

**2013 – 2017  
New Jersey  
Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation  
Plan**

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

# **STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

**DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**  
**Bob Martin, Commissioner**

**NATURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES**  
**Rich Boornazian, Assistant Commissioner**

**GREEN ACRES PROGRAM**  
**Martha Sullivan Sapp, Acting Administrator**

**September 2014**

## **Table of Contents**

	<b><u>Page</u></b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	
<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The Policy Plan</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Supply and Demand</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Issues and Policies</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Action Plan</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>Project Priorities Selection</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>New Jersey Wetlands Plan</b>	<b>84</b>
<b><u>Appendices</u></b>	
<b>Land and Water Conservation Fund</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>New Jersey Land and Water Conservation Fund Projects</b>	<b>92</b>
<b>Green Acres Bond Issues Summary</b>	<b>93</b>

## List of Tables

<b><u>Table</u></b>	<b><u>Page</u></b>
<b>1 Statewide Land Use and Developed Acreage Percentages</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>2 County Acreages</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>3 Statewide Land Use</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>4 Urban Land Changes</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>5 New Jersey Open Space</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>6 County Population Change</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>7 County Characteristics</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>8 Residential Building Permits</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>9 Population Projections</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>10 State Park Attendance</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>11 Recreation Facility Requests</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>12 Trail Grant Requests</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>13 Open Space Preservation</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>14 State Land Funding</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>15 Land Preservation</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>16 Local Government Acquisition and Park Development</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>17 Non Profit Acquisition and Park Development Expenditures</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>18 State Land Acquisition Program</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>19 2007-2012 Land Preservation</b>	<b>30</b>

**This report was prepared by the Green Acres Program  
Bureau of Planning and Information Management  
Cherylynn Cooke, Secretary Assistant 3  
Steven Jandoli, Supervising Program Specialist  
Eric Knudsen, Administrative Analyst  
John Thomas, GIS Specialist**

**Green Acres Program  
Mail Code 501-01  
PO Box 420  
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0420  
Telephone: (609) 984-0500  
Fax: (609) 984-0608  
[www.state.nj.us/dep/greenacres](http://www.state.nj.us/dep/greenacres)**

## **Acknowledgements**

**The following NJDEP staff contributed to the preparation of the  
2013-2017 New Jersey Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan:**

**Lisa Carben – Division of Fish and Wildlife  
Robert Cartica – Division of Parks and Forestry  
Brian LaPolla – Division of Parks and Forestry  
Susan Lockwood – Land Use Regulation  
Edward Mulvan – Natural and Historic Resources  
Robert Opacki – Natural and Historic Resources  
Joseph Rogers – Local Government Assistance  
Cari Wild – Division of Parks and Forestry  
Ben Witherell – Office of the Commissioner**

**Also assisting in the preparation of the  
2013-2017 New Jersey Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan  
were these agencies and organizations:**

**New Jersey Highlands Council  
Monmouth County Division of Planning  
Monmouth County Park System**

## **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 2013-2017 update to the SCORP has been significantly influenced by the impact of Superstorm Sandy, which struck the State in October of 2012, and inflicted unprecedented damage on New Jersey. The State sustained nearly \$37 billion in damage, with 346,000 homes and housing units damaged or destroyed. Over 2.7 million homes and businesses lost power and more than 116,000 people were under a mandatory evacuation order and displaced by the storm. The storm also caused major damages to roads and mass transit systems.

The impact of Sandy upon New Jersey's open space and recreational lands and facilities 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 parks facilities sustained damage from the storm event, including serious damage to the two most visited parks in the State park system. Land preservation can provide protection from future storms as well as protecting water resources, wildlife habitat and providing recreational open space. Using \$330 million in post-Sandy relief monies, NJDEP Blue Acres Program has commenced an accelerated effort to acquire and remove flood-prone homes, thereby creating new open space that can mitigate the impacts of future storm events.

The 2013 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 Garden State Preservation Trust, LWCF, Forest Legacy Program and other sources of funding which may become available.

The 2013 SCORP also contains findings based on research and the public participation and planning processes. The findings presented in the 2013 SCORP are:

1. New Jersey has 1,323,374 acres of preserved public open space.
2. Open space preservation 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 a statewide priority.

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 2013 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, and relies upon State demographic data to provide the foundation for the issues and policies presented in the SCORP.

**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 process.**

**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 comprise one of the cornerstones of New Jersey's quality of life. New Jersey is a national leader in open space preservation and funding park and recreation facilities, as evidenced by thirteen Green Acres bond issues 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.**

**Today, New Jersey's natural and recreation resources face pressures from increasing population and development. According to Census data, the State's population grew by over 375,000 people since 2000, to over 8.8 million people, an increase of 4.5%. A total of 57,088 residential building permits were issued between 2008 and 2011 according to New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (NJLWD) statistics.**

**The 2013 SCORP is the ninth 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 2013 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 Garden State Preservation Trust, 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 of 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.

The SCORP is framed by the following initiatives which will guide implementation over the next five years.

## **NJDEP Goals**

NJDEP has made great strides in protecting and preserving the State's natural, recreational and historic resources over the past 43 years. Because the environmental and public health issues the State faces today are not the same as they were when the agency first began, NJDEP has embarked on a process of adapting its approach in order to ensure that environmental protection meets current and future demand. The following five goals have been adopted by NJDEP and direct it to look across all programs and environmental media in a comprehensive regional approach to achieve results valued by New Jerseyans and shaped by the regional characteristics of the state.

### **Goal 1 – Comprehensive Regional Environmental Management**

Alignment of planning, regulatory, enforcement, and property acquisition programs to ensure NJDEP successfully implements a more comprehensive environmental approach that supports our environmental mission, community concerns and recognizes a commitment to vibrant regions.

### **Goal 2 – Barnegat Bay Restoration**

Implement Governor's Ten Point Comprehensive Plan of Action of Barnegat Bay; expand this plan as we discover new issues and solutions so as to address water quality concerns specific to impacted surface water bodies throughout the state.

### **Goal 3 – Enhanced Protection in Environmentally Overburdened Communities**

Develop a new paradigm for the protection of communities overburdened by environmental stresses through a multimedia approach focusing on human health and the environmental

impacts; ensure that we work in concert to address issues related to air, water, preservation, acquisition, and affordable access to parks.

#### **Goal 4 – Sustainable Parks**

Establish a financially viable and stable system with dedicated funding sources that sustain our Parks with minimal General Fund reliance.

#### **Goal 5 – Renewable Energy Strategy**

Accelerate the transition to a clean energy economy.

### **America’s Great Outdoors**

In 2010, the America’s Great Outdoors (AGO) was launched and charged the Secretaries of the U.S. Departments of the Interior and Agriculture, the Administrator of U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Chair of the White House Council on Environmental Quality to develop a 21<sup>st</sup> century conservation and recreation agenda. This agenda is based on the following objectives:

1. Provide quality jobs, career pathways and service opportunities
2. Enhance recreational access and opportunities
3. Raise awareness of the value and benefits of America’s great outdoors
4. Engage young people in conservation and the great outdoors
5. Strengthen the Land and Water Conservation Fund
6. Establish great urban parks and community green spaces
7. Conserve rural working farms, ranches, and forests
8. Conserve and restore our national parks, wildlife refuges and forests
9. Protect and renew rivers and other waters
10. Make the federal government a more effective conservation partner

### **Policy Plan Strategic Directions**

As part of the SCORP preparation process, NJDEP Green Acres Program engaged in a strategic planning effort to prepare for conservation and recreation in the future.

### **Green Acres 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, the 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 hazard mitigation;**
- **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;**
- **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: Implement buyout program as a statewide hazard mitigation program**
- **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, Cooperative Endangered Species Fund and the North America Wetlands Conservation Act**

- **Planning:** Coordinate its preservation and planning activities with federal and local governments and the nonprofit community. The State will continue to provide technical assistance in open space planning to local governments and nonprofit organizations
- **Public Information:** Publicize its land acquisition efforts to increase public 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 projects
- **Partnerships:** Green Acres encourages nonprofit participation 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 planning and preservation.

**Public Participation**

There are many avenues for public participation in New Jersey's SCORP planning process. Green Acres staff also participated in conferences and other public events that address open space and recreation concerns statewide.

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 meeting on their application. This requirement ensures that local governments are providing an opportunity for residents to discuss open space and recreation issues.

In the past several years, many counties have established Green Tables. Green Tables are forums for organizations, local governments and the public to discuss open space and park recreation issues. They are often sponsored in partnership with a local government and can be effective planning venues and an opportunity for public participation.

The preparation of the SCORP itself has provided opportunities for public participation. Copies of the draft plan were mailed 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. Comments submitted by these various agencies, organizations and individuals have been incorporated into the 2013 New Jersey SCORP. The Green Acres Program also hosted two public meetings on the draft plan.

