

## Office of the Governor

PO BOX 004  
TRENTON, NJ 08625

### NEWS RELEASE

CONTACT: Jayne O'Connor  
Laura Otterbourg  
609-777-2600

RELEASE: December 7, 1999

### **Governor Whitman Accepts Gift of Land from Nature Conservancy on Behalf of State; Furthers Goal of Preserving One Million Acres of Open Space and Smart Growth**

Governor Christie Whitman today accepted a holiday present on behalf of all New Jerseyans - a land gift of 4,100 acres from The Nature Conservancy for open space preservation.

"With the promise of permanently preserving one million acres of open land, New Jersey today is a better place in which to live, work and raise a family," said Gov. Whitman today upon receiving The Nature Conservancy's donation. The gift, which will save 4,100 acres known as the Berkeley Triangle Project in the Pine Barrens, again showcases New Jersey as a leader in preservation.

"This is a great day for preservation in New Jersey - and it's one more proud achievement for The Conservancy," said the Governor. "For the past 11 years, the New Jersey Chapter of The Nature Conservancy has demonstrated its dedication to protecting our precious natural areas for the generations to come."

In addition to being a triumph for open space preservation, Gov. Whitman said that these preservation efforts are also a victory for smart growth since the land was acquired through a transfer of development rights. The development, that would have occurred on the land now being preserved, will instead take place where the roads, sewers and water supply are already in place.

According to the Governor, The Nature Conservancy's dedication to land preservation has protected more than 42,000 acres and 30 nature preserves across the state. And now thanks to this donation, the state will be able to expand Double Trouble State Park, Manchester Wildlife Management Area and Crossley Nature Preserve, and develop a new retreat nature preserve of the Natural Lands Trust.

"There is still a lot of work to do, however, to reach our million-acre goal," explained Gov. Whitman "As I have said all along, reaching the goal will require teamwork. It will take the best efforts of leaders in government, the private sector and the non-profit conservation community."

Yet the Governor said, "I'm proud that today, a non-profit leader is moving us closer to one million."

The Whitman administration - in its commitment to quality of life in the state and smart growth - will ultimately preserve 500,000 acres of farmland, 200,000 acres of greenways, 200,000 acres of parkland and 100,000 acres of watershed protection. This open space preservation amounts to about half of the remaining undeveloped land in New Jersey.

The Garden State Preservation Trust Act dedicates a stable source of funding to save one million more acres of undeveloped land by 2009. The Garden State Preservation Trust is responsible for approving projects submitted by Green Acres, the State Agricultural Development Committee and the New Jersey Historic Trust. It will also submit at least two appropriation bills to the Legislature each year.

A non-profit organization, The Nature Conservancy of New Jersey was founded in 1988 and works to preserve New Jersey's natural heritage. It's parent organization, The Nature Conservancy, works to preserve threatened ecosystems and wildlife habitat around the world.

The New Jersey chapter began negotiations in 1996 to secure the Berkeley Triangle land in Berkeley and Manchester townships from Leisure Technology, a developer of senior citizen housing. As a result, development rights to the donated land will now be transferred to the site of an existing development in Southhampton Township in Burlington County.

