

NEW JERSEY CONSERVATION



Honoring a Conservation Legend:

The 4,000-acre Candace McKee Ashmun Preserve at Forked River Mountain, located in the Pine Barrens of Ocean County, was dedicated in October.

PLEASE SEE STORIES ON PAGES 4 AND 5.

From Our Executive Director

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2010 was a whirlwind here at New Jersey Conservation Foundation. Within eight days in the fall, we celebrated our 50th anniversary with four former governors and two congressmen, AND dedicated a 4,000-acre preserve to a conservationist who has spent more than six decades helping New Jersey's environment.

By year's end, we completed 44 land preservation transactions, the highest total for any year in our history!

It was an honor to celebrate our 50th anniversary with former Governors Thomas Kean, James Florio, Christine Todd Whitman and James McGreevey on Oct. 30. Former New Jersey Network anchor Kent Manahan was masterful in her familiar role "interviewing" our former governors on stage; see some of their comments and advice on Page 3.

It was also wonderful to personally thank former Congressman Peter Frelinghuysen for his crucial roles in establishing the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge and New Jersey Conservation Foundation. The tribute was even more special because of the presence of his son, Rodney, the current congressman from the same district. Photos from the 50th anniversary celebration appear on pages 6 and 7.



One week earlier, we and many partners honored the incomparable Candy Ashmun – a member of the Pinelands Commission for 31 years and its current chair – by naming the Candace McKee Ashmun Preserve at Forked River Mountain for her. It's a testament to Candy's tireless advocacy that Governor Kean singled her out for praise at the 50th anniversary dinner. Read all about the Candace McKee Ashmun Preserve on pages 3 and 4.

With 50 years behind us, what lies ahead?

First and foremost, New Jersey still needs a permanent source of open space funding. With about 2 million acres left in our state that have yet to be paved or preserved, the land will be up for grabs once the economy turns around.

The defense of our already-preserved lands from diversions and damaging uses will become more challenging in the coming years.

Perhaps the most important challenge is making conservation relevant to younger generations of New Jersey's increasingly diverse population. Fifty years from now, who will care about the land? Will future generations defend the land; will they love it?

This is a collective challenge that all of us who love and enjoy our state's natural lands and resources must embrace if we are to ensure their permanent preservation.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michele S. Byers". The signature is fluid and cursive.

MICHELE S. BYERS
Executive Director



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Four former New Jersey governors were honored for their environmental legacies at our 50th anniversary celebration on Oct. 30 at the Frelinghuysen Arboretum in Morristown. Holding their awards are, from left, James McGreevey, Christine Todd Whitman, James Florio and Thomas Kean.

A Few Words from our Former Governors

New Jersey's 50th governor, Christine Todd Whitman, whose environmental legacy includes launching a million-acre preservation campaign in 1999, minced no words when describing the need for continued land preservation.

"Right now, we are on track to become the first state in the union to run out of open space," said Whitman at New Jersey Conservation Foundation's 50th anniversary celebration on Oct. 30. "I love New Jersey being first in a lot of things, but that's not where we want to be."

Whitman and three fellow former governors – James Florio, Thomas Kean and James McGreevey – shared recollections about environmental initiatives when they were in office, and their thoughts on what the current governor should do to keep the Garden State green.

McGreevey, who signed the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act into law in 2004, said it's important that the state not back away from its responsibility to protect water resources in the Highlands region. "I feel like I'm preaching to the choir, but we're not going to get a chance to do this again. This is it," he said. "If we don't protect the Highlands, we have not practiced responsible stewardship."

Florio, who served from 1990 to 1994, said many people incorrectly believe the state has to choose between a healthy economy and a healthy environment. "We're not going to have one without the other," he stated. "We have to take that as a mission."

Kean, who served from 1982 to 1990, agreed that attracting businesses to New Jersey and creating new jobs depends on keeping the state a desirable place to live. "For people trying to create jobs, it's very attractive to have green space around," he said.

If New Jersey, the most crowded state in the country, doesn't pay attention to open space and clean air and water, Kean warned, "we can forget about creating any more jobs."

