

# THE LAND CONSERVANCY OF NEW JERSEY

# OUTDOOR ISSUES

FALL 2018

## 3,400 ACRES OF WATERSHED LAND PRESERVED



*Hudson Farm*

Over 3,400 acres of watershed land is nestled in the New Jersey Highlands. It's a habitat to wildlife that is on New Jersey's endangered species list – bobcats, red-shouldered hawks and bald eagles. The property boasts sixteen mountaintops, nine ponds, more than 10 miles of trails and close to 20 miles of stream banks.

And we just helped preserve it.

In one of the largest state-coordinated preservation efforts in New Jersey, the Hudson Farm properties encompass land in Andover, Byram, Sparta and Hopatcong. This multi-year effort was no small feat. The Land Conservancy proposed this project in 2005 to the owner of Hudson Farm, Peter Kellogg. We worked to preserve the initial 222 acres and completed that in 2010. Byram Township now owns 69 acres known as Tamarack Park. The Township also holds a conservation easement on 153 acres.

In 2016, the second and third phases of the project concluded when we helped the State of New Jersey acquire conservation and trail access easements on 973 acres of Hudson Farm in Hopatcong, Andover and Byram.

In October 2018, the fourth and final phase was completed. This easement added 2,218 acres to this project. The amount of land preserved totals 3,414 acres. Enough acreage to fit four Central Parks.

Hudson Farm contains some of the last remaining high-quality core forests in the Highlands.

This easement will protect water quality for over 15 million residents in two states who rely on the Delaware watershed for drinking water. There are 4.5 miles of public access trails on the ground. An additional 8 miles of public access trails will be built in the future.

“The preservation of this land was made possible by philanthropist Peter Kellogg who had the vision to gather this astounding array of properties, and the wisdom to allow us to preserve it. We celebrate this outstanding accomplishment with all of you and all of New Jersey,” said Sandy Urgo, vice president of land preservation for The Land Conservancy.

It took the diligent work of the staff of New Jersey Green Acres and The Land Conservancy of New Jersey who spent more than a decade working to preserve thousands of acres of this watershed. Although the time and effort it took was enormous, in return, generations will enjoy unspoiled forests that are teeming with wildlife, miles of hiking trails to enhance the quality of life, and continued access to clean drinking water for millions of residents. Although 3,414 acres is immense, preserving it is immeasurable.

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## FROM MY PERSPECTIVE



*Nancy Conger*

This section of our newsletter is normally reserved for comments from our President, David Epstein. But for this edition we decided to take a different approach and temporarily rename it “From My Perspective.” We thought that sharing a perspective from someone who had a different view of The Land Conservancy – and now has a front row seat – would be interesting.

My name is Nancy Conger and I am the new Chair of the Board of Trustees. While I am new to this position, I am a long-time admirer and supporter of The Land Conservancy. My husband Bill and I have had a lifelong love of the natural world. When we lived in Millington, we took biked in the Great Swamp. This led to me serving on the Board of Trustees of the Great Swamp Watershed Association for many years while Bill joined the Board of the Raptor Trust, where he still serves.

I first became aware of The Land Conservancy after we moved to Green Pond. The Conservancy spearheaded a remarkable campaign to preserve a 61-acre property situated on a cliff above our neighborhood and worked relentlessly to get community support. I was so impressed with this effort to negotiate a deal with a combative landowner, find funding and build community support that after this property was permanently preserved, I decided I had to get more involved with this organization!

I joined the Board in 2013 and, soon afterward began visiting our Preserves and meeting with our wonderful staff. I learned more about the important land preservation work that our small, nimble team does on a daily basis. With my background in the securities industry and philanthropy, one of my main goals is to ensure that the good work of The Land Conservancy is accomplished to the highest national standards of ethical practices and technical excellence. While The Land Conservancy was the first land trust in New Jersey to receive accreditation from the Land Trust Accreditation Commission in 2009, I want to safeguard that we continue to exceed those standards when we renew our accreditation in the next year.

