

Green Acres Program

Martha Sullivan Sapp
Director

October 13, 2023



Community Investment and Economic Revitalization

Office of
Natural
Resource
Restoration



Green Acres
Program



Historic
Preservation
Office



Community
and Local
Government
Assistance

Green Acres Program Areas



State Land Acquisition

- Opportunities?

Local and Nonprofit Assistance Program

- \$\$\$\$

Planning and Technical Services

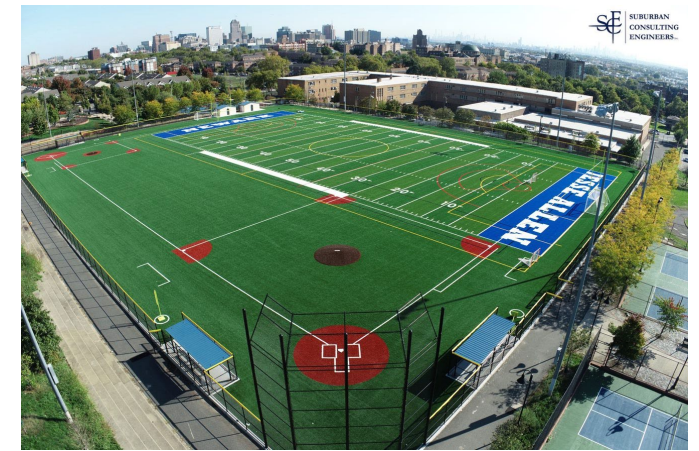
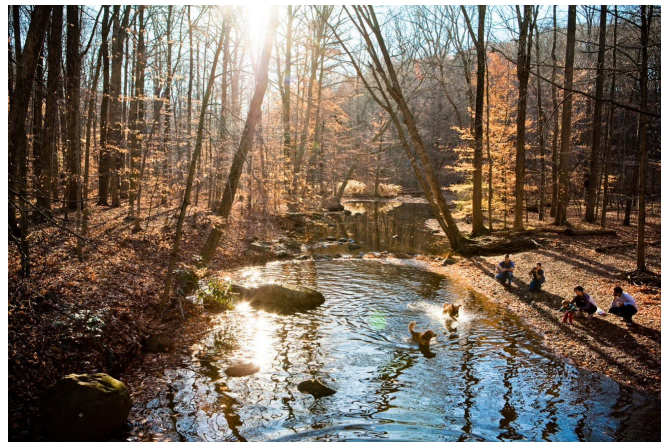
- Technical Assistance
-

Reorganization:

- Blue Acres
- Legal Services and Stewardship is now Public Land Compliance in OTPLA

"What can we buy?"

Eligible Acquisition Projects



"Recreation and conservation purposes" means the use of lands for beaches, biological or ecological study, boating, camping, fishing, forests, greenways, hunting, natural areas, parks, playgrounds, protecting historic properties, water reserves, watershed protection, wildlife preserves, active sports, or a similar use for either public outdoor recreation or conservation of natural resources, or both.



"What can we build?"

Eligible Development Projects



What is stewardship?

Eligible Stewardship Projects



Be innovative!





Be Brave !





Colonial Park,
Franklin Township



Bass River State Park,
Tuckerton



Cavallo Park, Lambertville



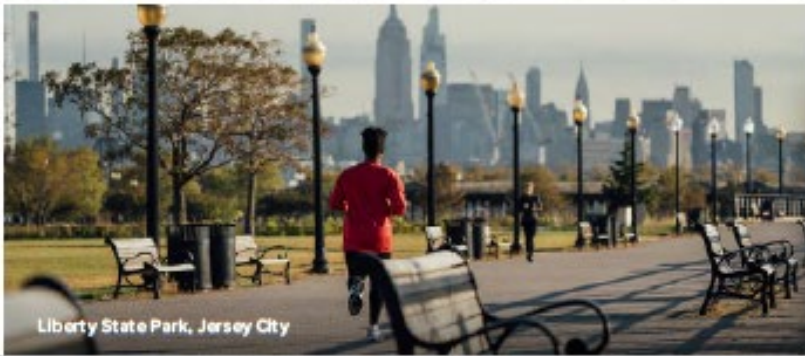
Wiggins Waterfront Park,
Camden



Atlantic City Beach



Long Pond Ironworks
State Park, Hewitt



Liberty State Park, Jersey City

Who are we?

Where are we?

How are we doing?

Outside, Together! Principles

1

Expanding high-quality open space and recreational opportunities for all New Jersey residents and visitors

DEP seeks to increase and ensure high-quality, safe, and easily accessible recreation and open space within a short walk, public transit ride, or drive from every neighborhood. New Jersey is a densely populated state that boasts numerous parks, outdoor recreation areas, and open spaces that give residents and visitors opportunities to decompress, celebrate special occasions, experience nature, and exercise. All New Jersey residents have the right to enjoy these outdoor resources, regardless of race, ethnicity, age, religion, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and expression, ability, economic status, and other diverse backgrounds. With relatively limited undeveloped land, New Jersey must be innovative in our natural resource and recreational planning. DEP believes it is important to collaborate with local governments, nonprofit organizations, and private partners to expand the acreage, quality of, and access to open space and recreation land. Investing in stewardship of our parks and open spaces is critical to improving the local environment and economy while providing health and quality of life benefits to residents.

2

Enhancing climate resilience and sustainability through acquisition and development of open and green space;

Climate change is an existential threat to our state. Maintaining New Jersey's existing natural lands and making targeted investments in open spaces are vital to the state's climate resilience. Through analysis of our assets and investments in infrastructure that provide ecosystem services, DEP can better promote the state's climate resilience. Proper stewardship of our parks, open spaces, forests, wetlands, and other natural lands increase the state's ability to adapt to and mitigate climate change impacts such as flooding, wildfires, heat waves, and droughts. Additionally, land preservation adds to the resilience of our natural systems and habitats which support a vast array of species. DEP believes the state should serve as a model for sustainable solutions by implementing initiatives that build upon State and DEP efforts to inform residents about how to protect the natural environment.

3

Empowering communities through investments in ecotourism and outdoor recreation

A robust outdoor recreation economy contributes to the strength of local communities and attracts broader economic investments. Individuals and businesses throughout New Jersey can be enriched by promoting outdoor recreation and conservation areas as ecotourism sites, attracting visitors and stimulating local economic activity. Encouraging healthier communities and individuals through increased connection with nature can help attract high-quality employers and a sustainable workforce, and enhance community identity. New Jersey seeks to identify and promote natural and recreational assets, support environmental community restoration actions, encourage the next generation of environmental workforce stewards, and identify funding that enhances and connects outdoor activities to local, regional, and broader economic sectors.

4

Embracing the role of technology in conservation and outdoor recreation

Technology is ever-evolving, and the public's reliance on technological tools is growing. Constant connectivity, social media, and high-tech equipment are changing how people engage in outdoor recreation and how they experience and understand nature. Technology can connect us through shared experiences in the outdoors or guide us to nature for much-needed solitude, but it can also isolate us, depending on how and when it is used. Exploring technology's evolving uses will require constructive dialogue on how to achieve balance: how to respect the public's outdoor experiences while enhancing them in culturally and educationally relevant ways. New Jersey strives to consider best practices for implementing and leveraging social networks, especially how technology can support broader engagement and deepen our collective appreciation for the natural environment while maintaining the privacy, safety, and cyber security of our residents.

5

Furthering equity and environmental justice through outdoor recreation

Everyone has the right to safe, close-to-home recreational opportunities regardless of race, ethnicity, age, religion, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and expression, ability, economic status, and other diverse backgrounds. As the most densely populated and fourth most diverse state in the nation, New Jersey must work harder to meet the needs of its myriad residents by providing sufficient, high-quality recreation and open space opportunities for all. This is especially important in lower-income communities and communities of color, where there is a disparity in the amount and quality of open space and recreational opportunities compared to affluent white communities. New Jersey has identified and taken action to overcome obstacles that limit public access to urban parkland and open space; this includes ensuring operation and maintenance of existing facilities, increasing Green Acres acquisition and park development grant funding to our cities, passing Environmental Justice legislation, and creating a special Urban Parks grant program to benefit residents in Overburdened Communities. DEP acknowledges that more needs to be done, in partnership with stakeholders, to further inclusion and the public's sense of connection to their parks and open spaces.

