



STATE OF NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

news releases

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DEP ANNOUNCES GARDEN STATE PRESERVATION TRUST APPROVAL OF NEARLY \$81 MILLION FOR GREEN ACRES PROJECTS

The Christie Administration today announced the Garden State Preservation Trust's approval of nearly \$81 million in funding for projects that will enhance the quality of life in New Jersey by improving and expanding parks, protecting and conserving open space, increasing public access to waterways, and enhancing land for public enjoyment.



The Christie Administration recommended the projects for approval through the Department of Environmental Protection's Green Acres Program.

"In New Jersey, we have a longstanding tradition of continually expanding our inventory and improving the quality of parks and open space to make sure that everyone has great places to unwind, participate in healthy activities, and enjoy nature and scenic views," said DEP Commissioner Bob Martin. "The Christie Administration is proud to help our local partners in cities and towns throughout the state move forward with

these projects that will benefit the public and our communities."

The Garden State Preservation Trust (GSPT) is an independent authority that reviews state-funded open-space purchases. The funding comes from money approved by voters as well as loan and interest repayments, interest earnings and previously approved projects that did not come to fruition.

The GSPT approved \$37.4 million for municipal and county land acquisition projects, more than \$33 million for local development of parks and recreation facilities, \$5.8 million for acquisition projects by nonprofit organizations, nearly \$2.5 million for recreational development by nonprofits, nearly \$1.4 million for local stewardship projects and \$748,000 for nonprofit stewardship projects. The Legislature must now approve legislation to formally appropriate the funds for the projects.

The GSPT-approved projects establish new parks and expand existing ones, develop athletic fields and playgrounds, improve access to waterways, create open space, and enhance stewardship by restoring lands for nature and public enjoyment.

Green Acres funding allows governments and nonprofits to leverage millions of additional preservation dollars through matching federal, state, county and local funds, as well as from private sources.

Major projects approved for matching grants of \$1 million or more include:

- Construction of a waterfront park in **Pleasantville** that will include an amphitheater and gazebo, play areas, walking trails and signage leading people to the Pleasantville Marina, which is also being improved;
- Redevelopment of **Garfield's** athletic facilities at Semel and Palisade avenues to serve as a resource for the entire community, a project featuring renovations to the football field, running track and multipurpose fields, as well as restoration of the historic stadium's outer wall, rehabilitation of seating and parking improvements;

- Enhancements to Camden County's Cooper River Park in **Cherry Hill, Pennsauken, Camden** and **Collingswood** to include plazas, pavilions, decks, landscaping, lighting, walkways, signs, new parking, and development of an area to watch regattas;
- Continued enhancements to **Camden's** North Camden Waterfront Development Project, a 2.4-mile park and greenway along the Delaware River, to include construction of the RCA Pier Park on a former industrial pier to anchor the southern end of the project;
- Acquisition by **Bloomfield** of 12.7 acres along the Third River and Spring Brook to be restored as wetlands to provide flood storage and wildlife habitat that will create opportunities for recreation and environmental education in an urban setting;
- Purchases of 13 properties along the Passaic River in **Newark** to continue the expansion of the popular Riverfront Park to include an area known as the Lower Broadway Landing segment;
- Ongoing improvements to Colgate Park in **Orange**, including installation of a skate park, playground, and T-ball area, and renovations to the basketball courts and swimming pool. In addition, Ropes Playground will be upgraded with a new spray park, lighting upgrades, playground equipment and field house improvements;
- Continued improvements to Town Square Park in **Glassboro** on a 1.5-acre parcel at Rowan Boulevard, High Street, and Main Street that will include paths, landscaping, lighting, a Veterans Memorial, and other passive recreation amenities;
- Enhanced access to Newark Bay in **Bayonne** through the creation of 1,200 feet of paths and development of a shade structure and seating areas, with the goal of providing kayak access, a boat ramp, benches and signage about the harbor and its history;
- Phase IV development of Hudson County's Laurel Hill Park in **Secaucus** to enhance access to the Hackensack River, including development of wildlife habitat gardens, native landscaping and tree-planting, boat ramp repairs and installation of a section of the Berlin Wall overlooking the river and the Sawmill Creek Wildlife Management Area;
- Expansion of recreation opportunities and access to **Weehawken's** Waterfront Park and Recreation Center, including extension of the pier further into the Hudson River as a destination for sightseeing, fishing, walking and scenic vistas of the New York City skyline;
- Rehabilitation and expansion of **Trenton's** Hetzel Field Park to include construction of a landscaped plaza on North Olden Avenue, renovation of the historic pool house and related construction of a spray area, improvements to basketball courts and softball fields, and improvements to the trail system, lighting and benches;
- Acquisition of a former brownfield in **Carteret** along Roosevelt Avenue and Waterfront Access Road to expand Arthur Kill Waterfront Park, which the borough will later develop with a river walk, observation deck, pier, floating dock, boat launch, beach, Ferris wheel, and amphitheater;
- Renovation and rehabilitation by **Brick** of facilities in Birchwood, Bayside and Bernie Cook Memorial parks, including playgrounds, gazebos, skate park, softball fields, basketball court, walking tracks, multipurpose fields, landscaping and parking;
- Enhancements to **Passaic's** Third Ward Veterans Memorial Park, the city's largest and most popular park, to include new softball and baseball fields, bathroom renovations and improved walkways;
- Acquisition by **Paterson** of land to create a gateway to Great Falls National Historical Park that will connect with area trails and provide scenic vistas of the Great Falls of the Passaic.

New Jersey has long been a leader in preserving open space. The Green Acres Program, the oldest of its kind in the nation, was created in 1961 as the result of an innovative bond referendum. The Green Acres Program has protected more than 690,000 acres of open space and provided hundreds of recreational facilities around the state.

The DEP is a partner in the Governor's Population Health Challenge, which calls on state agencies to promote health through their policies. Studies have found that investments in parks and recreational amenities have a positive effect on health and fitness, resulting in less strain on the health-care system. Studies also demonstrate that people are likely to be more physically active if they live close to parks and recreational facilities.