

New Jersey Natural Lands Trust



2006 Annual Report

Statement of Purpose

The New Jersey Natural Lands Trust was created by the Legislature in 1968 as an independent agency with the mission to preserve land in its natural state for enjoyment by the public and to protect natural diversity through the acquisition of open space. The Trust preserves land primarily by donations of open space through acquisition of title in fee simple or conservation easements, and manages its properties to conserve endangered species habitat, rare natural features, and significant ecosystems. The Trust invites passive use by the public for recreational or educational purposes wherever such use will not adversely affect ecological communities and biological diversity.

The Trust also recognizes that ownership and management alone are not enough to achieve its mission. Public education is an integral function of protecting natural diversity. The Trust distributes information designed to convey a conservation ethic for the protection of open space and its natural values.



New Jersey Natural Lands Trust contact information:

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Cover photo: Sooy Place Preserve

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The New Jersey Natural Lands Trust brought 2,950 new acres under Trust stewardship, making the Trust responsible for over 24,000 acres managed as a system of more than 120 preserves throughout the state.

Two of the new holdings were donated directly to the Trust, while the others were transferred to the Trust for management through the State's Green Acres Program.

Four new Trust preserves were established: Great Piece Meadows Preserve in Fairfield Township, Essex County, and the Borough of Lincoln Park and Montville Township in Morris County; Hardwick Meadows Preserve in Hardwick Township, Warren County; High Rock Mountain Preserve in Liberty Township, Warren County; and Warren Grove Bogs

Preserve in Stafford Township, Ocean County. The remaining acquisitions represented additions to the Abraitys Pine Stand, Bass River, Gravel Hill, Mankiller, Panther Branch, Sooy Place and Sweet Hollow preserves.

Personnel notes:

In 2006, Martha Windisch left her position as the Trust's Volunteer/Outreach Coordinator. For more than seven years, Martha helped to enhance the stewardship of the Trust's system of preserves by organizing volunteers to assist Trust staff with monitoring and management activities.



Gravel Hill Preserve, Holland Township, Hunterdon County



Hardwick Meadows Preserve: Hotspot of New Jersey Biodiversity

One of the most important aspects of the Trust's mission is its commitment to the protection of the State's natural diversity. New Jersey's natural diversity or biodiversity is a key measure of the health of its natural environment. Some of the greatest threats to New Jersey's biodiversity are development, habitat fragmentation, water and air pollution and the proliferation of invasive species. Unless we preserve and enhance habitats that support New Jersey's biodiversity, many native plant and animal species may be lost to the State forever.

The Trust's new Hardwick Meadows Preserve is focused around a calcareous fen wetlands system that includes extensive braided stream channels fed by springs and seepage areas, limestone sink-hole ponds and wooded swamps. The calcareous fen is host to many rare plants, a few of which are found nowhere else in New Jersey.

One of the most significant rare species present on the new preserve is the state-endangered spreading globe flower, a showy, buttercup-like plant that blooms in the early spring. This globally rare plant survives at only about 40 widely scattered sites in five states in eastern North America. It was the discovery of this endangered plant species by noted New Jersey author Ursula Perrin that ultimately led to the acquisition and permanent protection of Hardwick Meadows. She had read a 1988 newspaper interview of David Snyder, botanist for the New Jersey Natural Heritage Program, who discussed the rarity of spreading globe flower. She was convinced that this was the flower she had growing in her wet meadow and extended an invitation to Snyder to explore her property.

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After a season's worth of field visits, Snyder described the Trust's preserve as one of the most important areas of plant biodiversity in New Jersey. The preserve, approximately 432 acres, supports over 30 different rare plant species of global and state rarity. Few places of comparable size in New Jersey can claim such biodiversity bragging rights!

Another state-endangered plant, sessile-leaved water-speedwell, occurs nowhere else in the state. Prior to its discovery at Hardwick Meadows, this species had not been seen in New Jersey since 1907, its only other New Jersey location having been turned into a golf course.

