

Appendix D.

Open Space Task Force Report of 1999 and BCF Approval Resolution

**OPEN SPACE TASK FORCE REPORT ON FINDINGS AND
RECOMMENDATIONS**

Prepared for

Board of Chosen Freeholders

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I. Executive Summary

The County agencies that are under state statute authority to acquire interests in land using the county Open Space and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund tax dollars, sought and received a Warren County Board of Chosen Freeholder directive to evaluate the funding and acquisition process and to recommend techniques for it's improvement.

The Freeholder resolution of February 10, 1999, created a task force, consisting of two members of each of the entities entrusted with portions of the dedicated Open Space and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund, and directed the task force to address the issues in the resolution, Exhibit A.

Biweekly meetings have been held since February 1999 dealing with each of this issues. Members and staff have evaluated specific areas and reported their findings to the full task force.

Warren County's agricultural industry is among the most productive in New Jersey.

Farmland preservation is important for both aesthetic and economic reasons. In a state with dwindling farmland, Warren County is a leader in agricultural production. Around 30% of the 230,961 acres that make up Warren County are actively devoted to production agriculture.

Warren County has had success in preserving valuable farmland during the first 15 years of the farmland preservation program. The CADB has established a goal of preserving 1500 acres of farmland per year. At this pace, it will take approximately 25 years to preserve the remaining viable farmland in the county.

The principal source of funding for both farmland preservation and open space over the next 10 years will be the 1998 Green Acres Bond Act. The opportunity to obtain state funding for farmland preservation has increased dramatically. Because the state program will be funded at an unprecedented level, the limitation to preserving farmland in Warren County will be the ability to raise the local cost share for the state grant and the ability to administer the program at the local level. Even if both the farmland preservation and discretionary sources of funding were assigned to the farmland preservation program the level of local funding would be inadequate to take advantage of the current opportunities to secure state funding for easement purchases.

Based on the number of active non-profit organizations in Warren County and the number of municipalities with trust funds for open space the demand on county funds for cost-share is likely to be great in the next 10 years. All of these non-profit organizations are expected to maintain active interest in Warren County in the coming years.

Currently 12 of the municipalities in Warren County have funding mechanisms specifically for farmland preservation and open space; several others have attempted to obtain voter approval but failed. Municipalities have a variety of opportunities to participate in land preservation projects, including direct purchase of land or easements, acquisition through the Green Acres program, direct acquisition of farm development rights, and acquisition of partnerships with state, county,

other local, and non-profit agencies. The degree to which municipalities will participate in any of these opportunities will be difficult to predict. Local priorities will influence spending. Both the State Green Acres Program and the SADC will encourage and even require municipalities to submit preservation plans for state approval.

The following are the major findings of the Task Force:

- *The current county dedicated open space tax is insufficient to meet Warren County's open space and farmland preservation needs over the next 10 years. The task force projects needed funding from year 2000 to year 2010 to be about \$43 million, or an average of \$4.3 million per year. The advent of municipal programs will increase the demand on the county for cost-share funds for open space and farmland.*
- *Warren County needs a flexible financial plan to have an effective and successful open space and farmland preservation program. Opportunities to acquire attractive land are often fleeting, due to competition from other buyers, personal hardships, and real estate factors. The county must be able to respond quickly to take advantage of fleeting opportunities. Many creative financial tools are available to stretch open-space dollars long-term. The county should have both "cash-on-hand" and the ability to structure payments long-term to best cope with the variety of acquisition opportunities that will present themselves in the future and acquire the greatest amount of land in the shortest term.*
- *The next 10 years will be critical to preserving Warren's open space and farmland and farming heritage. A financial plan needs to be developed that will set aside the largest amount of the best agricultural land during this period. Favorable real estate conditions in Warren County helps make the preservation of significant amount of farmland preservation a realistic goal in the immediate future.*
- *Due to its significant amount of land still in agriculture Warren County is in a significant position to help make the goals of the state farmland preservation program successful. Because the state program will be funded at an unprecedented level, the limitation to preserving farmland in Warren County will be the ability to raise the local cost share for the state grant and the ability to administer the program at the local level. State funding for farmland preservation will increase dramatically in 1999, more than doubling historic levels. The county will need to increase farmland preservation funding by a similar amount to keep pace with the state program.*
- *It is projected that it would take more than 20 years to preserve the estimated 35,000 acres of viable farmland in the county. Preserving half of the remaining viable farmland will require a commitment to acquiring easements at least 1500 acres of farmland per year over the next 10 years.*
- *The county should be able to target and close farmland preservation acquisitions based on its own priorities and timetable, and then annually submit farms to the SADC for*

reimbursement based on state procedures and based on the likelihood for reimbursement for any one easement purchase. Counties that have followed this strategy are better able to preserve the best farms and insure easements are purchased by the state and, therefore, that associated administrative costs are not wasted.

- *The county and municipalities can leverage available farmland preservation and open-space funds by working in partnership with each other and with conservation organizations. The county task force will continue to forge partnerships to find creative ways of protecting valuable lands.*
- *Twelve Warren County municipalities have approved and are collecting dedicated taxes for open space and farmland preservation. Total funding available from municipal dedicated taxes is projected to be approximately \$530,000 dollars annually, which should increase over time as real property values increase in those municipalities. It is likely that municipalities will continue to work in partnership with and seek funding from county sources. Municipal funding could offset on the order of 10% of the projected annual cost of farmland and open-space preservation. Local priorities will determine where dedicated funds are spent.*
- *Non-profits are involved in both open-space and farmland preservation, depending on the mission of the organization and acquisition opportunities. Active organizations that have acquired significant conservation land and/or easements in Warren County include The Nature Conservancy (TNC), the New Jersey Conservation Foundation (NJCF), the Ridge and Valley Conservancy (RVC), and the Phillipsburg Riverview Organization (PRO).*
- *Both Warren County Farmland Preservation Program and Open Space Program should take full advantage of the State's Planning incentive grants.*
- *Having adequate staff to administer and manage the Open Space and Farmland Preservation Programs is critical to their success. There will be \$98 million worth of state acquisition money to compete for, and the lack of appropriate staffing will put Warren County at a competitive disadvantage potentially leaving Warren County far behind other counties in securing its rightful share of state acquisition money.*
- *Staff to adequately manage county open space properties will become increasingly critical as more properties are acquired. As responsible stewards of the land, attention needs to be given to a number of properties that have gained or will gain higher public visibility and visitation.*
- *The need to acquire land is becoming more critical as development continues to consume more land. The Open Space Plan contains an analysis of land uses and acreage from 1960 to 1996. In 1960 4,300 acres were considered developed. In 1996 almost 48,000 acres were considered developed, which is about 21% of the county. This averages to an annual increase of 1,200 acres per year being converted from agricultural and vacant land to*

developed. If this trend continues over the next 35 year period, 41% of the land will be developed by the year 2035.

- *However, from 1986 to 1996 the average rate of conversion has accelerated to 1900 acres per year. At that rate, by the year 2035, 52% of the county will be developed. Consequently, the need to preserve more open spaces and farmland is becoming more imminent as the rate of development increases.*

II. Introduction

The State of New Jersey enacted legislation which states... "the governing body of any county in which the voters of the County have approved; in a general or special election, a proposition authorizing the acquisition of lands for conservation as open space or as farmland, may annually raise by taxation... a sum not to exceed the amount or rate set forth in the proposition approved by the voters...". N.J.S.A. 40:12-16.

Acknowledging the need to preserve open space and farmland, the Warren County Board of Chosen Freeholders passed a resolution on July 28, 1993, authorizing the placement of a public question on the November 2, 1993, ballot. The voters of the county, in order to assure Warren County's long standing tradition of maintaining a high quality of life through the acquisition of open space, recreational lands and areas of environmental significance approved a non-binding referendum by a margin of 2 to 1 for the creation of the Warren County Open Space and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund to be funded by a tax not to exceed 0.02¢ per \$100 of total County equalized real property valuation.

The question posed to the public read as follows:

Shall the County of Warren consider establishing an open space trust fund to be used exclusively for the purpose of acquiring land for preservation as open space in order to protect drinking water sources, provide outdoor recreation and preserve farmland, in accordance with P.L. 1991, c. 283, to be funded at a rate not to exceed 0.02¢ per \$100.00 of total county equalized real property valuation?

The interpretive statement read as follows:

This non-binding referendum will give the elected officials of the County of Warren the sentiment of the voters concerning the establishment of an "Open Space Preservation Trust Fund" to be used exclusively for the acquisition of land or water areas for the purpose of providing and/or protecting parkland or green spaces; protecting ecologically sensitive areas such as wetlands, stream corridors, drinking water sources, aquifers and recharge areas; to provide for public outdoor recreation and to preserve farmland. The county will annually determine the yearly rate, which may not exceed 0.02¢ per \$100.00 of total county equalized real property valuation. As an example, at the 0.02¢ rate, the owner of a property assessed at \$100,000.00 would be contributing \$20.00 to the Open Space Preservation Trust Fund. It has been recommended that the rate for the first year be set at 0.02¢. Money raised for this fund could only be used to acquire land which will remain open space and for the costs of administering these acquisitions. Once the objectives of this program have been achieved, the tax can be discontinued.

As a result of the election, the Board of Chosen Freeholders, in a resolution adopted October 26, 1994, established the trust fund. This fund commenced January 1, 1995, with a tax equal to 0.02¢ per \$100 of total county equalized real property valuation. By resolution adopted March

27, 1996, the tax rate of 0.02¢ was authorized for 1996 and future tax years, unless directed otherwise at some later date.

In 1998, the Warren County Planning Board conducted a public opinion survey as part of the State Plan Cross Acceptance Process. Results of the survey indicate that the people are highly supportive of the preservation of open space and farmland and have indicated a willingness to pay higher taxes for its preservation. Unfortunately, the voters did not approve the referendum to increase the trust fund tax in 1998. Some have said that the questions were not understandable while others have said that there were too many questions on the ballot asking for tax increases. Nevertheless, the task force believes that there is strong support for land preservation. Because the Board of Chosen Freeholders created the task force to look into funding and coordination, the recommendations provided in this report are geared toward the goal of acquiring as much land as possible over the next ten years by taking advantage of the \$98 million annually under the "Garden State Preservation Trust Act".

III. REVIEW OF WARREN COUNTY TRUST FUND PROGRAMS

A. Farmland Preservation

Warren County's agricultural industry is among the most productive in New Jersey.

