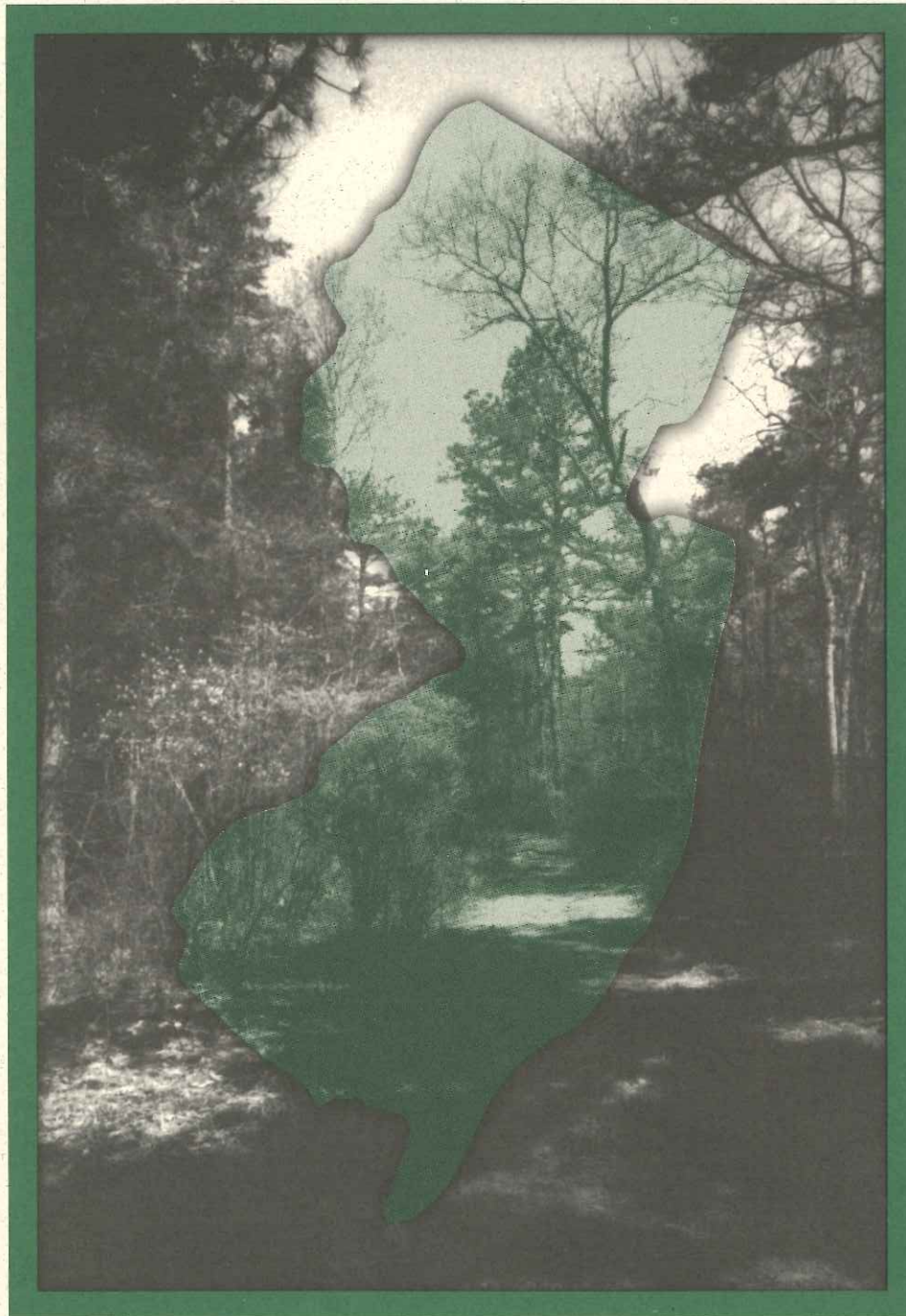




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THE NEW JERSEY NATURAL LANDS TRUST