6

Continuing commitments to stewardship and the conservation and restoration of biodiversity

Open space conservation offers numerous opportunities to strengthen outdoor recreation as well as fish, wildlife, and plant communities. DEP is committed to properly maintaining, monitoring, and managing public open spaces and recognizes that outdoor recreation can be enhanced when natural habitats and native species are part of the experience. This is especially true in open spaces near urban centers where the public's interactions with nature might be otherwise limited. DEP also recognizes the need to manage areas where public access and land conservation may conflict due to excessive or inappropriate use. Therefore, DEP commits to the conservation and restoration of lands, a nature-based solution that can increase biodiversity through preserving habitat connectivity. When properly coupled, natural resource preservation and outdoor recreation can improve the health and well-being of people while providing fish, wildlife, and plant communities with a multitude of life-sustaining and environmental benefits.

Keeping Up With The Population

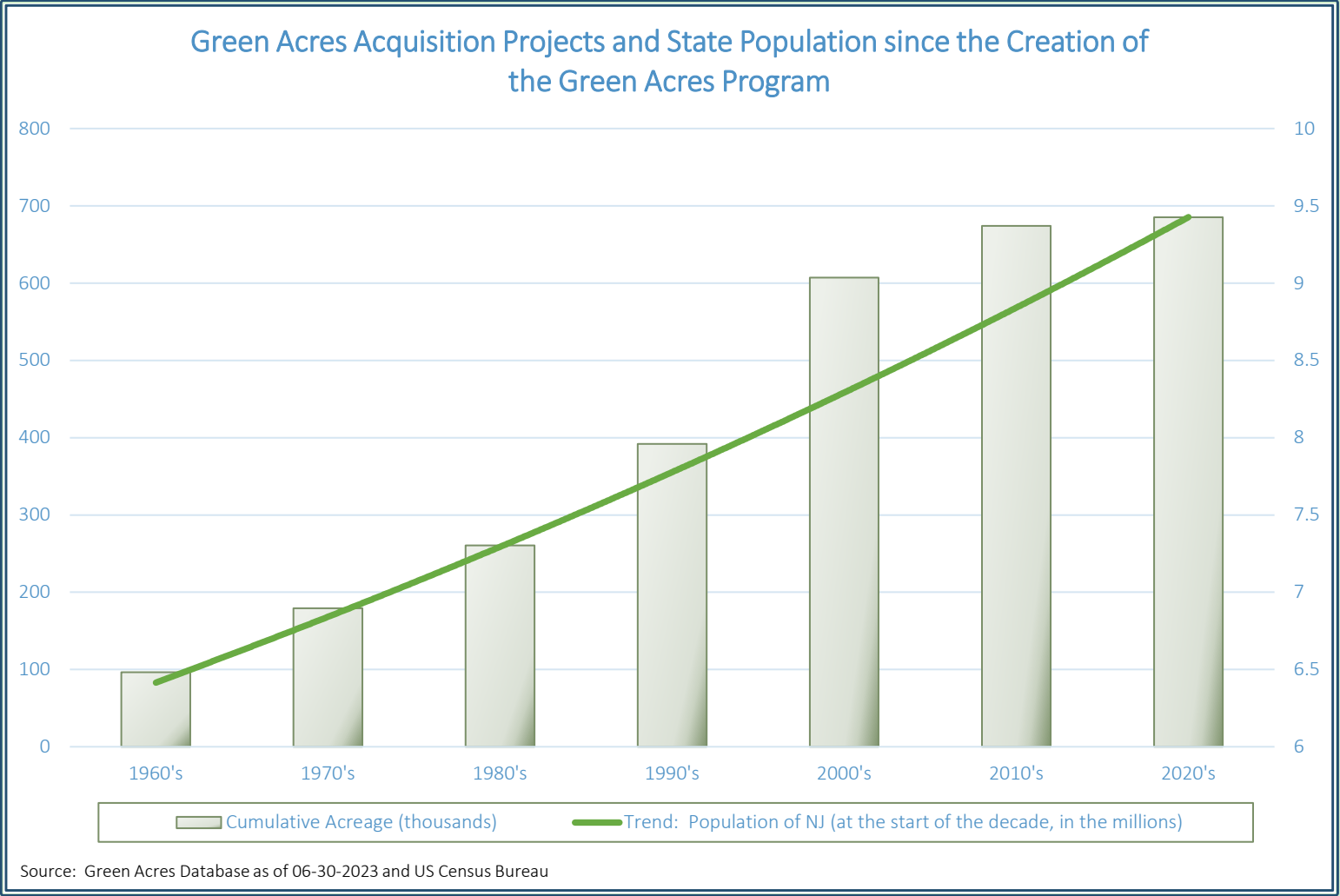


Table 5: Population 2018, 2022, 2034

COUNTY	2018	2022	PERCENT CHANGE	2034 PROJECTION*
Atlantic	275,753	273,176	-0.9%	282,900
Bergen	951,353	962,086	1.0%	1,065,500
Burlington	459,512	463,067	0.8%	472,700
Camden	522,513	522,982	0.1%	525,600
Cape May	93,384	94,621	1.3%	93,400
Cumberland	155,971	153,196	-1.8%	164,400
Essex	809,316	874,475	8.0%	840,100
Gloucester	299,200	303,198	1.3%	312,500
Hudson	693,538	744,105	6.8%	766,500
Hunterdon	128,365	128,728	0.3%	119,800
Mercer	375,350	390,124	3.9%	406,300
Middlesex	853,646	870,727	2.0%	965,000
Monmouth	638,701	643,265	0.7%	665,200
Morris	506,503	510,489	0.8%	548,000
Ocean	606,422	646,483	6.6%	665,700
Passaic	516,266	526,290	1.9%	542,500
Salem	64,864	64,254	-0.9%	59,800
Somerset	341,107	348,645	2.2%	378,700
Sussex	146,888	142,549	-3.0%	136,600
Union	565,061	581,509	2.9%	620,000
Warren	109,165	109,402	0.2%	102,100
Total	9,112,878	9,348,327	2.6%	9,733,400

Source: 2018 Esri Population Count, 2022 Esri Population Count, NJLWD Population Projection*

* The 2034 projection was completed in 2014 and does not take into account population loss from COVID-19.

Table 4: Green Acres Program Land Preservation 2018 - 2022 Acres Preserved

	STATE LAND	LOCAL GOVERNMENT	NONPROFIT	TOTAL
2018	6,582	1,406	887	8,876
2019	3,896	650	798	5,345
2020	3,296	603	617	4,515
2021	1,930	560	724	3,214
2022	1,456	615	376	2,447
Totals	17,159	3,834	3,403	24,396

Source: DEP Green Acres Database June 6, 2023

Table 6: Population Density

COUNTY	POPULATION	LAND (SQUARE MILES)	DENSITY (PERSONS/ SQUARE MILE)
Atlantic	273,176	611	447
Bergen	962,086	240	4,012
Burlington	463,067	820	565
Camden	522,982	228	2,298
Cape May	94,621	286	331
Cumberland	153,196	502	305
Essex	874,475	130	6,740
Gloucester	303,198	336	902
Hudson	744,105	52	14,439
Hunterdon	128,728	437	294
Mercer	390,124	229	1,705
Middlesex	870,727	317	2,747
Monmouth	643,265	486	1,324
Morris	510,489	481	1,060
Ocean	646,483	758	853
Passaic	526,290	198	2,654
Salem	64,254	347	185
Somerset	348,645	305	1,144
Sussex	142,549	535	266
Union	581,509	105	5,519
Warren	109,402	363	302
Total	9,348,327	7,765	1,204

Source: [DEP 2015 Land Use/Land Cover Updated \(Urban Land Use Classification\)](#)

Table 1: Preserved and Developed Acreages by County

COUNTY	TOTAL ACREAGE	PRESERVED ACRES*	DEVELOPED ACRES*
Atlantic	390,815	119,262	67,845
Bergen	153,477	20,758	111,713
Burlington	525,003	224,090	110,321
Camden	145,651	31,149	76,445
Cape May	183,127	78,451	34,395
Cumberland	321,150	106,133	45,164
Essex	83,035	12,045	64,082
Gloucester	215,167	19,720	76,590
Hudson	32,982	3,836	23,797
Hunterdon	279,885	44,148	70,627
Mercer	146,432	27,217	72,216
Middlesex	202,860	24,625	117,880
Monmouth	310,834	50,231	146,301
Morris	308,084	84,731	121,381
Ocean	485,078	175,902	112,981
Passaic	126,921	50,295	47,411
Salem	222,159	33,186	28,148
Somerset	195,127	31,896	90,020
Sussex	342,589	130,433	54,839
Union	67,439	7,341	55,772
Warren	232,061	51,377	41,001
TOTAL	4,969,875	1,326,826	1,568,929

* Preserved Acres includes State-owned open space/parkland and Green Acres funded and/or encumbered county, municipal, and nonprofit lands (fee and easement). It also includes federal open space and land preserved through the Highlands Development Credit and Pinelands Development Credit programs. It does not include preserved farmland.

