



The New Jersey Natural Lands Trust
1992 Annual Report

Statement of Purpose

The New Jersey Natural Lands Trust was created in 1968 by the Legislature as an independent agency with the mission to preserve land in its natural state for enjoyment by the public and to protect natural diversity through the acquisition of open space. Land is preserved primarily by donations of open space through fee simple title or conservation easements and is managed to conserve endangered species habitat, rare natural features, and significant ecosystems. Passive recre-



ational use is considered only if it will not adversely affect natural communities and biological diversity.

The Trust also recognizes that ownership and management alone are not enough to achieve its mission. Public education is an integral function of protecting natural diversity. The Trust distributes printed information and sponsors interpretive programs and seminars designed to convey a conservation ethic for the protection of open space and its natural values.

The New Jersey Natural Lands Trust Board of Trustees

Policy for the Trust is set by an eleven-member Board of Trustees. Six members are appointed by the Governor from the recommendations of a nominating caucus of conservation organizations. Five members are State officials.

Acting Chairperson: James Hall, *Assistant Commissioner for Natural and Historic Resources, Department of Environmental Protection & Energy; Representing Ex officio Commissioner*

Michael Catania

Emile DeVito

Sally Dudley

Thomas Gilmore

Frank Leary

Newton LeVine

Honorable John A. Lynch, *Senator; Ex officio State House Commission*

Robert A. Preston, *Supervisor, Dept. of Treasury - Capital Commission on Budget; Representing Ex officio State Treasurer*

John Weingart, *Assistant Commissioner for Environmental Regulation; NJDEPE appointment*

Thomas Wells, *Administrator, Green Acres Program; NJDEPE appointment*

Secretary/Treasurer: David F. Moore

Staff

Thomas F. Hampton, *Executive Director*

Beverly Mazzella, *Real Estate Coordinator*

Judeth Piccinini, *Counsel*

Martin Rapp, *Ecologist*

1992 Donors to the Natural Lands Trust

The New Jersey Natural Lands Trust gratefully extends its thanks to those who have donated land or funds to the Trust in 1992 to help preserve and protect New Jersey's natural diversity.

Donald Jones

Harold & Jane Hughes

Pauline & William Schwartz

Helen Feldman

Helen Clark Francis

Dawn & Robert LeBach

Victor Van Voorhees

Polly Huff

Mary Jane Cieri

Betty Ann Henry

James A. Giammarino

Dennis & Judith

Weissman Jacobs

Marjorie De Groat

Gloria Snook

Jean Chamberlain

Mary Jane Frankel

William Rieck

Robert H. & Barbara J.

Douglass

Wolosz Family Trust

New Jersey Conservation
Foundation

The Nature Conservancy
New Jersey Department of
Transportation

Julia C. Buhlman

Ralph Thulin

Bell Atlantic Properties

The Fanwood Foundation

Joseph S. & Virginia Hartle
CAREZ

John T. & Margaret P. Hannas

John W. & Kim L. Morrison



The New Jersey Natural Lands Trust

22 South Clinton Ave., CN 404

Trenton, NJ 08625

(609) 984-1339



PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

Project Area Receives Incentive

In 1986, a group of Burlington County residents known as Citizens Advocating Responsible and Equitable Zoning (CAREZ) approached the Trust with a proposal for protecting the last remaining large tract of freshwater wetlands within Moorestown Township. The 170 acre site, defined by existing roads, was approved by the Board as one of its first project areas. CAREZ volunteers quickly began contacting property owners on behalf of the Trust to secure donations. Prior to 1992, this local volunteer effort, orchestrated over the years by local resident Theresa Viola, had resulted in over 45 lots being donated to the Trust. This past year, the Board of Trustees revised the project area boundaries taking into consideration new development in the surrounding area, ecological features of the land and acquisition potential.