Farmland preservation is important for both aesthetic and economic reasons. In a state with dwindling farmland, Warren County is a leader in agricultural production. Up until the last decade, agriculture was the largest industry in the county. Warren County ranks first statewide in the production of milk, corn and grain. It ranks second in the number of cattle and calves, third in hay production, third in lettuce, and fourth in production of commercial apples and the number of sheep and lambs. Development pressure threatens the county's agricultural productivity. The county population continues to climb, building and construction of both housing and commercial properties continue at a steady pace. Large scale development has been concentrated in the southwestern part of the county in proximity to Interstate Route 78. It is clear that the county needs to aggressively pursue the preservation of its remaining productive farmland for agriculture to remain a viable economy within its borders.

Due to Warren County's geologic history prime farmland is in short supply. Around 30% of the 230,961 acres that make up Warren County are actively devoted to production agriculture. While local, county and state records indicate a much higher percentage of land actively devoted to agriculture it is important to remember that 40% of Warren County is woodlands and many of those acres are enrolled in the farmland assessment program. While approximately 70,000 acres are actively devoted to production agriculture only 30 percent or 21,000 acres are ranked as prime and only 25 percent are of statewide importance or about 17,500 acres. Warren County agriculture has thrived despite limitations imposed by soil conditions.

Status and Goals

Warren County has had success in preserving valuable farmland during the first 15 years of the farmland preservation program. The County Agricultural Development Board (CADB), which administers the program, currently has on file applications for preservation of 60 farms totaling 8142 acres. Several new applications are received every month. Development rights have been retired on farms in Allamuchy, Franklin, Frelinghuysen, Harmony, Independence, Knowlton, Pohatcong, and Washington Townships. Farms in Alpha Borough (in part), and Greenwich, Harmony, and Blirstown Townships will enter the program in 1999.

Through the 1997 funding round 3700 acres of farmland had been preserved in Warren County at a cost to county taxpayers of \$4 million. An additional 744 acres from the 1998 funding round is being preserved as this report is being prepared at a cost to the county of about \$590,000, bringing to nearly 4500 acres the number of acres preserved. The 1999 funding round, which allows the county to submit an unprecedented 9 farms for state funding, is in progress. An additional 1300 acres from the 1999 round could enter the program before the year 2000 at a projected cost to the county of approximately \$1.9 million. The dramatic increase in projected costs for 1999 reflect the increased number of farms submitted, greater average acreage per farm,

and the increasing value of appraised easement costs in the county. By the end of 1999 farmland preservation in Warren County could reach 5800 acres at a total cost to the taxpayers of \$6.5 million.

Farmland Preserved and Cost in Warren County, 1988-1998

<i>Funding Round(s)</i>	<i>Acres Preserved</i>	<i>Cost to County</i>
1988 - 1998	3700	\$4,000,000
1998	744	\$590,00
1999	1300	\$1,900,000
Total	5744	\$6,490,000

It is estimated that, of the 70,000 acres of farmland in Warren County, time, costs, competition and other factors will allow for probably a maximum of only 35,000 acres to ever be preserved.

The CADB has established a goal of preserving 1500 acres of farmland per year. At this pace, it will take approximately 25 years to preserve the remaining viable farmland in the county. The State Agricultural Development Board has in the past permitted the counties to submit 7 farms per year for funding. In 1999 this was increased to 9 farms. In the year 2000 round, counties will be permitted to submit an unlimited number of farms. The county's ability to take advantage of this expanded opportunity at the state level to preserve farmland will depend on the availability of county funding and increase staffing for purchase of development rights on farms. A complete listing of preserved farms is shown in Exhibit B.

B. Open Space Program

The County's Open Space Plan is implemented by the Warren County Board of Recreation Commissioners. The BRC was created in 1987 by resolution of the Warren County Board of Chosen Freeholders. It has seven regular members and two alternate members. The Board is staffed by the Warren County Planning Department. The WCBRC has the statutory authority to select, acquire, and maintain lands in accordance with an adopted Open Space Plan.

On May 24, 1999, the Warren County Planning Board adopted the County Open Space Plan. The Plan revises to the Open Space Plan that was adopted in 1994. The 1999 Plan's function is to guide the Warren County Board of Recreation Commissioners in its open space acquisition efforts and to coordinate those efforts with local and state acquisition activities to accomplish complementary goals. For planning purposes the plan identifies broad target areas that should be considered for acquisition. Parcels within the target areas are then evaluated as they become

available or proactively sought for acquisition. This adds needed flexibility to the plan that the 1994 plan did not have.

Fundamental to the plan's selection of open space properties acquisition is the degree of environmental sensitivity, the need to link existing properties with one another, and to give consideration to properties in regions that lack sufficient reserves of open space.

The general environmental features that the county open space plan considers when targeting open space areas are areas of steep slopes, ridgelines, stream corridors, and freshwater wetland areas. The selection of these areas also serve to protect other environmentally sensitive features such as habitats for endangered and rare species of animal and plants, and the protection of ground and surface waters. Opportunities for environmental preservation, are then combined with providing passive recreation such as hiking, biking and fishing and sight seeing. In addition, a long standing goal of the county has been to acquire segments of the historic Morris Canal for recreation and historic preservation purposes. The County has been using a \$1.0 million Green Acres grant where 50% of all acquisition costs are reimbursable to the county to acquire canal properties.

Status and Goals

The Open Space Plan established the goal of 9,312 acres of county owned open space. This goal is based on the State's 1994 Open Space and Outdoor Recreation Plan which uses the balanced land use method. The balanced land use method for county acquisition is based on a formula that states that 7% of the county's developed and developable land should be in county-administered public open space. The goal for all jurisdictions is for 46,000 acres of open space. There are 25,300 acres of public open space currently in the county. Of the 25,300 acres, the County of Warren owns 670 acres. Of the 670 acres, 625 acres have been acquired as part of the Open Space Program. An additional 500 acres is or will be under contract during 1999. A list of properties acquired as part of the Open Space Program is found in Exhibit B. For purposes of this report the task force established the goal of acquiring all 9,312 acres over the next 10 year period. Currently, the County owns 670 acres. The difference then equates to approximately 865 acres per year.

C. Municipal and Charitable Conservancy Trust Fund Committee

The Municipal and Charitable Conservancy Trust Fund Committee has made open space and farmland preservation acquisition recommendations to the Board of Chosen Freeholders for the 1997 and 1998 funding rounds. The Trust Fund Committee has painstakingly reviewed numerous applications from charitable conservancies and municipalities. Through creative and often complex funding partnerships with the State, municipalities and private nonprofit groups, approximately \$1,136,000 of County open space funding has contributed to saving over 1300 acres from future development. These preservation and acquisition projects averaged \$871 per acre of County funds.

In the first two years of operation the Trust Fund Committee reviewed 18 applications and was able to provide partial funding for 7. As charitable conservancies become more active and

aware of the County's program and as more municipalities institute open space taxes, the number of applications for funding will continue to increase. These open space acquisition partnerships allow the County to leverage its funds and significantly advance the cause of open space in Warren County.

The present rate of funding available to the Municipal and Charitable Conservancy Trust Fund Committee is approximately \$290,000 per year. The Trust Fund Committee would need \$2,900,000 over the next 10 years to continue at the present rate of open space acquisition. Assuming the Committee continues to contribute \$871 per acre, the \$2,900,000 could enable the Committee to being a partner in acquiring 3,330 acres over the next ten years.

Through continuing efforts to partnership with municipalities and charitable conservancies and an increase in the County's investments in open space and farmland preservation much can be accomplished during the next decade. A complete listing of acquired and approved properties is shown in Exhibit B.

IV. Strategies to Improve Cooperation and Coordination of Agencies using Trust Fund

The task force discussed a number of strategies that existing agencies can utilize to improve cooperation and coordination. Some of the strategies require freeholder action. Each strategy that was discussed is described below.

- A. Use one Land Acquisition Routing Form that would be circulated to the various agencies involved in acquisition. The agency taking the inquiry would ask the prospective seller the questions contained on the routing form and then forward a copy of the form to the other agencies to determine their interest in the project. The Warren County Agriculture Development Board, the Warren County Board of Recreation Commissioners, host municipality, Green Acres, and appropriate non-profits would all receive a copy of the form.. Using and circulating this form would increase the chances of pooling financial resources and improve communication among the agencies. A copy of this form can be found in Exhibit C.
- B. Share agenda packages and the minutes of CADB, BRC, Warren County Planning Board, and Municipal & Charitable Conservancy Trust Fund with each other. This will help the agencies better understand the status of projects underway or being considered. Members of the respective agencies or their staff should consider attending the other agencies meetings as well.
- C. Have quarterly or semi-annual "task force meetings" to discuss projects and finances. This would continue the current task force on an informal basis. The advantage is that it would provide for face to face discussion.
- D. The Task Force explored the consolidation of land acquisition programs into one county office. It was determined that efficiencies would not necessarily result if this action was taken.
- E. Institute joint marketing of programs to landowners. Brochures of programs offered by the county should be distributed to municipalities, landowners, non profit agencies and the general public. Displays can be set up at the Warren County Farmers Fair and at other similar gatherings for information and promotional purposes.
- F. Geographic Information System mapping is playing a key role in processing and displaying information graphically. The State Agriculture Development Committee and the Green Acres program require that all maps to be submitted in digital form. The mapping of all open space and preserved farmland properties should be coordinated in one county office such as Planning. Planning would work with other departments that use or could use GIS such as Health, Engineering, Cultural and Heritage Commission, 911, Elections, etc.

V. FUNDING

A. Available Open-Space and Farmland Preservation Funding Methods

1. Overview

The principal source of funding for both farmland preservation and open space over the next 10 years will be the 1999 Garden State Preservation Trust Act, introduced on May 3, 1999. When adopted the act will authorize \$98 million dollars per year to fund projects. Funds for acquisition of land and conservation easements will be available in the first 10 years of the State program. Debt service will consume most of the funding after the first 10 years. The first draft of the bill allocates 60% of available funding to the Green Acres program primarily for open space preservation and 40% to the State Agricultural Development Committee primarily for farmland preservation.

The Governor's Council on New Jersey Outdoors has concluded that there is a critical need to preserve one million acres over the next ten years when acquisition funds are available. The Council recommended that expenditures be allocated in the following proportions: 25% to farmland preservation, 25% to open space acquisition by local government and non-profits, 20% to state land acquisition, 7.5% to historic preservation, 7.5% to renovation and capital improvements, and the balance among urban area initiatives, state park operation, and in-lieu tax payment.

