



**February 24 2015**

## **Land crossed by Batona Trail donated**

J. Garfield DeMarco, whose family once farmed cranberries on the 9,400-acre Pine Barrens property now known as the Franklin Parker Preserve, has donated a small but important parcel to expand the preserve.

Earlier this month, Garfield gave 1.75 acres in Woodland Township to New Jersey Conservation Foundation, which co-owns the preserve with the State of New Jersey.

The gift is especially significant because part of the Batona Trail - a 53-mile hiking path through the heart of the Pine Barrens - crosses the parcel.

"We're very grateful to Garfield for his generosity in donating this land to New Jersey Conservation," said Michele S. Byers, executive director. "The Batona is an incredibly beautiful and scenic trail in the Pine Barrens, and it's wonderful that the land beneath this trail section is now preserved forever."

Garfield, a longtime supporter of New Jersey Conservation, said he was pleased to make the donation.

"I'm very proud of what my sister, Anna Lynn DeMarco Papinchak, and I accomplished to preserve and conserve such a vast area of New Jersey. The donation of the land through which the Batona Trail crosses is part of that family legacy," said Garfield.

"Our parents, Anthony R. DeMarco and Gladys Alloway DeMarco, would be most pleased to know that certain family members played such important roles in protecting the forest, streams and flora and fauna of the Pinelands, which they loved and for which they cared," he added.

New Jersey Conservation purchased the land for the Franklin Parker Preserve from the DeMarco family in 2003. In 2011 and 2012, staff and volunteers rerouted 7.2 miles of the Batona Trail to cross scenic sections of the preserve.

With the rerouted Batona Trail, the Franklin Parker Preserve now has about 28 miles of hiking and mixed use trails.