The revised Moorestown Project Area encompasses over three hundred lots totalling more than 124 acres of wetland and adjacent

buffer. At a meeting in March, the Board of Trustees voted to accept a significant monetary donation from a local developer, Bell Atlantic Properties Inc., which included a fund to be dedicated to the purchase and protection of land in the Moorestown Project Area. This fund has provided the staff with the flexibility to purchase land from those owners who choose not to donate, and has dramatically improved the chances for success to protect the area. Through the cooperation of the Township Administrator, it appears that Moorestown Township, holder of more than 28 non-contiguous acres, is receptive to the transfer of its land to the Trust. In 1992, an additional seventeen lots were added to Trust ownership. Staff has made contact with other large land-owners and, together with the continued efforts of CAREZ and Theresa Viola, this project area will one day be known as the *Moorestown Preserve*.

Coordination Leads to Success

An important part of a successful land protection organization is not only acquisition and management of land but, even more importantly, the willingness to work with other agencies to achieve the common goal of protecting open space. The Natural Lands Trust finds itself in the unique role of operating both as a state agency and as an independent nonprofit organization. This dual nature has allowed the Trust to work closely with both related state agencies and private nonprofit organizations to achieve what neither could do alone.

An example of this relationship in action this past year is the Trust creation of the Moorestown Acquisition Fund and the Eastgate Mitigation Fund. Both of these funds were born out of a condition of a Stream Encroachment Permit issued by the Department of Environmental Protection and Energy (NJDEPE) to Bell Atlantic Properties Inc., a housing developer in South Jersey. Bell Atlantic sought permission for a development and, as a condition of its permit, it was required to provide for mitigation through the establishment of these two funds which will be used to protect open space in Moorestown and the surrounding region.

The Moorestown Acquisition Fund is to be used to pay costs related to acquisition of land and interest in properties within the Board-approved boundaries of the Moorestown Project Area. This proposal will help to protect over 120 acres of the last significant contiguous wetland area in Moorestown, and its associated buffer. Monies remaining in this fund after acquisition has been completed will be transferred to the Eastgate Mitigation Fund.

The concept of the Eastgate Mitigation Fund emerged from the NJDEPE's Land Use Regulation Program and was developed to serve as a source of money for wetland mitigation. Projects

will include design studies, land acquisition, wetland creation, research and management, and public information and education related to the enhancement of existing wetlands, and restoration of wetlands within the region. Each of these projects will be reviewed by the Freshwater Wetlands Mitigation Council, and must be approved by the Assistant Commissioner for Environmental Regulation within the NJDEPE before presentation to the Natural Lands Trust.

Cooperating with the Edison Township Environmental Commission, the Natural Lands Trust recently established the Stevens Land Management Fund to assist with management and protection of the Stevens Wildlife Preserve in this urban Middlesex County township. The fund was initially established by a generous donation from a longstanding Trust contributor, The Fanwood Foundation. The monies will be used for costs related to the Commission's management of the Preserve, including design studies, research, reports, and activities necessary for protection of the land, and to fulfill the requirements of the 57 acre conservation easement acquired by the Natural Lands Trust in 1987.

Obviously, land acquisition is not the only way to cooperate with other agencies. Early in the year, the Trust was asked to participate with twelve other state, Federal and nonprofit agencies in the nomination of wetlands of the Delaware Bay Estuary into the Ramsar Convention. Through this nomination, specific lands of the Delaware Bay are recognized as Wetlands of International Importance, especially as waterfowl habitat. The nomination by the Trust of its 659 wetland acres along the Bay, protects these lands by requiring that any changes in land use take into consideration wetlands conservation.

Adding to Existing Open Space

The Natural Lands Trust continued its focused efforts on expanding existing public landholdings during the last year. The Clark's Landing Preserve in Galloway Township, Atlantic County, was established in 1988 as a 185 acre donation from a land developer as a condition of a Department of Environmental Protection and Energy permit. Two additions to the Preserve this year brought the total landholdings to over 213 acres.

Working with the Pinelands Development Credit Bank, an autonomous state agency, Donald Jones was able to sell the development rights in his Pinelands acreage and then donate his remaining interest in the 20 acre parcel to the Trust. The land is almost entirely forested wetlands along the Tar Kiln Branch of the Mullica River, providing habitat for the threatened barred owl and endangered Pine Barrens tree frog. Harold and Jane Hughes's 8 acre donation lies directly adjacent to over 70 acres protected by Galloway Township through a conservation easement, and

over 1000 acres of nearby land controlled through tax liens held by NJDEPE.