Whitman said those in office should bear in mind the benefits of preserved land, such as filtering water. "Mother Nature frankly does a much better job of cleaning it than we will, and she does it far less expensively," Whitman pointed out. "You cannot have a thriving economy without a clean and green environment, without clean water to drink and clean air to breathe."

Kean advised the current governor to heed the voices of those who have worked on behalf of land conservation for many years. "They need to be listened to and heard because they understand the environmental ethic in this state perhaps more than anyone else," he said. At the same time, Kean added, the state needs to nurture new voices of environmental leadership. "I would urge the governor to help develop these leaders and to please listen," he said.

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Hundreds of acres of farmland were permanently protected in recent months, thanks to our grant partnership with the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

About the Cover

Candace McKee Ashmun of Basking Ridge, a dedicated advocate for New Jersey's environment since moving to the Garden State in 1946, stands next to the sign for a Pine Barrens preserve named in her honor. Among her many positions, Ashmun has been a member of the state Pinelands Commission since its creation in 1979.

New Jersey Conservation Foundation is a private, non-profit organization whose mission is to preserve land and natural resources throughout New Jersey for the benefit of all. We protect strategic lands through acquisition and stewardship, promote strong land use policies, and forge partnerships to achieve conservation goals. Since 1960, we have worked to protect the state's farmland, forests, parks, wetlands, water resources and special places.

For membership information, please call us at 1-888-LAND-SAVE (1-888-526-3728), e-mail us at info@njconservation.org, or visit our website at www.njconservation.org. Our mailing address is 170 Longview Road, Far Hills, NJ, 07931.

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Pine Barrens Preserve Named for Candace McKee Ashmun

Candace McKee Ashmun of Basking Ridge, who has spent six decades as a tireless advocate for New Jersey's environment, was honored on October 23 by having a 4,000-acre nature preserve in the Pine Barrens named for her.

About 75 of Ashmun's family members, friends and colleagues gathered for the ribbon-cutting ceremony and dedication of the "Candace McKee Ashmun Preserve at Forked River Mountain," formerly known as the Forked River Mountain Preserve. The property is located in Ocean and Lacey townships in Ocean County.

"I'm stunned; obviously I'm very honored," she said before the ceremony. "It's the greatest thing that could have happened to me."

Ashmun, 82, has been a member of the Pinelands Commission since its inception in 1979 and currently serves as chair. She was the founding director of the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions (ANJEC),

served on the State Planning Commission, and is a trustee of the Coalition for Affordable Housing and the Environment, vice president of the Fund for New Jersey, a consultant for the Crossroads of the American Revolution Association, and a longtime volunteer for New Jersey Conservation Foundation.

She and her husband, Charles, currently live at the Fellowship Village retirement community in Basking Ridge, Somerset County.

"Candy Ashmun is an inspiration, and we want to recognize her enormous contributions toward preserving the Pine

Ashmun Lauded as "Mentor" and "Hero" to Many

"Raise your hand if you want to be Candy Ashmun when you grow up!"

Laughing appreciatively, everyone in the audience shot hands in the air in response to the question posed by Richard Greenberg from the Fund for New Jersey. The crowd, it should be noted, was filled with many of the state's top environmental leaders.

This light moment at the dedication of the Candace McKee Ashmun Preserve at Forked River Mountain illustrated how much of an influence the 82-year-old Ashmun has been to those in the conservation community.

"She's a mentor and an energizer ... a woman who gets things done," said Michele Byers, executive director of New Jersey Conservation Foundation, who got her first environmental job through Ashmun.

"The things Candy has done just astound me," said John Stokes, executive director of the Pinelands Commission, on which Ashmun has served since 1979. "Candy



must have put 500,000 miles on her cars over the years ... and that's just in the Pinelands. She really has been the conscience of the

Pinelands Commission for the past 31 years."

Sandy Batty of the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions (ANJEC), of which Ashmun served as the first executive director, said Ashmun developed a 10-week training course that is still remarked on for its excellence. "There's no job too big or too small for Candy," declared Batty.