During one recent visit to the preserve in August 2006, more than 15 endangered and rare plants were observed, including the spreading globe flower, sessile-leaved water-speedwell, hemlock-parsley, stiff gentian autumn willow and green sedge. In order to protect and buffer the habitat of these rare plants, the Trust will seek to preserve the

entire Hardwick Meadows Natural Heritage Priority Site. Natural Heritage Priority Sites are designated by the New Jersey Natural Heritage Program as critically important remaining habitat for rare plant species and ecological communities within the state. These areas are considered acquisition priorities in order to preserve the State's remaining biodiversity.

Although the preservation of Hardwick Meadows protects these rare plants from pollution, development and fragmentation threats, the threat from invasive plant species is real and significant. Within the Hardwick Meadows Preserve, there are pockets of such invasive plants as purple loosestrife, Japanese barberry, Japanese honeysuckle and autumn olive, all of which threaten native plant diversity at this important site. Because of this site's significance and the serious threat from invasive plant species, Snyder will inspect the site annually to monitor biodiversity and recommend management activities. The proper monitoring and management of this site to ensure its continued support of rare plant species will be a high priority for Trust staff in 2007 and future years.



Warren Grove Bogs Preserve: Living with the Pine Barrens

In his book, “Living with the Pine Barrens,” Jack Cervetto, an early Pine Barrens settler, outlined a history of his life that focused around nature in his own backyard, known locally as the “Cervetto Tract.” A major portion of the Cervetto Tract is now protected and preserved by the Trust as its new Warren Grove Bogs Preserve.

Located just north of the small village of Warren Grove in Ocean County, the Cervetto Tract is part of a series of abandoned cranberry bogs that follows along the East Branch of the Wading River. It is a key land parcel linking other state owned lands, including Bass River State Forest, Warren Grove Recreation Area and Stafford Forge Wildlife Management Area.

The Warren Grove Bogs Preserve features classic Pine Barrens habitats and is home to the federally-threatened and state-endangered Knieskern’s Beaked Rush, a small grass-like plant. With help from beavers, areas of the abandoned cranberry bogs are naturally reverting to a stand of Atlantic white cedar, providing ideal habitat for the state endangered Pine Barrens treefrog. Adding to the unique ecology of the site is the presence of a dwarf pitch pine ecological community. Recognized by the Natural Heritage Program as the Little Plains Natural Heritage Priority Site, it is somewhat smaller in acreage than other dwarf pitch pine communities, such as the nearby West Plains.

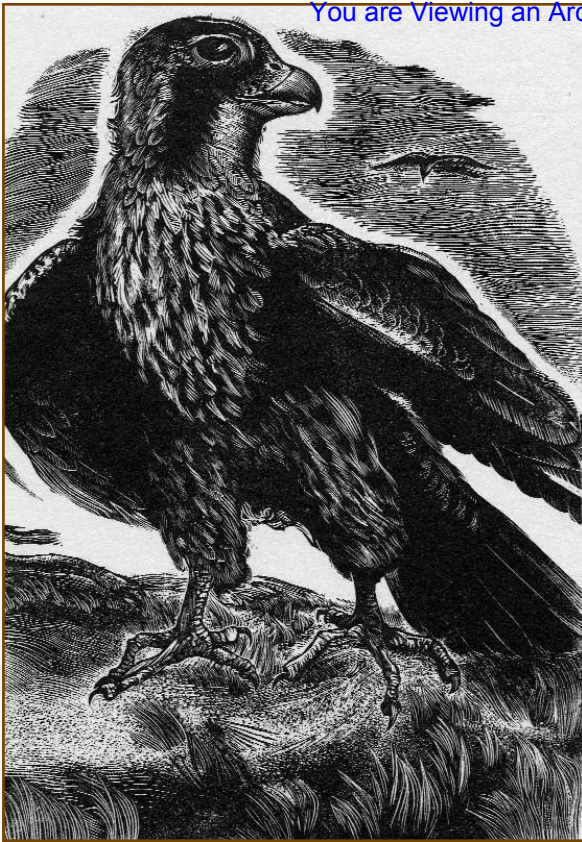
The 265 acre preserve was obtained as a donation of land required as a condition of a Coastal Areas Facility Review Act (CAFRA) permit issued to Route 539 LLC. To preserve this property as mitigation for residential development work done elsewhere in Ocean County, managing partners Kevin and Randy Scarborough worked with the Trust and went

