2003 – 2007
New Jersey Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

Preserving Natural Resources • Providing Recreation
Planning for the Future

New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection

Green Acres Program

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

James E. McGreevey, Governor

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
Bradley M. Campbell, Commissioner

NATURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES
Marc A. Matsil, Assistant Commissioner

GREEN ACRES PROGRAM
John S. Watson, Jr., Administrator

This report was prepared by the Green Acres Program
Bureau of Planning and Information Management
Robert S. Stokes, Chief
Lou Iuliucci, Program Development Specialist
Steven Jandoli, Supervising Program Specialist
Eric Knudsen, Administrative Analyst
Nancee May, Support Staff
Kathleen Minnear, Program Development Specialist
Michael McCann, Supervising Environmental Specialist
John Thomas, GIS Specialist

March 2003

Table of Contents

	Page
Acknowledgements	
Executive Summary	**1**
Chapter 1 – The Policy Plan	**4**
Chapter 2 – Open Space and Recreation Providers	**13**
Federal	
Regional	
State	
County	
Municipal	
Nonprofit and Commercial	
Chapter 3 – Supply, Demand and Need	**43**
Chapter 4 – Issues and Policies	**52**
Land Preservation	
Recreation	
Urban Centers	
State Resource Areas	
Greenways	
Partnerships	
Stewardship	
Chapter 5 – Action Plan	**76**
Chapter 6 – Project Priorities Selection	**84**
Chapter 7 – New Jersey Wetlands Plan	**104**
New Jersey Freshwater Wetlands Protection Act	
New Jersey Land Use Regulation Programs	
Major Accomplishments	
Wetland Conservation Strategies	
Appendices	**113**
Green Acres Program	
Land and Water Conservation Fund	
Garden State Preservation Trust Act	

Acknowledgements

The following NJDEP staff contributed to the preparation of the 2003-2007 New Jersey Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan:

Dorina Frizzera – Coastal Planning
Susan Lockwood – Land Use Regulation
Larry Miller – Division of Parks and Forestry
Laurie Pettigrew – Division of Fish and Wildlife
Michele Stelle – Division of Parks and Forestry

Also assisting in the preparation of the 2003-2007 New Jersey Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan were these agencies and organizations:

Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions
Delaware and Raritan Greenway
Monmouth County Park System
New Jersey Conservation Foundation
New York/New Jersey Baykeeper
Somerset County Park Commission
The Highlands Coalition
The Trust for Public Land

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 2003 SCORP has been prepared to meet the following goals:

1. **To preserve sufficient amounts of open space for current and future public use and to utilize the environmental protection amenities of open space to protect important natural resources for the enhancement of the quality of life in New Jersey.**
2. **To promote the development of parks in New Jersey's urban and suburban centers to support revitalization efforts and to provide close to home recreation opportunities for residents statewide.**
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.**

The 2003 SCORP also contains findings based on research and the public participation and planning processes. The findings presented in the 2003 SCORP are:

1. **New Jersey has 1,082,625 acres of preserved public open space and farmland.**
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. **207 local governments are assessing a tax for land preservation, park and recreation projects and historic preservation, providing an estimated $158 million annually.**
4. **Land use planning and coordination between public and private agencies is an important element of New Jersey's open space and recreation program.**
5. **Approximately $450 million in capital improvement projects have been identified as needed for state parks, forests, historic sites and wildlife management areas.**
6. **There is a need for the State to focus its land preservation projects on the protection of water resources, preservation of biodiversity and the provision of park and recreation opportunities statewide.**
7. **Open space, parks and recreation projects are essential features of urban redevelopment initiatives.**

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 2003 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. The local government survey on recreation needs and preferences and 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 seven 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 and related activities during the next five years.

Chapter 5 outlines an action plan that will support the implementation of policies to achieve SCORP goals. It details strategies and partnerships that can be used to support open space and recreation policies statewide.

Chapter 6 covers the State project selection process and the methodology used to award funding via 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.

The Appendices feature an overview of the Green Acres Program, the Land and Water Conservation Fund and the Garden State Preservation Trust Act.

Chapter 1

The Policy Plan

The 2003 New Jersey Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) is the seventh 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 and guidance to the State, local governments and conservation organizations in the preservation of open space and the provision of recreation opportunities. Through the accumulation of data on the available supply of open space and recreation resources, the degree and nature of the demand for recreation opportunities, this plan, using an issues and policies format, will attempt to direct the planning, acquisition and development of the State's natural resources for public recreation and open space purposes. 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 2003 SCORP has been prepared to meet the following goals:

1. **To preserve sufficient amounts of open space for current and future public use and to utilize the environmental protection amenities of open space to protect important natural resources for the enhancement of the quality of life in New Jersey.**

2. **To promote the development of parks in New Jersey's urban and suburban centers to support revitalization efforts and to provide close to home recreation opportunities for residents statewide.**
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, and each State, by a State Liaison Officer (SLO) who is appointed by the Governor. The SLO for New Jersey is the Assistant Commissioner for Natural and Historic Resources. As SLO, the Assistant 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 Division of Natural and Historic Resources, specifically, the Green Acres Program in the Department of Environmental Protection, will continue to be 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 35 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 a wide variety of 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 which participate in the Planning Incentive Program hold two public meetings on their open space and recreation plan. This requirement ensures that local governments are providing access to plan information and an opportunity for residents to express their concerns on these individual plans. 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 187 municipalities and 20 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 issues.

The Governor's Council on New Jersey Outdoors has played an important role in the SCORP public participation process in the past. Over the years, the Council has examined a variety of open space and recreation issues, held public meetings and issued reports documenting their findings.

The Council's involvement in this current SCORP has continued this role. The Council was given the charge in 1996 to review the open space and recreation needs of the State and to investigate and make recommendations for a stable source of funding to meet these needs. The Council held six public hearings over the course of the following two years. More than 200 public officials, organizational representatives and New Jersey residents provided testimony and written comments to the Council.

During the summer and fall of 2000, as part of the Garden State Greenways project, the New Jersey Conservation Foundation and the Green Acres Program held a series of workshops attended by representatives of county and municipal governments, state agencies, and nonprofit conservation organizations. The purpose of these workshops was to gain a broadbase participation and input into the statewide greenways vision from the public and the conservation community, stakeholder groups, and individuals. The workshops also served to introduce the project's concept of protecting and linking large core areas of critical lands.

The half day workshops were conducted as urban and regional planning charrettes. For each workshop, a series of eight sectional basemaps were created comprising the entire state. Accompanying each basemap were two clear overlays, illustrating proposed and potential open space, greenways and trails. Following a project presentation, participants were divided into breakout groups with facilitators. They were asked to identify and draw existing open space and greenways missing from the basemaps, and then to recommend and add potential open space hubs and connecting greenway corridors. Recommendations were entered into a geographic information system database. The workshops ensured that the project solicited statewide perspectives on the proposed greenways system.

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, as were each County Freeholder President. Every New Jersey municipality received notification of the availability of the draft plan for review as did each member of the New Jersey Legislature. Interested parties such as nonprofit land trusts and conservation organizations were also sent copies for comment. Copies were also sent to the public libraries participating in the New Jersey Repository System. Comments submitted by these various agencies, organizations and individuals have been incorporated into the 2003 New Jersey SCORP. The Green Acres Program hosted three 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. SCORP information was also available on the Green Acres website at 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 and planning 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. There is a $200 million combined annual limit for open space and farmland appropriations.

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 June 2002, the Trust approved $554.4 million for state, local government and nonprofit open space preservation and park and recreation projects.

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 are currently $8 million a year.

Blueprint for Intelligent Growth (BIG) Map

Growth management is an imperative for New Jersey. As an element of the State's smart growth efforts, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection has developed a

mapping strategy that will align state regulations and funding programs with the State Development and Redevelopment Plan. The BIG Map will ultimately identify areas of the state where development will be encouraged and where growth will be strictly regulated. A major goal of the BIG Map proposal is to provide clear direction to developers and local governments on state environmental regulatory standards prior to developing new projects. This approach will strengthen the protection of natural resources throughout New Jersey while accommodating growth in suitable areas.

TABLE 1

Funding Approvals for Open Space and Recreation Projects

June 1999 – June 2002

Project Type	Funding
State Land Acquisition	$236,000,000
Local Government Acquisition	$221,600,000
Local Government Park Development	$ 46,700,000
Nonprofit Acquisition and Park Development	$ 49,200,000
Coastal Blue Acres Acquisitions	$ 992,000
Total	$554,492,000

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.

Summary of Findings

That New Jersey believes open space preservation is an essential public policy is an understatement. Nine Green Acres bond issues totaling $1.3 billion together with funding from the Garden State Preservation Trust Act, which has the potential to provide an eventual $1.9 billion, representing a combined $3.2 billion public investment. New Jerseyans have continually expressed their support and desire 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. New Jersey was ranked second in the nation in a study done in 2001 of state funding for open space preservation. Open space and recreation comprise one of the cornerstones of New Jersey's smart growth policy.

This substantial, long term dedication of funds for land preservation and recreation represents, in part, 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 for all New Jerseyans. It is essential to preserving rural landscapes and is a major factor in sustaining New Jersey's $31 billion tourism industry. New Jersey's open space goals are based on comprehensive analysis and public opinion concerning preservation needs for biological diversity, water supplies, farmland, historic sites 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 considerable investment in open space and recreation is aimed at maintaining a high quality of life for all residents. New Jersey is clearly a national leader in open space preservation and recreation efforts. Of the 110 open space and recreation tax referendums on the ballot nationally in 2001, 54 were in New Jersey.

New Jersey's natural and recreation resources are facing tremendous pressures from the State's increasing population and development. Between 1990 and 2000, the State's population grew by over 684,000 people, an increase of nearly 9%. During the same period, 273,646 building permits were authorized. Rutgers University Center for Remote Sensing and Spatial Analysis examined changes in New Jersey's land use between 1986 and 1995 and determined that a total of 135,764 acres were developed, an area equal to the total land area of Essex and Union counties combined. The Center estimates that given the amount of

buildable land remaining in New Jersey and current rates of land development and preservation, New Jersey could be built out within 40 years. The implications for natural, historic and recreation resources are beyond words. These implications will not only result from population associated growth and impacts, but also from increased demand for and use of New Jersey's public conservation and recreation resources.

Findings

1. **New Jersey has 1,082,625 acres of preserved public open space and farmland.**
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. **207 local governments are assessing a tax for land preservation, parks and recreation projects and historic preservation, providing an estimated $158 million annually.**
4. **Land use planning and coordination between public and private agencies is an important element of New Jersey's open space and recreation program.**
5. **Approximately $450 million in capital improvement projects have been identified as needed for state parks, forests, historic sites and wildlife management areas.**
6. **There is a need for the State to focus its land preservation projects on the protection of water resources, preservation of biodiversity and the provision of park and recreation opportunities statewide.**
7. **Open space, park and recreation projects are essential features of urban redevelopment initiatives.**

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. It is not surprising that given the many ecosystems in the state, that New Jersey is one of the leaders in statewide biodiversity efforts. This biodiversity includes 2,215 known native plant species and close to 900 wildlife species.

Approximately 1.5 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 population. Along with hunting and fishing, birding and wildlife photography are enjoyed by many residents.

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 112,400 acres of public open space in New Jersey. Others such as the Department of Defense's military installations offer open space amenities indirectly.

The National Park Service is responsible for some of the most outstanding recreation resources in New Jersey. In 2001, more than 5.6 million people visited National Park Service sites in New Jersey. 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 are popular activities.

The Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area 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, 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. The Park Service manages approximately 35,000 acres of the National Recreation Area in New Jersey.

The National Park Service also takes advantage of New Jersey's rich history. In Morris County, Morristown National Historic Park provides visitors a look at an important Revolutionary War encampment. Further evidence of New Jersey's pivotal role in the Revolution can be seen at Washington's Headquarters.

The National Park Service has teamed with the State and prepared a Special Resource Study to determine eligibility and level of public support for designation of a portion of New Jersey as a National Heritage Area. The Crossroads of the American Revolution would link New Jersey's Revolutionary War sites to provide recreational and educational

opportunities to the public. The living landscape of the National Heritage Area is based on public and private agencies and individuals using a small federal investment to leverage other financial resources.

The National Park Service's role in New Jersey goes beyond park management. The LWCF and the Urban Park and Recreation Recovery Program are important facets of New Jersey's open space and recreation funding. A total of 296 projects have been funded in New Jersey using close to $105 million from the LWCF. This funding has been used to preserve 72,452 acres in New Jersey and develop over 230 park and recreation projects. The Urban Park and Recreation Recovery Program has provided over $19 million for recreation projects in urban centers throughout New Jersey. The Park Service, in cooperation with regional watershed groups, prepared the Musconetcong River National Wild and Scenic Rivers Study and a river management plan in consideration for the inclusion of the Musconetcong River in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

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 620,000 visitors in 2001. These refuges comprise 68,900 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. Approximately 10,000 acres were acquired by the Service as additions to the network refuge in the state between 1995 and 2000 and remains active in pursuing acquisition opportunities to expand the existing refuge system in New Jersey. The Service is also active in habitat restoration through its Challenge Cost Share and Partners for Fish and Wildlife Programs. The Service's New Jersey field office is involved in preservation planning for the Hackensack Meadowlands and the New York/New Jersey Harbor Estuary.

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, 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,

Table 2

Federal Funding Programs
for

New Jersey Open Space and Recreation Projects

1965-2002

Program	Funding Awarded
Land and Water Conservation Fund	$108,765,801
Urban Parks and Recreation Recovery	$ 19,150,042
Pinelands Section 502	$ 52,900,000
National Coastal Wetlands Conservation	$ 5,210,000
Forest Legacy	$ 7,871,000
Transportation Equity Act Funding	$ 2,675,000
Recreational Trails Program	$ 4,326,604

As of July 2002. Please note that these Federal programs have varied start dates for the provision of funding to New Jersey.

they help protect the water quality of streams that drain on to public lands. Former military installations have been surplused and converted into public open space and recreation areas. The State recognizes that base closures could lead to the possible loss of these benefits.

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 is developing a restoration plan for the Hudson Raritan Estuary. The Corps is also working with the State to acquire 5,350 acres of natural flood storage areas in the central Passaic River Basin for flood control purposes.

New Jersey has worked closely with the Department of Agriculture's Forest Legacy Program to preserve 11,882 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. The State has used Forest Legacy funds to preserve over 9,200 acres of prime forest lands in Newark's Pequannock Watershed. An additional 5,300 acres have been targeted for preservation using Forest Legacy funding. The Forest Service has also updated its 1992 Highlands report.

The United States Department of Transportation has provided funding to New Jersey through its National Scenic Byways Program. Route 29 was nominated as the first and only to date scenic byway under this federal program that helps preserve scenic corridors. Approximately 35 miles long and bordering the Delaware River, the Route 29 Scenic Byway stretches from the historic areas of Trenton in Mercer County to the rural landscapes of Hunterdon County. A 220 acre property was preserved in 2002 using funds from the National Scenic Byways Program and the Garden State Preservation Trust. The project protected one of the largest remaining developable tracts in the Delaware River corridor and preserved the scenic integrity of Route 29.

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 is a State resource area. This internationally recognized area is 1.1 million acres in size and occupies 22% of New Jersey's land area. The Pinelands encompasses the largest parcel of open space between Boston and Richmond. Its political jurisdiction takes in all or portions of 52 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.

Water resource protection remains at the forefront of the Pinelands program. Environmental monitoring confirms that the most important drainage areas in the heart of the Pinelands retain their natural qualities. A truly unique, intergovernmental plan to protect the upper reaches of the Mullica River basin from water supply and wastewater impacts has been instituted and new septic system technologies are being introduced to significantly reduce non-point source pollution. The Commission is leading the Mullica watershed planning effort and work is beginning on a comprehensive assessment of the Kirkwood-Cohansey aquifer, the lifeblood of the Pinelands ecosystem. All of these efforts will ensure that Pinelands water resources will be protected.