2. State of New Jersey Farmland Preservation Program

New Jersey's Farmland Preservation Program was initiated under the Farmland Preservation Bond Act of 1981 (P.L. 1981, c. 276). The State of New Jersey, through the State Agricultural Development Committee (SADC), provides matching grants to counties for purchase of development rights on agricultural lands. The grant cost sharing formula depends on a number of factors, but is typically subsidized 65% by the state and 35% by counties. Landowners have subsidized a percentage of land value to the program in the form of discounted offers to sell development rights. The state farmland preservation program is administered through county agricultural development boards (CADBs), currently in 16 counties.

Until 1998 the SADC permitted CADB's to submit 7 farms per year for consideration for easement cost-share grants. In 1998 changes were made to the state program to permit counties to submit 9 farms for consideration. In the year 2000 funding round upcoming the SADC will allow the submission of an unlimited number of farms. (Greg Romano, SADC Executive Director June 3, 1999 CADB meeting.)

Other program SADC program changes may take place this year once legislation is finalized. It is anticipated that 1999 will bring direct grants to municipalities and non-profits for farmland preservation. This program will be in the form of a 50/50 matching grants (Michael Catania, Governor's Council on New Jersey Outdoors, personal communication, April 7, 1999).

Planning Incentive grants will be made to municipalities having a farmland preservation plan approved by the County Agricultural Development Board and the SADC that will likely require

local funding (Robert Baumley, Assistant Director, SADC, meeting with Warren County Task Force, March 9, 1999).

In addition to issuing matching grants for the purchase of development rights, SADC operates a fee-simple program. In the fee-simple program the state purchases farmland outright. The SADC then imposes a conservation easement on the farmland and offers it at auction to the highest bidder. The land remains deed restricted after resale. Even the fee simple program may require a county cost-share.

The SADC has spent approximately \$50 million total for farmland preservation over the past three years. There will be an unprecedented level of funding available for farmland preservation in 1999. The SADC has budgeted \$40 million for the 1999 funding round. It is expected that approximately \$40 million per year will be available for farmland preservation beginning in the year 2000. The majority of funds allocated to the SADC by the legislature under the upcoming appropriation will be spent to acquire development rights on farms through the counties. Funding for the fee-simple program, 10% of the program funds in the past, will be increased to 15%. (Robert Baumley, Assistant Director, SADC, Warren County Open Space Task Force meeting, March 9, 1999)

Due to its significant amount of land still in agriculture Warren County is in an enviable position to help make the goals of the state farmland preservation program successful. Because the state program will be funded at an unprecedented level, the limitation to preserving farmland in Warren County will be the ability to raise the local cost share for the state grant and the ability to administer the program at the local level (Gregory Romano, Executive Director, SADC, meeting with Warren County Task Force, March 9, 1999).

3. *State of New Jersey Green Acres Program*

The State of New Jersey Green Acres Program has been and will be the principal source of funds for acquisition of open space and conservation easements on open space in Warren County. The Green Acres Program provides funding for open space projects through two of its bureaus, the Bureau of State Acquisition and the Bureau of Green Trust Management. State Acquisition acquires lands managed by other State Agencies, including the Division of Parks and Forestry, the Division of Fish, Game and Wildlife, and the Office of Natural Lands Management. The Green Trust provides low interest loans and partial grants to municipal and county governments and non-profit organizations to purchase land and conservation easements. Recent proposed legislation allocates \$60 million per year to the Green Acres program with the following allocations: 50% to State Land Acquisition, 40% to the Green Trust for local governments and 10% for non-profits organizations. If approved this suggests the majority of the funds appropriated under the state's 1998 Open Space referendum will go for acquisition of open space directly by the state.

Based on past levels of acquisition in Warren County, it is expected that the Green Acres program will acquire significant open space in the county over the next ten years. To date the state has acquired in excess of 12,500 acres in Warren County in fee simple (Warren County Open Space Plan, 1999). Future project areas for Green Acres in Warren include additions to Jenny Jump State Forest, Allamuchy Mountain State Park, Worthington State Park, Pequest and

White Lake Wildlife Management Areas, the Highlands Trail corridor, and greenways along the Delaware, Musconetcong, Pequest, Paulinskill and other rivers and streams. County and local open space acquisition will complement these project initiatives.

The Green Trust will make loans in the amount of 75% and award grants in the amount of 25% for acquisition of open space for municipal and county governments with approved with open space plans approved by Green Acres; this program is known as "planning incentive grants." The program requires that local governments identify priorities for open space acquisition; this can include, but does not necessitate identification of specific land parcels (Steve Herb, Negotiator, Green Acres Program, meeting with Open Space Task Force, March 9, 1999). Thus, Green Trust funding is likely to provide the majority of funds to local governments for open space acquisition.

The Warren County Open Space Plan's approval by the Green Acres Program is pending. Its approval will make the county eligible for planning incentive grants. These grants will provide the bulk of the funding for acquisition projects identified by the County Board of Recreation Commissioners and approved by the Freeholder Board. Green Trust Funds will also provide municipalities with a source of funding to match open space raised by local dedicated taxes. In the past the Green Trust has provided 50/50 matching funds to municipalities and non-profit organizations for open space acquisition. The continued status of this program is uncertain, but is likely to continue. Municipal governments and non-profit organizations who qualify for funding under this category will likely continue to approach the Warren County Municipal and Charitable Conservancy Trust Fund Committee for funds to match the Green Acres share of grants. Based on the number of active non-profit organizations in Warren County and the number of municipalities with trust funds for open space the demand on county funds for cost-share is likely to be great in the next 10 years.

4. Non-profit conservation organizations

Non-profit conservation organizations that are active in Warren County use grant funds from the State Green Acres program and from private foundations as well as private contributions to acquire open space in Warren County (Michael Catania, The Nature Conservancy, personal communication, 4/6/99). County open-space funds are used in other counties as a required match for non-profits' Green Acres Green Trust grants.

Non-profits are involved in both open-space and farmland preservation, depending on the mission of the organization and acquisition opportunities. Active organizations that have acquired significant conservation land and/or easements in Warren County include The Nature Conservancy (TNC), the New Jersey Conservation Foundation (NJCF), the Ridge and Valley Conservancy (RVC), and the Phillipsburg Riverview Organization (PRO). Other non-profits are headquartered in the county that could become involved in open-space acquisitions in the future as state funding becomes abundant, include the Paulinskill Valley Trail Committee and the Paulinskill/Pequest Watershed Association.

All of these non-profit organizations are expected to maintain active interest in Warren County in the coming years. The Nature Conservancy is pursuing a Great Limestone Valley project, which

should result in additional protected open space in the Kittatinny Valley. The New Jersey Conservation Foundation has several project areas statewide. One of its major project areas is the New Jersey Highlands, which occurs in southwestern Warren County. NJCF will continue to obtain easements and fee-simple acquisitions in the Highlands, and is interested in working in partnership with local government in preserving the Highlands (Susan Currie, Land Projects Administrator, NJCF, personal communication, May 3, 1999). Ridge and Valley Conservancy will continue to pursue its Limestone Forest and Paulinskill Greenway, and Bear Creek projects in the Kittatinny Valley and is undertaking a Kittatinny Ridge project. PRO will continue to focus on the Delaware River corridor and Pohatcong Mountain acquisition.

5. *Private Foundations*

Funding of conservation acquisition projects by private foundations has always been rare and the likelihood that this will change is not great (Nancy Zimmerman, Victoria Foundation, personal communication, 4/13/99). The Victoria Foundation provided funding to the Ridge and Valley Conservancy for assistance in acquiring the White Lake Farm Wildlife Management Area in Hardwick. Victoria does not plan on awarding conservation grants in the foreseeable future.

Of the large private foundations researched, only the William Penn Foundation is active in issuing grants for land acquisition. William Penn would support projects in Warren County from its natural and physical environment category, if those projects are within 100 miles of Philadelphia (Diane Schrauth, Program Analyst, William Penn Foundation, personal communication, 4/30/99).

6. *Palisades Interstate Park Commission*

In 1995, the State of New Jersey expanded the authority and jurisdiction of the Palisades Interstate Park Commission to acquire and manage park lands in northern New Jersey, for park purposes, and for the purposes of protecting, maintaining, or enhancing the quality and quantity of water supplies.

The Palisades Interstate Park Commission may, in consultation with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection and in cooperation with the North Jersey District Water Supply Commission, select, locate, acquire, and maintain, such lands lying within the Highlands or Skylands areas of Bergen, Hunterdon, Morris, Passaic, Somerset or Warren counties in the State of New Jersey, including those areas lying within the North Jersey Water Supply District. These lands may be acquired for the purpose of establishing a park and thereby preserving the scenic beauty of those areas, for other recreation and conservation or historic preservation purposes, or for the purposes of protecting, maintaining, or enhancing the quality and quantity of water supplies as well as conserving watershed lands; (**Statement to A-623, 1995**).

7. *Farmland Preservation and Open Space Funding in Warren County*

Funding available for the farmland preservation program in Warren County came from general funds from 1987 to 1991. In 1991 bonds were issued that raised \$1 million per year for farmland preservation. Bond funds were available until the passage of the Open Space and Farmland Preservation Tax in 1995. Annual operating expenses up until the institution of the dedicated tax were about \$150,000 per year. The county open space tax yields approximately \$1.2 million

annually, which provides approximately \$290,000 per year for farmland preservation for farmland preservation. Additional funds can and have been made available by the Freeholder Board from the "discretionary" category of the Open Space Trust Fund.

Even if both the farmland preservation and discretionary sources of funding were assigned to the farmland preservation program the level of funding would be inadequate to take advantage of the current opportunities to secure state funding for easement purchases. Easement values average \$3772 per acre in Warren County in 1999. If the funds in the farmland preservation and discretionary categories were combined, and the typical county/state cost share (35%/65%) were applied, only 425 acres of farmland per year could be preserved. This rate of preservation falls far short of the goal of 1500 acres per year and do not keep pace with the current rate the county has established for preserving farmland.

Funding for county open space is obtained from two primary sources, the county open space and farmland preservation trust fund, and the State Green Acres program. Twenty five percent of the trust fund is reserved for open space acquisition under the purview of the WC BRC amounting to \$290,000 per year. The Green Acres program has provided a \$1.0 million matching grant for Morris Canal Acquisition.