beyond the permit requirements to assure that this ecologically sensitive property was transferred in a safe and conservation-minded way. For example, to offset long-term stewardship responsibilities, the Scarboroughs agreed to provide a financial donation to the Trust in the amount of \$5,000, as well as a donation of 50 acres in Little Egg Harbor Township, as an addition to the Bass River Preserve.

In order to preserve an element of the site’s unique cultural history, the Scarboroughs agreed to stabilize the small, cedarlog cabin that Jack Cervetto built long ago beside the Wading River. Perhaps scout groups might someday use this simple log cabin as a place to enjoy “Living with the Pine Barrens” as much as Jack Cervetto did.



Warren Bog from Simms Place



"Peregrine Falcon"



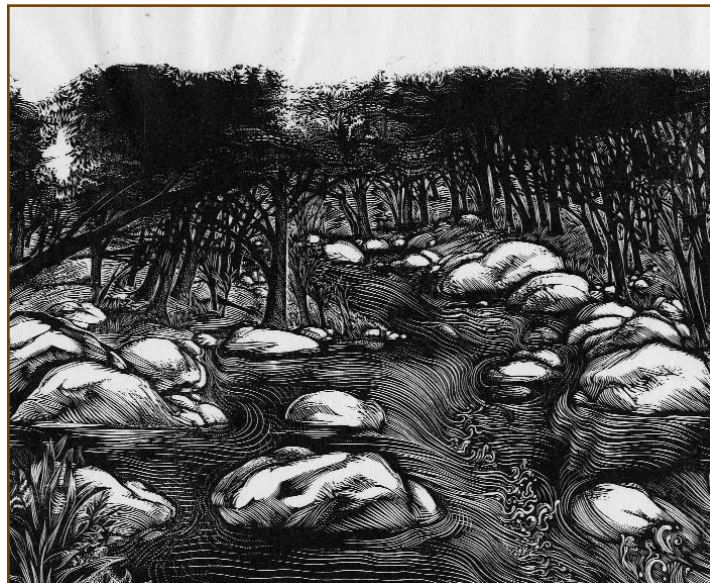
"Gentian"

Sale of Stefan Martin Prints Benefits Trust

In 1984, the Trust commissioned a series of limited edition prints created exclusively for the Trust by New Jersey wood engraver Stefan Martin. Each of the three prints highlights an object of the Trust's preservation efforts: the State-endangered Peregrine Falcon, titled "Peregrine Falcon;" a northern New Jersey stream habitat titled, "Morning Stream;" and a grouping of three Pine Barrens Gentian, titled "Gentian." After Stefan Martin's death in a 1994 fishing accident, a fellow artist noted that Martin was "absolutely one of the most important artists in New Jersey. He won many awards, was nationally known, and very well-loved."

Unframed prints are \$150 each, or \$400 for all three (a \$50 savings). Remaining as of this writing are 203 "Peregrine Falcon," 131 "Morning Stream," and 20 "Gentian" prints.

To order, contact the Trust at 609-984-1339, or email NatLands@dep.state.nj.us and indicate which print or prints you would like to order and your name and phone number. We will get back to you with ordering details.



"Morning Stream"



Biodiversity Inventory of Ancient Peat Bogs at Hyper Humus

The ancient peat bogs at Hyper Humus were long presumed to be a botanical and wildlife treasure because of the site's unusual soil substrate, peat. While it was assumed that the site provided habitat for rare and unusual plant and animal species, no one knew for sure because for decades Hyponex Corporation strictly monitored the property and kept it off limits to the public.

