



RTC / FDIC

Forest Legacy Tract, New Jersey

December 1997

In one of the most densely populated areas of our country, a piece of the forest was secured forever. Doreen Urquhart of the USDA Forest Service in Vermont traveled to Morris County, New Jersey on December 19, 1997, to pay the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation \$412,000 for 145 acres of undeveloped forest land. The tract was identified as important and purchased under the Forest Legacy Program. It lies within New Jersey's only Forest Legacy Area: The Highlands. The proximity of the area to New York City makes it extremely susceptible to industrial and residential development.

The tract lies within a significant water supply network providing surface water and groundwater to more than 2.5 million people. "New Jersey wants to ensure clean runoff into the Rockaway River," said Dennis Davidson of Green Acres-the New Jersey land acquisition program. "Keeping land undeveloped is a more cost-effective water purification system than a water filtration plant."



Hiking up to see the view are, from left to right, Joe Penkala, NJ Fish, Game & Wildlife; Dave Edelman, NJ Stewardship Coordinator; Wayne Martin, NJ Forestry Services; Don Donnelly, Morris County Soil Conservation District; and Mark Vodak, Cooperative Extension Forester.

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Dennis Davidson, New Jersey Green Acres Program

This forest helps clean the polluted air from the superhighways bisecting central and eastern Morris County. It also provides a sanctuary for human respite as well as for wildlife. Doreen Urquhart agrees. "When you climb high on this tract, you see a really nice view," Urquhart said following a visit to the property.

The parcel was purchased outright. The Forest Service will make a management agreement with the State of New Jersey. "Most likely the Department of Fish, Game and Wildlife will manage the parcel," said John Denlinger, NJ Forest Legacy Program manager, "because it is adjacent to

the Berkshire Valley Wildlife Management Area, as well as Minisink County Park."

"New Jersey is serious about maintaining open space," said Les Alpaugh, New Jersey State Forester. "Governor Whitman recently announced her intention to secure an additional one million acres of open space- 300,000 acres before the end of this term." Alpaugh added, "The Forest Legacy Program will be a good component of this effort because it features conservation easements that allow land to remain privately owned."

The Forest Legacy Program protects important forests from conversion to non-forest uses. Important forests provide critical wildlife habitat, protect water quality, offer outstanding recreation opportunities, and scenic views, are home to historic sites, and provide the opportunity to continue traditional forest uses. A Federal-State partnership allows landowners to keep their land private, while at the same time ensuring it remains forest forever through the use of conservation easements.

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