The Land Conservancy of New Jersey completed the purchase of a 170-acre property in West Milford known as the West Brook Preserve. The West Brook Preserve is one of the most important watershed properties remaining in the State of New Jersey and contains the source of the West Brook, one of the primary sources of water for the Wanaque Reservoir, which provides two million New Jersey residents drinking water. The Preserve contains a valley with steep rocky hillsides, vast wetlands, and a Category One trout production stream, a New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection designation indicating clean, high quality water.

“The Land Conservancy of New Jersey is grateful to each of our partners and generous private donors who joined us to protect the West Brook Preserve and clean drinking water for two million New Jersey residents,” stated The Land Conservancy of New Jersey President, David Epstein. “By permanently preserving this critical property, we are securing clean water, open space, and new recreational opportunities into the future for residents of West Milford, Passaic County, and New Jersey.”

The Land Conservancy purchased the West Brook Preserve for $975,000, with funding provided by the Passaic County Board of Chosen Freeholders, the Passaic River Coalition, the Green Acres Program, the New Jersey Highlands Council, the Victoria Foundation, the PSE&G Foundation, the Union Foundation, the E.J. Grassman Trust, and twenty five individual donors who provided $266,000 in private contributions.

The Land Conservancy will remove a house from the property, create a parking lot, and develop hiking trails within the Preserve. We also plan to restore the natural hydrology of the Preserve, which has been damaged by past construction.

“The Passaic County Board of Chosen Freeholders remains committed to protecting our resident’s drinking water, preserving open space, and continually improving access to recreational opportunities for our residents,” stated Passaic County Freeholder Board Director Cassandra “Sandi” Lazzara. “This Board remains committed to protecting our natural environment and are thankful to The Land Conservancy of New Jersey for organizing this effort across a spectrum of stakeholders to protect clean drinking water for generations to come. It is a great day for our environment and for Passaic County residents.”

Story continued inside
Partnerships have always been a mainstay of The Land Conservancy’s work. Today we are entering into a new realm of exciting partnerships with organizations we have never worked with before that will enhance and broaden our work and help illustrate the very real benefits of preserving open space.

For the past three years we have been working to transform the fields at the South Branch Preserve into an organic farm that produces fresh vegetables for people who don’t have enough to eat. We have installed some important infrastructure – deer resistant fence, storage sheds, a well and irrigation system. The missing link was finding a farmer. This spring our new partner, City Green, will begin growing vegetables on our farm. City Green is a nonprofit organization that grows vegetables in urban farms and gardens to provide food to disadvantaged residents of northern New Jersey cities. The Land Conservancy will receive 1000 pounds of food for local food pantries we support, the remainder of the crops will be sold at reduced prices to needy Paterson residents.

Invasive, non-native plant species have become a serious problem at our South Branch Preserve, threatening to outcompete native plants and reduce the ability of the Preserve to provide good wildlife habitat. To combat this problem, The Land Conservancy will be partnering with the Antler Ridge Wildlife Sanctuary. This nonprofit will bring goats and sheep to our Preserve to graze on the invasive plants, helping restore wildlife habitat on the property, without the use of chemicals that might pollute the river.

When we decided to purchase the West Brook property in West Milford, the Passaic River Coalition partnered with us to provide significant Green Acres funding to purchase the property and donated an adjoining 28 acre property to expand the Preserve. As we scrambled to complete the West Brook acquisition, Passaic County provided us with a desperately needed portion of their unused Green Acres funds. The New Jersey Highlands Council also stepped in with funding at the last possible moment, after originally declining to fund the project. These three partners were a tremendous help to us in completing this critical and underfunded project and may prove helpful for other projects in the future as well.

Partnerships are critical to helping The Land Conservancy complete its work to protect more of New Jersey’s magnificent natural landscapes. We are fortunate to work with great partners who share our goals of making New Jersey a better place by preserving more land and restoring it for uses that benefit our residents for generations to come.
In conjunction with this acquisition, the Passaic River Coalition is donating an adjacent 28-acre property to The Land Conservancy that will be incorporated within the new West Brook Preserve. The 198 acre West Brook Preserve will be managed by The Land Conservancy of New Jersey and further the PRC’s mission of protecting waterways in Passaic County and New Jersey.

