

# DRAFT

**2008 – 2012  
New Jersey  
Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation  
Plan**

New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection

**Green Acres Program**

Draft  
August 29, 2007

# STATE OF NEW JERSEY

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## **Executive Summary**

**The New Jersey Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) is prepared every five years by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's Green Acres Program to provide statewide policy direction on open space and recreation issues. The preparation of the SCORP also maintains New Jersey's eligibility to receive funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund, administered by the National Park Service. The SCORP serves as a status report, strategic plan and guide for natural and recreational resource protection and planning.**

**The 2008 SCORP has been prepared to meet the following goals:**

- 1. To preserve a sufficient amount of open space for current and future public recreational use and for the conservation of natural resources important to protecting New Jersey's biodiversity and the quality of life in New Jersey.**
- 2. Provide close to home park and recreation opportunities for residents statewide and promote the development of parks in New Jersey's urban and suburban centers to support revitalization efforts.**
- 3. To present current information on the supply, demand and need for recreation and open space in New Jersey.**
- 4. To implement open space and recreation planning policies and projects that are consistent with the New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan.**
- 5. To encourage coordinated open space and recreation planning, acquisition and development initiatives of local governments and conservation organizations.**
- 6. To effectively use funds from the Garden State Preservation Trust, Land and Water Conservation Fund, Forest Legacy Program, Pinelands Section 502 Program and other sources of funding which may become available.**

**The 2008 SCORP also contains findings based on research and the public participation and planning processes. The findings presented in the 2008 SCORP are:**

- 1. New Jersey has 1,242,664 acres of preserved public open space.**
- 2. Open space preservation provides many amenities including water resource protection, wildlife habitat, assessed recreation, agriculture, and tourism.**
- 3. 252 local governments are assessing a tax for land preservation, park and recreation projects and historic preservation in 2007, collecting \$330 million annually.**

- 4. Over \$410 million in capital improvement projects have been identified as needed for state parks, forests, historic sites and wildlife management areas.**
- 5. The State shall continue to make the protection of water resources, preservation of biodiversity and the provision of park and recreation opportunities a statewide priority.**
- 6. There is a need to preserve 700,000 acres of high value natural resources lands statewide.**

**The SCORP is comprised of seven chapters that discusses New Jersey open space and recreation program and its various elements of planning preservation and funding. The 2008 SCORP is organized as follows:**

**Chapter 1 discusses the role of the SCORP, goals, findings and the public participation process used to formulate SCORP issues and policies.**

**Chapter 2 describes New Jersey's open space and recreation system. It looks at the roles of federal, state and local governments, conservation organizations and commercial recreation operators in providing conservation and recreation services to the public.**

**Chapter 3 analyzes the supply and demand for open space and recreation in New Jersey. One of the most important functions of the SCORP is to provide current data on the supply of open space in the state. State demographic data provide the foundation for the issues and policies presented in the SCORP and for estimating open space and recreation demand and need.**

**Chapter 4 identifies six statewide issues and policies. The issues and policies are the result of the public participation and resource assessment process. These policies and issues will provide direction for open space and recreation funding decisions during the next five years.**

**Chapter 5 outlines an action plan containing policies to achieve SCORP goals. It details strategies that support and implement statewide open space and recreation policies.**

**Chapter 6 covers the State project selection process and the methodology used to award funding through a series of priority ranking systems. It also discusses the Green Acres application and project management process.**

**Chapter 7 provides an update of New Jersey's plan to protect wetlands. It discusses current wetland regulatory programs and non-regulatory initiatives designed to preserve the State's wetland resources.**

# Chapter 1

## The Policy Plan

Land preservation and recreation comprise one of the cornerstones of New Jersey's smart growth policy. Nine Green Acres bond issues totaling \$1.4 billion together with funding from the Garden State Preservation Trust Act, which has the potential to provide \$1.9 billion, represent a combined \$3.3 billion public investment in open space preservation and recreation by the State since 1961. New Jerseyans have continually expressed their support for the State to carry out a comprehensive open space and recreation program. There is no stronger testament of this support than residents consistently voting for open space and recreation referendums not only at the State level, but at the local level as well. In 2007, 252 New Jersey local governments, all 21 counties and 231 municipalities, assessed a special tax for land preservation and recreation purposes. New Jersey is clearly a national leader in open space preservation.

This substantial, long term dedication of funds for land preservation and recreation represents New Jersey's response to an urgent need to protect its water resources, preserve biodiversity, enhance urban centers, create greenways and provide a broad array of recreational opportunities. It is essential to preserving rural landscapes and is a major factor in sustaining New Jersey's nearly \$40 billion tourism industry. New Jersey's open space goals are based on comprehensive analysis and public opinion concerning preservation needs for biological diversity, water resources, and recreation. Given all the attributes and functions of open space, it can be said that open space preservation is one of the most cost effective and efficient means of environmental protection.

New Jersey's natural and recreation resources are facing tremendous pressures from the State's increasing population and development. According to Census data, the State's population grew by over 300,000 people since 2000, increasing to over 8.7 million people. Rutgers University Center for Remote Sensing and Spatial Analysis examined changes in New Jersey's land use between 1995 and 2000 and determined that a total of 89,888 acres were developed, an area nearly equal in size of Essex County. The Center estimates that 50 acres of land are developed every day in New Jersey or more than 18,000 acres annually. A total of 232, 938 residential building permits were issued between 2000 and 2006 to support

**this growth according to New Jersey Department of Labor statistics. The implications for natural resources are beyond words. These implications will not only result from the residential, commercial and infrastructure development necessary to accommodate population growth, but also from increased demand for and use of New Jersey's public conservation and recreation resources.**

**The 2008 New Jersey Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) is the eighth plan prepared by the State since the passage of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) in 1965. The purpose of the plan is to provide statewide policy direction to the State, local governments and conservation organizations in the preservation of open space and the provision of public recreation opportunities. The SCORP is required to be prepared by the National Park Service in order for New Jersey to remain eligible for LWCF monies.**

**The SCORP though has become much more than a report prepared to satisfy the eligibility requirements for funding under the LWCF. The SCORP serves as a strategic guide and status report for open space preservation and recreation in New Jersey. It acts as a policy communication to all branches of state government, local governments, conservation organizations, other interest groups and the general public. The SCORP provides data and information on supply, demand, issues and policies that are used by open space and recreation professionals. It is, however, the continued assessment and planning that makes the SCORP a timely endeavor. New Jersey is a dynamic state facing many challenges to its natural and recreation resources. It can only successfully meet these challenges by engaging in a continual process of examining all facets of open space and recreation in New Jersey.**

**The 2008 SCORP has been prepared to meet the following goals:**

- 1. To preserve a sufficient amount of open space for current and future public recreational use and for the conservation of natural resources important to protecting New Jersey's biodiversity and quality of life.**
- 2. Provide close to home park and recreation opportunities for residents statewide and promote the development of parks in New Jersey's urban and suburban centers to support revitalization efforts.**

3. To present current information on the supply, demand and need for recreation and open space in New Jersey.
4. To implement open space and recreation planning policies and projects that are consistent with New Jersey's smart growth principles and the State Development and Redevelopment Plan.
5. To encourage coordinated open space and recreation planning, acquisition and development initiatives of local governments and conservation organizations.
6. To effectively use funds from the Garden State Preservation Trust, Land and Water Conservation Fund, Forest Legacy Program, Pinelands Section 502 Program and other sources of funding which may become available.

### **Legal Authority**

New Jersey receives authorization to participate in the LWCF Program under provisions of New Jersey Statutes Annotated 13:1B-65 and 13:1D-9(r). These state in part that “the Department of Environmental Protection shall in addition to the power and duties vested in it by this act or any other law have the power to, with the approval of the Governor, cooperate with, apply for, review and expend funds for the Federal Government.”

The LWCF is administered in New Jersey, by a State Liaison Officer (SLO) who is appointed by the Governor. The SLO for New Jersey is the Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Protection. As SLO, the Deputy Commissioner has the authority and responsibility to apply for, accept and administer funds received from the federal government and used to pay for approved LWCF projects.

### **Maintenance of the Plan**

The Green Acres Program in the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) is responsible for both the programs and studies necessary for plan maintenance and the allocation of LWCF grant monies to qualified recipients.

### **Public Participation**

There are many avenues for public participation in New Jersey's SCORP planning process. The Green Acres Program hosted 18 public workshops over the last five years. These

workshops provide a venue to discuss issues, learn about funding availability and receive technical assistance. These annual workshops are an important part of the Green Acres public participation process. Green Acres staff also participate in conferences and other public events that address open space and recreation concerns statewide.

Recognizing the importance of public involvement in open space and recreation planning, Green Acres requires that local governments applying for Green Acres funding hold a public meeting on their application. This requirement ensures that local governments are providing an opportunity for residents to discuss open space and recreation issues. Another important element of these local efforts has been the establishment of open space and recreation taxes by the State's counties and municipalities. A total of 231 municipalities and 21 counties in New Jersey assess a voter approved tax for land preservation, and recreation projects and historic preservation. The campaigns waged to secure public approval of these referendums required the examination and discussion of local open space and recreation concerns.

In the past several years, many counties have established Green Tables. Green Tables are forums for organizations, local governments and the public to discuss open space and park recreation issues. They are often sponsored in partnership with a local government and can be effective planning venues.

The preparation of the SCORP itself has provided opportunities for public participation. Copies of the draft plan were mailed to a variety of federal, state and regional agencies for review and comment. County park and planning agencies also were sent copies for their input. Every New Jersey municipality received notification of the availability of the draft plan for comment. Interested parties such as nonprofit land trusts and conservation organizations were also sent copies for comment. Comments submitted by these various agencies, organizations and individuals have been incorporated into the 2008 New Jersey SCORP. The Green Acres Program hosted two public meetings on the draft plan to ensure what the public was saying about open space and outdoor recreation would be accurately portrayed in the final plan. The SCORP was also available for public review and comment on the Green Acres website at [www.state.nj.us/dep/greenacres](http://www.state.nj.us/dep/greenacres).

These efforts have provided the public the opportunity to participate in an area about which they have a valued opinion. Matching these opinions, needs, demands and ideas with professional insight and existing financial resources remains one of the most important objectives of New Jersey's SCORP public participation process.

### **Garden State Preservation Trust Act**

Signed into law in 1999, the Garden State Preservation Trust Act (the Act) was a result of the recommendations of Governor's Council on New Jersey Outdoors to create a stable source of funding for conservation and recreation projects. The Act establishes a framework to implement the 1998 voter approved statewide ballot initiative that provides a dedicated source of funding for open space preservation, farmland and historic preservation and the development of parks and recreation facilities. The constitutional amendment allows New Jersey to set aside \$98 million each year for ten years of state sales tax revenues and to allocate up to \$1 billion in bond proceeds over the same time period. A November 2003 referendum increased funding for the act by \$150 million.

In addition to providing funding, the Act also established the Garden State Preservation Trust. This nine member board reviews and approves projects for funding by the Department of Environmental Protection and the State Agriculture Development Committee. Between June 1999 and May 2007, the Trust approved \$1.37 billion for state, local government and nonprofit open space preservation and park and recreation project (Tables 1 and 2).

The Act also continues the payments of in lieu of taxes to municipalities in which lands are purchased by the Green Acres Program for state conservation and recreation purposes. The Act includes both the 13 year declining percentage schedule which had been a fixture in the Green Acres bond acts between 1971 and 1995 and institutes a new per acre payment depending on the acreage of land in a municipality owned by the State for recreation and conservation purposes or by a nonprofit conservation organization. Payments for in lieu of taxes for Fiscal Year 2007 was \$9 million paid to 268 municipalities on over 730,000 acres of state and nonprofit recreation and conservation lands.

**Table 1**

**Garden State Preservation Trust Act Funding  
For  
Green Acres Acquisition and Park and Recreation Projects**

1999	\$123,900,000
2000	\$152,500,000
2001	\$162,792,000
2002	\$115,300,000
2003	\$174,700,000
2004	\$225,600,000
2005	\$223,500,000
2006	\$153,100,000
<u>2007</u>	<u>\$ 40,000,000</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,371,392,000</b>

*Note: Includes funding from Green Acres Bond Acts, Green Acres loan repayments, Coastal Blue Acres, and Land and Water Conservation Funds.*

**Table 2**  
**Green Acres Acquisition and Recreation Projects**  
**June 1999 – May 2007**

<u>Project Type</u>	<u>Funding</u>
State Land Acquisition	\$560,000,000
State Land Development	\$ 10,000,000
Local Government Acquisition	\$485,200,000
Local Government Park Development	\$191,800,000
Nonprofit Acquisition and Park Development	\$123,400,000
Coastal Blue Acres Acquisitions	<u>\$ 992,000</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,371,392,000</b>

*Note: Includes funding from the Garden State Preservation Trust Act, Green Acres bond acts, Green Acres loan repayments and the Land and Water Conservation Fund.*

## **Corporate Business Tax**

The proper stewardship of State public open space lands has been an ongoing problem for many years. Funding for maintenance and capital projects has been insufficient and has resulted in a \$413 million backlog of projects needing funding. New Jersey's state park system and wildlife management areas contain some of the most significant natural landscapes and historic sites in New Jersey. They represent an invaluable ecological and cultural resource and greatly enhance the quality of life for state residents.

To address this pressing current need and to meet future needs of State public open space and recreation areas, a constitutional amendment was approved by public referendum in 2006, which reallocated a surplus of existing environmentally dedicated funds from Corporate Business Tax revenue. An estimated total of \$15 million a year through 2015 and approximately \$32 million a year thereafter will be used to address capital project needs in state parklands and wildlife management areas. Because it is a reallocation of existing tax revenues it, it will provide this funding without any additional taxes. The referendum passed with a 60% of the vote. With close to 18 million people using the state park system in FY 2006, these funds will greatly increase public enjoyment of these resources.

The NJDEP's Division of Parks & Forestry and Division of Fish & Wildlife have prepared projects for the initial use of Corporate Business Tax revenues in addition to FY 2007 capital funds. State parks and forest generate about \$1.2 billion annually in economic benefits and are responsible for the creation of more than 7,000 jobs according to a 2004 NJDEP study.

The list in Table 3 contains \$9.6 million in Corporate Business tax funds and \$8.9 million in FY 2007 capital funding.

**Table 3**

**FY 2007 Corporate Business Tax and Capital Fund Projects**

**Division of Parks and Forestry**

**Division of Fish and Wildlife**

<b><u>Project</u></b>	<b><u>Funding</u></b>
Liberty State Parks – Ferry Slip/Bulkhead	\$1,750,000
Trenton Battle Monument – Design/Construction	\$1,000,000
Allamuchy State Park – Waterloo Village Restoration	\$ 450,000
Ringwood State Park – Skylands Manor HVAC/Park Maintenance	\$ 945,000
High Point State Park – Monument Lighting	\$1,150,000
Wharton State Forest – Batsto Mansion Restoration	\$2,000,000
Hopatcong State Park – Bulkhead/Sanitary Improvements	\$ 400,000
Kittatinny State Park – Maintenance Facility	\$ 100,000
Brendan Bryne State Forest – Office/Historic Site Renovations	\$ 300,000
Belleplain State Forest – Dam Repairs	\$ 160,000
Leonardo State Marina – Dredging	\$ 200,000
Hackettstown Fish Hatchery – Water Supply System	\$ 250,000
Pequest Fish Hatchery - Photovoltaics/Roof Replacement	\$ 600,000
Great Bay Wildlife Management Area – Well Decommissioning	\$ 450,000
Office Base Stations – Park Police & Conservation Offices	\$ 100,000
Statewide Historic Sites – Restoration	\$2,450,000
Palisades Interstate Park – Security/Parks Improvements	\$ 325,000
Forest Fire Service – Tower Repairs	\$ 90,000
State Urban Parks – Design/Construction	\$2,000,000
Alfieri Trail – Design/Construction	\$ 500,000
Forest Nursery – Pesticide Building	\$ 100,000
Mosquito Control – Insecticide Building	\$ 102,000
Statewide Demolition, Fire Safety, Environmental	\$1,749,900
Statewide Road Repairs	\$ 550,000
Statewide Bridge Repairs	\$ 350,000
Administration	<u>\$ 480,100</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$18,552,000</b>

## **Summary of Findings**

Land preservation, either for conservation, recreation or agricultural purposes, is a central component of statewide land use planning. Open space preservation and park development continues to be an integral feature of revitalization of the State's urban centers. Protection of New Jersey's historic structures and landscapes remains a priority for the State. Despite the preservation of over 1.3 million acres of open space and farmland, need to preserve additional acreage continues. The demand for park and recreation facilities remains very strong.

There are two factors driving this demand and need. One is population growth. According to census data, New Jersey's estimated population in 2006 was 8,724,560, an increase of 310,210 since 2000. With 1,176 persons per square mile, New Jersey's distinctive status as the nation's most densely populated states goes unchallenged, especially when compared against a national density of 80 persons per square mile. Although this represents an annual growth rate of only .7 percent between 2000 and 2006, individual county growth rates were more dramatic. Bergen County continues to be the most populous county in the State, with over 904,000 residents (more than six states) and joined Essex, Hudson, Middlesex and Monmouth counties on the list of the nation's 100 most populous counties.

The second factor is the accommodation of this population growth, which is reflected by more than 230,000 residential building permits issued between 2000 and 2006. Commercial building permits represent another element, that together with residential land development, are responsible for the loss of 50 acres of land a day, 18,000 acres annually, to meet the housing, transportation, retail and employment needs of 8.7 million state residents. This figure, derived by analysis of land use changes between 1995 and 2000 by Rutgers University Center for Remote Sensing, represents a major challenge for New Jersey's natural resources and there ability to sustain the State's economic strength. The NJDEP land use data for 1995-2002 depicts statewide land cover changes in Table 4. Table 5 shows the counties with the lightest land cover changes during the same period. These two land uses translate into a loss of vegetation and an increase in impervious surfaces, which directly impact the very essence of quality of life issues and have broad implications. Based on current land use development patterns, Rutgers' Center for Remote Sensing is predicting that New Jersey could be built out within the next 30 to 40 years, the first state in the nation that may do so.

## **Findings**

- 1. New Jersey has 1,242,664 acres of preserved public open space which represents 26 percent of New Jersey's land area.**
- 2. Open space preservation is a tool of smart growth that provides many amenities including water resource protection, wildlife habitat, recreation, agriculture, and tourism.**
- 3. 252 local governments assessed a tax for land preservation, park and recreation projects and historic preservation in 2007, collecting \$330 million annually.**
- 4. Over \$410 million in capital improvement projects have been identified as needed for state parks, forests, historic sites and wildlife management areas.**
- 5. The State shall continue to make the protection of water resources, preservation of biodiversity and the provision of parks and recreation opportunities statewide a priority.**
- 6. There is a need to preserve 700,000 acres of high value natural resource lands statewide.**

**Table 4**  
**New Jersey Statewide Land Use**  
**1995-2002 Acreage Change**

<u>Land Use</u>	<u>1995 Acres</u>	<u>2002 Acres</u>	<u>Change Acreage</u>
Agriculture	652,335	596,805	-55,530
Barren Land	56,698	59,668	2,970
Forest	1,616,522	1,575,219	-41,303
Urban Land	1,334,542	1,440,404	105,862
Water	301,987	302,883	897
Wetlands	1,022,253	1,009,357	-12,896

Source: NJDEP GIS 2002 Land Use/Land Cover

Note: See [www.state.nj.us/dep/gis/categories02.htm](http://www.state.nj.us/dep/gis/categories02.htm) for 2002 Land Use/Land Cover category descriptions

**Table 5**  
**Highest County Urban Land Acres Increases**  
**1995-2002**

<u>County</u>	<u>1995 Acres</u>	<u>2002 Acres</u>	<u>Change Acres</u>
Monmouth	121,366	133,961	12,595
Ocean	88,530	100,226	11,696
Somerset	72,467	82,569	10,102
Morris	105,952	113,147	7,195
Hunterdon	55,977	63,064	7,087
Gloucester	58,654	65,739	7,085
Middlesex	<u>101,145</u>	<u>108,157</u>	<u>7,012</u>
Totals	604,091	666,863	62,772

Source: NJDEP GIS 2002 Land Use/Land Cover

Note: Urban Land includes residential areas, commercial areas, institutions, industrial areas, corporate parks and developed parks and recreation areas, For full description see [www.state.nj.us/dep/gis/categories02.htm](http://www.state.nj.us/dep/gis/categories02.htm).

## **Chapter 2**

### **Open Space and Recreation Providers**

New Jersey is fortunate that in addition to abundant natural resources, there are a variety of public and private agencies which contribute to the State's supply of open space and recreation. These agencies ply their trade in a state with five distinct physiographic provinces ranging in elevation from sea level in the south and east to over 1,800 feet in the northwest. As a peninsula, water is a primary feature of the New Jersey landscape which is dominated by 127 miles of Atlantic Ocean coastline. New Jersey is ecologically unique, very different northern and southern plant and wildlife communities call the state home, making New Jersey's ecosystems among the most complex and diverse in the nation. This biodiversity includes 2,134 known native plant species and close to 900 wildlife species. Approximately 1 million shorebirds and as many as 80,000 raptors make migratory stopovers here each year. To sustain this rich biological diversity, New Jersey must protect the habitats of plant and animal species through land preservation and the regulation of growth and development.

The protection of natural resources is just one task facing providers in New Jersey. The landscapes that nurture biodiversity also cultivate a strong demand for recreation. New Jersey's parks and recreation areas offer opportunities from camping to softball. Both active and passive recreation activities are needed to satisfy the State's diverse and growing population.

#### **Federal Government**

The presence of the federal government in New Jersey is a reflection of the State's strategic location and physiographic diversity. Six federal agencies are part of the New Jersey open space and recreation community. Each plays an important, yet different, aspect in the provision of recreation. Some like the United States Fish and Wildlife Service are active in land preservation, management and public recreation. Together with the National Park Service, these two agencies manage over 112,000 acres of public open space in New Jersey. Others such as the Department of Defense's military installations indirectly offer open space amenities. Table 6 contains a listing of federal funding for New Jersey open space and recreation projects.

**The National Park Service is responsible for some of the most outstanding recreation resources in New Jersey and manages over 35,000 acres in the State. The Sandy Hook Unit of the Gateway National Recreation Area is located on a peninsula at the northern tip of Monmouth County and features seven miles of ocean beaches and coves, hundreds of acres of barrier beach vegetation and the historic Fort Hancock and Sandy Hook Lighthouse. Ocean swimming and fishing, as well as bicycling are popular activities.**

**The New Jersey portion of the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area consists of about 32,000 acres and is located along the Delaware River between New Jersey and Pennsylvania. The Delaware River is the only large free flowing river on the eastern seaboard. The portion of the river that flows through the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area was inducted into the National Wild and Scenic Rivers system in 1978 as part of thirty-seven mile segment beginning in Port Jervis, New York. The park is located within an hour drive from major population centers in northern New Jersey. Popular outdoor recreation activities include canoeing, kayaking, swimming, fishing and cross country skiing. The Appalachian Trail and other trails offer hikers a variety of terrain. It is also contiguous with major public open space holdings such as Stokes and Worthington State Forests, which together create an outstanding visitor experience. Total of 5.7 million people visited National Park Service sites in New Jersey in 2006, a 3.9% increase from 2005.**

**The National Park Service partnered with the State to conduct a Special Resource Study to determine eligibility for designation of a portion of New Jersey as a National Heritage Area. The study documented New Jersey's pivotal role in the American revolution resulting in the designation of the Crossroads of the American Revolution National Heritage Area in 2006. The Crossroads of the American Revolution is one of only 37 National Heritage Areas in the nation. It includes over two hundred municipalities in 14 counties, stretching from Fort Lee in Bergen County to the Red Bank Battlefield in Gloucester County. The legislation establishing the heritage area also authorized federal funding of up to \$ 10 million over 15 years. These funds will be leveraged by a required match from public and private sources.**

**Table 6**  
**Federal Funding Programs**  
**for**  
**New Jersey Open Space and Recreation Projects**  
**1965-2007**

<u>Program</u>	<u>Funding Awarded</u>
Land and Water Conservation Fund	\$112,243,252
Urban Parks and Recreation Recovery	\$ 19,150,042
Pinelands Section 502	\$ 53,640,759
National Coastal Wetlands Conservation	\$ 5,210,000
Forest Legacy Program	\$ 19,723,000
Transportation Equity Act	\$ 2,675,000
Recreational Trails Program	\$ 8,841,476
Costal Estuarine Land Conservation Program	\$ 14,167,168

The National Park Service’s role in New Jersey goes beyond park management. The LWCF is an important facet of New Jersey’s open space and recreation funding. New Jersey has enjoyed a long and successful partnership with the National Park Service through the LWCF. A total of 300 (Table 7) projects have been funded in New Jersey with over \$100 million from the LWCF. This funding has been used to preserve nearly 73,000 acres in New Jersey and develop over 230 park and recreation projects. The Park Service, in cooperation with regional watershed groups, prepared the Musconetcong River National Wild and Scenic Rivers Study in consideration for the inclusion of the Musconetcong River in the National Wild and Scenic River Systems. In 2006, portions of the Musconetcong River were designated a wild and scenic river.