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, canoeing 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 over 38,000 acres in the Pinelands.

TABLE 3
Pinelands "502" Acquisition Projects

Section "502" Funded Pinelands Project	Original Target Acreage	Total Acres Acquired as of June 2002
Cedar Creek Watershed	15,400	14,833
West Plains/Greenwood Forest	9,000	9,007
Oswego River	10,250	8,769
Bass River	8,500	6,841
Upper Wading River Watershed	3,400	3,142
Goose Ponds at Tabernacle	909	909
Friendship Bogs	2,171	2,171
Makepeace Lake	8,000	7,747
East Plains/Stafford Forge	8,400	7,482
Minor Additions to State Lands	960	1,083
Wading River Ecosystem	16,693	322
Southern Forest Region:		
Manumuskin/Tuckahoe River Basin	12,800	3,975
Peaslee Addition	1,289	1,289
Belleplain Extensions	5,373	2,938
Pinelands "502" Total	**103,135**	**70,398**

Source: New Jersey Pinelands Commission, Green Acres Program

TABLE 4
State Pinelands Acquisition Projects

Pinelands Acquisition Projects	Total Acres Acquired as of June 2002
Allens Woods, Natural Lands Trust Preserve	118
Bass River	453
Belleplain State Forest	1,847
Cedar Creek Watershed	64
Clarks Landing Preserve	45
Colliers Mills WMA	194
Crossley Preserve	120
Dennis Creek WMA	207
East Plains/Stafford Forge	627
Forked River Mountains	725
Gibson Creek WMA	435
Great Egg Harbor WMA	2,942
Green Bank State Forest	198
Hamilton Preserve	772
Hammonton Creek WMA	1,833
J & M Statewide	2,507
Lebanon State Forest	3,126
Makepeace Lake	3,376
Pancoast Preserve	264
Peaslee WMA	1,145
Pemberton Lake	82
Pinelands National Reserve	1,101
Manumuskin/Tuckahoe River Basin	1,149
Belleplain Extensions	1,790
Tuckahoe WMA	254
Upper Wading River Watershed	109
Urban-Natural Areas	381
Wading River Ecosystem	5,907
West Plains/Greenwood Forest	398
Wharton State Forest	4,128
White Oak WMA	1,684
Winslow WMA	618
Pinelands Total	**38,599**

Source: New Jersey Pinelands Commission, Green Acres Program

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. Given its location, a mere three miles from Manhattan, the Meadowlands are subject to tremendous development pressure.

The Commission has been active in open space planning in the District. It has prepared a new master plan which identifies 8,400 acres for preservation. 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 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. The New Jersey Meadowlands Commission is an important facet of the State's efforts to provide urban open space and recreation opportunities. The NY/NJ BayKeeper, Hackensack RiverKeeper and the Rutgers Law Clinic, in cooperation with the Meadowlands Commission, established The Meadowlands Conservation Trust. The Trust will work to preserve and manage open space in the Meadowlands and the Hackensack River Watershed.

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.

Like New York City, the City of Newark is the owner of a large land area purchased to preserve the quality of drinking water for its residents. Watershed areas have been the

focus of planning and preservation efforts in recent years. Newark's Pequannock Watershed is a 35,000 acre forested preserve located in the Highlands area of Passaic, Morris and Sussex counties. It contains a series of four reservoirs, smaller ponds, wetlands and large tracts of unbroken upland forest. The watershed contains some of the most wild and rugged landscapes in New Jersey. These lands provide important habitat for threatened and endangered species such as coopers hawk, barred owl, red-shouldered hawk, bog turtle and timber rattlesnake. Interior nesting migrant birds use the watershed as an important breeding area. The Newark Watershed Conservation and Development Corporation administers public access to the watershed for outdoor recreation activities. The Pequannock Watershed offers many recreation opportunities on a permit basis, including hiking, birding, fishing, hunting, horseback riding and boating. Over 1,500 acres of water are open for fishing and electric motor boating. The Corporation has improved parking and boat launch areas and cooperates with the State's Division of Fish and Wildlife on fish stocking. The Echo Lake Recreation Area, a LWCF project, is the center of Newark's environmental education program, in addition to providing recreation activities. The long distance Highlands Milennium Trail crosses the watershed, connecting it to State public open space areas as part of its 150 mile connection between the Hudson and Delaware rivers.

New Jersey has long recognized the critical importance of the Pequannock Watershed as a natural and recreational resource. The Green Acres Program in cooperation with the City of Newark and Newark Watershed Conservation and Development Corporation, has initiated a conservation plan aimed at the permanent protection of critical watershed areas.

This cooperative planning has yielded the protection of over 18,000 acres, more than half of the watershed. The State has used a mix of fee and easement purchases. The preservation of the watershed is considered essential to maintain the character of the Highlands and to protect the integrity of the substantial State public open space lands in the region.

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 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 and environmental commissions also have a part in regional projects by providing public support and planning and acquisition assistance.

State Government

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection 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 infrastructure. The Division of Parks and Forestry and the Division of Fish and Wildlife are responsible for over 635,000 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 Department of Environmental Protection 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 39 state parks, 11 state forests, three state recreation areas, 42 natural areas and five state marinas and 57 historic sites and districts. Together, these sites total over 363,656 acres and are a critical component of New Jersey's open space and recreation infrastructure. New Jersey is ranked eighth in the nation for state park system acreage and second among northeastern state park systems. State resource areas such as the Pinelands and the Highlands are defined by the presence of state parks and forests. Over 45 million people visited state park system facilities between 2000 and 2002, an average of 15 million a year. The Division forecasts that annual visitation will be 17.5 million by 2005.

The preservation and stewardship of the State's diverse natural, recreational and historic resources is the central mission of the Division. 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 family campsites, 67 group camping sites, and over 100 cabins and shelters. During 2002, over 440,000 people used these facilities. Even through ongoing construction, attendance at the state marinas exceeded 576,000 people in 2002. Every season brings different activities to these public lands. Winter will see cross country skiing, 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 settings, offer a much needed respite for New Jerseyans.

The Office of Natural Lands Management administers a group of inter-related programs that promote the conservation of biodiversity, stewardship and passive recreation opportunities. It is responsible for the Natural Areas System, which 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 42 designated sites totaling 38,586 acres. Public access is permitted for compatible recreational uses and management plans are prepared for each site.

The State Trails Program studies and recommends sites for acquisition and trail development and undertakes planning initiatives to develop management proposals for existing trails. The *New Jersey Trails Plan* first adopted in 1982 and revised in 1996, 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. This program administers the Recreational Trails Program which has awarded

more than $4.3 million in grants to local governments and nonprofit organizations to fund 301 projects to develop and maintain trails. Trails planning is a key element of New Jersey statewide recreation planning efforts.

The Natural Heritage Program, also administered by the Office of Natural Lands Management, identifies and catalogues New Jersey's significant biodiversity through a comprehensive statewide inventory of rare plant and wildlife species and representative natural 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 development of the Endangered Plant Species List, and land use planning and environmental review by regulatory agencies and consultant firms. Open space planners can use the database for the identification of environmentally sensitive areas and the preparation of natural resource inventories and open space plans to guide preservation efforts.

The Division of Parks and Forestry is also responsible for the stewardship of New Jersey's considerable forest resources. Currently, 42% 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. The suppression and control of wildfire is an important responsibility of the Forestry Service, especially in the Pinelands.

The Historic Preservation 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 resources. 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. New Jersey's Revolutionary War sites are the focus of planning and acquisition projects that will enhance the interpretation of these important areas. An interpretive center was recently opened at Island Beach State Park which was funded by a natural resource damage claim.

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 120 wildlife management areas totaling over 271,743 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. As a result, these areas are an important component of New Jersey's open space and outdoor recreation network. In addition to providing outstanding hunting and fishing, the wildlife management areas also offer a variety of other 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. In cooperation with the New Jersey Division of Motor Vehicles, a wildlife license plate is available for purchase. Eighty percent of the revenues generated by the sale of the plates will go to the endangered and non-game species program.

The recreational and commercial benefits of the State's wildlife are significant. Commercial fishing generates $100 million to the New Jersey economy annually. Recreational fishing benefits from the stocking of more than 3.6 million fish in about 400

waterways statewide by the Division. Over 181,000 licensed freshwater anglers and 826,000 salt water anglers take advantage of the abundant fishery resources in New Jersey. In addition to stocking, many streams in the state are designated as wild trout streams which support natural trout populations. New Jersey hunters generate over $300 million annually and 3,800 jobs can be linked to hunting related activities as well.

In of its 2001 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service documented the recreational and economic importance of New Jersey's wildlife resources. The results show that nearly two million people participated in some form of wildlife recreation. This activity translates into $2.2 billion in expenditures for wildlife recreation in New Jersey. The survey data clearly demonstrates that New Jersey's wildlife resources are an important to the quality of life for residents and visitors. Fish and wildlife are a major capital asset that must be managed and protected in order to maintain this high economic yield. Open space preservation as pursued by New Jersey is one way in which wildlife resources can be protected and enhanced.

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 is participating in regional open space preservation projects such as the Highlands and along the Delaware Bay. Wildlife biologists from the Division have also assisted county park systems around New Jersey with management of deer on public parklands. The Division's endangered and non-game species program has started a Landscape Protection Project and mapped 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. Open space preservation plays a role. The Division also administers the North American Wetlands Conservation Act federal monies and projects.

There are other State agencies that, although their missions are not recreation, do provide open space and outdoor recreation opportunities. 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, 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 landscape of the region.

The protection of water resources is a critical public policy issue in New Jersey. Land preservation is one of the best methods available to the State, local governments and conservation organizations to protect water resources. Coupled with recent initiatives to upgrade the water quality designations of nine reservoir systems and six streams demonstrates the State's commitment to employ a diversified approach to preserve both water quality and supply.

Within the Department of Environmental Protection, there are several agencies that support New Jersey's open space and recreation infrastructure. These agencies are primarily concerned with the regulation and protection of New Jersey's natural resources. The Land Use Regulation Program 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. These program regulations sometimes preclude the development for access and support facilities in areas considered environmentally sensitive.

The Department's Watershed Management Program is designed to implement plans developed by stakeholder groups to protect and manage natural resources on a watershed basis. A total of 20 watershed management areas have been established and the State has provided funding for the preparation of management plans. Many of the groups involved in the process are focusing on land preservation as a strategy to protect water resources.

Given the dominance of water as a New Jersey landscape feature, it is not unusual for the State to be involved in national water resource programs. 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.

Within the Natural and Historic Resources group are two programs that affect park and recreation resources, the Office of Natural Resource Damages and the Office of Engineering and Construction. The Office of Natural Resource Damages 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. The most recent shore protection project in New Jersey involves a 33 mile beach replenishment and erosion control project, beginning at Sandy Hook and stretching to Barnegat Inlet. Part of this project has included negotiating improved public access to replenished beach areas. This project is considered crucial to New Jersey's shore tourism industry.

The Environmental Services Program coordinates State and local government environmental protection activities through technical and financial assistance to municipal environmental commissions. It administers a matching grant program for environmental

commission and soil conservation district projects. It also publishes manuals and guidebooks to assist members of environmental commissions and local officials in meeting their designated responsibilities in environmental protection.

The New Jersey Natural Lands Trust was created in 1968 by the New Jersey Legislature as an incorporated independent State agency with the mission to preserve land in its natural state for the enjoyment of the public and to protect biodiversity. Operating under the Division of Parks and Forestry, it is an independent land trust organization and an entity of State government. Land is preserved primarily by donations of land through fee simple title or conservation easements. The Trust is responsible for nearly 14,000 acres that are managed to conserve endangered species habitat, rare natural features and significant ecosystems. Compatible passive recreation is permitted on suitable lands. The unique role of the Natural Lands Trust allows it to operate both as a State agency and as an independent nonprofit organization. This dual nature enables the Trust to work closely with both related State agencies, private nonprofit organizations and landowners.

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 open space 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, 68 organizations are enrolled in the program, protecting nearly 52,000 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.

Providing funding for open space preservation is often a challenge. The New Jersey Environmental Infrastructure Financing Program is a new participant in New Jersey's land preservation efforts. It provides low interest loans to local governments to acquire lands that protect water quality. In its first year of funding land preservation projects in 2001, the program provided more than $19 million to 12 local governments which will assist in the preservation of over 2,000 acres. Lands funded by the program can be used for hiking and other passive recreation activities.

The Passaic River Basin Buyout Program has used nearly $15 million to acquire 123 homes in the river's flood hazard area. After acquisition is complete, the home is demolished and the site maintained as open space. In New Jersey's coastal area, the Coastal Blue Acres Program, used an equal amount of funding to provide grants and loans to local governments to acquire storm prone lands. The funds are being used to preserve 60 acres of land that can be used for passive recreation.

The Environmental Infrastructure Financing Program, the Passaic River Basin Buyout Program and the Coastal Blue Acres Program are examples of alternative funding initiatives that can be used to achieve multiple conservation and recreation objectives. In partnership with local governments, these programs have provided open space and recreation opportunities, flood protection, growth management and water quality protection.

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 Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) which funds a variety of projects such as pedestrian and bicycle facilities, scenic easements acquisition, historic preservation, and the preservation of abandoned railway corridors. TEA-21 ensures the continuation of the Transportation Enhancement Program which funded 156 projects with over $60 million in funding. The Department is updating its 1995 New Jersey Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan. Activities being 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.

The Garden State Preservation Trust has worked with 21 State agencies and authorities to review their current land holdings for conservation and recreation potential. Over 8,200 acres statewide were identified for possible preservation.

County Government

New Jersey's 21 counties represent an essential element of the open space and recreation provider system. Generally, New Jersey's municipalities tend to concentrate on smaller, user intensive recreation facilities, while counties generally provide larger, resource based,

multiple use facilities. Counties have a special role in integrating recreation, open space and environmental protection.

County park and recreation departments offer a variety of facilities and activities to their residents. Twenty out of 21 New Jersey counties have some form of park and recreation agency. 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 and environmental education centers help counties meet their goals of providing open space and recreation opportunities for a county wide population.

Counties take advantage of New Jersey's varied landscapes to offer many different experiences, and some new ones, such as dog parks. Counties are also actively involved in the watershed management process. County park agencies have also needed to address concerns associated with white tail deer, all terrain vehicles, Canada geese, and exotic invasive vegetation.