1994 ANNUAL REPORT

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# Statement of Purpose

The New Jersey Natural Lands Trust was created in 1968 by the Legislature as an independent agency with the mission to preserve land in its natural state for enjoyment by the public and to protect natural diversity through the acquisition of open space. Land is preserved primarily by donations of open space through acquisition of title in fee simple, or of conservation easements, and is managed to conserve endangered species habitat, rare natural features, and significant ecosystems. Access to Trust lands is generally not restricted. Passive use by the public for

recreational or educational purposes is invited wherever such use will not adversely affect natural communities and biological diversity.

The Trust also recognizes that ownership and management alone are not enough to achieve its mission. Public education is an integral function of protecting natural diversity. The Trust distributes printed information and sponsors interpretive programs and seminars designed to convey a conservation ethic for the protection of open space and its natural values.

## THE NEW JERSEY NATURAL LANDS TRUST *Board of Trustees*

*Policy for the Trust is set by an eleven-member Board of Trustees. Six members are appointed by the Governor from the recommendations of a nominating caucus of conservation organizations and five members are State officials.*

**Michael Catania**, Executive Director of New Jersey Field Office of The Nature Conservancy. Resides in Mendham Borough, Morris County.

**Emile DeVito**, Director of Conservation Biology, New Jersey Conservation Foundation. Resides in South Plainfield Borough, Middlesex County.

**Sally Dudley**, Executive Director, Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions. Resides in Harding Township, Morris County.

**Ruth Ehinger**, Land Use Regulation Program, Department of Environmental Protection. Resides in Hopewell Township, Mercer County.

**Thomas Gilmore**, Executive Director, New Jersey Audubon Society. Resides in Franklin Lakes Borough, Bergen County.

**James Hall** (Vice Chairperson), Assistant Commissioner for Natural and Historic Resources, Department of Environmental Protection; representing the Commissioner. Resides in North Hanover Township, Burlington County.

**Frank Leary**, environmental consultant with J.H. Crow Company. Resides in Pohatcong Township, Warren County.

**Newton LeVine** (Chairperson), professor of Architecture & Urban Design at Ramapo State College. Resides in Glen Ridge Township, Essex County.

**Honorable John A. Lynch**, Senator from District 17 and member of the State House Commission. Resides in the City of New Brunswick, Middlesex County.

**Thomas Wells**, Administrator, Green Acres Program, Department of Environmental Protection. Resides in Mendham Borough, Morris County.

**Lisa Young**, Treasurer's Executive Staff; Representing the State Treasurer. Resides in Princeton Township, Mercer County.

### STAFF

David F. Moore, *Secretary/Treasurer*  
Thomas F. Hampton, *Executive Director*  
Beverly Mazzella, *Real Estate Coordinator*  
Judeth Piccinini, *Counsel*  
Martin Rapp, *Ecologist*



# BURLINGTON COUNTY OPEN SPACE


Demands on staff increase in direct proportion to the number of smaller properties the Trust acquires during both the acquisition process and necessary stewardship that follows. It is not often that the Trust, or other conservation organizations, receive an offer to donate a large, consolidated parcel of land in a new location, efficiently providing protection of biodiversity. It was with great excitement this year that the staff reviewed, and the Trustees accepted two such offers located in Burlington County.

A 486-acre donation, southwest of the Red Lion Circle in Southampton Township, is located within a rural agricultural setting, with scattered single family homes nearby along Route 70. The property is a completely forested wetland community for Bear Swamp River, where several unnamed streams and tributaries join. Donated by the Chemical Bank of NJ, the large size and inaccessibility of the Bear Swamp Preserve have helped to maintain the undisturbed quality of the site. The swamp is a low point along the course of the Bear Swamp River, with an undefined river channel reforming to the west of the site. A small upland spit with several large broadly branched beech trees is accessible from a powerline right-of-way within the southwestern corner of the property. These trees with wide crowns had grown up in an open sunny area and it is quite possible that this upland may have been a homesite decades ago.