The Municipal and Charitable Conservancy Trust Fund Committee is allocated 25% of the county trust fund. Its function is to review projects submitted from municipalities and charitable conservancies for open space and farmland preservation projects. As of this writing \$650,000 has been used to acquire a 140 acre farmland preservation project in Mansfield and a 400 acre open space project in Washington Township. Five other open space projects have been awarded funding totaling \$486,415. Funding for the 1999 round will be limited to the amount anticipated by November which is \$290,000.

8. *Farmland Preservation and Open Space in Other Counties*

The task force thought it would be productive to determine how land is preserved in other counties in New Jersey. Program administrators in the other 15 counties that have both open space and farmland preservation programs were interviewed to determine how their programs are funded, how they are managed, and what adaptations they expect to make with the increased availability of state and local funding. Their responses are summarized below.

Atlantic County

The Atlantic County farmland preservation program is extremely limited and has only purchased one easement to date, one additional easement purchase is upcoming (John Brennan, Chief of Land Acquisition Design, personal communication, 4/16/99). The CADB is seeking funding for administration of the program from the SADC. The Atlantic County Law Department handles most of the administrative tasks associated with land acquisition. Atlantic County parkland acquisition is funded by a realty transfer fee.

Burlington County

Burlington County is recognized as being at the forefront of farmland preservation efforts in New Jersey. Burlington has developed a creative installment purchase agreement (IPA) approach that defers payment of the principal cost of land and easement acquisition to the year 2011.

Dedicated county funds are used to make interest-free payments to program participants until the principal is paid. This IPA approach has significant advantages to both the county and landowners.

- Farmland easement purchases are made in installments. The county uses the proceeds of its dedicated tax to purchase federal zero-coupon bonds, maturing in 2011. The county dedicated tax is used to make interest-free payments to land owners annually; the principal is paid at the time the “zeros” mature in 2011. Because of the structure of this installment payment approach, a waiver is needed from the State Department of Community Affairs Local Finance Board.
- Municipal participation is required in all farmland preservation and open-space purchases. In the case of farmland preservation, the county and municipality formerly shared equally in the county cost of farmland preservation. Currently the county uses a sliding-scale, which significantly reduces municipal costs of participation where a significant financial commitment to farmland preservation has already been made by the municipality. The municipal cost share ranges from 20% to 5%, depending on the percentage of municipal equalized value spent on farmland preservation.
- For open-space purchases, the county and municipality share equally in the loan portion of Green Acres 75%/25% loan/grant agreements. Therefore, the county and municipality both are liable for 37% of the cost of open space. The municipality can participate in this cost-share on an installment basis, as the county would. In cases where the municipality does not provide 37% of the loan amount, the property owner is required to donate land or easement value equivalent to the percentage not subsidized by the municipality.
- The IPA deferred payment plan provides significant tax advantages to sellers. The seller can defer the capital gain on the sale of an easement or land. Sellers are permitted to market the IPA after one year in the program. Sellers who need cash-at-closing are permitted to receive 10% of the purchase price or \$100,000, whichever is less, the balance being paid in accordance with the standard IPA.
- Burlington county makes limited cash-in-full purchases. These are made in cases where the owner purchased the property after 1991 and is vulnerable to limited capital gain, in cases where property owners are required by lenders to pay off debt, and in cases where sellers are acquiring additional property as part of a life-kind exchange.

Camden County

Camden County has just started acquiring farmland preservation easements; the county also has an interest in acquiring riparian buffers. Farmland preservation criteria are in place in Camden and the program is in place. The open space program is currently being organized, acquisitions probably won't take place this year (Robert Dobbs, Administrator, Camden CADB, personal communication, April 22, 1999)

Voters approved a referendum for \$6.5 million to fund the program in 1993, but the Board of Freeholders would not approve the funding. Voters approved a \$.01/100 dedicated tax for farmland preservation and open space in November 1998; the tax generates \$1.2 million per year. Funds are not allocated by a specific formula to either category of acquisition, although the county is working on a formula for allocation. Both farmland preservation and open space projects are evaluated by an Advisory Trust Committee, which consists of 22 members, 2 of which are from the County CADB.

Camden is considering installment purchase agreements as an option, but has not committed to this approach. There is discussion about local cost sharing and allowing municipalities to own county-acquired open space. Items under consideration include requiring local cost-share for purchase, or maintenance agreements with local government, or giving credit in evaluation criteria to changes to local master plans and ordinances that provide suitable buffers to county open space.

The agricultural community in Camden is apparently extremely supportive of the preservation program. The county is emphasizing acquisition of land and easements, as opposed to capital improvements. Spending on facilities is under discussion, as is spending for historical preservation.

Cape May County

Cape May County's farmland preservation and open space programs are funded together through the proceeds of a bond approved by referendum in 1989 (Jim Smith, Planning Director, personal communication, 4/16/99). There is no specific allocation of funds to either category. To date the Freeholder Board has approved all projects submitted, resulting in preservation of 2500 acres of open space and farmland, which will increase to 3000 acres by next year.

The CADB conducted a mailing to eligible farmers recently, which prompted an large influx of applications for sale of development rights. Farms in Cape May are generally less than 150 acres in size.

The open space program uses two appraisals per project, and the county retains the services of a review appraiser to review appraisals that differ significantly.

Cumberland County

Cumberland County funds its open space and farmland preservation program through a dedicated tax of \$.01/100 approved in 1994, which generates \$440,000 per year due a limited base of . ratables. The county has not yet attached a high priority to open-space acquisition, principally due to the large amount of land purchased by Green Acres (Timothy Brill, Cumberland CADB administrator, personal communication, 4/29/99).

Cumberland County has been able to fund its farmland preservation projects in past years, but envisions that it will have trouble competing due to increasing competition among counties for increased state funding. It is investigating ways to accelerate its program without increasing the dedicated tax, but admits it may need to look at a tax increase. The county is investigating the

possibility of using supplemental bonds in addition to the dedicated tax. It would like to “front-load” funding in the early stages when state funding is available by using some of its tax to fund projects and some to pay off bonds.

Currently the county is conducting a summit meeting among parkland, open space and farmland interests to develop future strategies. Cumberland’s open-space priorities include developing linkages between state open space, trails, greenway corridors, and links between population centers and open space. It is attempting to complement open-space and farmland preservation efforts, while advocating the economic viability of farming.

Municipalities are not required to participate financially in projects. Only one municipality to date has made a contribution to farmland preservation. Others are interested in pursuing Green Acres planning incentive grants to acquire large blocks of small individual farms that might not otherwise be a priority for the county CADB.

Gloucester County

Gloucester County’s farmland and open space preservation program began in the 1980’s with a \$1 million bond issue (James Yates, Gloucester CADB Administrator, personal communication, 4/20/99). A second bond was authorized by a 69% vote in 1993, which raised \$2 million for the program. In 1997 an open-space tax was approved that generates \$1.2 million per year. The county has recently borrowed \$6.5 million to fund projects for 3 years, using the proceeds of the tax to pay the debt service.

Funds are not specifically allocated to either category of land protection. Due to the low cost of farmland easements, the majority of funding has been used to preserve farmland. The county allows land owners to make a choice regarding the use of installment payments for acquisition of land and easements.

Gloucester purchases farmland easement in advance and then submits them to the SADC for reimbursement. The Gloucester County freeholders have established a goal of preserving 2000 acres during 1999. The programs are administered from the county agricultural extension service. The administrator’s sole responsibility is to pursue open space and farmland preservation.

Hunterdon County

Hunterdon County funds farmland preservation projects on an as-needed basis. An ordinance is passed annually by the board of freeholders to bond for the funds necessary to subsidize the county share of the easement purchases that have qualified for SADC grants in that year (Linda Weber, Hunterdon CADB, personal communication 4/6/99). Contracts with landowners are signed once they qualify under the SADC competitive bidding process. These contracts establish the amount needed to bond, then the bond is secured to make the necessary funds available. The source of revenue for subsidizing interest costs on the bond was not revealed.

Hunterdon County requires the municipality to equally cost share with the county on the remaining cost share not covered by the SADC. At this time, the county is considering placing a

question on the November ballot for a tax used for open space and farmland preservation acquisitions. If approved, the tax will complement funds bonded for both programs. The intent is to reduce the amount of bonded funds.

Mercer County

Mercer County has a dedicated tax of \$.02/100 that it uses to fund both farmland and open space preservation. The second penny of the tax was approved in 1998, raising funding levels to \$3.6 million (Dan Knox, Mercer CADB Administrator, personal communication, 4/13/99). Currently the first penny raised funds debt service on bonds and the second is used for project funding, as the county borrows money to fund the program. Fifteen (15) percent of the funds go to capital improvement, in particular to construction of support facilities for the county's greenways project.

Mercer County does not have a set formula for allocating funds to open space vs. farmland preservation. They leverage their funding at every opportunity by working in partnership with non-profit organizations, municipalities, and the Green Acres Program (Leslie Floyd, Mercer Planning Division staff, personal communication, 4/22/99).

Municipalities are not required to contribute to county land acquisition projects. The county has provided some funding to municipalities for farmland preservation, and recently two municipalities have acquired farmland and applied to the county for reimbursement.

The county has engaged in installment purchase agreements with three land owners. Mercer realizes that installment purchase agreements are not necessarily right for all land owners, but has found owners interested in this arrangement.

Both the Mercer CADB and the Open Space Planning Board are staffed by employees of the County Planning Division, and act as advisors to the County Executive, who makes final decisions on land projects.

Middlesex County

Funding for the Middlesex County farmland preservation program comes from the county's general funds; open space projects are funded by a dedicated open-space tax. Farmland preservation is coordinated out of the county planning department. The open-space program is administered by the Middlesex County Improvement Authority (Linda Busch, Middlesex CADB Administrator, personal communication, 4/21/99).

Middlesex requires municipalities to participate in farmland preservation. The county funds 20% of the cost of easements, leaving the remaining 20% of the SADC's local cost-share to be subsidized by the property owner, through the bid-down process, or by the municipality. Property values are high in Middlesex, causing few farmers to bid lower than state-certified easement values.

Middlesex has not experimented yet with installment purchase agreements. The concept must be initiated by the land owner.