All the while, Hyponex's operations were transforming the peat bogs. Hyponex was mining and bagging the rich, deep peat for sale as potting soil. The mining activities prompted naturalists to wonder what habitats and species were being impacted. Fortunately, the

Trust was recently put in a position to find out.

After the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers brought suit against Hyponex for federal wetlands violations, a settlement was reached whereby Hyponex agreed to donate a conservation easement to the Trust to ensure the property's preservation in perpetuity. This donation is known as the Paulinskill River Easement. As part of the settlement, Hyponex also agreed to undertake an extensive wetland restoration project intended to mitigate the effects of previous peat and muck soil mining and to provide a \$125,000 endowment for natural resources management.

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Public ownership has added miles of new trails.

As a first step, the Natural Lands Trust decided to use a limited portion of the endowment to fund a baseline biodiversity inventory of Hyper Humus. After a public bidding process in late 2005, Wander Ecological Consultants was selected to begin a year-long, four season survey of the unknown natural resources at Hyper Humus. Ecologists Sharon and Wade Wander reached out to a local network of amateur and professional naturalists for information and insight on the property. The Wanders then spent more than 150 hours on-site. A draft biodiversity inventory report submitted to the Trust in late 2006 documents numerous rare plant and animal species. Once the report is finalized, it will be shared with New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife (DF&W), which now owns and manages the property as the Paulinskill River Wildlife Management Area. Using the inventory and the remaining endowment, the Trust will work with the DF&W to ensure the best possible stewardship and management of the property.



The ancient peat bogs

With this stewardship commitment, the wetland system of bogs, fens, hardwood swamps, marshes and open water should continue to support a high diversity of plant and animal species, including such state-endangered and threatened plants and animals as bog willow, bog rosemary, rush aster, American bittern and long-tailed salamander. Waterfowl and wildlife also make good use of the site's restored wetlands and natural cover. Ducks, geese and swans use the open water habitat, while wading birds like herons and egrets stalk the shallow edges.

Sportsmen, hikers, birders and other outdoor enthusiasts are now exploring and enjoying these ancient bogs, too. Public ownership of Hyper Humus has added miles of new hiking and horseback riding trails to the Sussex Branch and Paulinskill Valley Trails, both part of the State Trails System.



An extensive wetlands restoration project mitigates the effects of previous peat and muck soil mining.



Three Cheers for Volunteers!!!

The Trust would like to acknowledge and thank its many volunteers for their invaluable contributions to the maintenance of Trust preserves. Special thanks are due to volunteers who have been monitoring Trust preserves for three, four, and five or more years, and to volunteers who have attended preserve cleanups on an annual basis. It takes a lot of commitment and discipline to keep a watchful eye on a piece of

property over time, especially since volunteer monitoring is pretty much a self-motivated endeavor. It also takes dedication to attend a preserve workday and pick up what appears to be the same trash, year after year.

If you are interested in becoming a Trust volunteer monitor or attending a workday, please contact the New Jersey Natural Lands Trust at 609-984-1339 or NatLands@dep.state.nj.us.

