

GREEN ACRES PROGRAM

New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection



NONPROFIT STEWARDSHIP APPLICATION 2019

Green Acres Mission Statement

*To achieve, in partnership with others, a system of interconnected open spaces
the protection of which will preserve and enhance New Jersey's natural environment
and its historic, scenic, and recreational resources
for public use and enjoyment.*

GREEN ACRES PROGRAM

MAIL CODE 501-01

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**NJDEP GREEN ACRES PROGRAM
NONPROFIT STEWARDSHIP APPLICATION PACKAGE**

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GREEN ACRES PROGRAM NONPROFIT STEWARDSHIP APPLICATION

GENERAL INFORMATION AND GUIDELINES

Since 1961, the Green Acres Program has funded the acquisition of open space for recreation and conservation purposes, and the development of outdoor recreational facilities. The Green Acres Program remains committed to preserving New Jersey's natural resources statewide. We are pleased to be able to continue the tradition of partnering with municipal and county governments and nonprofit organizations to serve the people of our state.

The Preserve New Jersey Act (P.L. 2016, C 12) provides funding for stewardship activities by nonprofits on lands held for public recreation and conservation purposes. The Act defines stewardship as "an activity, which is beyond routine operations and maintenance, undertaken by the State, a local government or qualifying tax exempt nonprofit organization to repair or restore lands acquired for recreation and conservation purposes for the purpose of enhancing or protecting those lands for recreation and conservation purposes."

The application deadline for our next funding round is March 30, 2019. Projects will compete against each other, and successful applications will be approved by the Garden State Preservation Trust. Only one request will be considered from each nonprofit. All interested applicants are encouraged to contact Green Acres *as early as possible* to discuss project eligibility and application procedures.

In developing this new funding program, Green Acres solicited input from local governments, nonprofits, and natural resource professionals. Based on these discussions, Green Acres has decided to focus our limited Stewardship funds on natural resource and conservation projects and not active recreation facilities. Nonprofits seeking to make improvements to recreation facilities (such as ballfields) may apply for Green Acres park development funding under the Nonprofit Assistance Program if the property is located in a Densely or Highly Populated Municipality or in an Urban Aid municipality. (Those municipalities are listed in that application.) The application for those projects, also due on March 30, 2019 is available on our website at www.nj.gov/dep/greenacres. A nonprofit can submit one application for Stewardship funding and, if desired, an application under the regular Green Acres Nonprofit Assistance Program for land acquisition or park development funding. Green Acres staff is available to discuss the various funding programs/options.

Stewardship awards will be in the form of a 50% matching grant. Minimum funding awards will be \$50,000; therefore, only projects with more than \$100,000 in eligible costs will be considered. Applications can include proposed stewardship activities on up to 3 properties.

ORGANIZATIONAL ELIGIBILITY

Prior to applying, applicants should familiarize themselves with the requirements of administering a Green Acres project. It is important that applicants have sufficient capacity to successfully complete, maintain, and manage the proposed project in accordance with our rules and procedures. Before applying, nonprofits should give serious consideration to whether the organization has sufficient staff and volunteers to complete the project during the two-year project period, and to commit to the long-term site maintenance responsibilities. Green Acres staff is available to discuss these administrative requirements if you have any questions.

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

To qualify for grant consideration, the board of directors or governing body of an applying tax-exempt nonprofit organization must:

1. Demonstrate to the Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Protection that it qualifies as a Charitable Conservancy for the purposes of P.L. 1979, c. 378 (C.13:8B-1 et seq.). The enclosed excerpt from that law defines a Charitable Conservancy, but applicants should obtain and review a copy of the entire law, as a compliance certification from each organization will be required as part of the application;
2. Demonstrate that it has the resources to match the grant requested. The nonprofit may use as its matching share, its own funds, a donation of all or a portion of the value of a project site, or any other public or private funding except

as provided by, or through, the Garden State Preservation Trust;

