

# GREENWAYS

Newsletter of  
D&R Greenway Land Trust, Inc.  
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Winter 2014

## Land Preservation Update

Since 1989, D&R Greenway has placed 267 properties, approximately 18,787 acres valued at \$379,214,417 into permanent preservation, an area as big as 15,000 football fields!

Good health is something we all treasure. A breath of fresh air, a tall glass of clean water, a Jersey fresh apple, an invigorating walk on a trail—all help us maintain a healthy body and spirit. Communities, too, are healthiest when they include places where people can gather, hike, picnic and celebrate together. Forests, fields, populations of wildlife, birds and butterflies require healthy conditions to thrive. In this edition, you'll learn about many of the ways that D&R Greenway is ensuring good health for people, communities and the natural world. Reflecting on the coming year, the best wish we can send to you is for good health. Without that, nothing else matters.

## An Urban Farm Takes Root

The weedy, odd-shaped property on Escher St. next to the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen, a remnant of a former railroad siding, appears to be just a vacant lot. But to an urban farmer, it may be the most valuable real estate there is: a place to grow food.

On October 22, a coalition of community organizations and public agencies planted the seeds for a project that will transform the property into an urban farm for public use. By 2016 the weeds will be gone; in their place will be vegetables, berries and flowers. The farm will serve the community by providing a local source of fresh

food, along with educational and employment opportunities for some of the city's most disadvantaged residents.

The site, formerly owned by Norma Pratico, was acquired for the public by the City of Trenton, through a partnership spearheaded by D&R Greenway. The Pratico family, longtime gardeners whose backyard sign read "Weed Now—Eat Later," are thrilled that the property has found a new use. "We're pleased to be a part of this wonderful project," remarked Sharon Pratico. "Placement of this community farm



Future Home of Capital City Farm (Photo: Jay Watson)



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in the midst of the agencies that serve the people of Trenton who need it most could not be a better fit. This project may serve as a model for other urban areas in New Jersey and beyond."

Getting to this first step took three years. The project began when a sharp-eyed TASK volunteer recognized that the empty lot was full of potential. It could transform not only the cityscape, but people's lives. She alerted D&R Greenway because of the land trust's success in preserving and restoring land for community use, including projects in Trenton's Cadwalader Park.

"We jumped on the opportunity to preserve the site," remarked Jay Watson, D&R Greenway's Vice President. "We immediately reached out to potential partners, asking if there was interest in joining a preservation effort. The response was overwhelming." D&R Greenway assembled a team that each contributed unique resources to the project, including funding, land

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## Urban Farm

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planning, urban gardening, social services and education.

Mercer County provided the acquisition funds from the County's Open Space Program. A 2-acre brownfield site is not necessarily what the phrase "open space" brings to mind. But the site's value is precisely its location in an area where green fields are no longer sitting around waiting to be preserved: they have to be re-created. Mercer County Executive Brian M. Hughes commented, "Preserving this property and turning it into an urban farm and outdoor learning center will enhance the neighborhood and provide a direct benefit to TASK and other local social service agencies."

The City of Trenton will initially own the site on Escher Street near the Helping Arms ex-offender reentry center, the Trenton Treatment Center for substance abuse, and the Escher St. SRO Project homeless shelter. Mayor Eric E. Johnson observed, "We are very fortunate in Trenton to have so many wonderful nonprofit groups and social service organizations working to improve the quality of life in our great City. This urban farm project is a great compliment to the many social service organizations on Escher Street, and our Administration

supports the project wholeheartedly."

'Capital City Farm' will be more than just a garden plot. Working with Isles and others, a conceptual plan for a community-centric farm envisions a sustainable system including a wildflower meadow to attract pollinating insects, raised beds for seasonal produce, and a small orchard of fruit trees in raised containers. Future phases may include hydroponic greenhouses that will enable a year-round growing season and diversify

food that could not be fresher. "TASK is grateful to D&R Greenway for taking the leadership in seeing this very important project through to conclusion," said Executive Director Dennis Micai. "We have long sought to have this vacant property put to a positive use. We are very excited about having the opportunity to partner with others in turning the property into gardens and an educational site and eventually providing training opportunities."

