

NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

# GREEN ACRES PROGRAM

GREEN ACRES STATE LAND ACQUISITION  
2009 BOND ACT

PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS

Funding Round FY 2013

State Open Space  
And Blue Acres Acquisition

Recommendations for Funding



**Chris Christie**  
Governor

**Bob Martin**  
Commissioner

### **The Green Acres Mission**

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

### **General Overview**

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Green Acres Program was created in 1961 to meet New Jersey's growing recreation and conservation needs. Together with public and private partners, Green Acres has protected more than **658,968** acres of open space and provided hundreds of outdoor recreational facilities in communities around the State. The total acres of protected open space and farmland across the State now exceed **1.45 million** acres.

The protection of New Jersey's environmentally sensitive open space, vital water resources, and significant natural and historic resources is critical to the quality of life enjoyed by all New Jerseyans. Preserved open space protects our water supply, protects sensitive habitats for endangered and threatened species, promotes smart growth, and provides a place for public recreation and connection with community and nature.

Quality open space and attractive recreational facilities in cities, suburbs, and other developed communities throughout New Jersey help to improve the quality of life for residents and visitors alike and help to create an environment where people want to live and work.

Thanks to widespread public support of land preservation for recreation and conservation purposes, and to Governor Chris Christie's commitment to smart growth and the environment, New Jersey's legacy of parks, open space and conservation areas continues.

Funding for this round totals \$57 million, and is provided under the Green Acres, Farmland, Blue Acres, and Historic Preservation Bond Act of 2009. Of that total, \$45 million is directed to open space acquisition, the enhancement of historic resources and natural areas, and the creation of recreational facilities.

The remaining \$12 million provides for acquisition of Blue Acres lands in the floodways<sup>1</sup> of Rivers, and their respective tributaries, for recreation and conservation purposes. Eligible flood prone properties are those that have been damaged by, or may be prone to incurring damage caused by, storms or storm-related flooding, or that may buffer or protect other lands from such damage. Blue Acres acquisitions, which must be from willing sellers, will be administered by the Green Acres State Land Acquisition Program.

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<sup>1</sup> The Act states that: " 'Floodway' means 'flood hazard area' as defined pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1962, c.19 (C.58:16A-51)."

## STATE LAND ACQUISITION PROJECTS

### **Barnegat Bay Watershed Greenway** **\$3,000,000**

The Barnegat Bay is the most widely used recreational resource in New Jersey, yet its ecosystem is fragile and dependent on the preservation of coastal islands, wetlands, and critical uplands. Preservation of open lands within the Barnegat Bay Watershed will promote the continued enjoyment of this critical natural and recreation resource by millions of residents and visitors each year.

### **Cape May Peninsula** **\$2,000,000**

Cape May is host to increasing numbers of tourists every year. This increase is due in part to the presence of Cape May Point State Park, Higbee Beach Wildlife Management Area, and the natural wonders that can be witnessed at these sites. Located on the Atlantic Flyway, both of these state facilities have drawn worldwide attention for the spectacle of the spring and fall migration of birds. Particularly notable are the spring migration of warblers and the fall migration of raptors. Tourists flocking to Cape May to witness these spectacles have also become a rite of the spring and fall migrations. Green Acres will continue its program of expanding Cape May Point State Park, Higbee Beach Wildlife Management Area, and other important wildlife areas to protect wildlife and provide public access.

### **Crossroads of the American Revolution** **\$2,000,000**

More Revolutionary War battles took place in New Jersey than in any other state, as the creation of the 14-county Crossroads of the American Revolution National Heritage Area attests. Remarkably, many vestiges of the Revolutionary era still remain, including mines, mills, soldier's footpaths, leaders' homes, encampment sites, battlegrounds, and barracks. Many of these sites are already preserved in public ownership; many more can still be preserved. What is even more remarkable, though, is that much of the landscape over which Washington's army crossed en route from battle to battle is still open land. The basis of this project is to preserve land, through a variety of methods and with a variety of partners, which will help interpret New Jersey's role in the American Revolution.

**Delaware and Raritan Canal Greenway****\$2,000,000**

The Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park is a designated national recreation trail. It serves as a link between rolling countryside of the Piedmont and Inner Coastal Plain Provinces and urban areas. The park, as it exists now, is a relatively narrow strip along its 70-mile length. Green Acres and its preservation partners would like to widen the park and provide greater protection to neighboring resources. One of the major project initiatives is to connect the Delaware and Raritan Canal Greenway into a system of existing and planned greenways in the region.

**Delaware Bay Watershed Greenway****\$4,000,000**

The Delaware Bayshore is an area of global ecological significance: millions of shorebirds and thousands of raptors rely upon the area's food sources and habitat for their survival during migration. The fragile web of marine and terrestrial species can only be sustained through preservation of contiguous blocks of habitat. In addition, this region's economic base is greatly enhanced by the growing ecotourism industry that is directly linked to the preservation of the Bayshore's natural resources. The primary focus of this project is the protection of the major river corridors that drain into the Delaware Bay.

