

## Office of the Governor

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### NEWS RELEASE

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#### **Governor's Weekly Radio Message Focuses on Plan to Preserve Open Space and Farmland**

Gov. Christie Whitman provides a weekly radio message to radio stations throughout the state. Each week, the message focuses on a different concern or event of interest to New Jerseyans.

This week the Governor speaks of preserving New Jersey's farmland and open space. One of her Inaugural goals is to preserve 1 million acres of open space and farmland within the next decade. Saving this land will enable New Jersey to maintain its quality of life-with clean air, clean water, more open space, less traffic jams and less pollution. Members of the Legislature have sponsored a bill to ask voters on the November ballot to dedicate nearly \$100 million in existing revenues for each of the next 10 years for open space and farmland preservation. Governor Whitman urges all citizens to contact their legislators to let them know New Jerseyans want a chance to vote on this issue.

Attached is the text of the message.

The radio message can be accessed by calling the Governor's actuality line at 609-292-3249. It will be available today, beginning at noon, and will run through the weekend

Governor's Weekly Radio Message  
July 17, 1998  
Open Space

Recently, we learned of the death of Roy Rogers. For those who've seen Rogers in the movies or on television he will always be Hollywood's most beloved singing cowboy.

Children growing up in the 1950s had Roy Rogers lunchboxes, played with Roy Rogers cut-out dolls, and even slept on Roy Rogers bedsheets. And I seem to remember that Dale Evans, Roy's wife, had her image on a few of the same items.

Roy Rogers and Dale Evans are part of a picture postcard of America that's fading all too fast. An America of open spaces and undeveloped landscapes.

Sadly, New Jersey's open spaces are becoming part of that fading picture. Every year we lose another 10,000 or more acres of open space and farmland to development. In fact the Department of Agriculture reports that over half our farmland has disappeared since the days when Roy Rogers and Dale Evans captivated the nation on television.

But we can stop the process. We can protect our remaining undeveloped open spaces and farmland.

In my Inaugural Address I set a goal of preserving 1 million acres of open space and farmland within the next decade.

Why a million acres - and why now? The Department of Agriculture says that we must preserve at least 500,000 farm acres if we're going to keep farming a viable industry in New Jersey.

The Council on New Jersey Outdoors has recommended that our state preserve 1 million acres of open space and farmland in the next 10 years to preserve our quality of life and protect the farming industry.

We know that preserving our open space enhances tourism, our second largest industry, as it preserves the natural beauty that attracts so many visitors each year.

And people across New Jersey are recognizing that this isn't just about preserving acres. It's about dealing with the real cost of haphazard development - in traffic jams, in pollution, in the loss of New Jersey's special character.

It's about maintaining the quality of life our families deserve - with clean air, clean water, with safer roads and more open space.

I'm very pleased to tell you that Senate President DiFrancesco and Senator Martin and Assemblymen Lance and Corodemus have sponsored a bill to ask voters on the November ballot to dedicate nearly \$100 million in existing revenues for each of the next 10 years for open space and farmland preservation.

And the new budget includes \$50 million to match local preservation funds. Citizens in 13 counties and 53 municipalities have shown their support for open space by officially dedicating a portion of their revenues for preservation.

I ask for your help. If you've taken 5 minutes to listen to this radio message, please take another 5 minutes and call or write your legislators to let them know you want the chance to vote on this urgent issue this November.

Roy Rogers and Dale Evans ended every episode of their television show with the song "Happy Trails." And we all sang along: "Happy trails to you, until we meet again."

Let's keep the "happy trails" in New Jersey. Let's give our children and our children's children a legacy of trails and wide open spaces. Let's give them the gift of a million acres for the new millennium.

Here's wishing "Happy Trails" to all of you. And have a great week.