The area is well used by migratory songbirds with warblers and other neotropicals identified during inspections. While the State-threatened Barred owl is located on-site, the endangered red shouldered hawk is expected to be found here as well. A small cluster of the State and Federally-listed swamp pink also grows within portions of the Preserve. The Rancocas Conservancy, a local land trust working to protect the Rancocas Creek watershed, has shown interest in developing an agreement with the Trust for ongoing management. Monitoring, inventory of fauna and flora, mapping, and boundary posting are activities anticipated to be shared with The Rancocas Conservancy.

The second of these two large tracts is located along Sooy Place Road in nearby Woodland Township and was donated by Bruce R. and Richard

Genderson. The 423-acre site is surrounded by rural wooded open space, with lands of the New Jersey Conservation Foundation directly adjacent and Lebanon State Forest nearby. The tract, named by the Trust as Sooy Place, is a rich mixture of community types and wildlife habitat ranging from wetlands along stream courses to dry, upland oak forests. The wetlands consist of pitch pine lowland and red maple swamps with seasonally ponded sites evident within the latter, while the uplands are predominantly upland oak or oak/pine forests.

Together, these two new Preserves protect over 900 acres of open space, including native wildlife and vegetation of rural Burlington County. The Trust is pleased to join other local and statewide conservation organizations and State agencies that are active land stewards in this portion of the pinelands. 

*Bear Swamp at Red Lion*

M. Rapp



# PROJECT AREAS BECOME REALITY

Maturing as an active landholding organization in the mid-1980's, the Natural Lands Trust sought to identify sites for protection beyond evaluating random land offerings. Staff identified several existing preserves where additional acreage was desirable to buffer open space and protect natural diversity at sites already preserved. Attention also turned to the Natural Heritage Database, the state's most comprehensive, centralized source of information on rare plants, animals, and natural communities, to help focus acquisition efforts. The database is a compilation from several sources of information including museum and herbarium collection records, publications, and fieldwork. It contains information collected by the Office of Natural Lands Management on rare plants, animals, and natural communities with data on rare animals provided by the Endangered and Nongame Species Program.

Information obtained from the Database identified eighteen sites that were the most significant habitats in the State for the protection of natural diversity. In January 1990, the Board of Trustees endorsed acquisition of the sites and offered to assume management responsibilities, should the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) obtain title. Following intense ranking with other potential acquisitions, the Green Acres Administration approved several sites for purchase, and in 1994, acquired one site, while another was donated directly to the Trust.

Budd Lake Bog, in Mount Olive Township, Morris County is well known to botanists and ecologists alike for its rare species and community type. Using Green Acres funding, the DEP recently purchased 120.84 acres of the site's most important segment for protection of natural diversity. The Trust has agreed to manage the land and has received initial indications that some federal funding may be available for that purpose. This property contains the world's northernmost population of the federally-listed swamp pink and a state imperiled black spruce bog community, with many other rare plants and animals calling this area home. A large adjoining forest of black spruce, hemlock and hardwood swamps surrounded by mixed hardwood upland forest



*Budd Lake Bog*

E.F. Karlin

characterizes the site. Stone walls through the forest suggest agricultural uses nearly a century ago where, today, a mature forest now stands.

Through the generous donation of Ms. Matilda Ratzman, the Trust received a donation this past year of part of the Mountain Lake Bog. This 27.2 acre offer, protecting 1000 feet of stream corridor, is an important wetland transitional ecotone between a tamarack/black spruce bog and a mostly mature hardwood forested wetland. Located in White and Liberty Townships in Warren County, Mountain Lake Bog has been known for years as an important and rare ecotype in New Jersey. Nearly a dozen records for rare plant species have been documented from the bog. The donation encompasses the ecotone between the tamarack and the mature hardwood forested swamp including significant portions of the hardwood swamp.