3. Agree to provide public access, unless the Commissioner determines that public accessibility would pose an unacceptable risk to the land or its natural resources;
4. Agree not to sell, lease, exchange, or donate the lands except to the State, or local government unit, another qualifying tax exempt nonprofit organization, or the Federal government for recreation and conservation purposes (and then only with the prior written approval of the Commissioner); and
5. Agree to execute and donate to the State, at no charge, a conservation restriction or historic preservation restriction, as the case may be, pursuant to P.L. 1979, c. 378 (C.13:8B-1 et seq.) on the lands to be improved utilizing the grant. The conservation restriction and historic preservation restriction referred to in the law will be provided by Green Acres.

As you consider potential projects for Green Acres funding, please keep in mind that all proposals must demonstrate consistency with established needs and planning objectives in local and state planning documents, such as the municipal/county Master Plan, New Jersey's 2013-2017 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (is available at www.nj.gov/dep/greenacres/pdf/scorp_2013.pdf); an ability and commitment to maintain the proposed space/outdoor recreation project; and public input in the project planning process. Successful applications will reflect comprehensive natural resource protection, effectively meet recreation and conservation needs, demonstrate cost effectiveness, and provide meaningful public access.

To ensure that proposals selected for Green Acres funding are those that best represent stewardship priorities, we encourage you to discuss your proposal with land-use planning officials, environmental commissions, and other appropriate interest groups.

Each nonprofit should review and consider the applicable Landscape Project maps and reports, developed by the NJDEP's Division of Fish and Wildlife, during the formulation of its Green Acres stewardship application. Information about the Landscape Project can be found at www.nj.gov/dep/fgw/ensp/landscape.

Nonprofits should carefully analyze site suitability early in the project planning process and prior to submitting applications to Green Acres. Applicants are urged to seek assistance from Green Acres or another source to ascertain whether special approvals and permits may be required. Early awareness of possible site limitations can minimize delays. Permit identification is required as part of all Green Acres stewardship applications.

PROJECT ELIGIBILITY

Meaningful public access must be provided to every project funded under this program. Funding is available for stewardship projects such as, but not limited to:

- Landscape restoration, including historic landscapes;
- Invasive species removal/control;
- Wildlife habitat restoration/enhancement;
- Freshwater/tidal wetlands restoration/enhancement;
- Dam removal as an element of a river/waterway restoration project (approved by NJDEP's Dam Safety Program);
- Forest/woodland restoration/enhancement;
- Stream corridor restoration/enhancement;
- Rain garden;
- Shoreline restoration/enhancement;
- Trails, boardwalks, bird blinds, lighting, interpretive signage, or
- Facilities that provide or enhance public environmental education.

The preparation of stewardship plans will not be considered for this limited funding.

A nonprofit may undertake a stewardship project that implements or assists in the implementation of an Open Space and Recreation Plan developed by a local government. These projects must be undertaken with the approval of and in cooperation with the local government. The plan must be prepared according to Green Acres guidelines and must be submitted for approval as part of the nonprofit's application. Since this is a new project category, it is *critical* that you discuss your project with Green Acres prior to preparing your application. It is recommended that all jointly sponsored proposals be discussed with Green Acres staff prior to the preparation of the application.

ELIGIBLE COSTS

Costs eligible for funding include the cost of plants, soil, and related materials, boardwalk/trails materials, interpretive signage, invasive species removal, fencing, etc. The cost to demolish buildings on a site is eligible for reimbursement as part of a broader project. Professional services (e.g., design, engineering, and supervision), up to 13% of the cost of the project (construction), and preliminary assessment costs associated with the project site are eligible. Other incidental costs, individually itemized, associated with the implementation of the stewardship project, including legal, engineering, financial, geological, hydrological, inspection, and other professional services are eligible for reimbursement up to an established cap.

Administrative and operating costs and salaries and/or wages of any employee of the nonprofit are not eligible for funding, nor is remediation work done to address any areas of concern that are identified in the required preliminary assessment (described below) or by other means.

