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Press Releases

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53 acres acquired in Tewksbury with SADC grant, adds to preserved lands encircling Oldwick

TEWKSBURY TWP. - Two properties totaling 53 acres have been permanently preserved by New Jersey Conservation Foundation and its partners, adding to a growing greenbelt surrounding Oldwick village.

On Dec. 21, NJ Conservation bought the development rights on 48 acres of the Finderne House Farm, located on the north side of Lamington Road. The farm will continue in private ownership but future uses are limited to agriculture. The easement will be held by Hunterdon County.

New Jersey Conservation Foundation also accepted the donation of a 5-acre conservation easement on the south side of Hill & Dale Road on Dec. 20. The easement was donated by resident Louisa Sargent, who purchased it last year from her neighbors Eric and Geraldine Turnquist. The property includes a trail that could eventually connect to the nearby Hill & Dale Preserve, a 295-acre nature preserve open to the public for hiking, horseback riding, bird watching and other passive recreation.

"We're excited to preserve these two properties near Oldwick and add to Tewksbury Township's greenbelt," said Michele S. Byers, executive director of New Jersey Conservation Foundation. "We are extremely grateful to Louisa Sargent for her generous donation and to our partners who provided funds for the preservation of Finderne House Farm."



The Sargent property brings Tewksbury a step closer to its vision of a 10-mile trail circling the village of Oldwick and connecting preserved lands.

"I'm absolutely thrilled to donate a conservation easement to NJ Conservation Foundation to further support its land conservation work in our beautiful town of Tewksbury," said Sargent. "Hopefully, this trail connector will encourage more people to enjoy our equestrian and hiking trails - and support NJ Conservation's future conservation efforts in our community."

Properties along the 10-mile trail would include Hunterdon County's Cold Brook Preserve just north of Oldwick village, Tewksbury Land Trust's Lance Farm Preserve, Raritan Headwaters' Fox Hill Preserve, the township's Hell Mountain Preserve, New Jersey Conservation Foundation's Hill & Dale Preserve and the township's Whittemore Wildlife Sanctuary.

NJ Conservation hopes to eventually preserve the 68-acre Turnquist farm, located between the Sargent property and Hill & Dale Preserve.

Finderne House Farm

Finderne House Farm, a horse farm that also grows hay and corn, is named for the circa 1740 colonial house at its center. Originally built in the hamlet of Finderne in Bridgewater Township, the house was disassembled, moved and reassembled in Oldwick in 1963 by the late Willie and Hannah Wister.

The farm is located near the Cold Brook, and preserving it helps protect the stream's water quality, as well as wildlife habitat.

Scott Clucas, a local farmer who tends thousands of agricultural acres in Tewksbury Township - including Finderne House Farm - said he's happy to see it preserved. "As kids, my friends and I would ride our bikes all around Oldwick," Clucas recalled. "We'd get to the end of town and be surrounded by expansive farmland on all sides. I remember thinking how cool it was that the town just ended like that and the farms began, like crossing over some imaginary line. It's amazing that it hasn't really changed all that much - there aren't a lot of towns like that in New Jersey anymore. And now it's a step closer to staying like that."

Funding for the purchase of the farm's development rights was provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resource Conservation Service, the State Agriculture Development Committee and the 1772 Foundation.

"This farm is an important addition to nearly 600 acres of preserved farmland stretching from Tewksbury to Bedminster Township. We were pleased to build on our cooperative preservation efforts and ensure that the land will always remain in farming," said Agriculture Secretary Douglas H. Fisher, who chairs the State Agriculture Development Committee.

State Conservationist Carrie Lindig, of USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service, said, "All soils on the Finderne House Farm property are either prime soils or statewide important soils. Protecting these productive soils will ensure that they are available for agriculture in the future, and that the land will continue to absorb rainfall protecting nearby Cold Brook."