

## CHAPTER V

### GOVERNMENTAL, NON-PROFIT, AND PRIVATE ROLES

The preservation of open space in New Jersey is the responsibility of all levels of government, as well as the private sector. The roles and responsibilities of each level of government vary as well. Although many agency roles differ, overlapping responsibilities and the exchange of data often occur.

#### **The Federal Role**

The federal government's role is to assess management problems in order to meet the recreational needs of the Nation's citizens in addition to managing thousands of acres of open space. Federal agencies supply programs and funding that meet the broad scale needs for open space and outdoor recreation.

The Department of the Interior acts as the principal conservation agency of the federal government. Agencies within this Department include the National Park Service and the Fish and Wildlife Service.

The US Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources Conservation Service lends assistance to all levels of government, conservation districts, and watershed associations. The Natural Resources Conservation Service provides grants, conducts soil surveys, forecasts water supplies, and publishes data useful in resource conservation and development programs, public recreation, fish and wildlife protection.

Other federal agencies, which provide programs in open space preservation, include the Environmental Protection Agency, the Commerce Department, the Department of Defense, and the Department of Transportation. The federal government presence in Warren County is exhibited through the National Park Service management of the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation

Area. The site covers 9,984 acres in the former Pahaquarry Township, now part of Hardwick Township, and portions of Blirstown and Knowlton Townships. The Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area also extends into Sussex County and across the river in Pennsylvania.

### **The State Role**

The State of New Jersey has the responsibility of planning for the competing pressures and interests on the state's natural resources. This responsibility includes the setting of goals and priorities, as well as the formulation of policy concerning open space and outdoor recreation as set forth in the New Jersey Open Space and Outdoor Recreation Plan.

The Department of Environmental Protection was established to unite state government operations with a mandate for conservation, restoration, and enhancement of the physical environment. Agencies within this Department include the Division of Parks and Forestry, the Division of Fish, Game and Wildlife, the Office of Green Acres, and the State Historic Preservation Office. On November 3, 1998, the voters of New Jersey voted for one of the most resounding open space and farmland preservation referendums that mandate amending the state's constitution to provide \$98 million per year in dedicated funding for the next ten years to be used for land protection efforts.

### **The County Role**

The County has the responsibility to acquire, develop and maintain open spaces and parkland that are broader than municipal levels, can extend across municipal boundaries, but generally, are less in total acreage than statewide acquisitions. Often a county system integrates outdoor recreation with environmental protection.

In Warren County, a park system should be developed to provide for activities such as hiking, fishing, picnicking, ice skating, bicycling, nature study, touring and traditional uses, such as hunting,

where appropriate. Eventually, the park system could provide for more active recreation, such as golf, swimming, ball fields, and boating. Cultural and historic sites should be incorporated into any planned recreation site.