### **Summary of Findings**

Since Open Space preservation efforts began over five decades ago, New Jersey has successfully preserved over 1.5 million acres of open space and farmland. As set forth in more detail below, preserved space in New Jersey (including farmland) accounts for approximately 30% of land in the State, nearly on par with the 32% of land that is developed (see Tables 1 and 2).

Notwithstanding, New Jersey anticipates increases in population, which will foster increased demand for additional park and recreation facilities within the State. The preservation of additional acres should help to satisfy this demand. According to Census data, New Jersey's population in 2012 was 8,864,590, an increase of 450,240 since 2000. With 1,205 persons per square mile, New Jersey is the most densely populated state in the nation.

With population growth comes land development, reflected by 75,000 residential building permits issued between 2008 and 2012. Land development has not returned to the peak rates of the early to mid 2000s (16,000 acres were developed in 2007), owing in part to the

economic downturn that began in 2008. NJDEP land use data for 2002-2007 depicts statewide land cover changes in Table 3. Table 4 shows the counties with the greatest urban land cover changes during the same period.

**Table 1**  
**County Acreage Percentages Preserved, Developed and Available**

<u>County</u>	<u>Preserved</u>	<u>Developed</u>	<u>Available</u>
Atlantic	27.7%	17.6%	54.7%
Bergen	13.7%	72.7%	13.6%
Burlington	41.6%	21.5%	36.9%
Camden	18.8%	53.3%	27.9%
Cape May	45.8%	19.2%	35.0%
Cumberland	39.0%	13.9%	47.1%
Essex	11.4%	77.0%	11.6%
Gloucester	13.5%	36.3%	50.2%
Hudson	9.3%	73.2%	17.5%
Hunterdon	26.0%	26.1%	47.9%
Mercer	27.8%	50.0%	22.2%
Middlesex	11.8%	58.4%	29.8%
Monmouth	19.5%	48.3%	32.1%
Morris	30.3%	40.0%	29.7%
Ocean	37.5%	23.7%	38.8%
Passaic	51.9%	37.5%	10.6%
Salem	26.7%	13.0%	60.3%
Somerset	18.5%	47.0%	34.5%
Sussex	46.3%	16.6%	37.1%
Union	12.1%	83.1%	4.9%
Warren	<u>31.5%</u>	<u>18.3%</u>	<u>50.2%</u>
	30.2%	32.1%	37.7%

Source: NJDEP 2007 Land use/Land Cover

Note: Preserved includes open space and farmland as of 1/2012. Developed and available acreages as of 1/2012.

**Table 2**  
**County Preserved and Developed Acreages**

<u>County</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Preserved acres</u>	<u>Developed acres</u>
Atlantic	390,815	108,122	68,893
Bergen	153,479	21,020	111,518
Burlington	524,697	218,287	112,885
Camden	145,583	27,358	77,642
Cape May	183,171	83,916	35,221
Cumberland	321,148	125,230	44,771
Essex	83,023	9,452	63,928
Gloucester	214,975	29,104	77,963
Hudson	32,984	3,062	24,134
Hunterdon	279,784	72,660	73,062
Mercer	146,327	40,724	73,100
Middlesex	203,223	23,961	118,746
Monmouth	310,840	60,693	150,287
Morris	307,852	93,300	123,196
Ocean	485,076	181,858	115,178
Passaic	126,919	65,869	47,563
Salem	222,153	59,327	28,821
Somerset	195,122	36,078	91,803
Sussex	342,479	158,698	56,741
Union	67,440	8,130	56,024
Warren	<u>231,890</u>	<u>73,076</u>	<u>42,378</u>
	4,968,980	1,499,923	1,593,853

Source: NJDEP 2007 Land Use/Land Cover

Note: Preserved acres includes open space and farmland as of 1/2012. Developed acres as of 1/2012.

**Table 3**  
**New Jersey Statewide Land Use**  
**2002-2007 Acreage Change**

<u>Land Use</u>	<u>2002 Acres</u>	<u>2007 Acres</u>	<u>Change Acreage</u>
Agriculture	594,599	566,045	-28,554

Barren Land	59,138	51,678	-7,460
Forest	1,568,809	1,526,367	-42,442
Urban Land	1,452,077	1,532,364	80,287
Water	803,611	810,541	6,930
Wetlands	1,005,735	996,675	-8,760

Source: NJDEP GIS 2007 Land Use/Land Cover

**Table 4**  
**Highest County Urban Land Acres Increases**  
**2002-2007**

<u>County</u>	<u>2002 Acres</u>	<u>2007 Acres</u>	<u>Acres</u> <u>Change</u>
Monmouth	134,915	143,684	8,769
Ocean	101,311	109,146	7,835
Gloucester	65,840	73,492	7,652
Burlington	100,115	107,181	7,066
Middlesex	109,066	114,710	5,644
Atlantic	<u>60,039</u>	<u>65,553</u>	<u>5,514</u>
Totals	571,286	613,766	42,480

Source: NJDEP GIS 2007 Land Use/Land Cover

### **Findings**

1. New Jersey has preserved nearly 30% of its land area, nearly as much as the 32% of land that has been developed. Excluding farmland, New Jersey has preserved 1,323,374 acres of public open space as of July 1, 2013, representing 26% of New Jersey's land area.
2. Open space preservation is a tool of smart growth that provides 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 a priority.

**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	20,304		13,949	55,079	5,636		74,664	7,505	3,976	106,449	2,040	108,489
Bergen	0	2,452	3,328	208	10		3,546	9,209	5,626	20,833	865	21,698
Burlington	2,582		148,410	6,749	3,548		158,707	3,177	11,521	175,987	17,689	193,676
Camden	0		14,865	5,212	1,141		21,218	2,558	3,176	26,952	94	27,046
Cape May	11,993		20,147	38,480	479		59,106	2,953	4,563	78,615	3,097	81,712
Cumberland	0		5,614	73,710	224		79,548	165	2,470	82,183	28,160	110,343
Essex	21		608	0	33		641	6,007	2,365	9,034	308	9,342
Gloucester	0		79	9,499	998		10,576	2,536	4,245	17,357	1,002	18,359
Hudson	45		1,227	519	0		1,746	659	760	3,210	138	3,348
Hunterdon	0		11,376	5,676	1,916	108	19,076	7,776	9,899	36,751	6,258	43,009
Mercer	0		4,297	1,502	231		6,030	9,035	9,341	24,406	8,202	32,609
Middlesex	0		3,806	0	135		3,941	10,006	5,714	19,661	1,027	20,688
Monmouth	1,733		5,978	9,831	91	1,779	17,679	16,609	13,516	49,537	794	50,331
Morris	9,291		21,198	13,854	597		35,649	17,171	19,240	81,351	9,121	90,472
Ocean	24,497		33,673	72,800	4,727		111,200	11,407	7,255	154,359	28,090	182,450
Passaic	26		51,543	2,320	1,098		54,961	5,436	3,236	63,659	2,137	65,796
Salem	3,273		2,290	18,699	393		21,382	309	1,868	26,832	3,175	30,007
Somerset	188		6,227	423	19	152	6,821	10,479	8,689	26,177	2,436	28,613
Sussex	31,242		75,153	20,802	2,726		98,681	514	6,596	137,033	7,249	144,282
Union	0		1	0	0		1	6,572	1,396	7,969	151	8,120
Warren	9,332		19,087	10,837	2,795		32,719	1,621	4,319	47,991	4,994	52,984
<b>Total Acreage</b>	<b>114,527</b>	<b>2,452</b>	<b>442,856</b>	<b>346,200</b>	<b>26,797</b>	<b>2,039</b>	<b>817,892</b>	<b>131,705</b>	<b>129,771</b>	<b>1,196,347</b>	<b>127,027</b>	<b>1,323,374</b>

\* Includes recreation areas, natural areas, marinas, historic sites, reservoir sites and conservation easements  
Acreage of State Parks July 1, 2013  
Acreage of NJ Natural Lands Trust and Wildlife Management Areas as of November 4, 2013  
All other acreages as of January 1, 2012.

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

## **Supply and Demand**

As of July 1, 2013, there were 1,323,374 acres of land statewide being used for public conservation and recreation purposes (Table 5). This total does not include preserved farmland acreage of 205,723 acres. State, federal, county and municipal agencies have preserved 1,196,347 acres of land for public recreation and open space uses. This represents an increase of 73,548 acres of public open space since the publication of the 2008 SCORP. In 2012, 12,755 acres were preserved in the State, more than any other year during the 2007 to 2012 period (Table 14).

New Jersey State agencies are responsible for administering more public open space than all other entities (e.g., non-profits and other government entities). Specifically, State government agencies administer 817,892 acres of public open space, 62% of the total. Notably, the amount of public open space administered by the State has increased by 50,194 acres since the 2008 SCORP.