Morris County

Warren County's open space program is modeled after that of Morris County (Frank Pinto, Morris Co. Planning Dept., personal communication, 4/6/99). About 10 years ago Morris voters approved a bond in the amount of \$25 million to fund the county's farmland and open space open-space preservation program. Recently Morris voters approved a tax of \$.02 per hundred assessed value, which raised \$10 million per year. The open-space tax has since been increased to \$.025 per hundred, which generates \$13.5 million.

Morris' trust fund is allocated in the same way as Warren's. Twenty-five percent is allocated to farmland preservation, 25% to municipalities and non-profits, 25% to parks, and 25% to a discretionary fund. Morris' open space program for distribution to municipalities and non profits is managed out of the county planning department. The county park commission and municipal utilities authority approve and acquire land under the "parks" category. Parkland acquisition is processed the county planning department. Use of discretionary funds must be approved by an Open Space Trust Funds Committee and the freeholder board. The freeholder board approves all capital projects.

Monmouth County

Monmouth County's farmland preservation program pre-dates the state's program (Karen Fedosh, Administrator, Monmouth CADB, personal communication, 4/21/99). The program has a high level of support from the county freeholders. Funds for farmland preservation come from the general fund. A county dedicated open-space tax generates up to \$10 million per year, which is primarily used for parkland acquisition. The county finance director makes the final determination as to the source of funds for each program in any year.

Monmouth does not pre-acquire farmland easements, for fear of the potential influence of politics in the process. The county only managed to submit 6 farms to the SADC for grants in 1999 due to staff limitations. Staffing is a significant problem for the CADB, which feels it is overwhelmed with the current program and will have difficulty keeping pace with the SADC's planned accelerated program.

Monmouth looked at installment purchase agreements as a means of funding acquisition, but has not committed to the concept.

Ocean County

Until 1998 Ocean County funded its farmland preservation and open space acquisition through a bond issue. With the passage of a dedicated tax in 1997 the county retired the bond issue and will utilize the tax for acquisition. Ocean's tax of \$0.15/100 raises \$4 million per year. The county has no set formula for allocation of funds between farmland open space preservation, but is currently developing guidelines (Dave McKeon, Ocean CADB Administrator, personal communication, May 4, 1999).

All acquisition projects in Ocean are evaluated by a Natural Lands Committee. The committee was so named to emphasize to tax payers that the dedicated tax is intended to acquire lands in their natural state, as opposed to making capital investments. Farmland preservation projects are recommended to the committee by the county agricultural development board.

Municipal participation is required for all projects in Ocean County. Municipalities are required to subsidize 10% of the local cost share of grants for farmland and open space preservation. Only one municipality currently has a dedicated open-space tax, but others are mobilizing. The Ocean County programs are administered out of the county planning department. The county is attempting to add additional staff to administrate open-space acquisitions.

Salem County

Salem County spends about \$750,000 per year on farmland preservation (Rita Simpson, CADB Administrator, personal communication, 4/16/99). The program is supported entirely through bonding. The county determined that a \$.01/100 tax would generate only \$360,000 per year, inadequate to sustain the current preservation pace. Apparently a \$.02/100 tax that would be needed to provide current levels of funding might not be attainable politically.

The Salem Freeholder Board is looking at a \$2 million bond to provide funding for the next 3 years; the CADB has requested \$6 million over 3 years, anticipating increased activity due to the increased level of SADC funding now available. Salem is investigating the use of zero-coupons and installment purchase agreements, based on Burlington County's success.

No municipal participation is required in Salem County, although 3 municipalities have provided some level of funding. There is a lack of significant ratables in some communities, limiting the potential for local funding. Development pressure in Salem is apparently concentrated in one area. Salem does not have a parks commission or open-space commission. Acquisition of open space appears to be chiefly through and by the Green Acres Program.

Somerset County

Somerset County finances its farmland and open space preservation program through a dedicated county tax. The initial tax rate was \$.015/100, which was increased to \$.03 in 1998, which generates \$8 million per year for the program. Some of this funding is used to pay debt services for a \$50 million bond issue to fund farmland, open space and greenways preservation (Anthony McCracken, Administrator, Somerset CADB, personal communication, 4/16/99). The county does not engage in installment purchase agreements due to lack of staff to administer the financial aspects of such a program.

Sussex County

Sussex County has funded its farmland preservation program from a bond issue passed in 1986. Funds from that bond will expire with this year's funding round (Donna Traylor, Sussex County CADB Administrator, personal communication, May 4, 1999). The county does not have an

open-space acquisition program. The farmland preservation program is administered from the county planning department.

The Sussex Board of Freeholders prefers to fund farmland preservation projects as they are identified. The county does not have a proactive program from a funding perspective, although the freeholders like to see a five-year projection of farmland preservation spending.

Three municipalities in Sussex currently have dedicated open-space taxes. Two of these have only recently formed committees to consider acquisition priorities.

9. *Municipal Programs*

Currently 12 of the municipalities in Warren County have funding mechanisms specifically for farmland preservation and open space; several others have attempted to obtain voter approval but failed. Those municipalities that have, or have voter approval for, a dedicated open-space tax are listed below. Based on current assessed realty values if all of the voter approved dedicated open space taxes were implemented, they would raise approximately \$530,000 per year in Warren County.

Municipalities with Dedicated Open Space and Farmland Preservation Tax and Estimated Annual Funds Generated

<i>Municipality</i>	<i>Dedicated Open Space Tax Rate (per \$100 of assessed value)</i>	<i>Total Amount Raised from Dedicated Tax</i>
Alpha Borough	(2 cents)	23,494
Franklin Township	(2 cents)	35,881
Greenwich Township	(2 cents)	46,757
Hardwick Township	(1 cent)	10,096
Harmony Township	(2 cents)	70,153
Knowlton Township	(2 cents)	16,522
Independence Township	(2 cents)	56,373
Liberty Township	(2 cents)	29,301
Mansfield Township	(2 cents)	58,717
Pohatcong Township	(2 cents)	45,122
Washington Township	(2 cents)	77,625
White Township	(2 cents)	<u>61,043</u>
Total Municipal Open-Space Funding Available		\$531,085

Municipalities have a variety of opportunities to participate in land preservation projects, including direct purchase of land or easements, acquisition through the Green Acres program, direct acquisition of farm development rights, and acquisition by partnerships with state, county, other local, and non-profit agencies. In addition, municipalities may participate in preservation projects by agreeing to manage the lands once they are acquired. This is done by the Green Acres Program in cases where a municipality may not be able to make a financial commitment to

toward acquisitions. The degree to which municipalities will participate in any of these opportunities will be difficult to predict.

Several municipalities have undertaken or participated in farmland preservation and open-space preservation. Pohatcong Township contributed significantly to the preservation of farmland in partnership with the SADC, WCADB, Green Acres and the Phillipsburg Riverview Organization. Mansfield Township purchased the development rights on one farm and submitted to the CADB for reimbursement, which is taking place at the time of this report. Mansfield has also committed to preservation of a second farm through the Warren County Open Space and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund. Knowlton Township is participating in 1999 in the acquisition of development rights on a farm in that township.

In the open-space category, Washington Township acquired 400 acres on Oxford Mountain with assistance from Warren County Open Space and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund. Allamuchy is currently attempting to utilize a \$1 million Green Acres grant to acquire land on Allamuchy Mountain.

It appears certain that municipalities will become more active in protecting farmland and open space over the next 10 years. Current funding levels will increase with the value of local ratables. Buying power for individual municipalities is limited due to current open-space tax levies. It is likely that municipalities will continue to work in partnership with and seek matching funds from county sources.

Local priorities will influence spending. Both the State Green Acres Program and the SADC will require municipalities to submit preservation plans for state approval to qualify for matching funds. Submission of local comprehensive open-space plans will qualify municipalities for matching grants in broad projects at favorable cost-sharing. Therefore in the next several years the county will be able to identify specific land projects municipalities favor.

10. Warren County Open Space and Farmland Preservation Funding Needs

The current county dedicated open space tax is insufficient to meet Warren County's open space and farmland preservation needs over the next 10 years. The task force projects needed funding from year 2000 to year 2010 to be about \$43 million, or an average of \$4.3 million per year as shown on page 26. The county dedicated tax at its current rate yields \$1.2 million per year, which would provide only 30% of the projected need over a 10 year period, assuming no increase in county assessed values. Doubling the open space tax would yield about \$2.4 million per year, or about 56% of the projected funding need.

The Warren County CADB believes a realistic goal is to protect 50 percent of the remaining viable farmland in the county over the next 10 years. Total cost of attaining this goal, including administrative costs, is projected to be about \$27 million over 10 years. This projection assumes a protection goal of 1500 acres per year, an initial easement cost of \$3750 per acre (current average), an inflation of 3 percent in the cost of conservation easements on farmland, and associated annual administrative costs.

Farmland preservation will require nearly \$6 million in the first year to subsidize the entire cost of easements. Sixty-five (65) percent or more of this first-year expenditure would be recovered from the SADC as cost-share grants. Years 2 through 10 would take advantage of this reimbursement to subsidize the state's share of easement acquisition. Reimbursement from the SADC would be received each year thereafter, effectively "recycling" these funds.

The Warren County Board of Recreation Commissioners projects the need to preserve an additional 8650 acres of open space over the next 10 years based on the balanced land-use method of analysis. This goal includes the acquisition of an additional 650 acres along the Morris Canal. The Board of Recreation therefore projects an annual open-space goal of 865 acres, including acquisitions for the canal. Based on an average fee-simple purchase cost of \$4,000 per acre and assuming purchases are made through Green Acres cost-share grants (25% grant, 75% loan), the Board of Recreation estimates its goals will require funding to pay debt service on 2% loans over 20 years. The projection assumes an annual inflation rate of 3% per year. Total funding needs for direct county purchases are \$9.4 million over 10 years.

The Warren County Municipal and Charitable Conservancy Trust Fund Committee anticipates that it will need to double its grants to fund the number of worthwhile projects it expects to see over the coming years. The increased number of municipalities passing dedicated open-space taxes will add to the need for county funding to help subsidize municipal projects. To date the committee has awarded 7 grants over 2 years at an average cost to the county of \$871 per acre. This has resulted in over \$1,000,000 in funding being used in Warren County for open space through cost sharing by applicants. The Committee projects a goal of 6,600 acres over 10 years at a total cost of \$6.6 million, assuming an inflation rate of 3% per year.