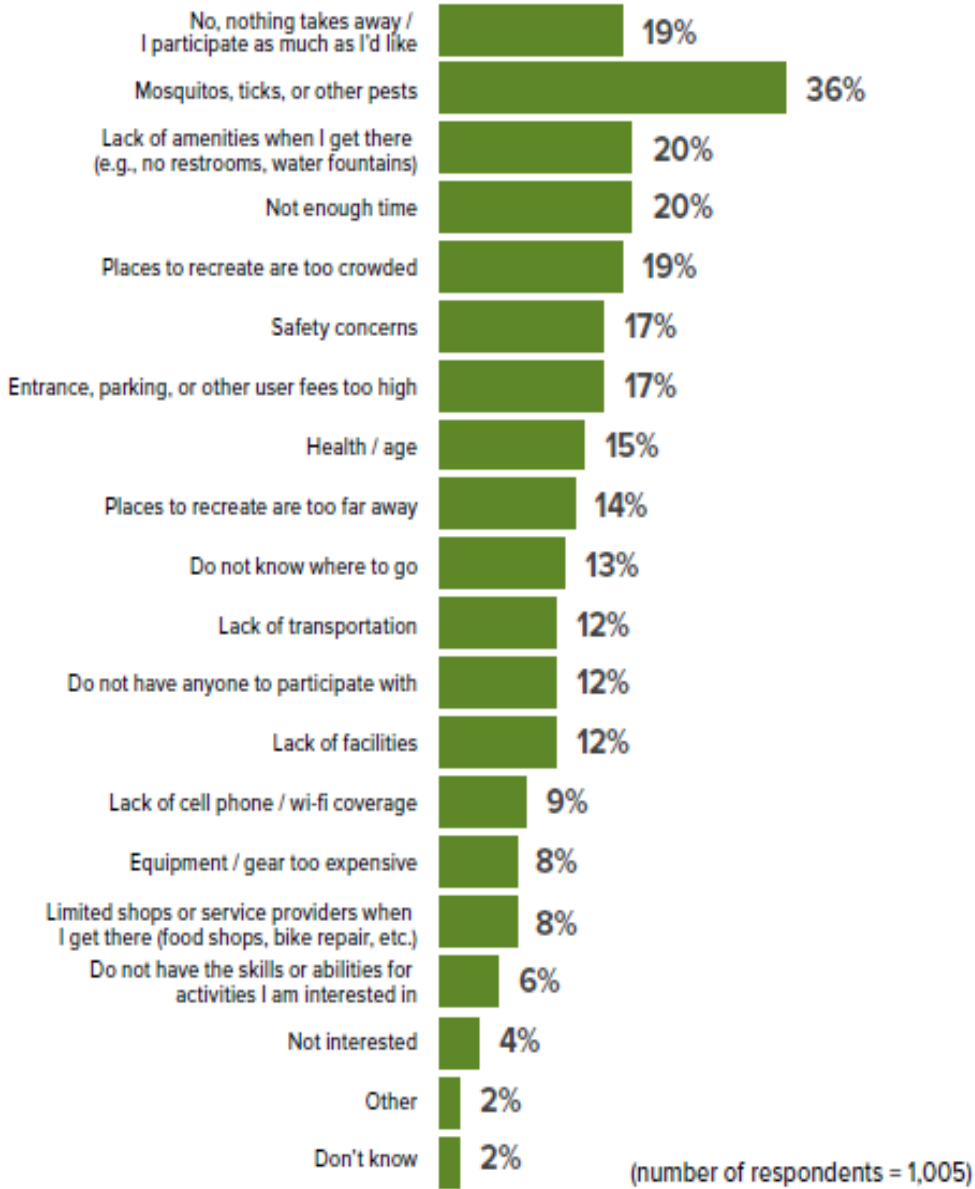
Sources for Preserved Acres: DEP Green Acres Program GIS Open Space Data December 31, 2022. Federal open space acres reported by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Park Service. HDC credit information provided by the Highlands Council. PDC credit information provided by the Pinelands Commission.

* Source for Developed Acres: DEP 2015 Land Use/Land Cover Updated (Urban Land Use Classification)

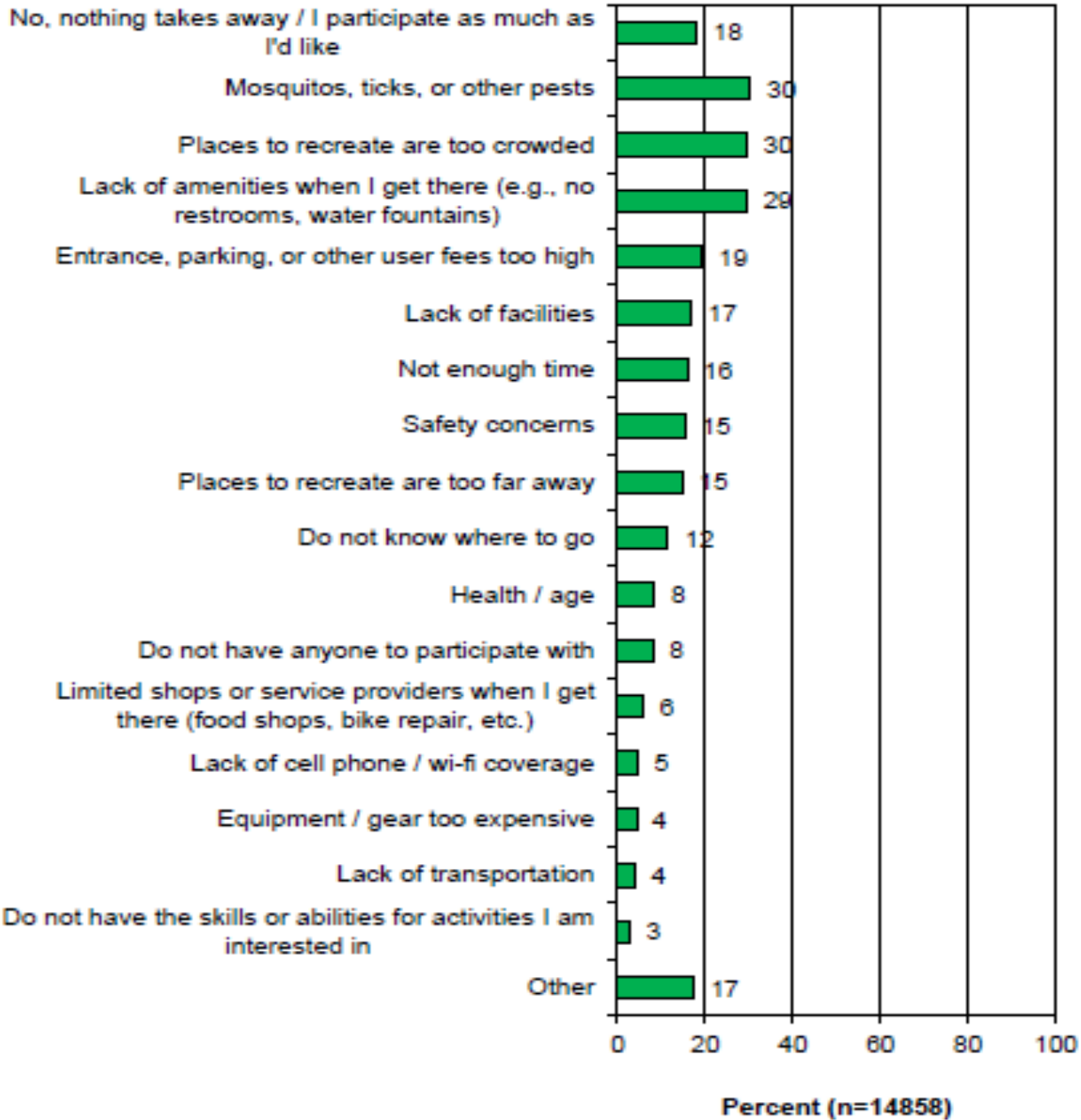
What Takes Away from Satisfaction with Outdoor Recreation?