Indeed, New Jersey has one of the best funded open space and recreation programs in the nation. In addition to administering public open space at the State level, the State provides funds to county and municipal governments, as well nonprofits, for land acquisitions and park development. As is the case in other contexts, however, the State's ability to provide local governments and nonprofits with the funding they request is subject to financial constraints. Not surprisingly, funding requests outpace funding availability, but the State nevertheless has been able to satisfy 23% of all requests during the 2007-2012 period.

Specifically, county and municipal governments are responsible for 261,475 acres of public parkland across the state. These lands comprise 20% of New Jersey's public open space and recreation land. New Jersey's 21 counties manage 131,705 acres of parkland, a 16,808 acre increase. The State's 565 municipalities are responsible for 129,771 acres of parkland, 11,251 acres more than reported in the 2008 SCORP.

Nonprofit conservation organizations have preserved 127,027 acres of land statewide, an increase of 7,143 acres. Nonprofits manage 9% of New Jersey's open space.

The National Park Service and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service represent the federal government's efforts regarding open space and recreation in New Jersey. These two

agencies manage 114,527 acres of land, 9% of the State's open space. This figure represents a 2,024 acre increase.

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. By 2020, it is likely that New Jersey's population will exceed 9 million.

New Jersey's population in 2010 was 8,791,794, an increase of 377,544 since 2000 with a population density of 1,195 persons per square mile. This represents a growth rate of 4.5 percent. Census data for 2012 for New Jersey shows a population of 8,864,590 and a population density of 1,205 persons per square mile. New Jersey remains the most densely populated state in the nation and has been so for more than 50 years. According to data compiled by the (NJLWD), Gloucester County had the highest rate of population growth in New Jersey from 2000 to 2010 with a 13.2 percent increase, which was substantially larger than the 4.5 percent rate of statewide population growth. Nine other counties exceeded the statewide growth rate between 2000 and 2010: Ocean (12.8%), Atlantic (8.7%), Somerset (8.7%), Middlesex (8%), Cumberland (7.1%), Warren (6.1%), Burlington (6%), Hunterdon (5.2%) and Morris (4.7%). Two counties lost population, Cape May (4.9%) and Essex (1.2%).

Ocean County had the largest numeric increase of 65,651 between 2000 and 2010. Other large increases were in Middlesex (59,696), Gloucester (33,615), Somerset (25,954), Burlington (25,340) and Hudson (25,291) counties. These six counties accounted for more than 62 percent of New Jersey's total population growth between 2000 and 2010. Bergen County, with 905,116 residents, had the largest population, while Salem County remained the least populated county with 66,083 residents. Hudson County's population density neared 14,000 people per square mile while Salem County's was less than 200 people per square mile.

Data from the 2010 Census shows that the median age in New Jersey was 39 years. This was a rise of over two years from the 2000 Census. The State's population is clearly aging and the increased number of residents over age 65 reflect this. The age cohort with greatest percentage of growth was resident age 85 and over. The under 18 population was smaller in

**2010, although the school age population of 5 to 17 years old remained essentially unchanged.**

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

<u>County</u>	<u>2000 Population</u>	<u>2010 Population</u>	<u>Change Number</u>	<u>Change Percent</u>
Atlantic	252,552	274,549	21,997	8.7
Bergen	884,118	905,116	20,998	2.4
Burlington	423,394	448,734	25,340	6.0
Camden	508,932	513,567	4,725	0.9
Cape May	102,326	97,265	- 5,061	-4.9
Cumberland	146,438	156,898	10,460	7.1
Essex	793,633	783,969	-9,664	-1.2
Gloucester	254,673	288,288	33,615	13.2
Hudson	608,975	634,266	25,291	4.2
Hunterdon	121,989	128,349	6,360	5.2
Mercer	350,761	366,513	15,752	4.5
Middlesex	750,162	809,858	59,696	8.0
Monmouth	615,301	630,380	15,079	2.5
Morris	470,212	492,276	22,064	4.7
Ocean	510,916	576,567	65,651	12.8
Passaic	489,049	501,226	12,177	2.5
Salem	64,285	66,083	1,798	2.8
Somerset	297,490	323,444	25,954	8.7
Sussex	144,166	149,265	5,099	3.5
Union	522,541	536,499	13,958	2.7
Warren	<u>102,437</u>	<u>108,692</u>	<u>6,255</u>	<u>6.1</u>
Totals	8,414,350	8,791,894	377,544	4.5

Source: US Census Data, NJLWD

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

<u>County</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Land</u>	<u>Density</u>
Atlantic	275,422	556	495
Bergen	918,880	233	3,943
Burlington	451,336	799	565
Camden	513,539	221	2,321
Cape May	96,304	251	383
Cumberland	157,785	484	326
Essex	787,744	126	6,241
Gloucester	289,586	322	899
Hudson	652,302	46	14,121
Hunterdon	127,050	428	297
Mercer	368,303	225	1,640
Middlesex	823,041	309	2,664
Monmouth	629,384	469	1,342
Morris	497,999	460	1,082
Ocean	580,470	629	923
Passaic	502,885	184	2,724
Salem	65,774	332	198
Somerset	327,707	302	1,085
Sussex	147,442	519	284
Union	543,976	103	5,288
Warren	<u>107,653</u>	<u>356</u>	<u>301</u>
Totals	8,864,590	7,354	1,205

Land area in square miles

Density is persons per square miles

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, NJLWD 2012 population data

**Table 8**  
**New Jersey Residential Building Permits Authorized**  
**2008-2012**

<u>County</u>	<u>Total Permits</u>
Atlantic	2,644
Bergen	7,467
Burlington	3,960
Camden	3,401
Cape May	2,297
Cumberland	1,221
Essex	4,653
Gloucester	3,491
Hudson	9,823
Hunterdon	1,217
Mercer	2,387
Middlesex	6,125
Monmouth	5,313
Morris	3,408
Ocean	5,808
Passaic	2,068
Salem	591
Somerset	3,698
Sussex	1,142
Union	3,434
Warren	<u>879</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>75,027</b>

Source: NJLWD

The NJLWD has projected that by 2028, the State's population will be 9.3 million people (Table 9). As a result, it is expected that there will be demand for additional open space and recreation facilities in the future.

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.

Of course, children will continue to require open space and recreation resources. While many facilities already exist, they will need to be upgraded and improved to service another generation.

Open space is a basic resource for the development of recreational facilities for New Jersey's citizens. Continued development, to accommodate the needs of New Jersey's growing population, is certainly expected. However, at the same time, and in large part because of the increasing population, open space will be required to satisfy recreational demand and to perform other vital functions, such as aquifer recharge for water supply purposes.

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

<b><u>State</u></b>	<b><u>2010</u></b>	<b><u>2028</u></b>
New Jersey	8,791,894	9,380,200
<b><u>County</u></b>	<b><u>2010</u></b>	<b><u>2028</u></b>
Atlantic	274,549	309,700
Bergen	905,116	903,000
Burlington	448,734	499,200
Camden	513,657	544,900
Cape May	97,265	95,900
Cumberland	156,898	175,500
Essex	783,969	765,100
Gloucester	288,288	347,800
Hudson	634,266	594,100
Hunterdon	128,349	152,100
Mercer	366,513	401,400
Middlesex	809,858	873,800
Monmouth	630,380	702,000
Morris	492,276	532,400
Ocean	576,567	706,300
Passaic	501,226	492,900
Salem	66,083	69,200
Somerset	323,444	386,000
Sussex	149,265	169,800
Union	536,499	527,300
Warren	108,692	131,800

Source: NJLWD, US Census Data

New Jersey embraces “Balanced Land Use,” an approach that recognizes that land is a finite resource, and open space is but one of the legitimate competing uses for available land. Balanced Land Use recognizes that demand for open space for recreational purposes increases as a result of new development.

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

In addition to an increasing population, as well as funding requests by local governments and nonprofits, attendance at State Parks and Forests remains high, indicating a continued demand for open space. Attendance at state parks during Fiscal Year 2013 (July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2013) was over 18.7 million (Table 11), and between 2001 and 2012, more than 208 million people visited New Jersey State parks. In addition, annual attendance at some county parks systems exceeds 5 million people.

Additionally, the National Survey on Recreation and the Environment determined that participation in many outdoor recreation activities will increase over the next several decades, including the use of public open space for camping, hiking, nature observation, fishing and other recreational activities. Another trend indicator are Green Acres recreational facility funding requests in Table 12. Recreational trail grant funding requests also show increasing funding demand and interest in trails (Table 13).