**Table 7**

**New Jersey Completed LWCF Projects**

<u>County</u>	<u>Projects</u>	<u>Acquired Land</u>	<u>LWCF Funding</u>
Atlantic	12	4,948	\$ 3,945,377
Bergen	21	2,136	\$ 3,646,522
Burlington	12	3,506	\$ 3,449,085
Camden	20	0	\$ 4,754,400
Cape May	15	4,692	\$ 3,126,785
Cumberland	9	14,273	\$ 3,133,201
Essex	22	0	\$ 5,265,074
Gloucester	3	39	\$ 858,507
Hudson	20	615	\$ 12,277,521
Hunterdon	8	966	\$ 11,698,544
Mercer	16	6	\$ 2,457,660
Middlesex	12	0	\$ 3,485,022
Monmouth	29	684	\$ 6,627,903
Morris	18	812	\$ 2,667,342
Multi*	17	27,935	\$ 12,878,300
Ocean	10	5,521	\$ 5,239,560
Passaic	13	0	\$ 5,695,360
Salem	3	2,106	\$ 221,238
Somerset	8	500	\$ 721,878
Sussex	7	3,122	\$ 4,496,821
Union	16	0	\$ 1,693,573
Warren	<u>9</u>	<u>952</u>	<u>\$ 7,595,065</u>
	300	72,813	\$103,573,755

The United States Fish and Wildlife Service is another federal agency that is active in preserving open space in New Jersey and providing recreation opportunities. New Jersey's five National Wildlife Refuge's had more than 600,000 visitors in 2006. These refuges protect more than 75,000 acres of land devoted to the protection and stewardship of federal trust wildlife resources that include migratory birds, anadromous fish and federally listed threatened and endangered species. The Service remains active in pursuing acquisition opportunities to expand the existing refuge system in New Jersey. The Service's New Jersey field office is involved in preservation planning for the Hackensack Meadowlands and the New York/New Jersey Harbor Estuary and the New Jersey Highlands.

**The United States Department of Defense participates in the open space and recreation arena through the Army Corps of Engineers and an extensive system of military installations located throughout New Jersey. Fort Dix, Picatinny Arsenal, Navy Lakehurst, Earle Naval Weapons Station and McGuire Air Force Base help maintain the character and integrity of existing public open space by preventing incompatible development from encroaching. Additionally, since much of the lands that comprise these installations are undeveloped, they help protect the water quality of streams that drain on to public lands. Navy Lakehurst, Fort Dix, and McGuire Air Force Base are part of a unique Joint Installation Partnership. These bases are the only Navy, Army, Air Force installations in the continental United States that are contiguous.**

**The Army Corps of Engineers is primarily responsible for the planning and construction of federal flood control, navigation and beach replenishment projects. The Corps maintains the Cape May and Manasquan canals, which in addition to being navigational waterways, provide public access for fishing. The Corps is involved with a major beach replenishment project along the New Jersey's Atlantic coast. The Corps has acquired 3,000 acres of natural flood storage areas in the central Passaic River Basin for flood control purposes.**

**The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration provides funding for New Jersey open space projects through the Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP). As the name implies, the focus of the CELCP is the protection of important coastal and estuarine areas that have significant conservation and recreation resource values. Since 2002, the CELCP has provided over \$14 million for ten land preservation projects in the State's coastal zone and in the Meadowlands. These projects have demonstrated consistency with the State's Coastal Management Plan and are identified as preservation priorities by organizations such as the Delaware Bay Estuary Program.**

**New Jersey and the Department of Agriculture's Forest Legacy Program have worked together to preserve more than 14,000 acres of important forest lands in the Highlands region. A program of United States Forest Service, Forest Legacy works with state governments to identify and protect significant forested areas that are threatened by development. An additional 1,100 acres have been targeted for preservation using Forest Legacy funding.**

Other federal agencies also provide open space and recreation services. The United States Coast Guard, which maintains several historic lighthouse stations and provides emergency assistance to boaters. The General Services Administration transfers federal surplus properties to State and local governments for public open space and recreation use. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has provided funding for New Jersey's estuary programs.

### **Interstate and Regional**

The New Jersey Pinelands are an internationally recognized area, 1.1 million acres in size and occupies 22% of New Jersey's land area. Its vast unbroken pine, oak and cedar forest make the Pinelands the largest tract of open space in the Mid Atlantic region. Its political jurisdiction takes in all or portions of 53 municipalities and seven counties in New Jersey. The Pinelands landscape is a patchwork of pine and oak forests containing extensive wetlands, streams and five major rivers. Underlying much of the Pinelands is the Cohansey aquifer, estimated to contain over 17 trillion gallons of water.

The Pinelands also contain a rich diversity of wildlife and plant species and important agricultural industries such as cranberry and blueberry production. In addition to their natural resource value, the Pinelands are also a tremendous recreation resource. Camping, hiking, horseback riding, canoeing, kayaking, and fishing are some of the many recreational activities that occur in the Pinelands. The State has several major open space holdings in the Pinelands which offer many recreation activities. The National Parks and Recreation Act authorized the establishment of the Pinelands Commission and in 1979, the State passed the Pinelands Protection Act. The Pinelands Commission has regulatory authority over most of the National Reserve area, in addition to preparing and updating the *Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan*. All counties and municipalities within the Pinelands are required to revise master plans and zoning ordinances so that they will be in conformance with the Comprehensive Management Plan. The Pinelands Commission oversees the acquisition of land in cooperation with the Green Acres Program. Lands acquired are added to state parks, forests and wildlife management areas. These acquisitions are needed to maintain the overall integrity of the Pinelands ecosystem and provide important outdoor recreation opportunities. Given the environmentally sensitive nature of the Pinelands, the development and promotion of compatible recreation facilities and activities is essential.

Over 140,000 acres in the Pinelands have been preserved using Green Acres, LWCF and Pinelands 502 funds. Along with traditional land preservation funds, the Pinelands also benefit from the Pinelands Development Credit Program, a transfer of development rights program, and the Limited Practical Use Program which acquires small land parcels which cannot be used in a way consistent with zoning. Combined, these programs have preserved nearly 55,000 acres in the Pinelands.

The Hackensack Meadowlands District encompasses 32 square miles, over 19,700 acres, in densely populated Bergen and Hudson counties. The New Jersey Meadowlands Commission is empowered with considerable environmental protection, growth management and solid waste mandates. The Meadowlands are a thriving urban estuary, and an important wetland complex of the New York-New Jersey Harbor Estuary. Its home to over 260 bird species.

The Commission has been active in open space planning in the District and is overseeing the preservation of 8,400 acres. The Commission has also participated in wetland restoration projects. In addition to these preservation and restoration initiatives, the Commission has developed public park and recreation facilities such as DeKorte Park, the Meadows Path, North Hudson Trail, and ballfields. The Commission partnered with Hudson County, Green Acres and the National Park Service to develop Laurel Hill Park which features a public boat launch on the Hackensack River which is operated by The Hackensack RiverKeeper. To promote ecotourism in the Meadowlands, the Commission has published a birding and wildlife brochure for the public. The Commission is developing a new public marina and park on a four acre parcel on the Hackensack River. The \$2.5 million project is slated for completion in 2009 and will serve as a gateway to the 587 acre Richard P. Kane Natural Area. The New Jersey Meadowlands Commission is an important facet of the State's efforts to provide urban open space and recreation opportunities. The Meadowlands Conservation Trust works to preserve and manage open space in the Meadowlands and the Hackensack River watershed. In 2005 the Trust took ownership of 587 acres of the former Empire Tract, which was renamed the Richard P. Kane Natural Area.

Another agency that plays an important role in urban open space and recreation in New Jersey is the Palisades Interstate Park Commission, which manages about 2,500 acres of

Hudson River shoreline. Included in this acreage are the Palisades cliffs which provide dramatic views of Manhattan. The New Jersey section of the park system was dedicated in 1909 and is 13 miles long containing 30 miles of hiking trails, two public boat basins along with other park and recreation facilities. The park protects important geologic features and vegetation communities. The talus slopes provide habitat for the eastern wood rat, the only known location for this mammal species in New Jersey. The Park Commission also manages extensive lands in southern New York State, including the Sterling Forest tract.

The New Jersey Highlands region consists of 859,358 acres located in the northwest portion of the State encompassing 88 municipalities in seven counties. Through passage of the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act in 2004, the New Jersey Highlands Council was charged with the development of a regional master plan to guide natural resource protection and appropriate economic growth. The Highlands Act creates two areas within the Highlands for planning purposes, a 415,000 acre Preservation Area and a 445,000 acre Planning area. A fundamental distinction between the Preservation Area and the Planning Area is that municipal and county conformance with the regional master plan is required in the Preservation Area and is voluntary in the Planning Area. The Highlands is the source of water for 5.4 million people in New Jersey, 65% of the State's population. Since 1987, New Jersey has preserved nearly 100,000 acres in the Highlands and provided \$96 million in Green Acres State Acquisition funding since 2000 for Highlands land preservation projects. Federal funding in 2007 provided \$1.9 million for Highlands open space preservation projects in the states of Connecticut, New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania.

Regional open space preservation and recreation issues will continue to be a focus of planners and providers in the future. The interrelated concepts of biodiversity, landscape ecology and the protection of watersheds, forests and water quality transcends simple political boundaries. Regional projects can provide comprehensive protection, accomplish multiple objectives and can be more cost effective. In New Jersey, regional planning has proven successful in protecting areas, such as the Highlands and the Pinelands, which are in reality a single ecosystem and need to be managed in that manner. Such a level of management goes beyond regulation or preservation. Regional planning also encompasses public access and recreational development. The State will continue to be a partner in regional projects. Counties which share a river as a boundary have a mutual interest,

particularly in the areas of watershed protection and recreation opportunities. Local governments can use the State Plan to promote smart growth with a regional perspective. The municipal role is especially important because of its close association with specific features of a regional landscape. Nonprofit organizations also have a part in regional projects by providing public support and planning and acquisition assistance.

### **State Government**

The NJDEP is responsible for the management of the State's public open space and recreation areas. The Department has two divisions which directly oversee the administration and operation of the State's open space and recreation system. The Division of Parks and Forestry and the Division of Fish and Wildlife are responsible for over 714,000 acres of public open space which represents 14% of the total land area of the State and approximately 64% of New Jersey's existing public open space acreage. There are also several other agencies within the NJDEP that provide support for the State's open space and recreation infrastructure through preservation, regulatory, funding and planning programs.

The Division of Parks & Forestry provides the operation, management, maintenance and protection for 40 state parks, 11 state forests, three state recreation areas, 42 natural areas and four state marinas and more than 50 historic sites. Together, these sites total over 403,000 acres and are a critical component of New Jersey's open space and recreation infrastructure. Over 66 million people visited state park system facilities between FY 2003 and FY 2006, an average of close to 17 million a year. In FY 2006, the state park attendance was 17.8 million people (Table 8).

**Table 8**  
**State Park and Forest Attendance**  
**July 1, 2005 – June 30, 2006**

<u>State Park (SP) / State Forest (SF)</u>	<u>Attendance</u>
Allaire SP/Spring Meadow Golf Course	554,050
Barnegat Lighthouse SP	431,758
Bass River SF	113,755
Belleplain SF	427,624
Brendan T. Byrne SF/Wharton SF	1,372,611
Cape May Point SP	564,378
Cheesequake SP/Leonardo Marina	1,044,176
D & R Canal SP/Washington Crossing SP	2,390,492
Farley Marina	390,948
Forked River Marina	14,490
Fort Mott SP/Parvin SP	372,756
Fortescue Marina	61,231
Hackelbarney SP	239,587
High Point SP/Swartswood SP	385,950
Hopatcong SP	340,450
Island Beach SP	1,257,008
Kittatinny Valley SP/Jenny Jump SF	181,013
Liberty SP	4,276,422
Monmouth Battlefield SP	297,877
Ringwood SP/Wawayanda SP	908,178
Round Valley Recreation Area	350,018
Spruce Run Recreation Area/Voorhees SP	825,789
Stokes SF/Worthington SF	<u>1,042,980</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,836,548</b>

**Note:** Total include all areas and or historic sites that are assigned to the state park or forest.

**Source:** Fiscal Year 2006 Attendance Report, Division of Parks and Forestry.

The preservation and stewardship of the State's diverse natural, recreational and historic resources is the central mission of the Division of Parks and Forestry. State parks and forests support a wide range of outdoor recreation activities that reflect the diverse leisure pursuits of New Jerseyans. Some areas cater to passive recreation and are largely undeveloped. Other sites, such as recreation areas, are more intensively developed and used. Special use areas, such as historic sites, marinas and a golf course also exist and add to the diversity of the Division's recreation resources. Recreation activities that occur in state parks and forests range from mass activities, such as festivals and races to family camping through to individual passive recreation such as hiking. Overnight camping is available at 19 state parks and forests providing over 1,400 campsites, and over more than 100 cabins and shelters. During FY 2006, over 370,000 people used these facilities. Attendance at the state marinas exceeded 655,000 people in FY 2006. Every season brings different activities to these public lands. Winter will see cross country skiing, snowshoeing, ice fishing, dog sledding and wind sailing. Spring and summer have state parks and forests providing swimming, mountain biking, fishing, boating, picnicking, canoeing and horseback riding. In the fall, many of the same activities occur, with special emphasis on enjoying the autumn colors. Hiking, birding, nature study and photography are all season activities which these areas provide. The intrinsic value of these lands, many of them located in remote forested setting, offer a much needed respite for New Jerseyans.

Within the Division of Parks and Forestry, the Office of Natural Lands Management administers a group of four inter-related programs that promote the conservation of biodiversity, stewardship and passive recreation opportunities: the Natural Areas System, the Trails Program, the New Jersey Natural Lands Trust and the Natural Heritage Program. The Natural Areas System is designated to protect and manage State owned lands supporting New Jersey's threatened and endangered wildlife and plant species and representative ecosystems. The system consists of 44 designated sites totaling 42,284 acres. Public access is permitted for compatible recreational uses and management plans are prepared for each site.

The Trails Program studies and recommends sites for acquisition and trail development and undertakes planning initiatives to develop management proposals for trails in the New Jersey Trails System. The *New Jersey Trails Plan* first adopted in 1982 and revised in 1996, and being updated in 2007, is a guide for the development of trails throughout the state.

Within New Jersey, there are over 1,500 miles of marked or mapped trails on public lands and waterways suitable for canoeing and kayaking. This program administers the Recreational Trails Program, a federal program that provides funding to states through the Federal Highway Administration. The Program has awarded more than \$8 million in grants to federal, state, county and local governments and nonprofit organizations to fund 469 projects to develop and maintain trails and trail facilities. Trails planning is a key element of New Jersey's SCORP program.

The New Jersey Natural Lands Trust (Trust) was created in 1968 by the New Jersey Legislature as an independent state agency, in but not of, the Division of Parks and Forestry, with the mission to preserve land in a natural state for the enjoyment of the public and to protect biodiversity. The Trust preserves land primarily by donations of land in fee simple title or conservation easement. The Trust currently owns and or manages over 21,000 acres. Trust properties are managed as a system of over 100 nature preserves to conserve endangered species habitat, rare natural features and significant ecosystems. Passive recreation is permitted on most of the Trust's preserves. The unique dual structure of the Trust allows it to operate both as a state agency and as an independent nonprofit organization, thus enjoying the benefits of each structure.

The Natural Heritage Program identifies and catalogues New Jersey's significant biodiversity through a comprehensive statewide inventory of rare plant species and ecological community occurrences. The Natural Heritage Database is used in setting preservation priorities for the Natural Lands Trust, Natural Areas System and other conservation organizations. The program assists in the preparation of management plans for Natural Areas and the development of the Endangered Plant Species List.

The Division of Parks and Forestry is also responsible for the stewardship of New Jersey's considerable forest resources. Over 40% of New Jersey is forested, making forest management an important ecological concern. The eleven state forests are also popular recreation sites. Healthy forests provide important environmental benefits such as clean air, protection of water quality and wildlife habitat. The State Forestry Service provides technical and financial assistance to local governments and private property owners for forest management. There are 88,700 private landowners who own 1.5 million acres of

forestlands in New Jersey. The suppression and control of wildfire is an important responsibility of the Forestry Service, especially in the Pinelands.

The Historic Preservation Office is committed to enhancing the quality of life for the people of New Jersey through the preservation and appreciation of New Jersey's collective past. The Office administers the state and federal historic preservation programs for New Jersey and offers technical assistance to individuals, organizations and government agencies in the identification, evaluation and protection of historic and archaeological resources. This is accomplished through conferences, consultations, training workshops, the Historic Preservation Planning Bulletin and various publications. The Office reviews public projects in order to avoid or mitigate adverse effects to historic resources in accordance with state and federal law. The Office is also responsible for developing and guiding the New Jersey Historic Preservation Plan. State historic sites provide about \$300 million in economic benefits according to a DEP study. Funding is available for planning, acquisition and restoration projects. The Office advises applicants on the eligibility for listing on the New Jersey and National Register of Historic Places. The Certified Local Government Program provides funds for historic resource surveys, preservation plans and technical assistance to municipal historic preservation commissions.

The Division also interprets the considerable natural and cultural history of New Jersey. From Batsto Village to the Liberty State Park Interpretive Center, visitors can gain an understanding and appreciation of the State's natural and historic resources. The Division operates 18 visitor centers, interpretive centers and museums throughout the state park system.

The State will add two new urban state parks in the near future in the cities of Paterson and Trenton. Winners of design competitions for parks were announced in the fall of 2006. The park in Paterson is located within the Society for Useful Manufactures Historic District, National Historic Landmarks. The first phase of park development will surround the Great Falls of the Passaic River and include the Colt Gun Mill. The proposed design will create trails linking the elements of America's first planned industrial community and the natural features of the Passaic River. In Trenton, the first phase of the park there will include the area behind the State House down to the Assunpink Creek. The project calls for the

creation of multiple paths for visitors to reach the now largely inaccessible Delaware River. Master plans for these urban parks are expected to be completed during 2007.

The Division of Fish and Wildlife is the agency responsible for the protection, management and enhancement of New Jersey's wildlife resources. The Division carries out a comprehensive program of research, education, management and law enforcement activities. Currently, there are 121 wildlife management areas totaling over 310,000 acres located throughout the state. The wildlife management area system is made up of lands purchased with license and stamp fees collected from hunters and anglers, Green Acres state land acquisition funds, Waterfowl Stamp monies and land donations from private individuals and conservation groups. Over 525,000 New Jersey resident fishing and hunting licenses were sold between 2004 and 2006. These areas are an important component of New Jersey's open space and outdoor recreation system. In addition to providing outstanding hunting and fishing, wildlife management areas also provide other public recreation activities.

Since these areas are managed for wildlife, they offer some of the best nature photography opportunities in the state. Other recreational activities that occur include birding, hiking, crabbing and horseback riding. These lands also offer sites for dog training and archery and shotgun ranges. The endangered and non-game program provides scientific information and recommendations necessary for the State's protection and management of endangered and threatened wildlife species. The Higbee Beach Wildlife Management area was acquired specifically to preserve habitat essential for the migration of endangered birds and other wildlife species. Located on Delaware Bay, it is considered one of the best birding spots in the United States.

The NJDEP documented the recreational and economic importance of New Jersey's wildlife resources a 2007 study of the economic value of the State's natural resources. It estimated that wildlife watching, hunting and fishing account for almost \$3.1 billion in economic activity supporting about 37,000 jobs. Approximately 2.4 million people participate in some form of wildlife recreation in New Jersey. Fish and wildlife are a major capital asset that must be managed and protected. Open space preservation as pursued by New Jersey is one way in which wildlife resources can be protected and enhanced.

As a state with a substantial Atlantic coastline, the Division of Fish and Wildlife is also responsible for the protection and management of marine fisheries. As documented by landings compiled by the National Marine Fisheries Service in 2005, New Jersey marine resources support some of the largest recreational and commercial fisheries, not only along the Atlantic Coast, but also on a national level. New Jersey ranked third in the nation with over 6.7 million recreational fishing trips and sixth nationally with 7.9 million recreational fish landings (number of fish brought to the dock). The State's commercial fishery numbers are also impressive. The port of Cape May – Wildwood ranked fifth out of 97 major ports in the United States with a dockside landings value of \$68.4 million from 74.6 million pound of seafood products.

While the Division seeks to maximize the recreational and commercial benefits derived from wildlife resources, it also manages them for the long term maintenance of biodiversity. The habitat management activities of the Division preserves and enhances habitats essential for balanced wildlife populations. The environmental and open space amenities provided by wildlife management areas are part of the quality of life in New Jersey. The Division's endangered and non-game species program's Landscape Protection Project maps priority wildlife habitat statewide. The mission of the project is the long term preservation of rare species through the coordination of land management, planning and state and local regulations. The project's database is continually updated as new information on species occurrence is documented.

There are other State agencies that, although their missions are not recreation or conservation, do provide open space for outdoor recreation and conservation purposes. The New Jersey Water Supply Authority operates the Spruce Run, Round Valley, and Manasquan Reservoirs and the Delaware and Raritan Canal. All four have public recreation areas that offer fishing, boating and at Spruce Run, and Round Valley, swimming. The reservoirs are unique in that they were planned with both water supply and outdoor recreation objectives. The North Jersey District Water Supply Commission manages two reservoirs in the New Jersey Highlands. Both provide public recreation opportunities as part of a pattern of open space ownership that enhances the regional landscape.

Within the NJDEP, the Division of Land Use Regulation administers many permit programs that have a direct bearing on open space and recreation resources. The Coastal Area Facility Review Act requires public access for certain waterfront projects and the Freshwater Wetlands Protection Act regulates the development of recreational facilities such as boardwalks and boat ramps in freshwater wetlands. Other permit programs that affect open space and recreation resources include the Waterfront Development Act, Riparian Lands Management Program and the Flood Hazard Area Control Act.

New Jersey is the fifth smallest state in the nation and is one of the most geologically and hydrogeologically diverse. Water is a dominant landscape feature. The State contains over 18,000 miles of rivers and streams and more than 3,200 lakes, ponds, and reservoirs along with 127 miles of Atlantic Ocean coastline. The protection of water resource is a critical public policy issue in New Jersey. The State has designated several streams as Category One Waters. This designation is the highest forum of water quality protection afforded by the State. It prevents any measurable deterioration in existing water quality, limiting development in the parts and discharges to streams. The objective of this designation is the protection of water supplies, ecological integrity and recreation resources.

The State has long recognized the importance of protecting of rivers, streams, lakes, reservoirs, wetlands and associated buffers, and coastal waters. These lands protect ecological resources and water quality, provide water based recreational opportunities, and serve as linear open space linkages. Public Law 2002, Chapter 76, directs the Green Acres State Land Acquisition Program to prioritize land for acquisition for the protection of water resources and flood prone areas. As a result of this legislation, the Green Acres Program has revised the ranking system used to evaluate state land projects based on water resource features, biodiversity, and other natural resources. The new ranking system assigns three times the weight for water resource lands and two times the weight of water resource lands and two times the weight for flood prone areas as compared to other priority criteria. While the protection of water resources through land preservation has been a goal of the Green Acres Program since its inception, the new legislation further focuses Green Acres preservation efforts on lands that protect important water resources.

The Green Acres Program published the *2005-2007 Land Preservation Plan*, which explains the criteria and process by which Green Acres considers land for acquisition, and sets forth

policy to guide Green Acres in its state land acquisition efforts. During the preparation of this plan, several other plans and studies were consulted and reviewed to ensure that the State was undertaking a comprehensive approach in its water resource and open space planning. While the plan does not list individual parcels, it clearly identifies areas of New Jersey that are considered priorities for state land acquisition. The identification of these areas will establish a basis for decision making by the Green Acres Program when both reacting to land offerings and targeting lands for preservation. State land acquisition activities covered in this plan include all the methods employed by the State to preserve land; fee simple acquisition, the purchase of easements and development rights, and the acceptance of donated lands. The report is available at [www.nj.gov/dep/greenacres/lpp\\_05\\_07.pdf](http://www.nj.gov/dep/greenacres/lpp_05_07.pdf)

The New Jersey Environmental Infrastructure Program (EIFP) is a partnership between the NJDEP and the New Jersey Environmental Infrastructure Trust. The Legislature created the program to offer local governments and private water purveyors low cost financing for the construction of wastewater and drinking water infrastructure, landfill construction and closure, and stormwater management and nonpoint source pollution control projects. Nonpoint source projects may include open space acquisition and remedial action such as a brownfield cleanup that produce water quality improvement.

Land acquisition financed through the EIFP must demonstrate a water quality benefit. Headwaters, stream corridors, wetlands, watershed protection, and aquifer recharge areas are among the types of land that would qualify. While lands purchased through the EIFP cannot be developed, they may be used for passive recreational activities such as hiking, fishing, and horseback riding. Application of a conservation easement on funded parcels assures that the water quality benefits are preserved. The EIFP works closely with the Green Acres Program to maximize a community's limited funds for land acquisition. Through this partnership, municipalities can receive the funding necessary to purchase larger and or more expensive parcels. Since 2001 the EIFP has provided \$74.5 million for the preservation of 2,762 acres statewide.

New Jersey has three estuaries enrolled in the National Estuary Program, each one representative of the geographic diversity found in New Jersey. The New York-New Jersey

Harbor Estuary takes in the most urbanized and densely populated area of New Jersey. Despite the impacts of four centuries of human occupation and development, the estuary remains a vital ecosystem. Many sites remain available for preserving and restoring critical wildlife habitats and other resources. The Barnegat Bay Estuary represents another regional approach to preserving important natural and recreation resources. Barnegat Bay's watershed, located in one of the fastest growing areas of the state, is feeling the impact of growth and urbanization.

Balancing this growth with preservation efforts is a major goal. Delaware Bay, the third estuary program in New Jersey, faces many of the same issues and its future, like that of the other estuaries, is linked to regional management of growth and natural resources. In addition to these estuaries, three New Jersey river systems, the Delaware, Great Egg Harbor and the Maurice have been designated as National Scenic and Recreation Rivers.

The Office of Natural Resource Restoration is responsible for documenting and quantifying injuries from oil spills and other illegal discharges, as well as injuries associated with hazardous material sites. Settlements often include funds for land acquisition and research in addition to the restoration of damaged natural resources. The Office of Engineering and Construction plans and designs shore protection projects, conducts waterway maintenance dredging activities and oversees the development of the State's Shore Protection Plan.

Another strategy used by the State to preserve open space is the Tax Exemption Program. Signed into law in 1974 and administered by the Green Acres Program, the program was created to help satisfy the need for lands available for public recreation use. The Tax Exemption Program provides a complete exemption from local property taxes for a renewable period of three years to eligible nonprofit organizations which own suitable recreation or conservation land and make it publicly accessible. Currently, 76 organizations are enrolled in the program, protecting nearly 70,000 acres of land statewide. The Tax Exemption Program remains a cost effective way for the State to preserve open space and provide public recreation opportunities.