Please note that nonprofits are required to award contracts for projects consistent with the Local Public Contracts Law, N.J.S.A. 40A:11-1 et seq.

PROJECT RANKING

Applications for Green Acres funding are subject to a competitive ranking system. The Stewardship Project Priority System measures the extent to which each proposal addresses specific stewardship needs, the amount of public input and support during the planning process, consistency of the proposal with existing state and local planning objectives, and project quality. The narrative portion of the Green Acres application is critical to the project ranking process. Therefore, it is important for the narrative to clearly address, *in order*, each factor listed in the Priority System.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

As part of the public input requirement, you must have printed in the official newspaper of the municipality(ies) in which the project is located, a notice stating that you have applied for Green Acres funds to undertake the stewardship project, and that your application is on file at Green Acres and available for review and comment. A copy of the notice must be sent to the clerk of the municipality(ies) in which the proposed project is located **at least 15 days prior** to submitting an application to Green Acres. Proof of publication and a copy of the municipal notice must be included in your application package.

If the proposed project is located in the Highlands, the Meadowlands, or the Pinelands, the nonprofit must meet with the Highlands Council, Meadowlands Commission, or Pinelands Commission staff, as applicable, to discuss the proposed project prior to applying to Green Acres. Green Acres requires a letter stating that such pre-application conference was held, accompanied by a copy of the Commission's/Council's comments on the proposed development project, if any. Please note that nonprofits are required to award contracts for projects consistent with the Local Public Contracts Law, N.J.S.A. 40A:11-1 et seq.

MATCHING SHARE

Stewardship awards will be in the form of a 50% matching grant. The nonprofit may use as its matching share its own funds or grants, contributions, donations, or reimbursements from State or Federal programs or from other public or private sources, except for the following:

- Any funding provided from or through Green Acres; or
- The value of any donated goods and services that have not been obtained in conformance with the Local Public Contracts Law, N.J.S.A. 40A:11-1 et seq.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

It is important to adequately plan for each project so that it is completed in a reasonable amount of time. Once approved, Green Acres establishes a project period of no more than two years, during which time the nonprofit must meet all procedural requirements, complete the stewardship project, and request payment. In addition, significant progress must be made throughout the project period to remain eligible. A proposed project schedule is required as part of each application to assist you in project planning and to allow Green Acres to evaluate your proposal. Please talk to your Green Acres contact regarding your expected project schedule. After approval, projects that are not making significant progress or cannot be completed by the end of the project period will be cancelled.

PRELIMINARY SITE ASSESSMENT

Green Acres requires careful review of all proposed project sites for evidence of past use as landfills; hazardous waste production, storage, or disposal sites; or of the adverse effects resulting from such sites in close proximity to proposed project site. This is intended to minimize public liability for site cleanup costs and allows the state and nonprofit to be reasonably assured that lands stewarded with public funds can be used for recreation or conservation purposes without risk to public health.

For this reason, if your application is approved, you will be required to conduct a preliminary site assessment of the project site. Green Acres will provide guidance documents that require adherence to the criteria established by the NJDEP's Technical Requirements for Site Remediation (N.J.A.C. 7:26E-3). Costs normally associated with this professional service are reimbursable as part of an approved and completed Green Acres project, as long as the preliminary assessment is done in accordance with our guidelines.

Green Acres encourages municipalities and counties to reclaim and restore former brownfields sites and transform them into public spaces, such as recreational and natural areas. The NJDEP's Office of Brownfields Reuse has experienced NJDEP case managers who can oversee remediation and revitalization efforts in your community. If you believe your project site qualifies as a brownfield, please discuss this with your Green Acres representative.

NEW JERSEY CONSERVATION BLUEPRINT

Open space and recreation planners now have a tool available to aid them in protecting natural, recreational, and historic resources in their communities. The New Jersey Conservation Blueprint is an interactive map-based system that provide access to data for land preservation planning in New Jersey. The Blueprint provides a wide array of map data on natural resources that is essential for open space and recreation planning. Visit the New Jersey Conservation Blueprint at www.NJMAP2.com for more information.

