

CHAPTER II

OPEN SPACE INVENTORY

In order to establish a basis for developing open space and recreation areas, an inventory of all existing federal, state, county, municipal and private open space and recreation areas was made. The location of all public, non-profit, and private open space is found on Map 1 (Existing Open Space).

Federal Open Space

The Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area is the only federal land reserve in Warren County. The Water Gap covers 9,984 acres, which includes all of the Pahaquarry section of Hardwick Township and portions of Blirstown and Knowlton Townships.

State Open Space

The largest state-owned open space site in Warren County is Worthington State Forest in Hardwick, Blirstown and Knowlton Townships. The forest covers 5,824 acres and is within the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area.

Allamuchy Mountain State Park and Stephens State Park in Allamuchy Township and Hackettstown share common boundaries and account for 3,390 acres of open space in Warren County. These two state parks extend into Sussex and Morris Counties.

The tracts of land that comprise the Jenny Jump State Forest totals 967 acres. These tracts are located in the Townships of Frelinghuysen, Independence, Hope, Liberty, and White.

Other large areas of state-owned land includes 1,574 acres associated with the Pequest Trout Hatchery and Natural Resource Education Center in Mansfield, Liberty, and Oxford Townships; 440 acres of land at the Rockport State Game Farm in Mansfield Township; the Hackettstown State Fish Hatchery, with 340 acres in Hackettstown; White Lake, with 265 acres in Hardwick Township; and

the Paulinskill State Park in Knowlton Township, with 92 acres.

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Green Acres State Acquisition Program, has targeted land areas throughout Warren County for acquisition. Among these targeted areas are the expansion of the Jenny Jump State Forest in Frelinghuysen, Hope, Liberty, and White Townships; the expansion of the Allamuchy State Park in Allamuchy Township; the expansion of Worthington State Park in Hardwick and Knowlton Townships; the expansion of the Pequest Trout Hatchery in Oxford, Liberty and Mansfield Townships; and acquisitions along the Musconetcong, Delaware, Paulinskill Rivers, Mountain Lake Brook, Lopatcong Creek, Beaver Brook and Pequest Rivers, as well as the focus areas of Scotts Mountain and Montana Mountain in Washington and Harmony Townships, Pohatcong Mountain, the Highlands Trail corridor, Morris Canal, and the abandoned railroad rights-of-way throughout Warren County.

The Paulinskill Valley Trail traverses the Townships of Knowlton, Hardwick, Frelinghuysen, and Blairstown and continues into Sussex County. This is part of what was once the route of the New York, Susquehanna, and Western Railroad. The trail is conducive to multiple uses. It has a flat, cinder base and can be used safely for various trail uses, such as hiking, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, and bicycling. It also provides access for fishing, canoeing, and individuals in wheelchairs.

County Open Space

County-owned open space now totals over 670 acres. Until 1990, the County owned approximately four acres of open space, which is the County Courthouse Park in the Town of Belvidere.

From 1990 to 1995, the Warren County Board of Recreation Commissioners acquired nine acres of the historic Morris Canal in Franklin, Greenwich, and Independence Townships. Since 1995,

the Warren County Board of Recreation Commissioners has acquired White Lake in Hardwick Township, West Oxford Mountain in Oxford Township, and 20 acres of the 60-acre Hamlen farm in Greenwich and Lopatcong Townships that contains the Morris Canal and the Lopatcong Creek Stream Corridor. The Warren County Board of Recreation Commissioners has been responsible for acquiring 568 acres of open lands and 57 acres of the historic Morris Canal.

Municipal Open Space

Few municipalities in Warren County have lands dedicated for the single purpose of open space. Generally, municipal-owned land needs to be cost effective and serve multiple uses. Intensely used small parks, such as playgrounds, playing fields, and picnic areas, are combined and closely linked with the community.

Many Warren County municipalities have combined open space and recreation facilities with local Boards of Education or a state sponsored program like Green Acres.

Semi-Public Open Space

The largest area of semi public open space in Warren County is the Merrill Creek Reservoir and Environmental Resource Center in Harmony and Franklin Townships. The site encompasses 2,800 acres, including a 650-acre reservoir.