The New Jersey Conservation Foundation (NJCF) and the Natural Lands Trust have worked together, and in cooperation with Camden County officials for continued protection of the Long-a-Coming Branch of the Great Egg Harbor River. During the year, NJCF made arrangements to transfer over 60 acres of land to Camden County, adjacent to land currently managed by them, while donating a 17 acre tract to the Trust. The latter tract is located within the Long-A-Coming Project Area approved by the Board of Trustees in 1991. This block of Atlantic white cedar forest is one piece of a conservation puzzle for protection of the river corridor.

Several smaller parcels came under protection of the Trust during 1992 with additions to the Starcherski Project Area and the Limestone Ridge Marsh Preserve. The Starcherski Project Area in Cape May County consists of hundreds of small wetland lots adjacent to larger expanses of salt meadow under the protection of the N.J. Division of Fish, Game and Wildlife. Land acquisition in this project area depends on local contacts who refer potential donors to the Trust. The boundaries of the Warren County Limestone Ridge Marsh were expanded this year by the addition of over 6 acres of adjacent land along its southern border, providing alternate access to the Preserve from Heller Hill Road. The land was purchased by NJDEPE through the Green Acres Program and assigned to the Trust for management.

A 5.9 acre tract in Mullica Township, Atlantic County, together with several other parcels in other South Jersey locations was acquired by the Trust from The Nature Conservancy. The Mullica Township tract, by itself, would normally not meet the Board's acquisition criteria. However, it lies directly adjacent to the Division of Fish, Game and Wildlife's Makepeace Wildlife Management Area, and provides additional road frontage and access for that large state-owned property in Atlantic County. The Trust acquired the land and will transfer title to the Division which will manage it with its other landholdings.

Reeds Beach, along the Delaware Bay, is known as an important staging ground for the millions of shorebirds passing over the Delaware estuary each spring. This year, the Trust was able to protect a central portion of shoreline at Reeds Beach thanks to a donation from Robert and Barbara Douglass. Red knots, sanderlings, and semi-palmated plovers will be feeding on horseshoe crab eggs deposited beneath the sand for their essential nourishment this spring. Title to the property will eventually be passed to the Division of Fish, Game and Wildlife for management, together with other shorebird properties previously acquired by the Trust.



Stewardship

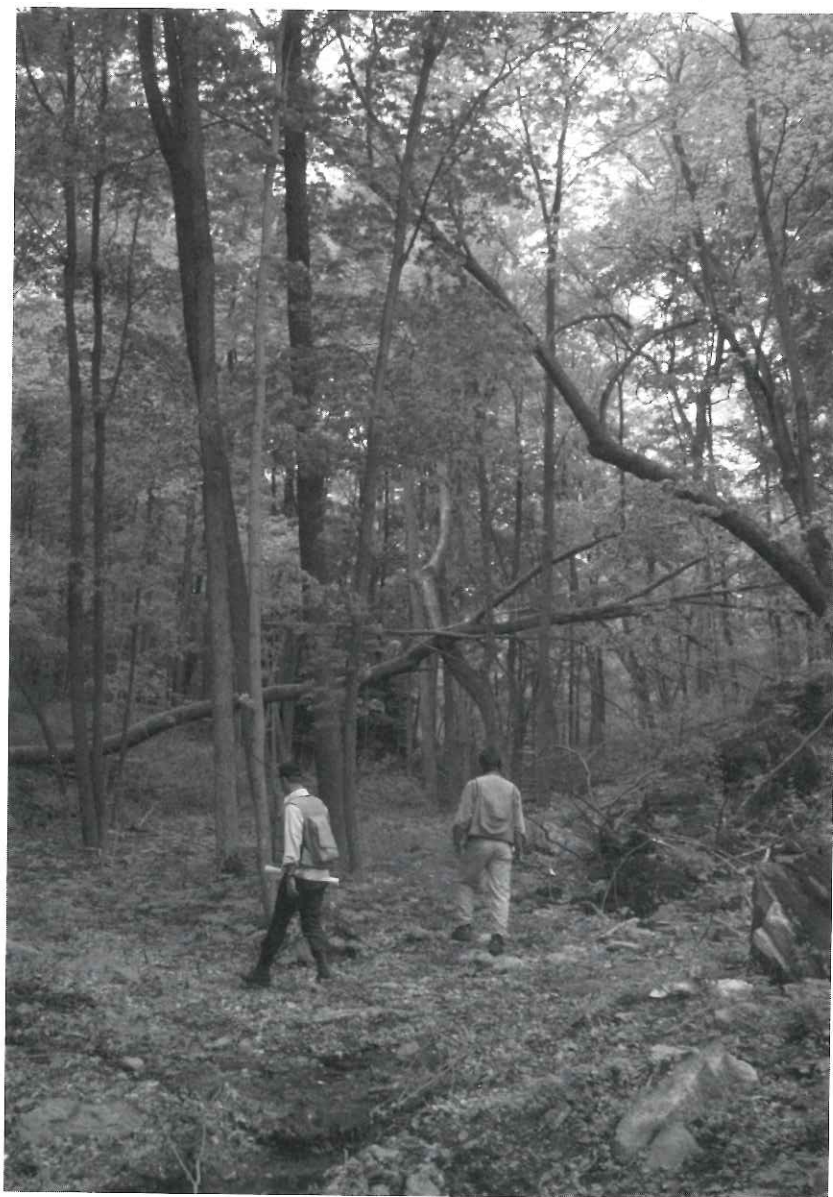
Land and management, or stewardship, is an essential responsibility for any landholding organization, including the Trust. With its continually growing acreage, staff must anticipate potential management issues at new preserves, while continuously monitoring the status of lands in current ownership to guarantee their upkeep and ecological integrity. Sometimes, the Board of Trustees will decline an offer of land when it presents management problems related to potential or real public abuse.