*"My family has long been conscious of the need for conservation, preservation and protection of natural resources. My mother tells us of her childhood, taking lunch to school in the same bread bag all week long, composting garbage in the garden, and using and re-using household items to save from waste. My father was raised similarly. They instilled those same values in us. We are very happy about the proposed use of the property as a community farm. Not only is this an environmentally higher purpose, it is a plan that encompasses a level of social consciousness as well."*

— Sharon Pratico Bucci, daughter of Norma Pratico, owner

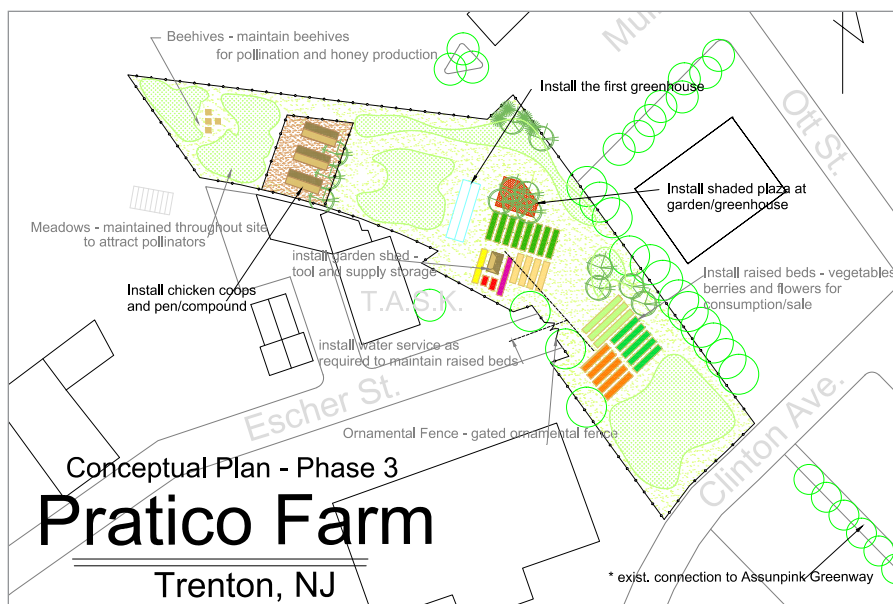
the farm's crops. The vision includes chicken coops for egg production and beehives to produce local honey.

Obtaining fresh food is a challenge for urban residents, and often insurmountable for those with the greatest financial needs. The farm will supply TASK with

The farm's benefits will extend beyond food. The open space full of plants will provide a green respite for clients and employees of the neighborhood social service agencies. It can also be connected into the planned regional network of pedestrian trails, through potential linkages to D&R Canal State Park and the Assunpink Creek Greenway.

There's much more work to do before the farm's first carrot can be crunched. We will need to raise additional funds to carry out the conceptual plan. Meanwhile, D&R Greenway will implement a remediation plan, installing a one-foot cap over the fill that was historically deposited to elevate the siding to grade level. All edible plants will be grown in raised beds above the cap, using clean soil.

Now that the land is in public ownership, we intend to roll up our sleeves and make this civic space into an urban farm: something that will benefit so many underserved people in our Capital City. 🌱



*Conceptual Site Plan (Courtesy of Randy Baum)*

# Saving the Health of the Sourlands Forest

To paint a portrait of the Sourland Mountains, dip a brush in green paint, start at one side of the canvas and keep going until you reach the opposite side. That green line stretches 20 miles, depicting a 20,000-acre swath of rich woods that harbor a treasure trove of wildlife and protect water quality.

If you were to superimpose over your painting a map of individual parcels, it would look like a mosaic of innumerable tiny shards. Development of any of those shards pokes holes in the forest, tearing into the dependent relationships that create a healthy ecosystem: connections between clean water and rich soil, sunlight and green leaves, and all the links that make up the food web.

This visual image illustrates exactly why D&R Greenway has made filling Sourland gaps a top preservation priority. Preventing fragmentation by development and clearing saves the health of the forest.

*In November D&R Greenway partnered with East Amwell Township to preserve three more Sourlands properties totaling 40 acres. Though not very large, all were critical from a conservation perspective because they close preservation gaps.*

The newly preserved properties are nearby D&R Greenway's Cattail Brook and Sourlands Ecosystem preserves.

Explaining the importance of this small but mighty acquisition, Linda Mead, D&R Greenway President & CEO shares, "Each of these newly preserved properties brings us a step closer to our vision of preserving a continuous stretch of the Sourlands forest from end-to-end."