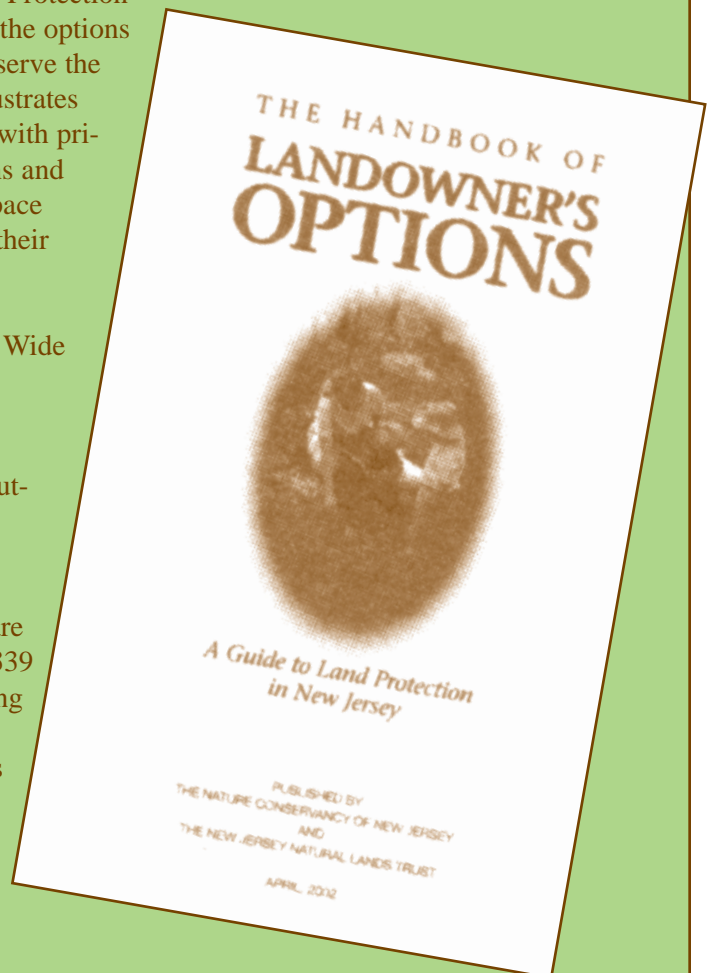
The Handbook of Landowner's Options – A Guide to Land Protection in New Jersey

Land in New Jersey is in demand more than ever before. Realizing that much of the effort to preserve land must come from the private sector, the New Jersey Natural Lands Trust and The Nature Conservancy of New Jersey published The Handbook of Landowner's Options – A Guide to Land Protection in New Jersey. The handbook describes the options available to landowners who wish to preserve the natural attributes of their property. It illustrates how property owners can work together with private, nonprofit conservation organizations and government agencies to preserve open space through a variety of methods tailored to their individual needs.

The Handbook is available on the World Wide Web at the site of the New Jersey Environmental Digital Library.

The link to the document is <http://njedl.rutgers.edu/ftp/PDFs/2116.pdf>.

To receive a hard copy of this document (the first copy is free, additional copies are \$1 each), contact the Trust at 609-984-1339 or NatLands@dep.state.nj.us. If requesting more than one copy, make your check payable to the New Jersey Natural Lands Trust, and send your request, including the name and address to which the handbooks are to be sent, to the NJ Natural Lands Trust, PO Box 404, Trenton, NJ 08625.



A New Address for the Trust – www.njnlt.org

On September 1, 2006, the Trust posted a new and vastly improved website at www.njnlt.org, replacing what had been a single page. Creation of a more comprehensive site addressing public outreach and hunter registration needs had been a goal of the Trust for many years. This visually stunning site has numerous pages summarizing the history and mission of the Trust, descriptions and maps of many Trust preserves, guidance to land donors and land preservationists, Annual Reports in PDF format dating back to 2002, a listing of members of the Board of Trustees, as well as staff contact information. Many of the impressive photographs used throughout the site were taken by Trust staff or contributed by members of the Department's Office of Natural Lands Management.

The heart of the site is the Preserves and Public Uses page, containing a map of the Trust's preserves. For selected preserves,

maps and additional information ~ including locations, features of interest, size, access, directions, and permitted passive recreational activities ~ is provided by clicking on the preserve location on the map. For those interested in deer hunting (only the hunting of deer is allowed, and only on selected Trust preserves), the user can access, print and electronically submit a hunter registration letter directly to the Trust, and also print the map of the Trust preserve which must accompany the registration letter. This self-registration process has essentially replaced the prior labor- and resource-intensive mail-in registration process.

The Trust intends to enhance the site regularly with updated information on additional and new preserves, as well as selected management projects. If you have any comments or questions concerning the website, please email us from the Contact Us page, at www.njnlt.org.

