

THE LAND CONSERVANCY OF NEW JERSEY

OUTDOOR ISSUES

FALL 2025

Land Conservancy Wins \$1 Million in Morris County Open Space Funding



Wildcat Ridge vista

The Morris County Commissioners recently approved their 2025 Open Space funding recommendations, and The Land Conservancy of New Jersey has been tapped to receive \$1.04 million to preserve 123 acres in Rockaway's Wildcat Ridge. We lobbied for the state to establish Wildcat Ridge Wildlife Management Area in 1994, and since then TLCNJ has acquired and transferred 9 parcels totaling 1,048 acres to expand this remarkable spot.

The new property consists of deciduous forest and a two-acre pond, surrounded on three sides by state-owned open space, and contains a portion of the Morris Park Commission's West Morris Greenway. The acquisition will expand an existing network of protected lands, provide additional wildlife habitat, and reinforce long-term conservation efforts in the region's mountainous terrain.

But wait, there's more! Morris County also recommended two other projects for funding—Tingley Road and Pocono Fields. Both were highlighted in Open Space Plans that TLCNJ's planning team recently completed for Mendham and Denville, respectively.

Mendham Township has been recommended to receive a \$214,000 grant to preserve 11.72 acres along Tingley Road within the Washington Valley Historic District. The scenic property provides a natural buffer between two nearby historic sites and lies adjacent to the Whipppany River, a designated trout production waterway. A mix of woodlands, wetlands, and meadows, the tract borders Lewis Morris County Park and offers direct access to Patriot's Path. Preservation will protect a mix of woodlands, wetlands and meadows while enhancing trail connectivity.

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THE LAND CONSERVANCY OF NEW JERSEY

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Planning Fellows: Jonah McDowell, Grace Nelson

From the Archives



President David Epstein celebrates The Land Conservancy's donation of Wildcat Ridge with Governor Christine Todd Whitman in 1999.



In 2004, the organization completed our Preserve Now—Protect Forever campaign, which raised \$3 million to establish the Land Preservation Fund that jumpstarted our land preservation efforts.

FROM MY PERSPECTIVE



It's hard to believe, but I'm coming up on my 15th year at The Land Conservancy of New Jersey. I guess time does fly while you're having fun! When people have asked me over the years what my job is, I always hesitated a bit trying to explain what I do. I think the best way to explain it is that I am a realtor, but for open space and preserved farmland, along with writing grants to help fund all these great projects we do. I also love being in the field and getting dirty—planting trees or helping with some of our stewardship projects.

I have been involved in many projects over the years, but two stand out. The first is a piece of land in West Milford that was the missing link connecting the Terrace Pond North Trail to the Bearfort Ridge Trail. Preserving this property created a buffer between hikers and a snake den that was home to timber rattlesnakes and northern copperhead on the adjacent state lands. The property

was transferred to the state at closing as an addition to Waywayanda State Park, and we were able to protect both the wildlife and the people using these trails. It is one of my favorite hikes in New Jersey, and really highlights the state's beautiful Highlands Region.

The second project was in a very different landscape in Livingston Township that involved the preservation of the ten-acre Evergreen Miniature Horse Farm on Northfield Road—a deal nine years in the making. The farm has been a notable landmark in Livingston for decades, even more so since almost all of the land around it has been built up for residential and commercial use. This picturesque farm was one of the last large parcels in Livingston and had been in the sights of developers for some time. Being an Essex County native who spent many of her after-school days playing in an old apple orchard near my home, I appreciate the value of having such gems preserved.

When I am not working, I love to garden, hike, bike, and kayak. I have been fortunate to travel to some very cool places over the years and experience wildlife up close, including chimps and mountain gorillas. Jane Goodall will forever be my hero.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Linda".

*Linda Glosinski
Land Preservation Specialist*

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.



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On the Farm, at the Table

On October 7, The Land Conservancy of New Jersey celebrated 30,000 acres preserved with a very special farm-to-table dinner at South Branch Preserve, inviting supporters, partners, and other key stakeholders to join us in celebrating this significant milestone.

We are grateful to everyone who made this special event possible. Andrea Lekberg from The Artist Baker prepared a delicious meal using organic produce grown on site by City Green, and Joe Fisher from Man Skirt Brewing poured refreshing, locally sourced brews.