Ashmun was also described as a hero by Carleton Montgomery, executive director of the Pinelands Preservation Alliance. "She's the most perfect example of intelligence, wisdom, wiliness and tirelessness," he said. "It takes incredible fortitude to keep up the pace this requires.

"She's also incredibly pushy," added Montgomery with a laugh. "Hardly a

week goes by that I haven't been told what needs to be done."

Michael Catania, president of Conservation Resources Inc., called Ashmun "a compass and a guiding light for so many issues and so many years."

Lorraine Sansone of the Forked River Mountain Coalition said nobody has to explain the importance of land protection to Ashmun. "She gets it, she totally gets it," said Sansone. Turning to Ashmun, she concluded: "We're so honored your name is going to be attached to the Forked River Mountains."

Scott McVay, former executive director of the Geraldine Dodge Foundation, read a poem he wrote for Ashmun, describing her as a "valiant, vigilant witness/voice for the flora and fauna/patron saint of what we hold dear." The dedication ceremony was co-sponsored by ANJEC, the New Jersey Pinelands Commission, the Pinelands Preservation Alliance, the Forked River Mountain Coalition and the Fund for New Jersey.

Admiring the new sign are, from left, Candace Ashmun, husband Charles Ashmun, daughter Elizabeth Ansley and niece Anne Fox.



Barrens, and the quality of life for all of us in all of New Jersey,” said Michele S. Byers, executive director of New Jersey Conservation Foundation. “It is an honor to dedicate this magnificent preserve for her.”

Ashmun grew up in Oregon and earned a bachelor’s degree in physics from Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts. She moved to New Jersey in 1946 with her husband, with whom she has three grown children, eight grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

Among other occupations, she has held positions as a freelance photographer, a managing editor and reporter at a local newspaper, and as an adjunct professor. She studied municipal law with an attorney and might have become one herself had the law not changed.

“You used to be able to take the bar without going to law school, but I was one year too late for that,” she explained. Still, she said, her knowledge of municipal law proved to be a great help throughout her career.

At ANJEC in the 1970s, Ashmun decided to take advantage of a jobs program, the Comprehensive Education and Training Act (CETA), to develop a new generation of environmentalists. “I had 21 kids working through the CETA program,” she recalled. “It was wonderful because they were such a lively group. Almost all of them are still doing nonprofit and environmental work.” Among them are Byers and Tom Wells of the Nature Conservancy.

Ashmun was first appointed to the Pinelands Commission by Gov. Brendan T. Byrne in June 1979. She recalls Byrne’s chief of staff



The Candace McKee Ashmun Preserve includes miles of sandy roads and trails through the Pine Barrens of Ocean County.

telling her, “We need to have a woman and an environmentalist, and you’re it.” Ashmun readily accepted.

“I just got there and never left,” said Ashmun. “I fell in love with the Pine Barrens, which is interesting because I came from the Northwest, where the mountains are 11,000 feet and the trees are 200 feet. The Pines are just a very subtle place.” She gets a chuckle out of the fact that the Forked River Mountains are only about 200 feet in elevation.

Creating land use policies in the Pinelands – and elsewhere – are a favorite part of Ashmun’s work. “Land use has always been



something that fascinates me – the connection between how we use the land and how we protect the environment,” she said.

Ashmun also gets satisfaction from organizing the “environmental summit,” an informal meeting of environmental leaders, lawmakers, and state regulatory staff.

“It’s much better to sit down and talk than not talk – or throw arrows at each other,” she remarked. “It’s been a very rewarding, interesting experience.”

Cheers for 50 Years!



Festive Fundraiser Celebrates 50 Years of Conservation

New Jersey Conservation Foundation celebrated its 50th anniversary on Saturday, Oct. 30, at the Frelinghuysen Arboretum in Morristown. The fund-raiser netted about \$220,000 to help us continue our mission of preserving natural areas, parks and farmland throughout New Jersey.

Over 340 people attended, including four former governors: Thomas Kean, James Florio, Christine Todd Whitman and James McGreevey. Former New Jersey Network anchor Kent Manahan served as mistress of ceremonies, interviewing the former governors and presenting awards honoring them for their environmental legacies.