**Table 10**  
**State Park and Forest Attendance**  
**July 1, 2012– June 30, 2013**

<u>State Park (SP) / State Forest (SF)</u>	<u>Attendance</u>
Allaire SP/Spring Meadow Golf Course	547,974
Barnegat Lighthouse SP	470,285
Bass River SF	95,231
Belleplain SF	431,574
Brendan T. Byrne SF/Wharton SF	827,486
Cape May Point SP	617,662
Cheesequake SP	1,396,737
D & R Canal SP/Washington Crossing SP	1,468,126
Farley Marina	501,195
Forked River Marina	11,177
Fort Mott SP/Parvin SP	477,946
Fortescue Marina	78,498
Hackelbarney SP	139,320
High Point SP/Swartswood SP	363,477
Hopatcong SP	387,704
Island Beach SP	523,633
Kittatinny Valley SP/Jenny Jump SP	190,783
Leonardo Marina	160,640
Liberty SP	2,953,022
Monmouth Battlefield SP	412,918
Ringwood SP/Wawayanda SP	1,223,898
Round Valley Recreation Area	304,775
Spruce Run Recreation Area/Voorhees SP	494,704
Stokes SF/Worthington SF	<u>1,306,901</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,385,666</b>

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

**Source:** 2013 Fiscal Year Attendance Report, Division of Parks and Forestry.

**Table 11**  
**Green Acres Recreation Facility Funding Requests**  
**2008-2011**

<u>Recreation Facility</u>	<u>Funding Requests</u>
Field Sports	195
Pathways	100
Court Sports	45
Playground	60
Waterfront	46
Picnic	29
Swimming	24

**Table 12**  
**Recreational Trail Grant Requests**  
**2010-2012**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Applications</u>	<u>Funding Request</u>
2010	108	\$2,837,656
2011	129	\$2,660,943
2012	151	\$3,305,195

As reported in the Outdoor Foundation’s Outdoor Recreation Participation Report 2011, nearly 50 percent of Americans ages six and older participated in outdoor recreation during 2010. Outdoor recreation in many forms remains popular both nationally and in New Jersey. Increasing participation in outdoor recreation activities will help combat childhood obesity and encourage children and adults to be more active.

### Issues and Policies

During the preparation of 2013 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 requirements 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 issues and policies to see that the State's open space and recreation infrastructure remains a critical element of the quality of life in New Jersey.**

### **Issue: Land Preservation**

**In addition to protecting natural and recreational resources, open space provides economic benefits. From increasing the value of adjacent properties and generating revenue from recreational activities to reducing the cost of public services, the economic impact of open space can be significant. The Outdoor Recreation Industry Association reports that in New Jersey, outdoor recreation generates \$17.8 billion in consumer spending, 158,000 jobs, \$6.1 billion in salaries and \$1.3 billion in state and local tax revenue. Tourism spending in New Jersey was nearly \$40 billion in 2012 and supported 318,560 jobs.**

**New Jersey's traditional land preservation efforts seek to preserve open space and farmland. Both of these 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.**

**In addition to traditional land preservation, 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. A total of \$36 million in Blue Acres funding has been used to purchase homes statewide. The Green Acres Program, which administers Blue Acres, has also provided funding for the purchase of flood prone properties. A total of \$3.1 million in Green Acres funding was provided in 2012 to nine communities towards the purchase of 171 homes. Another \$2.4 million in Coastal Blue Acres funding preserved undeveloped flood prone lands in the**

State's coastal zone. These funds are leveraged through federal reimbursements for a major portion of the acquisition cost.

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. Almost 77,000 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 water resources. The identification of critical natural resources is necessary for the continued environmental and economic viability of New Jersey. Over the last six years, 55,000 acres of open space have been preserved for public conservation and recreation purposes (Table 14).

**Table 13**  
**New Jersey Open Space Preservation**  
**2007-2012**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Open Space</u>
2007	11,658
2008	9,461
2009	8,621
2010	6,060
2011	6,453
2012	<u>12,755</u>
Totals	55,008

Source: NJDEP Green Acres Program

There are a total of 4,968,980 acres of land in New Jersey according to NJDEP 2007 land use data. There are a total of 1,529,097 acres of preserved open space and farmland, comprising 30 percent of New Jersey. Another 1,593,853 acres or 32 percent, 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 15-20 identify recent efforts in this regard.

**Table 14**  
**Green Acres Program**  
**State Land Acquisition Project Funding**  
**2009-2012**

<u>Project</u>	<u>Funding</u>
Barnegat Bay Watershed	\$ 6,500,000
Blue Acres	\$ 36,000,000
Cape May Peninsula	\$ 8,000,000
American Revolution Crossroads	\$ 12,000,000
Delaware and Raritan Canal	\$ 10,000,000
Delaware Bay	\$ 17,500,000
Delaware River Watershed	\$ 6,000,000
Highlands	\$ 38,000,000
Historic Resources	\$ 3,000,000
Natural Areas	\$ 8,000,000
Non Profit Camps	\$ 2,000,000
Pinelands	\$ 16,000,000
Ridge and Valley Greenway	\$ 11,000,000
Urban Parks	<u>\$ 12,000,000</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$186,000,000</b>

**Table 15**

**Green Acres Program Land Preservation  
2007-2012 Acres Preserved**

	<u>State Land</u>	<u>Local Government</u>	<u>Non Profit</u>	<u>Total</u>
2007	7,006	2,788	1,894	11,658
2008	5,492	3,008	961	9,461
2009	4,767	2,354	1,500	8,621
2010	1,643	3,540	877	6,060
2011	3,937	1,814	702	6,453
2012	<u>10,014</u>	<u>1,279</u>	<u>1,462</u>	<u>12,755</u>
Totals	32,859	14,783	7,366	55,008

**Table 16  
Green Acres  
Local Government Acquisition and Park Development  
2008-2012 Project Awards**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Acquisition</u>	<u>Park Development</u>	<u>Total</u>
2008	\$ 38,248,125	\$16,669,600	\$ 54,917,725
2009	\$ 75,549,795	\$44,573,625	\$120,123,420
2011	\$ 59,544,745	\$23,728,454	\$ 83,273,199
2012	<u>\$ 41,588,600</u>	<u>\$15,812,200</u>	<u>\$ 57,400,800</u>
Total	\$214,931,265	\$100,783,879	\$315,715,144

**Table 17  
Green Acres NonProfit Acquisition and Park Development  
2008-2012 Project Awards**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Acquisition</u>	<u>Park Development</u>	<u>Total</u>
2008	\$ 5,000,000	\$ 3,430,250	\$ 8,430,250
2009	\$ 12,715,000	\$ 7,204,700	\$ 19,919,700
2011	\$ 10,232,787	\$ 4,586,000	\$ 14,818,787
2012	<u>\$ 6,630,975</u>	<u>\$ 2,300,000</u>	<u>\$ 8,930,975</u>
Total	\$ 34,578,762	\$17,520,950	\$ 52,099,712

**Table 18**  
**Green Acres State Land Acquisition Program**  
**2007-2012 Acres Preserved**

<u>County</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Cost</u>
Atlantic	6,940	\$ 8,435,262
Burlington	1,787	\$ 3,572,930
Camden	64	\$ 850,750
Cape May	1,679	\$10,068,286
Cumberland	2,539	\$14,514,237
Essex	24	\$ 6,727,000
Gloucester	373	\$ 3,160,000
Hudson	14	\$ 2,000,000
Hunterdon	2,128	\$33,493,899
Mercer	376	\$ 4,235,705
Middlesex	143	\$ 5,288,240
Monmouth	1,402	\$21,983,219
Morris	2,790	\$26,889,977
Ocean	3,158	\$ 9,463,950
Passaic	852	\$ 8,729,551
Salem	2,125	\$18,149,780
Somerset	86	\$ 1,811,196
Sussex	3,876	\$24,793,059
Warren	<u>2,503</u>	<u>\$27,886,798</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>32, 859</b>	<b>\$232,053,839</b>

**Table 19**  
**Green Acres Land Preservation**  
**State Land, Local Government and NonProfit Programs**  
**2007-2012 Acres Preserved**

<u>County</u>	<u>State Land</u>	<u>Local Government</u>	<u>NonProfit</u>	<u>Total</u>
Atlantic	6,940	982	193	8,115
Bergen	0	95	24	119
Burlington	1,787	1,459	783	4,029
Camden	64	364	0	428
Cape May	1,679	0	425	2,104
Cumberland	2,539	0	295	2,834
Essex	24	40	11	75
Gloucester	373	409	99	881
Hudson	14	2	0	16
Hunterdon	2,128	2,532	595	5,255
Mercer	376	733	553	1,662
Middlesex	143	402	18	563
Monmouth	1,402	846	128	2,376
Morris	2,790	2,827	1,521	7,138
Ocean	3,158	1,723	690	5,571
Passaic	852	200	537	1,589
Salem	2,125	103	366	2,594
Somerset	86	878	162	1,126
Sussex	3,876	787	340	5,003
Union	0	24	0	24
Warren	<u>2,503</u>	<u>377</u>	<u>626</u>	<u>3,506</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>32,859</b>	<b>14,783</b>	<b>7,366</b>	<b>55,008</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.