# FUTURE BOUNDARIES FOR OPEN SPACE

In a sparsely populated region of Hamilton Township, Atlantic County, near hamlets known as Mizpah and Gigantic City, is the Trust's Costa Preserve. Beginning as two separate five-acre parcels in the 1980's, the Costa Preserve now encompasses over 450 acres of pine barrens habitat, and further expansion is expected. The Trust's 252-acre Pancoast Preserve is located to the west in nearby Buena Vista Township. Two separate parcels provide protection to the headwaters of the Deep Run, yet additional acquisitions are required for further protection of this natural resource. In rural Sussex County lies the Wallkill Preserve, 53 acres of wetlands along the Wallkill River, managed by the Trust. Each of the three locations has one issue in common; scattered parcels of land owned by the Trust or other agencies where additional acquisition will provide better protection for natural resources. In 1994, the Trustees approved project area boundaries for each of these preserves to focus future protection efforts.

Working with township and county officials, the Trustees have identified a 4,300-acre project area surrounding the Costa Preserve that includes land owned by the Trust, local governments, and individuals. Major factors in the design of the project area boundaries are the Mares Run, Deep Run, and their associated wetlands. These water bodies, with the Great Egg Harbor River, have been designated as a National Wild and Scenic River. Significant oak/pine wetland buffers were also included to protect known locations of endangered species. Boundaries for the project area focus on core ecological zones that expand to meet existing property ownership lines. Physical features, such as roadways, were used wherever suitable.

A 1994 donation of 4.85 acres from Joanna M. Droleskey occurs within the project area and is only one of many expected to follow. A 47.17 acre donation made possible this year by Marjorie Breedis and John Anthony Willister, in memory of Dr. Charles Breedis, is located directly next to the Costa Project Area. The land provides diversity of wildlife habitat and community types including the Deep Run flowing through the offered parcels for a distance of 2,000 feet. Red maple, black gum, and holly are dominant species in much of the wetlands, while Atlantic white cedar are common in healthy stands along the Deep Run.

The existing Pancoast Preserve could be enlarged by as much as 178 acres if all property in the project area is acquired. Addition of these lands to the Preserve will help protect documented habitat for state-listed species and contribute to conservation of the watershed leading to the Deep Run. The habitat includes stands of Atlantic white cedar with pitch pine lowlands and oak/pine uplands support-

ing several endangered and threatened species. While some sections of the oak woods were logged ten or more years ago, seedlings are now growing back quickly. Practically the entire surface water flow is within the project area boundaries, with an undefined stream channel traveling northwest to southeast, until it joins with the Deep Run. Within the project area is an intermittent pond; dry and grassy during the summer the pond is flooded in the late fall, winter and spring.

A wetland stream corridor of a different nature is within the 500-acre Wallkill Project Area in Sussex County. The boundary encompasses several landholders as it reaches to protect upper portions of the Wallkill River. The Trust, Sparta Township and the New Jersey Conservation Foundation currently hold title to significant stretches of the floodplain. Through coordination, general protection of the resources dependent on the Wallkill drainage can be accomplished.



*Costa Preserve*

M. Rapp

Wildlife in the area includes the endangered bog turtle and threatened wood turtle, with many waterfowl and woodcock. The latter species makes use of the open water and forested wetlands along the river for feeding and resting. Important ecological communities are also found within the fledgling project area. Limestone fens, spring seeps from the limestone bedrock, provide open, low pH conditions in wet soils. These rare natural communities support state listed plant species such as flowering gentian and bog birch.