The Sourlands is the largest intact forest in central New Jersey. It blankets a long ridge of hard diabase rock. Topography has made development

difficult—but not impossible. Because of its size and lack of clearing, much of the intact woodland is "interior" forest. Generally, woods that are at least 600 feet wide are considered interior forests. These have much less "edge" habitat than woods left after development has fragmented the forest.

As more easily developed lands are taken, the Sourlands forest becomes a target for new development. East Amwell is seeking to preserve its Sourlands forest, before it is lost.

"Our conservation priorities are reflected in D&R Greenway's vision for connected regional greenways and the goal of preserving and improving the Sourland forest," said Glorianne Robbi, chair of East Amwell's farmland and open space committee. "This is a partnership that works together to preserve our township's environment, and that of neighboring townships."

For millennia the Sourlands forest has attracted neotropical migratory birds that nest here or stop to feed and refuel for a longer journey, as well as residents such as the white-breasted nuthatch. The forest's leaves, seeds and flowers provide for caterpillars, insects and spiders that birds and their nestlings find so delectable. Many birds that migrate between the tropics in winter and their summer breeding grounds in temperate forests do much better in interior woodlands.

Interior forest habitat is vanishing statewide due to clearing for pipelines and development. This creates edge habitat. Edges attract songbird predators and parasites. Deer, abundant near suburban yards, devastate the forest understory needed

for nesting. Non-native invasive plants spread quickly from edges into the woods where they replace native plants.

Luckily, the three new properties are high-quality forest. That means they have well-established layers of native plants, from canopy to ground. The canopy is composed of oaks (Red, White and Swamp),

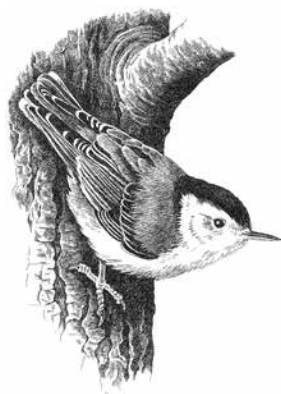


*Birch (Betula papyrifera)*

hickories, maple, ash, birch, beech, cherry, hophornbeam, tulip poplar and sassafras; below are dogwoods, ironwood and witch hazel, viburnums, blueberry and spicebush. Such a wide range of plants provides diverse internal habitat, supporting an amazing variety of plants and animals not typically found elsewhere in the region.

On the newly preserved properties nest such rare birds as the Hooded Warbler, Canada Warbler, Veery and Wood Thrush. The "who cooks for you" call of the rare Barred Owl echoes through the woods.

You can experience the extraordinary Sourland forest by walking the 8-mile network of trails that wind through several preserved areas. Start at D&R Greenway's Sourlands Ecosystem Preserve on Mountain Road (for a map, go to [www.drgreenway.org](http://www.drgreenway.org), Find a Place to Walk, Sourlands brochure). You'll walk under tall trees, past huge boulders, along wetlands and past streams. In spring you'll see arrays of wildflowers: rue anemone, bloodroot, mayapple, Solomon's seal and wood asters. Listen for the birds, teaching their young the songs they learned from their parents. Songs the forest knows by heart. 🌲



*White-breasted nuthatch (Sitta carolinensis)*



# In Celebration of D&R Greenway's 25th Anniversary Year

## *Founded 1989 ~ 2014*

Preserving and protecting New Jersey's open space, past, present and future

A Special Thanks ... as we Begin a New Year! To all of you—our donors and Business Partners who generously provide the support that enables D&R Greenway to save perpetually New Jersey's remaining open space, natural lands and farms. Together, we are inspiring a conservation ethic and engaging people in caring for and about the land.

Walk a trail, enjoy a preserved landscape and take a breath of fresh air! As we celebrate the holidays and look forward to a new year ... We wish you the peace and beauty of the outdoors.