In general, are there any things that take away from your satisfaction with outdoor recreation, or cause you not to participate in outdoor recreation as much as you would like, in New Jersey? (Residents)

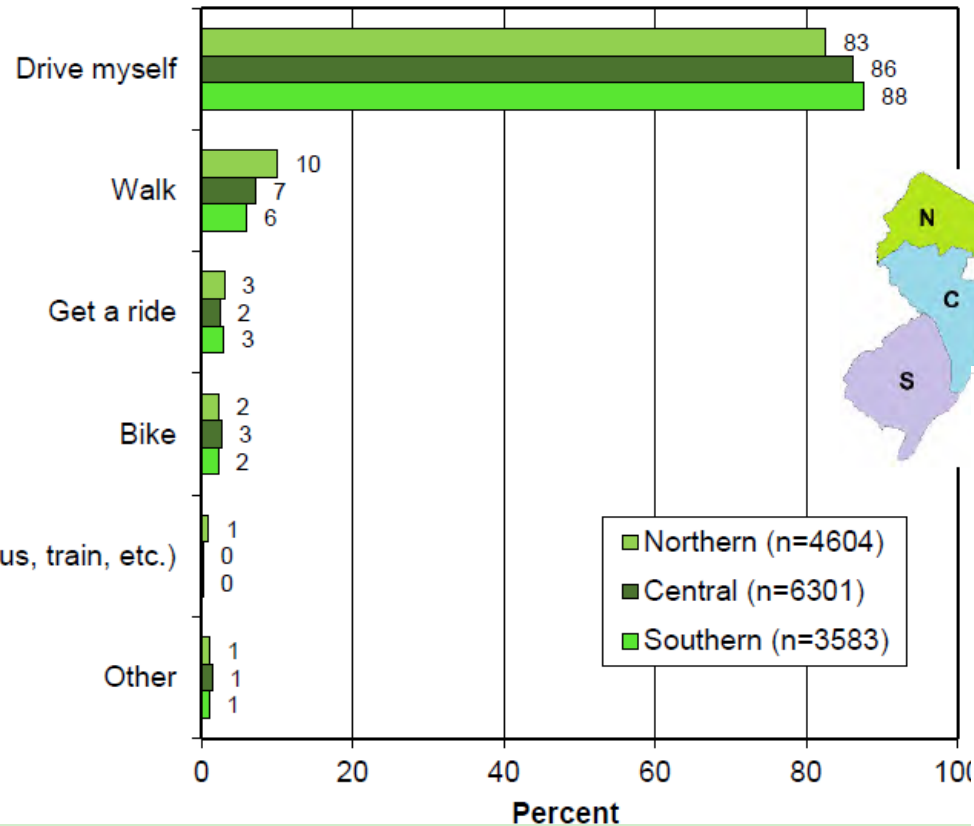
Multiple Responses Allowed



Stakeholders

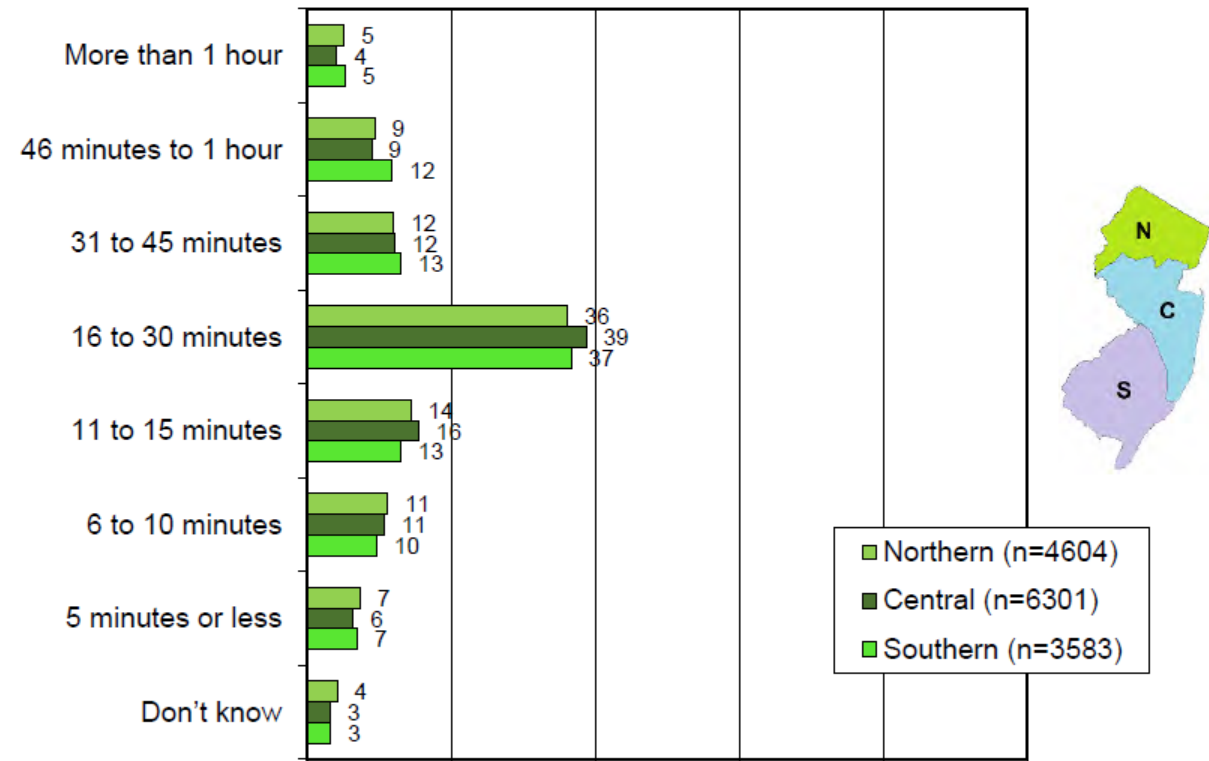


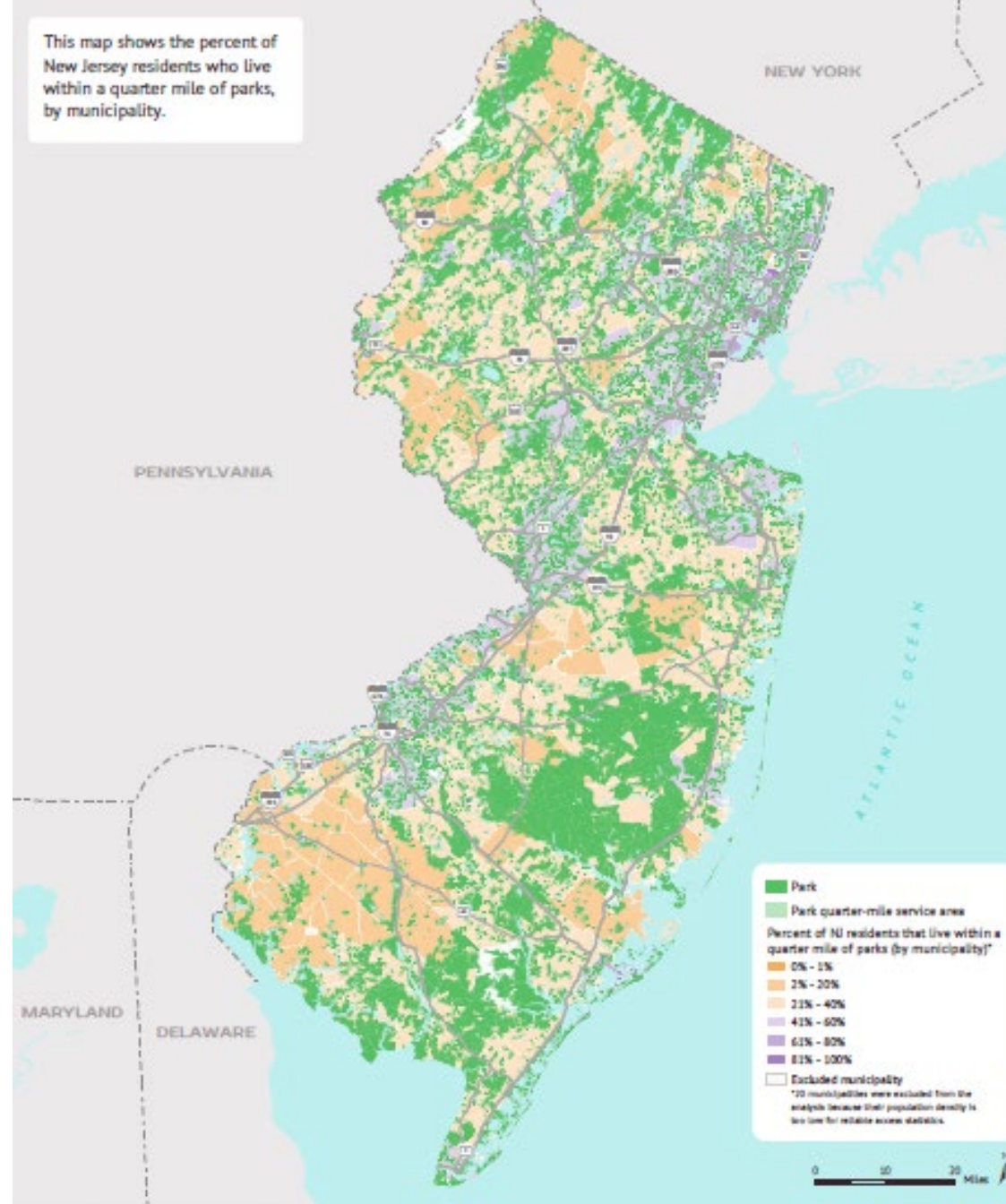
When you go to outdoor spaces, how do you typically get there? (Stakeholders)



Accessing the Outdoors

Thinking about how long it takes you in minutes, about how long do you typically travel to participate in outdoor recreation in New Jersey? (Stakeholders)





Park access: quarter-mile walk

WHAT DO NEW JERSEY RESIDENTS WANT?

Residents and stakeholders said they'd participate more in New Jersey outdoor recreation if they had:



