

NEW JERSEY

ANNUAL REPORT

JULY 1, 2019 - JUNE 30, 2020

FINAL CAMPAIGN REPORT



The Nature
Conservancy



New Jersey

The Nature Conservancy in New Jersey

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THIS PAGE LEFT TO RIGHT Flowers and bee at Johnsonburg Swamp Preserve © Jeff Burian/TNC; New Jersey State Director Dr. Barbara Brummer © Dr. Anthony DeFina; Donors and staff celebrate removal of the Columbia Dam © Jeff Burian/TNC
OPPOSITE PAGE Maurice River Bluffs © Damon Noe/TNC
MAP PHOTOS CLOCKWISE Water quality monitoring in the Paulins Kill © Jeff Burian/TNC; Bobcat in Bobcat Alley © Stephen Buckingham; Coastal salt marsh © Flickr; American oystercatcher chick and adult at South Cape May Meadows © Marian McSherry; New Jersey State House, Trenton, NJ © Marion Touvel



Dear Fans of Conservation,

How our world has changed! The pandemic has brought radical changes to our lives - but it has not diminished The Nature Conservancy in New Jersey's commitment to protecting nature nor my gratitude for all of you who stand with us. Ensuring the safety and respect of our colleagues and partners, pushing for equal access to nature, building communities where both nature and people thrive - this IS the real work of conservation.

Thanks to you, we are celebrating the successful completion of the *Campaign for The Real Nature of New Jersey!* In this report, you will see how our work during the last year took us over the finish line: we exceeded the majority of our ambitious 2015-2020 conservation objectives and surpassed our \$80 million fundraising goal.

Some of our proudest accomplishments include: the largest dam removal to date in New Jersey; 38 coastal communities engaged in using nature-based solutions to address erosion, flooding and sea level rise; and protection of 5,989 acres to conserve critical wildlife habitat and freshwater resources. Conservation at a pace and scale greater than we have ever done before. You made all this happen!

Looking forward, the need to protect our lands and waters, strengthen the resilience of our coastline, green our cities, and tackle climate change has never been greater. I am counting on you to remain steadfast in your commitment to protect nature as we work toward our new five-year conservation goals. And I know that together we can do great things - just look at what we have been able to accomplish. Thank you!

Yours in conservation,
Dr. Barbara Brummer

The Nature Conservancy in New Jersey
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For more information about The Nature Conservancy and ways to support it, please call 908-879-7262 or email sourtney@tnc.org

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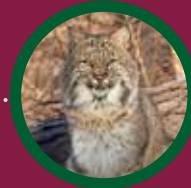
WHERE WE WORK