The following table depicts the projected program costs for acquisition over the next 10-year period. It should be noted that debt service on the open space program would actually continue for another 20 years, making the program need over a 30-year period approximately \$36.6 million.

**Projected Funding Needs for Open Space
And Farmland Preservation in Warren County
Year 2000 to Year 2010**

Year	Projected Farmland Funding Needs ¹	Projected Board of Recreation Funding Needs ²		Projected Trust Fund Committee Funding Needs ³	Projected Preservation Total Funding Needs ⁴
		Acquisition Cost	Debt Service on 75% of Cost		
1	\$5,905,000	\$3,464,000	\$155,880	\$580,000	\$6,640,880
2	2,066,750	3,567,920	316,500	597,400	\$2,980,650
3	2,128,752	3,674,958	482,000	615,322	\$3,226,074
4	2,192,615	3,785,206	652,466	633,782	\$3,478,863
5	2,258,393	3,898,762	828,045	652,795	\$3,739,233
6	2,326,145	4,015,725	1,008,891	672,379	\$4,007,415
7	2,395,029	4,136,197	1,195,163	692,550	\$4,282,742
8	2,467,807	4,260,283	1,387,022	713,327	\$4,568,156
9	2,541,841	4,388,091	1,584,638	734,727	\$4,861,206
10	2,618,097	4,519,734	1,782,253	756,768	\$5,157,118
	\$26,900,429	\$39,710,876	\$9,392,858	\$6,649,050	\$42,942,337

1. Based on acquisition of 1,500 acres per year, initial easement cost of \$3,750 per acre, 3% inflation rate, 65% state cost share.
2. Based on the projection of 865 acres per year of initial acquisition cost of \$4,000 per acre, 3% inflation rate, full use of Green Acres Planning Incentive Grant program of 25% Grant 75% loan payable at 2% over 20 years.
3. Based on a two year analysis of projects submitted and funded. Assumes a continuation of the county match of \$871 per acre and a doubling of funding to meet the funding needs of most projects. At the end year 10, 6,600 acres may be preserved for open space and farmland.
4. Sum of Farmland Preservation Funding, debt service for Open Space, and Trust Fund Committee needs.

11. *Task Force Recommendations on Future Funding and Program Features*

After consideration of available funding options, anticipated changes to state and municipal programs, open space and farmland preservation goals in Warren County, current and planned programs in other counties in New Jersey, and deliberation among task force members, the Warren County Open Space and Farmland Preservation Task Force recommends the County Board of Freeholders consider the following methods and policies to achieve an effective open space and farmland preservation program over the next 10 years:

- *A referendum should be placed on the ballot in 1999 to increase the current county dedicated tax for the Open Space and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund by an additional 2 cents per \$100 of assessed value. This will raise an additional \$1.2 million, to bring funding to \$2.4 million annually.*
- *The Freeholder Board should leverage the dedicated tax through borrowing to meet project program needs. Part of the dedicated tax should be used to fund projects annually and part used to subsidize debt service.*
- *The Freeholder Board should consider appropriating funding from the general purpose tax for farmland preservation. As noted previously, the trust fund does not generate enough money to fully fund the program.*
- *The current formula for allocating the Open Space and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund should be modified to offset an imbalance that places the farmland preservation program at a disadvantage. Anticipated significant expenditures in the county by the Green Acres State Land Acquisition Program will accentuate this imbalance. The discretionary category should be allocated between farmland preservation and maintenance. This step will help offset the imbalance in the current formula. The need for this reallocation would be reviewed on an annual basis by the task force, subject to Freeholder Board approval.*
- *Up to 10% of the annual revenue (50% of the discretionary allocation) could be allocated to maintenance. Eligible maintenance expenses would include staffing, supplies, and operations. The allocation should be determined annually during the county budgeting process.*
- *The two boards using the county dedicated tax should be able to draw on the 5 percent of the fund allocated to administrative costs to offset program administration, on an equitable basis, to the extent these funds are available. Administration would include expenses for acquisition costs, including staffing, surveys, appraisals, phase I environmental assessments, etc. It will maximize funding for direct land acquisition by the boards, because administrative costs would not come directly from funds allocated to the boards for acquisition.*

- *The CADB needs to be able to purchase development rights in advance, and then submit them to the SADC to have an effective, pro-active farmland preservation program. Advance purchase of farmland conservation easements will permit the county to focus on acquiring the best farmland in the shortest period of time, allowing the county to better compete with land speculators. Advanced purchase will accelerate the closing process, increasing landowner enthusiasm and confidence in the program.*
- *Warren County should be able to pre-acquire open space in fee simple and easements for resale to the state or local government and non-profits. Adequate funding will allow pre-acquisition of priority open space as it becomes available. Resale to state or local government may require the county absorb some of the cost of the acquisition, but will recycle funds for future acquisition. Pre-acquisition will increase the overall flexibility and effectiveness of the program and may allow the county and municipalities to acquire lands that might otherwise be lost to development.*
- *The CADB's budget should not be assessed for maintenance costs, since farmland preservation does not require any maintenance at a cost to the county.*
- *Installment payments for open space and farmland should be an option. Flexibility in structuring payments will broaden the base of landowner interest in the program.*
- *Municipal participation in county acquisition of farmland easements and open space should be encouraged, but not required at this time. The task force will continue to evaluate the extent to which municipalities should participate in county-funded projects. Municipalities should be prepared in the future to participate, based on their ability.*
- *Farmland Preservation Incentive Planning Grants (if approved) and the Green Acres Planning Incentive grants should be pursued to further leverage county funding.*
- *Other measures other than acquisition to preserve open space need to be taken by municipal, county, and state governments. Creative planning and zoning techniques can be used. The County Planning Board should be more proactive in relaying innovative techniques to municipal officials.*

VI. Organizational Recommendations

A. Staffing Plan for Open Space Acquisition and Maintenance

On October 15, 1997, the County Planning Director presented the Freeholder Board with an Alternatives Report that discussed several alternatives relating to the designation of a county department responsible for maintaining and managing open space and Morris Canal properties after they are acquired. The Report briefly discussed short, medium, and long term strategies for open space management. The report also stated that if the Planning Department became the designated agency, it would need an additional planner because one of the Senior Planners would have to be assigned entirely to land acquisition and management. When the Board of Chosen Freeholders designated the Planning Department as the management agency no additional staff was granted. However, all of a Senior Planner's time is devoted to land acquisition and management leaving the department shorthanded for normal planning duties.

Land acquisition and management is taking place under the advice of the Board of Recreation Commissioners and the Morris Canal Committee. Although the Board of Freeholders adopted a conduct ordinance applicable to all open space properties last month, proper and adequate management is becoming more of concern because over the past year additional properties have been acquired. An additional 500 acres are or will be under contract this year. The limiting factor in future open space acquisition is staff. One staff person can no longer carry out acquisition and management effectively. To be able to take full advantage of the state acquisition money, staff needs to be hired to effectively administer and manage the program. *Without the staff, additional money will not make a difference.*

The following is a table that categorizes some of the management and maintenance activities that need to be done on existing County Open Space Properties.

Management/Maintenance Activities Needed on Existing Properties

	Trail Development & Posting	Boundary Posting	Parking Lot	Structural Maintenance & Repair	Reconstruction	Resource Inventory	Grass Cutting	Routine Monitoring (Patrol)	Volunteer Program for Clean-up etc.
White Lake	X	X		X		X		X	X
Oxford Mountain	X	X	X			X		X	X
Morris Canal Jim Lee	X	X		X		X	X	X	X
Morris Canal Greenwich/Lopatcong	X	X	X		X		X	X	X
Other Morris Canal		X						X	X

To adequately oversee the maintenance and management of existing and future properties, the Task Force recommends that, in the short term, additional staff be hired, initially, within the Planning Department to carry out the open space program. Land acquisition and maintenance would be conducted under the purview of the Board of Recreation Commissioners. In the longer term, it will be necessary to create a Parks Department when the land acreage, and management needs warrant independent departmental staffing. The burden on the Planning Department to coordinate acquisition and maintenance efforts under current staffing has become increasingly burdensome and will worsen.

In order to carry out this alternative effectively, five additional persons should be hired over a three year period. The positions to be created include a Division Head or manager, staff person, clerical, and two rangers/maintenance. The Division will work with the Board of Recreation Commissioners and Planning in land acquisition, and plan development. It is anticipated that the working relationship with Roads and Buildings and Grounds will continue. However, it is recognized that many of the maintenance jobs will be contracted out to private companies.

In year 1, the recommended staffing would be to hire the division head, clerical, and one maintenance worker/ranger. Years 2 and 3 assume a 3% increase in staff salaries and phases in staff over the 3 year period.

	<u>Year 1</u>	<u>Year 2</u>	<u>Year 3</u>
1 Division Head/Manager	\$50,000	\$51,500	\$53,045
1 Staff Person to handle Planning/acquisition		\$30,000	\$30,900
1 Clerical	\$20,000	\$20,600	\$21,218
2 Maintenance/Rangers	\$30,000	\$30,900	\$61,827
5 employees in Division, Salary, 3% annual increase	\$100,000	\$133,000	\$166,990
Fringe 32.2%	\$32,000	\$42,829	\$53,771
Total Salary and Wages	\$132,000	\$175,829	\$220,761

The above assumes that new staff people will be hired. Short-term efficiencies may be realized if staff located in an existing department. If the Planning Department is to house these individuals, space needs to be found within the department for two office people and the ranger. By year 3, space for two additional persons would need to be found.

Other existing county buildings could be considered for the department including the Hamlen Property or Jim Lee's house. Both will require significant renovation and improvements to the structure, septic system, and bridges and roadways to the buildings.

B. Operating Expenses

Considering that the initial goal of the Warren County Open Space Plan is to land bank as much open space as possible and not develop it into active recreation activities, operation and maintenance expenses should not be significant.

To give a general overview of the type of operation and maintenance expenses that could be realized the Hunterdon County's Park System figures can be used as a guide. Hunterdon County averaged \$31 per acre for the 4,100 acres it owned in 1998. Assume the average can be applied to Warren County, the amount that would be budgeted for the 625 acres of county open space lands is \$19,375. Hunterdon County information can be provided upon request.

In 1999, \$31,000 was budgeted for maintenance based on an actual projection for what may be needed on the properties.

C. Capital Expenses

For capital purchase expenditures Hunterdon County budgeted an average of \$113,374 per year from 1998 through 2002 for equipment. Items need to be purchased including office furniture, vehicles, computer equipment, and communications equipment, etc. Using the Hunterdon County capital purchase plan as a guide, Warren County could spend nearly \$40,000 for capital expenditures during the first years of its existence.