TABLE 5

New Jersey County Open Space Tax Programs

County	Year Approved/Increased	Rate Cents Per $100	Annual Tax Collected
Atlantic	**1990/1998**	**2 ct.**	**$ 4,100,000**
Bergen	**1998**	**½ ct.**	**$ 3,500,000**
Burlington	**1996/1998**	**4 cts.**	**$ 8,600,000**
Camden	**1998**	**1 ct.**	**$ 2,100,000**
Cape May	**1989**	**1 ct.**	**$ 1,800,000**
Cumberland	**1994**	**1 ct.**	**$ 460,000**
Essex	**1998**	**1 ct.**	**$ 3,900,000**
Gloucester	**1993/2000**	**2 cts.**	**$ 2,400,000**
Hunterdon	**1999**	**1-3 cts.**	**$ 4,100,000**
Mercer	**1989/1998**	**2 cts.**	**$ 4,200,000**
Middlesex	**1995/2001**	**3 cts.**	**$ 14,100,000**
Monmouth	**1987/1996/2002**	**2.7 cts.**	**$ 16,000,000**
Morris	**1992/1998/2001**	**5¼ cts.**	**$ 24,000,000**
Ocean	**1997**	**1.2 cts.**	**$ 4,800,000**
Passaic	**1996**	**1 cts.**	**$ 2,600,000**
Salem	**2002**	**2 cts.**	**$ 560,000**
Somerset	**1989/1997**	**3 cts.**	**$ 9,400,000**
Sussex	**2000**	**up to 2 cts.**	**$ 1,900,000**
Union	**2000**	**1.5 cts.**	**$ 4,900,000**
Warren	**1993/1999/2002**	**6 cts.**	**$ 4,200,000**
	Total		**$117,620,000**

As of December 2002

Source: New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, Division of Local Government Services

TABLE 6

New Jersey County Characteristics

County	Population	Land *	Density **
Atlantic	252,552	561	450
Bergen	884,118	234	3,775
Burlington	423,394	805	526
Camden	508,932	222	2,289
Cape May	102,326	255	401
Cumberland	146,438	489	229
Essex	793,633	126	6,285
Gloucester	254,673	325	784
Hudson	608,975	47	13,043
Hunterdon	121,989	430	283
Mercer	350,761	226	1,552
Middlesex	750,162	310	2,422
Monmouth	615,301	472	1,303
Morris	470,212	469	1,002
Ocean	510,916	636	803
Passaic	489,049	185	2,639
Salem	64,285	338	190
Somerset	297,490	305	976
Sussex	144,166	521	276
Union	522,541	103	5,059
Warren	102,437	358	286
Totals	8,414,350	7,417	1,134

* Land area in square miles

** Persons per square miles

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 NJ census data

Another major trend affecting New Jersey's counties are open space taxes. 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. Over $117 million is collected annually by the 20 counties which assess an open space tax. 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 14 counties that currently participate in the Planning Incentive have been awarded more than $61 million for open space preservation projects. Several counties provide funding from 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.

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 $62 million for parks and recreation development projects over the past seven 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 require increased taxes to pay for them. Often, the tax ratables generated by new 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. Municipalities are the front lines of smart growth in New Jersey.

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 187 New Jersey municipalities currently collect approximately $40 million a year in open space and recreation taxes. Municipalities also participate in the Green Acres Planning Incentive and prepare open space and recreation plans. To date, Green Acres has awarded $158 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 1989 and 2002, 249 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.

New Jersey's local governments are essential partners and providers of open space and recreation in New Jersey, managing over 197,000 acres for public conservation and recreation purposes. Reeling from the combination of population growth and attendant development, local governments will continue to use open space preservation as a tool of smart growth. In addition to preserving close to 164,000 acres with Green Acres funds, New Jersey local governments preserved 19,000 acres without Green Acres funds between 1997 and 2000. In the State's urban centers, open space and recreation will be critical facets of redevelopment efforts.

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 $31 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. New Jersey is home to six minor league baseball teams. Since many of these facilities require a large scale capital investment, profit and other economic considerations are important factors. Other private facilities smaller in size include country clubs, golf courses and swim clubs. Tourism continues to be an integral component of New Jersey's economy supporting 836,000 jobs and nearly $18 billion in wages.

Although not traditionally considered as a recreation provider, agriculture has assumed an important role in the open space and recreation infrastructure of New Jersey. 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. 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 long and 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. Some, like the Trust for Public Land, have undertaken regional studies such as the *Century Plan*, which focuses on land preservation in the Barnegat Bay watershed. 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 $94 million in matching grants to assist nonprofit organizations to preserve over 43,000 acres of land statewide. Lands acquired through this program will be either retained by the acquiring nonprofit or transferred to a public open space agency. Lands that are owned and operated by conservation organizations offer important passive recreation

TABLE 7

New Jersey Farmland Preservation Program
Preserved Farmland

County	Preserved Farms	Acreage
Atlantic	3	243
Bergen	1	216
Burlington	117	15,485
Camden	1	49
Cape May	30	2,270
Cumberland	60	9,125
Gloucester	39	5,329
Hunterdon	102	11,772
Mercer	49	4,540
Middlesex	24	3,393
Monmouth	61	7,491
Morris	53	3,867
Ocean	21	2,050
Salem	96	14,782
Somerset	39	4,378
Sussex	41	6,996
Warren	59	8,159
Totals	796	100,145

Source: New Jersey State Agriculture Development Committee as of January 2002

opportunities. The Garden State Preservation Trust Act broadened nonprofits role to include funding for park and recreation development projects.

The Green Acres Program and New Jersey Conservation Foundation are working in partnership 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, the project will identify the framework for a potential statewide system of interconnected open space, a green infrastructure of forest, fields, wetlands, farms, waterways and recreation lands.

The purpose of Garden State Greenways is to provide local governments, state agencies, and nonprofit conservation organizations with a planning resource, in the form of maps and GIS data, that will help them achieve their land preservation goals in a manner that helps preserve and enhance the State's green infrastructure. Garden State Greenways will provide a geographic framework to be used, adapted and built upon by those working toward land conservation at all levels. It can be used to help guide land preservation opportunities, target urban greenway initiatives and coordinate partnerships throughout the state. The goal is to minimize the impacts of sprawl and landscape fragmentation through strategic efforts to conserve interconnected open space, smart conservation to complement New Jersey's smart growth efforts.

Green infrastructure is New Jersey's natural life support system, maintaining native plant and animal populations, sustaining air and water quality, and contributing to the health and quality of life of New Jersey's communities and its people. Green infrastructure is a network of undeveloped or minimally developed lands, public as well as private, that link significant conservation, recreation and cultural resources and spans rural, urban and suburban areas.

Creating the Garden State Greenways vision is a long term and ongoing effort. The preservation of green infrastructure is gaining popularity among many conservation and governmental organizations throughout the United States. The States of Maryland and Florida have already completed projects to map and plan for the preservation of green infrastructure in their states.

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. As a further incentive to private landowners, the State has developed a capital gains proposal which would authorize the exemption from state capital gains tax land transfers to the State. It would apply to land donated or sold to the State for open space or farmland preservation purposes and would expire after three years of enactment. Over 7,600 acres in New Jersey have been donated for open space preservation purposes.

Chapter 3

Supply, Demand and Need

As of January 1, 2002, there were 1,082,625 acres of land statewide being used for public conservation and recreation purposes. This total does not include preserved farmland acreage. Federal, state, county and municipal agencies have preserved 988,777 acres of land for public recreation and open space uses. This represents an increase of 198,436 acres in public parkland since the publication of the last SCORP in 1994. Nonprofit conservation organizations have preserved 93,848 acres of land statewide.

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 109,672 acres of land, 11% of the State's open space. This figure represents a 19,661 acre increase since 1993 and is largely attributable to the ongoing expansion of the national wildlife refuge system in New Jersey.

Interstate areas account for 2,452 acres that are under the jurisdiction of the Palisades Interstate Park Commission in Bergen County.

New Jersey state government agencies administer 679,646 acres or 63% of the State's public recreation open space. A total of 151,680 acres have been preserved by the State since the 1994 SCORP.

County and municipal governments are responsible for 197,007 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 61,195 acres over previously reported acreage for local governments. New Jersey's 21 counties manage 99,360 acres of parkland, a 26,719 acre increase since 1994. The State's 566 municipalities are responsible for 97,647 acres of parkland, 34,476 acres more than the 63,171 acres reported in 1994.

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

New Jersey Recreation Open Space*

TABLE 8

County	Federal Recreation Open Space Areas	Interstate and Regional Areas	State Parks, Forests, Recreation Areas, Natural Areas, Marinas & Historic Sites	State Wildlife Management Areas	State Natural Lands Trust	State Reservoir Sites	New Jersey Water Authority	State Miscellaneous Areas	State Subtotal	County Parks**	Municipal Parks**	Total Public Recreation Open Space	Nonprofit Open Space***	Total Open Space
Atlantic	20,224		14,056	39,828	4,676			2,310	60,870	5,545	3,316	89,955	1,624	91,579
Bergen		2,452	3,243	208	10			0	3,461	8,216	5,088	19,217	248	19,465
Burlington	2,572		134,749	3,700	2,201			1,499	142,149	1,322	8,579	154,622	7,522	162,144
Camden			14,506	4,346	520			105	19,477	2,007	2,821	24,305	0	24,305
Cape May	10,705		23,216	24,809	416			5,400	53,841	2,045	4,442	71,033	2,587	73,620
Cumberland			3,526	62,626	143			2,650	68,945	165	2,354	71,464	21,123	92,587
Essex	21		396	0	2			5	403	6,001	2,338	8,763	297	9,060
Gloucester			0	6,906	401			869	8,176	1,578	3,821	13,575	882	14,457
Hudson	45		1,211	519	0			0	1,730	673	597	3,045	0	3,045
Hunterdon			6,970	2,317	273		108	2,295	11,963	3,906	5,080	20,949	3,809	24,758
Mercer			3,322	921	47			34	4,324	6,604	7,805	18,733	6,471	25,204
Middlesex			2,694	0	73	104		0	2,871	8,638	5,794	17,303	15	17,318
Monmouth	1,733		5,374	8,263	75		1,779	527	16,018	12,876	6,901	37,528	552	38,080
Morris	8,974		11,442	10,894	511	948		822	24,617	12,502	11,787	57,880	7,581	65,461
Ocean	22,184		29,771	67,230	2,743			1,577	101,321	5,231	6,207	134,943	26,712	161,655
Passaic	26		36,451	2,320	111			176	39,058	4,668	2,745	46,497	1,620	48,117
Salem	3,745		1,372	15,760	393			594	18,119	274	1,838	23,976	1,858	25,834
Somerset	188		5,944	0	19	3,611	152	189	9,915	9,065	6,801	25,969	2,160	28,129
Sussex	30,104		50,311	13,746	896	1,340		1,902	68,195	17	4,904	103,220	4,963	108,183
Union			1	0	0			0	1	6,554	1,391	7,946	151	8,097
Warren	9,151		15,101	7,350	478	181		1,082	24,192	1,473	3,038	37,854	3,674	41,528
Total Acreage	109,672	2,452	363,656	271,743	13,988	6,184	2,039	22,036	679,646	99,360	97,647	988,777	93,848	1,082,625

* Figures are as of January 1, 2002, except as noted in the footnotes below.

** Based on inventories filed with Green Acres and a 2001 survey conducted of open space lands acquired by counties and municipalities as of January 1, 2001.

*** Based on a 2001 survey of nonprofit organizations to determine the amount of open space acquired by nonprofit conservation and recreation groups as of January 1, 2001 and supplemented by GIS mapped nonprofit open space information.

being fueled by New Jersey's increasing population and development. The State continued to experience population growth in all counties with the exception of Salem. Counties which lost population during the 1980s such as Bergen, Essex, Hudson and Union increased in population during the 1990s. The last decade also saw 11 counties exceed the statewide growth rate of 8.9%. Somerset County led the state with a growth rate of 23.8%, followed by Ocean County (17.9%), Hunterdon (13.2%), Atlantic (12.6%), Warren (11.8%), Middlesex (11.7%), Morris (11.6%), Monmouth (11.2%), Gloucester (10.7%), Hudson (10.1%), and Sussex (10.1%).

New Jersey's total population according to 2000 census data reached 8,414,350 which maintained its ninth ranked place in population among the nation's 50 states. The State's population increased 684,162 people since 1990. Middlesex County had the largest net population increase of 78,382 in the state from 1990 to 2000, followed by Ocean with a 77,713 increase, Monmouth with 62,177, Bergen at 58,738, Somerset with 57,211 and Hudson with an increase of 55,876 people. Together these six counties accounted for almost 60 percent of the State's total population growth.

In addition to an increase population, New Jersey, according to 2000 census data, had the highest median household income in the nation. Over the years, New Jersey has consistently ranked high in household income, but at $54,226, the state was ranked first in household income. Three New Jersey counties, Hunterdon, Morris and Somerset ranked fourth, fifth and sixth in the United States in terms of household income. Not surprisingly, these counties, in terms of per capita income, ranked tenth, seventh and fourth respectively.

While the State's growth rate of 8.9% was lower than the national rate of 13.1%, the demand for open space and recreation is expected to remain high in New Jersey. The amount of public parkland and number of recreation facilities has never been enough to satisfy past and current populations. The New Jersey Department of Labor has projected a population increase of over one million people by 2020. The continuing trend in regional population shifts to rural areas of the state will require land for parks and recreation facilities. It is unlikely that public support for open space and recreation will wane in the near future. The recent passage of a Green Acres bond act in 1995 and the Garden State Preservation Trust in 1998 and 207 local open space and recreation tax referendums indicate continued support in the future. Land preservation and the development and

TABLE 9

Total Population, New Jersey Counties: 1990 and 2000

	Total Population		***Population Change***	
	1990	**2000**	**1990-2000**	
			Number	**Percent**
STATE TOTAL	**7,730,188**	**8,414,350**	**684,162**	**8.9%**
Atlantic County	**224,327**	**252,552**	**28,225**	**12.6%**
Bergen County	**825,380**	**884,118**	**58,738**	**7.1%**
Burlington County	**395,066**	**423,394**	**28,328**	**7.2%**
Camden County	**502,824**	**508,932**	**6,108**	**1.2%**
Cape May County	**95,089**	**102,326**	**7,237**	**7.6%**
Cumberland County	**138,053**	**146,438**	**8,385**	**6.1%**
Essex County	**778,206**	**793,633**	**15,427**	**2.0%**
Gloucester County	**230,082**	**254,673**	**24,937**	**10.7%**
Hudson	**553,099**	**608,975**	**55,876**	**10.1%**
Hunterdon County	**107,776**	**121,989**	**14,213**	**13.2%**
Mercer County	**325,824**	**350,761**	**24,937**	**7.7%**
Middlesex County	**671,780**	**750,162**	**78,382**	**11.7%**
Monmouth County	**553,124**	**615,301**	**62,177**	**11.2%**
Morris County	**421,353**	**470,212**	**48,859**	**11.6%**
Ocean County	**433,203**	**510,916**	**77,713**	**17.9%**
Passaic County	**453,060**	**489,049**	**35,989**	**7.9%**
Salem County	**65,294**	**64,285**	**- 1,009**	**- 1.5%**
Somerset County	**240,279**	**297,490**	**57,211**	**23.8%**
Sussex County	**130,943**	**144,166**	**13,223**	**10.1%**
Union County	**493,819**	**522,541**	**28,722**	**5.8%**
Warren County	**91,607**	**102,437**	**10,830**	**11.8%**

Source: US Bureau of the Census: 1990 and 2000 Censuses of Population and Housing

TABLE 10

New Jersey Population by Age

Age Group	Number	Percent
under 5	563,785	6.7
5-9	604,529	7.2
10-14	590,577	7.0
15-19	525,216	6.2
20-24	480,079	5.7
25-34	1,189,040	14.1
35-44	1,435,106	17.1
45-54	1,158,898	13.8
55-59	423,338	5.0
60-64	330,646	3.9
65-74	574,669	6.8
75-84	402,468	4.8
85+	135,999	1.6

maintenance of a park and recreation infrastructure to support New Jersey's population will be an essential feature of the State's smart growth efforts.

The increasing populations of young children and 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. In addition, 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. Conversely, the baby boom echo generation will require the open space and recreation resources of their parents, the baby boomers. 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. It also performs other critical functions. Open space provides breathing room in densely populated areas, shapes growth, protects natural resources, preserves historic sites, and provides parkland near urban and suburban centers. 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.

For purposes of estimating the amount of open space required for recreation purpose, 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.

Balanced Land Use Guidelines

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

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.

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. Environmentally sensitive lands are usually unsuitable for tennis courts, ballfields, basketball courts, golf courses and other typical active day-use facilities provided by local levels of governments.

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 FY 2000 and 2002, the Green Acres Program received acquisition funding requests from local governments that exceeded $1.23 billion and were awarded nearly $211 million. Local governments also requested over $220 million in park and recreation projects and were awarded $73.9 million. Conservation organizations submitted during the same time period,

requests for $234.7 million in acquisition and development funding and were awarded $37.5 million. Despite having one of the best funded open space and recreation programs in the nation, New Jersey still exhibits tremendous funding needs.