To enhance visitors' experiences, New Jersey's State park system has launched a new mobile phone application to help park visitors plan their trips to state parks, forests and historic sites. The free application provides information on activities, amenities and services directly to users' smartphones. The initiative keeps the State park system current with public demand and use for technology and information. With this application, visitors can use their smartphones to find park overviews, directions, operating hours and recreational activities at various sites managed by NJDEP's Division of Parks and Forestry. Visitors will be able to locate recreational activities such as hiking, bicycling, swimming, fishing, boating or winter activities. A similar application for hunting, fishing and wildlife watching is also available.

The Green Acres Program has provided funding for park and recreation development since 1974. Between 2008 and 2012, the Green Acres Program has awarded nearly \$120 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 \$62 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 and low interest loans to legislatively designated urban aid communities for open space and recreation projects.

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 2008 and 2012, the Green Acres Program awarded \$122.1 million to 221 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 \$61 million was spent in urbanized counties between 2007 and 2011 to preserve nearly 4,200 acres of land.

Two recent projects demonstrate the ability of NJDEP to work with public and private sector partners to preserve open space and provide recreation opportunities in the State's urban communities. In Hudson County, the State worked with Weehawken Township, Union City, the New Jersey Infrastructure Trust and the Trust for Public Land to preserve a 14 acre reservoir. Located in Weehawken on the border of Union City, the reservoir had not been used as a potable water supply for many years and was surrounded by a thin strip of land. Both municipalities are among the most densely populated in the nation. Nearly \$11 million in grant and loan funding was used to preserve the property, located just blocks from the Lincoln Tunnel and has spectacular views of the Manhattan skyline.

In Union County, a Consent Order directed Linden to remediate and the close the landfill located on the Rahway River. Linden agreed to enhance 50 acres of surrounding forest and wetlands that would become an element of a greenway along the Rahway River. The project, part of the Hawk Rise Sanctuary includes a walkway and trail system, overlook platforms, pedestrian bridges and interpretive signage. Linden committed \$1 million for the project while NJDEP's Green Acres Program and Natural Resource Restoration Program provided a \$1 million match to natural resource damages from a separate settlement. Several area businesses also contributed to the project and the New Jersey Audubon Society will conduct public programs on the site.

In 2011, the Great Falls in Paterson became the nation's 397<sup>th</sup> national park, Paterson Great Falls National Historic Park. The 77 foot waterfall of the Passaic River served as basis for the development of water systems for industrial use. The Great Falls of Paterson were designated a National Natural Landmark in 1967 and the mills of Paterson a Natural Historic Landmark District in 1976. A general management plan will be developed with public participation to guide the long term management of the park.

Transportation projects in New Jersey have also contributed to public recreation opportunities. The completion of Route 52 bridge in 2012 over the Great Egg Harbor Bay between Somers Point and Ocean City serves as an example of how transportation and recreation can be combined to address public needs. The \$500 million bridge replacement not only services the peak summer traffic of 40,000 cars daily and provides a much improved primary evacuation route for Ocean City but dramatically improves pedestrian and bicycle access and unprecedented opportunities for fishing, boating, birding and sightseeing. Shared walkways stretch the length of the 2.2 mile bridge, making it possible to walk from Somers Point and Ocean City. Along that pathway, there are four fishing piers, two boat ramps, several scenic outlooks and a visitor's center.

The Route 36 Bridge to Gateway Natural Recreation Area at Sandy Hook is another example of a rebuilt bridge designed for recreational use. Linking to Monmouth County's Henry Hudson Trail, this bridge demonstrates the multiple goals that can be achieved by planning for both transportation and recreation. Given the public infrastructure cost of transportation and recreation facilities, the public dollars invested must meet a variety of public needs.

**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 of 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 regions of New Jersey that are considered State Resource Areas.

**Highlands**

In New Jersey, the Highlands Region includes almost 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 just 17% of the state, but it is the source of water for 5.4 million people in New Jersey, approximately 64% of the State's population. The Highlands generate nearly 900 million gallons of water daily for potable water, 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. Preservation is a key component in protecting these water resources.

Over 100,000 acres of land in the Highlands Region have been preserved by the State, local governments and conservation organizations with Green Acres funding since 1987. Green Acres has committed \$158 million in State Land Acquisition funding to Highlands land preservation projects since 1999. Almost 4,000 acres in the Highlands was preserved by the State between 2008 and 2011. Another 4,718 acres were preserved by local governments and nonprofits during the same time with \$40 million of Green Acres funding assistance.

### *Coastal Zone*

Superstorm Sandy at the end of October 2012 wreaked unprecedented damage on New Jersey. The State sustained nearly \$37 billion in damages with 346,000 homes and housing units damaged or destroyed, over 2.7 million homes and businesses without power and more than 116,000 people were under a mandatory evacuation order and displaced by the storm. The storm also caused major damages to roads and mass transit systems.

Since many public park and recreation facilities are located in coastal and waterfront areas, these facilities were impacted by Sandy. New Jersey's state park system suffered over \$107 million in damages and local park systems were also affected. Island Beach and Liberty State Parks each saw a 45% decrease in public attendance as a result of Superstorm Sandy in FY 2013. Statewide, nearly 184,000 acres of public open space was inundated by the Sandy storm surge.

Rebuilding and recovery requires not only a focus on park and recreation facilities but also a focus on the opportunity to remove buildings in storm prone areas through buyouts from willing sellers. These buyouts not only create open space but prevent future damage and the associated costs. NJDEP's Green Acres Program provides funding not only for repair of storm damage recreation facilities but also, through the Blue Acres Program, to purchase properties. The State is proposing to use \$300 million in federal funding to acquire approximately 1,300 flood prone homes. A total of 306 property owners have accepted Blue Acres buyout offers and there have been 154 closings so far and 48 homes have been demolished. NJDEP has identified 946 properties for buyouts in 10 municipalities that sustained major flooding from Sandy or previous storms.

More generally, 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 and provide flood control, pollution abatement and have tremendous natural resource values. More than 50 species of fish and shellfish support commercial and recreational fisheries. Tourism in New Jersey's coastal communities is a multibillion 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 certain species of migrating raptors in the fall or shorebirds that stop along Cape May's Delaware Bayshore in the spring.**

**Coastal municipalities can see their summer population double and even triple. 1.6 million people visited Island Beach and Cape May Point State parks in FY2012. Another 782,796 used the State's marinas. Atlantic, Monmouth and Ocean Counties saw a population increase of over 100,000 people between 2000 and 2010. New Jersey has spent \$54.5 million in Green Acres funds to preserve almost 9,800 acres in the coastal zone between 2008 and 2011.**

**Some of the most sensitive coastal ecosystems are also the most heavily used recreational resources in the State. New Jersey's Barnegat Bay is a critically important natural, recreational and economic resource. In 2010, the Governor unveiled a 10 point action plan to address the short and long term health of Barnegat Bay, which was designated an estuary of national significance by the National Estuary Program.**

**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, as well as a population of more than 550,000 people, which more than doubles during the summer season.**

**The action plan contains two items that directly affect open space and recreation, land preservation and reducing water craft impacts. The State, working with local governments and other partners, has preserved nearly 3,000 acres in the watershed and has identified**

**another 30,000 acres for preservation. Preserving open space helps to protect the Bay's water quality.**

**Boats and personal watercraft can harm environmentally sensitive areas of Barnegat Bay if operated carelessly by damaging submerged aquatic vegetation and disturbing habitats. Research identified ecologically sensitive areas and a stakeholder process was initiated to discuss management options to protect these areas. A map depicting important habitat areas and management lines was produced and made available for public use.**

**In addition to the land preservation and recreational boating actions, the following accomplishments are some of the other actions implemented to date 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, and establishing an Oyster Creek Safety Advisory Panel;**
- Making available \$20.3 million in zero and low-interest loans and principal forgiveness loans for local government projects to reduce pollution from stormwater runoff;**
- Providing nearly \$3 million in Clean Water Act grant awards for restoration projects to improve the quality of water flowing into Barnegat Bay;**
- Teaming up with leading research organizations in the region, including Rutgers University and the New Jersey Sea Grant Consortium, to fund 10 studies that fill in critical research gaps, provide baseline data, and assist the DEP in making policy decisions about steps to restore the Bay;**
- Launching a new watershed-wide water quality monitoring network to collect data that will improve understanding of conditions in the Bay, assess these conditions against water quality standards, and direct restoration efforts;**
- Holding two annual watershed-wide clean ups, Barnegat Bay Blitz, involving thousands of volunteers and NJDEP staff;**
- Implementing the strictest fertilizer law in the nation.**

**Public access to the water remains an issue in some coastal communities, and the need for adequate parking and related facilities is increasing. As more people engage in that quintessential New Jersey summer activity, “going down the shore”, it becomes increasingly**

important to preserve and enhance public access. The need for adequate public access is more than a luxury, it is a necessity and a legal right under the Public Trust Doctrine. In light of the importance of the rights protected by the Public Trust Doctrine, NJDEP adopted new public access rules for coastal management and permit rules. These rules will ensure the public's rights to access tidal waters continue to be protected to provide realistic and meaningful public access and recreation opportunities.