The six-year capital budget for park development in Hunterdon County was reviewed. It is anticipated that funding for any type of park development in Warren County would be obtained from grant sources.

In 1998, \$24,000 was budgeted in capital account for constructing parking lots and maintenance of structures at White Lake and Oxford Mountain properties.

D. Summary of Expenses for Open Space Program

Proposed Open Space Budget for year 2000 - 2002:

	<u>2000</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>2002</u>
Staff, 5 persons Salaries and fringe	\$132,000	\$175,829	\$220,761
Operating Expenses @31 per acre -- 625 acres	\$19,375	\$46,190	\$65,565
Capital Purchase	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000
Park Development	<u>Grants</u>	<u>Grants</u>	<u>Grants</u>
GRAND TOTAL	\$191,375	\$262,019	\$326,326

Partial funding for the above can be obtained by using the 10% maintenance set aside of the Trust Fund. As approved by the voters, the allocation for maintenance is to be determined annually, but not exceed 10% of the annual revenue collected. If \$1.2 million is collected annually, no more than \$120,000 may be used for maintenance expenses. Leaving \$71,500 that to be funded for the year 2000. This equates to a .12 cent on the county tax rate. By 2002 the impact on the county generated tax rate could be .36 cent.

E. Staffing Plan for Farmland Preservation

The CADB has estimated that it will require at least one additional full time person to assist with the program in the event that an aggressive acquisition program is adopted. This program would

put the CADB staff out in front of the State program looking at potential parcels, reviewing applications and actually negotiating for farmlands that come into the market that are key to the program. This process would allow the county to acquire easements and submit them for reimbursement rather than apply for the cost share which is our present method of purchasing easements.

1 new Full Time person	\$40,000
Fringe 32.2%	\$12,880
Total Salary and Fringe	\$52,880
 Part Time Clerical	 \$10,000
 TOTAL ADDITIONAL FARMLAND STAFF	 \$62,880

Total Farmland Preservation Staff:

Administration	half time
Staff	full time
Clerical	20 hours per week
Secretary	<u>10 hours per week</u>
TOTAL STAFF	2.35 persons

F. Staffing Plan for Municipal and Charitable Conservancy Trust Fund Committee

Currently staffed by Senior Planner whose other principal duties include development review, municipal zoning and master plan review, watershed planning, and state plan.

MCCTFC responsibilities include Committee meeting logistics and administration, application review and distribution to potential applicants, review and evaluation of applications with committee, writing report for Freeholder review, grant agreement preparation and management.

So far 7 projects have been awarded grants from the committee for a total of \$1,136,415, preserving 1,305 acres. Two of the grant awards have closed. One more is expected to close in 1999. Staff administration of the grant awards is governed more by the number of applications funded rather than the dollar amount per applicant. Of course, if more money is available, the potential for more applications being funded increases as well.

As was discussed in other sections additional money is available from municipal trust funds where 11 of the 22 municipalities have or will be collecting an open space and farmland preservation tax. Based on 1998 ratables, \$531,000 will be generated locally and can be used to leverage against county trust fund moneys. One can expect an increase municipal interest in this Committee's program.

Morris County has a similar committee and awards funding to about 15 applications per year. The committee has \$4.5 million for distribution. One full time person is devoted to overseeing the program. Another quarter person devotes time to the program as well.

Under the current funding level of \$290,000 per year, maybe two to three applications may be funded annually.

If funding is doubled it is possible that six applications could be funded and a staff person would have to devote 50% of his/her time to adequately manage the program.

If the goal is to fund all projects that are submitted to the committee, it is estimated that \$573,112 should be available per year. The \$573,112 is based upon the actual requests made of the Committee in 1997 and 1998. Over ten years \$5,731,120 would be needed, and it could acquire 6,580 acres.

Additional Staff Recommended if funding is doubled:

.5	\$18,000
Fringe rate 32.2%	\$5,796
TOTAL MCCTFC	\$23,796

OTHER STAFF REQUIREMENTS

The county should have a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) expert to develop maps for all land acquisition programs and assist in program planning. The GIS person would work with the County Engineering Office, and the County Health Department that currently has UNIX based ARC/INFO system that is used for mapping wellheads and their protection areas. Planning should budget for its color plotter and computer workstation to fully maximize the new technology.

TOTAL ADDITIONAL STAFF AND OPERATIONS

	<u>2000</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>2002</u>
1 Management Level Position (Div. Head Parks)	\$50,000	\$51,500	\$53,045
2.5 Mid Level Positions (.5 MCCTFC, 1 BRC, 1 CADB)	\$40,000	\$71,200	\$91,336
2 Park Rangers/Maintenance Workers	\$30,000	\$30,900	\$61,827
1.5 Clerical	\$10,000	\$30,900	\$31,827
1 GIS	\$40,000	\$41,200	\$42,436
	<u>\$170,000</u>	<u>\$225,700</u>	<u>\$280,471</u>
8 additional persons needed less part time clerical	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
	<u>\$160,000</u>	<u>\$215,700</u>	<u>\$270,471</u>
32.2% fringe	\$51,250	\$69,455	\$87,092
GRAND TOTAL Salary and Fringe	<u>\$211,520</u>	<u>\$285,155</u>	<u>\$357,563</u>

OTHER EXPENSES

Workstation and Color Plotter (\$5,000 each)	\$10,000		
Furniture and Workstations for 8 persons at \$2,000 to \$5,000 per workstation	\$8,000	\$4,000	\$4,000
Operating/Maintenance	\$19,375	\$46,190	\$65,565
Capital Purchase	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000
GRAND TOTAL	<u>\$288,895</u>	<u>\$375,345</u>	<u>\$467,128</u>

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGES TO "TRUST FUND RULES AND PROCEDURES"

It is the recommendation that maintenance as approved by voters become an eligible expense under the "discretionary" category of the trust fund. Assuming that \$1.2 million is collected annually, no more than \$120,000 can be budgeted for maintenance purposes.

It is recommended that the 5% administration category be used by all boards for acquisition costs.

It is the recommendation that the balance of the discretionary fund be allocated to farmland preservation this year. Application of discretionary funds should be reviewed by the task force each year, subject to the approval of the Board of Freeholders.

Adding Historic Preservation as an eligible purpose should be reviewed carefully, inasmuch as the focus is to acquire land, as opposed to the development or preservation of buildings.

June 18, 1999

EXHIBIT A

THE BOARD OF CHOSEN FREEHOLDERS
OF THE COUNTY OF WARREN
WAYNE DUMONT JR. ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
BELVIDERE, NEW JERSEY 07823

RESOLUTION

On a motion by Mrs. Stone, seconded by Mr. Lance, the following resolution was adopted by the Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Warren at a meeting held February 10, 1999

**RESOLUTION CREATING AND APPOINTING MEMBERS TO THE
OPEN SPACE TRUST FUND TASK FORCE**

WHEREAS, ways need to be explored to improve communication between the various stakeholders in the trust fund and to coordinate the use of trust fund monies in the acquisition of properties; and,

WHEREAS, approximately, \$98 million per year will become available from the State of New Jersey to acquire open space and farmland statewide; and,

WHEREAS, it is a concern that Warren County is not prepared financially or organizationally to leverage the County's trust fund monies with the State money to take full advantage of the money that will be available; and,

WHEREAS, a plan of action needs to be developed as quickly as possible so that Warren County can be at a competitive advantage to obtain the funding and to coordinate land acquisition projects; and

WHEREAS, the County Chief Finance Officer or his designee will be available to provide technical assistance regarding financial matters, and the Farmland Preservation Coordinator and the Planning Department will provide other assistance as needed;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Warren County Board of Chosen Freeholders creates a Trust Fund Task Force for the following purposes:

1. To develop a greater level of cooperation among all the agencies using the trust fund.
2. To identify, review and recommend to the Board of Chosen Freeholders various funding mechanisms that should be in place to take advantage of the State funding.
3. To identify and seek other funding sources, such as grants, matches, etc., from other public, private, and non-profit organizations.

RESOLUTION: Open Space Trust Fund Task Force

Page 2

4. Review and recommend changes to the "Trust Fund Rules and Procedures" to include maintenance as an eligible funding category and to revisit eligible purposes for funding.
5. The task force shall deliver a report to the Board of Chosen Freeholders detailing its findings and recommendations to address the above purposes within 90 days of its creation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Task Force shall consist of two members of each board that have access to the trust fund monies and are appointed upon the recommendation of those boards as follows:

County Agriculture Development Board

Robert Canace

Duane Copley

County Board of Recreation Commissioners

William Hann

Jane Bullis

Municipal and Charitable Conservancy Trust Fund Committee

Gary Pohorely

David Detrick

I hereby certify the above to be a true copy of a resolution adopted by the Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Warren on the date above mentioned.