YOUR BASIC RESPONSIBILITIES

Prospective applicants are urged to familiarize themselves with the Green Acres Program rules (N.J.A.C. 7:36-1.1 found at www.nj.gov/dep/rules/rules/njac7_36.pdf) The rules are designed to advance Green Acres' goals of expanding New Jersey's open space resources and increasing public outdoor recreation opportunities, giving attention to natural resource preservation. Acceptance of Green Acres funds obligates the nonprofit to adhere to the program's requirements, both during the funding process and after a project is complete.

Prior to accepting our funding, nonprofits should familiarize themselves with the requirements for maintenance and operation of Green Acres encumbered parkland at N.J.A.C. 7:36-25, including:

1. Sites funded by Green Acres must be open to the public without discrimination or exclusion based on residency.
2. Scheduling the use of facilities at directly funded sites is allowable, provided that such programmed uses are not exclusive or discriminatory and that adequate provisions are made for daily or non-scheduled use.
3. Fees for use of directly funded sites are allowable. Differential fees for use by non-residents may also be charged but must be discussed with Green Acres to ensure equity for all New Jersey residents. All revenues derived from use or operation of directly funded sites must be employed for the operation, maintenance, or capital expenses of either that facility or other permanently preserved recreation and conservation land owned by the nonprofit.
4. Structures funded by Green Acres must be used exclusively in support of outdoor recreation and conservation purposes. This condition will be included in the project agreement if the project is approved. Many compliance problems result from the use of such structures for ineligible purposes. To avoid such problems, nonprofits must discuss proposed

future uses of structures with Green Acres, both during and after the funding process, to ensure that such uses are allowable.

5. The nonprofit must give to the State, at no cost, a permanent conservation or historic preservation restriction on any land funded by Green Acres.
6. Restoration projects require a minimum of two years for monitoring the project site to help ensure success of the project.

Nonprofit Stewardship Application Form

APPLICATION MATERIALS SHOULD BE SUBMITTED ON PAPER (ONE COPY) AND ELECTRONICALLY.
(INDIVIDUAL EMAIL CANNOT EXCEED 25 MB.)

Complete and submit with **all required attachments** to:

GreenAcresApplications@dep.nj.gov and

NJDEP Green Acres Program

Mail Code 501-01

P.O. Box 420

Trenton, NJ 08625-0420

Contact Phil Collins: (609)984-0500

For G.A. Use Only

Date Rec'd: _____

Application No. _____

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Title _____

Location (street address) of site _____

Municipality(ies) _____ County(ies) _____

Street(s) _____

Block(s) and Lot(s) _____

Size of project: _____ acres (Please provide breakdown by property if application covers multiple properties; limit is 3 sites.)

Is land owned by _____ or leased to* _____ Nonprofit?

(*Minimum 25-year lease must be provided upon project approval. Letter from landowner agreeing to do so must be submitted with application. Lease is subject to Green Acres' approval.)

State Legislative District (of project site) _____ Congressional District (of project site) _____

Total Estimated Cost of Stewardship Project:

Construction	\$ _____
Professional services (up to 13% of const.)	\$ _____
Preliminary site assessment	\$ _____
Other costs (attach itemized list)	\$ _____
Demolition*	\$ _____
Total project cost	\$ _____
Total request this round	\$ _____

* Demolition and incidental costs will be limited to established caps.

Profile of municipality and county in which project is located:

Municipality: Area _____ (in sq. mi.) Population _____ (Year _____)

Population per square mile: _____

County: Area _____ (in sq. mi.) Population _____ (Year _____)

Population per square mile: _____

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Name of applicant organization _____

a.k.a. _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone number (____) _____ Fax number (____) _____

Chief Executive Officer _____

Does the organization qualify as a Charitable Conservancy for the purposes of P.L. 1979, c. 378 (C. 13:8B-1 et seq.)? _____ Yes _____ No

(Please attach a letter from the organization's attorney certifying compliance.)

