

National Land Trust Excellence Award



The Land Trust Alliance has honored The Land Conservancy of New Jersey with the 2024 National Land Trust Excellence Award, recognizing our work in multiple areas—especially our landback project with the Ramapo Munsee people.

“The Land Conservancy of New Jersey has been a leader, conserving nearly 30,000 acres of farmland, trails and wildlife corridors, all the while connecting and educating people about the natural landscapes and diverse communities that surround them,” said Jennifer Miller Herzog, interim president and CEO of the Land Trust Alliance. “Perhaps most significantly, the Conservancy has been a model for combining land conservation with restorative justice.”

The award—presented to only one land trust in the United States each year—acknowledges our 43-year history of land preservation and stewardship. We completed our 500th land acquisition project in 2023, helping landowners to protect and conserve their land in perpetuity—work that in the last ten years alone has provided local communities with more than \$232 million thanks to projects completed with our assistance. We continue work with municipalities throughout New Jersey in protecting natural resources and accessing funding to create parks and preserve farmland.

Additionally, The Land Conservancy is building future environmental leaders through education. Our scholarship program will award \$70,000 in college

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THE LAND CONSERVANCY OF NEW JERSEY

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Hello from Rockaway Township!

Planning team members Barbara Heskins Davis and Allie Vaccaro are working on updating Rockaway's Open Space Plan and recently made a visit to the township. Here they are at Peterson Field with David Novak, Allison Ferrante, David Dyer, and Morgan Morris. Our crack planning team loves helping municipalities make the best use of their green spaces and natural resources, and it shows!

FROM MY PERSPECTIVE



I love New Jersey from head to toe. In fact, I live in Glenwood, NJ, close to the northern boundary line with New York State. I grew up in central Jersey and still travel each summer to visit our beautiful beaches. It is my family's tradition to trek the soft sands of Wildwood Crest beach to hear those magical waves crash on the shoreline. My love of NJ's mountains, beaches, and more has inspired me to find a career path to protect our natural areas.

My Land Conservancy journey began 16 years ago in 2008. I knew that it was important to not only preserve land but to also assist towns in writing their Open Space and Recreation and Farmland Plans, and TLCNJ facilitates this. This work is near and dear to me since I did not grow up in the country, but in an urban community that had

pocket parks and less open space. My earliest memories are of the sounds of the waterfall at Rahway River Park. It all matters.

I work as a Land Preservation Associate and am otherwise known as the "Jill of all trades." I support the Land Preservation team and work behind the scenes to help keep the land preservation machine constantly moving. I work on land preservation grants, organize our data, project finances, handle reimbursements, and do research. I have learned and work in Arc GIS. I have basically done it all for this nonprofit.

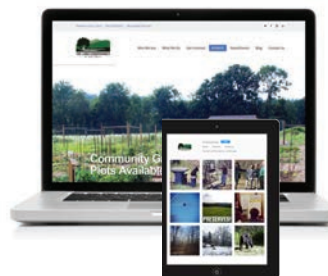
Throughout the years, the Conservancy has grown from owning a few tracts of land to stewarding six different thriving preserves totaling over 1,976 acres in five different counties in New Jersey. I look forward to further contributing to the great work we do and seeing our next preserve. I ask that you go find your favorite waterfall, go to the shore, local playground, state park, and walk your favorite trail. Please take the time to listen to the sounds of stillness of nature. I hope these open spaces makes you smile and bring peace to your heart, as they do for me.

Sincerely,

Yvonne LoGiudice
Senior Land Preservation Associate

GET MORE FROM THE LAND CONSERVANCY

If you enjoy this newsletter, follow us on social media and sign up for our mailing list. You'll receive occasional dispatches from the field and learn about conservation issues, our preserves and programs, the people and organizations we partner with, and what we're working on in your area. You can also visit tlc-nj.org to read our blog.



Land Trust Excellence Award

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“The Land Conservancy of New Jersey is honored to have our dedication to preserving and restoring imperiled forests, farms, and tribal lands acknowledged with the 2024 National Land Trust Excellence Award,” said David Epstein, president of The Land Conservancy of New Jersey. “This recognition by our peers will energize our organization and serve as a catalyst to expand our efforts to empower future generations of conservation leaders and connect people back to the land, and for that we are deeply grateful.”

scholarships in 2025, and our Outdoor Ambassador Program provides children with limited access to the outdoors with opportunities to explore and learn about nature and the outdoors at our beautiful preserves. TLCNJ also is an active land steward and community supporter through our push for equitable access to healthy food, and land and stream restoration.

The Land Trust Alliance created a beautiful video about The Land Conservancy of New Jersey’s impact and why we were chosen for this year’s Land Trust Excellence Award. We invite you to view it on our website at tlcnj.org/video, or use the QR code.



A Celebration of the Land, on the Land

In October, we celebrated the Land Trust Excellence Award with a small gathering of key stakeholders and partners at South Branch Preserve. We are profoundly grateful to everyone who shared this special evening, including our members, the Artist Baker for the marvelous food, City Green for growing it on our farm, and Man Skirt Brewing for creating a very special juniper Fall Forest ale for the occasion.

And of course, much gratitude to the Land Trust Alliance for bestowing the award and giving us the opportunity to celebrate. Our community is everything.