Cultural events/
festivals/
celebrations



Programming
geared towards
populations of
color



Centralized
location for
detailed
information
on parks



More
communication
between the
State and
community
groups and Tribes



More reliable
and affordable
transportation
options



Reduced park
entry fees

OBSTACLES TO VISITING THE OUTDOORS



Lack of information



No reliable transportation



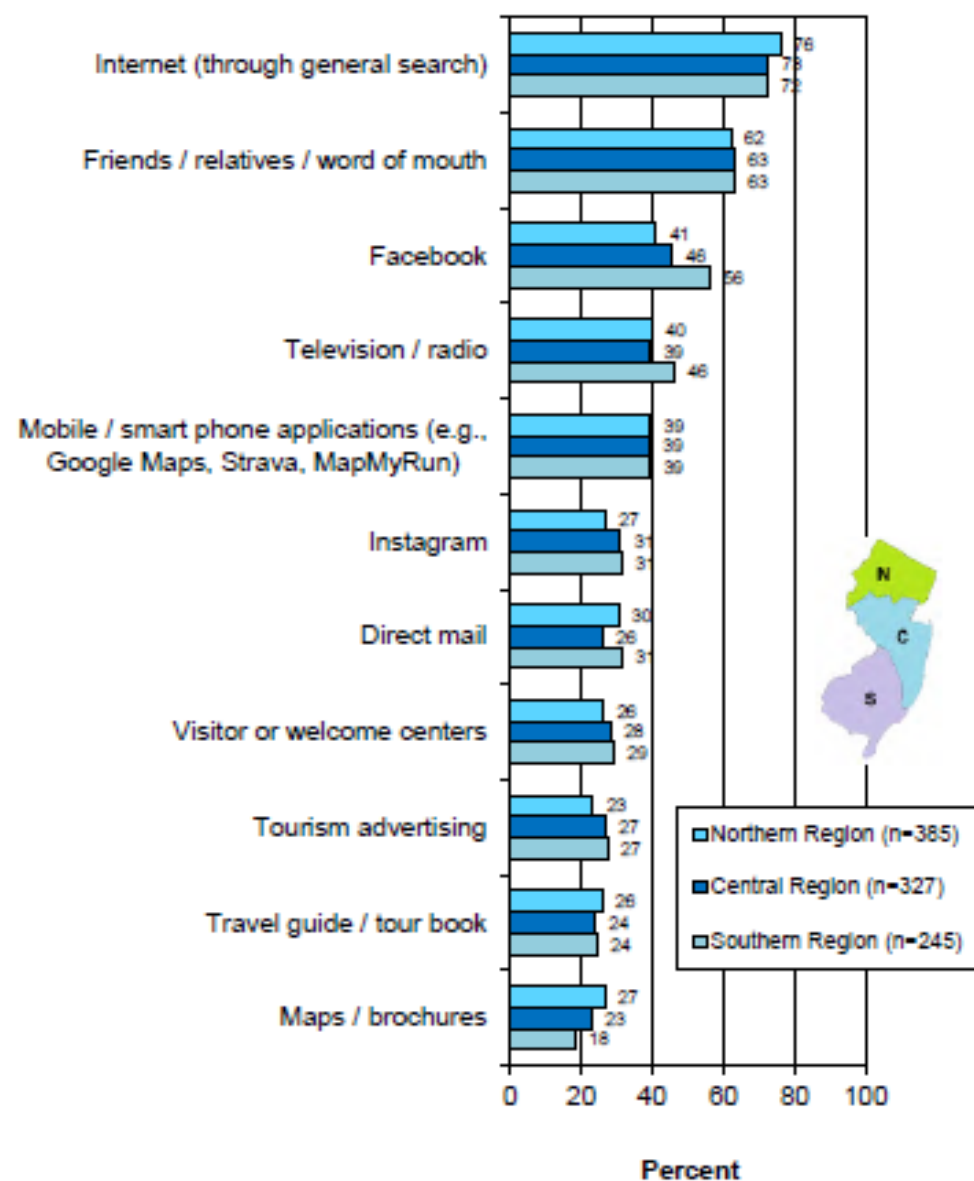
Expense



Changing needs

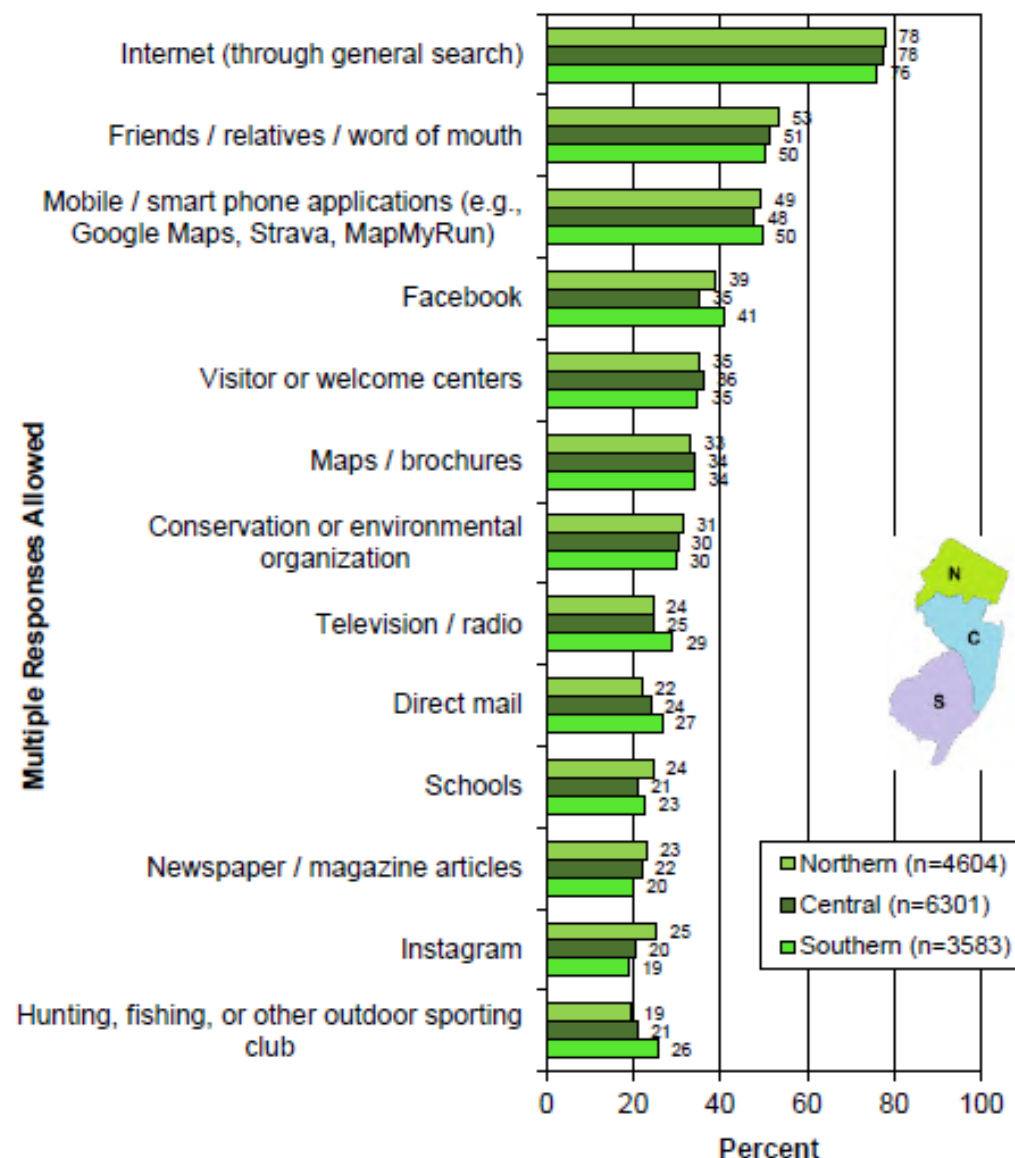
What is the best way to get you information on outdoor recreation in New Jersey? (Part 1) (Residents)

Multiple Responses Allowed



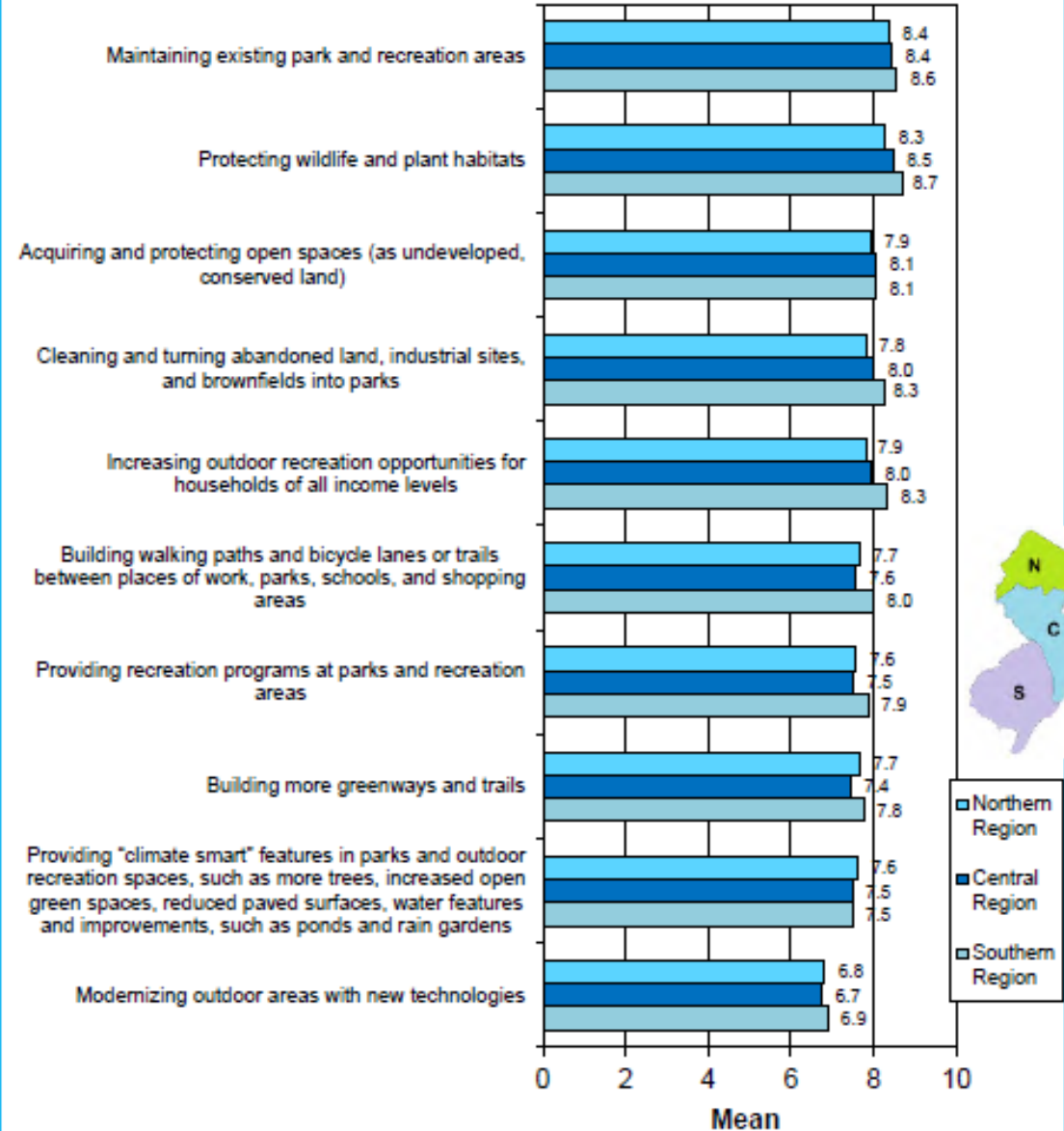
What is the best way to get you information on outdoor recreation in New Jersey? (Part 1) (Stakeholders)

Multiple Responses Allowed



People
care
about
Nature!

Outdoor recreation agencies and organizations in New Jersey spend their time and effort in many different areas. Please rate how important you think each of the following areas should be for outdoor recreation. (Residents)



Public Investment in Open Space and Parks in 2023



Local governments:	\$27.2 million
Nonprofits:	\$ 8.7 million
Urban Parks	\$ 7.6 million

State Acquisition:	<u>\$35.3 million</u>
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Total:	\$78.8 million
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Table 7: State Funding Sources

AGENCY	GRANT	DESCRIPTION
New Jersey Department of Human Services, Division of Disability Services	<u>Inclusive Healthy Communities Grant</u>	A funding opportunity provided to New Jersey communities and nonprofit organizations seeking to promote and implement community initiatives that support individuals with disabilities
New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (NJ DCA)	<u>Local Recreation Improvement Grant</u>	A competitive grant that supports improvement and repair of public recreation facilities including local parks, municipal recreation centers, and local stadiums. The grant exists to provide quality outdoor recreational space to underserved communities
NJ DCA, New Jersey Historic Trust	<u>Preserve New Jersey Historic Preservation Fund</u>	Fund was established by legislation in 2016 to provide an annual source of matching grants from the state's Corporate Business Tax for historic preservation projects
New Jersey Department of State, Division of Travel & Tourism	Cooperative Marketing Grant	A collaboration between the New Jersey travel industry and the Division of Travel and Tourism, whose goal is to promote New Jersey as a premier travel destination. Funding will be provided to promote and market specific tourism opportunities in New Jersey
New Jersey Department of Transportation	<u>Municipal Aid (NJ DOT)</u>	A competitive program intended to provide municipalities with transportation-based grants to supplement their transportation programs

Cha-Ching!