Former Congressman Peter H.B. Frelinghuysen was recognized for his pivotal role in establishing both the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge and New Jersey Conservation Foundation.

Other highlights of the evening included a live and silent auction, the raffle of a 2011 Toyota Prius hybrid, and a cork pull.





1. Yoshimi Inaba, right, chairman and CEO of Toyota Motor Sales USA, and New Jersey Conservation Foundation President L. Keith Reed get ready to draw the winning raffle ticket for a 2011 Toyota Prius hybrid donated by Toyota. The lucky winner was Tom Koven of Hampton.

2. New Jersey Conservation Foundation's leaders met with former governors at the 50th anniversary celebration. From left are Governor Thomas Kean, Governor Christine Todd Whitman, New Jersey Conservation Foundation Executive Director Michele Byers, Governor James Florio, Governor James McGreevey and New Jersey Conservation Foundation President L. Keith Reed.

3. Thomas Byrne, son of former Governor Brendan Byrne, accepts his father's award from former New Jersey Network anchor Kent Manahan.

4. New Jersey Conservation Foundation Trustee Holly Hegener, who served as one of the 50th anniversary celebration co-chairs.

5. A colorfully-dressed Roger Byrom, right, enjoys a glass of wine with Wendy Rasmussen.

6. Vaughn McKoy and his daughter, Aubri, check out one of the silent auction items: a NY Jets football autographed by the team.

7. New Jersey Conservation Foundation trustee Mark Biedron with his wife, Gretchen, left, and mother-in-law, Gretchen Johnson.

8. New Jersey Conservation Foundation trustee and event co-chair Wendy Mager thanks attendees while her fellow trustees and co-chairs Ronnie Goldberg and Holly Hegener look on.

9. Former trustee Hunt Stockwell takes a whirl around the dance floor with his wife, Margaret.

10. Sharing a laugh are, from left, former Governor Thomas Kean, former Congressman Peter H.B. Frelinghuysen, an honorary trustee of New Jersey Conservation Foundation, and his son, current Congressman Rodney Frelinghuysen. The senior Frelinghuysen was given an award recognizing his pivotal role in establishing both the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge and New Jersey Conservation Foundation.

11. New Jersey Conservation Foundation President L. Keith Reed leads a toast to the next 50 years!



State Agriculture Secretary Douglas H. Fisher, right, stops to chat with former property owner Frank Fichera after a press conference to announce the preservation.

476 Acres of Agricultural and Ecological Treasures Preserved in Mannington Meadows of Salem County

It's no exaggeration to say that the former Fichera farm has it all. The 476-acre property in Mannington Township, Salem County, includes cultivated farmland, woods, tidal marshes, freshwater wetlands and even a forested island!

New Jersey Conservation Foundation purchased the property to ensure permanent protection of 279 acres for agriculture and nearly 200 acres in the Mannington Meadows ecosystem as a haven for birds and wildlife.

“The importance of this property – from both agricultural and ecological standpoints – made it one of our top priorities in the state for preservation,” said Michele S. Byers, executive director.

The property was purchased using funding from the State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC), the federal Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program, the state Green Acres program and the William Penn Foundation.

The Fichera acquisition is an outgrowth of our Tri-County Agricultural Retention Partnership, established to promote a viable agricultural industry in the South Jersey farmland. “In 2006, a proposed residential development of up to 3,000 homes on the Mannington Meadows signaled that this important farming region was squarely in developers’ sights, so we stepped up our efforts to protect the Meadows’ rich agricultural and natural resources,” noted Byers.

The Mannington Meadows are a 6,000-acre tidal ecosystem within the Salem River watershed, surrounded by thousands of acres of highly productive farmland.

The Fichera property will be managed by New Jersey Conservation Foundation to promote sustainable agriculture and demonstrate the intricate relationship between agriculture and natural resources in the region. A portion of the land will be open to the public for nature observation, hiking, fishing, canoeing and kayaking.

Frank Fichera, who sold the property for preservation, will continue to farm the portion that has been preserved for agriculture under a lease agreement. “I wanted to preserve it because it’s an excellent farm, with good soils,” remarked Fichera, who grows tomatoes, asparagus, peppers, eggplants and cucumbers.