During the program we revisited the history of South Branch, our most active preserve: its establishment in 2010 thanks to a thwarted housing development, the popularity of our community garden, City Green farm planting roots to feed New Jersey families, and the many hands that have contributed to South Branch Preserve's growth. Guests enjoyed a walking tour of the wetlands, reforestation area, and City Green Farm led by staff members who have a deep connection to the land.

On this special night we also unveiled some exciting plans for the future: a new master plan focused on balancing increased public access to recreational opportunities at South Branch with the critical need to preserve drinking water quality. It establishes a clear vision for improving existing facilities and identifying new, appropriate recreational spaces.



We've preserved 30,000 acres!



For 44 years, The Land Conservancy of New Jersey has been building wildlife corridors in the Delaware River watershed, restoring habitat in and around the West Brook, uplifting indigenous land stewards at Split Rock Mountain, and building community at South Branch Preserve. We've come a long way since our first land acquisition in 1997! As we celebrate preserving 30,000 acres, we can see how these individual wins add up to something truly remarkable. We're grateful to be part of a movement that understands taking care of the environment is essential for all of our survival. Thank you to our supporters for making this possible!

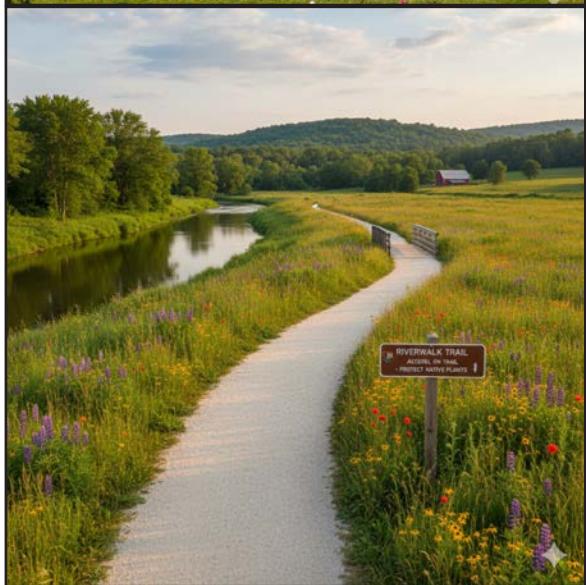
The Future of South Branch Preserve

This fall, TLCNJ unveiled some exciting plans for the future of South Branch Preserve: a new master plan focused on balancing increased public access to recreational opportunities with the critical need to preserve drinking water quality.

Since January of 2009, The Land Conservancy of New Jersey has been working to acquire and preserve 1,000 undeveloped acres of the headwaters of the South Branch of the Raritan River, the source of clean drinking water for more than 1.5 million NJ residents. We first focused on a 135-acre property in Mount Olive where construction had begun on a residential development. The land included springs, seeps, and wetlands that combine to form several streams flowing directly into the South Branch—in other words, critical headwaters of the Raritan.

The Land Conservancy purchased the property, establishing South Branch Preserve in 2010. It has since been expanded to 408 acres after the 208-acre northern addition to South Branch Preserve was purchased. The master plan pertains primarily to this northern section along Wolfe Road and Route 46 that gets the most use. The South Branch Community Garden is located there, and it's where City Green farms organic vegetables for families all over North Jersey in restored agricultural fields. Our education program, the Outdoor Ambassadors, uses the wetlands here as a hands-on classroom, and everyone in the community can enjoy the trails and picnic area and wander through fields full of native wildflowers.

Over the years, the Conservancy has planted forests and pollinator-friendly meadows and restored the riparian area above the river. This master plan builds on that with an improved outdoor education area including a pavilion, accessible trails, shade kites, and a barrier-free trail (mock-ups are pictured at right). Stewardship of this land is meant to be an invitation to the public for passive recreation—a safe, welcoming area to connect with nature. The South Branch master plan is the next organic phase in that vision for what this remarkable landscape can ultimately become.



Heather Korzun Named 2025 Sargent Fellow

We are very excited to announce that Heather Korzun has been named as The Land Conservancy of New Jersey's Richard M. Sargent Fellow for 2025. Each year, we recognize one of our interns or fellows—an individual whose passion and enthusiasm for our mission were evident in all they did.

VP of Programs Barbara Davis describes Heather in glowing terms, saying, "Her time with us raised the bar in our work with towns, and her dedication resulted in plans that reflected the community's needs and offered a clear vision of what they could achieve."