For the State, the Governor's Council on New Jersey Outdoors in 1998 recommended the preservation of an additional one million acres of open space and farmland. The Council felt that based on public testimony and in consultation with open space providers and advocates, that this amount of acreage needed to be preserved in order to sustain New Jersey's natural resources and economic vitality and to protect the quality of life of state residents. The Council's million acre recommendation was composed of 100,000 acres of watershed lands, 200,000 acres of greenways, 200,000 acres of recreational open space and 500,000 acres of farmland. The preservation of biodiversity is an element of this initiative. The Council's recommendation has guided the State's land preservation effort over the next several years. The State has committed to the preservation of water resource lands, providing statewide recreation opportunities, improving existing parklands and preserving natural resources. It is imperative that New Jersey balance land preservation, development and economic growth to promote its continued prosperity. Working to preserve open space and develop park and recreation facilities will help achieve that prosperity.

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 2003 SCORP seven 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. **Partnerships**
7. **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 2003 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 8.4 million, at a density of 1,134 people per square mile and a population forecast of 9.25 million by 2020, makes land preservation a very serious issue in New Jersey. This issue becomes even more critical when coupled with building permit data showing that between 1997 and 2001 over 200,000 building permits were issued. Given these trends, the projected buildout of New Jersey over the next 40 years is not improbable.

Land preservation is a central component of statewide land use planning. It is a goal of the State Plan to preserve and enhance areas with open space, recreational, historic and scenic value. The State Plan contains no less than 34 policies designed to improve statewide planning and coordination of open space and recreation policy among all levels of government.

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.

Open space preservation and planning will play a crucial role in New Jersey's efforts to protect its water resources. The identification stream corridors, aquifers and other water resource features is necessary for the continued environmental and economic viability of New Jersey. Over the last five years, over 195,000 acres of land have been preserved for

public conservation and recreation purposes. The Governor's Council set a goal of preserving 500,000 acres comprising watershed lands, greenways, recreation lands and lands to preserve biodiversity. In order to increase funding for land preservation, legislation has been proposed that will raise the cap on the bonding capacity of the Garden State Preservation Trust. This will increase by at $100 million the amount of funds available for open space and recreation projects over the next three years.

New Jersey has over 800,000 acres of farmland. Much of the privately owned undeveloped land in the state is in agricultural use. Agriculture remains a significant economic activity, generating $812 million in cash receipts in the 2001 fiscal year. New Jersey agricultural production of blueberries and peaches is ranked second in the nation and cranberry production is ranked third. Virtually all of New Jersey's farms are family owned with an average farm size of 86 acres.

As the most densely populated state in the nation, New Jersey has seen a steady loss of farmland, around 10,000 acres per year. Retaining productive, taxpaying farmland is critically important to New Jersey. Farmland can protect water resources, rural landscapes and wildlife habitat. It can also be part of a greenway system, linking public lands, preserving viewsheds, providing river access or buffering public lands from incompatible development. The State has a goal of preserving 20,000 acres of farmland a year. The Garden State Greenways plan incorporates agricultural lands into greenway networks.

Through the State's Farmland Preservation Program, over 100,000 acres on 796 farms have been preserved in the last five years. The Governor's Council on New Jersey Outdoors recommended that 500,000 acres of farmland be preserved to ensure the future of this vital sector of New Jersey's economy and landscape. The State Plan contains policies designed to provide an effective agricultural strategy statewide and by guiding growth and development toward established centers.

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.

Issue: Recreation

Recreation and parks are considered by New Jerseyans as inseparable from quality of life issues. Recreation providers, in both the public and private sectors, must literally offer a smorgasboard of opportunities, programs and facilities to satisfy the substantial recreation appetite of residents and visitors. Recreation in New Jersey comes in many forms, but regardless of the form, it satisfies the human need to play.

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 tops 15 million and Monmouth and Somerset counties report annual park attendance of nearly four million and two million, respectively. At the municipal level, towns struggle with finding fields for soccer games. That 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 State Park Service capital budget was close to $18 million dollars, ranking it fifth among northeastern state park systems during fiscal year 2000. During the same period, New Jersey spent $8.7 million on new construction projects in the state park system.

The Green Acres Program has provided funding for park and recreation development since 1974. Between 1999 and 2002, the Green Acres Program has awarded over $40 million in grant and loan funding for recreation development projects to local governments and conservation organizations. In addition, New Jersey has funded over 230 recreation projects with $58.6 million from the LWCF. The State has set as a goal creating or improving 200 local parks and establishing at least two new State parks by 2006. The State has proposed using $50 million from the Garden State Preservation Trust within the next three years to meet the 200 local parks goal.

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.

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

According to New Jersey Future, 94% of New Jerseyans live in an urban area, as defined by the United States Census Bureau, tying for first place with California. This represents a five percent increase from 1990. The State Plan's Metropolitan Planning Area 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. The most recent Garden State Preservation Trust awards included $13.4 million for urban aid projects. In addition,

the Garden State Preservation Trust Act specifies that a percentage of Green Acres funding be spent in counties with a population density of 1,000 people per square mile or more. Ten New Jersey counties currently exceed this population density. Over $46 million has been spent in urbanized counties to preserve more than 9,000 acres of land.

Almost every urbanized county assesses an open space and recreation tax. In many of these counties, the county park systems require rehabilitation and the development of new park and recreation facilities. The cost of such an endeavor is expensive. Union County in its open space and recreation master plan, estimates a cost of $46 million for park and recreation projects over ten years. Essex County projects a $125 million cost over a similar time period to improve its park and recreation system. Counties can use portions of their open space and recreation tax for park development and maintenance projects.

Successful brownfield remediation and redevelopment projects have improved the quality of life in numerous urban centers and communities across New Jersey in recent years. The State's Hazardous Discharge Site Remediation Fund provides funding to municipalities for the cleanup of contaminated lands. The fund, administered jointly by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection and the New Jersey Economic Development Authority, has awarded over $40 million to 461 municipalities for brownfield projects. While most of these projects' intended goal is economic redevelopment and its associated benefits of ratables, jobs and community renewal, some have been used to develop public park and recreation facilities. Revitalizing Hoboken's Hudson River waterfront involves both public and private efforts to reclaim areas impacted by contamination and provide pedestrian park and recreation amenities. Sinatra Park and Castle Point Park will also provide canoeing, fishing and waterfront access opportunities. In Camden, redeveloping the city's waterfront has included brownfield projects that have yielded a new minor league baseball stadium, a soccer field for Rutgers Camden and a community park. The remediation of brownfields will be an important strategy used by the State to address urban park and recreation needs. As part of this strategy, the State has created a Brownfields to Greenfields program. The program will work with local governments and other partners to identify opportunities for the reuse of brownfield sites as parks.

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, the Green Acres Program has committed over $18 million to the preservation 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

You live in New Jersey? What exit? With 446 housing units per square mile, 35,600 miles of roads, more highways per square mile than any state in the nation, and with 5.9 million registered cars, it would seem that New Jersey is truly an asphalt empire. Put 8.4 million state residents at a density of 1,134 people per square mile with the highest median household income in America, and you have the potential for unparalleled consumerism and development.

And yet for every statistic depicting sprawl and urbanization, there is data that shows a very different New Jersey. A New Jersey with more than one million acres, 20% of its land, preserved as open space and farmland, 42% of the state forested, 23 active nesting pairs of bald eagles and landscapes ranging from ridge and valley to coastal plain. Despite being the fifth smallest state in the nation, New Jersey is very diversified in terms of its terrain. This diversity and variety is responsible for natural resources that the State will need to focus on over the next five years to ensure their protection and New Jersey's prosperity.

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.

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

Highlands

The Highlands area of New Jersey serves as a greenbelt to the greater New York and New Jersey metropolitan area. It effectively serves as the backyard for the largest urban center in the United States. 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. The water resources of the Highlands, which provides over one-half of New Jersey's water supply, have long been recognized as the region's most valuable natural resource.

The Highlands is the source of water for 4.4 million people in New Jersey. The Highlands supply 240 million gallons of water per day from Highlands reservoirs to New Jersey residents. The combined surface and groundwater sources in the Highlands provide a total of 590 million gallons per day to the metropolitan region. Water resources though are only one feature that makes the Highlands unique, 14 million people use the Highlands recreation resources for fishing, hunting, birding, camping and hiking, 246 wildlife species live in the Highlands and 165 historic sites have been identified as well. The critical importance of the Highlands' resources has warranted its designation by the State Plan as a Special Resource Area. The designation is for regions with resources of statewide importance which are essential to the environmental and economic well being of New Jersey. The Highlands in New Jersey represents about 13% of the state's land area and includes seven counties and all or parts of 83 municipalities. Over 743,000 people live in the New Jersey portion of the Highlands, an increase of nearly 12% over the 1990 population of 665,257. With the completion of Route 287 and near build out conditions in the surrounding region, the New York/New Jersey Highlands are expected to add almost 400,000 residents over the next 20 years according to the 2002 *Highlands Regional Study Update*. The report estimates that 32,000 acres of land may be developed by 2010. Despite an impressive record of public land preservation in the Highlands, the Green Acres Program has spent about $310 million to preserve more than 100,000 acres, the Highlands' natural resources remain threatened by growth and urbanization impacts. For example, the Highlands Study using a conservation Gap Analysis Process, found that 77% of high value water resource lands were unprotected by either public ownership or a conservation easement. The Gap Analysis also showed 60% of high value biodiversity lands and 50% of the high value forest lands were unprotected. Most alarmingly, the Gap Analysis documented that 53% of the total combined high value conservation lands required protection. The study identified seven areas in the New Jersey Highlands that possess high conservation values and are not protected. The State has committed to providing an additional $50 million over the next three years for Highlands projects. The Highlands study provides support for the federal Highlands Stewardship Act. This proposed legislation would authorize $25 million annually for ten years in matching funds for land preservation in the Highlands.

Coastal Zone

The State's 127 miles of Atlantic coastline together with the Delaware Bayshore contain estuaries, bays, rivers, streams, beaches and wetlands that provide abundant opportunities for recreation and tourism. Among New Jersey's many natural resources, those of the State's coastal zone represent some of the most important. As a peninsula, New Jersey offers residents and visitors a wide variety of water resource features 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 and pollution abatement. More than 50 species of fish and shellfish support a thriving commercial and recreational fishery that contributes significantly to New Jersey's economy. Tourism in New Jersey's coastal communities is a $16 billion 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 the 1.5 million shorebirds that stop along the county's Delaware Bayshore in the spring. These annual migrations, along with an impressive spring warbler migration, account for over $42 million in economic benefits to Cape May County. Other coastal highlights include the 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 by an additional 7,800 acres. The Trust for Public Land's *Century Plan* identifies over 100 sites in the Barnegat Bay watershed for preservation for conservation and recreation purposes. However, some of the most sensitive coastal ecosystems are also the most heavily used recreational resources in the state. Four coastal counties, Atlantic, Cape May, Monmouth and Ocean, had the highest population growth in the 1990s. These four counties accounted for more than one quarter of New Jersey's population growth between 1990 and 2000. The demand for building lots in coastal communities, especially on the barrier islands is, in a word, fierce. The State Plan estimates that only 199 acres of undeveloped land remains on New Jersey's barrier islands. Coastal municipalities can see their summer population double and even triple. These communities are also witnessing the teardowns of existing homes with larger homes being constructed. The complexities of land use issues are very evident along the coastal zone and is the reason New Jersey is in the process of updating its Coastal Management Program which supports

open space, recreation and habitat protection initiatives. 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.

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 and this is memorialized at Monmouth and Princeton Battlefield State Parks. The Division of Parks and Forestry is the steward of 57 historic sites and districts which include home villages and lighthouses. Over 280,000 people visited these historic sites in fiscal year 2001. 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. In 2000 the Trust awarded $12.3 million in matching grants to 50 preservation and planning projects from the Garden State Preservation Trust Act. The State's Certified Local Government Program provides technical assistance and grant funding to New Jersey communities in the protection of their historic resources. The program recently awarded $154,000 in grant assistance to eight local government projects. The relationship between open space and historic sites and landscape preservation was the theme of the 2001 Historic Preservation Office Conference. There is a renewed interest in New Jersey parks designed by Frederick Law Olmsted and a conference on Olmsted parks was held in 2002. As required by the Garden State Preservation Trust Act, the Historic Preservation Office performs historic resource surveys on lands acquired with funds from the Trust Act. Local governments can dedicate portions of an open space tax for historic preservation projects. In an attempt to link New Jersey's Revolutionary War sites, the State is working with the National Park Service on the Crossroads of the American Revolution project. In the *Economic Benefits of Historic Preservation in New Jersey*, the Rutgers University Center for Urban Policy Research documented the role that historic preservation plays in the State's economy. The study reported that historic preservation and historic sites are a powerful tool in generating jobs, income, tax revenue, tourism and enhancing urban and regional centers. The research

concluded that historic preservation is an economic force in New Jersey supplying more than half a billion dollars into the State's economy. The symbiotic relationship between historic preservation, open space, recreation and tourism creates opportunities that demand it be a statewide planning issue.

New York/New Jersey Harbor Estuary

The Harbor Estuary is situated in one of the most urbanized and densely populated regions in the world. Over 20 million people live and work in the area. New York City, Newark, Brooklyn, Jersey City, Elizabeth along with many other urban and regional centers and suburban communities comprise this sprawling urban landscape. This landscape also contains extensive road systems, airports, port facilities, industrial and commercial land uses. With the first European visit to the Harbor Estuary in 1524 and subsequent settlement in 1609, the area has been subject to human activity for nearly four hundred years. And it shows. But yet despite the impacts from this activity, the Harbor Estuary supports a diverse assemblage of wildlife populations, plant species and ecological communities. Some of the most significant New Jersey ecosystems like the Hackensack Meadowlands, are located in the Harbor Estuary. To complement the Harbor Estuary's biodiversity are substantial holdings of public open space such as Liberty State Park, Cheesequake State Park, and extensive local government park and recreation areas. Gateway National Recreation Area, Jamaica Bay National Wildlife Refuge and Ellis and Liberty Islands represent federal interests. In addition to existing public open space and recreation areas, both New Jersey and New York City have been active in preserving land in the Harbor Estuary. The City has preserved more than 1,500 acres and New Jersey has preserved nearly 450 acres. As part of the New York/New Jersey Harbor Estuary Program (HEP), close to 150 priority acquisition and restoration sites have been identified in both states. The HEP is a unique regional partnership of citizens, scientists, conservation groups and federal, state and local government agencies. It was formed to protect the harbor's watersheds and to restore a productive ecosystem to full beneficial uses. The HEP Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) serves as a blueprint for the management of the region. Habitat is a central focus of the CCMP because of its critical importance to the environmental health of the estuary. The NY/NJ BayKeeper has done extensive planning in the HEP region and is actively working to protect and restore priority sites identified in the 2001 HEP Habitat Workgroup Report. This urbanized estuarine environment has tremendous potential for being restored as a vibrant ecosystem, serving the recreation needs of millions of people and protecting natural resources.