The New Jersey Department of Transportation provides both funding and planning assistance to New Jersey open space and recreation programs. It administers funding from the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Uses

(SAFETEA-LU) which funds a variety of projects such as pedestrian and bicycle facilities, scenic easements acquisition, historic preservation, and the preservation of abandoned railway corridors. SAFETEA-LU ensures the continuation of the Transportation Enhancement Program which funded 156 projects with over \$60 million in funding. The Department has updated its 1995 New Jersey Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan. Activities conducted as part of this update include a statewide inventory of existing and potential bicycle facilities to be used to develop a database and developing a method of evaluating demand a need for bicycle and pedestrian improvements.

Phase 2 of the master plan looks towards implementation by providing clear guidance on the most effective and efficient use of federal, state and local resources to implement bicycle and pedestrian initiatives. The planning process involved the collection of appropriate data and the development and use of flexible analytical tools to establish initial priorities on a statewide basis for the potential for bicycle and pedestrian travel. The following are some key recommendations of the Master Plan update:

- Regularly update statewide and regional bicycle and pedestrian plans
- Develop local bicycle and pedestrian plans
- Develop bicycle and pedestrian improvements as independent projects and as integral features of other transportation projects
- Expand programs that support or embody bicycle and pedestrian modes of travel such as Safe Routes to School, Sensitive, Design, Transit Villages, Smart Growth New Jersey Main Streets and Garden State Greenways
- Revise the Municipal Land Use Law to require circulation elements in municipal master plans

### **County Government**

New Jersey's 21 counties represent an essential element of the open space and recreation provider system. Counties have a special role in integrating recreation, open space and environmental protection. County park and recreation agencies offer a variety of facilities and activities to their residents. Some of these are a department of county government and others operate as an autonomous commission.

County park systems have been part of the New Jersey park and recreation scene for many years. Essex County's park system is over 100 years old and was the first county park system in the United States. County park agencies administer and maintain parkland and maintain a diversity of recreation facilities, including golf courses, marinas, equestrian sites, skating arenas and zoos. Other facilities such as senior citizen centers, ballfields, swimming areas, trail systems and environmental education centers help counties meet their goals of providing open space and recreation opportunities for a county wide population. County park agencies have also needed to address concerns associated with white tail deer, all terrain vehicles, Canada geese, and invasive vegetation.

Counties have taken advantage of State legislation that allows counties and municipalities to assess a tax for open space preservation, historic and farmland preservation, and park and recreation purposes. In 2007, over \$250 million was collected by all 21 counties in open space taxes (Table 9). In order to support county open space preservation efforts, the Garden State Preservation Trust Act provides 50% grant funding for counties with an open space tax for land preservation projects. In addition, the Green Acres Program has a special funding program, the Planning Incentive, for local governments with an open space tax. It not only provides grant funding but also a streamlined project management process. The 17 counties that currently participate in the Planning Incentive have been awarded more than \$114 million for open space preservation projects (Table 11).

Several counties provide funding from their open space tax program to municipalities and conservation groups for projects. A provision of the open space tax law requires counties to prepare an open space plan to guide acquisition funding and having a completed plan is a requirement to receive Green Acres Planning Incentive funding.

**Table 9****New Jersey County Open Space Tax Programs**

<b>County</b>	<b>Year Approved/Increased</b>	<b>Rate Cents Per \$100</b>	<b>Annual Tax Collected</b>
Atlantic	1990/1998	2 cts.	\$ 10,200,000
Bergen	1998/2003	½ ct.	\$ 15,390,000
Burlington	1996/1998/2006	4 cts.	\$ 18,762,000
Camden	1998/2005	1 ct.	\$ 7,620,000
Cape May	1989	1 ct.	\$ 4,500,000
Cumberland	1994	1 ct.	\$ 811,000
Essex	1998	1 ct.	\$ 7,847,000
Gloucester	1993/2000/2004	2 cts.	\$ 10,296,000
Hudson	2003	1 ct.	\$ 4,124,000
Hunterdon	1999	1-3 cts.	\$ 7,664,000
Mercer	1989/1998/2004	2 cts.	\$ 13,200,000
Middlesex	1995/2001	3 cts.	\$ 30,000,000
Monmouth	1987/1996/2002/2006	2.1 cts.	\$ 16,000,000
Morris	1992/1998/2001	5¼ cts.	\$ 42,572,000
Ocean	1997	1.2 cts.	\$ 12,386,000
Passaic	1996	1 ct.	\$ 5,244,000
Salem	2002	2 cts.	\$ 995,000
Somerset	1989/1997	3 cts.	\$ 18,365,000
Sussex	2000/2005	up to 2 cts.	\$ 6,940,000
Union	2000	1.5 cts.	\$ 10,755,000
Warren	1993/1999/2002	6 cts.	\$ 7,741,000
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$ 251,412,000</b>

Note: As of July 1, 2007. Source: New Jersey Department of Community Affairs.

**Table 10**

**New Jersey County Characteristics**

<u>County</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Land</u>	<u>Density</u>
Atlantic	270,620	561	482
Bergen	904,037	234	3,863
Burlington	450,627	805	559
Camden	517,001	222	2,328
Cape May	97,724	255	383
Cumberland	154,823	489	316
Essex	786,147	126	6,239
Gloucester	282,031	325	867
Hudson	601,146	47	12,790
Hunterdon	130,783	430	304
Mercer	367,605	226	1,626
Middlesex	786,971	310	2,538
Monmouth	635,285	472	1,345
Morris	493,160	469	1,051
Ocean	562,335	636	884
Passaic	497,093	185	2,686
Salem	66,595	338	197
Somerset	324,186	305	1,062
Sussex	153,384	521	294
Union	531,088	103	5,156
Warren	<u>110,919</u>	<u>358</u>	<u>309</u>
Totals	8,724,560	7,417	1,176

Land area in square miles

Density is persons per square miles

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, July 2006 New Jersey estimates

**Table 11**  
**Green Acres County Planning Incentive Funding**  
**1999-2006**

<u>County</u>	<u>Funding Awarded</u>
Atlantic	\$ 8,000,000
Bergen	\$ 5,650,000
Burlington	\$ 8,750,000
Camden	\$ 6,750,000
Gloucester	\$ 4,550,000
Hudson	\$ 2,385,000
Hunterdon	\$ 7,523,350
Mercer	\$ 7,000,000
Middlesex	\$ 9,750,000
Monmouth	\$ 12,045,000
Morris	\$ 7,225,706
Ocean	\$ 5,250,000
Passaic	\$ 5,000,000
Somerset	\$ 13,250,000
Sussex	\$ 1,250,000
Union	\$ 6,750,000
Warren	<u>\$ 3,250,000</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$114,379,056</b>

## **Municipal Government**

**New Jersey's 566 municipal governments are the prime providers of daily recreation programs and facilities for local residents. It is the embodiment of the concept of close to home recreation that defines the role municipal recreation providers. A park and recreation program is an intricate component of a municipality's quality of life. Typical municipal park and recreation areas in New Jersey include ballfields, soccer fields, court sports, playgrounds, picnic areas and swimming pools. Bike trails and golf courses are also provided by some municipalities. Municipalities also are responsible for recreational programming and special events that satisfy the needs of preschoolers, teens, adults and senior citizens. The dual tasks of providing and maintaining park and recreation areas coupled with programming for diverse populations, makes municipal recreation in New Jersey very challenging. To meet increasing demand for municipal recreation, Green Acres has provided over \$144 million for parks and recreation development projects over the past four years.**

**As with counties, municipalities are also active participants in land preservation. In New Jersey, municipalities under the Municipal Land Use Law, have the authority to regulate growth and development. Municipalities have come to realize that with growth often comes demands for local services such as schools and roads that can require increased taxes to pay for them. Often, the tax ratables generated by new residential development are insufficient to meet the costs created by an increased population. Given these impacts, municipalities see open space preservation and recreation as an integral component of community planning. As part of the municipal planning process, open space preservation can be designed and implemented to enhance the quality of life, protect natural resources, provide recreation opportunities and avoid excessive service costs associated with poorly planned sprawl development. By planning for open space, municipalities help to channel development to appropriate areas, which fosters growth compatible with community character.**

**Faced with growth pressures resulting from seemingly endless suburban sprawl, municipalities have also turned to open space and recreation taxes to fund land preservation and recreation projects. A total of 231 New Jersey municipalities collected approximately \$80 million in open space taxes in 2007. Municipalities also participate in**

the Green Acres Planning Incentive and prepare open space and recreation plans. To date, Green Acres has awarded \$200 million to municipalities for planning incentive projects.

Given the municipal focus on user-intensive facilities, it is not surprising that some municipal recreation departments have established relationships with local boards of education. In New Jersey, boards of education oversee a wide variety of facilities that can be used to support recreation. These include gymnasiums, auditoriums, athletic fields, playgrounds, art studios and multi purpose rooms. These facilities can provide recreational services to a large number of people. Several municipalities have incorporated school sites into greenway and open space plans. There is, however, an enormous potential and need for this cooperation to increase and become more formalized. As municipalities continue to look for ways to economize, facility sharing by recreation agencies and school boards can be a cost effective way to meet the needs of both organizations. The cost of municipal government and education in New Jersey is requiring a fresh look at existing service roles and responsibilities. Part of this will require the examination of scheduling issues. The mutually compatible missions of education and recreation can complement each other as public service providers.

Municipal environmental commissions are the natural ally of municipal recreation departments and open space initiatives. Environmental commissions have the statutory authority to conduct open space inventories, acquire land and advise a municipal government on land use matters. Environmental commissions are the municipal advocate for open space preservation and initiate many open space preservation efforts. Lands that are acquired can be used for the development of recreation facilities, protect important natural resources and promote smart growth. Between 2003 and 2005, 176 environmental commissions received funding from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's Office of Local Environmental Management for the preparation of natural resource inventories, environmental ordinances and open space plans.

### **Nonprofit and Commercial**

Nonprofit and commercial providers partner with government in the provision and operation of a comprehensive system of open space and recreation for the citizens of New Jersey. The private sector's commercial operators are a prime supplier of many recreation facilities that are beyond the capability of State and local governments to provide. State and local governments have done an admirable job of providing a broad spectrum of open

space and recreation opportunities. However, it is obvious that New Jerseyans desire programs, services and facilities that are offered by private commercial recreation providers.

New Jersey's \$37 billion travel and tourism industry is fertile ground for commercial recreation operators. These operators satisfy a considerable portion of the public recreation demand. Typical commercial recreation facilities include health clubs, theme parks, amusement parks, race tracks, campgrounds, canoe rentals, marinas, resort hotels, equestrian centers and ski areas. Tourism continues to be an integral component of New Jersey's economy supporting 391,000 jobs and nearly \$11.2 billion in wages and salaries in 2006. Tourism also generated \$7.5 billion in tax revenue in 2006.

Although not traditionally considered as a recreation provider, agriculture has assumed an important role in New Jersey's open space and recreation infrastructure. Agricultural lands can help maintain contiguous open space, preserve woodlands and protect wildlife habitat and water quality. The small town and rural life style associated with agricultural areas remains an attractive feature of the New Jersey landscape. It contrasts significantly from the urban and suburban land uses found throughout the state. The Farmland Preservation Program has preserved 1,470 farms totaling more than 150,000 acres in 17 counties (Table 12). The Farmland Preservation Program is also active in preserving farmland in the Pinelands and in the Highlands regions of New Jersey. A total of 57 farms covering 8,207 acres have been preserved in the Pinelands and in the Highlands, 279 farms totaling 25,431 acres have been preserved. The New Jersey Department of Agriculture estimates that a preserved farmland base of 600,000 acres will be required to sustain the State's agricultural industry. Approximately 200,000 acres of farmland will be preserved by the time Garden State Preservation Trust funding expires in June 2008, leaving 400,000 acres in need of permanent protection. The State anticipates preserving half of that through the Farmland Preservation Program and protection of the remainder through land use tools such as transfer of development rights and conservation zoning. While recreation and agriculture are two completely different activities, they do have a common denominator which is land. The Green Acres Program and the Farmland Preservation Program have worked together on cooperative land preservation projects. Greenway projects are especially well suited for cooperative projects. Protected farmland can buffer greenway parcels from incompatible development and retains the scenic quality of viewsheds.

**Green Acres has enjoyed a successful relationship with the many nonprofit land trusts in New Jersey. Nonprofit entities make substantial and important contributions to the open space and outdoor recreation network in the state. New Jersey is fortunate to have many conservation organizations active within the state. Their work includes land acquisition and preservation, technical assistance, research and advocacy. The ability of these groups to rally public support and to cultivate advocacy for open space projects is an important facet of their work. In order to bolster the work of conservation organizations and to leverage their considerable financial acumen, the Green Acres Nonprofit Program was established in 1989 and has received continued funding. It has, to date, provided \$168 million in matching grants to assist nonprofit organizations for land preservation and park and recreation projects statewide.**

**The Green Acres Program and New Jersey Conservation Foundation have worked together to create a map-based, statewide vision for open space and greenways, known as Garden State Greenways. Based on input from the conservation community and various levels of government, together with Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping and analysis, identifies a framework for a potential statewide system of interconnected open space, a green infrastructure of forest, fields, wetlands, farms, waterways and recreation lands. Creating the Garden State Greenways vision is a long term and ongoing effort.**

**Individual property owners also participate in New Jersey's open space and recreation system by allowing access to their property via an easement or other form of agreement. Land owners also contribute by donating land or land value in conservation transactions. In addition to state and federal tax credits for land donations, property owners receive the benefit of knowing their land is preserved. Over 12,400 acres in New Jersey have been donated for open space preservation purposes.**

**Table 12**

**New Jersey Farmland Preservation Program  
Preserved Farmland**

<u>County</u>	<u>Preserved Farms</u>	<u>Acreage</u>	<u>Total Cost</u>
Atlantic	28	3,374	\$ 8,103,130
Bergen	6	271	\$ 12,151,166
Burlington	174	21,352	\$103,196,480
Camden	7	467	\$ 11,741,401
Cape May	38	2,515	\$ 10,965,385
Cumberland	100	12,537	\$ 21,582,937
Gloucester	90	8,318	\$ 36,196,361
Hunterdon	216	20,291	\$142,669,533
Mercer	86	6,699	\$ 63,595,051
Middlesex	42	4,359	\$ 46,266,568
Monmouth	110	9,993	\$106,883,262
Morris	90	5,989	\$ 99,295,685
Ocean	36	2,591	\$ 17,685,120
Salem	166	21,551	\$ 54,571,869
Somerset	76	6,514	\$ 74,256,910
Sussex	80	10,543	\$ 30,095,598
Warren	<u>125</u>	<u>14,179</u>	<u>\$ 67,313,270</u>
Totals	1,470	151,543	\$906,569,726

Source: New Jersey State Agriculture Development Committee. December 2006  
State share was \$596,179,153, which represents 66% of the total cost. County and  
municipal government share was \$310,390,573 or 34% of the total cost.

**Table 13**  
**Farmland Preservation Program**  
**Garden State Preservation Trust Appropriations by Program**  
**2000-2007**

<b>County Easement Purchase Grants</b>	<b>\$286,000,000</b>
<b>Local Planning Incentive Grants</b>	<b>\$119,000,000</b>
<b>State Acquisitions</b>	<b>\$282,000,000</b>
<b>Non Profit Grants</b>	<b><u>\$ 19,000,000</u></b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$706,000,000</b>

**Source: State Agriculture Development Committee. 2006 Annual Report**

## Chapter 3

### Supply, Demand and Need

As of July 1, 2007, there were 1,242,664 acres of land statewide being used for public conservation and recreation purposes (Table 14). This total does not include preserved farmland acreage. Federal, state, county and municipal agencies have preserved 1,122,780 acres of land for public recreation and open space uses. This represents an increase of 134,003 acres of public open space since the publication of the last SCORP in 2002. Nonprofit conservation organizations have preserved 119,884 acres of land statewide, an increase of 26,036 acres and represents 10% of New Jersey's supply of open space.

The National Park Service and the United States Fish and Wildlife represent federal government efforts in open space and recreation in New Jersey. These two agencies manage 112,503 acres of land, 9% of the State's open space. This figure represents a 2,831 acre increase since 2002 and is attributable to the ongoing expansion of the national wildlife refuge system in New Jersey.

New Jersey state government agencies administer 767,698 acres or 62% of the State's public recreation open space. A total of 88,052 acres have been preserved by the State since 2002.

County and municipal governments are responsible for acres of public parkland across the state. These lands comprise 19% of New Jersey's public open space and recreation lands and reflects an increase of acres over previously reported acreage for local governments. New Jersey's 21 counties manage 114,896 acres of parkland, a 15,536 acre increase since 2002. The State's 566 municipalities are responsible for 118,520 acres of parkland, 20,873 acres more than the acres reported in 2002.

These increases in the statewide supply of open space and recreation lands are the result of land preservation efforts of government agencies and conservation groups fueled by strong public support and funding. This strong public support and associated funding is in turn being fueled by New Jersey's increasing population and development (Tables 15 and 16). Despite over \$1.3 billion for land preservation and park and recreation projects, the demand for open space and recreation remain very strong. With an estimated 18,000 acres

**Table 14****New Jersey Preserved Recreation Land and Open Space**

County	Federal Recreation Open Space Areas	Interstate and Regional Areas	State Parks and Forests*	State Wildlife Management Areas	New Jersey Natural Lands Trust	New Jersey Water Authority	State Subtotal	County Parks	Municipal Parks	Total Public Recreation Open Space	Nonprofit Preserved Open Space	Total Preserved Open Space
Atlantic	20,224		14,570	48,296	5,159		68,025	6,212	3,827	98,288	1,658	99,946
Bergen	0	2,452	3,310	208	10		3,528	8,102	5,557	19,639	841	20,480
Burlington	2,572		139,444	5,215	3,309		147,968	2,612	10,336	163,488	17,108	180,596
Camden	0		14,850	4,702	520		20,072	2,354	3,046	25,472	94	25,566
Cape May	11,148		23,836	31,894	479		56,209	2,596	4,563	74,516	2,672	77,188
Cumberland	0		7,023	68,646	175		75,844	165	2,470	78,479	27,865	106,344
Essex	21		208	0	2		210	5,995	2,338	10,317	297	10,614
Gloucester	0		2	9,184	876		10,062	1,578	4,091	15,731	1,002	16,733
Hudson	45		1,213	519	0		1,732	659	605	3,041	15	3,056
Hunterdon	0		10,050	4,977	1,260	108	16,395	7,663	7,507	31,565	5,646	37,211
Mercer	0		3,984	1,547	231		5,762	8,879	8,953	23,594	7,746	31,340
Middlesex	0		3,760	0	135		3,895	9,091	5,581	19,567	82	19,649
Monmouth	1,733		5,820	8,985	91	1,779	16,675	13,074	13,031	44,513	667	45,180
Morris	9,175		17,666	12,606	552		30,824	14,289	15,728	70,016	8,001	78,017
Ocean	23,693		31,448	72,675	4,235		108,358	9,370	6,829	148,250	27,400	175,650
Passaic	26		46,763	2,320	1,057		50,140	4,068	2,871	61,063	1,929	62,992
Salem	3,745		2,130	17,416	393		19,939	274	1,868	25,826	2,835	28,661
Somerset	188		6,022	423	19	152	6,616	9,744	8,000	24,548	2,287	26,835
Sussex	30,710		72,702	20,125	3,076		95,903	1	5,981	132,595	7,018	139,613
Union	0		1	0	0		1	6,554	1,391	7,946	151	8,097
Warren	9,223		18,194	10,209	1,137		29,540	1,616	3,947	44,326	4,570	48,896
<b>Total Acreage</b>	<b>112,503</b>	<b>2,452</b>	<b>422,996</b>	<b>319,947</b>	<b>22,716</b>	<b>2,039</b>	<b>767,698</b>	<b>114,896</b>	<b>118,520</b>	<b>1,122,780</b>	<b>119,884</b>	<b>1,242,664</b>

\* Includes recreation areas, natural areas, marinas, historic sites, reservoir sites and conservation easements  
Acreage of State Parks and Wildlife Management Areas as of July 1, 2007.  
All other acreages as of January 1, 2007.

of land being developed annually, an area equal to 28 square miles, and an average of over 33,000 residential building permits issued each year between 2000 and 2006, the need for statewide land preservation and park and recreation facilities is very apparent.

According to census data, New Jersey's population in 2006 was 8,724,560, an increase of 310,210 since 2000. With 1,176 persons per square mile, New Jersey's distinctive status as the nation's most densely populated states goes unchallenged, especially when compared against a density of 80 persons per square mile nationwide. Although this represents an annual growth rate of only .7 percent between 2000 and 2006, individual county growth rates were more dramatic. Ocean County added 51,419 residents and Middlesex County added almost 37,000 during this period and were the only New Jersey counties to make the list of the nation's top 100 counties with the largest numerical increases during the first half of this decade. Bergen County continues to be the most populous county in the State, with 904,000 residents. The central region of the State, comprising Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, and Somerset counties, had the largest numeric population gain of 89,100 between 2000 and 2006. These four counties accounted for nearly 29 percent of the New Jersey's total population growth since 2000. The coastal counties of Atlantic, Cape May, Monmouth and Ocean saw an increase of about 28 percent increase between 2002 and 2006. Cape May, Essex and Hudson counties experienced moderate population declines between 2000 and 2006. All other 18 New Jersey counties gained population since the 2000 Census.

The second factor is the accommodation of this population growth, which is reflected by more than 233,000 residential building permits issued between 2000 and 2006 according to New Jersey Department of Labor data. Commercial building permits represent another element, that together with residential land development, are responsible for the loss of about 50 acres of land a day, 18,000 acres annually, to meet the housing, transportation, retail and employment needs of 8.7 million state residents. This figure, derived by analysis of land use changes between 1995 and 2000 by Rutgers University Center for Remote Sensing, depicts a dire future for New Jersey's natural resources and there ability to sustain the State's economic strength.

**Table 15****New Jersey County Population Changes**

<u>County</u>	<u>2000 Population</u>	<u>2006 Population</u>	<u>Change Number</u>	<u>Annual Percent</u>
Atlantic	252,552	270,620	19,068	1.4
Bergen	884,118	904,037	19,919	0.4
Burlington	423,394	450,627	27,233	1.2
Camden	508,932	517,001	8,069	0.3
Cape May	102,326	97,724	- 4,602	-0.9
Cumberland	146,438	154,823	8,385	1.1
Essex	793,633	786,147	-7,486	-0.2
Gloucester	254,673	282,031	27,358	2.0
Hudson	608,975	601,146	-7,829	-0.2
Hunterdon	121,989	130,783	8,794	1.3
Mercer	350,761	367,605	16,844	0.9
Middlesex	750,162	786,971	36,809	0.9
Monmouth	615,301	635,285	19,984	0.6
Morris	470,212	493,160	22,948	0.9
Ocean	510,916	562,335	51,419	1.8
Passaic	489,049	497,093	8,044	0.3
Salem	64,285	66,595	2,310	0.7
Somerset	297,490	324,186	26,696	1.7
Sussex	144,166	153,384	9,218	1.2
Union	522,541	531,088	8,547	0.3
Warren	<u>102,437</u>	<u>110,919</u>	<u>8,482</u>	<u>1.5</u>
Totals	8,414,350	8,724,560	310,210	0.7

Source: US Census Data, NJ July 2006 estimates

**Table 16**  
**New Jersey Residential Building Permits Authorized**  
**2000-2006**

<u>County</u>	<u>Total Permits</u>
Atlantic	13,579
Bergen	14,968
Burlington	13,361
Camden	8,949
Cape May	11,921
Cumberland	3,126
Essex	15,580
Gloucester	11,928
Hudson	18,701
Hunterdon	4,224
Mercer	9,042
Middlesex	16,908
Monmouth	18,253
Morris	13,321
Ocean	25,841
Passaic	4,874
Salem	1,749
Somerset	10,105
Sussex	4,674
Union	7,446
Warren	<u>4,817</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>233,367</b>

Source: New Jersey Department of Labor, U.S. Census Bureau

These two land uses translate into a loss of vegetation and an increase in impervious surfaces, which directly impact the very essence of quality of life issues and have broad implications. These implications include impacts to water supply and quality, wildlife habitat, losses of open space and farmland, transportation, air quality, historic sites and the increased demand for and use of New Jersey's public conservation and recreation resources. The NJDEP's *Final Report of the New Jersey Comparative Risk Project* published in 2003, identified land use change as its number one environmental risk issue. With its attendant habitat loss, increased impervious surfaces, sprawl potential and congestion, the report stated that "land use change lies at the heart of many of New Jersey's environmental problems."

New Jersey according to the 2000 Census data, had the highest median household income in the nation. More recent census data showed the State remains a leader in per capita income also. 2004 Census data shows that two New Jersey counties, Hunterdon and Morris were in the top ten counties nationally. A total of 14 New Jersey counties were ranked among the highest per capita income in the United States (Table 17). These high income levels translate into disposable income that can be used to pursue recreational activities. It also provides a very large market for retail development.

Despite a low annual growth rate of less than one percent between 2000 and 2006, New Jersey remains one of the nation's most populous states. The New Jersey Department of Labor has projected that by 2025, the State's population will be 9.8 million people (Table 18). Growth in counties such as Atlantic, Ocean, Sussex and Warren counties will continue, creating increased demand for open space and park and recreation facilities. It is very unlikely that public need and demand for open space and recreation will decrease in the future. Demand statewide for Green Acres funding demonstrates a large unmet need (Table 19). Green Acres has only been able to provide funding to meet 18.5% of funding request of local governments and 17.6% of funding requests by nonprofit conservation organizations. Given the prospects of New Jersey's population increasing by over 1 million people by 2025 and the current inability to meet funding requests, the need and demand for open space and parks and recreation facilities will continue.