Stewardship begins at a site long before property is acquired by the Trust. Each potential donation is inspected and examined by the staff ecologist to determine if the land meets the Board's acquisition criteria and to identify the management demands that will follow. A staff ecologist walks the site with the property donor, while discussing the history of the property and its relationship to the surrounding landscape. This provides not only familiarity with the site, but an understanding of past uses and future wishes of the donor. Important natural resource features are noted, such as sensitive wetland communities and potential habitats for rare flora or fauna. Property attributes, such as existing or potential public use, are examined as well as public abuses of trash disposal or hazardous waste dumping. It is only after all these issues are considered, that the Board will make a decision on the donation of land.

Land Acquisition Fund

Over the years, the Board of Trustees has accepted monies dedicated by donors for acquisition of specific parcels or types of land, such as the Hamilton Preserve Acquisition and Wetland Acquisition Funds. This past year saw the creation of a general Land Acquisition Fund for the purchase of lands anywhere the need is recognized by the Board. These limited funds will be used primarily to acquire and protect land adjacent to existing Trust holdings or where the opportunity for significant bargain sales may arise.

Once the land is acquired, proper stewardship is aimed at maintaining and improving the ecological integrity and public resource value of the site. Each property is posted with signs identifying the site as a nature preserve managed by the Trust. Each preserve is documented by still and video camera. This footage forms a library of management conditions and events and is used to illustrate changes or problems in the future. Management plans are prepared for larger properties, addressing all issues related to conservation of natural resources, public use, and appreciation of the open space. Volunteers are often engaged in all aspects of stewardship from monitoring the land as extra sets of eyes for the Trust, to physical inventories and maintenance.



Management Through Others

Stewardship is perhaps one of the most difficult aspects of open space protection faced by the Trust or any other landowner. It becomes even more so as the amount of land and its public use increases, unless additional staff is available to manage it. As any other nonprofit organization might do, the Trust routinely turns to volunteers for assistance. This assistance comes both from individuals and from organizations.

At the Trust's Readington Preserve in Hunterdon County, the forested slopes along the Rockaway River and adjacent

open fields are managed according to a Board-adopted plan. A deed restriction and the Trust's management plan, both require that the fields be mowed once each year to maintain their wildlife use. This past year, as they have for several years, the Division of Parks and Forestry's Round Valley Recreation Area maintenance staff contributed time and equipment to accomplish this objective.