*Sledding at Greenway Meadows*



*Conservation Biologist, Diana Raichel (c), points out native plants at the new established meadow at Cadwalader Park*



*Jim Amon, Director of Stewardship, retired in June*



*Celebrating People of Preservation: Special 25th Anniversary Partner Awards were presented at the 25th Anniversary Greenway Gala (Photo: Carl Geisler)*



*Community members came to the Johnson Education Center to experience hands-on the art of creating watercolors from the Garden State Watercolor Society (Photo: Jay Watson)*



*Charlie and Mary Leck were honored at the grand opening of the Tulpehaking Nature Center with a native garden recognizing their years of dedication and service to the Abbott Marshlands*





*Hopewell Community Campout at St. Michaels Farm Preserve*



*Down to Earth Ball at the Chateau in the Woods  
(Photo: Richard Grant)*



*Having fun at Greystones on the Geology Field Tour with geologist and author, David Harper*



*John Burkhalter delighted guests and welcomed spring with French Baroque music*



*D&R Greenway's 25th Anniversary Silver Jubilee Tree at Morven's Festival of Trees, ingeniously created by Avril Moore and her team of elves, Tasha O' Neill, JoAnne Stransky, Carolyn Edelmann and Jody Kendall*



*Kay Widmer (c) celebrates her birthday with a gift from friends that creates Kay's Hazelnut Grove at St. Michaels Farm Preserve*





# Striking a Healthy Balance

The community chorus of songbirds that can be heard at D&R Greenway's Woodens Lane Preserve includes veery, Kentucky warbler and worm-eating warbler. This 250th property protected by D&R Greenway, acquired as a preserve in 2013, is host to a new stewardship experiment.

According to Diana Raichel, our Conservation Biologist, the goal of the experiment is to guide reforestation efforts for turning old agricultural fields into early successional forests. Test plots were planted both inside and outside deer fencing, with comparatively deer-resistant plants. Fast-growing trees

that were planted include sassafras, black cherry, sweet gum and pin oaks. Beneficial native understory plants and native shrubs are already establishing naturally, including red cedar, American crabapple and blackberries. Undesirable non-native multiflora rose and autumn olive are also popping up and will be kept in check while the restoration is progressing.

This reforestation project on land co-owned with West Amwell Township was supported by Washington Crossing Audubon Society, US Fish and Wildlife, and a Franklin Parker grant from the NJ Conservation Foundation. The

acquisition of the land in 2013 benefitted from a unique partnership with The Willow School.

The farm was purchased by the Wooden family at the turn of the last century. The fields supported cattle and were later planted in hay. The large fields consist of 26 acres. In keeping with our commitment to manage the fields for grassland birds and to protect the forest that makes up close to 20 acres, D&R Greenway struck a balance: keep the more productive front field in farming and restore the back field closest to the forest and stream.

Reforestation the canopy gap will expand early successional habitat for woodcock, golden-winged warbler and indigo bunting. The chorus of songbirds is growing. ♡

## Project Milkweed at Greenway Meadows

The black-and-orange beauties that we used to see fluttering above our meadows have been disappearing. Scientists say that the number of monarch butterflies is at the lowest level since monitoring began in 1993. The monarch butterfly's favorite food—milkweed—has been replaced in many cases by genetically-modified crops and urban sprawl, and has also been affected by extreme weather conditions.

The Garden Club of Princeton has joined with D&R Greenway and

others to do something about it.

This fall began Project Milkweed at Greenway Meadows. In partnership with Princeton who owns the park, members of the Garden Club were assisted by Bloomberg volunteers and guided by D&R Greenway staff in planting a half-acre to attract monarchs within the open area of the park. The goal is to increase the availability of host plants to monarchs; to raise public awareness about the value of milkweeds to monarchs and native pollinators;

and to promote the inclusion of milkweeds in habitat restoration.

Previously infested with an invasive brown knapweed (*Centaurea jacea*) monoculture, the area now will support a wide variety of beneficial native pollinator plants that feature milkweeds and other native wildflowers. Beautiful and beneficial meadow plantings include New York aster, common boneset, blazing star, bergamot, joe-pye weed and beardtongue as well as warm season grasses little bluestem, big bluestem, Indian grass and switchgrass. The bulk of the milkweeds will be planted in the early spring of 2015.

Butterfly surveys will be conducted during the spring and summer months by D&R Greenway staff and citizen scientists. Efforts will be made to add this survey point to the North American Butterfly Association "Fourth of July Butterfly Count" for long-term data.

Future walks at Greenway Meadows should provide the beautiful sight of fluttering monarchs, once again as in the past. D&R Greenway is glad we can be a part of a migratory pathway of restoration for the monarch butterfly. We are grateful to the Garden Club of Princeton for their leadership and support for this project. ♡



Volunteers from Bloomberg and the Garden Club of Princeton planting Project Milkweed for future monarch butterfly generations

# The Art of Nature

Events are at no cost unless otherwise indicated. For gallery hours and to RSVP, please send a message to [rsvp@drgreenway.org](mailto:rsvp@drgreenway.org) or call (609) 924-4646.