Nonprofit must be registered and in full compliance with the Charities Registration and Investigation Act of 1994. (N.J.S.A. 45:17-A-18 et. seq.) Please submit confirmation.

State major purposes, activities, and membership policies of the organization: _____

Please attach the bylaws.

Person having day-to-day responsibility for this application:

Name _____ Title _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone Number (____) _____ extension _____ Fax Number (____) _____

E-mail address _____

Signature _____ Date _____

I, _____ (name of authorized official) hereby certify that the information provided within this Green Acres Program application is complete and true.

Date

Signature of official authorized to submit application
as per attached Governing Body Resolution

**STEWARDSHIP APPLICATION
ATTACHMENTS CHECK LIST**

***APPLICATION MATERIALS SHOULD BE SUBMITTED ON PAPER (ONE COPY) AND ELECTRONICALLY
(INDIVIDUAL EMAIL CANNOT EXCEED 25 MB)***

NOTE: This checklist should be returned with your completed application. If any items are not applicable, please indicate with 'N/A' next to that item.

1. _____ Application Form: Are all questions answered? Is form signed?
2. _____ Governing Body Resolution (The enclosed form must be used.)
3. _____ Project schedule. Please see attached *Things To Be Done* list and state when you anticipate addressing/completing each item.
4. _____ Letter from nonprofit's attorney certifying that the applicant qualifies as a Charitable Conservancy for the purposes of P.L. 1979, c. 378 (C. 13:8B-1 et seq.) (Excerpt enclosed.)
5. _____ Units and quantities cost estimate, prepared and signed by a licensed professional
6. _____ Narrative description of proposal (must address, *in order*, each applicable factor contained in the enclosed Nonprofit Stewardship Project Priority System)
7. _____ Site specific mapping:
 - _____ a. Site location on legible street map
 - _____ b. Tax map outlining boundaries of project site
8. _____ Environmental Assessment (instructions enclosed)
9. _____ Conceptual Site Plan. Plans should be prepared by a licensed professional and should identify all site features and any areas of proposed work.
10. _____ Copy of irrevocable property lease or use agreement for project site (if applicable). Lease term must be 25 years from anticipated date of project commencement to ensure term of public access.
11. _____ Proof of publication of newspaper notice and copy of notification letter to municipal governing body(ies) regarding application submission. (See General Information.)
12. _____ Photographs of the site (digital images and/or prints)
13. _____ Letters of support (See Priority System Factor #2)
14. _____ Letters from municipal **and** county planning boards describing how project is specifically consistent with the appropriate Master Plans (See Priority System Factor #2)
15. _____ List of all applicable permits that may be required for the project. Applicants with projects requiring permits, grants, or other approvals must contact all applicable permitting agencies to secure permit information and application materials prior to the submission of a Green Acres application. Evidence of having met this requirement must be provided with the application. Technical assistance from Green Acres is available upon request.
16. _____ Letter verifying pre-application conference with the Highlands Council, Meadowlands Commission, or Pinelands Commission, if applicable, including the Council/Commission's comments on the proposed project
17. _____ By-laws
18. _____ Verification that nonprofit is registered and in full compliance with the Charities Registration Investigation Act of 1994
19. _____ Breakdown of annual operating/maintenance expenses after stewardship project is completed

Things to Be Done

Please assume a July 1, 2019 project commencement date (subject to change).