**Table 17**  
**2004 New Jersey County Rankings**  
**Highest Per Capita Income of Counties in the United States**

<u>Rank</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Per Capita Income</u>
7	Hunterdon	\$59,384
9	Morris	\$58,817
14	Somerset	\$57,033
19	Bergen	\$53,131
46	Monmouth	\$45,784
49	Mercer	\$44,661
65	Union	\$42,728
89	Essex	\$40,634
102	Middlesex	\$40,036
104	Sussex	\$39,931
125	Burlington	\$38,575
168	Cape May	\$36,525
214	Warren	\$35,016
235	Camden	\$34,422

Source: New Jersey Department of Labor, April 2006

**Table 18**  
**New Jersey Projections of Total Population by County**

<u>County</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2025</u>
New Jersey	8,724,560	9,817,400
Atlantic	270,620	319,800
Bergen	904,037	983,400
Burlington	450,627	532,200
Camden	517,001	569,600
Cape May	97,724	103,200
Cumberland	154,823	168,700
Essex	786,147	855,300
Gloucester	282,031	337,300
Hudson	601,146	630,600
Hunterdon	103,783	158,300
Mercer	367,605	411,700
Middlesex	786,971	883,500
Monmouth	635,285	723,700
Morris	493,160	568,600
Ocean	562,335	678,200
Passaic	497,093	544,900
Salem	66,595	75,100
Somerset	324,186	375,100
Sussex	153,384	187,000
Union	531,088	576,500
Warren	110,919	135,000

Source: New Jersey Department of Labor, US Census Data

**Table 19**

**Green Acres Program  
Unmet Need  
Average Annual Requests vs. Project Approvals  
2000 – 2006**

**Local Government**

<b>Request</b>	<b>\$489,000,000</b>
<b>Approvals</b>	<b>\$ 90,400,000</b>

**Nonprofit**

<b>Request</b>	<b>\$93,900,000</b>
<b>Approvals</b>	<b>\$16,500,000</b>

The increasing populations of senior citizens will pose challenges to park and recreation providers. It is expected that future senior citizens will be an active class of people and more physically fit, which means that they will continue to demand recreation programs and services. Nearly 3 million New Jersey residents are between the ages of 40 and 64 (Table 20). The sheer number of seniors, who are now maturing baby boomers, will mean that the demand for senior oriented services will be greater. Recreation planners will need to consider design features and programs that accommodate the physical capabilities and recreation preferences of this population. This generation generally has a higher level of education, and will have access to better healthcare services. Wellness and fitness related recreation programs are likely to be in demand. Additionally, less physical activities such as educational programs and historic and environmental interpretive programming will be popular. Children from under five to 14 will continue to require open space and recreation resources. This population segment consists of almost 1.8 million individuals. While many of these facilities do already exist, they will need to be upgraded and improved to service another generation. Recreation programming will continue to expand to provide further daycare, after school, special population and special event programming.

Open space is the basic resource for the development of recreational facilities and for satisfying the recreational needs of New Jersey's citizens. If New Jersey is to remain a

desirable place in which to live it is critical that an adequate amount of open space be permanently protected. Development will continue to consume remaining unprotected open space in order to accommodate the residential and other needs of New Jersey's growing population. At the same time, the amount of open space required to satisfy recreational needs and to perform other vital functions, such as aquifer recharge for water supply purposes, will increase. It is important for the State's future to recognize what its open space requirements will be, and to take steps to preserve the necessary lands now, before opportunities to do so are lost.

**Table 20**  
**New Jersey Population by Age**

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Under 5	581,682	6.6
5-9	581,785	6.6
10-14	623,240	7.1
15-19	602,733	6.9
20-24	529,267	6.0
25-29	494,905	5.6
30-34	570,793	6.5
35-39	662,691	7.6
40-44	731,836	8.3
45-49	701,301	8.0
50-54	595,624	6.8
55-59	520,419	5.9
60-64	392,293	4.4
65-69	288,532	3.3
70-74	248,824	2.8
75-79	234,883	2.6
80+	357,117	4.0

Source: New Jersey Department of Labor, U.S Census data

For purposes of estimating the amount of open space required for recreational purposes, an approach referred to as the Balanced Land Use Concept has been determined to be the most appropriate for New Jersey. The approach uses the guidelines presented below to calculate the recreation open space requirements for county and municipal governments. The Balanced Land Use approach incorporates land as a finite resource for which there are other legitimate competing uses. The Balanced Land Use requirements represent the recreation open space needs that will result from existing and new development.

The need figures obtained through the Balanced Land Use guidelines are long term goals for public recreation land acquisition based on the extent of New Jersey's developed, developable and undeveloped land resources and the need to accommodate competing land uses such as transportation, commerce and housing. Using developed and developable land as the calculation basis for counties and municipalities takes into account the fact that the demand for county and municipal recreation land is generated by development. In addition, this approach recognizes that, in many instances, municipal and county park agencies are competing with other legitimate local uses for the same developable lands.

### **Balanced Land Use Guidelines**

<b>Municipal Level</b>	<b>3% of the developed and developable area of the municipality</b>
<b>County Level</b>	<b>7% of the developed and developable area of the county</b>
<b>Developable Areas:</b>	<b>excludes acreage of slopes over 12%, wetlands, low density areas of the Pinelands, and federal and state-owned open space</b>

The Balanced Land Use Guidelines are a means of estimating the amount of recreation land that should be set aside by local governments in New Jersey to provide recreation opportunities for the existing and future residents of the state. The figures produced represent only minimum goals for recreation land acquisition programs. In order for public open space areas to be considered as supply toward meeting the Balanced Land Use goals, the areas must be environmentally suitable for the recreation activities generally provided.

Need figures derived by the Balanced Land Use method represent the minimum amount of land that should be permanently dedicated as public open space and available for appropriate direct public recreation uses. Open space that is protected for environmental or agricultural purposes through conservation easements, land use regulation or other means that do not provide for direct public use is not considered as part of the public recreation land supply. These lands are, however, of considerable outdoor recreation value because they protect important natural and historic resources that are essential in maintaining an environment that is conducive to high quality recreation experiences. It is important to recognize that the availability of suitable land resources is the single most important factor in providing opportunities for recreation activities. Although providing recreation open space for residents is a priority for local governments, preserving land for conservation and growth management purposes has also been important. The protection of natural resources and community character are driving many local open space programs.

In addition to the Balanced Land Use methodology, the National Recreation and Park Association advocates a systems approach to open space and recreation planning. This approach looks at the existing park and recreation infrastructure of a community, current and projected uses and needs, resources and trends to develop recommendations. It also relies on public participation to guide the process. This method also is suitable for regional open space and recreation planning. Given the complicated nature of open space and recreation planning, it is apparent that a varied approach is warranted to ensure that the individual community needs will be met.

An additional indicator of demand and need are funding requests. Between 2003 and 2006, the Green Acres Program received land acquisition and park development funding requests from local governments of \$1.68 billion and were awarded \$408 million. Conservation organizations submitted during the same time period, requests for \$283.6 million. A total of 1.93 billion was requested by local governments and conservation organizations for land acquisition and park development projects between 2003 and 2006 and \$494.5 million was awarded (Table 21). Despite having one of the best funded open space and recreation programs in the nation, New Jersey still exhibits tremendous funding needs.

**Table 21**  
**Green Acres Program Funding**  
**2003-2006 Requests and Awards**

	<u>Requests</u>	<u>Awards</u>
2003	\$ 496,227,691	\$110,803,550
2004	\$ 496,478,714	\$161,757,950
2005	\$ 563,509,665	\$148,526,080
2006	<u>\$ 407,498,580</u>	<u>\$ 73,428,585</u>
	\$1,936,764,650	\$494,516,165

Source: Green Acres Program. Includes both local government and nonprofit acquisition and development funding requests and awards.

Data collected for the National survey on Recreation and The Environment, (NSRE) conducted by the United States Forest Service, provides insights into outdoor recreational trends, users and markets. The recreation market in the United States is characterized by the NSRE into the following eight segments:

**Inactives**

Least active outdoor segment in American society. Walking is the only activity in which more than half participate.

**Passives**

Limited set of preferred recreational activities. Prefer low intensity, low commitment recreations such as sight seeing, driving for pleasure, walking for pleasure, family gatherings and picnicking.

**Nonconsumptive Moderates**

More expansive set of preferred recreational activities. Favored activities include visiting a beach, visiting a nature center, mountain biking and swimming.

**Nature Lovers**

Relatively large percentage involved in viewing/learning activities such as birding. Also prefer visiting nature centers and museums and diving for pleasure.

### **Water Bugs**

Attracted to water as a recreational venue, focuses on participation in water based activities. Also prefer visiting nature centers, sight seeing and nature photography.

### **Backcountry Activities**

Participate at a higher than national average in most recreations. Defined by high participation rates in backpacking, primitive camping, day hiking, wilderness visits and cross country skiing

### **Motorized Consumptives**

Large participation rates in hunting, fishing and motorized activities

### **Outdoor Avids**

Highest recreation participation rates prefer recreations that demand skill and physical exertions such as canoeing, kayaking, cross country skiing, rafting and wind surfing.

**Note: As reported in *A Recreation Plan for State Parks and State Forests for the Pennsylvania Wilds. March 2006* Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources**

Natural resource based outdoor recreation requires the continued protection of these resources to ensure their public use. A 2005 recreation trends analysis study published by the Outdoor Industry Foundation found growth in individual activities is focused on activities that can be “done in day”. The study also noted a decline in commitment heavy activities. Considering that two income earners is common throughout the nation, these findings are not surprising. The study also noted the Northeast region had the lowest participation rate, 69%, in outdoor recreation activities in the United States. However, compared to the North Central region (72%) and the South Central region (70%) the differences appear not to be dramatic even when compared with the West region, which had the highest outdoor recreation participation rate of 78%. All four regions saw

increased participation rates in outdoor recreation between 1999 and 2005. The Northeast region participation in outdoor recreation increased from 60% in 1999 to 69% in 2005.

Hiking has remained one of the most popular outdoor recreation activities in the United States and in New Jersey. The New Jersey Trail Plan Update provides an insight into hiking as a recreational activity. As part of the Trails Plan Update, a survey was conducted in September 2006 to gauge public opinion regarding trails in New Jersey. The survey identified topics, issues and concerns to inform the planning process for the Trails Plan. The survey was conducted informally and the results cannot claim to be statistically representative. Participants were self-selecting. Regardless, the survey provided an important opportunity to hear from thousands of New Jersey residents who care about trails. The results provide significant insight into the perspectives and priorities of New Jersey's trail users.

The surveys were filled out by attendees of three Open House Meetings held in September 2006. The survey was also posted on the project website and the Green Acres Program homepage. A total of 3,759 respondents completed the survey.

Some of the findings of the survey are as follows:

- A plurality of trail users use trails more than 30 days per year. A significant majority of trail users use them over eight times per year.
- Trails use is a four season phenomenon in New Jersey.
- Using trails on foot (hiking, walking, jogging, backpacking) are by far the most popular trails activities. Off Road Vehicle (ORV) use was mentioned second most by almost half the respondents. Mountain biking, bicycling, canoeing/kayaking, horseback riding and winter sports are significant trail uses.
- Trails are predominately experienced in rural or remote areas.
- Skylands and Delaware River areas are the most popular (frequently mentioned) locations for trails activities.
- A majority travel more than 10 miles (each way) for the purpose of using a trail; almost a quarter travel more than 30 miles.
- The D&R Multi-use Path is the most frequently used trail in the state. Other frequently used trails include: Wharton State Forest, NJ Off-Road Vehicle Park, Delaware Water

**Gap National Recreation Area and Brendan Byrne State Forest. The preponderant reason for the frequent use is the proximity to where the user lives.**

- **Most trail users learn about trails by word of mouth and from clubs; the internet is increasingly used as an information resource.**
- **Trails are a significant economic force. Almost half of respondents spend more than \$1000 annually on these purchases and almost a quarter of respondents spend more than \$5000.**
- **A significant percentage of respondents indicated that trails and their use of trails influenced the purchase of their home.**
- **On their most recent trails outing, most trail users purchased food and beverages, including meals at a restaurant en-route.**
- **Lack of trails and the quality of the facilities were identified as the two most important trails concerns. Lack of information about trails, overcrowding, the adequacy of support facilities, accessibility and safety and security were mentioned as significant concerns.**
- **Most users rarely if ever experience conflicts with other trail users.**
- **A plurality of trail users think that trails for specific types of trails activity should be emphasized; but significant numbers mention that trails connections, trails for multiple users type and trails in natural landscapes should be emphasized.**
- **Trail users overwhelmingly want an outcome of the Trails Plan Update to be more trails to use.**
- **Respondents to the survey overwhelmingly believe that trails rank high in importance when compared to other forms of outdoor recreation.**
- **New Jersey trails users most like the variety and diversity of trails facilities, the availability and convenience of trails, their maintenance and freedom from crowds.**

**The publication *Projections of Outdoor Recreation Participation to 2050* examines future recreation participation trends. The report identifies future recreational use of participants age 16 and over. Participation trends such as these provide direction for future planning.**

**The following are national recreation participation trends highlighted in the report:**

- **Non Pool swimming will continue to be the most popular water based recreation activity with an anticipated increase of 25% by 2050.**

- **Walking remains one of the top recreational activities in the county**
- **Non-consumptive wildlife recreation such as birding is expected to increase 61%**
- **Picnicking is projected to see an increase of 54% by 2050**

**Recent Green Acres recreation project funding request of local governments and conservation organizations provides additional information on the park and recreation needs of New Jersey's residents (Table 22). New Jersey high school sports participation is another indicator of recreation demand as many high school athletes participate in municipal recreation programs and leagues which require the use of a variety of field sports facilities (Table 23). As many schools use the recreational facilities of parks to meet the needs of their athletic programs. This underscores the close relationship between municipal recreation departments and boards of education and the increased potential for shared services to reduce municipal government costs.**

**Table 22**

**Green Acres Recreation Facility Funding Requests  
2003-2006**

<u>Recreation Facility</u>	<u>Funding Requests</u>
Field Sports	231
Pathways	173
Court Sports	116
Playground	113
Waterfront	74
Picnic	54
Swimming	24
Skate Park	24

**Note:** Represents number of funding requests from local governments and conservation organizations. Field sports include baseball, softball, little league, soccer, football and field hockey. Pathways include walking, bicycle and jogging paths and hiking trails. Court sports include basketball, tennis and volleyball. Waterfronts include marinas and other boating facilities. Skate parks include bike parks and roller hockey.

**Table 23**

**2006 Top 10 New Jersey High School Sports**

<u>Sport</u>	<u>Participation (Boys &amp; Girls)</u>
Outdoor Track & Field	29,915
Soccer	28,846
Baseball/Softball	27,370
Football	26,765
Basketball	23,302
Indoor Track & Field	17,534
Lacrosse	13,744
Tennis	12,490
Cross Country	11,069
Field Hockey	9,312

**Source:** New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association. As reported in *The Star Ledger*, May 15, 2007.

## Chapter 4

### Issues and Policies

As a public policy, open space preservation and recreation has been strongly supported by the public and private sectors. New Jersey has had a long history of government involvement in land preservation and public parks and recreation. In 1895, Essex County established the first county park system in the United States. Shortly after, the State began to address the recreation needs of its citizens through the acquisition of lands for state parks and wildlife management areas. Bass River State Forest was acquired in 1905, Stokes State Forest in 1907, Brendan Byrne State Forest in 1908 and the Hackettstown Fish Hatchery in 1912. Other notable acquisitions include Allaire State Park in 1940, Island Beach State Park in 1953 and Wharton State Forest in 1955.

Various planning activities dating back to the 1920s have called for the acquisition of large tracts of land throughout the state for public park, recreation and conservation purposes. New Jersey's planning has historically considered the need to provide not only open space but also park and recreation opportunities. In 1941 and in 1950, the State Planning Board published plans calling for the acquisition of more land for state public open space and recreation areas. The largest purchase by the State for a state recreation area, 96,000 acres for Wharton State Forest and the purchase of 2,694 acres for Island Beach State Park were a result of a 1951 bond referendum.

The Regional Plan Association alerted New Jersey to an impending open space and recreation crisis in a 1960 report *The Race for Open Space*. The report detailed the state's disappearing acreage and increasing population and was instrumental in the creation of the Green Acres Program in 1961. The first SCORP was prepared in 1967 and each subsequent SCORP has guided New Jersey's open space and recreation expenditures and has been an important element of New Jersey's nationally recognized program.

The issues and policies outlined in this SCORP articulate the State's vision of open space and recreation in New Jersey over the next five years. Issues were identified within State

government by the Divisions of Fish and Wildlife and Parks and Forestry. Also contributing were county and municipal governments and conservation organizations.

During the preparation of 2008 SCORP six issues were identified as being necessary to meet the current and projected future public open space and recreation needs in New Jersey.

The issues presented in this SCORP are:

1. Land Preservation
2. Recreation
3. Urban Open Space and Recreation
4. State Resource Areas
5. Greenways
6. Stewardship

These issues and their associated policies provide the framework which New Jersey will use to satisfy the significant and diverse recreation and open space requirements of its residents and visitors during the following five years. A theme of the 2008 SCORP is the preservation and protection of a sufficient quantity of land to meet the environmental protection, open space and recreation needs facing New Jersey now and into the future. Public open space and recreation areas are part of the public infrastructure, just like roads, schools and bridges. It is the goal of these issues and policies to see that the State's open space and recreation infrastructure remains a critical element of the quality of life in New Jersey.

### **Issue: Land Preservation**

According to the 2001 New Jersey Development and Redevelopment Plan (State Plan), there are nearly 4.8 million acres of land in the state. In some areas of the state, almost 90% of that land has been developed. A population of over 8.7 million people, at a density of 1,176 people per square mile and a population forecast of over 9 million by 2025, makes land preservation a critical issue in New Jersey. This issue becomes even more critical when coupled with building permit data showing that between 2000 and 2006 over 230,000 residential building permits were issued. Rutgers University estimates 278,000 acres of land were developed between 1984 and 2001 in New Jersey. Given these trends, the projected buildout of New Jersey over the next 40 years is not improbable. The Monmouth County Planning Board estimates that there are between 60,000 and 70,000 acres of developable land remaining in the County. This acreage must support not only projected population growth in the county but also meet park and recreation demand.

New Jersey's land preservation efforts are carried out with two themes: open space and farmland. Both of these are necessary for the State to protect important natural, recreational and agricultural resources. The perception that open space is just land in an undeveloped state is deceiving. While open space itself is a simple concept, the factors that affect it, and that it affects are quite complex. Open space is an intricate system serving a variety of functions, often concurrently, which are essential in sustaining and enhancing New Jersey as a desirable place to live and work. Open space can protect the quality and quantity of surface and groundwater resources, guide development and growth, preserve natural and historic resources, shape community character, and provide land for recreation. Additionally, the economic value and benefits of open space have been the subject of several studies. From increasing the value of adjacent properties and generating revenue from recreational activities to reducing the cost for public services, the economic impact of open space can be significant.

The NJDEP Division of Science and Research conducted a two year study to document the economic value of New Jersey's natural resources. The report, *Valuing New Jersey's National Capital*, details both the values of ecosystem services such as water supply and ecosystem goods such as wood. The report determined that New Jersey's natural resources have an annual value of about \$26 billion. The State's open space preservation efforts clearly support the protection of these resources and the economic value they generate. The State's average annual expenditure of \$129 million on land preservation between 2002 and 2006 appears to be a wise investment to protect natural resources valued at \$26 billion annually.

Open space preservation and planning will play a crucial role in New Jersey's efforts to protect its water resources. The identification of critical natural resources is necessary for the continued environmental and economic viability of New Jersey. Over the last five years, over 145,000 acres of open space have been preserved for public conservation and recreation purposes (Table 24). Nearly 65,000 acres of farmland have also been preserved during the same period.

**Table 24**  
**New Jersey Land Preservation**  
**2002-2006**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Open Space</u>	<u>Farmland</u>	<u>Total</u>
2002	38,725	13,156	51,881
2003	19,423	19,867	39,290
2004	23,558	12,826	36,384
2005	44,106	8,905	53,011
2006	<u>20,423</u>	<u>10,048</u>	<u>30,471</u>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>146,235</b>	<b>64,802</b>	<b>211,037</b>

Source: Green Acres Program, Farmland Preservation Program. Open space totals include federal and Green Acres funded and unfunded, state, local government and non profit preserved acreages.

There are a total of 4,778,631 acres of land in New Jersey according the State Plan. As of July 1, 2007 a total of 1,394,207 acres were preserved open space and farmland. Another 1,361,146 acres were consisted of developed lands according to 1995 and 2002 NJDEP GIS land use coverages for the State. This leaves 2,023,278 acres available for land preservation and development.

Approximately 700,000 acres of high value natural resource lands of State preservation interested were identified in the *2005-2007 State Land Acquisition Land Preservation Plan*. These are lands that possess significant natural, recreational or historic resource value to warrant the preservation interest of either public or private conservation agencies and organizations. An additional 400,000 acres of farmland need to be preserved to reach the 600,000 acres required to sustain agriculture as a viable industry in New Jersey according to the State Agricultural Development Committee.

The preservation of land for conservation, recreation and agricultural purposes will require substantial long term funding and a concerted planning and acquisition effort. All levels of government together with conservation organizations, the public and private sector will need to work together to preserve open space to protect critical natural resources, especially water resources and to provide recreational opportunities (Tables 25-30).

**Policy:**

**It shall be the policy of the State of New Jersey to continue to preserve land to protect water resources, biodiversity, provide statewide public recreation opportunities and for the retention of agriculture in New Jersey.**

**Table 25  
Green Acres Program  
State Land Acquisition Project Funding  
1999-2007**

<u>Project</u>	<u>Funding</u>
Barnegat Bay Watershed	\$ 18,500,000
Cape May Peninsula	\$ 21,250,000
American Revolution Crossroads	\$ 41,000,000
Delaware and Raritan Canal	\$ 16,250,000
Delaware Bay	\$ 42,000,000
Delaware River Watershed	\$ 42,000,000
Great Bay Greenway	\$ 1,500,000
Great Egg Harbor Watershed	\$ 3,500,000
NY/NJ Harbor Estuary	\$ 10,500,000
Highlands	\$114,500,000
Historic Resources	\$ 10,500,000
Jenny Jump State Forest	\$ 6,750,000
Musconetcong River Greenway	\$ 7,000,000
Natural Areas	\$ 9,500,000
Non Profit Camps	\$ 15,250,000
Parvin State Park	\$ 500,000
Paulinskill River Watershed	\$ 12,500,000
Pequest River Watershed	\$ 7,750,000
Pinelands	\$ 51,000,000
Raritan River Watershed	\$ 31,000,000
Ridge & Valley Greenway	\$ 31,250,000
Stokes State Forest	\$ 6,500,000
Swimming River Watershed	\$ 3,000,000
Trails	\$ 32,750,000
Urban Parks	\$ 18,000,000
Watershed Lands	<u>\$ 14,250,000</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$568,500,000</b>

**Table 26  
Green Acres Program Land Preservation  
2002-2006**

	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>Totals</u>
State Land	24,767	10,764	15,897	32,181	10,705	94,314
Local Government	6,422	3,929	3,056	3,691	4,462	21,560
Non Profit	<u>4,831</u>	<u>3,239</u>	<u>3,790</u>	<u>3,232</u>	<u>918</u>	<u>16,010</u>
	36,020	17,932	22,743	39,104	16,085	131,884

**Table 27  
Green Acres  
Local Government Acquisition and Park Development  
2002-2006 Project Expenditures**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Acquisition</u>	<u>Acres Preserved</u>	<u>Park Development</u>	<u>Total Expenditures</u>
2002	\$ 58,925,980	6,422	\$19,163,696	\$ 78,089,676
2003	\$ 43,981,717	3,929	\$18,610,866	\$ 62,592,583
2004	\$ 40,628,533	3,056	\$ 8,750,648	\$ 49,379,181
2005	\$ 52,969,592	3,691	\$16,042,991	\$ 69,012,583
2006	<u>\$ 51,969,356</u>	<u>4,462</u>	<u>\$23,042,871</u>	<u>\$ 75,012,227</u>
Total	\$248,475,178	21,560	\$85,611,072	\$334,086,250

**Table 28  
Green Acres NonProfit Acquisition and Park Development  
2002-2006 Project Expenditures**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Acquisition</u>	<u>Acres Preserved</u>	<u>Park Development</u>	<u>Total Expenditures</u>
2002	\$ 9,690,758	4,831		\$ 9,690,758
2003	\$ 11,761,446	3,239	\$ 1,489,590	\$ 13,251,036
2004	\$ 10,090,728	3,790	\$ 1,866,976	\$ 11,957,704
2005	\$ 13,515,783	3,232	\$ 1,529,491	\$ 15,045,274
2006	<u>\$ 7,083,915</u>	<u>918</u>	<u>\$ 7,647,001</u>	<u>\$ 14,730,916</u>
Total	\$ 52,142,630	16,010	\$12,533,058	\$ 64,675,688

**Table 29**

**Green Acres State Land Acquisition Program  
2002-2006 Acres Preserved**

<u>County</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Cost</u>
Atlantic	9,325	\$11,550,995
Bergen	91	\$ 4,955,523
Burlington	13,067	\$10,171,955
Camden	845	\$ 5,677,877
Cape May	1,679	\$18,164,400
Cumberland	6,357	\$ 8,262,096
Essex	1,159	\$11,123,869
Gloucester	1,252	\$ 7,697,227
Hudson	1	\$ 385,000
Hunterdon	5,560	\$55,122,075
Mercer	820	\$ 8,686,234
Middlesex	682	\$ 7,936,266
Monmouth	955	\$20,703,810
Morris	10,398	\$34,077,595
Ocean	4,027	\$13,323,277
Passaic	9,263	\$17,320,258
Salem	2,935	\$13,088,943
Somerset	122	\$ 1,389,375
Sussex	19,940	\$62,104,420
Warren	<u>5,836</u>	<u>\$33,504,468</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>94,314</b>	<b>\$345,245,663</b>

**Table 30**  
**Green Acres Land Preservation**  
**State Land, Local Government and NonProfit Programs**  
**2002-2006 Acres Preserved**

<u>County</u>	<u>State Land</u>	<u>Local Government</u>	<u>NonProfit</u>	<u>Total</u>
Atlantic	9,325	1,156	34	10,515
Bergen	91	857	6	954
Burlington	13,067	2,182	186	15,435
Camden	845	269	94	1,208
Cape May	1,679	120	85	1,884
Cumberland	6,357	10	6,742	13,508
Essex	1,159	0	0	1,159
Gloucester	1,252	538	123	1,913
Hudson	1	8	15	24
Hunterdon	5,560	3,189	1,837	10,584
Mercer	820	1,606	1,275	3,701
Middlesex	682	1,117	26	1,825
Monmouth	955	1,499	115	2,569
Morris	10,398	3,886	420	14,704
Ocean	4,027	1,871	688	6,586
Passaic	9,263	206	309	9,778
Salem	2,935	0	977	3,912
Somerset	122	1,402	127	1,651
Sussex	19,940	1,000	2,055	22,995
Union	0	55	0	55
Warren	<u>5,836</u>	<u>589</u>	<u>896</u>	<u>7,321</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>94,314</b>	<b>21,560</b>	<b>16,010</b>	<b>131,884</b>

## **Issue: Recreation**

Recreation and parks are considered by New Jerseyans as inseparable from quality of life issues. Public and private recreation providers offer a wide array of opportunities, programs and facilities to satisfy the substantial recreation needs of residents and visitors. Recreation in New Jersey comes in many forms, but regardless of the form, it satisfies the human need for play and relaxation.

