

New Jersey's Landscape Project

State Open Space

This map book delineates protected open space and recreation areas owned by the State of New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP). Types of property that comprise this data layer include state parks, forests, natural lands and wildlife management areas. This coverage was compiled in order to provide the Divisions within the NJDEP's Natural and Historic Resources Group a graphic inventory of state owned and protected open space throughout New Jersey and serves as a valuable tool in future land acquisition decisions.

The following sections describe the land management programs of the various Divisions within the NJDEP's Natural and Historic Resources Group.

Division of Fish & Wildlife: Wildlife Management Areas

(Map Symbol: )

Managing human population growth while maintaining functional natural ecosystems is the greatest challenge land managers face today. New Jersey has some of the most diverse and complex ecosystems found in the United States. The Division of Fish and Wildlife helps maintain these ecosystems through the operation and management of the Wildlife Management Area (WMA) System.

New Jersey's Wildlife Management Area System preserves a diversity of fish and wildlife habitats from Delaware Bay coastal marshes to Kittatinny Ridge mountaintops. In addition to providing protection and enhancement for many of our unique habitats, Wildlife Management Areas help maintain water quality through watershed protection, provide greenways and travel corridors for wildlife and provide healthful benefits to society. Ranging in size from the .68 acre Delaware River Fishing Access Site at the Pennsauken WMA to the 28,000-acre Greenwood Forest Tract in Burlington and Ocean counties, Wildlife Management Areas provide countless outdoor recreational opportunities for New Jersey residents and visitors alike.

The system had its beginning with the purchase of the 387-acre Walpack Tract in Sussex County in 1932. This land was purchased as a "Public Shooting and Fishing Ground" by the Board of Fish and Game Commissioners, the forerunner of today's *Fish and Game Council*. Presently there are more than 297,000 acres in 121 areas and new properties and additions to existing properties are continually being added. This acreage represents more than 44% of New Jersey's state-owned public open space.

Initially, the purchase of lands for the Wildlife Management Area System was funded entirely from the sale of hunting and fishing licenses. In 1961, the first of several *Green Acres* bond issues was approved, enabling the general public to participate in the development of the system. Approximately two-thirds of the present system was purchased through Green Acres bonds. Operational funding is provided entirely by hunters and anglers. Capital projects such as boat ramps, dams and parking lots are usually funded through combinations of *Federal Aid* (funds from excise taxes on sporting equipment), Green Acres and General Fund Capital appropriations.

Through the years, particularly with the infusion of Green Acres monies since 1961, the Wildlife Management Area System gradually broadened from preserving "Public Shooting and Fishing Grounds" to protecting and enhancing fish and wildlife habitat and providing a variety of wildlife-related recreational and educational opportunities.

The number of people in search of wildlife-oriented recreational opportunities has grown significantly in the last 35 years as shown by the *National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation*, conducted every five years by the *US Fish and Wildlife Service*. In New Jersey, the 2001 National Survey found that 135,000 people hunted, 806,000 people fished, and more than 2,328,000 people participated in other wildlife-oriented recreational activities (bird feeding, wildlife observation, photography, etc.). The survey includes only people 16 years of age and older.

While demand continues to increase, the overall amount of land available for the pursuit of wildlife-oriented recreation is declining. New Jersey loses roughly 45-sq. mi. of wildlife habitat to development every year. In view of this reality, acquiring and managing Wildlife Management Areas is an important part of the Division's mandate to provide for the needs of wildlife and public wildlife-related recreation.

For additional information please visit: <http://www.njfishandwildlife.com/wmas.htm>

Division of Parks & Forestry: State Parks & State Forests

(Map Symbol: )

The State Park Service administers 39 state parks, 11 state forests, three state recreational areas, 43 natural areas, more than 50 historic sites and districts, five state marinas, one golf course and 22 miscellaneous areas. These units cover a total area of nearly 400,000 acres.

Approximately 15 million people visit our state parks, forests and historic sites annually. The Park Service lands encompass more than 1,700 buildings, more than 400 roads, approximately 1,500 miles of trails, 326 bridges, 21 fire towers, 48 dams, an airstrip and numerous interpretive centers.

New Jersey's state parks and forests constitute a vital natural resource for residents of New Jersey. The areas provide not only environmental, but also substantial economic benefits of at least \$1.2 billion annually. The ecological benefits of the protected open space include watershed protection, hydrological services, wildlife/biodiversity conservation, carbon sequestration and storage, soil erosion control, and groundwater protection. The state parks and forests also generate approximately \$812 million in benefits to the state annually from tourism and recreation spending.

For more information about the NJ Division of Parks & Forestry or to receive a Calendar of Events, please call (800) 843-6420 or (609) 984-0370. Text telephone users: please call the NJ Relay Services at (800) 852-7899.

Office of Natural Lands Management: Natural Lands Trust Preserves

(Map Symbol: )

The New Jersey Natural Lands Trust was created in 1968 by the Legislature as an independent agency within the DEP's Division of Parks and Forestry 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. Currently the Trust owns and manages or holds conservation easements on over 18,500 acres of open space from Sussex to Cape May Counties. The Trust preserves land primarily by donations of open space through acquisition of land and conservation easements and manages its properties to conserve endangered species habitat, rare natural features, and significant ecosystems. The Trust invites passive use by the public for recreational and educational purposes wherever such use 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 instill in the public a conservation ethic for the protection of open space and its natural values.

For additional information visit:

<http://www.state.nj.us/dep/parksandforests/natural/index.html>

Delaware River Boat Access Sites

(Map Symbols: )

In this map book the Division of Fish & Wildlife has included a layer of boat access sites along the Delaware River to assist anglers in locating boating access from the NJ/NY state line downstream to the freshwater license line at the Commodore Barry Bridge in Pennsville, Salem County, NJ. Several sites below the Commodore Barry Bridge are also included. Access sites on both NJ and PA shorelines are included and anglers may launch from either shore. The access sites are open to the general public.