Funding Opportunities

AGENCY	GRANT	DESCRIPTION
New Jersey Department of Transportation	<u>Safe Streets to Transit</u>	In 2006, New Jersey announced a comprehensive Pedestrian Safety Initiative. One element of that initiative administered by NJDOT is the Safe Streets to Transit program. This program provides funding to counties and municipalities to improve access to transit facilities and all modes of public transportation
New Jersey Economic Development Association (NJEDA)	<u>Brownfields Loan Program</u>	Program offers a competitive loan with low-interest financing of up to \$5 million for comprehensive coverage of brownfield revitalization projects

Table 8: Federal Funding Opportunities

AGENCY	GRANT / PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION
National Park Service (NPS)	<u>Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership (ORLP)</u>	A competitive program funded through the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) that targets funding to economically disadvantaged urban communities with severely limited access to outdoor recreation. Funds available for New Jersey projects are administered by DEP's Green Acres Program
Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)	<u>Recreational Trails Program</u>	Program funds states to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities. Funds available for New Jersey projects are administered by DEP's Green Acres Program
U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)	<u>Conservation Innovation Grant</u>	A competitive program that supports the development of new tools, approaches, practices, and technologies to further natural resource conservation on private lands. Through creative problem-solving and innovation, CIG partners work to address our nation's water quality, air quality, soil health, and wildlife habitat challenges, all while improving agricultural operations
USDA	<u>New Jersey Conservation Stewardship Program</u>	Program builds on existing conservation efforts while strengthening operations by connecting project leads with USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) liaisons who develop conservation plans to facilitate goal setting
USDA	<u>Urban & Community Forest Program (UCFP)</u>	A technical, financial, and educational assistance program dedicated to urban forestry. Reworked as a result of the Inflation Reduction Act, UCFP is now funded at \$32 million annually and will provide project implementation grants. The program takes aim at delivering nature-based solutions for climate issues, environmental justice, and green jobs

AGENCY	GRANT / PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION
U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT)	<u>Wildlife Crossings Pilot Program</u>	Funding for construction of wildlife crossings over or under busy roads; part of new Safe System Approach aimed at increasing traveling public safety and reducing economic impact of wildlife crashes with the linked benefit of improving species survival
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)	<u>Brownfields Program</u>	Program that provides a series of loans directed at assessment, cleanup, and related job training for projects seeking to remediate brownfields. Program works in collaboration with other funding sources, including other EPA programs, other federal partners, and state agencies
U.S. EPA	<u>Climate Pollution Reduction Grants</u>	In 2023, the EPA announced a \$3 million award for New Jersey to plan innovative strategies to cut climate pollution and build clean energy economies across the state. Additionally, EPA launched a competition for \$4.6 billion in funding to implement projects and initiatives included in the plans. New Jersey is eligible to receive that implementation funding because it has opted in to receive the planning grant
U.S. EPA	<u>Environmental Justice Government to Government Program</u>	Provides funding at the state, local, territorial, and tribal level to support government activities that lead to measurable environmental or public health impacts in communities disproportionately burdened by environmental harms
U.S. Forest Service	<u>Forest Legacy Program</u>	Administered in partnership with state agencies to encourage the protection of privately owned forest lands through conservation easements or fee land purchases
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)	<u>Delaware Bay Coastal Program</u>	Achieves voluntary habitat conservation and restoration through technical and funding assistance
USFWS	<u>State Wildlife Grants</u>	Provide funding to conduct research, surveys, and species and habitat management in support of wildlife species with the greatest conservation needs as identified in applicable State Wildlife Action Plans

Funding Opportunities

See DEP administered active funding opportunities as well as all available DEP grants, loans, and financial programs.

[Deadline Approaching](#)[Rolling Deadline](#)[Full List of Grants and Loans](#)[Keyword Search](#)

[Green Acres Local Assistance Grants & Loans](#) – Closes March 1, 2023

[Green Acres Nonprofit Acquisition Grants](#) – Closes March 1, 2023

[Green Acres Urban Parks Grant](#) – Closes March 1, 2023

[Solid Waste Recycling Enhancement Act \(REA\) Higher Education Research Grant Program](#) – Closes March 31, 2023 (extended)

[Stormwater Competitive Grants and Resilience/Stormwater Utility Feasibility Technical Assistance Grants](#) – Full details of the Notice of Funds Availability (NOFA) will be available at <https://nj.gov/dep/wlm/grants/swgrant.html> by March 3.


Wetland Restoration Opportunity

The Freshwater Wetlands Mitigation Council is sending out Request for Proposals (RFP) for wetland restoration with a tidal component in the Atlantic Water Region. The RFP is linked to the Council's website with instructions and time frames. The final deadline to submit a proposal will be May 17th, 2023 at 5 p.m. Proposals should be emailed to Staff to the Council, Faelyn Meyers, at faelyn.meyers@dep.nj.gov along with mailed to the address provided in the instructions. If you should have any questions, I can be reached via email or by phone at (609) 940 – 4317, Monday – Friday, 7:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

[View the Request for Proposal \(RFP\)](#)

Highlighted Resources

The DEP has launched an informational video series from the public-private partnership "Drive Change. Drive Electric." Learn more about EVs.

 NJDCA is collecting information from affected parties regarding the upcoming Community Development Block Grants (CBDG) for disaster relief and resilience. If you were affected by Hurricane Ida, please take the Hurricane Ida Recovery Registration Survey.

Blue Acres has a new application! View the new and easier-to-use application.

[DEP Standard Terms and Conditions](#)

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Grants and Loans Page

- Improve accessibility to funding opportunities
- Information for deadlines and potential opportunities
- Keyword Search