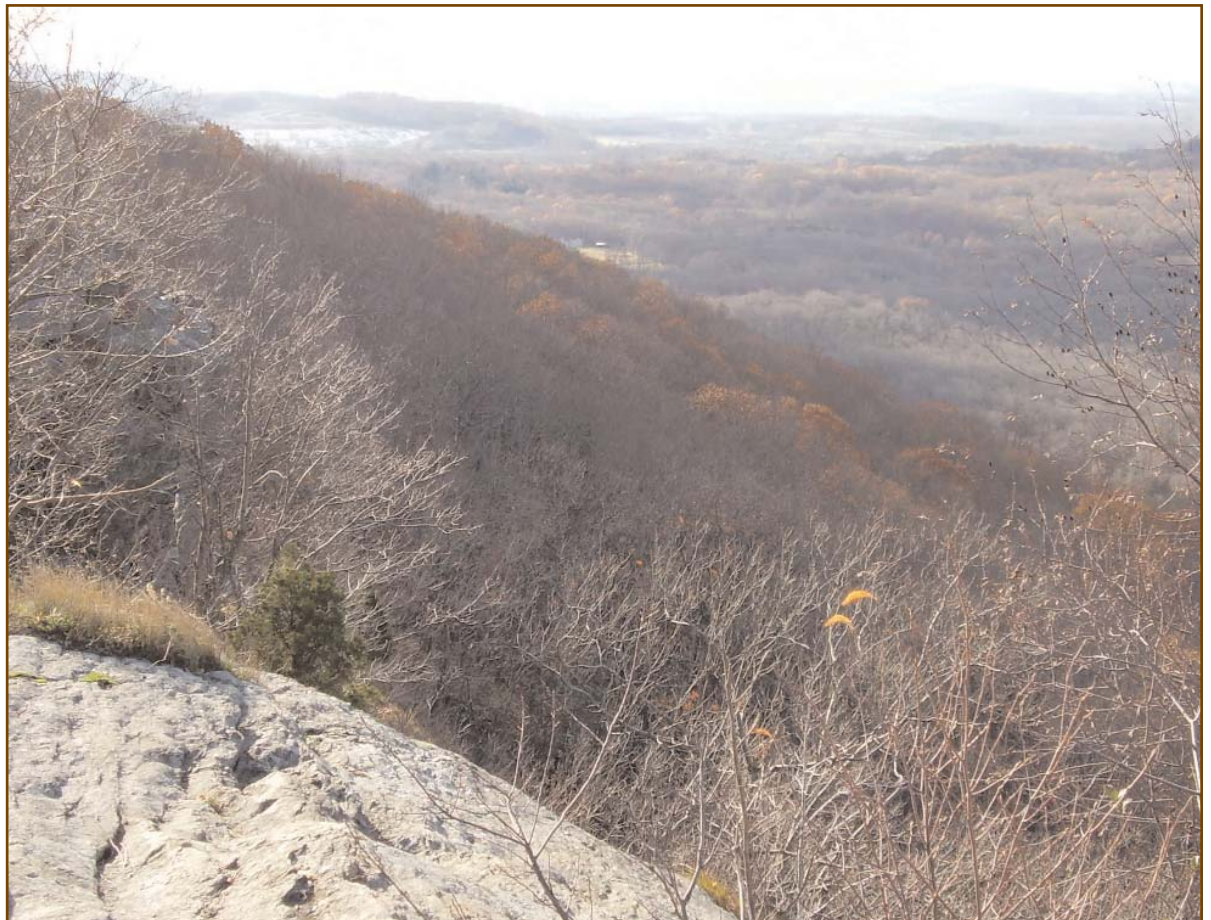


High Rock Mountain and Great Piece Meadows: New Trust Preserves

The High Rock Mountain Preserve was initiated with a Green Acres management assignment of an 81-acre property in Liberty Township, Warren County. Adjacent to this property is an area that includes the habitat for the only known New Jersey occurrence of the state-endangered western false lily-of-the-valley. With the protection of this state-endangered plant species in mind, the Trust created a Project Area that identifies areas considered a priority for acquisition as additions to the preserve. The entire Project Area is in the Highlands Preservation Area, with its boundary based on the newly drawn boundary for the High Rock Mountain Natural Heritage Priority Site, which is ranked B4V1. The V rank is a newly

