

## Office of the Governor

PO BOX 004  
TRENTON, NJ 08625

### NEWS RELEASE

CONTACT: Jayne O'Connor  
Gene Herman  
609-777-2600

RELEASE: October 26, 1998

#### **GOVERNOR HIKES TRAILS AT TIMBERLAND PROPERTY WATERSHED PROJECT; CITES NEED FOR OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION**

Gov. Christie Whitman today demonstrated her commitment to open space preservation when she visited and hiked the trails at the Timberland Property Watershed Project on Holland Mountain in Jefferson Township. The Township has applied for grants and loans through the state's Green Acres program to help purchase the 125-acre tract of land in cooperation with the Passaic River Coalition.

"This property is a wonderful example of how many people in New Jersey benefit when we preserve open space," the Governor said. "First of all, everyone who lives in Jefferson Township benefits by keeping more of the town green. It's fitting then that Jefferson Township is working with the Passaic River Coalition to purchase and protect this land, with help from the state Green Acres program."

"This land also holds value for all the visitors who enjoy hiking in this area - and of course, for the endangered species who make their homes on this land," she said. "But is also matters to people miles away, in Newark and in Jersey City. That's because the wetlands and the headwater streams on this property feed into rivers that provide drinking water for the families who live in those cities. In fact, the Friends of the Rockaway River identified the Timberland Property as one of more than 20 that needs to be protected and preserved."

"We all benefit from preservation. And, next month, people across the state will have an opportunity to vote on it," the Governor said.

Gov. Whitman said a yes vote on Public Question No. 1, which will appear on the ballot in next month's election, is crucial to the state's efforts to preserve open space. Approval of Public Question No. 1 will ensure a stable funding level -- \$98 million annually for ten years -- for open space and farmland preservation and historic preservation projects throughout New Jersey.

The Governor said her goal is to preserve one million acres of open space over the next ten years, including 500,000 acres of farmland, 200,000 acres for public recreation, 200,000 acres for greenways along streams and trails and 100,000 acres for watershed protection. Public Question No. 1 will also provide resources for restoring and preserving historic sites.

Joining Gov. Whitman on the Timberland Property hike were U. S. Rep. Rodney P. Frelinghuysen (R-Harding) and students from Jefferson public schools.

The 125-acre Timberland Property on Holland Mountain is part of the watershed boundary that separates the Rockaway River basin and the Newark-Pequannock River basin. It contains about 10 percent wetlands that are the source of several small streams that flow into Russia Brook, the headwaters of the Rockaway River.

The Passaic River Coalition (PRC) and Jefferson Township are working to acquire the property for preservation and watershed protection. The PRC has permission from the Department of Environmental Protection to use part of the funds it received for the acquisition of the adjacent 245-acre Russia Brook Sanctuary property toward the acquisition of the Timberland Property. However, additional funds will be needed by the PRC to complete the project.

Jefferson Township has applied for a \$31,325 grant and a \$93,975 loan through the Green Acres program to be used as its share of the property purchase. The project is one of 200 unfunded Green Acres applications totaling \$250 million.