“The Passaic River Coalition’s partnership with The Land Conservancy of New Jersey and the Passaic County Board of Chosen Freeholders is critical to protecting New Jersey’s water supply and fulfilling our environmental mission to safeguard waterways throughout New Jersey,” stated Passaic River Coalition Chairwoman Laurie Howard. “The West Brook Preserve is now in the hands of capable stewards, and I am confident The Land Conservancy of New Jersey will continue the important work of restoring its natural ecology and transforming it into a hiking destination for the tristate area.”

Over the past decade, The Land Conservancy of New Jersey has helped to purchase and permanently preserve seven properties totaling 443 acres throughout Ringwood and West Milford in Passaic County. All of the properties contain small streams that directly feed into the Wanaque Reservoir. Acquiring the West Brook Preserve is a critical first phase in a multi-year, multi-property acquisition project to protect and preserve the Wanaque Reservoir watershed.
The Land Conservancy of New Jersey is pleased to announce that Danielle Wolfrum has joined us as Director of Development and Communications. Danielle brings a wealth of experience in the non-profit and environmental realms.

In her new position, Danielle will be responsible for overseeing all fundraising initiatives including major gifts and planned giving, as well as growing our membership program, grants management, and development reporting.

Despite having spent the last three years as the Director of Development for the Lehigh Heritage Corridor in eastern Pennsylvania, Danielle is a born and bred Jersey girl and leapt at the chance to return to her home state to work for The Land Conservancy.

“For a small state, New Jersey has the best of everything,” Danielle said. “We have urban city centers and are close to New York City and Philadelphia for cultural stimulation. But we also have access to nature, open spaces, trails, beaches, nature preserves, you name it — some of the most beautiful country in the world.”

Danielle moved back to Hackettstown recently. Although she missed New Jersey, one of the upsides of living in Pennsylvania was meeting and marrying her husband of several months.

In addition to her new responsibilities at The Land Conservancy, she will be instilling in her husband all that she loves about our state. She is also looking forward to meeting and getting to know our members, working with donors and our events, and seeing the bears at her Wild Acres office.

“The best part of my job,” Danielle concluded, “is knowing that every dollar we raise helps us preserve another acre to keep New Jersey beautiful for years to come.”

Welcoming Danielle as the new Director of Development & Communications means having to bid a fond farewell to Christi Kobus-Rokicki. Thanks to Christi, we grew our membership base, received much-needed grant funds, and increased involvement and donations to premier events like the Gray Cup and Gran Fondo. We will miss Christi and wish her the best in her new position, with After School All-Stars.

Volunteer Spotlight: Ann Duddy

Ann Duddy has been volunteering at The Land Conservancy since last spring. She brings 20+ years of corporate communications, marketing and advertising copywriting to us, while also providing her expertise to the Raritan Headwaters Association, the Highlands Coalition, and Mount Pleasant Animal Shelter.

“We have really appreciated the wonderful volunteer work Ann has done for The Land Conservancy, but her work on the summer newsletter was nothing short of remarkable,” said David Epstein, President.

Ann’s love of the outdoors was established at an early age. She moved around to areas as diverse as urban Cleveland, Louisiana wetlands, and verdant Kentucky horse country, before moving to New York City. After 20 years there, she and her husband wanted to get closer to nature, so they moved to Morris County, New Jersey.

She shares her home with her husband and two cats, her yard with a pair of foxes, a skunk, and a hawk, and her garbage cans with the neighborhood raccoons.
REI ADOPT RAMAPO TRAIL

REI Co-op has been partnering with The Land Conservancy to encourage everyone to get outside for the past seven years. REI helped plan our Pedal for Preservation bike ride on the Columbia Trail, and provided volunteers to help tune up bicycles along the 25-mile course.