developed state value, based on the global biodiversity rank combined with the state biodiversity rank to provide information about the significance of the site on a state level. V1 is the highest state value rank and reflects outstanding significance on a state level. The Project Area consists of undeveloped, forested ridge tops with a fairly steep slope on the west face. The summit has at least two open balds with rock outcrops. There are small areas of talus slope woodlands. The Project Area consists almost entirely of a deciduous forest with a diverse herbaceous layer. It adjoins the Trust's Mountain Lake Bog Preserve and Jenny Jump State Forest.

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The Great Piece Meadows Preserve currently includes some 1,370 acres. It falls within the approximately 7,500-acre Great Piece Meadows Project Area, which is based on the B4V1-ranked Great Piece Meadows Natural Heritage Priority Site. Great Piece Meadows is a freshwater wetland complex formed by melting ice water from receding Ice Age glaciers in an area described by geologists as Glacial Lake Passaic. This wetland complex blends habitats of palustrine hardwood forest, scrub-shrub and emergent wetlands. It provides suitable habitat for state-endangered and threatened animal species such as blue-spotted salamander, sedge wren, bobcat and barred owl. In addition to providing habitat for rare animal species, this area also includes habitat for documented occurrences of state-endangered and rare plants such as Louisiana sedge, buttonbush dodder, early buttercup and blunt-lobe grape fern.

Approximately 350 acres of the Great Piece

Wildlife Preserves Inc. by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as part of the federal Passaic River Flood Damage Reduction Project. Wildlife Preserves acquired critical wetlands in this area in the 1950s, with hopes of establishing the area as a wildlife sanctuary. Because of Wildlife Preserve's extensive history with and commitment to Great Piece Meadows, the Trust has entered into a 24-year management agreement with it. Under the agreement, as the Trust's steward, Wildlife Preserves is authorized to post and patrol Great Piece Meadows Preserve. The property is open to such public recreational uses as hiking, biking, boating and bird watching. Fishing on and within the bounds and banks of the Passaic River and its tributaries is also permissible. Recreational hunting is not permitted at this Preserve. In the future, however, the Trust may look to employ deer management techniques should it determine that deer overbrowsing creates a biological need to protect the ecosystem.



2006 List of Donors

The New Jersey Natural Lands Trust gratefully extends its thanks to those who have donated land, funds, or services to the Trust in 2006 to help preserve and protect New Jersey's natural heritage.

Mr. and Mrs. Gary Simpkins

Mr. and Mrs. Dean Paul Thompson

Mr. Sam Buscaglia

Mr. and Mrs. James Fish

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Clark, Jr.

Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Henderson, Jr.

Mr. and Mrs. Richard Henss

Mr. Thomas O'Brien

New Jersey Department of Human Services



The Trust accepts gifts, legacies, bequests, and endowments of land and/or funds for use in accordance with the Trust's mission.

For more information about how you can make a donation to further the Trust's mission to acquire, preserve, and manage natural lands for the protection of natural diversity,

call 609-984-1339

or visit the Trust's website

at www.njnlt.org

The New Jersey Natural Lands Trust financial report is available upon request.

The New Jersey NATURAL LANDS TRUST

Board of Trustees

An 11-member Board of Trustees sets policy for the Trust.

Six members are appointed by the Governor from the recommendations of a nominating caucus of conservation organizations, and five members are State officials.

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James Hall, Vice Chairperson
Superintendent, Palisades Interstate Park Commission

Theresa Lettman, Secretary/Treasurer
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Emile DeVito
Director of Conservation Biology, New Jersey Conservation Foundation

John Flynn
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