

Office of the Governor

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NEWS RELEASE

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Governor's Weekly Radio Address Celebrates Signing of Historic Open Space Preservation Bill

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 weeks message focuses on the Garden State Preservation Trust, signed by the Governor last week, which will lead to the preservation of 1 million acres of open space and farmland. The Governor tells New Jersey citizens that the initiative will lead to the preservation of about 40 percent of all land in the Garden State.

Attached is a 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.

Radio Message Open Space Bill Signing

Hello, this is Governor Christie Whitman.

Just last week I had the pleasure of signing a bill that commits New Jersey to preserving an additional 1 million acres of land in our state. And in case you're wondering, that's about half of the remaining undeveloped land in New Jersey.

If you find it hard to visualize how much land a million acres is, it's five times the size of New York City, 65 times the size of Newark, and more than the entire state of Rhode Island.

The open space bill, passed unanimously by the Legislature, commits \$98 million a year in the State Budget for a decade-long preservation program that you - the voters of New Jersey - approved overwhelmingly last November.

After setting aside about \$6 million each year for historic preservation, the bill calls for 60 percent of the land preservation funds to be used for open space and recreation projects and 40 percent for farmland preservation.

Preserving open space means a great deal for our state. It means clean water, more watersheds, and more greenways along streams and trails. It means more land purchased for recreational use and more urban park facilities so that you and your family can enjoy the great outdoors. It means those farmstands that dot our

countryside will continue to provide Jersey Fresh produce rather than fruits and vegetables trucked in from other states.

Overall, we will preserve about 500,000 more acres of farmland for all time, 200,000 acres of public recreation space, 200,000 acres of greenways, and 100,000 acres for watershed protection.

And as we're preserving our open spaces and farms and parklands, we'll also be protecting our historic treasures.

Consider all the Garden State has to offer. There's Historic Hoboken, the birthplace of baseball and Frank Sinatra, and Menlo Park offers a look at Thomas Edison's laboratories.

There's Fort Lee Historic Park, with its reconstructed Revolutionary War fort, and Fort Mott State Park, featuring gun embattlements from the Spanish-American War.

The Speedwell Iron Works in Morristown was the site of the first of the public demonstration of Morse Code. Cape May was once a summer resort for several U.S. Presidents, and every year Flemington offers a reenactment of the Trial of the Century.

I'm very pleased that our open space program will preserve and restore our history-making sites across New Jersey. Because preserving history makes our communities more attractive places in which to live, work and raise a family.

These are good times for New Jersey. Our restored Capitol dome shines on a state with a booming economy, low unemployment, the most rigorous educational standards in the country, dramatically reduced welfare rolls, and the lowest crime rate in a quarter century.

We are also returning more State revenues than ever before to municipalities and school districts to offset local taxes. No budget in our state's history has ever returned as much in direct and indirect tax relief.

Now, to add to all the good news, we're on the way to preserving a million more acres of open land. Thirty years from now, these million acres will look much like they do today - lush and open, clean and green, beautiful and inviting.

And thirty years from now I hope the people of New Jersey will look back on 1999 and recognize it as a time when all the citizens of our great state acted so wisely in setting aside fields and farms and public spaces.

Thank you.