Open Space Taxes in 2022



233 Local Governments: \$116 million

21 Counties: \$241 million

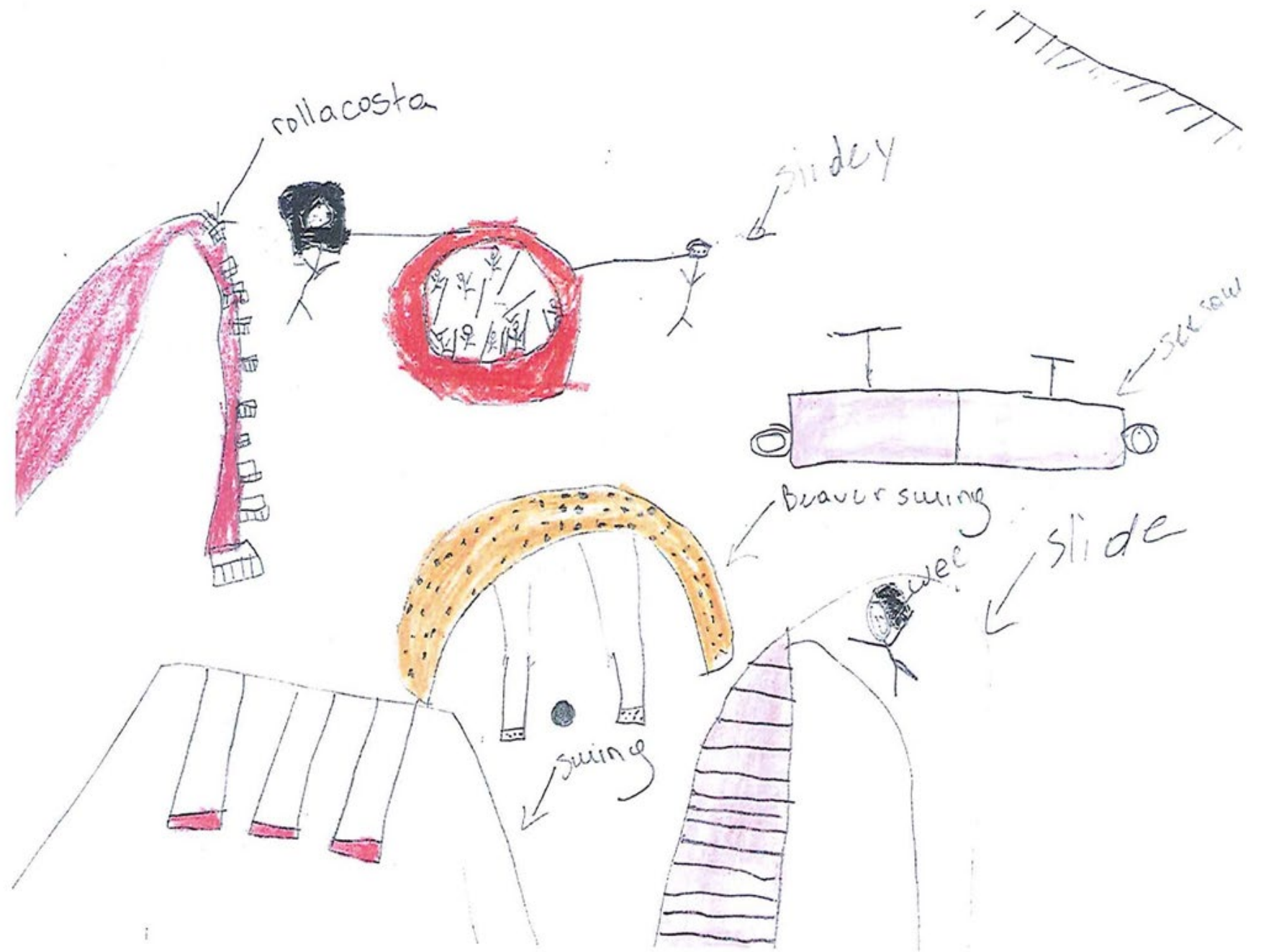
Total: **\$357 million**

Application Ranking: What we look for

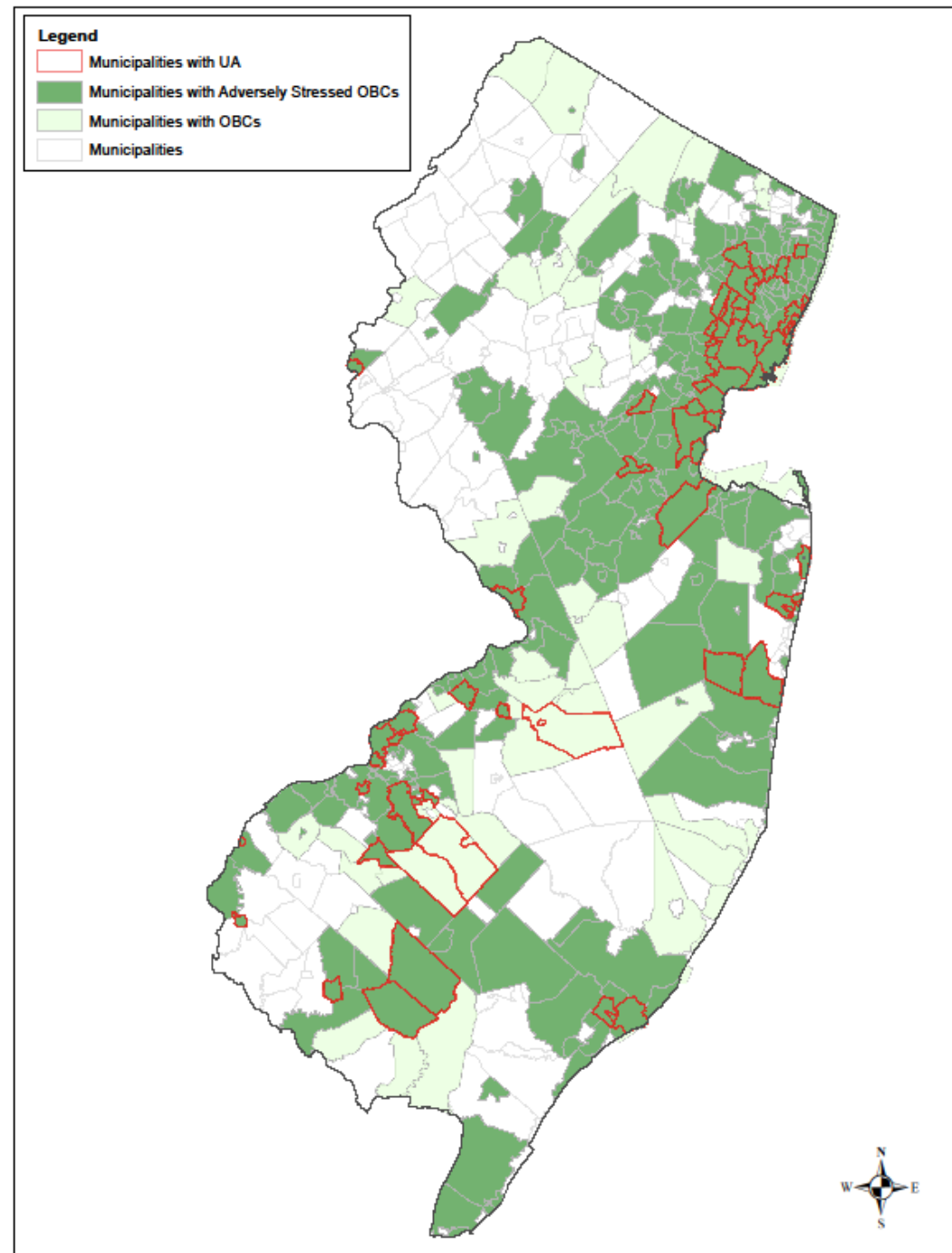


- Public Engagement and Outreach
 - Synthetic turf fields, pickleball
- Environmental Justice
 - Adversely Stressed Overburdened Communities
 - Urban Aid AS/OBCs = 100% grants!
- Community Revitalization
 - Conservation Tourism
- Protection of Natural and Historic Resources
 - Stewardship
- Climate Mitigation and Resilience
 - Tree policy, renewable energy
- Consistency with Open Space and Recreation Planning
 - Planning Incentives, SCORP

Engage ALL
members
of the
public!



Areas of Greatest Need



GREEN ACRES PROGRAM

New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection



OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN GUIDELINES

for Participation in the Green Acres Planning Incentive Program

Green Acres Mission Statement

To achieve, in partnership with others, a system of interconnected open spaces whose protection will preserve and enhance New Jersey's natural environment and its historic, scenic, and recreational resources for public use and enjoyment.

GREEN ACRES PROGRAM

MAIL CODE 501-01

501 EAST STATE STREET, 1ST FLOOR

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www.NJGreenAcres.org

2019

“Strings”



- Recreation and Open Space Inventory (ROSI)
- Diversions / Disposals (State House Commission)
- Routine Inspections

Be our eyes and ears!



The Future

Funding round: February 2024

Applications released this month

Workshops – How To's


Local rules (stakeholder meetings – How are we doing?)


Outside, Together! – public comments by October 18th





Contact Us!

www.NJGreenAcres.org


 OFFICIAL SITE OF THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY






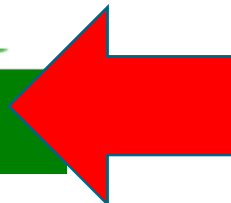
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 Department of Environmental Protection 

Green Acres Program

Preserving & Enhancing New Jersey's Great Outdoors since 1961



Home  About Us  Program Areas  Forms and Regulations Green Acres Success Stories  Enjoy Your Green Acres  **Contact Us** 

Green Acres Contact List

For general questions, please email GreenAcres@dep.nj.gov

County	Contact for STATE ACQUISITION	Contact for LOCAL/NONPROFIT acquisition projects (entire county, unless noted)	Contact for LOCAL/NONPROFIT park development and stewardship projects (entire county, unless noted)	Contact for Post-Funding Compliance
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Thank you!!