In 1994, Richard and Cynthia Predmore and Darlene and Thomas Bennett donated a 3.48 acre parcel lying within the project area to the Trust. The property lies adjacent to 80 acres presently owned by the New Jersey Conservation Foundation. The donated property was once part of a large farmstead owned by Grandfather Predmore. His grandchildren now live on the remaining family farm. As a result of their thoughtful gift, they may now take comfort in the fact that another small portion of their family land will be preserved for the benefit of future generations. ♻️

## EXPANDING STEWARDSHIP

By adding acreage to a property already owned by the Trust, open space protection is enhanced with a small increase in demand for stewardship. The Board of Trustees has made it a priority to enlarge its properties by establishing project areas or identifying individual owners and proactively seeking donations. This year there were several additions to Trust Preserves, a happy outcome where the public benefit and the individual desires of private property owners were joined together.

Before she died, Edward J. Raban's mother gave him 20 acres of land located in Hamilton Township, Atlantic County. The property consisted of mixed pitch pine uplands and lowlands with two grassy intermittent ponds. A few years later, Mr. Raban moved out of state and wished to dispose of his New Jersey landholdings. After finding that wetlands and pinelands restrictions would severely limit property development, he was directed to the Trust by the local tax assessor. Mr. Raban generously agreed to donate his property as an addition to the Trust's Hamilton Preserve. The property contributes to protection of critical habitat for several endangered species and provides watershed protection for the Gravelly Run, a tributary of the Great Egg Harbor River.

Mary Mannino and Steward R. Maines & Co. added their property to a Township donation of 169 lots to the Burlington County Moorestown Project Area. Locally called the South Valley Woods, this predominantly wetland area, consisting of hundreds of undersized lots, encompasses one of the last large blocks of undeveloped forest in the Moorestown area. Next to the town's public elementary school, the preservation of the forest will offer an excellent opportunity for students and

teachers to use the natural setting for environmental studies. Recognizing the many benefits afforded Moorestown residents through the protection of the area, the town entered into an agreement with the Trust to manage the Preserve.

Several years ago, the New Jersey Conservation Foundation (NJCF) acquired title to 37.3 acres located within Black Meadows, part of the Glacial Lake Passaic wetland complex. In 1993, the Trust received a donation of the nearby 146-acre Black Meadows Preserve. This past year, title to the NJCF land was transferred as an addition to the Trust Preserve. NJCF's donation is located in the Borough of Florham Park, and was once in agriculture, apparent by the existence of old fruit trees and wire fencing laced throughout the woods. Today the property in Florham Park, Morris County, is composed entirely of open marsh and forested wetlands.

Beverly Mazzella, the Trust Real Estate Coordinator, contacted the descendants of John M. Hurff concerning the family's plans for its 12.54 acre landholdings within the Long-a-coming Branch Project Area. These landlocked wetlands lie along this tributary to the Great Egg Harbor River in Winslow Township, Camden County. Over the years, the family had scattered throughout the United States and was having difficulty coming to an agreement on the disposition of their lands. It was found that the family members shared an environmental consciousness and agreed that a land donation to the Trust would be a desirable solution. Through the leadership, perseverance and generosity of Bruce L. Smith, a New Jersey cousin, the project area has been initiated through the acquisition of these environmentally significant lands.



*Black Meadows*

M. Rapp

# VITAL WETLANDS PROTECTION



*Risley's Channel*

M. Rapp

The documented value of wetlands as wildlife habitat and contributions to improved water quality are well known to most. Many donations to the Trust include freshwater wetlands that occur throughout the State. Likewise, many thousands of acres of coastal marshes provide important wildlife habitat, and are at the base of the entire marine food chain. Their protection is vital for a healthy and productive estuarine system.

In 1994, the Trust accepted several donations that protect coastal wetlands, including one from Jack and Grace Nixon known as Risley's Channel. This 12-acre site is located in Egg Harbor Township, Atlantic County along the west bank of Risley's Channel. The entire property is tidal marsh wetland. Most of the marsh is knee-high saltmarsh cordgrass, with shrubs hightide bush and sea lavender found on the higher elevations.