Recreation providers are finding that while recreation demand is increasing and contributes significantly to the State's economy, the benefits it supplies are not easily dispensed. The demand and need for recreation are being driven largely by the State's increasing population. It seems that it is impossible to build enough soccer fields or softball fields in New Jersey. It also seems difficult to find a park in the state that does not have a problem with Canada geese. There is a statewide trend of residents living near parks resisting the development of recreation facilities, particularly playing fields. Increased usage translates into greater operational and maintenance costs. Demographic trends point not only to an increasing population, but also the ongoing aging of New Jersey's population.

All of these factors, along with others means that public park and recreation agencies must continue to provide the programs and facilities to meet an increasing demand. Annual visitation at state parks exceeds 17 million. Annual attendance at many county parks systems exceeds 2 million people. At the municipal level, towns struggle with finding fields for soccer and softball games. These fact and that recreation land often competes with other land use needs complicates matters even more.

It is clear that the State and local governments must work together to provide for the parks and recreation needs of its citizens. It is also clear that planning will play a key role in identifying appropriate lands for recreational development. Local government open space and recreation plans can guide the acquisition and development of public conservation and recreation areas to provide a balanced park system. One of the greatest challenges facing growing rural areas of the state is in providing adequate park and recreation facilities. In many of these areas, there are abundant opportunities for hiking, fishing, birding, camping and hunting. But recreation facilities needed by families such as playgrounds can be in

short supply. New Jersey over the years has consistently provided funding for park and recreation development projects. The referendum approved in 2006 for capital funding for the State's public lands will provide \$15 million a year for improvements to state parks and wildlife management areas.

The Green Acres Program has provided funding for park and recreation development since 1974. Between 2003 and 2006, the Green Acres Program has awarded over \$144 million in grant and loan funding for park and recreation projects to local governments conservation organizations. In addition, New Jersey has funded over 237 parks & recreation projects with \$62 million from the LWCF. During the same period, \$40 million was awarded by Green Acres to conservation organizations for parks and recreation projects.

Local governments have been active in funding and developing a wide array of recreation facilities. The State's open space tax legislation allows counties and municipalities to collect a tax specifically dedicated to development and maintenance of park and recreation areas. Many local governments have used this provision in the legislation to increase funds for recreation projects. In 2005, counties spent of \$11 million in these funds for park development and maintenance purposes.

**Policy:**

It shall be the policy of the State of New Jersey to continue the funding of recreation facilities on State open space and recreation areas and to provide funding to local governments and conservation organizations for park and recreation projects.

## **Issue: Urban Open Space And Recreation**

The Metropolitan Planning Area of the New Jersey State Plan contains over 840,000 acres, roughly 17% of New Jersey. As the name implies, the communities in this Planning Area often have strong ties to major metropolitan centers. In the State's northeastern counties, New York City, Newark and Jersey City and along the lower Delaware River, Philadelphia, Camden and Trenton have historically influenced growth in these regions.

The State Plan identifies eight urban centers within the Metropolitan Planning Area: Atlantic City, Camden, Elizabeth, Jersey City, New Brunswick, Newark, Paterson and Trenton. This Planning Area also contains regional centers and suburban communities.

The State Plan has a goal the revitalization of New Jersey's urban centers and established communities. Urban center revitalization efforts will need to include the redevelopment and rehabilitation of existing park facilities as well as creating new park and recreation opportunities. The use of redevelopment projects as a catalyst for park projects and public spaces can be an important tool. Public and private investment in urban parks can also spur economic redevelopment initiatives.

Urban centers throughout New Jersey are continuing the development of their waterfronts for public open space and recreation uses. Walkways, marinas, piers and lawn areas have been created to afford access to urban waterfronts. Through the State's coastal management program one of the most ambitious urban waterfront projects in the country, the Hudson River Walkway, is being assembled to provide pedestrian use on a continuous 18 miles of Hudson River shoreline in New Jersey.

The acute need for and intensive use of urban park and recreation areas is a continuing issue in the state. The recognition of the problems encountered by urban communities led to the establishment in 1978 of the Urban Aid funding category within the Green Acres Program. This category provides grants and low interest loans to legislatively designated urban aid communities for open space and recreation projects. In 2003, the Green Acres Program adopted a new project funding formula to further advance open space and park and recreation initiatives in New Jersey's older and urbanized municipalities. Green Acres established categories of Densely Populated Municipalities which have a population of at least 35,000 people and Highly Populated Municipalities with a population density greater

than 5,000 people per square mile. Funding for these municipalities is derived through the application of multiplier that recognizes a municipality's or county's population data. This results in increased funding for these local governments in excess of the base award. Between 2003 and 2006, the Green Acres Program awarded \$135 million to 219 urban aid and densely and highly populated community projects. In addition, the Garden State Preservation Trust Act specifies that a percentage of Green Acres State Land Acquisition funding be spent in counties with a population density of 1,000 people per square mile or more. Based on 2000 Census data, ten New Jersey counties currently exceed this population density. Over \$110 million was spent in urbanized counties between 2002 and 2006 to preserve more than 24,000 acres of land.

In addition to park and recreation issues, urban centers also can have considerable natural resource and open space values. Research conducted in the Arthur Kill region by the New Jersey Conservation Foundation with documented the significance of urban habitat lands. Despite being the most densely populated, developed and industrialized area of New Jersey, it remains a thriving estuarine ecosystem. The Conservation Foundation's report, *Greenways to the Arthur Kill*, identified several critical habitat areas, some of which have been preserved. The New York/New Jersey Harbor Estuary Program is seeking to preserve and restore important wildlife habitat, wetlands, stream corridors and other natural resource features. Approximately 150 sites have been identified in both states for acquisition and restoration. In New Jersey, \$36.6 million has been spent by federal, state and local governments along with conservation organizations to preserve nearly 1,700 acres of these critical lands.

**Policy:**

It shall be the policy of the State of New Jersey to provide funding for urban public open space, parks and recreation areas.

**Issue: State Resource Areas**

State Resource Areas contain critical natural resources. The most critical resource, water, is found in all of these resource areas, and is a force in their ongoing protection. In addition, recreation, wildlife, tourism, and agriculture combine to make these areas even more outstanding. And these resource areas also provide substantial economic benefits. State parks in New Jersey contribute about \$1.2 billion annually to the State's economy while the economic benefits of ecotourism is estimated to be \$3.1 billion annually.

The following summarizes the regions of New Jersey that are considered State Resource Areas:

**Highlands**

New Jersey's Highlands are part of a two million acre region stretching from Reading, Pennsylvania through New Jersey and New York and into northwestern Connecticut. So rich in natural and recreation resources, it is considered a landscape of national significance by the United States Forest Service. In New Jersey, the state designated Highlands region includes almost 860,000 acres comprised of two areas, the 415,000 acres in the Preservation Area and 445,000 acres in the Planning Area. Together these areas encompass 88 municipalities in seven counties in the northwestern part of the state. The water resources of the Highlands have long been recognized as the region's most valuable natural resource.

The Highlands are the source of water for 5.4 million people in New Jersey, 65% of the States population. The Highlands generate more than 870 million gallons of water daily for potable water, industrial and agricultural uses. Reservoirs in the Highlands supply 115 billion gallons of drinking water annually to meet the water supply demands of not only the greater New Jersey Metropolitan Area, but also portions of Burlington, Camden, Gloucester, Mercer and Middlesex counties. Preserving open space to protect there critical water recourses is an imperative for New Jersey. Through the passage of the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act in 2004, the New Jersey Highlands Council was charged with the development of a Regional Master Plan for Highlands to protect natural resources and accommodate appropriate economic growth.

Development and population growth continue in the Highlands. Between 1990 and 2004, the Highlands saw an increase of about 126,000 people or 18% according to the *2006 Draft*

*Highlands Regional Master Plan.* More than 33,000 housing units, a 12.7% increase were built during the same period to accommodate this population growth. Both of these figures surpassed the statewide percentages for population growth and housing units. New Jersey has a long history of public and private investment in preserving open space in the Highlands. Close to 100,000 acres have been preserved by the State, local governments and conservation organizations with Green Acres funding since 1987. Green Acres has committed \$114 million in State Land Acquisition funding to Highlands land preservation projects since 2000. Federal funding for the Highlands in 2007 includes \$1.9 million for the four state Highlands region. Highlands local governments collected over \$125 million in 2007 in open space taxes that can be used for open space and recreation projects. It is clear that the combined and coordinated efforts of public agencies and nonprofits will be required to protect the essential natural and recreational resources of the Highlands.

### **Coastal Zone**

The State's 127 miles of Atlantic coastline together with the 83 miles of shoreline of Delaware and Raritan Bays, contain estuaries, rivers, beaches and wetlands that provide abundant opportunities for recreation and tourism. As a peninsula, New Jersey offers residents and visitors a wide variety of water resources for sailing, boating, fishing, swimming, hunting, canoeing and birding. The Atlantic Ocean, Barnegat, Delaware and Raritan bays and coastal rivers such as the Toms and Mullica provide the setting for these activities. Tidal wetlands provide breeding and nursery habitat for fish and shellfish and provide flood control, pollution abatement and have tremendous natural resource values. More than 50 species of fish and shellfish support a thriving commercial and recreational fishery that contributes to more than \$750 million a year to New Jersey's economy. Tourism in New Jersey's coastal communities is a multibillion industry. The phenomenal economic power of the Jersey shore does not stop at the beach or boardwalk. Economic impact studies performed in Cape May County document the importance of ecotourism to the local Cape May economy. There is no place in the United States with the concentration of certain species of migrating raptors in the fall or shorebirds that stop along the County's Delaware Bayshore in the spring. New Jersey has spent \$35.5 million in Green Acres funds to preserve almost 11,000 acres in the Coastal zone between 2004 and 2007. Other coastal highlights include the Coastal Estuarine Land Conservation Program, Barnegat Bay and Delaware Bay National Estuary Programs and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service's ongoing expansion of the Cape May and Forsythe National Wildlife Refuges. However,

some of the most sensitive coastal ecosystems are also the most heavily used recreational resources in the state. Atlantic, Cape May, Monmouth and Ocean Counties saw an increase of almost 86,000 people between 2000 and 2006 and over 69,000 residential building permits issued during the same period. Coastal municipalities can see their summer population double and even triple. These communities continue to see the teardowns of existing homes with larger homes being constructed. 1.8 million people visited Island Beach and Cape May State Park in 2006. Another 657,000 used the State's four marinas. Public access to the water remains an issue in some coastal communities, and the need for adequate parking and related facilities is increasing. As more people engage in that quintessential New Jersey summer activity, going down the shore, it becomes increasingly important to preserve and enhance public access. Access to tidal waterways and their shores are being threatened by continued development. The need for adequate public access is more than a luxury, it is a necessity and a legal right under the Public Trust Doctrine. In light of the importance of the rights protected by the Public Trust Doctrine and the constant development pressures threatening to reduce public access to tidal waterways, the NJDEP's Coastal Management Program proposed new rules and amendments to existing coastal management and permit rules in 2006. These proposed rules will ensure the public's rights to access tidal waters continue to be protected and that public facilities such as parking and restrooms are available to provide a realistic and meaningful public recreation opportunity.

### **Historic Resources**

That New Jersey has consistently identified the protection of its historic heritage in previous SCORPs should not be a surprise. As one of the 13 original colonies, the landscape of New Jersey is steeped in American history. New Jersey's role in the American Revolution was pivotal as more battles and skirmishes occurred in New Jersey than in any other colony during the war. Monmouth and Princeton Battlefield State Parks are both testaments and memorials to this fact. The Division of Parks and Forestry is the steward of 57 historic sites and districts which attracted over 1.1 million visitors in 2006. These historic sites are part of the 1,601 sites that are listed on the New Jersey and National Register of Historic Sites. New Jersey's Historic Preservation Office provides guidance and technical assistance to individuals, organizations and government agencies in the identification, evaluation and protection of historic resources. The New Jersey Historic Trust was created in 1967 to promote the preservation of historic resources by supporting local government and nonprofit historic preservation efforts. Since 2000, the Trust has awarded nearly \$44

million to help preserve 273 sites. The relationship between open space and historic sites and landscape preservation remains a theme the historic preservation efforts in New Jersey. Local governments can dedicate portions of an open space tax for historic preservation projects. Working to link Revolutionary War sites, New Jersey continues to work with the National Park Service as part of Crossroads of the American Revolution project and has provided \$41 million in Green Acres funding since 2000. The relationship between historic reservation, open space, recreation and tourism creates opportunities that demand it be a statewide planning issue.

### **Pinelands**

The National Parks and Recreation Act of 1978 created the Pinelands National Reserve and, with the subsequent establishment of the Pinelands Commission in 1979, New Jersey has been reaping the benefits of the preservation and growth management of this 1.1 million acre region. The Pinelands Protection Act, administered by the Pinelands Commission, has provided the framework for the preservation and protection of natural resources and traditional lifestyles while allowing sustainable development. The Pinelands landscape is a patchwork of pine and oak forests containing an aquifer with 17 trillion gallons of water, five major river systems, two of which, the Maurice River and three of its tributaries, and the Great Egg Harbor River have been inducted into the Wild and Scenic Rivers System. The Pinelands also supports a rich diversity of plants and wildlife species and thriving cranberry and blueberry industries. The Pinelands are an enormous recreation asset with camping, hiking, canoeing, fishing, hunting and birding, among some of the activities that occur in the Pinelands. The State has several major open space holdings in the Pinelands. The State has preserved over 205,000 acres in the Pinelands with Green Acres funding and has committed \$51 million in Green Acres funds for Pinelands land preservation projects between 2000 and 2007 but there are many areas that still require protection. Of the original Section 502 acreage identified for preservation, 30,000 acres remain to be preserved. Both the Pinelands Development Credit Program and the Limited Practical Use Program complement public land acquisition programs. The protection of the Pinelands has been a feature of New Jersey's SCORP planning for decades. The permanent protection of Pinelands resources was a fundamental principle mandated by the Pinelands Protection Act. Only continued comprehensive regional planning can sustain the Pinelands and ensure the vision of protecting critical resources and growth.

## *Natural Heritage Priority Sites*

Natural Heritage Priority Sites are sites identified by the Department's Office of Natural Lands Management (ONLM) as areas that contain some of the best remaining habitat for rare species and ecological communities in the State. ONLM uses the information found in its Natural Heritage Database to identify these sites. The boundaries for Natural Heritage Priority Sites are developed to encompass critical habitat for the rare species or ecological communities. Often the boundaries extend to include additional buffer lands that should be managed to protect the habitat. Each of the current 414 Natural Heritage Priority Sites is categorized as either a standard site or a macrosite. Standard sites are smaller in size, usually less than 3200 acres in size, while macrosites are larger. Currently there are 385 standard sites and 29 macrosites. It is not unusual to find one or more standard sites contained within the boundaries of a macrosite. The protection of New Jersey's biodiversity is dependent upon the acquisition and preservation of New Jersey's Natural Heritage Priority sites. Of the 385 standard sites, at least 218 are unprotected, while 167 of the standard sites occur at least partially on State public open space lands.

**Policy:** It shall be the policy of the State of New Jersey to continue the protection of State Resource Areas through land preservation, land use planning, participation in regional projects, promotion of smart growth policies and continued funding and planning assistance to local governments and conservation groups.

**Issue: Greenways**

The Green Acres Program's Mission Statement speaks to the significance of greenways in the State's open space and recreation planning. Greenways such as the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park and Patriots Path are examples of greenways that have been serving the public for many years. Greenways are as an economical and efficient solution to the need for public open space throughout New Jersey. Greenways can offer close to home recreational activities such as walking, running, biking and birding. Those associated with water can provide canoeing and fishing opportunities. Greenways also can protect environmentally sensitive areas, link public open space areas, provide wildlife habitat and preserve community character. The Green Acres Program continues to support greenways statewide and has provided over \$75 million for greenway projects since 2000.

Open space and recreation planners now have a powerful new tool available to aid them in protecting important natural, recreational and historic resources in their communities. Garden State Greenways, created by the New Jersey Conservation Foundation (NJCF), is a interactive map based system that provides a statewide vision for land preservation in New Jersey. NJCF has had an interest in conducting a statewide greenways plan that dates back to the early 1990s. The Green Acres Program was also interested in showing land preservation needs and progress made in meeting those needs.

Other organizations supported that idea of a statewide greenways vision. In 1991, the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation provided an award to NJCF to "develop a coordinated, shared vision of a Jersey Greenways Network". The F.M. Kirby Foundation supported an awarded to NJCF that resulted in the inclusion of rail bed corridors into the emerging greenways vision. In 1995 and 1996, NJCF received grants from New Jersey Department of Transportation to produce a greenways plan for New Jersey that incorporated municipal and regional greenways plans. The Green Acres Program also provided funding support.

In 2004, Rutgers University's Walton Center of Remote Sensing and Spatial Analysis became a partner in the devlopment of the Garden State Greenways. The Center hosts the website [www.gardenstategreenways.org](http://www.gardenstategreenways.org) and has been responsible for making the Garden State Greenways available to a much wider audience.

The project became a map-based vision for a potential statewide system of parks, natural areas, farmland and historic sites, linked together by greenways and trails. A set of accompanying Geographic Information System (GIS) maps illustrated the vision. The interconnected system of open space, or ‘green infrastructure’ was envisioned to lessen the environmental and social impacts of sprawl and help to maintain the quality of life in New Jersey. To accomplish this vision, Garden State Greenways has eight goals:

- Establishment of parks, trails or other protected lands within walking distance of every New Jersey resident.
- Protection of New Jersey’s critical natural resources such as aquifers, surface water, rare and endangered species habitat, and prime agricultural soils.
- Protection of large, contiguous tracts of undeveloped land.
- Protection of large, contiguous tracts of farmland for the long-term viability of agriculture and the maintenance of scenic and cultural landscapes.
- Protection of parks, natural lands, farmland and historic sites, to maintain historic character, visual context and interpretive value.
- Linking New Jersey’s public open space lands with greenways.
- Granting public access where appropriate, to lands to allow the public to benefit from scenic and recreational opportunities.
- Coordination of state, local and private preservation as well as land use planning efforts, around shared GIS data and maps.

**Policy:**

It shall be the policy of the State of New Jersey to promote greenway planning and the use of Garden State Greenways by local governments, public agencies, conservation organizations and the public.

**Issue: Stewardship**

Preserving open space and providing recreation opportunities are only part of the State's responsibility. This responsibility is also shared with local governments and conservation organizations. Caring for the lands and resources after they are put into public ownership is equally important. Over the past 45 years, New Jersey citizens have invested \$2.7 billion in state funds and millions more in local tax dollars for land preservation and park and recreation facilities. However, like any endowment, these valuable assets must be properly managed, given care and oversight, replenished and renewed. In order for these lands to sustain the open space and recreation needs of New Jersey, now and into the future, excellent stewardship is needed.

Both state and local governments face pressing challenges to meet the goal of proper stewardship of the public's lands and recreational resources. Among these challenges are increasing development and land consumption, limited fiscal resources, increased public land acreage to be managed, decline in forest health due to fragmentation and intrusions of invasive species. Pressures derived from increased recreational demand and visitation are also factors, as well as global climate change. Over many years, funds for the operation and capital needs in recreation areas have fallen short of the needs. The 2006 referendum for capital funding on state public land will help to address this issue. Capital projects for fiscal years 2006 and 2007 include nearly \$30 million in funds from the Corporate Business Tax and the Garden State Preservation Trust for 52 projects at state parks, forests, historic sites and wildlife management areas. Some local governments use open space taxes for development and maintenance expenditures associated with their park systems. In these cases, dedicated funding has given these jurisdictions some predictability and flexibility to meet the needs to acquire open spaces, maintain their recreation infrastructure and meet the needs of visitors. The Division of Parks and Forestry has initiated a visitor survey for state parks and forests to determine public recreation needs at these facilities.

The Corporate Business Tax, which will increase from \$15 million a year to \$32 million beginning in 2016 will be directed to working on a \$413 million backlog of stewardship projects. Focus areas for the funds will be on improvements in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, public access improvements for hunting, fishing, boating and hiking, urban parks development, new interpretive facilities and the use of green design elements in construction projects and the implementation of the States Wildlife Action Plan.

The control of invasive species, particularly plants, is a major stewardship issue in New Jersey. More than one thousand nonindigenous plants species have become established in New Jersey. Fortunately not all of them have harmful or invasive qualities. But some of these species are very harmful and crowd out native plant species, altering the structure of natural plant communities, disrupting ecosystem functions and degrading recreational opportunities. While statewide eradication of invasive species is impossible, site specific removal and restoration is possible and is occurring throughout New Jersey.

The continued illegal use of off-highway vehicles (OHV) in New Jersey remains another serious stewardship concern. The state currently has a policy that prohibits OHV use on State public open space lands but damage to natural resources on these lands continues. The State acquired a 235 acre site in Gloucester County as a possible site for an OHV park. The State is currently in the planning and design phase to determine the site feasibility in more detail. The State is also working with a nonprofit group to establish an OHV park in Ocean County. The lack of a large parcel of land without environmental constraints and concerns of local officials and the public makes siting such a facility difficult. Given the levels of OHV use statewide, there is a need for at least two OHV parks. The State set a goal of establishing two OHV parks by 2005. Due to the complex issues associated with ORV use, this remains an on going goal for the State to achieve. The State continues to seek opportunities to provide OHV users with safe, legal places to ride in New Jersey. Besides providing recreational benefit, these sites will enable the NJDEP to implement stronger protections on land currently subject to illegal OHV use.

In 2006, the Garden State Preservation Trust hosted a conference on New Jersey stewardship issues attended by a wide variety of public and private open space, parks and recreation, farmland and historic preservation interests. The conference put forth ideas for consideration on stewardship issues such as:

- Capital projects funding for state parks, forests, wildlife management areas and historic sites,
- Funding to address damage and to control white tail deer and invasive species,
- Stewardship grants for soil and water conservation projects or preserved farmland,

- **Establishment of a Garden State Easement Trust to monitor local conservation easements,**
- **Creation of a Forest Preservation Program to preserve private forest lands with easements,**
- **Policy mandating funding for stewardship endowments when land is acquired,**
- **Funding to develop stewardship partnerships for urban open space and recreation projects**

**The common thread for all of these issues and others are policies to require stewardship consideration for projects and funding for stewardship activities. The Garden State Preservation Act does not comprehensively address stewardship. It is clear that either through future legislation or other methods, stewardship will need to be a component of future funding for land preservation, parks and recreation and historic projects.**

**As part of its stewardship efforts, the NJDEP will undertake regulatory, legislative and programmatic initiatives to protect the State's natural resources and set priorities for the protection of the most critical natural and historic resources on State public open space and recreation lands.**

**Several initiatives that NJDEP has targeted for 2007-2010 and expects will have significant and tangible impact on its ability to protect and steward the State's natural resources include: working with the Legislature to develop incentives under the forest stewardship program to reward efforts by landowners to manage healthy forests and ecosystems; promulgation of regulations for the protection of threatened and endangered species habitat, and for governance of the natural resource restoration program; and implementation of the Wildlife Action Plan to identify and protect species and habitats of greatest conservation need. In addition, NJDEP will adopt new Flood Hazard Area Protection Act regulations will be adopted to preserve the natural and beneficial functions of floodplains and better protect people and property.**

**In terms of providing protections to the most critical natural resources on state-owned lands, NJDEP will launch a biodiversity inventory program on priority habitats on state parks and forests, natural areas, Natural Lands Trust preserves, and wildlife management areas. The purpose of the inventory will be to identify natural resources on these lands that**

are most critical and pressing for protection and NJDEP will work with private funders and the nonprofit sector to leverage State resources towards those priorities. To address the pressing issue of controlling invasive nonindigenous plant species on state lands, NJDEP will identify critical areas of impact where invasive plant species are out competing native vegetation and implement appropriate control measures, such as initiatives underway to control Japanese sedge in Island Beach State Park. Similarly, NJDEP will review the capability of the Statewide Land and Building Management System program to create a tracking system of land easements for enforcement purposes and develop a user friendly inventory of New Jersey's most valuable historic assets to inform and expedite public and private development decision making.

**Policy:**

It shall be the policy of the State of New Jersey to provide funding for the operation and maintenance and restoration of State public open space and recreation areas and to provide funding to local governments and conservation organizations for the development and rehabilitation of park and recreation areas.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Action Plan**

The successful implementation of the policies of this plan depends on outlining a plan framework through which strategies can be formulated and orchestrated to advance New Jersey's open space and recreation program. Organized according to the issues and policies previously presented, the Action Plan offers a basis for future direction. The 2007 Priorities and Action Plan outlines the policy priorities of the NJDEP and initiatives that are planned and underway to address those priorities. The purpose of this three year plan is to provide direction in a single document for NJDEP managers and staff and to articulate the agency's policy direction to partner organizations, interest groups and the public.