“We were pleased to be able to provide key funding for this cooperative project, which builds on our continuing investment in preserving farmland in Salem County to ensure that agriculture remains an important part of our communities for future generations,” said Agriculture Secretary Douglas H. Fisher.

Preserved Farm in Warren County Becomes Home to Water Buffalo

Brian and Courtney Foley are a new breed of dairy farmer, staking their future on a new breed of bovine – at least to New Jersey.

The Foleys are raising water buffalo, whose high-butterfat milk is ideal for making a gourmet mozzarella cheese known in Italy as “mozzarella di bufala.” Although common in other parts of the world, water buffalo are a rarity in New Jersey.

“We knew we needed to differentiate ourselves with something that’s very recognizable and marketable,” explained Courtney about their decision to look beyond traditional dairy cows.

The Foleys have slowly built their water buffalo herd through purchase and breeding since acquiring their first cow in 2005. Four calves were born this summer and fall, bringing the herd to 18.

With the growing herd, pastures were getting crowded at the Foley’s old seven-acre property. Luckily, the water buffalo have gotten a roomier home: a 62-acre preserved farm in Washington Township, Warren County, which the Foleys bought from New Jersey Conservation Foundation.

New Jersey Conservation Foundation acquired the former Sigler family farm in 2008 to preserve it for agriculture. After permanently deed-restricting the property, the foundation put it on the market. The Foleys turned out to be the perfect buyers.

They had been searching for a larger farm, but everything they looked at was out of their price range. Finally, they discovered that preserved farmland was more reasonably priced, since the development rights are permanently extinguished.

“It’s a beautiful piece of land, and we wouldn’t have been able to buy it if we were going up against a builder,” said Brian.

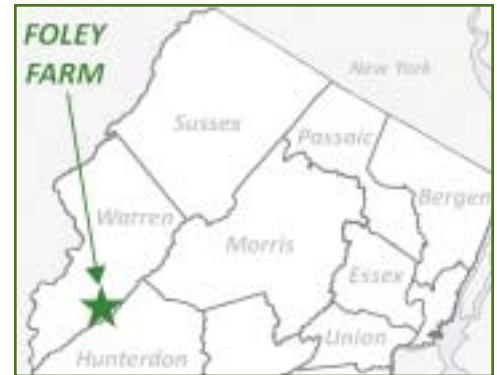
This summer and fall, the Foleys repaired barns and fences, and replanting fields with grasses. The animals were moved there in November.

Always Wanted a Farm

Raising water buffalo in Warren County is a big leap for a couple who grew up in the Long Island suburbs and later lived in Queens. But what they lack in farming background they make up for in enthusiasm.

“Ever since I was a kid, I’ve loved animals and wanted a farm,” said Courtney.

She and Brian learned about water buffalo during two trips to Italy, where they visited farms and sampled cheeses. They were won over by the animals’ docile, friendly,



intelligent personalities – and the delicious artisan mozzarella made from their rich milk. Another plus: water buffalo are hardy beasts that eat less than traditional dairy breeds and are resistant to most diseases.

The Foleys learned the art of organic cheese-making by taking classes at the University of Pennsylvania and apprenticing with Jonathan White, owner of Bobolink Dairy in Hunterdon County, which produces organic cheeses. They’ve also been assisted by the Northeast Organic Farming Association’s New Jersey chapter.

They’ve perfected their buffalo mozzarella recipe through trial and error, although they’re not yet licensed to sell their cheeses.

They’re hoping to have a commercial permit by next summer.

The Foleys are convinced that their animals’ contentment is an important ingredient. “You know that commercial about how happy cows come from California?” asked Courtney. “Well, happy buffalo come from New Jersey.”



Brian and Courtney Foley, pictured with two water buffalo calves born this past summer, have moved their growing buffalo herd to a 62-acre farm in Warren County preserved by New Jersey Conservation Foundation in 2008.