Heather's tenure with TLCNJ was a time of growth and learning. In fact, she says she learned so much that, despite being a Virginia native, she's made New Jersey her home! She now works with NOAA as a Climate Resilience Fellow. Heather says, "I am honored to be chosen as this year's Richard M. Sargent intern. My time at TLCNJ deepened my understanding of NJ environ-



TLCNJ Wins \$1M in Morris County Open Space Funding, cont'd.

In addition, Denville has been recommended to receive a \$5.7 million grant for the preservation of 57.29 acres spanning the historic St. Francis and Pocono Field properties. Formerly a senior living facility and a farm, both properties were sold in 2022 with plans for residential development. Those plans were later abandoned, and the township envisions transforming the northern site into a community park while maintaining the Pocono Fields for active recreation.

It is wonderful to see all these properties move towards permanent preservation!

mental policy and the connection between public and nonprofit partners. I'm deeply grateful for the opportunity to learn from such a talented planning team, and I wish them continued success in their work."

The Land Conservancy established the Richard M. Sargent, Jr. Internship Fund in 2007. This provides us with a steady source of funds to attract talented college students to help accomplish our mission of preserving open space lands and protecting water resources in New Jersey.

Dick Sargent was a dedicated conservationist who served on The Land Conservancy of New Jersey's board of trustees for more than a decade. Dick's energetic devotion to the outdoors was embodied in his work, and he used his corporate background to support our land preservation efforts. Dick spent his entire career working for the Chubb Corporation, where his lifelong interest in education led to his position as president and CEO of the Chubb Institute.

Congratulations to Heather for carrying on Dick's legacy!

Welcome, Julia!

The Land Conservancy of New Jersey is delighted to welcome Julia Flath as our new Membership Manager. Julia brings more than a decade of fund-raising experience for environmental and cultural nonprofits in New York City. At the Rainforest Alliance, she held roles in membership and major gifts and fundraising operations, similar to her work for TLCNJ.

Julia is a champion for sustainable transportation, evidenced by the local bicycle and pedestrian advocacy group she founded, and her family rides the “bike bus” to school. She’s also an active school PTA and green team member.

Julia says: “Working for The Land Conservancy brings together my interests in sustainability, ensuring access to nature, and municipal planning. As we



look to the future, it’s so important to help New Jersey communities be good stewards of our open space and environmental resources.”

We’re happy to have you on board, Julia!

Thank you, Breanna!

The Land Conservancy of New Jersey would like to thank Breanna Durkin for the four years she served as our Membership and Outreach Manager, and we wish her luck on her next venture with The Nature Conservancy–New Jersey.

Breanna’s warmth and enthusiasm for the mission helped us grow our development program not only in terms of dollars raised, but also in how the organization expresses our gratitude and appreciation for our supporters. Her thoughtfulness and creativity allowed us to reach members of our community in new and exciting ways. She shepherded our first radio ad campaign and helped launch our volunteer trail maintainer program. Breanna always showed up both in the field and behind the scenes in truly meaningful ways. Her efforts helped us connect with folks who care deeply about TLCNJ’s work and wish to invest in our mission.

During Breanna’s tenure, our scholarship program grew from awarding four \$7,500 scholarships to seven \$10,000 scholarships. She eagerly took on the demanding role of staff liaison to the Scholarship Committee and touted it as one of her favorite parts of the job. She assisted candidates through the application process,

set up interviews, and participated in the selection process. She amplified our outreach to universities throughout the country, as well as to scholars under-represented in the environmental sector, ensuring a highly qualified and diverse pool of applicants.

We are grateful for the opportunity to work alongside Breanna and share her talents with our community. While we miss working alongside her daily, we’re thrilled we still get to call her a colleague in the NJ conservation community, and we’re proud of her efforts to protect our state’s precious natural resources.



Breanna (far right) at an environmental cleanup day with volunteers.



THE LAND CONSERVANCY
OF NEW JERSEY

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It Takes a Village...

Earlier this year, Linda and Amber from our staff walked the trails at Nancy Conger West Brook Preserve with Bob Jonas and Estelle Andersen, two longtime supporters and superstar volunteers in our region who demonstrate an unparalleled passion for trails and a commitment to meaningful volunteer leadership. Naturally, while they were out exploring they couldn't resist doing a little trail maintenance.

As 2025 comes to a close, we're reflecting on how closely our human fates are entwined with each other and with the natural world around us. All of our accomplishments are thanks to our members, partners, volunteers, and entire community. Consider a year-end gift to make your meaningful impact on New Jersey's precious land and water resources. Visit tlc-nj.org or scan the QR code today.



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