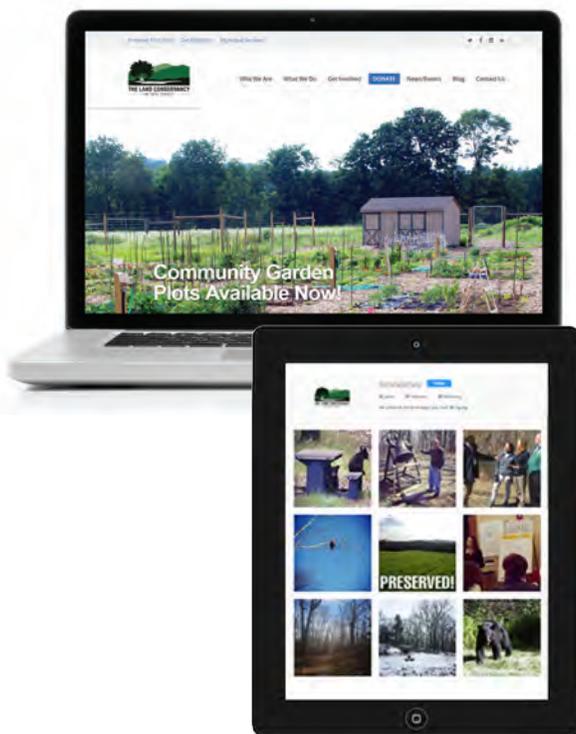
While I am not a naturalist, I have enjoyed learning about the dangers of invasive plants, the need to restore our damaged streams, forests and native meadows, the importance of preserving our farmland and growing more local food. I am so excited to be directly involved in this important work and hope that you share my enthusiasm and continue to support our efforts. Working together will ensure that this critical work will continue into the future.

Nancy P. Conger, Chair of the Board

# GET MORE FROM THE LAND CONSERVANCY AT TLC-NJ.ORG

Our website features plenty of information on everything we offer including the latest news and events!

- Explore our preserves with photos, maps and history
- Get involved with upcoming volunteer opportunities
- Stay up to date with our Blog



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## DARK MOON FARM PRESERVED



*Dark Moon Farm*

After several years of very detailed work by The Land Conservancy's Land Preservation Team, we recently helped preserve Dark Moon Farm, a 97-acre hay farm located in Frelinghuysen Township.

An easement was acquired on this privately owned farm, and funded by a grant from the New Jersey Highlands Council and State of New Jersey's State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC). Funding was also contributed by Frelinghuysen Township. Warren County assisted in the closing and will own and monitor the easement.

Instrumental in this long process to help preserve this property was Sandy Urgo, vice president of land preservation for The Land Conservancy who worked tirelessly with the current owners of the farm, Ron and Sharon Pittenger. Since 1944, the farm has been with the Pittenger family where three generations of their family currently reside. Ron grew up on the farm and Sharon was raised not too far from the property. They have been married for 52 years and raised their two daughters on Dark Moon farm. Their life long home is treasured for its beauty, and they are pleased to have their property preserved as farmland and protected from development. "We are grateful to the Pittengers for proceeding to preserve this farm," says Sandy. "In addition to being scenic and a productive hay farm, there are valued natural features within the property, which adjoins The Nature Conservancy's Johnsonburg Swamp Preserve. Preservation of this farm has been a long time goal for Frelinghuysen Township."

Mayor Frank Desiderio, of Frelinghuysen Township, was grateful to preserve this farmland in his Township and appreciative of the grants received that assisted with funding this purchase. "The Pittenger family has been stewarding this land for many decades and the Township appreciates their willingness to preserve their farm intact. We also appreciated their patience while the Township applied for and obtained additional grant funding."

# DEBOER FARM IN WHITE TOWNSHIP PRESERVED



*DeBoer Farm*

Through the State of New Jersey's Municipal Planning Incentive Grant, on October 17, the DeBoer farm located on Route 519 in White Township, was preserved.

This 53-acre property features stunning views of the surrounding rural landscape, including the Delaware Water Gap. There are

rolling fields of hay and corn intermingled with rows of various trees and forestlands.

The Municipal Planning Incentive Grant is a program within the State of New Jersey's Department of Agriculture. It enables the State Agriculture Development Committee to provide grants to eligible counties and municipalities to purchase development

easements for permanent preservation of farmland in designated project areas.

This recent closing will extend an extensive preserved farm belt in this portion of the Township that will only continue to grow as other projects that are under contract begin to close.

This will ensure that the township retains its rural character, and the continued viability of agriculture in this part of Warren County. White Township is a hub for agricultural activity and is adjacent to towns such as Phillipsburg, Washington Borough and Hackettstown, which offer local farmers easy access to potential buyers and support businesses.

## INVESTORS BANK AWARDS GRANT TO THE LAND CONSERVANCY

On September 20, Investors Bank presented The Land Conservancy of New Jersey with a grant of \$5,000. David Epstein, President of The Land Conservancy, accepted this grant which was presented by Dinesh Jani, Branch Manager of Investors Bank at Denville Station.

Since 2008, Investors Bank sponsorships and grants have totaled over \$64,000 and has been used to fund numerous land conservation projects and support events. In addition, more than 200 employees have participated in 18 projects through our award-winning *Partners for Parks Program*.



*David Epstein with Investors bank*

In 2016, Investors Bank was awarded the Rosalie Lavinthal Volunteer of the Year Award, established to honor Rosalie Lavinthal, who served as our Development Director for five years before passing away in 2012. Rosalie was universally admired by her co-workers, members of the Board, and all of the people with whom she

worked. The award is presented annually to honor an outstanding volunteer and/or company whose volunteer land conservation work best exemplifies Rosalie's spirit of volunteerism and giving back to the community.