Now REI has joined The Land Conservancy in helping to make our Ramapo Mountain Preserve in Mahwah more accessible to the public.

In addition to providing a $5,000 grant for the development of a small dirt parking lot on the property, REI brought 28 employees from its East Hanover and Paramus stores to build a new mile and a half hiking trail. The Paramus store employees were so excited about the project that they adopted the trail and will maintain it by visiting several times each year to make necessary repairs.

“As we worked side by side to create the trail, it left us all with an incredible feeling of accomplishment. Not just for what we had created but that we had been able to create a space for others to be outside and enjoy the beauty of what surrounds them. We believe an outdoor life is a life well lived,” said Beth Chesterton of REI.

“REI has been a wonderful partner,” said David Epstein, President of The Land Conservancy. “Our organizations share a strong belief in encouraging public use of the great outdoors. Thanks to REI’s grant and volunteers, our members and the public can now enjoy one of Bergen County’s premier outdoor recreational experiences, just minutes from the doorsteps of hundreds of thousands of residents.”

TRENCH AT SOUTH BRANCH FARM

There’s new energy at the Farm thanks to a dedicated first-time volunteer.

Bert Wortman of WME, Inc. dug trenches for electric lines to power our well pump and two sheds to irrigate and store vegetables that will be donated to local food pantries. Our new partner, City Green, will grow 1000 pounds of food for our donations while the remainder of the crops will be sold at reduced prices to Paterson residents.

“Bert was a pleasure to work with and we thank him for his prompt and friendly service,” said The Land Conservancy President, David Epstein.

Do you have too much shade in your yard for a garden? Do you desire to farm your own small plot with a community of like-minded folks? Does growing your food provide a strong sense of satisfaction?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, you can sign up for a 10’ by 10’ garden plot at our Community Garden, located on a quarter acre on the westbound side of Wolfe Road near its intersection with Route 46 East.

Residents of Mt. Olive and members of The Land Conservancy of New Jersey pay $35 annually and non-residents and non-members pay $45 annually. There is a one-time $30 irrigation fee; water is provided by individual spigots located throughout the garden.

The Garden opens April 1; if you have any questions, please contact Barbara McCloskey at (973) 541-1010 x14 or gardenmaster@tlc-nj.org. Follow us on Facebook at https://www.facebook.com/tlcnjgarden
Buckaloo View Farm of Hope, New Jersey, home of five generations of the Maertens family, was recently preserved by Hope Township with assistance from Warren County, the State Agriculture Development Committee, and The Land Conservancy of New Jersey. Over the years, the small property has supported a self-reliant family farm, a profitable dairy farm, and, during a period of dormancy, various crops.

The great-granddaughter of the original owner, Patty Maertens, and her daughter, Liesl, wish to bring the farm back to life. “We are planning to run a sustainable and diverse farm with fiber animals to provide wool for Liesl’s unique yarn business, as well as dairy goats, chickens, vegetables, fruit, and more.”

Liesl Maertens raises vegetables to create beautiful dyes for yarn that she spins herself. The yarn is sold globally through her online shop at www.buckalooview.com. Preserving the land will enable her to raise sheep to provide wool for the yarn.

“This is a really neat and unique agricultural operation, with a lot of potential, that is owned and operated by a lovely Warren County family,” said Sandy Urgo, Vice President, Land Preservation and Stewardship of The Land Conservancy. “I am pleased we were able to assist in preserving it.”

And no one is more pleased than Patty Maertens. “It’s been a long journey to get preservation status and we are immensely grateful to The Land Conservancy, Hope Township, and all the others who helped make this possible,” she said. “We are excited to see what all is in store as we now have the means and confidence to take the next step to turn Buckaloo View back into a diverse and active farm for many more generations.”

