



Forked River Mountain Views

Newsletter of the Forked River Mountain Coalition

Vol. 4 No. 3

A Special Message for Residents of Ocean County

On November 4th, the Board of Chosen Freeholders will ask voters whether or not to create an "Ocean County Natural Lands Trust Fund." If approved at the polls, the trust fund would help protect water quality and environmentally sensitive areas in Ocean County through dedicated funding for the conservation of natural areas and open space.

With a "yes" vote Ocean County residents will be recommending that the Freeholders create a trust fund to provide for the conservation of land in its natural state. The referendum would be advisory to the Freeholders, not binding upon them. The ballot question will give the voters of Ocean County the opportunity to say "yes" to conserving open space and to express a willingness to pay a small amount of additional property taxes to achieve this end.

The Ocean County Natural Lands Trust Fund could provide as much as \$3.8 million dollars annually for natural lands conservation throughout the County. The trust fund would represent an investment of \$12 each year for a family whose house had an equalized assessed value of \$100,000. The money would be collected through a maximum increase in the property tax of 1.2 cents. At the discretion of the Freeholders, these funds could be leveraged through long term bonding or State Green Acres sponsored loan programs.

Currently, 12 of New Jersey's 21 counties have similar trust funds. Trust fund money would be used in Ocean County to protect sources of drinking water and groundwater recharge areas, ecologically significant natural areas and farmland. A citizens advisory committee would make recommendations to the Freeholders regarding what natural lands should be purchased for conservation purposes. Although the trust fund would be designated for the purpose of conserving open space, the Freeholders would not be obligated to spend the money on any set schedule.

Over the last 50 years Ocean County has experienced the highest rate of growth of any county in New Jersey and among the highest in the nation. An Ocean County Natural Lands Trust Fund would help maintain a high quality of life for present and future generations so that they may enjoy the natural beauty of the land, a high quality of drinking water, protected natural areas for animals and plants, and clean water in our bays, creeks and rivers.



Proclamation

WHEREAS, the New Jersey Pinelands occupies 1.1 million acres or almost one quarter of the state. This expanse comprises the largest tract of open space between Boston and Washington, D.C. and flourishes in the nation's most densely populated state; and

WHEREAS, the New Jersey Pinelands provides the perfect environment for berry agriculture, making New Jersey the third largest producer of cranberries in the United States and home to the first cultivated, hybrid blueberry; and

WHEREAS, the New Jersey Pinelands is the country's first National Reserve and an international U.N.E.S.C.O. Biosphere Reserve; is home to many rare and endangered plant and animal species; and

WHEREAS; the New Jersey Pinelands contains the Kirkwood-Cohansey Aquifer which retains 17 trillion gallons of clean water; and

WHEREAS, the New Jersey Pinelands has a rich and colorful history, music, and culture all its own, making this treasured area distinct from any other region in New Jersey; and

WHEREAS, the New Jersey Pinelands comes alive in Autumn with cranberry harvest celebrations;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, CHRISTINE TODD WHITMAN, Governor of the State of New Jersey, do hereby proclaim

*OCTOBER 1997 as
NEW JERSEY PINELANDS MONTH*

HELP US CELEBRATE AT THE FOLLOWING EVENTS

Pine Barrens Jamboree
October 11, 10am-5pm

A celebration of Pinelands melodies and memories with food, music and local crafters and artisans at Wells Mills County Park, Route 532, Waretown.
Rain or Shine.

Batsto Country Living Fair
October 19, 10am-4pm

Held annually at the restored historic village in Wharton State Forest, Route 542, Hammonton. Local crafters, antique autos and much more. Rain date: October 26.

Chatsworth Cranberry Festival
October 18 & 19, 10am-4pm

Annual cranberry harvest festival in Chatsworth, Route 563. Harvest tours, arts, crafts, food and music.