Public abuse of land, left unchecked, will grow at an alarming pace. Whenever they have been asked, members of the Berkeley

Township maintenance crew of Jersey Central Power & Light Company (JCP&L) have answered the call for help. This past year, off-road vehicle use at the Crossley Preserve presented a challenge that JCP&L dealt with quickly and efficiently. Using heavy equipment and a skilled operator, ditches were dug across the illegal entry points and sand from the ditches was mounded in front of them. While there, the Berkeley crew also responded to a request from the staff ecologist to clear some brush and enlarge a parking area so school buses can turn around safely.

Representatives of the US Soil Conservation Service and the Ocean County Soil Conservation District read in the Trust 1991 Annual Report how Webelo Scout Den 9, Pack 66, of Barnegat Township, had constructed trash filter fences along streams entering Lin-Lee Preserve in Ocean County and were planning erosion-control measures. The agencies contacted the Trust with an offer of assistance. After explaining to them how the eroding sand was affecting a population of rare plants in the wetlands, the District and the Service set to work. Identifying the various problem sources, they requested a neighboring sand-and-gravel operation to control silt runoff from its operation. They then selected to survey the area to get an engineering description of the water course and flow. With this information, the Trust, Webelo Den 9, and the Service can now plan and install the best erosion-control techniques to protect the sensitive wetlands.



Costa Preserve Continues to Grow

In 1986, the Trust accepted a donation of two separate parcels of land in Hamilton Township, Atlantic County, totalling approximately 10 acres, from Maria Costa. At that time, there was little reason to think that these two tracts would be of any great significance in the future. In 1991, however, this humble beginning was enlarged by a 25 acre donation; and this past year, a total of almost 70 acres from four donors has increased the Costa Preserve to over 104 acres.

Pauline and William Schwartz and Helen Feldman contributed 9.6 acres of forested uplands and wetlands adjacent to the abandoned Pennsylvania-Reading Seashore railroad line. Knowing about our involvement in the area, the New Jersey Conservation Foundation referred Helen Clark Francis to the Trust for donation

of her 10 acres of forested oak-pine upland. Dawn and Robert LeBach contributed a total of 9.7 acres as part of the ever-growing Costa Preserve. Several years ago, The Nature Conservancy had acquired title to a nearby 40 acre tract of land in addition to partial ownership of a much larger 336 acre parcel. This past year, the 40 acre property was donated to the Trust, with a commitment from the Conservancy to a future transfer of their ownership in the larger tract. Negotiations with the other partial owner are near completion and transfer to the Trust is expected to occur in 1993.

Because of Hamilton Township's ownership of nearby lots and Atlantic County's interest in the acquisition of the abandoned railroad right-of-way for trail use, cooperative management and protection of additional open space is almost certain.

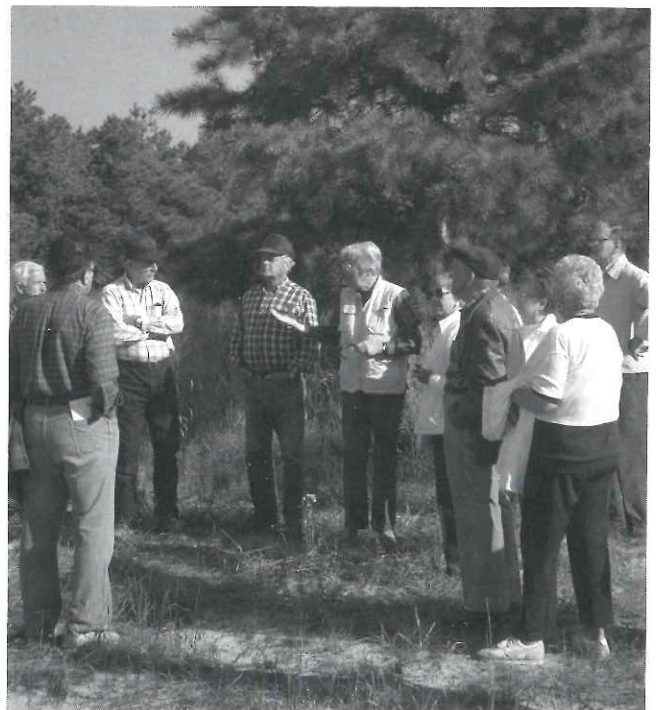
Public Use of Public Property

All of the properties owned by the Trust are open to the public for some form of use; however, the largely undeveloped landscapes cannot be used in a manner comparable to the active recreation that occurs within local or state parks. Passive recreation is, however, just as important as ball fields for many people who frequent Trust lands.