- 1. Obtain and submit Preliminary Assessment Report _____
- 2. Design project _____
- 3. Apply for/obtain permits (if necessary) _____
- 4. Submit plans to Green Acres for pre-bid approval _____
- 5. Go out to bid or get quotes (in accordance with the Local
Public Contracts Law) _____
- 6. Award project contract _____
- 7. Begin project work _____
- 8. Complete project _____
- 9. Submit for final payment _____

Comments: _____

**STATE OF NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
GREEN ACRES ENABLING RESOLUTION**

WHEREAS, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Green Acres Program ("State"), provides loans and/or grants to municipal and county governments and grants to nonprofit organizations for assistance in the acquisition, development, and stewardship of lands for outdoor recreation and conservation purposes; and

WHEREAS, the _____ (*name of applicant*) desires to further the public interest by obtaining funding in the amount of \$ _____, in the form of a \$ _____ matching grant and, if available, a \$ _____ loan, from the State to fund the following project(s): (*describe the project*) _____ at a cost of \$ _____ (*project cost*);

NOW, THEREFORE, the governing body/board resolves that _____ (*name of authorized official*) or the successor to the office of _____ (*title of authorized official*) is hereby authorized to:

- (a) make application for such a loan and/or such a grant,
- (b) provide additional application information and furnish such documents as may be required, and
- (c) act as the authorized correspondent of the above named applicant; and

WHEREAS, the State shall determine if the application is complete and in conformance with the scope and intent of the Green Acres Program, and notify the applicant of the amount of the funding award; and

WHEREAS, the applicant is willing to use the State's funds in accordance with such rules, regulations and applicable statutes, and is willing to enter into an agreement with the State for the above named project;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED BY THE _____ (*name of legal body or board*)

1. That the _____ (*title of authorized official*) of the above named body or board is hereby authorized to execute an agreement and any amendment thereto with the State known as _____ (*project name*);
2. That the applicant has its matching share of the project, if a match is required, in the amount of \$ _____;
3. That, in the event the State's funds are less than the total project cost specified above, the applicant has the balance of funding necessary to complete the project;
4. That the applicant agrees to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations in its performance of the project; and
5. That this resolution shall take effect immediately.

CERTIFICATION

I, _____ (*name and title of Secretary or equivalent*) do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true copy of a resolution adopted by _____ (*name of legal body or board*) at a meeting held on the _____ day of _____, _____.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunder set my hand and the official seal of this body this _____ day of _____, _____.

(*Name and title of Secretary or equivalent*)

DEFINITIONS FROM P.L. 1979, C. 378 (C. 13:8B01 ET SEQ.)*

a. "**Charitable conservancy**" means a corporation or trust whose purposes include the acquisition and preservation of land or water areas or of a particular land or water area, or either thereof, in a natural, scenic or open condition, no part of the net earnings of which inures to the benefit of any private shareholder or individual, and which has received tax exemption under section 501(c) of the 1954 Internal Revenue Code;

b. "**Conservation restriction**" means an interest in land less than fee simple absolute, stated in the form of a right, restriction, easement, covenant, or condition, in any deed, will or other instrument, other than a lease, executed by or on behalf of the owner of the land, appropriate to retaining land or water areas predominantly in their natural, scenic, open or wooded condition, or for conservation of soil or wildlife, or for outdoor recreation or park use, or as suitable habitat for fish or wildlife, to forbid or limit any or all:

- (1) Construction or placing of buildings, roads, signs, billboards, or other advertising, or other structures on or above the ground;
- (2) Dumping or placing of soil or other substance or material as landfill, or dumping or placing of trash, waste or unsightly or offensive materials;
- (3) Removal or destruction of trees, shrubs or other vegetation;
- (4) Excavation, dredging or removal of loam, peat, gravel, soil, rock or other mineral substance;
- (5) Surface use except for purposes permitting the land or water area to remain predominantly in its natural condition;
- (6) Activities detrimental to drainage, flood control, water conservation, erosion control or soil conservation, or fish and wildlife habitat preservation;
- (7) Other acts or uses detrimental to the retention of land or water areas according to the purposes of this act.

c. "**Historic preservation restriction**" means an interest in land less than fee simple absolute, stated in the form of a right, restriction, easement, covenant, or condition, in any deed, will or other instrument, other than a lease, executed by or on behalf of the owner of the land, appropriate to preserving a structure or site which is historically significant for its architecture, archeology or associations, to forbid or limit any or all:

- (1) Alteration in exterior or interior features of such structure;
- (2) Changes in appearance or condition of such site;
- (3) Uses of such structure or site which are not historically appropriate;
- (4) Other acts or uses detrimental to the appropriate preservation of such structure or site.