**Delaware River Watershed Greenway****\$4,000,000**

Many consider the Delaware River Valley one of the most scenic areas of the Mid-Atlantic States. A trip down the 115 miles that the river meanders along New Jersey's western border would reveal dramatic palisades at the Delaware Water Gap, the steep rise of the Kittatinny Mountains, forested islands, rolling valleys, towns, historic villages, and farms. The Delaware River also serves as a section of a major flyway for migratory birds. The amount of access varies throughout the length of the river, but remarkably, the vast majority of the New Jersey land along its length is only sparsely developed and retains its scenic quality. Efforts are underway to secure greater public access, broaden the width of public holdings within its corridor, and protect the scenic and historic resources of the Delaware River and its tributaries.

**Highlands Greenway****\$8,000,000**

Sweeping across the north central portion of New Jersey, nearly 1 million acres of forests in the Highlands surround and protect the source waters for one-third of New Jersey's citizens. Serving as a spectacular green belt around some of the nation's most densely populated cities and suburbs, the majority of the Highlands' mountains, ridges, forests, and fields are privately held and are thus vulnerable to development. Preservation of the greenbelt is critical to ensuring the integrity of New Jersey's water supplies and maintaining the state's biodiversity.

**Historic Resources****\$1,000,000**

New Jersey is dedicated to protecting sites that have played a role in the history of the state and nation. The following are examples of the types of historic sites the state has preserved and continues to expand: Allaire State Park, Monmouth Battlefield, New Bridge Landing, Princeton Battlefield, Proprietary House, Twin Lights, Washington Crossing State Park and Waterloo Village.

**Natural Areas****\$2,000,000**

New Jersey's natural areas protect threatened or endangered plant and animal species. Green Acres is committed to protecting these environmentally sensitive regions of New Jersey. Green Acres plans to expand dozens of Natural Areas throughout the state, ranging geographically from Woodbine Bogs in Cape May County, to Strawberry Hill in Mercer County, to Ramapo Lake Natural Area in Bergen and Passaic counties.

**Pinelands****\$8,000,000**

The only nationally designated reserve of its kind in the country, the Pinelands harbors species found nowhere else in the world. Its sandy soils filter billions of gallons of annual rainfall into New Jersey's largest drinking water aquifer. Comprising 1 million acres, the majority of which are privately held, the Pinelands continue to offer important opportunities for land and resource preservation. Permanent protection of open spaces in the Pinelands will ensure excellent water quality, ecosystem integrity, sustainable agricultural production, and the continuance of such resource-based recreation as canoeing, hunting, and camping.

**Ridge and Valley Greenway****\$5,000,000**

Bounded by the Highlands to the east and the uppermost reaches of the Delaware River to the west, the Ridge and Valley region is made up of ridges including the Kittatinny and Jenny Jump, and valleys including the Paulinskill and Wallkill. These are popular areas for camping, hiking, fishing, hunting, and cross-country skiing. The ridge-tops offer amazing vistas of New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania. The world-famous Appalachian Trail also traverses the region.

The purchase of additional lands in the Ridge and Valley Region will create linkages between publicly owned lands, including the Delaware Water Gap National Recreational Area, Stokes State Forest, High Point State Park, Jenny Jump State Forest, and Bear Swamp Wildlife Management Area. Acquisitions in this region promote public access while also helping to protect surface water quality in the watersheds of the Upper Delaware River, the Paulinskill, the Wallkill and the Pequest River, and aquifer recharge areas for public drinking water supplies. This project area will further protect the habitat of a variety of wildlife species, including such endangered plants and animals as the dwarf wedge mussel, bog turtle, bobcats, and rattlesnake.

**Urban Parks****\$4,000,000**

Providing recreation and environmental education opportunities in urban areas is a national priority. Across the country, the departure of jobs and population from urban centers has compromised the quality of life in our largest cities. Creating and enhancing public open space in our urban areas not only improves the quality of life for urban dwellers and workers, but often is a catalyst for urban redevelopment and renewal. Recognizing the need for and importance of urban public open space and recreation facilities, New Jersey has created and continues to expand parks and historic sites such as the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park and the Walt Whitman House. Liberty State Park, situated in the shadow of the Statue of Liberty, is New Jersey's most popular state park, entertaining millions of visitors each year. With the creation of two new urban parks, in Trenton and Paterson, Green Acres will continue to acquire land and develop recreational facilities in New Jersey's cities to expand and enhance recreational opportunities for residents of and visitors to these important places.

**Blue Acres****\$12,000,000**

Blue Acres funds will be used statewide to acquire lands in the floodways<sup>2</sup> of Rivers, and their respective tributaries, for recreation and conservation purposes. Eligible Properties are those that have been damaged by, or may be prone to incurring damage caused by, storms or storm-related flooding, or that may buffer or protect other lands from such damage. Blue Acres acquisitions, which must be from willing sellers, will be administered by the Green Acres State Land Acquisition Program. Blue Acres funds will also be used for demolition of structures located on acquired properties.

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<sup>2</sup> The Act states that: " 'Floodway' means 'flood hazard area' as defined pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1962, c.19 (C.58:16A-51)."