Photo by Sandy Perry

Hundreds of Acres of Farmland Preserved Through Federal Grants

About 650 acres of our state's vital farmland were preserved during the last several months using New Jersey Conservation Foundation's grants from the federal Farm and Ranch Lands Preservation Program (FRPP).

Since 2005, we have been awarded \$19.4 million in FRPP funds, more than any other New Jersey nonprofit. The 2010 grant of \$7.2 million was New Jersey Conservation Foundation's largest ever from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resource Conservation Service, which administers the FRPP program.

We use FRPP funds in partnership with local, county and/or state farmland preservation programs to permanently preserve working farms and protect the Garden State's agricultural heritage.

Grant funds are used to purchase development rights, and the farms remain in private ownership. "This program helps keep farmland affordable for the farmers," explained

Greg Romano, assistant director of New Jersey Conservation Foundation and head of its land program.

Here are nine FRPP projects that closed in recent months:

- The 185-acre Stamets farm in Holland Township, Hunterdon County, the new home to Bobolink Dairy, whose milk is used to make organic cheeses.
- The 19-acre Burns farm in Lawrence Township, Cumberland County, where hay, chickens, lambs, goats and guinea fowl are raised.
- The 108-acre Prant farm in Allamuchy Township, Warren County, which includes pastures, hay fields and crop fields.
- The 57-acre Maple Lane farm in Hillsborough Township, Somerset County, which includes hay fields that will be managed as a habitat for grassland birds by the D&R Greenway Land Trust.
- The 48-acre Frenchtown Run farm on Horseshoe Bend Road in Kingwood Township, Hunterdon County.
- The 67-acre Piedilato farm in Bedminster Township, Somerset County, which is currently in hay production but may have acreage converted for organic vegetables and humanely-raised cattle, sheep and chickens.
- The 56-acre Schuster farm in Greenwich Township, Warren County, where corn is grown.
- The 19-acre Mulligan farm in Pilesgrove Township, Salem County.
- The 78-acre Demeter farm in White Township, Warren County.

The Piedilato farm in Bedminster Township, Somerset County, was preserved with the help of New Jersey Conservation Foundation's federal Farm and Ranchlands Preservation Program grant. Inset: Farmer Debbie Burns, center, was the first in Cumberland County to have her farm preserved using federal Farm and Ranchlands Preservation Program funds. Burns proudly posed by her new sign with Greg Romano, New Jersey Conservation Foundation's assistant director, and Cumberland County Freeholders Joe Pepitone and Tom Sheppard.



Photo by Fran Rapa

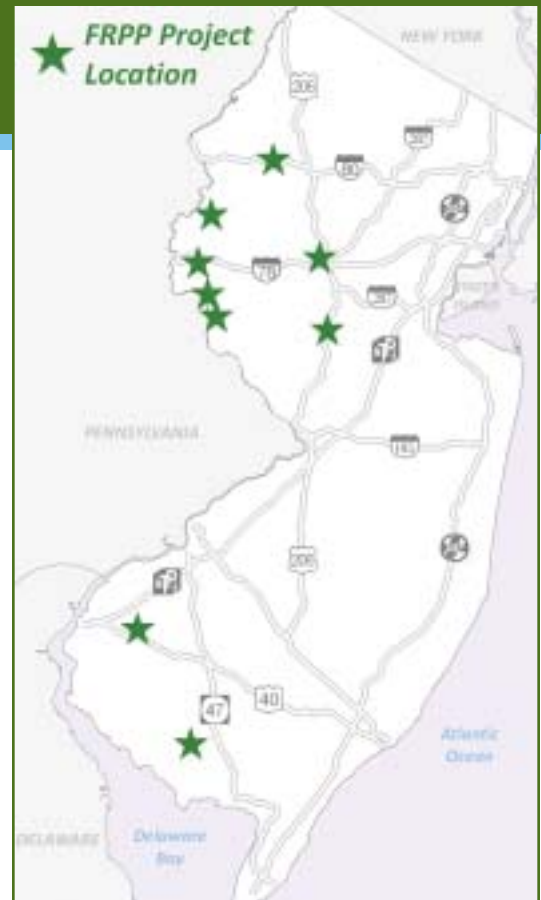


Photo by Stefanie Miller



Photo by Clem Fiori

The Prant farm in Allamuchy Township, Warren County, was preserved with the help of New Jersey Conservation Foundation's federal Farm and Ranchlands Preservation Program grant.