Water Resource Lands

Many of the State Resource Areas are special because they contain substantial watershed lands. Lands, such as the Greater Sourland Region, will be the focus of New Jersey's land preservation efforts in the coming years. This 20,000 acre area is the source of headwaters to many streams that drain into the Delaware, Millstone and Raritan rivers and the Delaware and Raritan Canal, representing the major water supply for central New Jersey. Although the State has made considerable progress in preserving watershed lands, there are many areas that still require protection. Aquifers, recharge areas, stream corridors, headwaters and wetlands need to be protected to ensure an adequate supply of water. The State is in an unique position to facilitate this initiative. By directing acquisition and funding and partnering with local governments and conservation groups, the State can address this critical issue. The need for this cooperative approach is realized when looking at data from two of New Jersey's Watershed Management Areas (WMAs). WMAs 3 and 6 include portions of Bergen, Essex, Morris, Passaic, Somerset and Union counties. Surface and groundwater sources in WMAs 3 and 6 supply potable water to over 2.7 million people. However, only 26% of the land in these two WMAs is preserved open space. New Jersey's Watershed Management Program is designed to work at the local level with a variety of interest groups to develop strategies to improve the quality of water resources statewide. Recent legislation requires the Green Acres Program to focus its State acquisition projects on water resource lands. It assigns priority to the protection of lands that protect water resources, flood prone areas and requires the preparation of an open space plan to guide the preservation of these lands. It also mandates the development and adoption of rules and regulations for recreational use and development of State open space and recreation areas to ensure the protection of water resources. In addition to these measures, new rules to protect reservoirs and streams from development impacts have protected reservoirs and streams and will be expanded to other sites. Protecting water resource lands on a statewide basis will also protect wildlife habitat, create recreation opportunities, and promote smart growth. New Jersey cannot grow smart without an abundant supply of clean water.

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. Today, the Pinelands is the largest tract of open space located in the Boston to

Richmond megapolis. 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 is considered a national model for regional planning. The Pinelands landscape is a patchwork of pine and oak forests containing 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. Other environmental amenities include an aquifer system containing 17 trillion gallons of water and rare plant communities. The Pinelands also supports a rich diversity of wildlife species and thriving cranberry and blueberry industries. The Pinelands are also an enormous recreation asset. Camping, hiking, canoeing, fishing, hunting, birding, sightseeing and visiting historic sites are some of the activities that occur in the Pinelands. The State has several major open space holdings in the Pinelands which, combined with county and municipal parklands, offer an outstanding array of recreational activities. In many regards, the Pinelands are a New Jersey wilderness, a wilderness surrounded by the most urbanized landscape in America. And that landscape is making the preservation of the region's natural resources more difficult each year. Regional growth areas are facing increased populations, school enrollments, traffic and property taxes. Over 71% of all residential units approved between 1991 and 2001 were located in the regional growth areas which comprise about 8% of the Pinelands. Galloway Township's population increased nearly 34% between 1990 and 2000. Ocean County had the largest net housing unit increase in the state, almost 29,000 units during the same period. Two Pinelands counties, Atlantic and Ocean, exceeded the statewide growth rate according to census data. Although the State's Pinelands acquisition program has preserved over 100,000 acres, there are many areas that still require protection. Of the original Section 502 acreage identified for preservation, close to 33,000 acres remain unprotected. Both the Pinelands Development Credit Program and the Limited Practical Use Program complement traditional 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. Its natural, cultural and recreational resources cannot be ignored. Only continued comprehensive regional planning and growth management can sustain the Pinelands and ensure the vision of protecting critical resources and accommodating agricultural, commercial and residential land uses.

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

<u>Issue:</u> Greenways

"To achieve in partnership with others, a system of interconnected open spaces…"

The Green Acres Program's Mission Statement speaks to the significance of greenways in the State's open space and recreation infrastructure and planning. Greenways are hardly a new idea in the state; they have been part of New Jersey's landscape for many years. The Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park and Patriots Path are examples of greenways that have been serving the public for many years. Called parkways or greenbelts in the past, greenways have evolved 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. Rarely does a greenway serve a single purpose.

Greenways are a variation on the theme of traditional park acquisition methods of land preservation. Greenways can offer a cost effective combination of public and private financing and land use techniques. Another advantage to greenways is that they can be financed and managed by a conservation organization and can include lands already set aside as open space. Local governments have adopted greenways into their master plans and open space plans in order to maximize their potential for providing cost saving environmental and recreational amenities.

The Green Acres Program is involved in several ongoing greenway projects statewide. Rivers such as the Delaware, Great Egg Harbor, Musconetcong and the Pequest serve as the rallying point for greenway projects. Garden State Greenways, a project of the New Jersey Conservation Foundation and the Green Acres Program, is a framework to help guide land preservation and greenway initiatives throughout New Jersey. The vision outlined in the project is that of a 21st century greenway system for New Jersey. It is a vision that confronts the open space and recreation needs of a state that consumed more than 16,000 acres of open land in 2001 according to Rutger's University's Center for Remote Sensing and Spatial Analysis.

The goals of the Garden State Greenways project are to:

- **Protect New Jersey's natural resources, water quality, and biodiversity.**
- **Maintain and enhance large, significant areas of habitat and environmentally sensitive lands as part of New Jersey's green infrastructure.**
- **Contain urban sprawl.**
- **Link components of the green infrastructure throughout the state to provide recreational opportunities within walking distance access to New Jersey residents.**
- **Promote public awareness and use of the State's green infrastructure.**
- **Foster coordination and partnerships among state, federal, local and non-government agencies involved in conservation, recreation and land use planning efforts.**

Policy:

It shall be the policy of the State of New Jersey to promote greenway planning and development statewide.

Issue: Partnerships

It is hard to imagine open space preservation in New Jersey without partnerships. In fact, it has become common practice to seek partners to leverage funding, share project responsibilities or assist in land management activities. The need for agencies and organizations to participate in partnership projects in New Jersey is great. The benefits are many but there are also complications. However, time and again, partnerships prove themselves to be an important strategy to employ and worth the effort. Simply put, some projects would not be possible without partnerships. Increased data sharing among governmental jurisdictions and conservation groups would enhance preservation and planning efforts.

A recent LWCF project, Wildcat Ridge, demonstrates the potential for partnership projects statewide. Located in Rockaway Township in Morris County, this 295 acre addition to Wildcat Ridge Wildlife Management was the number one conservation priority for the Township. The site contained portions of the Beaver Brook wetlands, recognized by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service as a priority wetland. The site was located approximately 200 feet from the Township's sole source aquifer. Preserving the site was critical for the protection of Rockaway's water supply. The project would also expand the wildlife management area and associated recreation activities. Of special note was the fact the land is overlooked by the hawkwatch located in the wildlife management area. A total of 15 raptor species, including 84 sightings of bald eagles, have been recorded at the hawkwatch. The problem was the site had received preliminary subdivision approval for 108 single family building lots and the property owner was asking $7 million for the site. It was readily apparent that the acquisition of the property was beyond the means of any one agency. It was though, possible to preserve the site with multiple partners.

Supported by previous planning studies that documented the land's natural resource value, the Morris Land Conservancy, Morris County, Rockaway Township, Trust for Public Land, LWCF and the Green Acres Program joined forces to successfully complete the acquisition. Throughout New Jersey, the State, local governments, conservation organizations, and property owners are working cooperatively to preserve land and increase recreation opportunities.

Natural resource restoration projects are another area where partnerships can play a role. In the City of Rahway, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, New Jersey Wetlands Mitigation Council, NY/NJ Baykeeper, City of Rahway, Union County Department of Parks and Recreation, and the State are working on a unique project. For years, 11 homes located in close proximity to the Rahway River, had a history of serious flooding. With funding from the Green Acres Program, the homes were acquired and the city demolished and removed the homes. The 4.5 acre site was regraded, a pond created and native vegetation planted throughout the site. Upon project completion, the land will be transferred to the County as part of Rahway River Parkway.

Policy:

It shall be the policy of the State of New Jersey to continue to partner in cooperative projects with local governments and the private sector.

Issue: Stewardship

Preserving open space is only part of the State's responsibility. Caring for the lands and resources after they are put into public ownership is equally important. Over the past 40 years, New Jersey citizens have invested $2 billion dollars of state funds and millions more in local tax dollars and private donations for preservation of lands and thereby created an endowment of lands valued at many times the original cost. 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 are challenged to meet the goal of proper stewardship of the public's lands and recreational resources. The State Department of Environmental Protection manages 64% of all public lands in New Jersey. Local governments manage 18% of public lands. Though much of the State land is largely undeveloped, many historic, recreation and education facilities are maintained and operated on both state and local lands. Over many years, funds for the operation and capital needs in recreation areas have fallen short of the needs. 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.

Deferral of capital spending for renovation and rehabilitation can lead to larger expenses down the road. Some facilities require compliance with disability access guidelines and some are in need of costly upgrades for environmental infrastructure projects such as water and sewage systems. Capital needs left unmet can lead to irreplaceable resource losses, particularly those of historic significance.

Stewardship at times entails enforcement to protect natural resources. The increasing popularity of off-road vehicles (ORV) in New Jersey has presented challenges for the management of public lands and the protection of natural resources. As ORV ownership has increased in New Jersey and neighboring states over the past several years, there has been a marked increase in the unlawful use of these vehicles on public lands. This unlawful usage has caused extensive damage to sensitive natural areas with no provision for restoration; has diminished the use and enjoyment of public lands and other natural areas

by other user groups; has diverted resources from other resource protection priorities; and has created serious risks to ORV users, to the public, and to law enforcement personnel.

By adopting a policy that prohibits ORV use in state parks, forests and wildlife management areas, and increases fines, together with increased enforcement, the State has taken an aggressive stance against unlawful use of ORV on state lands.

Stewardship, however, also involves planning and working with interest groups to address concerns and find solutions. As part of its ORV policy, the Division of Natural and Historic Resources will work to develop appropriate recreational areas for lawful ORV users with the goal of having two new such facilities in operation by 2005. The New Jersey Trails Council will participate in this effort by establishing an ORV subcommittee representing a cross-section of interested environmental, recreational, ORV industry and ORV user groups. No current state park, wildlife management area or other environmentally sensitive area will be considered in the site review and selection process.

The Governor's Council on New Jersey Outdoors has over the years identified a lack of park operation and maintenance funding as a serious problem confronting public recreation providers. State public open space and recreation areas are challenged by rapidly increasing visitation. The Division of Parks and Forestry has experienced a more than 4.1 million increase in annual visitation between 1991 and 2001. For those that care about the natural, recreational and historic resources and for those that have a clear vision of the imperative to protect open space, it is frustrating to contemplate this question: How can we spend money to protect more open space when we do not take proper care of the lands and facilities for which we are already responsible?

The answer is that we must do both – balancing fiscal resources for both preservation and stewardship needs. Many lands that are in public ownership require very little, in terms of resources, to manage. Others, particularly the high recreation use areas of parks and some wildlife management areas, need substantive fiscal and personnel resources. Public testimony to the Governor's Council was critical of both local and state governments' inadequate attention to the stewardship of public parks and recreation areas. The need to serve the public through the protection of open space and maintenance of historic and recreational resources is a critical quality of life issue for New Jersey residents.

In its 2001 report on stewardship issues on State public open space and recreation areas, the Garden State Preservation Trust recommended that $25 million a year over the next ten years be statutorily dedicated for capital projects on State public lands over a ten year period. This annual allocation would respond to an estimated long term capital needs for State public parklands and wildlife management areas of approximately $430 million. The report also recommended an investment of $154 million to develop regional environmental education and interpretive centers at seven sites throughout the state in addition to other enhancements at these and other sites. The report highlighted the potential for New Jersey to develop a world class park system based on its existing system of natural, recreational and historic resources.

Ensuring the public park and recreation facilities are accessible is another issue for the State and local governments. The American with Disabilities Act requires public park agencies to make both programmatic changes, such as having programs occur in an accessible portion of a facility and structural changes such as a physical building alteration. The Green Acres Program has provided $2.2 million in grant and loan funding to local governments for 34 projects to improve the accessibility of park and recreation facilities.

Policy:

It shall be the policy of the State of New Jersey to provide funding for the operation and maintenance 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. Given the constraints of limited funding and staff resources at all levels of the public and private sectors, the recommended strategies are intended to improve deficiencies in New Jersey's open space and recreation infrastructure.

Issue: Land Preservation

The preservation of open space and farmland is a strong growth management tool and is essential to successful smart growth. Land preservation for conservation, recreation and agricultural purposes yields substantial environmental and economic benefits.

Actions

1. **Continue to provide Green Acres funding for the acquisition of land for state parks, forests, wildlife management areas, 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. (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 ongoing farmland and open space preservation projects such as the Musconetcong Greenway. (NJDEP, NJ Department of Agriculture, County Agricultural Development Boards)**

9. **Continue the preservation of scout camps and other similar lands owned by nonprofit organizations. (NJDEP)**

10. **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)**

11. **Seek the permanent protection of privately held watershed lands. (NJDEP, State Legislature, water companies)**

12. **Promote the retention of private open space and recreation areas through planning, education and other methods. (NJDEP, private providers)**

Issue: Recreation

Recreation is a vital ingredient of the quality of life issue in New Jersey. A growing population is creating greater demand for recreation facilities.

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. **Utilize monies from Land and Water Conservation Fund, Urban Park and Recreation Recovery Program and the Transportation Enhancement Act to develop and improve recreation facilities. (NJDEP, National Park Service, New Jersey Department of Transportation)**

4. **Foster greater interaction between local government recreation agencies and school boards on shared facility use. (NJDEP, local governments, local school boards)**

5. **Encourage municipalities to utilize the provisions of the Municipal Land Use Law to establish park and recreation facilities as part of the master plan and planning board processes. (NJDEP, local governments, environmental commissions)**

6. **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)**

7. **Implement the recommendations of the New Jersey Trails Plans through funding, planning and technical assistance programs. (NJDEP, New York/New Jersey Trail Conference, local hiking clubs)**

8. **Establish or improve 200 local parks and create two new state parks by 2006.**

Issue: Urban Open Space and Recreation

The revitalization of urban centers, regional centers and established suburban areas is a goal of the State Plan and a requirement of successful smart growth. In order to have livable urban areas in New Jersey, open space and recreation facilities and opportunities must be designed as an element of development and redevelopment efforts.

Actions:

1. **Increase local government funding for urban open space and recreation projects. (NJDEP, local governments)**

2. **Continue participation in the Urban Parks and Recreation Recovery Program. (NJDEP, National Park Service)**

3. **Increase funding conservation organization projects in urban centers. (NJDEP, conservation organizations)**

4. **Continue the preservation of land for conservation and recreation purposes in urbanized counties by the State. (NJDEP)**

5. **Foster partnerships between urban communities and nonprofit groups on recreation programming and the operation of park and recreation areas. (NJDEP, local governments, community groups)**

6. **Encourage urban municipalities to establish public open space and recreation areas in coordination with redevelopment initiatives. (NJDEP, local governments, economic development authorities)**

7. **Continue the preservation of priority sites identified in the NY/NJ Harbor Estuary Comprehensive Management Plan. (NJDEP, local governments, conservation groups)**

8. **Increase state park opportunities in New Jersey's urban centers (NJDEP).**

9. **Provide conservation and recreation opportunities through the remediation of brownfields. (NJDEP, local governments, conservation organizations, community groups)**

Issue: State Resource Areas

The six State Resource Areas represent the best of New Jersey. There is nothing more Jersey than the Jersey Shore or more serene than the Pinelands, or more threatened than the Highlands. The very sustainability of New Jersey depends on the protection of these 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 areas of the Highlands. (NJDEP, local governments, conservation organizations)**

5. **Focus protection efforts on lands identified in the Highlands Regional Study. (NJDEP, United States Forest Service, local governments, conservation organizations)**

6. **Utilize funds from the Forest Legacy Program to protect lands in the Highlands. (NJDEP, United States Forest Service)**

7. **Continue to provide Green Acres funding for state coastal and waterfront recreation areas. (NJDEP)**

8. **Continue funding to local government and conservation organizations for coastal and waterfront projects. (NJDEP, local governments, conservation organizations, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration)**

9. **Continue 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)**

10. **Continue to preserve and protect State Resource Areas through planning, regulation and acquisition efforts. (NJDEP, local governments, regional agencies, conservation organizations)**

11. **Focus preservation efforts on water resources. (NJDEP, local governments, regional agencies, conservation organizations)**

12. **Promote ecotourism as a way to provide economic development and protect important natural, recreation and historic resources. (NJDEP, New Jersey Department of Commerce and Economic Development, local governments)**

Issue: Greenways

Greenways have become a graceful solution to the need for increased open space and recreation statewide. Whether in urban or rural areas, greenways offer the potential to provide close to home recreation and the establishment of a network of green infrastructure.