There are four policies in the Action Plan, which relate directly to open space and recreation issues in New Jersey. They are: Stewardship, Clean and Plentiful Water, Sustainable Growth and Enhancement and Restoration. Actions from these policies have been incorporated into the SCORP Action Plan.

### **Issue: Land Preservation**

#### **Actions**

- 1. Continue to provide Green Acres funding for the acquisition of land for state parks, forests, wildlife management areas, preserves and natural areas. (NJDEP)**
- 2. Continue to provide funding to local governments and conservation organizations for open space preservation projects. (NJDEP, local governments, conservation organizations)**
- 3. Focus open space preservation projects on protecting water resources and biodiversity. (NJDEP, local governments and conservation organizations)**
- 4. Support federal open space preservation projects at the Forsythe, Wallkill River, Cape May and Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuges and the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area. (NJDEP, local governments, conservation organizations)**
- 5. Encourage local governments to utilize the Municipal Land Use Law to preserve open space through environmental ordinances. (NJDEP, local governments, environmental commissions)**
- 6. Continue to evaluate the conservation and recreation potential of state owned lands such as hospitals and federal surplus lands. (NJDEP, State authorities and agencies)**

7. **Promote the preservation of farmland through acquisition and cooperative projects. (NJDEP, NJ Department of Agriculture, County Agricultural Development Boards)**
8. **Continue to provide programs such as the Green Acres Tax Exemption Program as a way to preserve private open space and recreation areas. (NJDEP, local governments, private providers)**
9. **Seek the permanent protection of privately held watershed lands. (NJDEP, State Legislature, water companies)**
10. **Promote the retention of private open space and recreation areas through planning, education and other methods. (NJDEP, private providers)**

## **Issue: Recreation**

### **Actions**

1. **Continue to acquire land for recreational open space. (NJDEP, local governments, conservation organizations)**
2. **Continue Green Acres funding for the development of recreational facilities on municipal, county and state parkland. (NJDEP, local governments)**
3. **Foster greater interaction between local government recreation agencies and school boards on shared facility use. (NJDEP, local governments, local school boards)**
4. **Encourage municipalities to utilize the provisions of the Municipal Land Use Law to establish park and recreation facilities as part of the municipal master plan process. (NJDEP, local governments, environmental commissions)**
5. **Continue the Green Acres Tax Exemption Program in order to provide for public access to private lands and recreation facilities. (NJDEP, local governments, private recreation providers, private land owners)**
6. **Implement the recommendations of the New Jersey Trails Plans through funding, planning and technical assistance programs. (NJDEP, NJDOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Programs, federal and local governments, trail user organizations and conservation organizations)**
7. **Continue to work to establish two OHV parks. (NJDEP)**

## **Issue: Urban Open Space and Recreation**

### **Actions:**

1. Continue local government funding for urban open space and recreation projects. (NJDEP, local governments)
2. Continue funding conservation organization projects in urban centers. (NJDEP, conservation organizations)
3. Continue the preservation of land for conservation and recreation purposes in urbanized counties by the State. (NJDEP)
4. Foster partnerships between urban communities and nonprofit groups on recreation programming and the operation of park and recreation areas. (NJDEP, local governments, community groups)
5. Encourage urban municipalities to establish public open space and recreation areas in coordination with redevelopment initiatives. (NJDEP, local governments, economic development authorities)
6. Continue the preservation of priority sites identified in the NY/NJ Harbor Estuary Comprehensive Management Plan. (NJDEP, local governments, conservation groups)
7. Design, build and staff Trenton Capitol State Park System and Paterson Great Falls Parks. (NJDEP)
8. Finance and develop the comprehensive management and development plan for Historic New Bridge landing. (NJDEP)
9. Implement urban river initiatives that have components of public access, urban habitat and forest stewardship, restoration and partnerships. (NJDEP, local governments, conservation groups)

## **Issue: State Resource Areas**

### **Actions:**

1. Continue to preserve important natural resource areas of the Pinelands. (NJDEP, Pinelands Commission)
2. Provide funding for local governments and conservation organizations to acquire lands for parks and develop recreation facilities in the Pinelands. (NJDEP, local governments, Pinelands Commission, conservation groups)
3. Ensure that open space and recreation projects are consistent with the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan. (NJDEP, Pinelands Commission)

4. Continue to protect important water resource and other natural resources in the Highlands. (NJDEP, Highlands Council, local governments, conservation organizations)
5. Utilize funds from the Forest Legacy Program and the Federal Highlands Act to protect lands in the Highlands. (NJDEP, United States Forest Service)
6. Continue to provide Green Acres funding for state coastal and waterfront recreation areas. (NJDEP)
7. Continue to provide Green Acres funding to local government and conservation organizations for coastal and waterfront projects. (NJDEP, local governments, conservation organizations, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration)
8. Continue to provide Green Acres funding for state land, local government and conservation organization acquisition projects for the Delaware Bayshore, Barnegat Bay Watershed and the Hudson-Raritan Estuary. (NJDEP)
9. Continue to provide Green Acres funding for the protection of Natural Heritage Priority Sites. (NJDEP)
10. Continue to preserve and protect State Resource Areas through planning, regulation and acquisition efforts. (NJDEP, local governments, regional agencies, conservation organizations)
11. Promote ecotourism to provide sustainable economic development and protect important natural, recreation and historic resources. (NJDEP, New Jersey Department of Commerce and Economic Development, local governments)

### **Issue: Greenways**

#### **Actions:**

1. Promote the use of the *Garden State Greenways* statewide. (NJDEP, New Jersey Conservation Foundation, local governments, conservation organizations)
2. Support greenway projects through Green Acres local government funding and technical assistance. (NJDEP, local governments, environmental commissions, conservation organizations)
3. Coordinate greenway plans with the New Jersey Trails Plan. (NJDEP, New Jersey Trails Council, local governments, trail user organizations and conservation organizations)
4. Encourage local governments to adopt greenways and trails as part of municipal master plans. (NJDEP, local governments, conservation organizations, environmental commissions)

## **Issue: Stewardship**

### **Actions:**

- 1. Continue Green Acres funding for local governments and conservation organization for park and recreation development projects. (NJDEP, local governments, conservation organizations)**
- 2. Implement New Jersey's newly created stable source of funding for improvement and maintenance at State public open space and recreation areas. (NJDEP)**
- 3. Work with the New Legislature to authorize a public referendum for land preservation and park and recreation development. (NJDEP)**
- 4. Increase public access to public open space and recreation areas. (NJDEP, local governments and conservation organizations).**
- 5. Examine existing natural and historic resource programs to determine new ways to use resources more effectively to improve stewardship, restoration enhancement and access to natural, recreation and historic resources. (NJDEP)**

## **Chapter 6**

### **Project Priorities Selection**

The selection of project priorities for the preservation of open space and the development of outdoor recreation facilities is a crucial feature of the 2008 SCORP. Through the identification of priorities, the issues presented in this document can be resolved. New Jersey is fortunate that there is an ongoing effort by all levels of government and by conservation organizations to identify areas and regions of significance in the state. The planning issue this SCORP addresses is the preservation and protection of a sufficient quantity of open space in the right place and of the proper type to meet the present and future natural resource, open space and recreation needs of New Jerseyans. The pace of development in New Jersey continues to consume over 15,000 acres a year, and as a result, the State will continue to lose opportunities to protect important natural resources to provide a balanced, diversified open space and recreation system.

The state, local government and nonprofit funding priority systems presented in this chapter are based on information obtained from state agencies, county and municipal governments, conservation organizations, civic groups, and the general public. In addition, regional planning projects and studies by the New Jersey Conservation Foundation, Highlands Council and the Pinelands Commission have provided invaluable information on issues and areas of significance. The issues presented, along with the priority systems, provide a policy framework to determine the projects funded with the resources available and result in an effective and coordinated implementation program. The systems are reviewed on an annual basis and revisions are made on an as needed basis to reflect emerging trends, issues and priorities and to improve the evaluation criteria for certain factors that involve technical judgments.

The 2008 SCORP has been prepared to provide guidance in the disbursement of limited funds. While the development of park and recreation facilities is an important part of New Jersey's recreation efforts, it is the preservation of open space that continues to be the focus of the State's funding priorities. The driving force behind this long standing New Jersey policy is two fold. One is based on environmental science. It is recognized that one of the many attributes of open space is its considerable environmental protection abilities. Whether it is the protection of surface water and groundwater, forest lands, air quality or

wildlife habitat, open space plays a major role in maintaining environmental quality in New Jersey. The protection of natural resources, particularly water resources, is critical to the long term economic health of New Jersey.

The second force behind the State's open space policy is grounded in public opinion. New Jerseyans have continually expressed their support for open space preservation and a desire for the State to carry out a comprehensive program of open space preservation. There is a strong connection in the minds of state residents between open space and the quality of life. The passage of ten Green Acres bond issues, the Garden State Preservation Trust Act, and 252 local government open space tax referendums is substantial evidence of public support.

Public opinion polling conducted in January 2007 for the New Jersey Conservation Foundation, Trust for Public Land and the Nature Conservancy confirm New Jersey's residents support for open space and recreation. In addition to supporting continued State funding for land preservation and recreation projects, the statewide survey results included:

- 91% believe that New Jersey needs parks in cities for livable neighborhoods and a good quality of life
- 85% believe land preservation and the protection of water resources is critical to New Jersey's economy
- 84% believe that it is critical to protect additional parks and recreation areas before the State is completely developed
- 60% think New Jersey is developing too fast, 27% think the pace of development is about right and 8% think it is too slow.

Smart growth policies by the State to direct and channel growth to existing urban and regional centers and established communities will help preserve open space. Statewide open space preservation must occur in concert with housing, transportation and economic development projects in order to successfully implement smart growth initiatives.

This is not to suggest that the development of park and recreation facilities are not a priority. Planning professionals recognize that park and recreation funding is a key feature of smart growth. Park and recreation projects support smart growth efforts by improving

the quality of life in developed and developing communities. The challenge confronting New Jersey is meeting both recreation and open space needs in a balanced manner while striving for natural resource protection and economic growth.

Recognizing the value and effectiveness of the public participation process, there has been a strong commitment to involve the public in these initiatives. Planning has been a key component of these initiatives. The 2008 SCORP represents a concerted effort by public agencies and open space and recreation interest groups to produce a sound plan to guide New Jersey's open space and recreation activities.

The primary basis for the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's policies regarding the allocation of LWCF monies throughout the state lies in this policy plan. The LWCF is an important segment of New Jersey's open space and recreation program. In 2006, New Jersey had an unmet funding need for open space and parks and recreation facilities of more than \$756 million based on funding requests and funding provided. Despite having one of the strongest state open space and recreation funding programs in the nation, New Jersey has demonstrated a consistent funding short fall in meeting its public conservation and recreation needs. Land preservation and recreation projects costs continue to escalate. New Jersey has some of the highest per acre land values in the country. The LWCF translates into more land being preserved and more recreation facilities built for public use. The LWCF has had a substantial impact on the New Jersey park and recreation scene. A total of 300 projects have received LWCF monies representing an investment of over \$100 million since the program's inception. The LWCF has been used to the great public benefit of New Jerseyans.

In order for the State to address the concerns identified in the 2008 SCORP in an equitable manner, funding is divided into state, local government, and nonprofit assistance programs. Funding for local government projects consists of grants and low interest loans and for nonprofit projects, matching grants. Local governments and nonprofit projects are further divided into acquisition and development. State projects are direct acquisition by the Green Acres Program. All programs are funded through the Garden State Preservation Trust. State and local government projects also receive funding from federal funding assistance such as the LWCF and Forest Legacy Program.

The Green Acres Program accepts applications throughout the year, and funding is awarded each April and October depending on funding availability. Correspondence inviting participation in the current funding round is forwarded to each of the State's 21 counties and 566 municipalities and to over 150 eligible nonprofit conservation organizations.

As part of the invitational process, Green Acres conducts a statewide series of informational workshops. Typically, workshops are held each year and are co-sponsored by the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions, New Jersey League of Municipalities, New Jersey Recreation and Park Association, and the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs. Notification of these workshops is transmitted via a brochure mailed to all counties and municipalities. In addition, brochures are sent to environmental commissions, park and recreation departments and, conservation organizations. Information is also posted on the Green Acres website, [www.nj.gov/dep/greenacres](http://www.nj.gov/dep/greenacres). The general public is also welcomed to attend. The workshops cover a variety of current New Jersey open space, recreation and planning issues. The local government and nonprofit application process is reviewed as is the state land acquisition program. The role of the LWCF is also discussed.

Green Acres staff provide technical assistance and public information at a variety of forums. From municipal council meetings, speaking engagements and conferences, staff continually offer input on open space and recreation issues in New Jersey.

Once an application has been received, each application is categorized according to type and entered into the computer data information system. A review period then ensues, during which each application is reviewed for completeness, project sites not seen prior to application submittal are visited, additional information is solicited as needed, and an individual pre-ranking in accordance with the appropriate project priority system is performed. The next step entails ranking, with each proposal competing only against others within the same category. Information reviewed and analyzed include service area, population, need, cost, recreation potential, environmental impact and natural resource value and assigned a score. For staged projects, each phase is ranked separately as an entire independent project.

**The allocation of LWCF money among local project proposals is limited to the projects receiving ranking scores justifying state or federal funding.**

**The list of potential applicants eligible to receive LWCF assistance is further refined by a number of factors:**

- **Future use and management of the project area may deem a specific proposal ineligible for federal funds.**
- **The projected schedule for completion of a project, or the complexity of its scope, may indicate an extended project period and thus render a particular proposal less desirable for LWCF assistance than other proposals.**
- **The past performance record of an applicant is also evaluated in the LWCF grant selection process.**

**In all instances, efforts are always made to select LWCF projects which promise to be of regional or statewide significance or which best exemplify one or more of the policies set forth in New Jersey's 2008 SCORP.**

**The Green Acres State Land program serves as the land acquisition agent for the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection. It acquires land for state parks, forests, natural areas, preserves, historic sites and wildlife management areas. Recommendations for acquisition are made by the Department's Division of Fish and Wildlife and the Division of Parks and Forestry, and the Office of Natural Lands Management. Recommendations for preservation are also made by conservation organizations, local governments, the New Jersey Legislature and the general public. Lands are also brought to the attention of the State through property offerings of sale or donation by property owners.**

**Section 502 funds are combined with Green Acres State land funds to purchase lands within the Pinelands National Reserve. Project selection is governed by conformance with the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan and requires the approval of the Pinelands Commission. Priorities are developed with public participation and are reviewed by government agencies and interest groups. LWCF monies are also used with state land monies for acquisition projects throughout New Jersey. Project funding decisions are based on a variety of natural, recreational, historic and administrative concerns and criteria. In**

2002, legislation directed the Green Acres Program to give priority in its state land projects to lands that protect water resources such as aquifers, wetlands and flood plains. Green Acres developed new criteria to reflect these legislative requirements.

This legislation requires the Green Acres Program to give extra weight to certain environmental factors in making acquisition decisions. It requires Green Acres to utilize criteria which accord three times the weight to acquisitions that would protect water resources and two times the weight to acquisitions that would protect flood-prone areas as compared to other criteria in the priority ranking process.

A number of parameters influence acquisition decisions. For example, Green Acres will generally only pursue acquisition of a property where the owner is a willing seller. Green Acres can only acquire properties to the extent it has monies to do so. A related consideration is the obligation for fiscal responsibility including avoiding over payment for properties and avoiding incurring fiscal liabilities. Such liabilities may be associated with contamination or structures whose restoration or maintenance would be costly.

Other determining considerations are the conditions established by funding sources. The appropriation bills which authorize the NJDEP to utilize Garden State Preservation Trust monies for land acquisition typically direct the funding to specific “project areas” and designate the funding level for each project area. These project areas may be geographically based such as “Pinelands” or based on a specific need like “Urban Parks”. Green Acres is obligated to adhere to the funding levels appropriated for these project areas. The necessity to identify an agency or organization willing to accept management responsibility for the property is also an important consideration. There are legal considerations as well, such as ensuring that clear title to the property can be obtained.

**In acquiring land for the State, Green Acres uses the following nine step project process:**

**Step 1 - Project Approval/Funding:** Project areas are submitted to the Garden State Preservation Trust for approval. The New Jersey Legislature appropriates the project funds. Amounts for funding for each project area are based on of policy initiatives, ongoing projects, funding demand and land costs.

**Step 2 - Project Identification:** Green Acres receives about 200 offers to sell land to the State a year from landowners statewide. Green Acres also targets land in a project area. Additionally lands are recommended for preservation by the Division of Fish and Wildlife, Division of the Parks and Forestry or the Natural Lands Trust as well as by conservation organizations and other interested parties.

**Step 3 - Project Evaluation:** Land offers are mapped in the Green Acres GIS open space map. Project parcels are evaluated using the GIS portion of the State Land Acquisition Priority System. The offers are then submitted for agency review.

**Step 4 – Division Review:** The offers are circulated to the Division of Parks and Forestry, Division of Fish and Wildlife and the Natural Lands Trust to ascertain potential ownership and management interest. If an offering is of interest, then it will be further evaluated by the Green Acres Program using the Priority System. The combined point value derived from both evaluations will represent the final point score for project. Information on parcels where there is no State interest is shared with local governments and conservation organizations. Opportunities for cooperative management are explored as appropriate. Lands with high water resource values but no State interest receive a second review to determine possible preservation alternatives.

**Step 5 - Project Assignment:** Once interest has been shown by an agency the project is assigned to a Green Acres project manager. Assignments are based on the geographic location of the property. Project management staff are organized into the following six teams:

**Central Team:** Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex and Monmouth counties

**North East Team:** Bergen, Morris, Passaic and Somerset counties

**North West Team:** Sussex and Warren counties

**South Central Team: Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Gloucester and Ocean counties**

**South Team: Cape May, Cumberland and Salem counties**

**Park Development and Urban Acquisition Team: Hudson, Essex and Union counties, statewide park development and acquisition in designated urban centers and communities.**

**These teams are responsible for state land, local government, and nonprofit project management. The project manager contacts the land owner to begin the state land acquisition process.**

**Step 6 - Technical Work: The project managers order title and two appraisals for properties with an estimated value in excess of \$250,000. Preliminary site assessment work to investigate previous land uses and the potential for hazardous waste concerns is preformed by Green Acres staff. Appraisals are reviewed by Green Acres appraisal staff to determine the fair market value of a property.**

**Step 7 - Purchase Decision / Purchase Offer: Upon the completion of Step 6, the project managers can continue the negotiation and make a purchase offer based upon satisfactory terms to the State and the property owner. A contract of sale is prepared by a Deputy Attorney General upon the acceptance of the purchase offer by the property owner. At this time, a survey of the property is ordered and when completed reviewed by Green Acres survey staff.**

**Steps 8 and 9 - Closing and Property Assignment: After the survey review is completed, closing occurs between the Green Acres Program and the property owner. After closing, the property is assigned to either Division of Parks and Forestry, Division of Fish and Wildlife, or the Natural Lands Trust for operation and management. In some cases, due to a lack of State interest, Green Acres may be assigned a property pending eventual transfer to a managing agency. In cooperative projects where state land acquisition funds were used, a local government or conservation organization may manage the land.**

**The Green Acres state land priority system evaluation process is based on 11 factors. Each property under consideration is evaluated with respect to each of these factors, and a number of points is assigned for each factor.**

**Factor I. Groundwater Protection**

**A. Wellhead Protection Area Water Supply – 2 points maximum**

**1. Feature evaluated: Whether, or the extent to which, the property is located within a Wellhead Protection Area (WHPA) delineated by the New Jersey Geological Survey (NJGS)**

**2. Information source: NJGS WHPA coverage in the Department's GIS**

**3. Points are assigned as follows:**

**a. If the grid cell data from the GIS is converted to a grid cell format, which each grid cell measuring 100 feet by 100 feet; and points are assigned to each of a property's grid cells, on a grid cell basis lies within or intersects with a WHPA - 2 points**

**b. If the grid cell lies outside any WHPA – 0 points**

**B. Groundwater Recharge Area – 5 points maximum**

**1. Feature evaluated: Groundwater recharge capacity of the property's grid cells relative to that of other grid cells in the Watershed Management Area (WMA), as established by the NJGS**

**2. Information source: NJGS Groundwater Ranking Recharge Area by WMA GIS coverage in the Department's GIS**

**3. Points are assigned, as follows:**

**a. If the grid cell is ranked in the top third of all grid cells in the WMA – 5 points**

**b. If the grid cell is ranked in the middle third of all grid cells in the WMA – 3 points**

- c. If the grid cell is ranked in the lowest third of all grid cells in the WMA – 0 points

**C. Aquifer Productivity Statewide – 3 points maximum**

- 1. **Feature evaluated: The NJGS Aquifer Productivity Ranking**
- 2. **Information source: NJGS Aquifer Rank GIS coverage**
- 3. **Points are assigned, as follows:**
  - a. **If the grid cell has an Aquifer Productivity Ranking of A, B or C (100+ gallons per minute [gpm]) – 3 points**
  - b. **If the grid cell has an Aquifer Productivity Ranking of D (25 to 100 gpm) – 2 points**
  - c. **If the grid cell has an Aquifer Productivity Ranking of E (less than 25 gpm) – 1 point**
  - d. **If the grid cell has no identified aquifer productivity – 0 points**

**Factor II. Surface Water**

**A. Public Surface Water Supply Watersheds (intakes) – 3 points maximum**

- 1. **Feature evaluated: Distance from an existing water supply intake**
- 2. **Information source: NJDEP GIS**
- 3. **Points are assigned to a grid cell, as follows:**

a. If the grid cell is located within 300 feet of the edge of a water body used for public water supply purposes; and if it is located either no further than 1,500 feet upstream of an existing public water supply intake, or no further than 500 feet downstream of an existing public water supply intake (or above a downstream dam that is closer than 500 feet to the intake) – 3 points

b. If the grid cell is located within 300 feet of the edge of a water body used for public water supply purposes; and if it is located more than 1500 feet upstream from an existing public water supply intake – 2 points

c. If the grid cell is located more than 300 feet from the edge of a water body used for public surface water supply, but is located within a watershed that serves an existing public water supply intake – 1 point

d. If the grid cell is not located within a watershed that serves an existing public water supply intake – 0 points

**B. Watershed Lands Draining to “Special Surface Water Resources” -**  
**4 points maximum**

**1. Feature or characteristic evaluated: Proximity to a “special surface water body**

**2. Information source: NJDEP GIS**

**3. Points are assigned to a grid cell, as follows:**

a. If the grid cell is located within 300 feet of the edge of a surface water body – 1 point

b. If the grid cell is located further than 300 foot from any surface water body – 0 points

**D. Planned Public Water Supply Facility Sites – 2 points maximum**

- 1. Feature evaluated: Location in relation to a planned water supply facility site**
- 2. Information source: NJDEP State Water Supply Master Plan.**
- 3. Points are assigned as follows:**
  - a. If the grid cell is located within a planned water supply facility site – 2 points**
  - b. If the grid cell is located within a watershed which drains to a planned public water supply facility site – 1 point**
  - c. If the grid cell is not located within a watershed which drains to a planned water supply facility site – 0 points**

**Factor III. Flood-prone Areas**

**A. Flood Hazard Areas – 10 points maximum**

- 1. Feature evaluated: Location in relation to flood hazard area**
- 2. Information sources: NJDEP GIS, the New Jersey Flood Hazard Maps**
- 3. Points are assigned ll, as follows:**
  - a. If the grid cell is located within a Flood Hazard Area except within the portion of the Flood Hazard Area identified as Zone A– 10 points**
  - b. If the grid cell is located within the portion of the Flood Hazard Area identified as Zone A – 5 points**
  - c. If the grid cell is not located within a Flood Hazard Area – 0 points**

**Factor IV. Natural Resource Features**

**A. Freshwater and Saltwater Wetlands – 5 points maximum**

- 1. Feature evaluated: Location in relation to wetlands**
- 2. Information source: NJDEP GIS**

**3. Points are assigned as follows:**

- a. If the grid cell is located within wetlands and/or within a 300-foot wide wetlands buffer area adjacent to wetlands- 5 points**
- b. If the grid cell is not located within wetlands and/or within a 300-foot wide wetlands buffer area adjacent to wetlands – 0 points**

**Sub-factor B. Forests – 5 points maximum**

- 1. Feature evaluated: Presence of forests**
- 2. Information source: NJDEP GIS**

**3. Points are assigned as follows:**

- a. If the grid cell contains forestland– 5 points**
- b. If the grid cell does not contain land – 0 points**

**C. Additional Unique Resources from an Open Space Preservation, Wildlife Conservation, or Botanical or Ecological Perspective – 5 points maximum**

- 1. Feature(s) evaluated: Presence of notable natural resources, such as distinctive scenic views, old forests and exceptional wetlands from an ecological or botanical perspective**
- 2. Information sources: NJDEP staff knowledge of site.**
- 3. Criteria for assigning points: Points are assigned as follows:**
  - a. If the property has unique resources of significant value from an open space preservation, wildlife conservation, or botanical or ecological perspective – 5 points**

**b. If the property's resources are moderately important from an open space preservation, wildlife conservation, or botanical or ecological perspective – 2.5 points**

**c. If the property's resources are insignificant from an open space preservation, wildlife conservation, or botanical or ecological perspective – 0 points**

**A. Critical Habitat for Imperiled and Priority Wildlife Species Threatened Endangered Animal Species – 10 points maximum**

**1. Feature evaluated: Presence of habitat for animal species that have been determined to be endangered or threatened or classified as a species of special concern, pursuant to the Department's Endangered, Nongame and Exotic Wildlife rules at N.J.A.C. 7:25-4.**