Bob May, Chairman of Hope Agricultural Advisory Committee could not agree more. “Buckaloo View Farm is the eighteenth farm to be preserved in Hope Township,” he said. “To date, 1,372 acres of farmland have been preserved, which will help protect the agricultural heritage of our Township for future generations to enjoy.”
MURPHY’S FARM PRESERVED IN FRELINGHUYSEN

Murphy’s Farm, a beautiful 203-acre farm in Frelinghuysen Township, has been preserved. The picturesque farm has amazing views, including the Kittatinny Ridge, and features more than 100 acres that are dedicated to farming, including 16 hay fields.

“We are very glad that Warren County understands the importance of farmland preservation in this region and we appreciate the support we received in preserving our property,” said landowners Richard and Gloria Murphy.

The funding partners for this preservation project were the Warren County Agriculture Development Board, Frelinghuysen Township, and the State Agriculture Development Committee.

“The citizens of Frelinghuysen Township truly appreciate the support and assistance of the Warren County Agriculture Development Board and the State Agriculture Development Committee in preserving this large and important farm,” said Mayor Frank Desiderio on behalf of the Township Committee. “Preservation of this farm was a major priority for the Township’s Agricultural Advisory Committee, and they and The Land Conservancy of New Jersey did an amazing job of securing it as a permanent part of the Township’s future agricultural landscape.”

“This is a very beautiful and productive Warren County farm and we appreciate the Murphy Family’s willingness to work with us to permanently preserve it, and the County, Township and State’s ongoing support of the farmland preservation program,” added Sandy Urgo, Vice President, Land Preservation and Stewardship.

KJ FARM PRESERVED IN HARMONY TOWNSHIP

The Land Conservancy closed out 2017 on a high note with the closing on KJ Farm in Harmony Township.

“Our farm preservation goal was achieved with the diligent work of The Land Conservancy Of New Jersey as we have accomplished preserving the final tract of our farmland as originally planned,” said landowner Kelley Smith, who also worked with The Land Conservancy to preserve the adjacent 39-acre Star D Farm earlier this year.

“Their hard-working and knowledgeable staff were the light at the end of our tunnel during this process. We would like to thank The Land Conservancy, the County of Warren and the State Agriculture Development Committee for their commitment of preserving New Jersey’s agriculture community.”

The farm is located in the heart of the Warren County farm belt. KJ Farm features vast open fields and a picturesque pond. The Land Conservancy has worked diligently with the landowners to ensure preservation of both of these farms.

“The preservation of KJ Farm will add to a legacy of farmland preservation in the Township,” said Aaron Cela, Land Preservation Specialist of The Land Conservancy. “We hope now that both farms are preserved that they will form a new hub of farm land preservation in this productive corner of the Township.”
THANK YOU
TO OUR GENEROUS SUPPORTERS AND VOLUNTEERS!

Corporations:
- BASF
- Groome Industrial Service Group

Foundations:
- E.J. Grassman Trust
- Frelinghuysen Foundation
- Jack & Susan Levkovitz Foundation
- Union Foundation
- Victoria Foundation
- Walmart Foundation

In Memory:
- Stuart Anderson: In memory of Eileen Anderson
- Clifford Back: In memory of MaryAnn Back
- Mindy Beck: In memory of Peter Beck
- Susan Darago: In memory of Robin Randolph
- Mary Meila: In memory of George Meila
- Sean Monaghan: In memory of Jean Monaghan
- Louisa Sargent: In memory of Dick Sargent
- Susan Eckler-Kerns & Margaret Malishchak: In memory of A. Ross Eckler

Office Volunteers:
- Judith Brown
- Ann Duddy
- Megan Goodson
- Ann Weissenburger
- Christi Whitehouse

PLANNED GIVING:
LEAVING A LEGACY GIFT

Leave a lasting legacy of open land, clean water, and preserved habitat. Name The Land Conservancy of New Jersey in your will through a bequest or as a beneficiary through other planned giving and ensure we pass this legacy down to future generations.

We hope you will think of us as you review your estate plan. By making a planned gift, you will join other visionary donors who are helping to secure the future of precious lands and water for all to enjoy.

To make sure your goals for your gift are achieved, please contact Danielle Wolfrum, our Director of Development, at 973-541-1010 ext. 25.