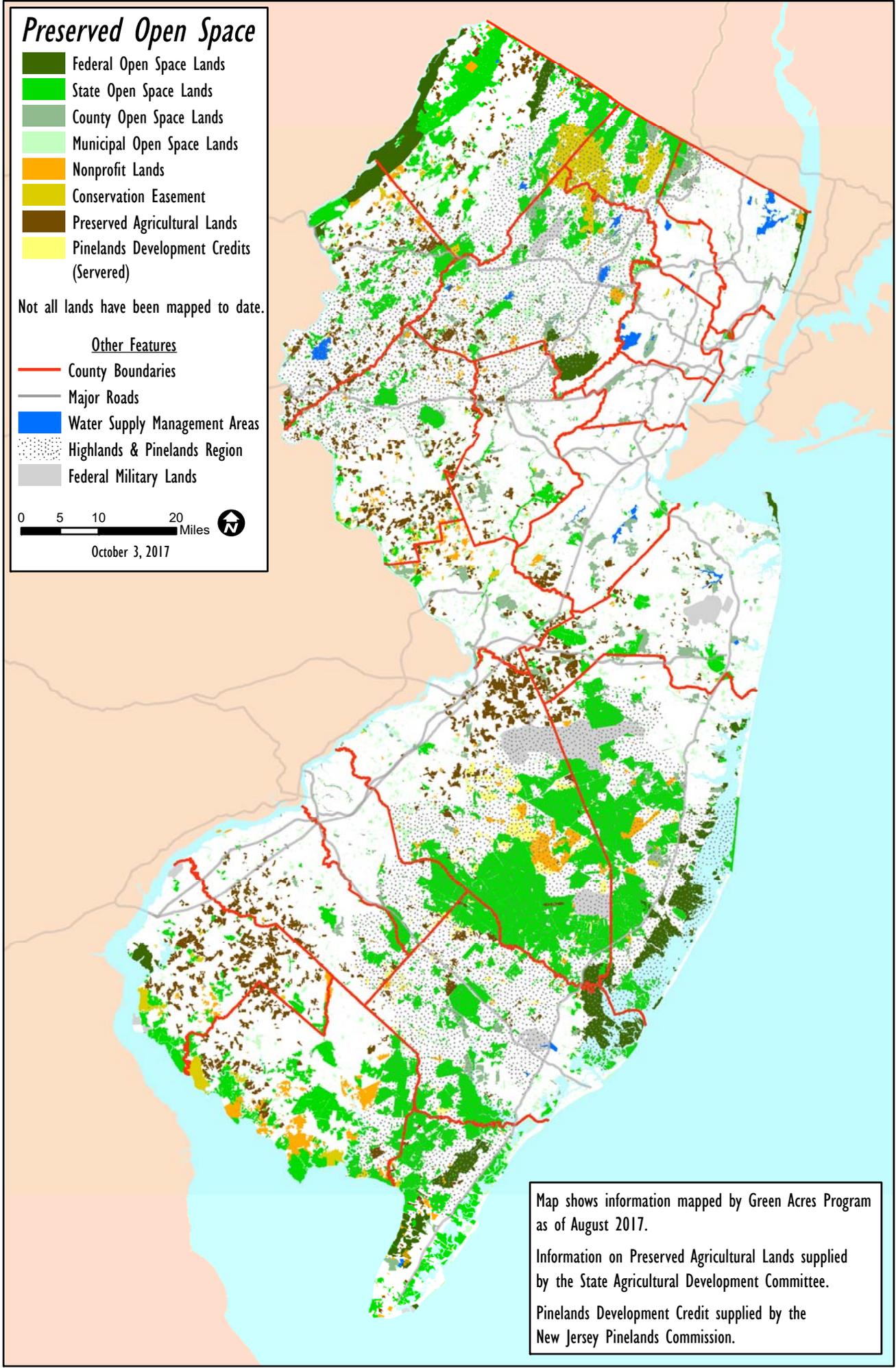
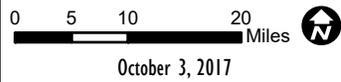
# Preserved Open Space

- Federal Open Space Lands
- State Open Space Lands
- County Open Space Lands
- Municipal Open Space Lands
- Nonprofit Lands
- Conservation Easement
- Preserved Agricultural Lands
- Pinelands Development Credits (Servered)

Not all lands have been mapped to date.

## Other Features

- County Boundaries
- Major Roads
- Water Supply Management Areas
- Highlands & Pinelands Region
- Federal Military Lands



Map shows information mapped by Green Acres Program as of August 2017.

Information on Preserved Agricultural Lands supplied by the State Agricultural Development Committee.

Pinelands Development Credit supplied by the New Jersey Pinelands Commission.