**2. Information source: NJDEP Landscape Project Maps**

**3. Points are assigned as follows:**

**a. If the grid cell includes land or waters that are classified as habitat for an animal species that is Federally-designated as threatened or endangered, based on documented sightings of the species – 10 points**

**b. If the grid cell contains land or waters that are classified as habitat for an animal species that is State-designated as endangered, based on documented sightings of the species – 8 points**

**c. If the grid cell contains land or waters that are classified as habitat for an animal species that is State-designated as threatened, based on documented sightings of the species – 6 points**

**d. If the grid cell contains land or waters that are classified as habitat for an animal species that is State-designated as a Species of Special Concern, based on documented sightings of the species – 4 points**

**e. If the grid cell contains land or waters that are classified as habitat that appears suitable for endangered or threatened animal species, but it is unconfirmed as to whether any such species uses the habitat – 2 points**

**f. If the grid cell does not contain land or waters that are classified as containing habitat that is suitable for endangered or threatened animal species – 0 points**

**A. Natural Heritage Priority Site – 10 points maximum**

**1. Feature evaluated: Presence of a Natural Heritage Priority Site**

**2. Information source: Natural Heritage Priority Sites.**

**3. Points are assigned as follows:**

**a. If the grid cell is within or includes any portion of a Natural Heritage Priority Standard Site that is ranked B1, B2, B3 or B4 for biodiversity – 10 points**

**b. If the grid cell is within or includes any portion of a Natural Heritage Priority Standard Site that is ranked B5 for biodiversity; or is within or includes any portion of a Natural Heritage Priority Macrosite that is ranked B1, B2, B3 or B4 for biodiversity – 5 points**

**c. If the grid cell is within or includes any portion of a Natural Heritage Priority Macrosite that is ranked B5 for biodiversity – 2 points**

**d. If the grid cell is not within or does not include any portion of a Natural Heritage Priority Macrosite or Standard Site – 0 points**

**B. Occurrence of Rare Plant or Rare Ecological Community – 10 points maximum**

**1. Feature evaluated: Occurrence of a rare plant or rare ecological community**

**2. Information source: NJDEP GIS**

**3. Points are assigned as follows:**

**a. If the grid cell includes an occurrence of a rare plant or rare ecological community that is ranked S1, G1 or G2 – 10 points**

**b. If the grid cell includes an occurrence of a rare plant or rare ecological community that is ranked S2 or G3 – 8 points**

**c. If the grid cell includes an occurrence of a rare plant or rare ecological community that is ranked S3 – 3 points**

**d. If the grid cell does not include an occurrence of a rare plant or rare ecological community – 0 points**

**C. Suitability of Location for Rare Plant or Rare Ecological Community – 10 points maximum**

**1. Feature evaluated: The property's suitability as habitat for a rare plant or rare ecological community**

**2. Information sources: NJDEP Natural Heritage Database and staff assessment of property**

**3. Points are preliminarily awarded to a property pursuant to the criteria in a. below; then the number of points awarded is adjusted pursuant to the criteria in b. below to determine the number of points assigned:**

**a. Habitat suitability:**

**1) If the property includes habitat that is suitable for a rare plant or rare ecological community ranked S1, G1 or G2 – 10 points**

**2) If the property includes habitat that is suitable for a rare plant or rare ecological community ranked S2 or G3 – 8 points**

**3) If the property includes habitat that is suitable for a rare plant or rare ecological community ranked S3 – 3 points**

**4) If the property does not include habitat that is suitable for a rare plant or a rare ecological community – 0 points**

**b. Quality and extent of the habitat on the property:**

**1) If the quality or extent of the habitat on the property is assessed by ONLM to be significant for rare plants or a rare ecological community – 100 percent of the points awarded under a. above**

**2) If the quality or extent of the habitat on the property is assessed by ONLM to be moderately significant for rare plants or a rare ecological community – 50 percent of the points awarded under a. above**

**3) If the quality or extent of the habitat on the property is assessed by ONLM to be insignificant for rare plants or a rare ecological community – 0 percent of the points awarded under a. above**

**A. Presence of Significant Features – 10 points maximum**

**1. Feature evaluated: Significance of historic or cultural features on the property**

**2. Information sources: Historic Preservation Office (HPO); HPO staff knowledge of site.**

**3. Points are assigned as follows:**

**a. If the property has feature(s) that are on or are eligible for listing on the State or National Register of Historic Places and have statewide significance – 10 points**

**b. If the property has feature(s) that are on or eligible for listing on the State or National Register of Historic Places that have local significance – 5 points**

**c. If the property has feature(s) that are eligible for listing for State or National Registers of Historic Places and have local significance – 3 points**

**d. If the property has no feature(s) eligible for listing for State or National Registers – 0 points**

**A. Open Space– 10 points maximum**

**1. Feature evaluated: greenways, trails, and/or continuity of preserved open space**

**2. Information source: Green Acres Open Space Planning Map**

**3. Points are assigned as follow:**

**a. The extent to which the property represents an integral component of an existing or planned greenway, trail or project area; or connects to an existing preserved open space area – up to 3 points**

**b. The extent to which the property enhances a designated or proposed component of the State Trails System or a Federal or State designated Wild, Scenic or Recreational River – up to 3 points**

**c. The extent to which the property contributes to the establishment of a greenbelt around an urban or suburban center – up to 2 points**

**d. The extent to which the property acts as a physical or visual buffer between a sensitive area and development – up to 2 points**

**A. Recreational Benefit – 14 points maximum**

**1. Feature evaluated: The population that could benefit from recreational opportunities afforded by the property**

**2. Information sources: Site characteristics, as given in the Open Space Planning Map developed by Green Acres and/or in municipal, county and regional park and open space master plans and site recreation master plans;**

and the most recent dicennial U.S. Census from which the relevant data is available.

**3. Points are assigned as follows:**

**a. Urbanization**

- 1) If the municipality in which the property is located is a qualifying municipality eligible for urban aid – 3 points**
  
- 2) If the municipality in which the property is located is an urbanized municipality with a population density equal to or greater than 5,000 people per square mile; or has a population of 35,000 people or greater – 2 points**
  
- 3) If the municipality in which the property is located is a municipality with a population density less than 5,000 people per square mile; or has a population of less than 35,000 people – 1 point**

**b. Density of county population**

- 1) If the county in which the property is located is heavily urbanized and has a population density equal to or greater than 5,000 people per square mile –3 points**
  
- 2) If the county in which the property is located is urbanized and has a population density equal to or exceeding 1,000 people per square mile, but less than 5,000 people per square mile – 2 points**
  
- 3) If the county in which the property is located has a population density of less than 1,000 people per square mile – 1 point**

**c. Access to open space**

**1) If the distance from the property to existing State open space areas with similar recreation potential is more than 20 miles – 3 points**

**2) If the distance from the property to existing State open space areas with similar recreation potential is more than 10 miles but less than 20 miles –2 points**

**3) If the distance from the property<sup>20</sup> to existing State open space areas with similar recreation potential is within 10 miles – 0 points**

**d. Potential recreational opportunities**

**1) If the property offers the potential to provide a wide variety of outdoor recreation opportunities, many of which are not available in the county – up to 5 points**

**2) If the property offers the potential to provide a limited number of outdoor recreation opportunities that are generally not available within the county – up to 3 points**

**3) If the property offers the potential to provide only outdoor recreation opportunities that are already generally available within the county –0 points**

**Factor X. Development Threat/ Property Size/Acquisition Cost**

**A. Cost, Size and Development Threat – 10 points maximum**

**1. Feature evaluated: The immediacy of the threat that the property will be developed; the size of the property; and the cost of acquiring the property compared to other properties**

**2. Information sources Green Acres “Application for Sale of Real Estate”  
Green Acres staff knowledge of site;**

**3. Points are assigned as follows:**

**a. Development potential -- 4 points maximum**

**1) If the property has local subdivision or site plan approval  
– 4 points**

**2) If the property has a pending local subdivision or site plan  
application – 3 points**

**3) If the property includes developable land but a local  
subdivision or site plan application has not been submitted –  
2 points**

**4) If the property has no development potential under State  
regulations – 0 points**

**b. Size of the property**

**1) If the property is 100 acres or greater – 4 points**

**2) If the property is 50 acres or greater but less than 100  
acres – 3 points**

**3) If the property is 25 acres or greater but less than 50 acres  
– 2 points**

**4) If the property is less than 25 acres – 1 point**

**c. Purchase price of the property m**

- 1) If the price of the property is 25% less than its appraised fair market value – 2 points**
- 2) If the price of the property is less than its appraised fair market value by less than 25% – 1 point**
- 3) If the price of the property is equal to or higher than its appraised fair market value – 0 points**

**Factor XI. Planning**

**A. Planning – 7 points maximum**

- 1. Feature evaluated: Consistency of acquisition with applicable plans**
- 2. Information sources: State Development and Redevelopment Plan, Green Acres Land Preservation Plan, New Jersey Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, Garden State Greenways, Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan, and Highlands Regional Master Plan.**
- 3. Points are assigned as follows:**
  - a. Consistency with the State Development and Redevelopment Plan– up to 2 points**
  - b. Consistency with the Land Preservation Plan – up to 2 points**
  - c. Consistency with the Pinelands Management Plan, the Highlands Master Plan , Garden State Greenways, Open Space Plans– 1 point**
  - d. Consistency with Open Space Plans – 1 point**
  - e. Consistency with Garden State Greenways – 1 point**

## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROJECT PRIORITY SYSTEM ACQUISITION AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS**

This priority system is used to evaluate the relative merits of proposed acquisition and development projects. The system is designed to reflect the degree to which proposed projects conform with findings, recommendations and priorities of the New Jersey Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, the New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan, and with statewide goals that are consistent with the Garden State Preservation Trust Act. The system uses a set of factors to evaluate each project's conservation and recreation features.

**NOTE: EACH APPLICABLE FACTOR SHOULD BE ADDRESSED, IN ORDER, IN NARRATIVE FORM.**

**FACTOR #1 OPEN SPACE NEEDS (Acquisition only)**  
This factor evaluates the extent to which a proposed acquisition project will satisfy local open space deficits.

(see table 1) a) **Balanced Land Use Deficit.** Up to 5 pts.  
This factor takes into consideration the amount of additional open space needed in each municipality or county in order to satisfy the open space goals derived through the balanced land use method.

b) **Service Area Needs.** Up to 25 pts.  
Because countywide figures do not necessarily represent the needs of a particular community or neighborhood, please discuss the needs of the population to be served. The service area for each project will be defined based on population density and the type and size of the project.

**FACTOR #2 SERVICE AREA FACILITY NEEDS (Development only)** Up to 20 pts.  
Please discuss the needs of the population to be served and evaluate the extent to which the proposed development project will satisfy local recreation facility deficits. The service area for the project will be defined on the basis of population density, scope and type of project, and consideration of the project's relation to an existing redevelopment plan. Facility needs will be based on a comparison of recreational demand and a site specific inventory of recreation facilities for the municipality(ies) in which the project is located (submitted by the applicant).

**FACTOR #3 ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION (Acquisition only)** Up to 3 pts.  
each  
This factor is used to determine to what extent a proposed acquisition meets key conservation and environmental protection goals.

a) **Lands that are of sufficient size and located so as to:**  
1. **Protect critical wildlife habitat;**  
2. **Enhance or preserve a critical site identified in the State Plan, New Jersey Meadowlands Master Plan, the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan, and Highlands Regional**

- Master Plan, as applicable, and or another unique natural area or land type (for example, steep slopes, dunes, beach, wetlands, forest lands);
  - 3. Provide additions to or link between existing public recreation and/or open space areas;
  - 4. Support a regional open space and/or conservation initiatives (for example, shore protection or the preservation of landscape ecology, biodiversity, wildlife corridors and/or greenways; and
  - 5. Protect documented endangered and/or threatened species habitat.
- b) Greenways and water resource protection projects, including forests, shorelines, and stream corridors that are of sufficient size and located so as to:
- 1. Establish an integral link in an existing or planned local, regional or statewide conservation initiative, or a component of a Wild and Scenic Rivers system under the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, 16 U.S.C. § 1271-1287 and/or the New Jersey Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, N.J.S.A. 13:8-45 et seq.;
  - 2. Facilitate water resource protection efforts;
  - 3. Provide significant natural flood protection;
  - 4. Act as a physical or visual buffer between a significant natural resource or feature and development, or provide visual or physical access to the water; and
  - 5. Protect headwaters, tributaries, or corridors of any waterbodies classified as "Category One Waters," pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:9B, and associated special water resource protection areas established pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:8, as well as other streams or rivers.

**FACTOR #4**      **HISTORIC RESOURCE PRESERVATION (Acquisition only)**      **Up to 3 pts.**  
each

This factor is used to determine to what extent a proposed acquisition meets key historic resource preservation goals.

- a) If the project is on, contained within, or adjacent to a site included on or eligible for inclusion in the New Jersey Register of Historic Places under N.J.S.A. 13:IB- 15.128 et seq. and/or the National Register of Historic Places under 16 U.S.C. §470 et seq., or is a Critical Historic Site identified in the State Plan, New Jersey Meadowlands Master Plan, Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan, or Highlands Regional Master Plan, as applicable.
- b) If the project is an historic project that provides an extension or linkage between existing public recreation and/or open space areas.
- c) The degree to which the project is a significant and/or contributing component of an historic district designated as such under N.J.S.A. 13:IB-15.128 et seq.

- d) If the project is part of an ongoing historic preservation or restoration project or historic study or investigation.
- e) The extent to which the project is one with historic integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

**FACTOR #5 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION/SUPPORT/PLANNING (Acquisition and Development)**

This factor evaluates public involvement and support in the planning process beyond the minimum requirement of a public hearing.

- a) **Support** Up to 5 pts.  
Public support for a project is encouraged and should be demonstrated through letters from the municipal and county planning boards, park agencies, recreation departments, environmental commissions, user groups and the general public.
- b) **Planning** Up to 10 pts.  
Applicants should demonstrate consistency with the New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan (State Plan), New Jersey Meadowlands Master Plan, Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan, or Highlands Regional Master Plan, as applicable; the New Jersey Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan; and local and county land use plans, especially open space and recreation elements thereof, as demonstrated in excerpts from or specific references to such plans in the project application; and whether proof of an approved petition for plan endorsement by the State Planning Commission or, for a local government unit in the Pinelands, certification from the Pinelands Commission that its master plan and land use ordinances or regulations are consistent with the minimum standards of the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:50-3 Part II or IV, as applicable.

**FACTOR #6 PROJECT QUALITY (Acquisition and Development)**

This factor evaluates project elements and features.

- a) **Accessibility (Acquisition and Development)** 1 pt. each  
The site location:
  1. Is close to population centers;
  2. Is accessible by public transportation;
  3. Is accessible by walking and bicycling; or
  4. Creates public access where none exists or where existing access is undeveloped or restricted.
- b) **Recreation Potential (Acquisition only)** Up to 2 pts.

each

**The site:**

1. Is suitable for major outdoor recreation facility development;
2. Is suitable for the use and/or development of appropriate water dependent recreation activities or facilities;
3. Represents part of a planned or existing waterfront development or redevelopment plan;
4. Provides environmental and/or historic interpretive opportunities; or
5. Improves management or expansion of recreation facilities.

c) **Water Access (Acquisition and Development)** Up to 6 pts.  
(see table 2)

This subfactor evaluates the extent to which a project improves needed visual and/or physical public access to water.

each d) **Design Quality (Development only)** Up to 2 pts.

**The design:**

1. Includes multiple recreation and conservation purposes;
2. Uses effective landscaping;
3. Provides opportunities for various active and passive recreational uses by diverse user groups; and
4. Includes significant shade tree plantings.

+8, -8 e) **Cost Effectiveness (Acquisition and Development)** Point range:

This subfactor evaluates the quality of conservation or recreation opportunities provided by a project in comparison to the anticipated cost. Considerations include:

1. Cost of alternative locations and facilities;
2. Whether the land is available at lower cost due to bargain sale, easement, donation of land value, or partnerships (acquisition) or donation of labor, equipment, or materials or partnerships (development);
3. Cost of future operation and maintenance; and
4. Whether the project site has development approvals from local planning board (Acquisition only).

**FACTOR #7 PROJECT PRIORITIES (Acquisition and Development)** 1 pt. each  
The following acquisition and development project elements are encouraged:

- a) Private investment and/or ecotourism potential, public/private sector venture, and/or supports municipal and county (urban complex) strategic revitalization plans and programs consistent with the State Plan, New Jersey Meadowlands Master Plan, Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan, or Highlands Regional Master Plan, as applicable;
- b) Waterfront development or redevelopment;
- c) Trails, bike paths, or greenways;

- d) Historic or archeological resource enhancement or preservation;
- e) Wildlife habitat protection;
- f) Protection of any waterbodies classified as "Category One Waters," pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:9B, and associated special water resource protection areas established pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:8; or protection of other water resources;
- g) Multiple uses and provides active and passive recreation opportunities;
- h) Addition to or the development of a prior Green Acres-funded acquisition or development project;
- i) Private donation of land, equipment, labor, or cash, etc.;
- j) Likelihood or threat of private development for other than recreation and conservation purposes, one point. Examples of actions that may indicate a possible impending development may include whether the property is on the market or is the subject of local planning board action, or if any development permits or approvals have been sought for the property (Acquisition only);
- k) Design and construction that utilizes clean and renewable energy and maximizes energy efficiency (Development only);
- l) Rehabilitation or redevelopment of an existing recreational facility (Development only);
- m) Supports a school construction initiative in an Abbott District established pursuant to N.J.A.C.6A:10A;
- n) Reclamation of a former brownfields site;
- o) A project undertaken by a municipality in the Highlands that has amended its development regulations in accordance N.J.S.A. 13:20-13 to establish one or more receiving zones for transfer of development potential from a sending zone in the Highlands); and
- p) A project undertaken by a municipality that has amended its development regulations in accordance with the State Transfer of Development Rights Act (P.L. 2004, c. 2 N.J.S.A. 40:55D-137 et seq.) to establish one or more receiving zones for the transfer of development potential.

**FACTOR #8 FIRST TIME APPLICANT (Acquisition and Development) 5 pts.**  
 Applies to a project sponsored by a county or municipality that previously has not received Green Acres funding.

**FACTOR #9 FACILITY DESIGN SENSITIVITY AND SITE SUITABILITY (Development only)**

a) **General recreation facilities Up to 4 pts. each**  
 The environmental features of the site will be used to determine the design sensitivity of the project. Projects that will have a significant negative impact on the site's natural resources will not be considered. Project design should minimize adverse impacts on the environmentally sensitive features of the site by:

1. Locating proposed facilities in already cleared areas, to minimize additional clearing of trees and vegetation;

2. **Locating proposed facilities where topography and soil conditions are suitable, to minimize grading, excavation, fill, and drainage of a site; and**
3. **Retaining, enhancing, or establishing vegetative buffers, or incorporating other site-sensitive techniques, to minimize impacts on sensitive areas such as shellfish beds, beach/dune systems, forests, wetlands, steep slopes, endangered or threatened species habitat, and aquifer recharge areas.**

**b) Structures/Buildings**

**1 point**

**For projects involving structures, project is designed and constructed to meet the U.S. Green Building Council's (USGBCs) Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED™) Green Building Rating System for New Construction and Major Renovations Version 2.1.**

**TABLE 1**  
**BALANCED LAND USE**

<u>County</u>	<u>Municipal Pts</u>	<u>County Pts</u>
Atlantic	1	3
Bergen	1	1
Burlington	4	5
Camden	2	2
Cape May	1	2
Cumberland	5	5
Essex	2	1
Gloucester	4	4
Hudson	2	1
Hunterdon	5	5
Mercer	2	2
Middlesex	3	3
Monmouth	2	3
Morris	1	2
Ocean	3	4
Passaic	1	1
Salem	5	5
Somerset	4	3
Sussex	4	4
Union	3	1
Warren	5	3

**TABLE 2**  
**PUBLIC ACCESS TO WATER**  
**Need for Access**

<u>Water Body Type</u>	<u>HIGH</u>	<u>MEDIUM</u>	<u>LOW</u>
Ocean	6	5	4
Bay			
River			
Large Lake	5	4	3
Stream			
Lake	4	3	2
Small Stream			
Pond	3	2	1



1. **Protect critical wildlife habitat;**
  2. **Preserve State Plan, Meadowlands Master Plan, Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan, and Highlands Regional Master Plan Critical Environmental Sites, unique natural areas or land types (steep slopes, dunes, scenic overlooks, wetlands, forest lands);**
  3. **Provide additions to or linkages between existing public recreation/open space areas;**
  4. **Support regional open space/conservation initiatives such as shore protection or the preservation of landscape ecology, biodiversity, wildlife corridors and/or greenways; and**
  5. **Protect documented endangered and/or threatened species habitat.**
- b) **Greenways and water resource protection projects, including forests, shorelines, and stream corridors that are of sufficient size and located so as to:**
1. **Establish an integral link in an existing or planned local, regional or statewide conservation initiative, greenway, or designated or potential Wild and Scenic River;**
  2. **Assist water resource protection efforts;**
  3. **Provide significant natural flood protection;**
  4. **Act as a physical or visual buffer between a significant natural resource or feature and development, or provide visual or physical access to the water; and**
  5. **Protect an aquifer; headwaters, tributaries or the corridor of a designated Category One stream; or other streams or rivers.**

**FACTOR #4**      **HISTORIC RESOURCE PRESERVATION (Acquisition only)**      **Up to 3 pts.**  
**each**

**This factor is used to determine to what extent a proposed acquisition meets key historic resource preservation goals.**

- a) **If the project is on, contained within, or adjacent to a site included on or eligible for inclusion in the New Jersey Register of Historic Places under N.J.S.A. 13:IB- 15.128 et seq. and/or the National Register of Historic Places under 16 U.S.C. §.§470 et seq., or is a Critical Historic Site identified in the State Plan, New Jersey Meadowlands Master Plan, Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan, or Highlands Regional Master Plan, as applicable.**
- b) **If the project is an historic project that provides an extension or linkage between existing public recreation and/or open space areas.**
- c) **The degree to which the project is a significant and/or contributing component of an historic district designated as such under N.J.S.A. 13:IB-15.128 et seq.,**

- d) If the project is part of an ongoing historic preservation or restoration project or historic study or investigation.
- e) The extent to which the project is one with historic integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

**FACTOR #5 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION/SUPPORT/PLANNING (Acquisition and Development)**

This factor evaluates public involvement and support in the planning process beyond the minimum requirement of a newspaper notice.

- a) **Support** Up to 5 pts.  
Public support for a project is encouraged and should be demonstrated through letters from the municipal and county planning boards, park agencies, recreation departments, environmental commissions, user groups and the general public.
- b) **Planning** Up to 10 pts.  
Applicants should demonstrate consistency with the New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan (State Plan), the New Jersey Meadowlands Master Plan, the Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan, the Highlands Regional Master Plan, as appropriate; the New Jersey Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan; and with local and county land use plans, especially open space/recreation elements as demonstrated in excerpts from or specific references to such plans in the project application.

**FACTOR #6 PROJECT QUALITY (Acquisition and Development)**

This factor evaluates project elements and features.

- a) **Accessibility (Acquisition and Development)** 1 pt. each  
The site location:
  1. Is close to population centers;
  2. Is accessible by public transportation;
  3. Is accessible by walking and bicycling; or
  4. Creates public access where none exists or where existing access is undeveloped or restricted.
- b) **Recreation Potential (Acquisition only)** Up to 2 pts. each  
The site:
  1. Is suitable for major outdoor recreation facility development;
  2. Is suitable for the use and/or development of appropriate water dependent recreation activities or facilities;
  3. Represents part of a planned or existing waterfront development or redevelopment plan;

- 4. Provides environmental and/or historic interpretive opportunities; or
- 5. Improves management or expansion of recreation facilities.

2) c) **Water Access (Acquisition and Development) Up to 6 pts. (see table**

**This subfactor evaluates the extent to which a project improves needed visual and/or physical public access to water.**

d) **Design Quality (Development only) Up to 2 pts. each**  
**The design:**

- 1. Includes multiple recreation and conservation purposes;
- 2. Uses effective landscaping;
- 3. Provides opportunities for various active and passive recreational uses by diverse user groups; and
- 4. Includes significant shade tree plantings.

+8, -8 e) **Cost Effectiveness (Acquisition and Development) Point range:**

**This subfactor evaluates the quality of conservation or recreation opportunities provided by a project in comparison to the anticipated cost. Considerations include:**

- 1. Cost of alternative locations and facilities;
- 2. Whether the land is available at lower cost due to bargain sale, easement, donation of land value, or partnerships (acquisition) or donation of labor, equipment, or materials or partnerships (development);
- 3. Cost of future operation and maintenance; and
- 4. Whether the project site has development approvals from local planning board (Acquisition only).