Also in Atlantic County, Wilbert R. Bivins, Jr. provided the Trust with a donation of 7.87 acres of

wetlands in the City of Port Republic. The property fronts on a sand path known as Shell Landing Road and is next to historic Nacote Creek for 320 feet. The diverse composition of wetland plants along the creek includes cordgrass, salt hay, marsh hemp and small patches of phragmites.

Traveling much further north to the banks of the Hackensack River, a 9.62 acre wetland located in Lyndhurst, Hudson County, was donated to the Trust by the Bellemead Development Corporation. In the late 1980's, when the Trust agreed to accept this property, it consisted entirely of Phragmites having limited value to the estuarine food chain. As part of a mitigation plan for development activities elsewhere, the corporation agreed to regrade the land, lower elevations and create a highly productive *Spartina* marsh, common in South Jersey but rare in the wetlands of the Hackensack Meadowlands. The creation of this productive community type completed, title was transferred to the Trust in 1994, with a substantial endowment for management.

# GREEN ACRES AND THE TRUST

"No man is an island." The meaning behind the cliché applies to land stewards as well. Over the years, the Trust has established an excellent working relationship with private conservation organizations having a similar mission to protect biodiversity. Working in a spirit of cooperation, rather than competition, agencies such as the New Jersey Conservation Foundation and The Nature Conservancy often refer potential land donors to the Trust when appropriate. Likewise, the Trust established a similar relationship with the major State agency for land protection efforts, the Green Acres Administration in the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). "The Green Acres staff is extremely helpful and never hesitates to call us when they have a donation where the Trust has established a presence," says Trust Real Estate Coordinator Beverly Mazzella.

Among several referrals from Green Acres this year, the Trust received a 29-acre addition to its Richard Buhlman Preserve in Fairfield Township, Cumberland County. Donated by Richard Nixholm and Peter Cugino, the acquisition extends stream bank protection along the Rattlesnake Gut for almost 3,000 feet. Very similar to the ecological conditions that are found within the current Preserve, the stream corridor and wetlands are buffered by extensive upland forest. Steep slopes rise quickly from the stream, the land levels off and becomes flat on the remainder of the site dominated by white oak, holly and mountain laurel. Neighbors next to the Richard Buhlman Preserve have offered to help with monitoring as a local effort to maintain this valuable open space.

*Richard Buhlman Preserve*

M. Rapp




The same donors transferred title to 18 more acres, not far to the east in a sparsely populated section of Fairfield Township. The site, named Kings End, is entirely uplands and was once farmed, as other properties currently are in the surrounding locale. Today, the site is a dense grove of Virginia pine with branches hanging low to a ground covered with moss and grasses.

The Manaway Branch separates the Borough of Newfield and the Township of Franklin in Gloucester County. It is also the site of 18.42 acres of stream corridor and wetland forest habitat donated to the Trust by Mary and Frank Smith. Thanks to a referral from the Green Acres Administration, this emergent marsh of tangled fallen logs and wet seeps has been protected as ideal habitat for wood duck. Beyond the marsh begins a dense forested wetland with large mature trees growing in rich moist soils. Red maple, black gum and sweetgum are the dominant canopy species, interspersed with small groves of Atlantic white cedar. Forest habitats in the region remain only in wet areas unsuitable for agriculture; therefore, this woodlot parcel is very important to nesting and migratory birds. 

# MEADOWS ONCE AGAIN

This year our protection efforts within Black Meadows, Morris County were expanded, bringing to 183 acres our current holdings in the Meadows, a remnant wetland complex created after the retreat of the last Ice Age. Most of this property follows along the Whippany River to where it is joined by the Black River. A portion of the wetland forest, last cut in the early 1960's, is within the glide path for air traffic coming into Morristown Airport. The Federal Aviation Administration realized that the trees near the end of the runway on Trust property had reached a height where they posed a serious hazard and needed to be removed.