Help Shape the Future of New Jersey

2024 was a banner year for The Land Conservancy of New Jersey, and our members play a crucial role in all our accomplishments. But there is still much important work to do. You can help us keep this momentum going by making a donation today. The investments you make in our organization are creating a new future for our state. Here's how you can make a difference:

CHECK: Use the enclosed envelope to send a donation by check today, payable to "The Land Conservancy of New Jersey."

ONLINE GIVING: Secure online giving is a convenient way to make your gift to The Land Conservancy. We will send an immediate email confirmation once your credit card information has been submitted. Donate at tlc-nj.org.

RECURRING GIFTS: You can set up a recurring gift that will be charged to your credit card automatically each month or year at tlc-nj.org.

LEGACY GIVING: Name The Land Conservancy of New Jersey in your estate plans to help protect natural resources in the Garden State for years to come. Visit tlc-nj.org to fill out our form.

MATCHING GIFTS: Contact your company's personnel office to see if they will match your gift to TLCNJ. This way you can double your gift!

THE LAND CONSERVANCY OF



APPRECIATED SECURITIES: Please contact us if you would like to donate stock or personal property so we may properly credit your donation.

DONOR ADVISED FUNDS: By donating donor advised funds, you can receive an immediate tax benefit for your charitable contribution. The Land Conservancy's EIN and Federal Tax ID is 22-2378868.

PLEDGES: You may spread out payments for up to five years on a schedule convenient to you.

The Land Conservancy of New Jersey is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Your contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Questions about donating? Contact Amber Ray at (973) 541-1010 x25 or aray@tlc-nj.org.

Welcoming New Trustee Niraj

We are delighted to welcome Niraj Shah as the most recent addition to our Board of Trustees. Niraj is a partner in the Strategic Advisory Group at PJT Partners in New York. Prior to joining PJT, Niraj spent 27 years at Citigroup, advising clients across a broad range of industries. He joined Salomon Brothers in 1996 in debt capital markets before moving to the investment bank in 2000, where he spent nearly a decade as a senior member of the Global Communications Group. Niraj was formerly a board treasurer and board chair of Breakthrough New York (BTNY), which seeks to break the cycle of poverty in disadvantaged communities across New York City by supporting and accelerating the educational development of aspiring and driven young teens. He grew up in Edison, NJ and went to Edison High School. He received his BA in economics from the University of Pennsylvania and spent a year abroad studying at the London School of Economics. Niraj is married to Mona Shah, and has a son who attends Georgetown University as well as a daughter who attends high school at Newark Academy. They live in Short Hills, NJ.

By the Light of the Moon

We celebrated Take a Hike Day in November with a light trek at South Branch Preserve South to observe the full Beaver Moon. Our big, friendly group strolled out to a moonlit meadow, where we handed out star charts and stargazed over tea and cookies, looking for planets and our favorite constellations. Thanks to everyone who came out, and to Roy Groething for capturing the evening so well with these photos.



Stewardship Interns Awarded Morris Parks Alliance Grant



Melissa Nussbaum, Brandon Zabriskie, and Tyler Hand-Cole, our outstanding 2024 stewardship interns.

For the third year in a row, the Alliance for Morris County Parks awarded TLCNJ the Don Palmer Memorial Internship Grant to support the hard-working, enthusiastic stewardship interns that we rely on to take care of our preserves and lend a hand with the Outdoor Ambassador Program. These internships offer young people valuable hands-on work experience in environmental land management, and in turn they help Stewardship Manager Dennis and the rest of the staff tackle the ongoing work to keep the land we steward safe, clean, and moving towards restoration. We value our interns' interest in the environment and hope to inspire them to become conservation leaders, continuing this vital work for future generations.

Thank you to Melissa, Brandon, and Tyler for being such great interns and making us proud!

Pedaling for Preservation

Another Land Conservancy Fondo is in the books! Eleven riders joined us for a sunny, 65-degree day that started at our Nancy Conger West Brook Preserve. Here's a dispatch from our president David: "We had a variety of riding abilities among our team, but chose to ride together the whole way around Greenwood Lake, across the Monkville Reservoir dam, and then a very long pull up Stonetown Road. At the end of the day, we rode 31 miles in about 2.5 hours with some stops."

Between the riders and other supporters, we also raised \$7,000 to preserve more of these beautiful places we rode past! While we miss the Garden State Fondo that inspired the Land Conservancy ride, the camaraderie and beauty of this incarnation more than makes up for the loss. Can't wait to do it again next year!



The 2024 Land Conservancy Fondo riders.

Busy Beavers



Beavers make short work of even established trees like these at our South Branch Preserve to build their dams. Beaver ponds create habitat that benefits waterfowl, amphibians, and semi-aquatic mammals like muskrat and river otter. Beaver dams help stabilize stream flow and reduce soil erosion. At the same time, damming can result in flooding, loss of trees, and increased water temperatures.

If you're a curious sort, you could check out the book *Beaverland* by Leila Philip, which explores the profound ways in which this "wonderfully weird rodent" has shaped the history, culture, and environment of North America.

An Eye for Fungi

Our stewardship intern Brandon has an eye for fungi! Throughout the season he sent us photos of cool specimens he found at our preserves and properties all over North Jersey. Here are a few he spotted on the job at one of our Pequannock Watershed properties this fall: golden spindles, violet coral, and the aptly named elegant stinkhorn. Isn't biodiversity amazing?