Naomi J. Stout

Clerk

EXHIBIT B

FARM	TOWNSHIP	ACRES	TOTAL COST	COUNTY COST	PURCHASED
GIBBS FARM #1	ALLAMUCHY	294	\$1,101,340.00	\$220,768.00	1989
GIBBS FARM #2	ALLAMUCHY	304	\$1,350,653.00	\$279,684.00	1989
JAMES GIBBS	ALLAMUCHY	432	\$1,433,494.00	\$131,622.00	1993
ELLIOT FOX	FRANKLIN	98	\$353,412.00	\$123,694.00	1993
LINCOLN STEINHARDT	FRANKLIN	188	\$661,464.00	\$231,512.00	1991
ROBERT LEYBURN	FRANKLIN	58	\$315,522.00	\$126,209.00	1992
SCHNETZER FARMS	FRANKLIN/WASH	113	\$581,998.00	\$237,914.00	1992
GEORGE CUMMINS	INDEPENDENCE	104	\$482,130.00	\$151,820.00	1995
GENE MAKAREVICH	KNOWLTON	171	\$538,489.00	\$147,016.00	1995
MILLHEIM ESTATE	KNOWLTON	161	\$479,358.00	\$127,667.00	1995
ORRIE TERPSTRA	KNOWLTON	109	\$338,799.00	\$91,804.00	1995
TAYLOR JELIFFE	WASHINGTON	78	\$329,056.00	\$131,620.00	1993
SCHNETZER ESTATE	WASHINGTON	21	\$97,945.00	\$43,134.00	1994
MARIE SCHNETZER	WASHINGTON	126	\$465,500.00	\$145,508.00	1995
JOSEPH CAPUTO	WASHINGTON	147	\$1,671,686.00	\$668,674.00	1991
SEMANCHICK ESTATE	ALLAMUCHY	19	\$99,179.00	\$32,748.00	1997
HENRY TROUT	FRANKLIN	159	\$545,192.00	\$154,311.00	1997
JOHN OOSTDYK	FRANKLIN	138	\$525,601.00	\$154,914.00	1997
LEW RISKO	HARMONY	98	\$160,000.00	\$32,000.00	1997
GENSIS FARM	FRELINGHUYSEN	139	\$318,915.00	\$81,808.00	1998
CHAN MOORE	FRELINGHUYSEN	72	\$186,009.00	\$48,648.00	1998
MATHEW JOZWIK	KNOWLTON	167	\$400,545.00	\$109,474.00	1998
TRANQUILLITY FARM *	ALLAMUCHY	228	\$855,000.00	\$191,000.00	1999
TOM BENNETT	FRELINGHUYSEN	90	\$270,000.00	\$72,000.00	1999
HAROLD HEERES	HARMONY	148	\$481,000.00	\$128,860.00	1999
JOE AUGUSTA	FRANKLIN	113	\$361,600.00	\$101,067.00	1999
ERVIN WATTERS	MANSFIELD	180	\$553,500.00	\$0.00	1999
J.G. McSHANE	INDEPENDENCE	112	\$414,400.00	\$120,963.00	1999
JOHN CSISZLAK	POHATCONG/ALPHA	172	\$894,400.00	\$292,380.00	1999
JAMES DURHOLZ	KNOWLTON	64	\$211,200.00	\$75,485.00	1999
FREY LIVING TRUST *	POHATCONG	97	\$485,000.00	\$155,200.00	1999
GLORIA TEEL	BLAIRSTOWN	122	\$366,000.00	\$97,612.00	1999
VEGH BROS	HARMONY	133	\$361,600.00	\$99,440.00	1999
JOSEPH YOUNG	FRELINGHUYSEN	62	\$217,000.00	\$61,997.00	1999
PETER YENTEMA *	MANSFIELD	104	\$343,200.00	\$95,341.00	1999
TOTAL		4821	\$18,250,187.00	\$4,963,894.00	

* THESE FARMS HAVE BEEN APPROVED FOR PURCHASE AND ARE BEING PROCESSED TO CLOSE THIS YEAR

LIST OF MORRIS CANAL PROPERTIES

June 11, 1999

				<u>Year</u>
1)	Gruver, Robert C. Marily	Franklin Township,	.5 acres	1990
2)	Castner, Nora A.	Franklin Township	2.7 acres	1994
3)	Lee, James S. & Mary B.	Greenwich & Lopatcong Township	3.9 acres	1994
4)	Spencer, Craig	Independence Township	1.8 acres	1994
5)	Chant, Stella & Wolf, Ruth	Greenwich & Lopatcong Township	9.3 acres	1996
6)	Earl E. Reed (Est. of W. Earl Reed)	Greenwich & Lopatcong Township	9.7 acres	1996
7)	Twinning, Clark & Bore, Debra	Mansfield Township	6.9 acres	1998
8)	Rossnagle, Patrick, Barry & Norman	Lopatcong Township	1.0 acres	1998
9)	Hamlen, Harry A. & Patricia	Greenwich Township	10.4 acres	1997
10)	Santini, Robert A. & Sharon	Greenwich & Lopatcong Township	3.3 acres	1998
11)	Hackettstown/Independence Prop.	Independence Township	5.1 acres	1998
12)	Copa Painting	Mansfield Township	2.4 acres	1999
Total Morris Canal Properties			57.0 acres	

LIST OF OPEN SPACE PROPERTIES

June 11, 1999

1)	West Oxford Mountain Natural Resource Area	Oxford Township	170.0 acres	1997
2)	White Lake Natural Resource Area	Hardwick Township	386.0 acres	1997
3)	Hamlen Lopatcong Creek Area	Greenwich Township	11.7 acres	1997
Total Open Space Properties			567.7 acres	1997
TOTAL MORRIS CANAL AND OPEN SPACE PROPERTIES			624.7 acres	

Warren County Municipal and Charitable Conservancy Trust Fund Committee

Application Sites

Year	Municipality	Applicant: C-Charitable M-Municipality	Name of Project	Funding Requested	Total Project Cost	Total Project Acreage	Type of Acquisition *	Type Of Project **
1997	Washington Twp.	M	American Water Co.	\$200,000.00	\$1,281,000.00	408	1	a
1997	Mansfield	M	Baldwin Tract	\$450,000.00	\$630,000.00	139.6	2	c
1998	Allamuchy	C	Tranquility Farms	\$125,000.00	\$450,000.00	220.00	1	a, c
1998	Frelinghuysen-Allamuchy	C	Bear Creek	\$14,500.00	\$215,600.00	154.00	1	a
1998	Hackettstown	M	Riverfront Park	\$203,925.00	\$260,500.00	48.40	1	a,b,d
1998	Hardwick	C	Limestone Forest	\$90,000.00	\$725,000.00	278.00	2	a
1998	Pohatcong	C	Hoffman Property	\$52,990.83	\$212,770.00	56.34	1	a
Totals						1304.34		

* 1 - Acquisition In Fee Simple
2 - Acquisition Of Less Than Fee Simple

** a - Primarily Passive Recreation
b - Primarily Active Recreation
c - Farmland Preservation
d - Multi-Use

1997 projects are purchased and closed upon.
1998 projects received Freeholder approval.

EXHIBIT C

OPEN SPACE & FARMLAND PRESERVATION ROUTING FORM

Information taken by: _____

Telephone/in person/written: _____

OWNER INFORMATION

Property Owner's Name _____ Phone # _____
(First, Middle, Last)

Property Owner's Street Address _____

City, State, Zip Code _____

Municipality _____

Tax Block # _____ Tax Lot # _____ Tax Assessment \$ _____ Total Acreage _____

Nearest Street or Road _____

Are there any buildings located on the property? _____ Yes _____ No

If yes, how many and what type? _____

Are there any easements or deed restrictions affecting the use of this property?
_____ Yes _____ No

If yes, please describe _____

Have you or are you in the process of pursuing any subdivision or site plan approvals on the premises?
_____ Yes _____ No

Date of Preliminary Approvals _____ Please provide documentation of approvals.

Is the property currently listed for sale with a realtor? _____ Yes _____ No

If yes, please provide the name and address of realtor _____

List any outstanding leases or rental agreements in effect _____

What is your asking price for this property? \$ _____

*NOTE: While the asking price is non binding it is a key element in the evaluation of this property however, it is not a commitment on the part of Warren County to pay this amount should this property be selected for acquisition.

Do you authorize a person to act as your representative in all matters pertaining to this application?
_____ Yes _____ No

APPLICATION REPRESENTATIVE INFORMATION

Name of Representative _____

Representative's Street Address _____

City, State, Zip Code _____

Acquisition Sensitivity: _____

Timing: _____

Response Requested By: _____

This form will be routed to the following organizations:
Warren County Board of Recreation Commissioners, Warren County Agriculture Development Board, Municipality, Non-profits (Ridge & Valley Conservancy, Phillipsburg Riverview Organization, Musconetcong Watershed Association, Pohatcong Watershed Association, and others), Green Acres, SADC?

OWNER AUTHORIZATION

Other Information: _____

I hereby certify that the information included in this application is true, that I am the legal owner of the property described above, that I have marketable title to the property and that I have the legal right to sell the property.

I hereby authorize the staff of the Warren County Open Space and/or Farmland Preservation Programs to conduct such site inspections on the property as are necessary to this application.

Signature of Owner _____ Date _____
(Applicant) if present

**THE BOARD OF CHOSEN FREEHOLDERS
OF THE COUNTY OF WARREN
WAYNE DUMONT JR. ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
BELVIDERE, NJ 07823**

RESOLUTION

On a motion by Mrs. Stone , seconded by Mr. Lance , the following resolution was adopted by the Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Warren at a meeting held July 14, 1999

**RESOLUTION APPROVING PORTIONS OF THE
OPEN SPACE TASK FORCE REPORT**

WHEREAS, it is a concern that Warren County is not prepared financially, nor organizationally, to leverage the County's trust fund monies with the \$98 million in State money that will become available; and

WHEREAS, on February 10, 1999, the Board of Chosen Freeholders created an Open Space Task Force, consisting of members of the three county agencies that utilize the Warren County Open Space Trust Fund, to provide recommendations to improve coordination and cooperation of agencies using the trust fund, to leverage and increase funding for land acquisition, to recommend staffing levels to adequately oversee the acquisition process, and to recommend changes to the "Trust Fund Procedures and Rules"; and

WHEREAS, the Open Space Task Force presented its report to the Board of Chosen Freeholders on June 16, 1999; and

WHEREAS, the report contains a number of recommendations that can be approved immediately using few county resources;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the following recommendations are approved by the Warren County Board of Chosen Freeholders:

A. Strategies to Improve Cooperation and Coordination

1. Use of one Land Acquisition Routing Form.
2. Share agenda packages and minutes of the County Agriculture Development Board, Board of Recreation Commissioners, County Planning Board and Municipal and Charitable Conservancy Trust Fund Committee.
3. Institute joint marketing of programs to landowners.

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B. Funding Recommendations

1. (\$.02) increase in the dedicated trust fund tax.
2. Information shall be presented to the Board of Chosen Freeholders to explain installment purchasing as an option for landowners.
3. Municipal participation in county acquisition of farmland and open space shall be encouraged.
4. Planning incentive grants for farmland and open space acquisition shall be pursued to further leverage county funding.

C. "Trust Fund Procedures and Rules" Recommendations

1. Maintenance shall be added as an eligible purpose for trust fund expenditures.
2. For FY 1999, the unreserved portion of the discretionary funds shall be allocated to farmland preservation.
3. Up to ten percent (10%) of the annual revenue collected may be used for maintenance subject to the annual budgeting process. Eligible maintenance expenses include staffing, supplies, and operations.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the other recommendations contained in the report will be addressed during the budgeting process.

I hereby certify the above to be a true copy of a resolution adopted by the Board of Chosen Freeholders of the County of Warren on the date above mentioned.

Naomi J. Stout

Clerk