Investors Bank has also involved The Land Conservancy of New Jersey with their "Care2Share" Affinity Program. The bank will make a donation to our organization based on the average monthly balance you carry on a new or existing account. If you are an existing customer of Investors Bank – or looking to open a new account – ask about this program that benefits us.

# UPDATES AT SOUTH BRANCH PRESERVE



*Bird house installation at South Branch Preserve*

Twenty new birdhouses were recently installed by the Land Steward team for the variety of bird species we have at the Preserve.

The birdhouses were made by a local Boy Scout, Logan Hart of Troop 236 in Long Valley, as an Eagle Scout project. Land Stewardship Manager, Dennis Briede, along with two interns, Aaron Rosado and Joe Pelley, installed wooden boxes at the Preserve.

“Soon to nest in these birdhouses will be bluebirds, tree swallows, and house wrens. We have a grand total of 90 birdhouses in the Preserve that should be occupied by next spring,” said Briede. “We’re very appreciative that Logan provided these for us. He built them by hand and did a wonderful job constructing them,” added Briede.

Across the street from the forest restoration site lies a 12-acre farm where a partnership was born between The Land Conservancy and City Green, a non-profit,

urban farming and environmental education organization. Together, “City Green Farms at South Branch Preserve” was formed.

“This project represents an innovative partnership between land conservation and food production. These two interrelated fields come together in support of open space and community benefit. The new farm increases access to affordable local food for low-income families in Morris and Passaic Counties, as well as ensuring that the entire parcel of land remains open for public enjoyment,” said Jennifer Papa, founder and executive director of City Green.

On November 5, a ribbon cutting ceremony took place and a ceremonial “cover crop” was seeded to help build the soil for the 2018 growing season. The mayor, Township Council, and representatives from Mount Olive Township were in attendance as well as representatives from City Green and The Land Conservancy.

“Today was a great day to embark on what will be a wonderful partnership with City Green,” said David Epstein, president of The Land Conservancy of New Jersey. “This marriage between our organizations was a natural fit, and being able to provide wholesome, organic produce will truly benefit those in the local community who may be in need,” added Epstein.

It is estimated that one thousand pounds of food from the new farm operation will go to local food pantries each year.

# SUCCESSFUL SEASON FOR THE COMMUNITY GARDEN



The Community Garden at South Branch Preserve closed out its sixth season on November 30, and for the past three years gardeners have been donating vegetables to Mount Olive food pantries.

This year, the garden yielded its second highest amount of organic produce since 2015; 514.5 pounds of cucumbers, tomatoes, zucchinis, various leafy greens and herbs.

The community garden’s 2019 season will begin on April 1st and the 10’x10’ plots are available on a first come, first serve basis. To sign up for next season please contact Barbara McCloskey at (973) 541-1010 x14 or [gardenmaster@tlc-nj.org](mailto:gardenmaster@tlc-nj.org).

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.

## WISH LIST/ HELP WANTED

**Handyman:** Help us keep our historic headquarters in tip-top shape! We need assistance with basic repairs such as doors, outlet covers, fix blinds, and patch cracks.

**Earth Day Volunteers:** Help us with activities at our South Branch Preserve and Community Garden in Mount Olive.

**Hiking Volunteers:** Hike our Preserves and report back to us about the experience!

**Locking cabinet,** fireproof/waterproof for important documents.

*All donations should be mailed or delivered to our headquarters.*

*Email us with any questions at [hr@tlc-nj.org](mailto:hr@tlc-nj.org)*

**Paid Internship:** The Planning Department Internship involves writing, technical research, data analysis, and mapping for municipal and county-based land use plans; assisting with the completion of Environmental Resource Inventories, Open Space and Recreation Plans, Greenway Plans and grant applications. through the 2018-1019 school year. Application details at [tlc-nj.org](http://tlc-nj.org)

## \$11,000 RAISED BY TEAM PRESERVATION



*Team Preservation*

Many would think twice about riding their bicycle 42 miles through the slick city streets of New Jersey. However, during Gran Fondo 2018, our own Team Preservation featuring nine dedicated cyclists, braved the non-stop rain to raise awareness and funds for The Land Conservancy of New Jersey.

Joining 2,200 other cyclists for this year's Gran Fondo in Morristown, NJ, Team Preservation consisted of David Epstein, president of The Land Conservancy of New Jersey and several of its trustees and supporters.

Starting off in the town of Morristown, Team Preservation logged a collective total of over 330 miles through scenic back roads of Mendham, Bernardsville, Far Hills and Peapack Gladstone. Through their charitable efforts, the team helped raise more than \$11,000 that will help us to continue preserving and protecting New Jersey's vital natural lands and drinking water resources.