Actions:

1. **Continue the development of the *Garden State Greenways* plan. (NJDEP, local governments, conservation organizations)**

2. **Support greenway projects through 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, New York/New Jersey Trail Conference)**

4. **Encourage local governments to adopt greenways as part of local master plans. (NJDEP, local governments, environmental commissions)**

Issue: Partnerships

Working through partnerships enables the State to achieve multiple conservation and recreation goals in a cost effective manner. Cooperative projects with local governments, conservation organizations and private land owners will continue to be an important strategy for the State.

Actions:

1. **Foster partnerships and cooperative projects between the State, local governments and conservation organizations. (NJDEP, local governments, conservation organizations, private landowners)**

2. **Continue funding local government and conservation organizations cooperative projects. (NJDEP, local governments, conservation organizations)**

3. **Increase opportunities for data sharing among public and private open space and recreation providers (NJDEP, federal agencies, local governments, conservation organizations)**

Issue: Stewardship

The management, operation and maintenance of the State's open space and recreation infrastructure is a critical issue because it relates directly to improving the quality of life for New Jersey residents.

Actions:

1. **Continue funding for local governments and conservation organizations for park and recreation development projects. (NJDEP, local governments, conservation organizations)**

2. **Seek increased funding for operation and maintenance on State public open space and recreation areas. (NJDEP)**

3. **Develop strategically located Regional Interpretive Centers at five sites statewide. (NJDEP)**

4. **Encourage the expansion of environmental education throughout New Jersey's educational system. (NJDEP, New Jersey Department of Education, environmental groups and conservation organizations)**

5. **Continue to provide Green Acres funding for state and local projects for compliance with the American With Disabilities Act. (NJDEP, local governments)**

6. **Establish two operational off road vehicle parks by 2005.**

7. **Continue to work with local governments and conservation organizations on the development and implementation of effective conservation easement language, monitoring and enforcement. (NJDEP, local governments, conservation organizations)**

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 2003 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 seems to be unstoppable 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, Regional Plan Association 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 2003 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 main reason behind the effort to preserve Sterling Forest in New York State was the protection of water quality and supply for northern New Jersey. The same is true of the initiative to protect the Highlands region. Protection of the Pinelands and the Hackensack Meadowlands was also spurred by water quality considerations. 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, 207 local government open space tax referendums is substantial evidence of public support. Clearly, there is a preference statewide for land preservation and that it features prominently in quality of life issues.

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. In fact, 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.

Since the publication of the 1994 SCORP, the State has undertaken a number of initiatives to define New Jersey's most pressing open space and recreation issues, forge cooperative partnerships, coordinate efforts with local governments and nonprofits, and strive for a balance between natural resource protection and economic growth within New Jersey. 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 2003 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 exists as one segment of New Jersey's extensive open space and recreation program. As such, the selection of projects to be federally funded is determined in conjunction with the state and local government project priority systems. The LWCF has had a substantial impact on the New Jersey park and recreation scene. A total of 296 projects have received LWCF monies representing an investment of over $104 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 2003 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 loan and for nonprofit projects, matching grants. State projects are funded from Green Acres bond monies and federal acquisition financial assistance. Local governments and nonprofit projects are further divided into acquisition and development.

The Green Acres Program accepts applications throughout the year, and funding is awarded each April and October. Complete applications are batched every February 15th and August 15th. 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, six 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, engineering and environmental consulting firms, conservation organizations and community groups. Information is also posted on the Green Acres website. 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 significance or which best exemplify one or more of the policies set forth in New Jersey's 2003 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, 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, Natural Lands Management Program. Recommendations for preservation are also made by conservation organizations, 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. Legislation signed by the Governor in August 2002, directs 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 will develop new criteria to reflect these legislative requirements.

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 projects conform with findings, recommendations and priorities of the New Jersey Open Space and 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)** Max. 35 pts.

This factor evaluates the extent to which a proposed acquisition project will satisfy the local open space deficits.

(see table 1) a) **Intensity of Need.** Up to 5 pts.

The intensity of need is derived for the counties by applying the acres/population standard. This standard indicates where the most critical open space needs exist.

(see table 2) b) **Balanced Land Use Deficit.** Up to 5 pts.

This factor takes into consideration the amount of additional open space needed in each county in order to satisfy the open space goals derived through the balanced land use method.

c) **Service Area Needs.** Up to 25 pts.

Because countywide figures do not necessarily represent the needs of a particular community or neighborhood within a community, this factor considers 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. The open space need will be based on an open space inventory keyed to a map for the municipality(ies) in which the project is located.

FACTOR #2 **FACILITY NEEDS** (Development only) Max. 28 pts.

This factor evaluates the extent to which a proposed development project will satisfy local recreation facility deficits.

a) **State Plan Endorsement** Up to 8 pts.

Urban Center	8 pts.
Regional Center	6 pts.
Town	4 pts.

b) **Service Area Needs.** Up to 20 pts.

This factor considers the needs of the population to be served. The service area for the project will be defined on the basis of population density, scope and type of project. 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 applicant).

FACTOR #3 **ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION** Max 30 pts.

(Acquisition only) Up to 3 pts. each

This factor is used to determine to what extent a proposed acquisition meets key environmental protection goals.

1. **Open space/conservation areas** that are of sufficient size and located so as to:
   a) Protect critical wildlife habitat
   b) Preserve State Plan Critical Environmental Sites, unique natural areas or land types (steep slopes, dunes, scenic overlooks, wetlands, forest lands)
   c) Provide additions to or linkages between existing public recreation/open space areas
   d) Support regional open space/conservation initiatives such as landscape ecology, biodiversity, wildlife corridors or shore protection
   e) Protect documented endangered and/or threatened species habitat

2. **Greenways and watershed protection projects** including forests, shorelines, stream corridors and trails that are of sufficient size and located so as to:

   a) Represent an integral link in an existing or planned county, regional or statewide greenway or designated or potential Wild and Scenic River
   b) Assist water quality protection efforts
   c) Provide significant natural flood storage
   d) Act as a physical or visual buffer between a sensitive area and development or provide visual or physical access to the water
   e) Protect a significant portion of a river's headwaters, tributaries or shorelines

FACTOR #4 **HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCE PRESERVATION**

Max. 15 pts.

(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) The level of historic significance, as evidenced by the site being included on or being eligible for inclusion on the New Jersey and/or National Registers of Historic Places or State Plan Critical Historic Site.

b) Extent to which the site provides extensions to or linkages between public recreation/open space areas.

c) Extent to which the site represents a component of a designated historic district.

d) Extent to which the site is part of an ongoing historic preservation/restoration project or historic study or investigation.

e) Integrity is the authenticity of a property's historic identity, evidenced by the survival of physical characteristics that existed during the property's historic or prehistoric period. If a property retains sufficient physical characteristics it possessed in the past, then it conveys association with historic patterns or persons, architectural or engineering design and technology, or information about a culture or people. The New Jersey and National Register criteria specify that integrity is a quality that applies to historic and prehistoric resources in seven ways: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. Included in the consideration should be whether or not the site has original furnishings.

FACTOR #5 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION/SUPPORT/PLANNING**

Max. 15 pts.

(Acquisition and Development)

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

1. **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 such as leagues or clubs and the general public.

2. **Planning** Up to 10 pts.
Applicants should demonstrate consistency with the New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan and the New Jersey Outdoor Recreation Plan, as well as with local planning documents, especially open space/recreation elements by providing excerpts from, or providing specific references from their State Plan Endorsement documents, master plans, open space plans, etc.

FACTOR #6 **PROJECT QUALITY** (Acquisition and Development) Max. 28 pts.

This factor evaluates project elements and features.

1. **Accessibility** (Acquisition and Development) 1 pt. each

The site location:

a) Is close to population centers (relative to size, density, and dispersion of the population as well as scope and type of the project)

b) Is accessible by public transportation (where useful and usable)

c) Is accessible by walking and bicycling

d) Creates public access where none exists or where existing access is undeveloped or restricted

2. **Recreation Potential** (Acquisition only) Up to 2 pts. each

The site:

a) Is suitable for major recreation facility development

b) Is suitable for water-dependent use and development

c) Represents part of a waterfront development or redevelopment plan

d) Provides environmental and/or historic interpretive opportunities

e) Improves management or expansion of recreation facilities

3. **Public Access to Water** (see table 4 on pg. 18) Up to 6 pts.

(Acquisition and Development)

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

4. **Design Quality** (Development only) 1 pt. each

The design:

a) Includes multiple recreation and conservation purposes

b) Uses effective landscaping

c) Is compatible with surrounding land uses

d) Provides adequate accessibility to and within the site

e) Provides ease of operation and maintenance

f) Provides opportunities for a variety of user groups and multiple active and passive recreation activities

5. **Cost Effectiveness** Point range: +2, -2

(Acquisition and Development)

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

a) Cost of alternative locations and facilities

b) Bargain sale, donation, easement or development rights purchase

c) Cost of future operation and maintenance

FACTOR #7 **PROJECT PRIORITIES** (Acquisition and Development) Max. 10 pts.

1 pt. each

The following acquisition and development project elements are encouraged:

1. Private investment and/or ecotourism potential, public/private sector venture, supports municipal and county (urban complex) Strategic Revitalization Plans consistent with the State Plan or the Pinelands Plan
2. Waterfront development/redevelopment
3. Trails/bike paths/greenways
4. Historic/archeological resource enhancement/preservation
5. Projects with scheduled programming
6. Open play area
7. Multiple use projects
8. Addition to or the development of a prior Green Acres funded project
9. Donation of land, land value, volunteers, etc.
10. Likelihood of development (acquisition only)

FACTOR #8 **FIRST TIME APPLICANT** 5 pts.
(Acquisition and Development)

Applies to a project sponsored by counties or municipalities that previously have **not** received Green Acres funding.

FACTOR #9 **DONATIONS** (Acquisition only) Up to 5 pts.

Applies to projects involving donations which exceed 25% of the value of the project. One point will be awarded for every additional 5% of the value of the donation.

FACTOR #10 **FACILITY DESIGN SENSITIVITY AND SITE SUITABILITY** Max. 6 pts.
(Development only) Point range: +2, -2
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:

1. Clearing by siting facilities in cleared areas
2. Grading, excavation and drainage by choosing sites with suitable topography and soil conditions for proposed facilities
3. Adverse impacts on sensitive areas (see list) by retaining, establishing or enhancing vegetative buffers, or incorporating other techniques compatible with surrounding land uses.

SENSITIVE AREAS LIST

Includes, but is not limited to:

Tidal Flats
Floodplains
Beach/Dune Systems
Forest Lands
Wetlands
Steep Slopes
Endangered or Threatened Species Habitat
Headwaters/Tributaries/Stream Corridors
Breeding Areas
Watershed Lands

	TABLE 1 INTENSITY OF NEED		TABLE 2 BALANCED LAND USE	
County	**Municipal Pts**	**County Pts**	**Municipal Pts**	**County Pts**
Atlantic	1	1	1	3
Bergen	5	4	1	1
Burlington	3	5	4	5
Camden	4	5	2	2
Cape May	1	2	1	2
Cumberland	3	3	5	5
Essex	5	5	2	1
Gloucester	2	3	4	4
Hudson	5	1	2	1
Hunterdon	4	1	5	5
Mercer	2	2	2	2
Middlesex	4	4	3	3
Monmouth	1	1	2	3
Morris	1	1	1	2
Ocean	2	4	3	4
Passaic	4	4	1	1
Salem	3	2	5	5
Somerset	2	1	4	3
Sussex	1	3	4	4
Union	5	2	3	1
Warren	3	3	5	3

TABLE 3
PUBLIC ACCESS TO WATER
Need for Access *

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

*Need is determined by water body type, type and location of the access and the existing supply.

NONPROFIT PROJECT PRIORITY SYSTEM

This priority system judges the relative merits of proposed acquisition and development project applications. The system is designed to reflect the degree proposed projects conform with open space findings, recommendations, and established priorities developed through the New Jersey Outdoor Recreation Plan, the New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan, and with statewide goals that are consistent with the Green Acres Bond Acts. 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) Max. 35 pts.

This factor evaluates the extent to which a proposed acquisition project will satisfy the local open space deficits.

(see table 1) a) **Intensity of Need.** Up to 5 pts.

The intensity of need is derived for the counties by applying the acres/population standard. This standard indicates where the most critical open space needs exist.

(see table 2) b) **Balanced Land Use Deficit.** Up to 5 pts.

This factor takes into consideration the amount of additional open space needed in each county in order to satisfy the open space goals derived through the balanced land use method.

c) **Service Area Needs.** Up to 25 pts.

Because countywide figures do not necessarily represent the needs of a particular community or neighborhood within a community, this factor considers 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. The open space need will be based on an open space inventory keyed to a map for the municipality(ies) in which the project is located.

FACTOR # 2 **FACILITY NEEDS** (Development only) Max. 28 pts.

This factor evaluates the extent to which a proposed development project will satisfy local recreation facility deficits.

a) **State Plan Endorsement** Up to 8 pts.

Urban Center	8 pts.
Regional Center	6 pts.
Town	4 pts.

b) **Service Area Needs.** Up to 20 pts.

This factor considers the needs of the population to be served. The service area for the project will be defined on the basis of population density, scope and type of project. 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 applicant).

FACTOR #3 **ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION** Max 30 pts.
(Acquisition only) Up to 3 pts. each

This factor is used to determine to what extent a proposed acquisition meets key environmental protection goals.

1. **Open space/conservation areas** that are of sufficient size and located so as to:
   a) Protect critical wildlife habitat,
   b) Preserve State Plan Critical Environmental Sites, unique natural areas or land types (steep slopes, dunes, scenic overlooks, wetlands, forest lands),
   c) Provide additions to or linkages between existing public recreation/open space areas,
   d) Support regional open space/conservation initiatives such as landscape ecology, biodiversity, wildlife corridors or shore protection,
   e) Protect documented endangered and/or threatened species habitat.

2. **Greenways and watershed protection projects** including forests, shorelines, stream corridors and trails that are of sufficient size and located so as to:

   a) Represent an integral link in an existing or planned county, regional or statewide greenway or designated or potential Wild and Scenic River System,
   b) Assist water quality protection efforts,
   c) Provide significant natural flood storage,
   d) Act as a physical or visual buffer between a sensitive area and development or provide visual or physical access to the water,
   e) Protect a significant portion of a river's headwaters, tributaries or shorelines.

FACTOR #4 **HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCE PRESERVATION** Max. 15 pts.
(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) The level of historic significance, as evidenced by the site being included on or being eligible for inclusion on the New Jersey and/or National Registers of Historic Places or State Plan Critical Historic Site.

b) Extent to which the site provides extensions to or linkages between public recreation/open space areas.

c) Extent to which the site represents a component of a designated historic district.

d) Extent to which the site is part of an ongoing historic preservation/restoration project or historic study or investigation.

e) Integrity is the authenticity of a property's historic identity, evidenced by the survival of physical characteristics that existed during the property's historic or prehistoric period. If a property retains sufficient physical characteristics it possessed in the past, then it conveys association with historic patterns or persons, architectural or engineering design and technology, or information about a culture or people. The New Jersey and National Register criteria specify that integrity is a quality that applies to historic and prehistoric resources in seven ways: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. Included in the consideration should be whether or not the site has original furnishings.

FACTOR #5 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION/SUPPORT/PLANNING** Max. 15 pts.
(Acquisition and Development)

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

1. **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 such as leagues or clubs and the general public.

2. **Planning** Up to 10 pts.
Applicants should demonstrate consistency with the New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan and the New Jersey Outdoor Recreation Plan, as well as with local planning documents, especially open space/recreation elements by providing excerpts from, or providing specific references from their State Plan Endorsement documents, master plans, open space plans, etc.