The Public Access Rule recognizes the diversity of New Jersey's shore and waterfronts that provide a wide range of public access opportunities: ocean and bay beaches, marinas and boat ramps, urban greenways and waterfront parks, natural areas and historic sites. The rule maintains existing public access and provides tools to help the local governments improve it.

The rule, to be recognized in NJDEP permitting processes, provides the opportunity for new access points to be created and existing ones enhanced by incentivizing local governments to work with NJDEP to adopt plans that are designed to meet local and regional access needs. The rule also mandates access be provided for new developments either on-site or offsite if a municipality establishes a public access fund.

### **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 over 1.1 million visitors in FY 2013. Another 347,000 people visited Morristown and Thomas Edison National Parks. These historic sites are part of the over 1,601 sites listed on the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Sites. New Jersey's Historic Preservation Office provides technical assistance to individuals, organizations and government agencies in the identification, evaluation and protection of historic resources. An ongoing historic preservation initiative in New Jersey is the Crossroads of the American Revolution National Heritage Area. This 14 county region was

designated a National Heritage Area in 2006 and was the focus of significant actions and engagements during the Revolution War. The National Heritage Area includes Morristown National Historic Park and Monmouth and Princeton Battlefield state parks. The Green Acres Program provided \$12 million for land preservation between 2009 and 2012 to preserve sites related to New Jersey's Revolutionary War history. The relationship between 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 are an enormous recreation asset with camping, hiking, canoeing, fishing, hunting and birding, among some of the activities that occur in the Pinelands. The State has several major open space holdings in the Pinelands and has preserved over 214,000 acres in the Pinelands with Green Acres funding. A total of \$16 million in Green Acres state land funds was committed for Pinelands land preservation projects between 2009 and 2012. Almost 9,300 acres were preserved by the State, local governments and conservation organizations between 2009 and 2011 but there remain areas that still require protection. The Pinelands Development Credit Program has preserved 51,610 acres and NJDEP Limited Practical Use Program complements public land acquisition programs. 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. 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. ONLM has identified 343 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, promotion of State Plan policies 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. Greenways are an economical and efficient way to preserve public open space throughout New Jersey. Greenways can offer close to home recreational activities such as walking, running, biking and birding. Those associated with water can provide canoeing and fishing opportunities. Greenways also can protect environmentally sensitive areas, link public open space areas, provide wildlife habitat and preserve community character.

Open space and recreation planners have a powerful tool available to aid them in protecting important natural, recreational and historic resources in their communities. Garden State Greenways, created by the New Jersey Conservation Foundation (NJCF), is an interactive map-based system that provides a statewide vision for land preservation in New Jersey.

Garden State Greenways provides a map-based vision for a potential statewide system of parks, natural areas, farmland and historic sites, linked together by greenways and trails. An interconnected system of open space, or ‘green infrastructure’ is envisioned to lessen the environmental impacts of development and help to maintain the quality of life in New Jersey. To accomplish this vision, Garden State Greenways has eight goals:

- Establishment of parks, trails or other protected lands within a reasonable distance of every New Jersey resident.
  
- Protection of New Jersey’s critical natural resources such as aquifers, surface water, rare and endangered species habitat, and prime agricultural soils.
  
- Protection of large, contiguous tracts of undeveloped land.
  
- Protection of large, contiguous tracts of farmland for the long-term viability of agriculture and the maintenance of scenic and cultural landscapes.
  
- Protection of parks, natural lands, farmland and historic sites, to maintain historic character, visual context and interpretive value.

- **Linking New Jersey’s public open space lands with greenways.**
- **Granting public access, where appropriate, to lands to allow the public to benefit from scenic and recreational opportunities.**
- **Coordination of state, local and private preservation as well as land use planning efforts, around shared GIS data and maps.**

**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, 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 Jerseyans. 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.**

**DOT’s Scenic Byways Program is an example of the relationship between transportation, open space, and recreation. Scenic Byways 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.**

**New Jersey has seven designated Scenic Byways:**

- **Bayshore Heritage Byways – Cape May, Cumberland and Salem counties, 122 miles**
- **Delaware River Scenic Byway – Hunterdon County, 34 miles**
- **Millstone Valley Byway – Somerset County, 27 miles**

- **Palisades Scenic Byway – Bergen County, 10 miles**
- **Pine Barrens Byway – Atlantic, Burlington, Cape May and Cumberland Counties, 130 miles**
- **Warren Heritage Scenic Byway – Warren County, 19 miles**
- **Upper Freehold Historic Farmland Byway – Monmouth County, 24 miles**

**NJDEP staff serves on the New Jersey Scenic Byways Advisory Committee. If a route is approved as a scenic byway, the byway sponsor has five years to prepare and complete a Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan. Federal grant funding is available for byway projects for program development, corridor management plans, facilities, recreation and natural resource projects, interpretive information and related projects. Three New Jersey byways were awarded \$1.6 million in grant funding in 2012.**

**NJDOT also prepares and implements the New Jersey Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan and coordinates the Bicycle and Pedestrian Resource Project. The Resource Project is an information clearinghouse and technical resource center that identifies significant bicycle and pedestrian plans and projects throughout New Jersey. DOT 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. Another 18 geographically diverse tour guides for bicyclists are available online as well.**

**NJDOT is also promoting Complete Streets, an initiative aimed at having streets being designated 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, provide connection to bicycling and walking trip generators such employment residential, recreation and retail facilities, promote healthy lifestyles, create more livable communities, reduces traffic congestion and provide fiscal efficiencies through project design. To date 30 New Jersey local governments have passed resolutions in support of Complete Streets.**

**Ongoing trail projects continue in New Jersey. The North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA), the federally mandated Metropolitan Planning Organization for the 13 county northern New Jersey region, is coordinating the Morris Canal Working Group, an effort to reuse this waterway for public recreation and to preserve and protect its historic significance. The NJTPA is currently sponsoring two planning studies of the Morris Canal**

in Warren County and in Jersey City in Hudson County. A plan for the canal's preservation has also been prepared for the canal in Morris County and Passaic County has been actively working on canal projects and was awarded \$532,000 in grant funds in 2012 to create bike lanes along the canal and upgrade sidewalks. Completed in 1831 and in operation until 1924, the Morris Canal connected Phillipsburg in Warren County to Jersey City in Hudson County and was an engineering marvel covering a distance of 102 miles through 36 municipalities in Essex, Hudson, Morris, Passaic, Sussex and Warren counties. The Morris Canal provides the opportunity for a greenway that will cross northern New Jersey offering many public recreation, historic and economic benefits.

**Policy:**

It shall be the policy of the State of New Jersey to promote greenway and trail planning, implementation and the use of Garden State Greenways by local governments, public agencies, conservation organizations and the public.

**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 millions more 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.

Both state and local governments face pressing challenges to meet the goal of proper stewardship of the public's lands and recreational resources. Among these challenges are increasing 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 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 ongoing 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. CBT revenue will

increase from \$15 million a year to \$32 million beginning in 2016. With nearly 800,000 acres of land administered by the Division of Parks and Forestry and the Division of Fish and Wildlife, 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 FY2007 to FY2011, NJDEP invested \$62 million in state park projects and \$12 million in fish and wildlife projects.

The cost of operating the State park system is about \$39 million annually. However, the park system now generates just \$8 million through fees and leases, or 21 percent of its total operational cost. NJDEP has embarked on a sustainable funding strategy for New Jersey's state park system. The long term strategy centers on making all State parks accessible without increasing park entrance fees for New Jersey residents. This new model will enable parks to generate self-sustaining revenues that will improve visitor services and amenities, make the park experience more rewarding for millions of visitors, and allow NJDEP to focus resources on stewardship and protection of these important natural, historic and recreation assets.

NJDEP's strategy is designed to generate 38 percent of the State park system's operating budget by 2015. Some projects are already underway including a Request for Proposal (RFP) for Liberty State Park various concessions, leasing the state golf courses, and identification of pilot sites for the installation of solar arrays on impervious surfaces. These new amenities and programs will help finance park operations while at the same time expanding and enhancing visitor services and offerings. Although these new services will be attained with the help of nonprofit and corporate partners, NJDEP will continue to own, manage and operate the parks. The strategy has two phases focusing on short and long term revenue growth. The goal of the first phase is to increase non-tax resources to \$15 million by 2015 through an initial round of partnerships with private sector and non-profit organizations and environmental foundations at some of the largest state parks. The longer term goal is to raise about two thirds of the annual budget for the park system from alternative funding sources, thereby greatly reducing reliance on the state budget while increasing funding for the state park system.