Crossley Preserve in Berkeley Township, Ocean County, adjacent to thousands of single-family homes, continues to be one of the most heavily used lands under Trust management. Its almost 400 acres, which will be expanded in the near future, are much in demand: one can rarely walk the trails without seeing another enjoying nature. A recently completed 1.5 mile marked trail, with new interpretive signs, has seen increased use over the last year. Lois Morris, a local resident and ardent volunteer for the Trust, leads different groups of hikers from nearby Crestwood Village on monthly "strolls". With her always keen eye and sense of place, Lois notes that, "By having the walk each month throughout the spring and fall, we can all observe the seasonal changes of wildflowers and wildlife at one place. There's always something new to see." The walk led by Lois in June also hosted Bob Zappalorti of Herpetological Associates who captured the interest of the hikers with an informative talk about endangered snakes, complete with live specimens. Other visitors to the Preserve included a group being guided by the National Park Service on visits to special places of the Pinelands. Guided by former Trust Chairman Jim Truncer and Secretary/Treasurer Dave Moore, the guests were more than surprised to find such an oasis adjacent to, but removed from, the densely populated area.

In the fall, the Trust ecologist volunteered as a trip leader for the New Jersey chapter of The Nature Conservancy, during their annual meeting in North Jersey. Several members joined the

walk through the Trust's 240 acre Reinhardt Preserve in Sussex County. Along the 3 mile hike, the group visited the sites of two conservation easements, totaling 57 acres, held by the Trust and flanking the Reinhardt Preserve. The hardwood forest, intermittent streams and year-round wetlands made this an interesting and informative tour for the members of this organization.



Conservation of Open Space for Tomorrow

Land in its natural state, whether it be wetlands, forest or field, possesses values for wildlife as well as providing places where people may enjoy the beauty of nature. Isolated patches of landscape may, tomorrow, be oases in an urban setting or a building block in a larger conservation area. Several tracts of land fitting both these categories were donated this past year, bringing the total acreage of open space managed by the Trust to over 4,500 acres.

Less than half a mile from the center of Gibbstown, in the Gloucester County community of Greenwich Township, 14 acres of red maple forest and emergent marsh offer wildlife a respite

along the Nehonsey Brook. This donation, referred to the Trust by the New Jersey Audubon Society, provides added open space to the nearby 100 acre tract of township-owned land along the corridor of the brook. Greenwich Township has offered to assist Trust staff in the management of these lands. The acreage is obvious habitat for ducks and geese, and there are also records of endangered plants in the surrounding marsh.

With the recognition that forest is important habitat for wildlife in the midst of agricultural lands, The Nature Conservancy asked Judith Jacobs to offer her donation of 10.5 acres of land to the Natural Lands Trust. With road frontage on Post Road and over 1000 feet of frontage along the Panther Branch, this bottomland hardwood forest provides permanent cover and protection for resident wildlife.

In a rural pinelands setting, with scattered single-family homes nearby, 25 acres of upland in Mullica Township was donated to the Trust by Mary Jane Frankel. After being logged several years ago, this land is now returning naturally to an oak forest community type and may be the first of many such properties to be protected as open space in the area.

The Division of Fish, Game and Wildlife has, as one of its goals, the maintenance of open space along waterways to provide fishermen with access. When approached by Victor VanVoorhees with a donation of his 8.5 acres along a steep slope above the Musconetcong River, the Division knew that Trust ownership would protect the open space which is part of the drainage to the waterway and may provide physical access someday. Adjacent properties are already developed in this rural portion of Hunterdon County.

Additional properties acquired by donation to the Trust include almost 11 acres in Frankford Township, Sussex County, from Jean Chamberlain, Marjorie DeGroat and Gloria Snook. The forest of sugar maples, ash, hickory and oak is situated among farms, as well as forests, in this largely agricultural countryside. Quite different in composition, but still typical for a forest of the pinelands is a 7.8 acre site in Hamilton Township, Atlantic County, known as Watering Race. Here, however, oaks and pines dominate this upland forest with single-family homes on wooded landscaped lots located directly north.