Natural Areas Preserved in Hunterdon County

Nestled among preserved farmland in Hunterdon County are two natural areas that were purchased during the last several months and are now open to the public for hiking, fishing, nature observation and other passive recreation.

The first is a wooded 5.2-acre parcel along the Wickecheoke Creek in Delaware Township, surrounded by preserved land. The second is a 25-acre tract in Kingwood Township, which runs along the Copper Creek.

The Delaware Township land was purchased from Estella Hilton, who raised her four children on the family's adjacent farm. Thirteen years ago Estella and her late husband, Edward, preserved 70 acres of farmland through an easement that permanently restricts it to agricultural use.

Acquisition of the Hilton property expands New Jersey Conservation Foundation's Wickecheoke Creek Preserve, an ever-growing network of protected parcels along the scenic Wickecheoke Creek.

"It's a small property, but one that is very important to us," said Michele S. Byers, executive director of New Jersey Conservation Foundation. "We've been working for more than 20 years to preserve land along the Wickecheoke Creek, and it's critical to keep adding the connecting parcels."

The 25-acre natural area off Horseshoe Bend Road in Kingwood is part of a larger preservation project. The New Jersey Conservation Foundation, Hunterdon Land Trust Alliance and Kingwood Township joined forces this past summer to preserve a total of 73 acres, of which the remaining 48 are permanently protected farmland.



The wooded Hilton property in Delaware Township offers scenic views of the Wickecheoke Creek.

About 75 participants on the annual Donald Jones Memorial Hike enjoyed a two-hour walk through both the natural area and preserved farmland at Horseshoe Bend in November.

Deer Don't Just Eat Plants; They Precipitate Wildlife Loss

New Jersey Conservation Foundation has embarked on a 300-acre forest restoration fencing project to exclude deer at the Apschawa Preserve in West Milford, Passaic County. Restoration ecologist Leslie Sauer explains in “The Once and Future Forest,” when a forest like Apschawa has dwindling plant populations that are not yet gone, a large-scale restoration investment can result in measurable benefits to animals.

New Jersey citizens want rich, diverse forests. But few realize that on preserved lands, overabundant deer are the current primary threat to hundreds of plant and animal species.

One mascot for the plight of our forests is the cryptic Whip-poor-will, a nocturnal insect-chasing bird, whose loud song graces summer evenings. Once abundant, now almost gone, this ground-nesting bird suffers as deer consume the forest-floor herbs, shrubs, and seedling trees. Here's why:

- Whip-poor-wills are less likely to evade predators, like owls and coyotes, when vegetative cover becomes sparse;
- As safe, well-hidden nesting sites become rare, Whip-poor-will eggs and nestlings are more likely to be eaten by blue jays, chipmunks, crows, and foxes;
- Thousands of caterpillar species decline as forest floor plants disappear. With fewer moths emerging from metamorphosis, the food chain is disrupted.

New Jersey Conservation Foundation's goal is to demonstrate that deer are “priming the pump” for ecological collapse in the state's most important, heavily forested ecosystem. Overabundant deer are browsing on native plants, fueling the spread of non-native invasive plants, and causing sensitive animal species to dwindle.

Policy makers are not listening to the ecological warning sirens blaring through the forest. Wildlife officials nibble

at the problem, by expanding recreational hunting in highly fragmented and degraded suburban areas. But in our heavily forested areas, new and comprehensive strategies must be employed to reduce deer density.

Although sensitive animal populations have been severely diminished by deer, they can rebound if deer density is significantly reduced. Currently, the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife is not attempting to reduce deer density in the Pequannock River (Newark Watershed) region of the New Jersey Highlands. Current state policy established for this region does not recognize high deer density as an adverse impact to hundreds of species of plants and animals.