* Applicants should obtain and review a copy of the entire law.

TAX EXEMPTION PROGRAM

There is an acute need in New Jersey for natural open space areas to serve public recreation and conservation purposes. The New Jersey Legislature recognized that public funds for the purchase and maintenance of open space are limited and should be supplemented by private individuals and organizations. The Legislature determined that it is "in the public interest to encourage the dedication of privately-owned open space to public use and enjoyment."

In 1974, the Green Acres Tax Exemption Program was created to help meet the open space deficit in New Jersey. This program offers the incentive of property tax exemption to certain nonprofit organizations or corporations that own recreation or conservation lands in New Jersey and are willing to open their private land to the public.

Any nonprofit organization that qualifies for exemption from Federal Income Tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and owns natural open space in New Jersey is eligible to make application under this program.

The Tax Exemption Program is in its 44th year and, to date, more than 80,200 acres of open space owned by 62 nonprofit organizations have been opened to the public for a wide variety of environmental and recreational uses. More than 420 sites are located in 144 municipalities throughout New Jersey.

The preservation of open space is a goal shared by many individuals and groups in New Jersey. The Tax Exemption Program is proof that the government and the private sector can work together successfully to achieve this goal. New Jersey must continue to explore methods of preserving open space, other than fee simple acquisition, if the state is to remain rich with "green acres."

Application checklists and forms as well as the enabling legislation and rules regarding the Tax Exemption Program are available on the Green Acres webpage at www.NJGreenAcres.org. For more information, please contact Cherylynn Cooke, Green Acres Program, Department of Environmental Protection, Mail Code 501-01, P.O. Box 420, Trenton NJ 08625-0420 (609) 984-0500.

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** Upto2pts.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;
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, 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.

**NONPROFIT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
STEWARDSHIP APPLICATIONS
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT INSTRUCTIONS**

As part of the Green Acres funding proposal, each applicant must collect, evaluate, and present pertinent environmental information necessary to ascertain the suitability of the site for the activities proposed.

OUTLINE

1. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

- a. Briefly describe the project
- b. State objectives of / need for project
- c. Fully describe multi-phase projects

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Describe existing environmental features:

- vegetation
- wildlife
- geology / topography / soils
- water resources / hydrology / wetlands
- historic / archeological resources
- transportation / access to site
- adjacent land uses/description of the surrounding area

3. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS OF PROPOSED ACTION

Impacts are defined as direct or indirect changes in the existing environment, whether beneficial or adverse, that are anticipated as a result of the proposed action or related future actions and uses. Any off-site impacts, such as increased traffic on neighborhood roads or increased noise levels in surrounding areas, should be described. Whenever possible, environmental impacts should be quantified (i.e. area to be restored, cubic yards of soil, etc.).

- a. Discuss all affected resources and the significance of each impact
- b. Discuss short-term and long-term project impacts
- c. Discuss anticipated increase in overall use of site over time
- d. Identify adjacent environmental features that may be affected by the proposal
- e. List any permits required for project and a brief status of each (i.e., freshwater wetlands)

4. MITIGATING MEASURES

Describe the measures that will be undertaken to mitigate any adverse impacts

5. Monitoring, Evaluation and Long-Term Maintenance (For restoration/enhancement projects)

- a. Identify specific and measurable on-the-ground outcomes; and
- b. The applicant must monitor the project site for a minimum of two years ensure project viability and success. For example, if the project includes tree planting, the applicant must be able to replace any lost trees or take other measures to achieve the desired outcome. Briefly describe the applicant's monitoring plan, including long-term maintenance of the project site.