Aware of the hazard and need to cut the trees, the Trust decided to make the best of an unfortunate situation. Coincidentally, the Division of Parks and Forestry was preparing plans for timber cuts to generate fire wood for the many campgrounds in the State Park System. Working with Morristown Airport their consultants and contractors, the timber felled for safety purposes was delivered to Stokes State Forest in Sussex County where it would later be distributed to nearby public campgrounds. While the Board of Trustees accepted the donation of the Black

Meadows Preserve with the knowledge that a timber harvest would be necessary, it was only through the coordination and cooperation of many that the public benefited. No natural ecosystem is static, and in time another tree removal for safety purposes may again provide wood for campfires in the State Parks and Forests. 

*Black Meadows*

M. Rapp



# UNDERSTANDING LAND PROTECTION



*Graphic at Taylor Preserve*

W. Greve

To further the Board's commitment to environmental education, Trust Staff continued its participation in a series of landsaving seminars in 1994. In cooperation with the New Jersey Conservation Foundation, Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions, New Jersey Chapter of The Nature Conservancy, Division of Parks & Forestry, and others, the Trust has participated in these seminars over the last several years.

On May 17, 1994, "Saving Land in Your Community: Stewardship—the seventh in the series" was presented at the Morris County Park Cultural Center in Morristown. The program concentrated on the various aspects to be considered and the importance of planning land management practices. Topics included baseline inventories, communication with landowners, public use, trash dumping, hunting, signage, and potential liabilities. Based on his personal experiences, Martin Rapp, Trust land manager, related the "perks" and pitfalls of Trust land management focussed on our mission to preserve lands in their natural state. On December 8, 1994, "Saving Land in Your Community: Identifying Hazardous Waste Problems Before They Become Yours—eighth in a series" was presented at Rutgers University's New Brunswick campus. The participants included attorneys, consultants, land trusts and governmental entities who shared an overview on the resources available and the various risks to be avoided when making a hazardous waste assessment of lands.

Environmental education does not have to be structured or held in a conference hall to be effective. For generations, members of the Taylor family have been good farmers and land stewards in Burlington County and have shared their land ethic with the public. The Taylor Preserve, the first conservation easement held by the Trust, was signed in 1975. Since then, the 89 acres of freshwater wetlands, Delaware River bank and woodlands have been permanently protected and open to public visits. This year, through the Open Lands Management Program, the Taylors received a financial grant to improve and maintain the existing hiking trail used by local residents and students. A dozen interpretive signs now explain the natural features, the organic farm operation, and enlighten the visitor to respect and protect our environment. Wide paths and new benches provide an enjoyable walk and an opportunity for 'relaxed education' along the Delaware River.

The protection of migratory shorebird habitats along the Delaware Bay has long been a priority for the Trust and others. This past May, Trust staff joined in a Shorebird Workshop organized by the Division of Fish Game and Wildlife's Endangered and Nongame Species Program. The workshop, co-sponsored by the Trust, was designed to identify goals for habitat management, public outreach, and research, and to insure continued work in these important areas. Besides the Trust, several nonprofit organizations, educators, and State agencies participated in developing the first stage of a management plan for shorebird habitat conservation.

## *Donors*

Darlene and Thomas Bennett

Wilbert R. Bivins, Jr.

Marjorie Breedis

Ruth Edna Brown

Richard Nixholm & Peter Cugino

Joanna M. Droleskey

Bruce R. & Richard Genderson

Sylvia and Sam Johnson

Rodman H. Martin

Jack and Grace Nixon

William B. Phillips

Kenneth J. Posey

Richard and Cynthia Predmore

Edward J. Raban

Matilda Ratzman

Roger Slack

The Estates of William V. and Ruth L. Smith

Mary & Frank Smith

Paul and Margaret Smith

John Anthony Willister

ANJEC

Audubon Wildlife Society

Bellemead Development Corp.

Borough of Kinnelon

CAREZ Association

Chemical Bank N.J., N.A.

The Fanwood Foundation

Lockhern Associates

Moorestown Township

New Jersey Conservation Foundation

Rancocas Conservancy

Woodhaven Village Inc.



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