New Jersey Conservation Foundation conducted a census of deer within the 300-acre Apschawa fence in December. Based on the number of individual deer observed, we established baseline density at a minimum of 40 deer per square mile. A healthy deciduous forest in the northeastern U.S. suffers when deer density is greater than 20 deer per square mile; the Apschawa forest has twice that density and it is already partially degraded!



A degraded forest cannot recover until deer density is reduced and held at low levels. Without action, the lack of native plant regeneration and the loss of forest-interior animals will accelerate. The New Jersey Conservation Foundation does not believe that building and managing numerous deer exclusion fences can be a solution to restoring the 100-square-mile Highlands landscape within the Pequannock Watershed. However, our forest restoration fence, at half of one square mile, is large enough to reveal that animal populations will rebound when the forest understory is healed.

New Jersey Conservation Foundation hopes to convince citizens and policy makers to take action. Reduce overabundant deer, and make forests resilient to the threats posed by never-ending suburbanization, non-native plants, pathogens, insect invaders, and eventually climate change.

NJCF Thanks

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Welcome New Employees

Two new employees have joined the New Jersey Conservation Foundation staff:
*Kathleen Thayne as Development and Communications Assistant,
and Russell Juelg as Land Steward.*



A resident of Morris County, Kathleen is responsible for maintaining the donor database, coordinating proposal and report schedules, coordinating special events, and working with the Development Committee of the Board. She was previously employed by the Frost Valley YMCA, where she was Director of Alumni and Donor Relations for three years. A graduate of Rutgers University with a BA degree in psychology, she is also a certified yoga teacher.



A resident of Burlington County, Russell is developing a trail system and educational programs for the Franklin Parker Preserve and other properties. He has a BA degree in religion studies from Texas Christian University. Past work experience includes three years as managing director of Woodford Cedar Run Wildlife Refuge and 11 years as Director of Outreach at Pinelands Preservation Alliance. His favorite areas of research include Pine Barrens vegetation communities, field botany, and threatened and endangered species.

Staff

Michele S. Byers – Executive Director
Russell Adams – Associate Land Steward
Kraig Adams – Associate Land Steward
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Land & Stewardship
Alix Bacon – Regional Manager,
Western Piedmont
Carol Banhart – Sr. Coordinator,
Development & Outreach
Louis Cantafio, Ph.D. – Sr. Land Steward
Aria (Beth) Davisson – Project Manager,
Black River Greenway
Emile D. DeVito, Ph.D. – Manager, Science
& Stewardship
Janet Eisenhauer – Project Manager,
Delaware Bay Watershed
Wilma E. Frey – Sr. Policy Manager
Amy Hansen – Policy Analyst
Maria Hauser – Executive Assistant/
Personnel Manager
Steve Jack – Associate Land Steward
Chris Jage – Assistant Director,
South Jersey
Russell Juelg – Land Steward
Peter Kroll, Ph.D. – Project Manager, Camden
Lisa MacCollum – Assistant Director, Acquisition
Alison E. Mitchell – Director of Policy
Tim Morris – Director of Stewardship
Sieglinde Mueller – Easement Steward
Marie K. Newell – Project Coordinator, Acquisition
Tanya Nolte – GIS Manager
Sandy Stuart Perry – Communications Manager
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Lauren Ramos – Development &
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Francis Rapa – Regional Manager,
Delaware Bay Watershed
Karen Richards, CPA – Director of Finance
& Administration
Greg Romano – Assistant Director &
Director of Statewide Land Acquisition
Raymond Steingall – Land Steward
Susan Schmidt
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Laura Szwak – Director of Partnerships
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Kathleen Thayne – Development &
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NEW JERSEY CONSERVATION



As part of his Eagle Scout project, Flemington area resident Jay Chardoussin (center, with arrow insignia on belt loop) led Troop 108 of Hunterdon County in building an information kiosk and picnic tables at New Jersey Conservation Foundation's Huey Preserve in Franklin Township, Hunterdon County. Chardoussin and his fellow scouts provided all materials and labor for the project. They raised \$1,500 by holding a car wash and soliciting donations from local residents and businesses, and spent more than 250 man-hours on construction.

Photo by Ray Stiegall

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