



# Sterling Forest

## Forest Legacy Tract, New York

December 2000

The site of a proposed 13,000-unit housing development will now remain forest with the help of the USDA Forest Service Forest Legacy Program. On December 11, 2000, a total of 1,065 acres of Sterling Forest located north of New York City in the town of Tuxedo was purchased and added to Sterling Forest State Park. Rose Harvey of the Trust for Public Land remarked, "Fifteen years ago, we were anticipating 13,000 housing units with 50,000 people living and working on that property."

The purchase price of the property amounted to \$7,890,000. The purchase of the land came in three parts. First, 847 acres were purchased for \$4,270,000 with the help of \$2,000,000 from the Forest Legacy Program.

Second, the Beaverkill Conservancy, Inc., the land acquisition affiliate of the Open Space Institute, purchased 128 acres of the property. Third, a conference center and 90 acres of surrounding land on the south shore of Sterling Lake, which was not part of the Forest Legacy purchase, were also acquired by the State.

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Rose Harvey, Trust for Public Land

Funding for the total project included \$4,000,000 from the State of New York, \$2,000,000 from the Forest Legacy Program, \$1,000,000 from the State of New Jersey, and \$200,000 from the Palisades Interstate Park Commission (PIPC). A \$550,000 grant from the Lila Acheson and DeWitt Wallace Fund for the Hudson Highlands (a fund established by the founders of the Reader's Digest Association) was used for the Beaverkill Conservancy, Inc. acquisition, with the Trust for Public Land contributed the remaining balance.

As part of Sterling Forest State Park, the property will be managed by the PIPC. The conference center on



*The site of a proposed housing development will now remain forested forever, providing for continued outdoor recreational opportunities with the help of the Forest Legacy Program.*  
Trust for Public Land Photo

the south shore of Sterling Lake will be used as an environmental education center.

Nearly 19,000 acres of land have been purchased in Sterling Forest over the last decade. The largest acquisition was in 1998 when 15,280 acres of land were purchased for \$55 million. With this most recent purchase, the forest is now 95 percent protected.

Sterling Forest provides many benefits for the area. The forest is a short drive from the New York City area and provides numerous recreational opportunities. The area forms the headwaters for the Monksville and Wanaque reservoirs, which provide drinking water for over 2 million northern New Jersey residents.

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

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