"Although the weather wasn't

optimal for cycling, it didn't dampen our team's spirit to conquer this competitive route," said David Epstein. "There were a number of timed hill climbs that challenged us, but all in all, it was a fantastic ride."

2018 marks the fourth year that The Land Conservancy has participated in Gran Fondo NJ. While not considered a race, Gran Fondo is a competitive ride that starts and ends in Morristown, NJ. Roughly translated as "big ride," cyclists are met with the excitement and challenges found in Gran Fondo rides of Europe. Each participant can choose to ride in one of four routes from 18 miles up to 107 miles.

Many thanks to our riders, David Epstein, Kaki Pierson, Kate Halse, Rob Romaine, Matt Finlay, Bill Conger, Gerry Lauro, Gaye Brumbaugh and Spence Mehl.

If you are a cyclist and would like to join The Land Conservancy in Gran Fondo 2019, please email us at [info@tlc-nj.org](mailto:info@tlc-nj.org) for more information on how to become a team member.

# 10TH ANNUAL GRAY CUP GOLF CLASSIC A SUCCESS!

This past September, over 75 golfers took to the links for a great cause as we celebrated our 10th Annual Gray Cup Golf Classic held at Somerset Hills Country Club in Bernardsville.

This annual event was not only a day of golf, but a dinner with a silent auction as well. It was also an opportunity for David Epstein, president of The Land Conservancy of New Jersey to share an overview of our programs and previous restoration work to those in attendance.

The Gray Cup Golf Classic is named in honor of Gray Rogers, who served 10 years on the board which included three as Chairman of the Board.

From this event, we successfully raised over \$113,000. Some of these funds will enable us to



*Somerset Hills Country Club*

restore a portion of the West Brook, an important stream that leads into the Wanaque Reservoir. Our work will help increase water flows to the reservoir at drier times of the year and also improve habitat for native brook trout. The reservoir supplies clean drinking water to 2 million residents of New Jersey.

The 400-acre South Branch Preserve will also benefit from funds raised at the Gray Cup.

Our work will continue to support a 12-acre farm to provide fresh, organic produce to underprivileged residents in Passaic and Morris counties, and we've partnered with Antler Ridge Wildlife Sanctuary to eradicate invasive plants using goats and sheep – not harmful pesticides. In addition, we're also transforming over 60 acres of formerly tilled land into native wildflower meadows that benefit the imperiled Monarch butterfly.

These are just a few of our projects that are made possible by the generosity of our supporters and participation in our annual Gray Cup Golf Classic. We thank all those in attendance and we hope to see you again next year!

## REI PARTNERS PRESENTED WITH VOLUNTEER AWARD



At the foot of West Brook Preserve located in West Milford, NJ, volunteers from REI's Paramus and East Hanover retail stores stood at the ready and followed our land steward manager, Dennis Briede and intern, Aaron Rosado into the trailhead. Armed with rakes, loppers, shovels and gloves, the seven intrepid

assistants spent a brisk October morning clearing part of a newly marked trail.

After their work was complete, David Epstein, president of The Land Conservancy of New Jersey, presented REI employees with certificates for the Rosalie Lavinthal Corporate Volunteer of the Year Award. Named in honor of Rosalie Lavinthal, who served as The Land Conservancy of New Jersey's Development Director from 2006 to 2012, the award is presented to assisting organizations who possess unwavering dedication to our mission.

Since 2016, employees of REI have been assisting our land stewards with upkeep on various Preservations throughout Morris, Passaic, and Bergen counties, from reinstalling trail markers to more laborious work of edging trails with logs to pruning and general cleanup.

"REI is extremely honored to receive this award from The Land Conservancy and we appreciate the opportunity to help keep their trails and Preserves in the most natural state for others to enjoy," said Steve Nobel, store manager, REI of East Hanover.



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## PLANNED GIVING: JOIN THE JANET ROSS FUND BEQUEST GIVING CHALLENGE!

The Janet Ross Fund Bequest Challenge is a campaign to inspire our supporters to make bequest commitments for the future and, in return, help us earn much-needed challenge grant dollars for use today.

For every supporter who notifies us that we are in their will or living trust, we will receive a \$1,000 donation from the Janet Ross Fund. New commitments and previously established bequest plans can qualify. Help us secure immediate funding today and leave a legacy to ensure we will continue to preserve land for years to come.



*West Brook Preserve*

For more information regarding the Bequest Challenge and to learn more about our generous donor visit our website at [www.tlc-nj.org/planned\\_giving](http://www.tlc-nj.org/planned_giving).

To notify The Land Conservancy of your bequest commitment please contact Danielle Wolfrum at 973-541-1010 x25 or [dwolfrum@tlc-nj.org](mailto:dwolfrum@tlc-nj.org).