## Marie L. Matthews Gallery

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### Botanicals Illuminated

*Now through January 9*

Fine art and botanical illustration of native plants of New Jersey.

### High Noon to Midnight Moon: Talismen of the Horizon

*January 19 through March 20*

*Opening reception: Friday, January 30, 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.*

Explore the celestial wonders of our skies as artists interpret the heavenly objects that have guided explorers for centuries. Find out who comes out at night and who thrives in the daylight. Night owls and early birds welcome!



*Nouvelle Lune by Silvere Boureau*

### New Decoy Exhibit: Ben Heinemann

*Through Spring 2015*

World-class carver Ben Heinemann is featured in D&R Greenway's Jay Vawter Decoy Collection in the Goldman Family Library. Lecture by carver: TBA, spring.

Volunteers play an important role in ensuring the success of our mission. If you are interested in a rewarding experience by helping as a Willing Hand volunteer at events or with other tasks, please contact Carolyn Edelmann, [cedelmann@drgreenway.org](mailto:cedelmann@drgreenway.org), (609) 924-4646 ext. 131.

## Olivia Rainbow Gallery

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### Flowerdance!

*Now through January 8*

Stuart Country Day School student art inspired by Georgia O'Keeffe. Art teacher, Deborah Land.

### The Pokeweed Project

*January 9 through February 13*

Art students of Heather Barros.

### Natural Art

*February 16 through March 27*

Johnson Park School students. Art teacher, Linda Gates.

## Wintertime Talks at the Johnson Education Center

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### Day and Night Creatures of the Abbott Marshlands

*Tuesday, January 20, 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.*

*Presented by: Kelly Rypkema, Director  
Tulpehaking Nature Center*

The new Tulpehaking Nature Center at the Abbott Marshlands opened October 7, 2014. Join its Director to learn about the birds, wildlife and amphibians that can be found 24 hours a day at this 3,000+ acre preserve near Trenton.

### The Heart of the Hickory: Natural Art and Native Seeds

*Thursday, February 12, 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.*

*Presented by: Janet Keller Laughlin, Artist and  
Emily Blackman, Manager, Native Plant Nursery*

"It's the mystery, the emotion, the experience of nature in its purest form that inspires my vision as an artist." Artist Janet Keller Laughlin will demonstrate how she creates art from natural objects, emphasizing the heart wood of the hickory in celebration of Valentine's Day. D&R Greenway's Emily Blackman will speak about the science of nurturing native plants at our Native Plant Nursery.

### The Raritan River: Our Landscape, Our Legacy

*Thursday, February 26, 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.*

*Presented by: Dr. Judy Auer Shaw, Environmental Author*

On the banks of the old Raritan, author Judy Shaw provides a tour of the 90-mile long waterway and its twisting tributaries from Morris County to the Raritan Bay. It is the longest river completely within New Jersey, where protected environments coexist with land left in ruins by industry. Dr. Shaw, a researcher at Rutgers University who has won awards for her Sustainable Raritan River Initiative, presents new ways of thinking about design and management—with people as part of the solution.

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D&R Greenway Land Trust, Inc., is a regional, 501(c)(3) nonprofit land conservancy dedicated to the preservation and stewardship of open space throughout New Jersey.

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## THANK YOU for Voting for Open Space!

On November 4 New Jersey voters again expressed their strong support for open space, farmland, clean water and historic preservation by overwhelmingly voting in favor of public Question #2. By doing so, they created a permanent source of dedicated funds for preservation. Starting in 2015, these State funds will help us pay landowners for land and easements that prevent development. The State funding, while critical, only pays for the direct purchase price paid to the landowner. Public funds do not pay for our staff time to negotiate and implement the acquisition or the stewardship required to protect

our air, water, plants and animals—and to create trails where members of our communities can enjoy the outdoors. As New Jersey is predicted to reach total buildout in 30 years, your support of our work is needed now more than ever to safeguard the remaining open spaces forever.

It is our people power that will leverage the public funds! We invite you to partner with us by making a year-end gift in the enclosed envelope or online at [www.drgreenway.org](http://www.drgreenway.org) or by calling Leslie Davis Potter, Director of Development at (609) 924-4646 ext. 121. ☘

*86-acre Olcott Preserve, Hopewell Township, preserved in perpetuity*