FACTOR #6 **PROJECT QUALITY** (Acquisition and Development) Max. 28 pts.

This factor evaluates project elements and features.

1. **Accessibility** (Acquisition and Development) 1 pt. each
   The site location:
   a) Is close to population centers (relative to size, density, and dispersion of the population as well as scope and type of the project)
   b) Is accessible by public transportation (where useful and usable)
   c) Is accessible by walking and bicycling
   d) Creates public access where none exists or where existing access is undeveloped or restricted

2. **Recreation Potential** (Acquisition only) Up to 2 pts. each
   The site:
   a) Is suitable for major recreation facility development
   b) Is suitable for water-dependent use and development
   c) Represents part of a waterfront development or redevelopment plan
   d) Provides environmental and/or historic interpretive opportunities
   e) Improves management or expansion of recreation facilities

3. **Public Access to Water** (see table 4 on pg. 18) Up to 6 pts.
   (Acquisition and Development)
   This subfactor evaluates the extent a project improves needed visual and/or physical public access to water.

4. **Design Quality** (Development only) 1 pt. each
   The design:
   a) Includes multiple recreation and conservation purposes
   b) Uses effective landscaping
   c) Is compatible with surrounding land uses
   d) Provides adequate accessibility to and within the site
   e) Provides ease of operation and maintenance
   f) Provides opportunities for a variety of user groups and multiple active and passive recreation activities

5. **Cost Effectiveness** Point range: +2, -2
   (Acquisition and Development)
   This subfactor evaluates the quality of conservation or recreation opportunities provided by a project in comparison to the anticipated cost. Considerations include:
   a) Cost of alternative locations and facilities
   b) Bargain sale, donation, easement or development rights purchase
   c) Cost of future operation and maintenance
   d)

FACTOR #7 **PROJECT PRIORITIES** (Acquisition and Development) Max. 10 pts.
1 pt. each

The following acquisition and development project elements are encouraged:

1. Private investment and/or ecotourism potential, public/private sector venture supports municipal and county (urban complex) Strategic Revitalization Plans consistent with the State Plan or the Pinelands Plan
2. Waterfront development/redevelopment,
3. Trails/bike paths/greenways
4. Historic/archeological resource enhancement/preservation
5. Projects with scheduled programming
6. Open play area
7. Multiple use projects
8. Addition to or the development of a prior Green Acres funded project
9. Donation of land, land value, volunteers, etc.
10. Likelihood of development (acquisition only)

FACTOR # 8 **FACILITY DESIGN SENSITIVITY AND SITE SUITABILITY** Max. 6 pts.
(Development only) Point range: +2, -2

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:

1. Clearing by siting facilities in cleared areas,
2. Grading, excavation and drainage by choosing sites with suitable topography and soil conditions for proposed facilities, and
3. Adverse impacts on sensitive areas (see list) by retaining, establishing or enhancing vegetative buffers, or incorporating other techniques compatible with surrounding land uses.

SENSITIVE AREAS LIST

Includes, but is not limited to:

Tidal Flats
Floodplains
Beach/Dune Systems
Forest Lands
Wetlands
Steep Slopes
Endangered or Threatened Species Habitat
Headwaters/Tributaries/Stream Corridors
Breeding Areas
Watershed Lands

	TABLE 1		TABLE 2	
	INTENSITY OF NEED		BALANCED LAND USE	
County	**Municipal Pts**	**County Pts**	**Municipal Pts**	**County Pts**
Atlantic	1	1	1	3
Bergen	5	4	1	1
Burlington	3	5	4	5
Camden	4	5	2	2
Cape May	1	2	1	2
Cumberland	3	3	5	5
Essex	5	5	2	1
Gloucester	2	3	4	4
Hudson	5	1	2	1
Hunterdon	4	1	5	5
Mercer	2	2	2	2
Middlesex	4	4	3	3
Monmouth	1	1	2	3
Morris	1	1	1	2
Ocean	2	4	3	4
Passaic	4	4	1	1
Salem	3	2	5	5
Somerset	2	1	4	3
Sussex	1	3	4	4
Union	5	2	3	1
Warren	3	3	5	3

TABLE 3
PUBLIC ACCESS TO WATER
Need for Access *

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

Need is determined by water body type, type and location of the access and the existing supply.

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, highlights of major accomplishments since the 1994 plan was completed and an outline of some of the New Jersey's wetlands conservation strategies. This wetlands plan update was prepared in consultation with the Land Use Regulation Program, Office of Coastal Planning and the Division of Fish and Wildlife of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection. The Land Use Regulation Program is responsible for the administration of the Freshwater Wetlands Protection Act, Coastal Wetlands Protection Act, 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 (NJFWPA)

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 NJFWPA, 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

NJFPWA 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 NJFWPA 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 NJFWPA 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 NJFWPA 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 NJFWPA 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 NJFWPA 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.

New Jersey Land Use Regulation Programs

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 NJFWPA, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection administers two other programs that affect wetlands. They are the Coastal Zone Management Program and the Stream Encroachment Permit Program. Each of these regulatory programs emphasizes the protection of critical natural resources associated with stream corridors and waterways throughout New Jersey. These areas encompass flood plains, tidal waters, tidal wetlands, lands abutting tidal waters, and upland areas as much as 24 miles inland.

The Coastal Zone Management Program regulates development through three specific laws: the Coastal Area Facility Review Act (CAFRA), the Waterfront Development Law, and the Wetlands Act of 1970. 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.

These permit programs, along with the permits authorized under the NJFWPA, have generated a considerable amount of regulatory review activity. In the period between January 1, 1993 and June 30, 2001, the Land Use Regulation Program issued 43,730 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.

Major Accomplishments

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. The manual is still in use today and will be updated again in the near future.**

2. **Office of Natural Resource Restoration**

   The primary mission of the Office of Natural Resource Restoration 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 is under the Assistant Commissioner for Natural and Historic Resources, thereby enabling ONRR to effectively and efficiently implement restoration of injured natural resources by working with the other natural resource agencies within DEP, such as the Division of Parks and Forestry, the Division of Fish and Wildlife, and the Green Acres Program.

In its eight years, the Office of Natural Resource Restoration has settled oil spill cases and hazardous waste site cases that totaled over $19,366,358. Working with municipalities, counties, other state and federal agencies, and non-government organization's, ONRR has allocated approximately $15 million of the $19 million to restore the public's resources injured by oil spills and hazardous waste sites. As of November 2001, ONRR has acquired 1,226 acres of aquifer recharge area, wetlands, and valuable wildlife habitat and set them aside as public open space. Over 169 acres of wetlands have been restored or are planned to be restored.

ONRR has done more than restore, preserve and provide open space and wildlife habitat. It has funded the construction of a new interpretive center at Island Beach State Park and the restoration of a Civil War era pier at Fort Mott State Park. In addition to being a registered historic site, the pier now serves as a ferry terminal that transports passengers to and from other historic sites in the Delaware estuary. Both of these projects were implemented to restore the public's loss of use and access to its natural resources because of oil spills. Construction of these facilities has substantially increased public use of these parks.

Damage recoveries have also been used for funding research in support of habitat restoration and endangered species management, hiking trails, erosion control, streamside cleanups, and constructing permanent oil boom anchors at the mouths of tributaries to New York Harbor and the Delaware estuary. These boom anchors will allow rapid deployment of booms to remote areas during future oils spills, thus protecting hundreds of acres of upstream wetland ecosystems.

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 ("Tech Rules")

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. <u>State Freshwater Wetlands Mitigation Council Projects</u>

The Freshwater Wetlands Mitigation Council, created statutorily by the Freshwater Wetlands Protection Act, has elected to fund projects that contain several partners, including: 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.

One such project is located in Ocean County. The partners involved are Ocean County (the landholders), Ducks Unlimited (the wetland restoration partner) and the Council. The project was completed in December 2001 and involved the restoration of approximately six acres of wetlands, which are to be planted with Atlantic White Cedar in Brick Township, Ocean County. The subject area is located on a 275-acre parcel owned by Ocean County and purchased with Ocean County Land Preservation Trust moneys. The parcel has been set aside for preservation/conservation purposes.

Another project that has been completed is located in Monmouth County. The partners involved are the State Division of Fish & Wildlife (the landowner), NJDOT (the wetland restoration partner) and the Council. The project was completed in March 2002 and involved the removal of an old railroad bed and bridge structure located in an estuarine wetland. The railroad bed and bridge structure is located in the Manasquan River Wildlife Management Area. The removal of the structure will not only result in the direct restoration of approximately 2-3 acres of salt marsh but also remove a hydrologic impediment.

In addition, the Freshwater Wetlands Mitigation Council has accepted and preserved 1,459.37 acres of land to compensate for 7.55 acres of freshwater wetland fills. On average this comes out to a wetland preservation ratio of almost 200:1.

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. **Seek to protect and preserve wetlands identified by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service's Regional Wetlands Concept Plan.**
4. **Continue to provide funding and technical assistance for wetland protection projects to nonprofit conservation organizations and local governments.**
5. **Work with private organizations and local governments to coordinate wetland protection efforts.**
6. **Continue to acquire and enhance wetlands through participation in the Waterfowl Stamp Program and the North American Wetlands Conservation Act.**
7. **Continue to provide opportunities for participation in the Green Acres Tax Exemption Program.**

8. Coordinate wetland protection efforts with the Pinelands Commission and the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission.

<u>Green Acres Program</u>

42 Years of Open Space and Recreation Success

Since the 1950s, New Jersey has lost nearly one million acres of farmland, forests, meadows, and wetlands to development. The rapid loss of open space threatens the environment and the quality of life in New Jersey. As development pressures increased, a clear and urgent vision unfolded. The Green Acres Program was created to meet New Jersey's growing recreation and conservation needs.

Since 1961, New Jersey voters have approved nine bond issues totaling more than $1.4 billion. These funds have protected nearly one half million acres of open space, bringing the statewide total of protected open space to over a million acres. The funds also provided for the development of hundreds of recreation facilities in communities across the state. Still, more needs to be done.

In 1997, the Governor's Council on New Jersey Outdoors recommended that an additional one million acres of open space be protected in the next decade to conserve biological diversity, preserve farmland, protect watersheds, create greenway corridors, and provide opportunities for outdoor recreation, and to constitutionally dedicate $98 million dollars a year from existing state revenues to open space and farmland acquisition, recreational development, and historic preservation. In June 1999, the Garden State Preservation Trust Act was signed into law. The Act also authorized the issuance of bonds to provide more than $1.9 billion dollars over the next ten years for land protection, historic preservation, and recreation development.

With strong, broad roots, New Jersey's commitment to open space continues to be an important initiative. By the end of 2001, New Jersey had protected an additional 255,000 acres of open space and farmland, bringing the total of preserved land in the state to 1.15 million acres. This represents more than 20 percent of the State's land area. Approximately four out of every ten acres in New Jersey will be protected and every New Jersey resident will have access to protected open space within minutes of their home.

Funding Opportunities for New Jersey Communities

The most significant role the Green Acres Program plays statewide, is as a planning consultant and financial partner to municipalities, counties, and nonprofit land trusts. The Program is organized into teams by geographic region. Each team works with the local officials in their region to coordinate land preservation across political boundaries.

In addition, Green Acres provides financial assistance by way of grants and low interest (2%) loans to municipalities, counties, and nonprofit organizations to acquire open space and develop outdoor recreation facilities. More than 80,000 acres have been protected and hundreds of recreation development projects have been financed through the Green Acres local and nonprofit funding program.

In addition to partnering with local governments, Green Acres also partners with the DEP Environmental Infrastructure Trust Program (EIFP) to provide loan funding for land preservation projects that provide a water quality benefit. This brings more state money to the table and helps local governments stretch their open space dollars to protect more land. EIFP has helped to protect over 2,000 acres of open space through these partnerships.

Twenty of New Jersey's 21 counties, as well as 187 of the 566 municipalities in the state, have a dedicated open space tax fund. These funds provide an estimated $158 million annually for land preservation and enable communities to leverage their resources and protect more land. Additionally, they help to stretch the State's land preservation resources, enabling the State to protect more land.

The Green Acres Planning Incentive Program provides grant and loan funding to local governments who have adopted an open space tax and who have an approved open space recreation plan. Participants in the program are eligible to receive the highest grant percentage awards and have the greatest flexibility in applying those funds for land acquisition and recreation development in their communities.

Partnerships Are Key

Green Acres successes would not have been possible without the tremendous effort of our municipal, county and nonprofit partners. Protecting large parcels is costly, complicated, and often involves many public and private partners bringing resources to the table.

In 1993, Green Acres accomplished its first cooperative preservation effort when it partnered with Wayne Township and The Nature Conservancy to protect more than 1,150 acres at High Mountain Park Preserve in Passaic County. One of the largest tracts of protected woodlands and wetlands in this part of New Jersey, High Mountain Park is a natural oasis amid suburban development.

Four years later, Green Acres was one of many partners contributing resources totaling $13 million to permanently protect the 589 acre Institute Lands, a well-known natural area adjacent to the Princeton Battlefield in Princeton Township, Mercer County. The preservation initiative was led by the Delaware & Raritan Greenway and included several nonprofit organizations, county and local governments, the landowners, and many private donors.

An example with a different twist was the effort to protect the 15 acre Stillwater Grist Mill site in Sussex County. The site includes a historic mill, the adjacent miller's house, and several outbuildings. While the site was clearly worthy of protection, its management was not in the scope of either Parks and Forestry or Fish and Wildlife. Green Acres acquired the site and then worked with the Ridge and Valley Conservancy to develop an outside managing committee to maintain the site. The committee consists of a diverse mix of organizations that signed a five year renewable lease with Green Acres, and it will pursue historical landmark status for the site as well as oversee restoration of the mill.

A 416 acre tract in the Swimming River watershed in Holmdel Township was a partnership success. The Green Acres Program worked with the county and township governments, Monmouth Conservation Foundation, Friends of Holmdel Open Space, DEP's Environmental Infrastructure Funding Program, and the State Agriculture Development Committee to consummate the deal at a purchase price of $19 million. This complicated deal would not have been possible without the partners and a willing seller. The

landowners, JP Morgan Chase, donated a portion of the appraised value of the land demonstrating their good corporate citizenship and enabling the land to be protected for generations to come.

Recreation Development

Well planned open space can promote community investment, educate citizens about the environment, contribute to a community's unique character, and link surrounding resources to create a sense of place. Parks and open spaces add economic, social, environmental and aesthetic value to our communities and play an important role in sustaining New Jersey's high quality of life.

Recreation needs are as diverse as the people who play. To meet these needs, Green Acres funds different types of recreation development in a variety of settings. Examples range from smaller projects, such as basketball courts and tot lots, to expansive waterfront parks and plazas. Green Acres supports the purchase of open space in New Jersey's cities, where such opportunities are extremely limited and generally quite expensive. The program provides both grants and loans to urban municipalities for acquisition and park development and embraces the opportunity to partner in neighborhood and economic revitalization projects, providing sorely needed funds to our urban communities. Many urban dwellers lack transportation to visit suburban and rural open spaces and parks, making close-to-home recreational facilities even more critical.

For example, Green Acres provided state and federal Land and Water Conservation Funds to the County of Camden, the City of Camden, and a nonprofit organization, The Cooper's Ferry Development Association, to develop the Ulysses S. Wiggins Waterfront Park on the Delaware River in Camden. Green Acres funding was an important catalyst for a successful ongoing partnership that not only developed a promenade, but also continues to revitalize the community and attract other facilities. The site includes The Tweeter Center, a privately operated performing arts center, the Camden Children's Garden and Visitors Center, the New Jersey State Aquarium and the Battleship USS New Jersey. The waterfront also includes a minor league stadium that is home to the Camden Riversharks.

The promenade transformed a former industrial site, which was vacant at the time the project began, into a permanent, publicly accessible, recreational facility and scenic corridor along the river.