New revenues will be generated from a combination of earnings from new and expanded services such as additional food amenities, golfing and boating opportunities, as well as use

of partnerships that will bring in new expertise to produce new revenue opportunities, and use of outside professionals for specialized and non-DEP functions. While there will be no increases in park entrance fees, there may be a small increase for other park amenities, such as group camping, boat storage, and bus passes. However, New Jersey's fees for these amenities will remain significantly lower than other states, as well as local entities providing similar services in New Jersey.

To change the parks funding base and make it more sustainable, NJDEP will take a new direction in running the state park system that includes:

- Marketing and managing each state park's unique offerings and amenities, including their ecological significance;
- Establishing pricing for amenities in line with other states and local competition;
- Having nonprofit partners provide amenities and financial support;
- Staffing at sufficient levels to maintain operational excellence;
- Using new funding to support stewardship, interpretive services and staffing;
- Eliminating non-mission critical functions and expenses.

In particular, Liberty State Park in Hudson County, Island Beach State Park in Ocean County, and Wharton State Forest in Atlantic, Burlington and Camden counties, will be prioritized as pilot projects. The new plan was developed with input from park employees and a review of partnership successes attained by other states and the National Park Service.

The control of invasive species, particularly plants, is a major stewardship issue in New Jersey. More than one thousand nonindigenous plants species have become established in New Jersey. Fortunately, not all of them have harmful or invasive qualities. But some of these species are harmful and crowd out native plant species, altering the structure of natural plant communities, disrupting ecosystem functions and degrading recreational opportunities. While statewide eradication of invasive species is impossible, site specific removal and restoration is possible and is occurring throughout New Jersey.

## **Policy:**

The State of New Jersey's long-term plan for future acquisition and stewardship of open space is expressed in its statutory law, which states that the quality of life, economic prosperity, and environmental quality in this State are served by the protection and timely preservation of open space and farmland, better management of those lands, resources, historic properties, and recreational facilities that are already under public ownership or protection. Further, the protection and preservation of New Jersey's water resources, including the quality of quantity of the State's water supply, is essential to the quality of life and economic health of the citizens of the State; that the acquisition of flood-prone areas is in the best interest of the State to prevent the loss of life and property that the preservation of the existing diversity of animal and plant species is essential to sustaining both the environment and the economy of this State, and the conservation of adequate habitat for endangered, threatened, and other rare species is necessary to preserve this biodiversity. Finally, it is also the policy of the State of New Jersey to provide funding and technical assistance to local governments and conservation organizations for land preservation and the development and rehabilitation of park and recreation areas.

NJDEP will continue to utilize Green Acres general obligation bond act repayments, constitutionally-dedicated corporation business tax monies, and Blue Acres post-Sandy relief funds to achieve the policy goals stated above. NJDEP is presently examining the efficacy and impacts of a wide range of potential funding sources to fund future acquisition and stewardship activities, as well as proposals pending before the State Legislature.

## **Action Plan**

In addition to implementing SCORP policies, this Action Plan implements the goals of NJDEP and America's Great Outdoors. The successful implementation of the policies of this plan depends on outlining a plan framework through which strategies can be formulated and orchestrated 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 National Park Service and United States Fish and Wildlife Service in New Jersey. (NJDEP, local governments, conservation organizations)
5. Encourage local governments to utilize the Municipal Land Use Law to preserve open space through planning and zoning actions. (NJDEP, local governments, environmental commissions)
6. 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)
7. Promote the retention of private open space and recreation areas through planning, education and other methods. (NJDEP, private providers)
8. Seek the permanent protection of privately held watershed lands. (NJDEP, local governments, conservation organizations),
9. Promote the preservation open space and farmland through cooperative projects. (NJDEP and Farmland Preservation Program)
10. Continue to provide funding for Blue Acres projects. (NJDEP)

## **Issue: Recreation**

### **Actions**

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

3. Foster greater interaction between local government recreation agencies and school boards on shared facility use. (NJDEP, local governments, local school boards)
4. Encourage municipalities to utilize the provisions of the Municipal Land Use Law to establish park and recreation facilities as part of the municipal master plan process. (NJDEP, local governments, environmental commissions)
5. Continue the Green Acres Tax Exemption Program in order to provide for public access to private lands and recreation facilities. (NJDEP, local governments, private recreation providers, private land owners)
6. 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)
7. Continue to work to establish OHV parks. (NJDEP, local governments, OHV groups, commercial operators)
8. Foster cooperation between state, local governments and nonprofits to promote the health benefits of outdoor recreation. (NJDEP, local governments, nonprofits)
9. Continue local government funding for urban open space and recreation projects. (NJDEP, local governments)
10. Continue funding conservation organization projects in urban centers. (NJDEP, conservation organizations)
11. Continue the preservation of land for conservation and recreation purposes in urbanized counties by the State. (NJDEP)
12. Foster partnerships between urban communities and nonprofit groups on recreation programming and the operation of park and recreation areas. (NJDEP, local governments, community groups)
13. Encourage urban municipalities to establish public open space and recreation areas in coordination with redevelopment initiatives. (NJDEP, State Planning Commission, local governments, economic development authorities)
14. Continue the preservation of priority sites identified in the NY/NJ Harbor Estuary Comprehensive Management Plan. (NJDEP, local governments, conservation groups)
15. 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. Provide funding for local governments and conservation organizations to acquire lands for parks and develop recreation facilities in the Pinelands. (NJDEP, local governments, Pinelands Commission, conservation groups)
3. Ensure that open space and recreation projects are consistent with the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan. (NJDEP, Pinelands Commission)
4. Continue to protect important water resources and other natural resources in the Highlands. (NJDEP, Highlands Council, local governments, 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 for state coastal and waterfront recreation areas. (NJDEP)
7. Continue to provide Green Acres funding to improve public access to local government and conservation organizations for coastal and waterfront projects. (NJDEP, local governments, conservation organizations, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration)
8. Continue to provide Green Acres funding for state land, local government and conservation organization acquisition projects for the Barnegat Bay and Delaware Bay watershed and the Hudson-Raritan Estuary. (NJDEP)
9. Continue to provide Green Acres funding for the protection of Natural Heritage Priority Sites. (NJDEP)
10. Continue to provide Green Acres funding for the preservation of historic sites.
11. Continue to preserve and protect State Resource Areas through planning, regulation and acquisition efforts. (NJDEP, local governments, regional agencies, conservation organizations)
12. 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)

**Issue: Greenways and Trails**

**Actions:**

1. Promote the use of the Garden State Greenways statewide. (NJDEP, New Jersey Conservation Foundation, local governments, conservation organizations)

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

### **Issue: Stewardship**

#### **Actions:**

1. **Continue funding for land preservation, park and recreation projects and historic preservation. (NJDEP, local governments, conservation organizations)**
2. **Continue Green Acres funding for local governments and conservation organization for park and recreation development projects. (NJDEP, local governments, conservation organizations)**
3. **Continue to use Corporate Business Tax to fund stewardship projects on state open space and recreation lands. (NJDEP)**
4. **Increase public access to public open space and recreation areas. (NJDEP, local governments and conservation organizations).**
5. **Provide technical assistance to local governments and conservation organization on natural resource protection, restoration and open space and recreation planning. (NJDEP)**
6. **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 2013 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. Over 300 projects have received LWCF monies representing an investment of almost \$120 million since the program's inception. 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 2013 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 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 566 municipalities and to

over 150 eligible nonprofit conservation organizations. Green Acres staff provide technical assistance and public information at a variety of forums. From municipal council meetings, 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 money among local project proposals is limited to the projects receiving ranking scores justifying state or federal funding.

The list of potential applicants eligible to receive LWCF assistance is further refined by a number of factors:

- 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.
- The past performance record of an applicant is also evaluated in the LWCF grant selection process.

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 2013 SCORP.

The Green Acres State Land 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 and 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.

Pinelands Section 502 funds, when available, have been combined with Green Acres State land funds to purchase lands within the Pinelands National Reserve. Project selection is governed by conformance with the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan and requires the approval of the Pinelands Commission. Priorities are developed with public participation and are reviewed by government agencies and interest groups. LWCF monies are also used with state land monies for acquisition projects throughout New Jersey.

The appropriation bills which authorize monies for land acquisition typically direct 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 is obligated to adhere 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. 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:** Burlington, Camden, Gloucester and Ocean counties

**South Team:** Atlantic, Cape May, Cumberland 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 supply intake**

**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**

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

**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.**

**3. Points are assigned as follows:**

- a. Consistency with the State Strategic Plan– up to 2 points**
  
- b. Consistency with the Land Preservation Plan – up to 2 points**
  
- c. Consistency with the Pinelands Management Plan, the Highlands Master Plan , Garden State Greenways, Open Space Plans– 1 point**
  
- d. Consistency with Open Space Plans – 1 point**
  
- e. Consistency with Garden State Greenways – 1 point**

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT 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 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.**
  
- each b) **Recreation Potential (Acquisition only) Up to 2 pts.**  
**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.**
  
- (see table 2) c) **Water Access (Acquisition and Development) Up to 6 pts.**  
**This subfactor evaluates the extent to which a project improves needed visual and/or physical public access to water.**
  
- each d) **Design Quality (Development only) Up to 2 pts.**  
**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.**

+8, -8

e) **Cost Effectiveness (Acquisition and Development) Point range:**

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).

