

## **Join April 23<sup>rd</sup> Trenton Rally for New Jersey's Parks and Natural Areas!**

Voters sent a clear message to state leaders in November that New Jersey should continue to invest in our parks, open spaces, farmland and historic sites despite the state's fiscal challenges. Now, however, the Governor has announced proposed cuts to the Divisions of Parks & Forestry and Fish & Wildlife. These cuts will require the closure of nine state parks and recreation areas, and cutbacks in service at three more.

***Your voice needs to be heard once again. Join NJ Keep it Green for "Camp Out at the Capitol," a rally at the Statehouse in Trenton on Wednesday, April 23, at 12:30pm, to protest the proposed park closings.***

Reversing the cuts is important not just to the park-going public, but for future funding for open space and historic preservation in New Jersey. In November 2007, New Jersey voters approved Ballot Question #3, the Green Acres, Farmland, Blue Acres and Historic Preservation Bond Act, which authorizes the State to issue up to \$200 million in bonds to fund open space, farmland and historic preservation.

The Nature Conservancy and the 90+ other organizations within the NJ Keep it Green Campaign worked hard to educate the legislature and the Governor about the need for long-term funding for these valuable programs. Instead, the legislature and the Governor put Question #3 before the voters, which provides only one more year of funding.

Cuts to the parks budget effectively derail the efforts of the campaign to secure long-term funding for the Garden State Preservation Trust, which supplies funding for the Green Acres, Farmland and Historic Preservation programs. Why would the state dedicate funding to preserve additional open space, while it is proposing to shut down parks it already owns?

For more information on **Campout at the Capitol** and other things you can do to make your voice heard, please visit the NJ Keep it Green website: <http://www.njkeepitgreen.org> or contact The Nature Conservancy's Tom Wells at (908) 955-0349.