In addition to the projects in Camden, Green Acres has helped to revitalize and stabilize many of our urban communities. Examples include Bayonne's Kill Van Kull Park, Jersey City's Exchange Place Pier Park, Hoboken's Frank Sinatra Park, Perth Amboy's Marina Waterfront, Trenton's Waterfront, Long Branch City's Ocean Promenade, Elizabeth City's Arthur Kill Park, and Millville's Waterfront Park.

Green Acres Buys Land

As the real estate agent for the DEP, Green Acres administers funds provided under the Garden State Preservation Trust Act. Green Acres purchases land from willing sellers. The land then becomes part of the system of state parks, forests, natural areas, and wildlife management areas (WMAs) managed by the Division of Parks and Forestry, the Division of Fish and Wildlife or the Natural Lands Trust. These include state parks such as High Point in Sussex County, Liberty in Hudson County, and Double Trouble in Ocean County, as well as the Wildcat Ridge WMA in Morris County and Union Lake WMA in Cumberland County.

Green Acres targets land along waterways, environmentally sensitive land, recreational and, trails and trail connectors, and historic resources. The program also seeks to expand State holdings and to link green spaces to form greenways. By preserving these resources, Green Acres provides for the continued enjoyment of New Jersey's natural and recreational resources by millions of residents and visitors each year.

Examples of Green Acres preservation project areas include shore points such as Barnegat Bay, one of the State's most widely used recreational resources; Cape May, where tourists flock each spring and fall to witness the spectacular migrations of warblers and raptors; and the Delaware Bayshore, an area of global ecological significance. Millions of shorebirds and thousands of raptors rely upon the bays and shores for food and habitat for their survival during migration. These ecosystems are fragile; their healthy existence depends on the preservation of the waterways that feed them, and the surrounding coastal islands, uplands and wetlands.

Along New Jersey's western shore, the Delaware River Greenway stretches 115 miles, revealing dramatic palisades, forested islands, rolling hills and valleys, towns, historic villages, and farms. Efforts are underway to secure greater public access to the river, broaden the width of public holdings within the corridor, and protect the scenic and historic resources.

Across the center of the State, Green Acres has identified multiple greenway project areas that protect resources and give residents and visitors a sense of place. The Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park is a 66 mile long linear park stretching from Bordentown north to New Brunswick and from Trenton north to Frenchtown. The State's goal is to link the D&R Canal State Park to protected lands in the surrounding region.

Sweeping across the north central portion of New Jersey, nearly a million acres of forests in the Highlands surround and protect the source waters for one-third of New Jersey's citizens. Serving as a spectacular green belt around some of the nation's most densely populated cities and suburbs, the majority of the Highlands mountains, ridges, forests, and fields are privately held and, therefore, vulnerable to development. Preservation of the greenbelt is critical to ensuring the integrity of New Jersey's water supplies and maintaining the State's biodiversity.

The Pinelands region, the only nationally designated reserve of its kind in America, is home to plant and animal species found nowhere else in the world. Its sandy soils filter rainfall into New Jersey's largest drinking water aquifer. The Pinelands comprise one million acres, the majority of which are privately held. Permanent protection of open spaces in the Pinelands will ensure excellent water quality, ecosystem integrity, sustainable agricultural production, and the continuance of resource-based recreation such as canoeing, hunting, and camping.

The New York/New Jersey Harbor Estuary Program is a regional partnership of federal, state, local agencies, citizens and scientists working to protect and restore the natural resources of the estuary. Loss of habitat is one of the greatest natural resource threats to the estuary. Lands along the Arthur Kill, Hudson River, Raritan River, Raritan Bayshore, and in the Hackensack Meadowlands are being preserved.

Another initiative, the Crossroads of the American Revolution, traces the footsteps of American Revolutionary War soldiers across the State. More Revolutionary War battles took place in New Jersey than in any other state. Remarkably, many vestiges of the Revolutionary War era still remain – mines, mills, soldier's footpaths, revolutionary leaders' homes, encampment sites, battlegrounds, and barracks. Many of these sites are already preserved in public ownership; many more can still be preserved.

New Jersey's exciting past comes alive at other historic sites across the State: battlefields and barracks; Native American and early immigrant archeological sites; factories and farms; mines and mills, canals and patriots' footpaths; industrial barons' mansions and humble poets' homes; lighthouses that guided schooners to safe harbors and safe houses that harbored slaves on the path to freedom. By protecting and linking sites of historic significance in Paterson, Camden, Trenton, and throughout the State, and by preserving adjoining buffer lands, the historic landscapes of our State can be enjoyed by generations to come.

Natural areas often protect threatened and endangered animal and plant species. Green Acres is committed to protecting and expanding these environmentally sensitive natural areas throughout the State, ranging geographically from Woodbine Bogs in Cape May County, to Strawberry Hill in Mercer County, to Ramapo Lake Natural Area in Bergen and Passaic counties.

The Green Acres Program has long recognized the importance of protecting watershed lands and has worked to protect headwater areas and the sensitive resources of rivers, streams, lakes, reservoirs, wetlands and associated buffers, and coastal waters. Watershed lands protect ecological resources and water quality, provide water based recreation opportunities, and serve as linear open space linkages.

Green Acres also is actively seeking to protect scout camps across New Jersey through conservation easements. The land is protected from development; the proceeds from the sale of the land help strengthen the camps by providing funds for the camps to reinvest in their programs; and children continue to have access to natural areas and the benefits of an outdoor youth camp experience. Additionally, the easements ensure that the land will

remain open, allow for continued operation of the camp, and provide public access to the natural resources associated with the camps.

To ensure the ongoing integrity, adequate public access and maintenance of the lands protected by Green Acres, the program monitors all sites acquired and developed with Green Acres funds. It also monitors lands protected through conservation easements to ensure consistent land stewardship.

Green Acres, Farmland and Historic Preservation Bond Issues Summary

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

1995	**Green Acres, Farmland and Historic Preservation and Blue Acres Bond Act**	$250 million - GA $ 30 million – BA $ 50 million – FP $ 10 million – HP

$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

TOTAL:

Green Acres (GA) Bond Funds	**$1,390,000,000**
Blue Acres (BA) Bond Funds	**$ 30,000,000**
Farmland Preservation (FP) Bond Funds	**$ 200,000,000**
Historic Preservation (HP) Bond Funds	**$ 60,000,000**

Green Acres Program Preserved Open Space Acreages

	State	Local Government	Nonprofit	Total
1997	**7,703**	**2,201**	**738**	**10,642**
1998	**13,474**	**2,304**	**3,657**	**19,435**
1999	**9,331**	**2,326**	**1,929**	**13,586**
2000	**16,388**	**4,704**	**1,656**	**22,748**
2001	**17,231**	**4,743**	**1,510**	**23,484**
Totals	**64,127**	**16,278**	**9,490**	**89,895**

Note: 1997 acreage from 5/97 – 12/97.

Land and Water Conservation Fund

America's Champion 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. Through the program, administered by the National Park Service, New Jersey has received $108,765,801 in federal matching funds for open space acquisition, park and recreation planning projects. New Jersey's seven 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, 296 projects have received LWCF financial support. Sixty state, county and municipal acquisition projects have used over $45 million of LWCF funds toward preservation of 72,452 acres. LWCF development projects total 233 in number and have received $58.6 million in federal assistance. Also, three state planning projects have received LWCF 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.

Since its establishment in 1979, the Urban Parks and Recreation Recovery Program (UPARR) has been effective in encouraging and assisting qualifying municipal and county governments to rehabilitate urban parks. New Jersey's project sponsors have been fortunate to be able to combine Green Acres funding with 85% UPARR grants for 100%

project funding. The National Park Service, which administers UPARR, has provided 28 New Jersey local governments with over $19 million for urban park and recreation projects.

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. Federal LWCF monies were instrumental in the preservation of Sterling Forest in New York State, a major watershed for northern New Jersey residents, providing $17.5 million. The LWCF has provided over $200 million for federal open space and recreation projects in New Jersey.

Federal LWCF Funding Summary for New Jersey

Project	*LWCF Total*
Cape May National Wildlife Refuge	**$ 19,012,200**
Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area	**$ 65,811,673**
Edison National Historic Site	**$ 275,000**
Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge	**$ 24,746,680**
Gateway National Recreation Area	**$ 11,963,000**
Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge	**$ 11,757,545**
Morristown National Historic Park	**$ 2,069,996**
Pinelands National Reserve	**$ 31,527,790**
Sterling Forest	**$ 17,500,000**
Wallkill River National Wildlife Refuge	**$ 15,756,552**
Federal LWCF Total for New Jersey:	**$200,420,436**

New Jersey Land and Water Conservation Fund Projects

As of May 2002

Projects Funded		LWCF
233 Development Projects		$ 58,660,426
60 Acquisition Projects	72,452 acres	$ 45,668,919
3 Planning Projects		$ 547,500
296 Projects		$104,876,845

Projects Funded		LWCF
233 Local Government Projects		$ 44,391,988
210 dev.: $33,624,496		
23 acq.: $10,767,491	7,023 acres	
63 State Projects		$ 60,484,857
23 dev.: $25,035,929		
37 acq.: $34,901,427	65,429 acres	
3 planning: $547,500		

LWCF Projects Funded

County	# of Projects	Acres Acquired	LWCF Invested
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	13	4,423	$ 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	7	874	$ 10,348,544
Mercer	16	6	$ 2,457,660
Middlesex	11	0	$ 2,485,022
Monmouth	29	684	$ 6,627,903
Morris	18	812	$ 2,667,342
Multi **	17	27,935	$ 17,451,800
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
	296	72,452	$104,876,845

*** Located in two or more counties.*

The Garden State Preservation Trust Act

The Garden State Preservation Trust Act establishes a framework to implement the 1998 voter approved statewide ballot initiative that provides a stable source of funding for the preservation of open space, farmland and historic sites as well as funding for the development of 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 for these purposes.

Under the act, the Garden State Preservation Trust is responsible for recommending funding approvals to the Governor and State Legislature. The Trust consists of nine voting members, including the State Treasurer, the Commissioner of the DEP, the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of State, as ex officio members, and five public members. Each year over the next decade, the Trust, after retaining sufficient funds to pay any debt service on bonds, will allocate $6 million to the New Jersey Historic Preservation Trust, 60% of the remaining proceeds would then be distributed to the Green Acres Program and 40% to the Farmland Preservation Program.

Of the funding set aside for the Green Acres Program, 50% will be allocated for open space acquisition and park development by the State; 40% allocated for grants and low-interest loans to local government units for open space acquisition and park development; and 10% allocated for grants to nonprofit organizations for open space acquisition or park development. There is a $200 million combined annual limit for open space and farmland appropriations.

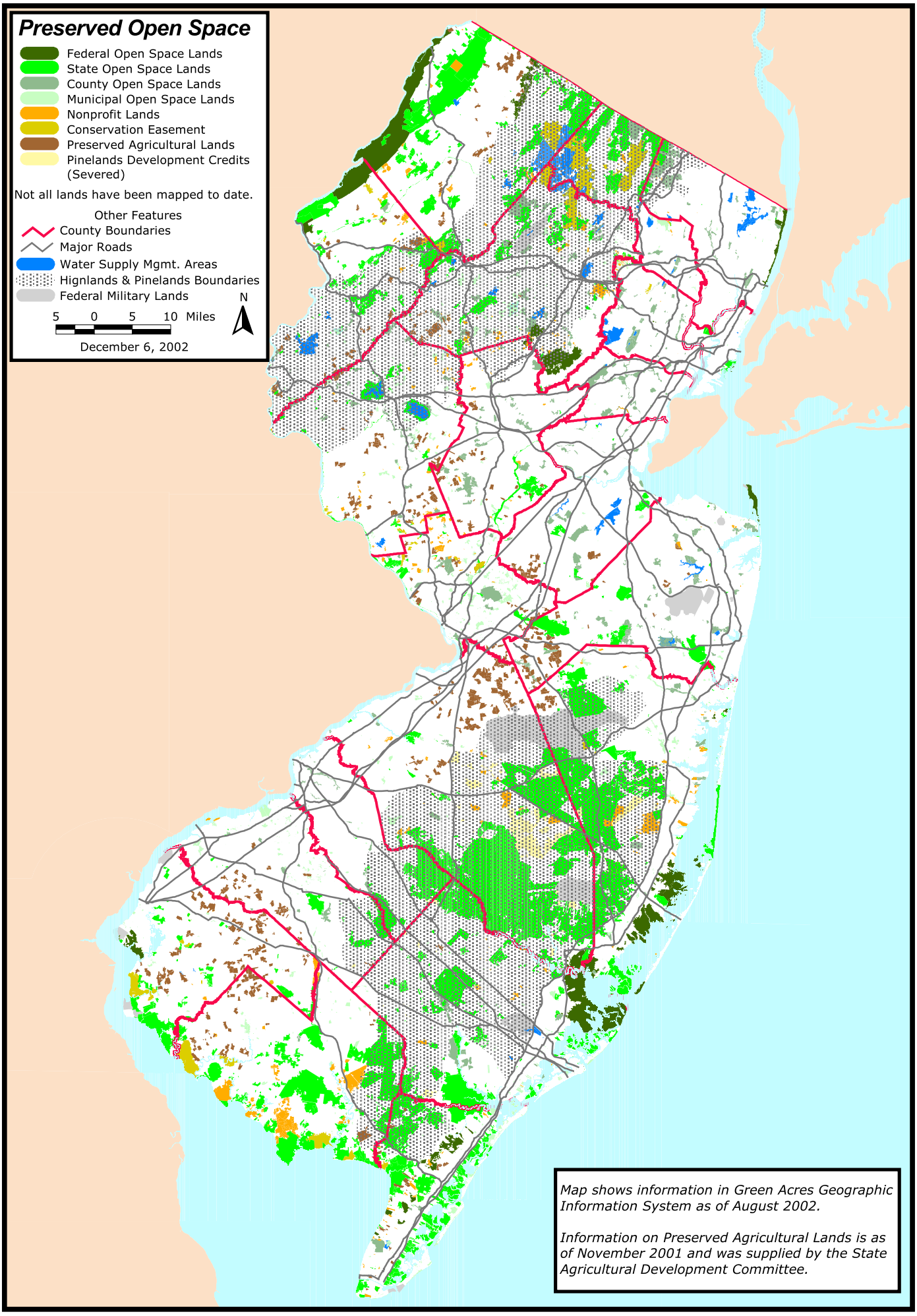
Proposed project funding lists are submitted by the DEP; the State Agricultural Development Committee and New Jersey Historic Trust to the Garden State Preservation Trust for approval. Once approved, the lists are forwarded to the Governor and Legislature for approval in the form of appropriation bills. The Trust can delete, but not add projects to the list and can make suggestions to programs for possible projects. The Trust is also responsible for preparing reports to the Governor and Legislature detailing projects, expenditures and acreage preserved.

Garden State Preservation Trust Act Funding
for
Green Acres Acquisition and Recreation Projects

Summary

June 1999	**$ 61,500,000**
November 1999	**$ 62,400,000**
April 2000	**$ 74,600,000**
October 2000	**$ 77,900,000**
April 2001	**$138,300,000**
May 2001	**$ 12,800,000**
October 2001	**$ 11,692,000**
June 2002	**$115,300,000**
Total	**$554,492,000**

- *Also includes funds from Green Acres Bond Act, loan repayments, Coastal Blue Acres and Land and Water Conservation Fund.*


Preserved Open Space
Federal Open Space Lands
State Open Space Lands
County Open Space Lands
Municipal Open Space Lands
Nonprofit Lands
Conservation Easement
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 Boundaries
Federal Military Lands
N
5 0 5 10 Miles
December 6, 2002
Map shows information in Green Acres Geographic Information System as of August 2002.
Information on Preserved Agricultural Lands is as of November 2001 and was supplied by the State Agricultural Development Committee.