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Trust Approves \$78 Million for Parks, Historic Sites

Funding package includes \$37 for critical capital repairs at State Parks, Forests, Refuges

STATE INVESTMENT IN LAND PRESERVATION SINCE 1999 REACHES \$2.7 BILLION

TRENTON – The board of the Garden State Preservation Trust on Tuesday approved \$78 million to acquire land for State parks, forests and refuges, to fund capital repair projects on State recreation lands and to restore historic sites.

Over the past 20 years the Garden State Preservation Trust (GSPT) has approved \$2.73 billion in state funding to preserve more than 460,000 acres of state parks, forests, wildlife refuges and private farmland.

“There is no state-based program in the United States that can point to this accomplishment in protecting our natural lands and the resources they provide to every citizen,” said GSPT Chairman Andy Buzby.

“These priceless resources include clean water, captured carbon, heat reduction, wildlife habitat and locally grown farm produce,” he said.

The largest allocation of funds approved Tuesday was \$37 million to repair and rehabilitate critical facilities at State parks, forest and refuges, which have been burdened for decades by a backlog in neglected projects.

Also, \$27.4 million was approved for the Office of Green Acres State to acquire lands to add to existing parks and forests. These are tracts which have become available for purchase from willing sellers. The trust board also approved \$3 million for the Blue Acres flood-site acquisition program, which is also run by the Office of Green Acres.

The trust board allocated \$10.8 million to the New Jersey Historic Trust based on their recommendations for 23 “bricks and mortar” construction or rehabilitation projects statewide plus smaller grants to 29 sites for project planning or to promote heritage tourism.

This brings the two-year total for historic project funding to \$22.7 million, the most for the Historic Trust in the 52 years since it was established.

This year, the segment of the Corporation Business Tax which is constitutionally dedicated to conservation and preservation purposes will provide \$113.6 million to the broad range of conservation programs: park and natural land acquisitions, conservation, farmland preservation, recreational development, capital projects at State parks and wildlife refuges, and historic preservation grants. Combined with funds from previous years which were not appropriated or which were held in reserve, these CBT revenues bring the total available to almost \$220 million.