**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.

**TABLE 1**  
**BALANCED LAND USE**

<u>County</u>	<u>Municipal Pts</u>	<u>County Pts</u>
Atlantic	1	3
Bergen	1	1
Burlington	4	5
Camden	2	2
Cape May	1	2

<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**

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

## **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)      Up to 5 pts.**  
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 in 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  
each**

**HISTORIC RESOURCE PRESERVATION (Acquisition only) Up to 3 pts.**

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.

- 2) c) **Water Access (Acquisition and Development)** Up to 6 pts. (see table)
- 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.
- +8, -8 e) **Cost Effectiveness (Acquisition and Development)** Point range:
- 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).
- 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<sup>TM</sup>) Green Building Rating System for New Construction and Major Renovations Version 2.1.

**TABLE 1**

**BALANCED LAND USE**

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

**TABLE 2**

**PUBLIC ACCESS TO WATER  
Need for Access**

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

## **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 996,783 acres of wetlands in New Jersey comprised of 798,012 acres of freshwater wetlands and 198,771 acres of tidal wetlands based on NJDEP 2007 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 less than 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 the FWPA through an agreement with NJDEP.

In 1994, New Jersey assumed the Federal 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 404 program when the state program incorporates all the federal law's requirements and receives United

States Environmental Protection Agency 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. They are 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 2006 and 2010, the Division of Land Use Regulation issued 4,685 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.

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 his or her land for wetland mitigation purposes; a non-profit or governmental agency that will develop and oversee the wetland mitigation project and will manage the land; and the Council to act as the funding source for the mitigation work. The Council has funded several projects with these types of partnerships.

**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 has 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 nearly 73,000 acres of wetlands between 1999 and 2011.

**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 projects to nonprofit conservation organizations and local governments.
4. Work with conservation organizations and local governments to coordinate wetland protection 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, the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission and the New Jersey Highlands Council.

## **Land and Water Conservation Fund**

### **America's Champion for Parks and Recreation**

Public conservation and recreation areas are part of our national heritage. The American people's love of the outdoors is a common value of our nation. The Land Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) has provided more than \$14.4 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 40,000 state and local government projects since 1965. In 2012, the LWCF awarded \$42 million, which funded 346 park projects and protected nearly 35,000 acres. 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.

Since its establishment in 1965, 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 \$120,000,000 in LWCF for open space acquisition and park and recreation projects. New Jersey's nine 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 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, 308 projects have received LWCF financial support. Sixty-eight State, county and municipal acquisition projects have used almost \$57 million of LWCF funds toward preservation of 75,503 acres. LWCF park development projects total 237 in number and have received over \$60 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 and to other federal agencies.

**New Jersey Land and Water Conservation Fund Projects**  
As of September 2013

<u>Projects Funded</u>	<u>LWCF</u>
237 Development Projects	\$ 61,391,650
68 Acquisition Projects	\$ 56,900,774
3 Planning Projects	\$ 547,500
308 Projects	\$118,839,924

**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	29	684	\$ 6,654,752
Morris	20	3,166	\$ 7,166,806
Multi **	17	27,923	\$ 15,318,828
Ocean	11	5,701	\$ 5,599,571
Passaic	12	0	\$ 4,162,860
Salem	4	2,217	\$ 977,327
Somerset	8	500	\$ 721,878
Sussex	9	3,122	\$ 7,954,552
Union	16	0	\$ 1,693,494
Warren	9	952	\$ 7,595,065
	308	75,503	\$118,839,924

\*\* Located in two or more counties.

## **Green Acres Funding Summary 1961-2009**

**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 \$121 Million**

\$45 million for State acquisition and development  
\$55 million for Local acquisition and development  
\$ 9 million for Nonprofit acquisition and development  
\$12 million for Blue Acres acquisition

**2009 \$242 Million**

\$90 million for State acquisition and development  
\$110 million for Local acquisition and development  
\$18 million for Nonprofit acquisition and development  
\$24 million for Blue Acres acquisition

**Supplemental Funding**

**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

For more information, see [www.nj.gov/dep/greenacres/bondact.html](http://www.nj.gov/dep/greenacres/bondact.html).

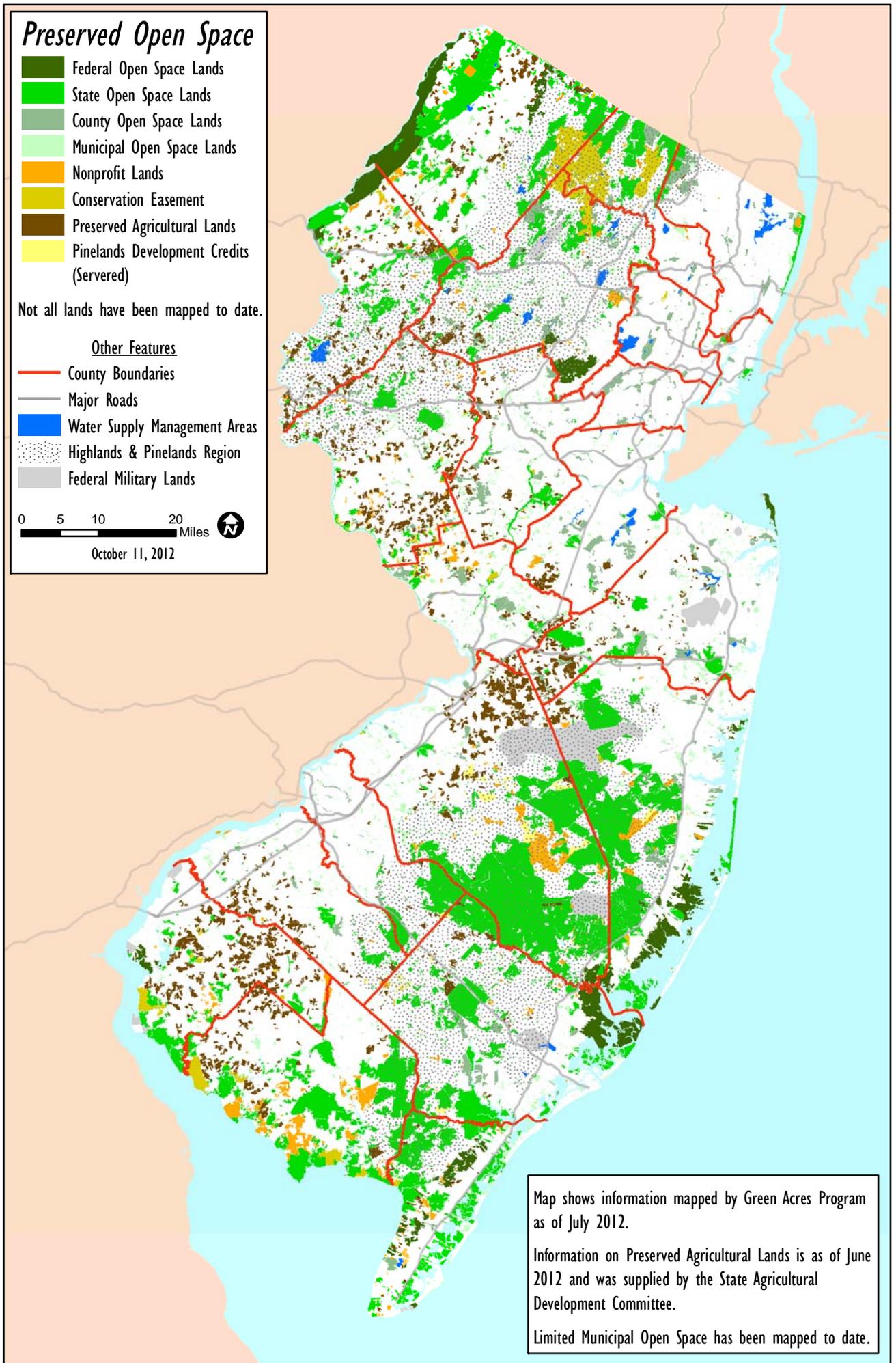
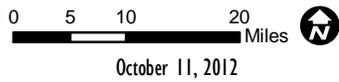
# Preserved Open Space

- 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 July 2012.

Information on Preserved Agricultural Lands is as of June 2012 and was supplied by the State Agricultural Development Committee.

Limited Municipal Open Space has been mapped to date.