**FACTOR #7 PROJECT PRIORITIES (Acquisition and Development) 1 pt. each**

**The following acquisition and development project elements are encouraged:**

- a) Private investment and/or ecotourism potential, public/private sector venture, and/or supports municipal and county (urban complex) strategic revitalization plans and programs consistent with the State Plan, New Jersey Meadowlands Master Plan, Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan, or Highlands Regional Master Plan, as applicable;
- b) Waterfront development or redevelopment;
- c) Trails, bike paths, or greenways;
- d) Historic or archeological resource enhancement or preservation;
- e) Wildlife habitat protection;
- f) Protection of any waterbodies classified as "Category One Waters," pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:9B, and associated special water resource protection areas established pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:8; or protection of other water resources;
- g) Multiple uses and provides active and passive recreation opportunities;
- h) Addition to or the development of a prior Green Acres-funded acquisition or development project;
- i) Private donation of land, equipment, labor, or cash, etc.;

- j) **Likelihood or threat of private development for other than recreation and conservation purposes, one point. Examples of actions that may indicate a possible impending development may include whether the property is on the market or is the subject of local planning board action, or if any development permits or approvals have been sought for the property (Acquisition only);**
- k) **Design and construction that utilizes clean and renewable energy and maximizes energy efficiency (Development only);**
- l) **Rehabilitation or redevelopment of an existing recreational facility (Development only);**
- m) **Supports a school construction initiative in an Abbott District established pursuant to N.J.A.C.6A:10A; and**
- n) **Reclamation of a former brownfields site.**

**FACTOR #8 FACILITY DESIGN SENSITIVITY AND SITE SUITABILITY (Development only)**

- a) **General recreation facilities** **Up to 4 pts.**  
each

**The environmental features of the site will be used to determine the design sensitivity of the project. Projects that will have a significant negative impact on the site's natural resources will not be considered. Project design should minimize adverse impacts on the environmentally sensitive features of the site by:**

1. **Locating proposed facilities in already cleared areas, to minimize additional clearing of trees and vegetation;**
2. **Locating proposed facilities where topography and soil conditions are suitable, to minimize grading, excavation, fill, and drainage of a site; and**
3. **Retaining, enhancing, or establishing vegetative buffers, or incorporating other site-sensitive techniques, to minimize impacts on sensitive areas such as shellfish beds, beach/dune systems, forests, wetlands, steep slopes, endangered or threatened species habitat, and aquifer recharge areas.**

- b) **Structures/Buildings** **1 point**  
For projects involving structures, project is designed and constructed to meet the U.S. Green Building Council's (USGBCs) Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED™) Green Building Rating System for New Construction and Major Renovations Version 2.1.

**TABLE 1****BALANCED LAND USE**

<b>County</b>	<b><u>Municipal Pts</u></b>	<b><u>County Pts</u></b>
<b>Atlantic</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Bergen</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Burlington</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Camden</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Cape May</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Cumberland</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Essex</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Gloucester</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Hudson</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Hunterdon</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Mercer</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Middlesex</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Monmouth</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Morris</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Ocean</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Passaic</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Salem</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Somerset</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Sussex</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Union</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Warren</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>

**TABLE 2****PUBLIC ACCESS TO WATER  
Need for Access**

<b><u>Water Body Type</u></b>	<b><u>HIGH</u></b>	<b><u>MEDIUM</u></b>	<b><u>LOW</u></b>
<b>Ocean</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Bay</b>			
<b>River</b>			
<b>Large Lake</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Stream</b>			
<b>Lake</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Small Stream</b>			
<b>Pond</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **New Jersey Wetlands Plan Update**

The 1994 New Jersey Wetlands Plan outlined the State's efforts to preserve and protect its wetland resources. This update contains a review of the Freshwater Wetlands Protection Act, information on other regulatory programs affecting wetlands, and an outline of some of New Jersey's wetlands conservation strategies. This wetlands plan update was prepared in consultation with the Division of Land Use Regulation, Coastal Management Office and the Division of Fish and Wildlife. The Division of Land Use Regulation is responsible for the administration of the Freshwater Wetlands Protection Act, Wetlands Act of 1970, and other land use regulatory programs. The Division of Fish and Wildlife acquires and manages wetland areas throughout New Jersey for wildlife management and outdoor recreation purposes.

### **New Jersey Freshwater Wetlands Protection Act (FWPA)**

Analysis of the existing wetlands protection programs at the local, state and federal government levels in the 1980's established that New Jersey needed a more comprehensive wetlands protection strategy. Prior to the FWPA, the regulation of freshwater wetlands was primarily the responsibility of the United States Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) under the authority of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, as amended by the Clean Water Act, and the Rivers and Harbors Act. Section 404 of the Clean Water Act in 1977 established the federal program to regulate and protect wetlands. Because the federal program focuses on navigable waters, it did not provide protection for several wetland types in New Jersey. Moreover, it limited the authority of the ACOE to the regulation of discharge of dredged or fill material and did not authorize the ACOE to regulate the draining of wetlands, the destruction of wetland vegetation or the use of pilings. There were extensive wetland losses with the self regulating ACOE Nationwide permit program which allowed the filling of less than one acre of wetlands without prior authorization. The FWPA was enacted on July 1, 1987 and became effective over a period of two years. The State's act sought to close the gaps in the federal regulatory program. This was accomplished by taking jurisdiction over all activities in freshwater wetlands, providing protection for areas

adjacent to wetlands through regulation as transition areas, and regulating activities in state open waters such as lakes and ponds. The FWPA requires permit authorization by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection for every regulated activity. Water Quality Certification is also required where a discharge of dredged or fill material is proposed.

In addition to the discharge of dredge or fill material, The FWPA regulates the following activities in wetlands:

- (1) the removal, excavation, disturbance or dredging of soil, sand, gravel, or aggregate material of any kind;
- (2) the drainage or disturbance of the water level or water table;
- (3) the driving of pilings;
- (4) the placing of obstructions; and
- (5) the destruction of plant life which would alter the character of a freshwater wetlands, including the cutting of trees.

In addition, the FWPA regulates all of the following activities in transition areas, which are upland areas adjacent to wetlands, and receive no protection under federal law:

- (1) removal, excavation or disturbance of the soil;
- (2) dumping or filling with any materials;
- (3) erection of structures, except for temporary structures;
- (4) placement of pavement; and
- (5) the destruction of vegetation which would alter the existing vegetation community.

The discharge of dredged or filled materials into state open waters is also regulated.

To clarify and consolidate wetlands regulation in the state, the FWPA provides authority for the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection to become the sole regulator of freshwater wetlands in the state. It preempts regulation of freshwater wetlands by municipalities, counties or regional entities with the exception of the Hackensack Meadowlands District. The Pinelands Commission implements the FWPA through an agreement with the Department.

In 1994, New Jersey assumed the Federal 404 program, which made it the second state in the country to do so. Under the Clean Water Act, a state may take over the 404 program when the state program incorporates all the federal law's requirements and receives United States Environmental Protection Agency approval. Through its assumed program, the Department routinely coordinates certain permit reviews with the EPA, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and sometimes with the National Park Service and the State Office of Historic Preservation.

### **Division of Land Use Regulation**

There are approximately 948,400 acres of wetlands in New Jersey. Of these, 739,160 acres are freshwater wetlands comprising 15% of the State and the balance are coastal wetlands. In addition to the FWPA, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection administers three other programs that affect wetlands. They are the Coastal Management Program, the Stream Encroachment Program and the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act Program. Each of these regulatory programs emphasizes the protection of critical natural resources within their areas of jurisdiction. These areas encompass flood plains, tidal waters, tidal wetlands, lands abutting the waterways, and upland areas.

The Coastal Management Program regulates development through four specific laws: the Coastal Area Facility Review Act (CAFRA), the Waterfront Development Law, the Wetlands Act of 1970 and the Freshwater Wetlands Protection Act. The purpose of CAFRA is to protect the coastal environment while accommodating compatible land use development. A CAFRA Permit is required for most types of large scale development in the approximately 1,370 square mile CAFRA area comprising portions of Atlantic, Burlington, Cape May, Cumberland, Middlesex, Monmouth, Ocean and Salem counties. The CAFRA area ranges in width from a few thousand feet to 24 miles inland. In 1993, CAFRA was amended to require that developments be subject to a tiered system based upon the proximity of that development to the mean high water line of tidal waters, a beach or dune. These amendments brought more development under CAFRA jurisdiction, particularly sensitive areas along tidal waterways.

**The Waterfront Development Law concerns itself with development in and along tidal waters of the state. A Waterfront Development permit is needed for projects involving development in any tidal waterway. Waterfront development refers to docks, wharfs, piers, bridges, pilings, beach nourishment, dredging and construction of any structure below the mean high water line or removing sand or other materials from lands under all tidal waters. In addition, upland construction within 500 feet of tidal waters is regulated in areas outside the CAFRA zone. Water Quality Certification is also considered under the Coastal Zone Management Program when filling of a wetland or waterway is proposed.**

**The Wetlands Act of 1970 concerns itself with the protection and regulation of coastal tidal wetlands. Under this Act, all coastal wetlands that have been mapped by the Department are subject to regulation. A Coastal Wetlands Permit is needed to excavate, dredge, fill or erect structures on coastal wetlands. In New Jersey, coastal wetlands subject to this act extend from the head of tide at Trenton, south along Delaware Bay and up the Atlantic coastline to the mouth of the Raritan River.**

**The Stream Encroachment Permit Program is authorized by the Flood Hazard Area Control Act. This Act empowers the State to control development within flood hazard areas to reduce flood damage and to protect the environmental attributes of floodplains. A Stream Encroachment Permit is required for the construction, installation or alteration of any structure or permanent fill along, in or across the channel or floodplain or any stream. A permit is also required for any alteration of a stream.**

**The Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act (HWPPA) program regulates “major Highlands development.” The purpose of the HWPPA is to protect the exceptional natural resources of the Highlands, including clean air, contiguous forest lands, wetlands, pristine watersheds, and habitat for fauna and flora, sites of historic significance, and recreational opportunities for the citizens of the State. A Highlands Preservation Area Approval (permit) is required for major Highlands development, as defined by the Act, in the designated Highlands Preservation Area comprising portions of Hunterdon, Morris, Bergen, Passaic, Somerset, Sussex and Warren Counties.**

These permit programs, along with the permits authorized under the FWPA, have generated a considerable amount of regulatory review activity. Between 2002 and 2006, the Division of Land Use Regulation issued 3,871 wetland permit decisions.

Along with the State itself, regional authorities such as the Pinelands Commission and the Delaware and Raritan Canal Commission perform regulatory reviews of development projects within their respective jurisdictions. The Highlands Council also has some development review authority within its jurisdiction.

In addition to the passage and enactment of the NJFWPA and subsequent assumption of the Section 404 Program by the State of New Jersey, there have been other wetlands conservation initiatives.

1. **Freshwater Wetlands Protection In Jersey, A Manual For Local Officials:** Written by the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions in cooperation with the Department of Environmental Protection, the manual explains the provisions of the NJFWPA. It also discusses techniques local governments can use in land use planning to complement the state's program. Originally published in 1989, a second edition update was published in 1992. A third update was published in 2004.

2. **Office of Natural Resource Restoration**

The primary mission of the Office of Natural Resource Restoration (ONRR) is to provide for the assessment and restoration of New Jersey's natural resources that have been injured by the release of oil or other hazardous substances. Restoration projects must have a demonstrable link to injuries caused by specific releases. ONRR works closely with the NJDEP's Site Remediation Program during oil spills and remediation of hazardous sites in assessing natural resource injuries. ONRR also works to implement restoration of injured natural resources with other natural resource agencies within NJDEP, such as the Division of Parks and Forestry, the Division of Fish and Wildlife, and the Green Acres Program.

ONRR has preserved over 6,000 acres of aquifer recharge area, wetlands, and valuable wildlife habitat and settled \$4 million in groundwater injuries in 2007.

**Restoration for injuries to the States natural resources are pursued under the following laws and regulations:**

**Federal Law: Clean Water Act, 33 U.S.C. 1301 et seq., Comprehensive Environmental Response and Compensation Liability Act (Superfund), 42 U.S.C. 9601 et seq.(releases of hazardous substances) Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (OPA), 33 U.S.C. 2701 et seq. (discharges of oil to natural resources)**

**State Law and Regulation:**

**N.J.A.C. 7:26E - Technical Requirements for Site Remediation**

**The New Jersey Water Pollution Control Act N.J.S.A. 58: 10A-1 et seq.**

**Spill Compensation and Control Act N.J.S.A. 58:10-23.11 et seq.**

**The Public Trust Doctrine**

### **3. State Freshwater Wetlands Mitigation Council Projects**

**The Freshwater Wetlands Mitigation Council, created statutorily by the Freshwater Wetlands Protection Act, has elected to fund projects that contain several partners, including: a state agency that will acquire degraded wetlands that will be restored; a land owner that is willing to donate his or her land for wetland mitigation purposes; a non-profit or governmental agency that will develop and oversee the wetland mitigation project and will manage the land; and the Council to act as the funding source for the mitigation work. The Council has funded several projects with these types of partnerships.**

**The Council provided \$1,000,000 to the New Jersey Natural Lands Trust to acquire degraded wetland within 13 preapproved areas. These areas were identified as rare plant and animal species habitat, which could be enhanced through restoration. These lands will also provide passive recreational opportunities such as hiking, fishing, bird watching and nature study. To date the Trust, in partnership with Green Acres, has preserved 138 acres with this funding.**

### **4. Wetlands Preservation**

**The preservation of wetlands is accomplished not only by regulation but also by acquisition. State, local government and conservation organizations are all active in acquiring wetlands. While New Jersey has slowed the loss of freshwaters wetlands by passage of a law in 1987**

that is much stricter than the federal law, losses continue through the issuance of general permits for which mitigation is not required. Therefore, the acquisition of wetlands is an important factor in preservation of the State's wetland resources. It is expected that given the increased focus on protecting water resources, the preservation of wetlands statewide will continue.

### **Wetland Conservation Strategies**

The State of New Jersey remains committed to the vigorous protection of its wetlands resources. The following strategies will serve as a framework for the continued protection of wetlands within New Jersey.

1. Through the implementation of the NJFWPA and other applicable regulatory programs, continue to control development in wetlands.
2. Continue to encourage non-regulatory methods of wetlands protection including planning, education and acquisition.
3. Continue to provide funding and technical assistance for wetland protection projects to nonprofit conservation organizations and local governments.
4. Work with conservation organizations and local governments to coordinate wetland protection efforts.
5. Continue to preserve wetlands through participation in the Waterfowl Stamp Program, the North American Wetlands Conservation Act and the Coastal Land and Estuarine Protection Program.
6. Continue to provide opportunities for wetlands protection through in the Green Acres Tax Exemption Program.
7. Coordinate wetland protection efforts with the Pinelands Commission, the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission and the Highlands Council.

### **Land and Water Conservation Fund**

## **America's Champion for Parks and Recreation**

**Public conservation and recreation areas are part of our national heritage. The American people's love of the outdoors is a common value of our nation. Nationwide, the LWCF has provided more than \$14.4 billion to acquire new federal recreation lands and as grants to state and local governments. The LWCF has funded 40,400 state and local government projects since 1965. In 2006, the LWCF awarded \$65.8 million, which funded 424 park projects and protected 34,635 acres nationwide. The LWCF continues to be America's best investment for parks and recreation. Since its establishment in 1965, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) has played an important role in New Jersey's open space preservation and recreation programs. New Jersey has enjoyed a long and successful partnership with the National Park Service through the LWCF. New Jersey has received \$112,243,252 in LWCF matching funds for open space acquisition and park and recreation projects. New Jersey's eight SCORPs have been prepared to retain New Jersey's eligibility to receive LWCF grants and to provide policy direction on the expenditure of federal and state open space acquisition and park and recreation development funds.**

**Projects that have benefited from LWCF assistance range from small municipal passive parks and tot lots to county urban waterfront parks and athletic complexes. State projects that have received both LWCF acquisition and development funds include Liberty State Park, as well as the Pequest Fish Hatchery and Spruce Run Recreation Area.**

**Across the state, 300 projects have received LWCF financial support. Sixty-three state, county and municipal acquisition projects have used more than \$40 million of LWCF funds toward preservation of 72,813 acres. LWCF development projects total 234 in number and have received almost \$60 million in federal assistance.**

**In addition to the standard LWCF Program, New Jersey has received funding specifically for planning and acquisition activities within the Pinelands National Reserve through the Section 502 side of the LWCF. Matching Section 502 grants have enabled New Jersey to acquire over 70,000 acres within the Pinelands to protect the region's sensitive natural resources and increase the open space available for public recreation purposes.**

**In addition to funding state and local government projects, the LWCF also provides funds to the National Park Service and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service for the acquisition of lands for national recreation areas and wildlife refuges. Nearly \$2 million in LWCF monies will be used to protect land in the Highlands in Connecticut, New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania. The LWCF has provided over \$200 million for federal open space and recreation projects in New Jersey.**

**New Jersey Land and Water Conservation Fund Projects**  
As of July 2007

<u>Projects Funded</u>	<u>LWCF</u>
257 Development Projects	\$ 59,649,393
63 Acquisition Projects      72,813 acres	\$ 45,668,919
3 Planning Projects	\$ 547,500
300 Projects	\$103,573,755

<u>Projects Funded</u>	<u>LWCF</u>
234 Local Government Projects	\$ 45,380,955
211 dev.: \$34,613,464	
23 acq.: \$10,767,491      7,023 acres	
66 State Projects	\$ 58,192,800
23 dev.: \$25,035,929	
40 acq.: \$32,609,371      65,790 acres	
3 planning: \$547,500	
	\$103,573,755

**LWCF Projects Funded**

<u>County</u>	<u># of Projects</u>	<u>Acres Acquired</u>	<u>LWCF Invested</u>
Atlantic	12	4,948	\$ 3,945,377
Bergen	21	2,136	\$ 3,646,522
Burlington	12	3,506	\$ 3,449,085
Camden	20	0	\$ 4,754,440
Cape May	15	4,692	\$ 845,341
Cumberland	9	14,273	\$ 3,133,201
Essex	22	0	\$ 5,265,074
Gloucester	3	39	\$ 858,507
Hudson	20	615	\$ 12,277,521
Hunterdon	8	966	\$ 10,348,544
Mercer	16	6	\$ 2,457,660
Middlesex	12	0	\$ 3,485,022
Monmouth	29	684	\$ 6,627,903
Morris	18	812	\$ 2,667,342
Multi **	17	27,935	\$ 10,517,277
Ocean	10	5,521	\$ 5,239,560
Passaic	13	0	\$ 4,695,360
Salem	3	2,106	\$ 221,238
Somerset	8	500	\$ 721,878
Sussex	7	3,122	\$ 4,496,821
Union	16	0	\$ 1,693,573
Warren	9	952	\$ 7,595,065
	300	72,813	\$103,573,755

\*\* Located in two or more counties.  
Total New Jersey LWCF awards: \$112,243,252

**Land and Water Conservation Fund  
New Jersey**

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>New Jersey's Apportionment</u>
1965	\$ 276,128
1966	\$ 2,200,000
1967	\$ 1,500,000
1968	\$ 1,681,589
1969	\$ 1,237,073
1970	\$ 1,686,363
1971	\$ 6,861,642
1972	\$ 7,201,200
1973	\$ 5,415,822
1974	\$ 1,283,787
1975	\$ 5,362,200
1976	\$ 5,238,274
1977	\$ 5,126,462
1978	\$ 9,137,831
1979	\$ 11,294,378
1980	\$ 9,024,313
1981	\$ 6,868,211
1982	\$ 0
1983	\$ 2,052,660
1983	\$ 1,162,667
1984	\$ 2,119,457
1985	\$ 1,703,964
1986	\$ 1,346,095
1987	\$ 957,103
1988	\$ 485,414
1989	\$ 509,228
1990	\$ 479,220
1991	\$ 868,135
1992	\$ 578,410
1993	\$ 724,834
1994	\$ 702,763
1995	\$ 699,734
2000	\$ 1,035,000
2001	\$ 2,471,241
2002	\$ 3,888,956
2003	\$ 2,628,475
2004	\$ 2,483,360
2005	\$ 2,439,085
2006	\$ 756,089
2007	\$ 756,089
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$112,243,252</b>

**Note: There was no LWCF for states in Fiscal Years 1996-1999**

## Green Acres, Farmland and Historic Preservation Bond Issues Summary

		<b>Amount</b>
1961	<b>Green Acres Land Acquisition Act</b> \$ 40 million State acquisition \$ 20 million Local acquisition	\$ 60 million – GA
1971	<b>Green Acres Land Acquisition Act</b> \$ 40 million State acquisition \$ 40 million Local acquisition	\$ 80 million – GA
1974	<b>Green Acres Land Acquisition and Recreation Opportunities Act</b> \$100 million State acquisition & development \$100 million Local acquisition & development	\$200 million – GA
1978	<b>Green Acres Bond Act</b> \$100 million State acquisition & development \$100 million Local acquisition & development	\$200 million – GA
1981	<b>Farmland Preservation Bond Act</b>	\$ 50 million – FP
1983	<b>Green Acres Bond Act</b> \$ 52 million State acquisition & development \$ 83 million Local acquisition & development	\$135 million – GA
1987	<b>Green Acres, Cultural Centers and Historic Preservation Bond Act</b> \$ 35 million Local acquisition & development \$ 25 million Historic Preservation	\$ 35 million – GA \$ 25 million – HP
1989	<b>Open Space Preservation Bond Act</b> \$ 80 million State acquisition & development \$120 million Local acquisition & development \$ 20 million urban projects \$ 10 million nonprofit matching grants \$ 50 million Farmland Preservation	\$230 million – GA \$ 50 million – FP
1992	<b>Green Acres, Clean Water, Farmland and Historic Preservation Bond Act</b> \$ 80 million State acquisition & development \$100 million Local acquisition & development \$ 20 million nonprofit matching grants \$ 50 million Farmland Preservation	\$200 million - GA \$ 50 million – FP \$ 25 million – HP

\$ 25 million Historic Preservation

1995 **Green Acres, Farmland and Historic Preservation  
and Blue Acres Bond Act**

\$105 million State acquisition & development  
\$ 10 million Liberty State Park  
\$120 million Local acquisition & development  
\$ 15 million nonprofit matching grants  
\$ 30 million Blue Acres  
\$ 50 million Farmland Preservation  
\$ 10 million Historic Preservation

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**TOTAL:**

<b>Green Acres (GA) Bond Funds</b>	<b>\$1,390,000,000</b>
<b>Blue Acres (BA) Bond Funds</b>	<b>\$ 30,000,000</b>
<b>Farmland Preservation (FP) Bond Funds</b>	<b>\$ 200,000,000</b>
<b>Historic Preservation (HP) Bond Funds</b>	<b>\$ 60,000,000</b>

# Preserved Open Space

- Federal Open Space Lands
- State Open Space Lands
- County Open Space Lands
- Municipal Open Space Lands
- Nonprofit Lands
- Conservation Easements
- Preserved Agricultural Lands
- Pinelands Development Credits (Severed)

Not all lands have been mapped to date.

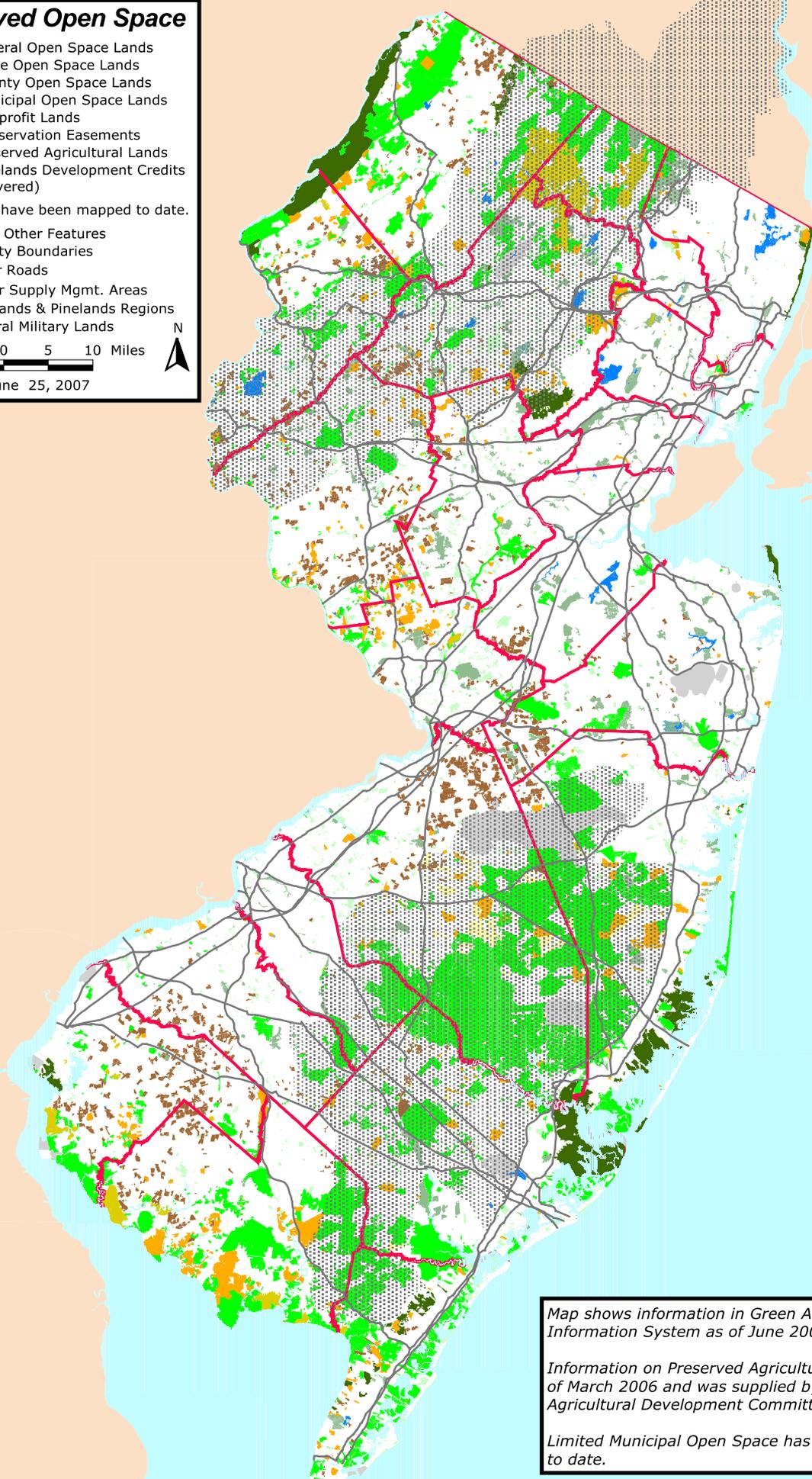
## Other Features

- County Boundaries
- Major Roads
- Water Supply Mgmt. Areas
- Highlands & Pinelands Regions
- Federal Military Lands

5 0 5 10 Miles



June 25, 2007



Map shows information in Green Acres Geographic Information System as of June 2007.

Information on Preserved Agricultural Lands is as of March 2006 and was supplied by the State Agricultural Development Committee.

Limited Municipal Open Space has been mapped to date.