Another reservoir in Warren County considered semi-public open space is the Yards Creek Station Recreation Area in Blairstown Township. There are 700 acres of open space associated with this site and another 500 acres of water.

The New Jersey Audubon Society was deeded two properties in Independence Township of approximately 175 acres. The site is located along Water Street and Ryan Road. The purpose of the donation is to ensure that a resting place for migrating birds and a suitable habitat for wild birds and other wildlife is preserved in perpetuity. A segment of the Bacon Run Creek flows through this site.

Public access along nature trails for bird watching and passive recreation is planned for the site.

The New Jersey Conservation Foundation owns one property in Warren County totaling one half acre, along with a conservation easement on 47 acres of land in Pohatcong Township. Other non-profit groups that have land holdings throughout the county include The Nature Conservancy, with 327.38 acres; Phillipsburg Riverview Organization, with 140± acres; Ridge and Valley Conservancy, with 6 acres; and Wildlife Preservation, with 180 acres in Frelinghuysen Township.

The following is a listing of properties that have been acquired as open space.

I.

A.	Federal	Acres
1.	Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area	9,984
B.	State	
1.	Finesville State Park	3
2.	Stephens State Park	133
3.	Jenny Jump Forest	967
4.	Worthington State Forest	5,824
5.	Burch Sugar Maple	25
6.	Johnsonburg Natural Area	11
7.	Osman Forest	10
8.	Allamuchy Mountain State Park	3,390
9.	Delaware River Access Areas	190
10.	Hackettstown Fish Hatchery	340
11.	Hackettstown State Game Farm (Rockport)	440
12.	Pequest Fish & Wildlife Area	1,574
13.	Dept. of Transportation Scenic Easement Area	53
14.	NJDEP, Office of Natural Land Management	
	a. Mountain Lake Bog	27
	b. Buckhorn Creek	38
	c. Blairstown, Earl Brugler + Limestone Ridge	411
15.	Paulinskill State Park	92
16.	White Lake	269
	Subtotal	13,797
C.	County	

1.	Garret D. Wall Park	4
2.	Morris Canal	57
3.	Oxford Mountain	170
4.	White Lake	386
5.	Hamlen, Lopatcong Creek Area	12
6.	Hamlen, Farm	40
7.	Oxford Furnace Historic Site	1
8.	Shippen Manor Historic Site	2
	Subtotal	<hr/> 672

D. Municipal

1.	Allamuchy	44
2.	Alpha	58
3.	Belvidere	39
4.	Blairstown	15
5.	Franklin	10
6.	Frelinghuysen	3
7.	Hackettstown	33
8.	Harmony	14
9.	Hope	142
10.	Independence	79
11.	Lopatcong	25
12.	Oxford	137
13.	Phillipsburg	43
14.	Pohatcong	182
15.	Washington Borough	39
16.	Washington Township	29
17.	White	65
	Subtotal	<hr/> 957

E. Non-Profit Groups

1.	The Nature Conservancy's Mud Pond, Frelinghuysen	327
2.	Wildlife Preserve, Mud Pond, Frelinghuysen	180
3.	New Jersey Conservation Foundation	0.5
4.	Phillipsburg Riverview Organization	
	a. Grasslands in Pohatcong Township	128
	b. Ragged Ridge in Harmony Township	18
5.	New Jersey Audubon Society	
	a. Allamuchy Township	30
	b. Independence Township	132
6.	Lawrenceville Preparatory School Camp	31
7.	Roman Catholic Church, Archdiocese of Newark	100

	8.	The Presbyterian Camp and Conference	345
	9.	Camp Hope	94
	10.	Township of Crawford	7
	11.	Camp Merry Heart, Easter Seal Society of New Jersey	86
	12.	Ridge and Valley Conservancy	6
		Subtotal	<u>1,486</u>
F.		Semi-Public	
	1.	Yards Creek Pumping Station	1,200
	2.	Merrill Creek Owners Group	2,800
		Subtotal	<u>4,000</u>
G.		Total of All Public	25,285
		Total of Non-Profit and Semi-Public	5,486
		GRAND TOTAL	<u>30,771</u>