



## news releases

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### **GARDEN STATE PRESERVATION TRUST APPROVES DEP-RECOMMENDED LIST OF GREEN ACRES PROJECTS**

**TRENTON** - The Garden State Preservation Trust today approved the Department of Environmental Protection's recommended list of \$157 million for Green Acres open space acquisition and recreational development projects in all 21 New Jersey counties, Commissioner Bob Martin announced today.

The funding list includes \$85.4 million for grants and loans to municipal and county governments for land acquisitions and park developments; \$45 million for state Green Acres acquisitions, including land for state parks, forests and wildlife management areas; \$14.8 million for nonprofit groups for acquisitions and park developments; and \$12 million for funding of Blue Acres acquisitions to move people out of flood-prone areas and create open space.

Green Acres funding leverages many millions of additional preservation dollars through matching federal, state, county, local and nonprofit funds.

The latest round of Green Acres funding comes from available money generated by voter approval of a previous bond referendum, supplemented by money from prior projects that were cancelled by the DEP or withdrawn by applicants.

"The open space acquisitions and recreation development opportunities funded by Green Acres are critical to sustaining a high quality of life in the nation's most densely populated state," Commissioner Bob Martin said. "The Green Acres Program reaches into virtually every community in New Jersey, funding a great diversity of projects from ballparks and playgrounds to hiking trails and wildlife watching areas that make the Garden State a great place to call home."

The DEP is targeting state acquisition money to expand State Parks, Forest and Wildlife Management Areas, as well as to purchase privately-owned parcels, known as in-holdings, that are located within the state lands.

Blue Acres money will be used to acquire flood-prone properties throughout the state, including the Passaic River Basin, to help move people out of harm's way. This money also will be used to leverage Federal Emergency Management Agency grants that are used for the same purpose.

Among the many diverse local and nonprofit projects to be funded include helping a partnership of local and nonprofit groups develop a waterfront park along the Passaic River in Newark's Ironbound section; improvements to Camden County's Cooper River Park; renovations to the oceanfront boardwalk in Long Branch; creation of an interpretive center for Mannington Meadows, a sprawling wetlands area adjacent to the Delaware River in Salem County; and acquisition of land to expand a YMCA camp in the Pinelands of Burlington County.

"These projects and many more that are proposed under the current funding round exemplify the great work the Green Acres program has done over the past 50 years to preserve and protect New Jersey's open spaces and provide a wealth of recreational opportunities to our residents," Commissioner Martin said.

The Green Acres program, created in 1961 as the result of an innovative bond referendum, is celebrating its 50 anniversary this year, marking the year-long celebration with the slogan "Green Acres: It's all Yours."

Together with public and private partners, the Green Acres program has directly protected 650,000 acres of open space and provided hundreds of recreational opportunities for a wide range of activities, including natural areas, city parks, playgrounds, athletic fields, boat ramps, docks, fishing piers and environmental education.

In addition to providing recreation opportunities, Green Acres projects help protect water quality and can help stimulate economic development by creating jobs, at the same time making cities and towns more attractive places to live and work.