2015-2020 PROJECTS



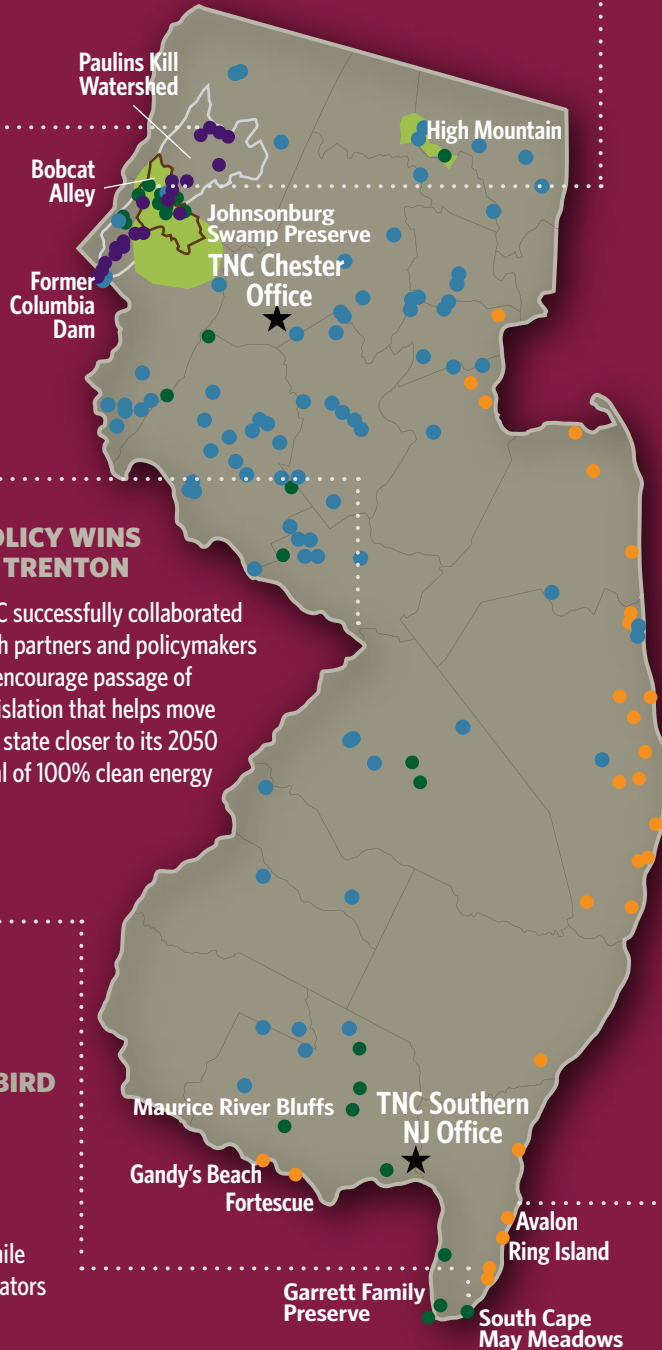
PAULINS KILL WATERSHED

2020 marks our fifth year of monitoring stream health as part of our long-term commitment to improving the water quality of the Paulins Kill watershed



BOBCAT ALLEY

We've protected 1,330 acres to date and are expanding our focus to create protected linkages with adjoining states, enhancing wildlife migration corridors



KEY

- Land protection
- Freshwater restoration
- Roots for Rivers tree plantings
- Coastal resilience
- Wildlife monitoring corridors



POLICY WINS IN TRENTON

TNC successfully collaborated with partners and policymakers to encourage passage of legislation that helps move the state closer to its 2050 goal of 100% clean energy



SOUTH CAPE MAY MEADOWS SHOREBIRD RESTORATION

Creative thinking led to innovative techniques for creating attractive habitat for beach nesting birds, while protecting them from predators



SALT MARSH RESTORATION

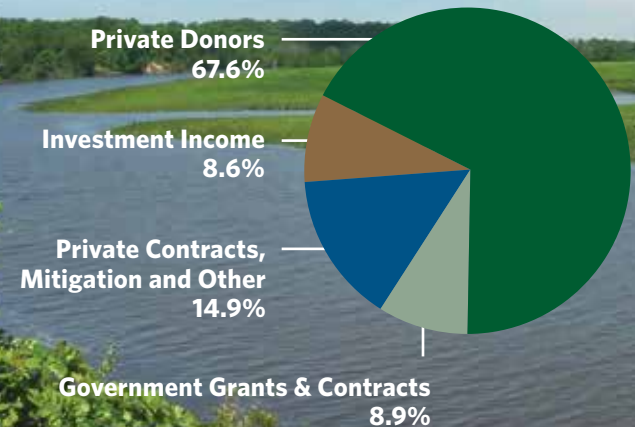
Innovative restoration techniques have resulted in healthier salt marshes, mitigating the effects of sea level rise on coastal communities

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

The Nature Conservancy in NJ concluded the multi-year Campaign for the Real Nature of New Jersey on a high note, reaching 109% of our goal! Total revenue for FY20 was \$10.5 million, about 68% of which came from private contributions and pledges. Operating expenses stood at \$6 million, 11% down from the previous year, largely influenced by the pandemic. The pie chart below shows primary sources of operating and capital revenue combined.

For more information, please contact Betsy Wullert at ewullert@tnc.org.

SOURCES OF OPERATING AND CAPITAL REVENUE





LAND



The New Jersey chapter is thrilled to report that we exceeded our ambitious goal to protect 5,000 acres across the state. Using the power of partnership, we helped protect 37 different properties totaling 5,989 acres in New Jersey’s most iconic landscapes: Bobcat Alley, the Highlands, Sourlands, Pine Barrens, and Cape May Peninsula.

The largest privately owned parcel remaining on the Cape May Peninsula, the 477-acre Cape Viking was a top conservation priority for more than 10 years. After an earlier sale agreement fell through, TNC led a consortium of partners to negotiate a new contract, secure funding, and add the property to Cape May National Wildlife Refuge. Cape May is a critical migratory stopover with world-renowned ecotourism destinations for birding and other outdoor recreation.

In 2018, TNC-NJ assisted the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) in protecting a 1,155-acre property in the southern Pine Barrens. This acquisition builds on decades of conservation work, including the 2013 protection of Lenape Farms by DEP and TNC, creating a corridor of preserved forests and wetlands that link more than 60,000 acres of parks and wildlife management areas.

Partnership has also been key in protecting Bobcat Alley in northwestern New Jersey. TNC and our partners have protected more than 1,300 acres in this critical corridor since 2014. During this time we have collaborated with the Ridge and Valley Conservancy to protect over 250 acres and created a new model to work together on landowner outreach and direct acquisitions. Our most recent success was an 81-acre addition to their Bobcat Ridge preserve in Warren County.

THIS PAGE Protected land in the Pine Barrens © Jeff Burian/TNC **OPPOSITE PAGE** LEFT TO RIGHT Three osprey chicks on South Cape May Meadows platform © Damon Noe/TNC; Receiving the Governor’s Environmental Excellence award from NJDEP Commissioner Catherine McCabe (far left) © NJDEP; Map © Mike Shanahan/TNC



Lights, Camera, Osprey!

Question: What does it take to create a live video feed from an osprey nest at TNC's South Cape May Meadows Preserve?

Answer:

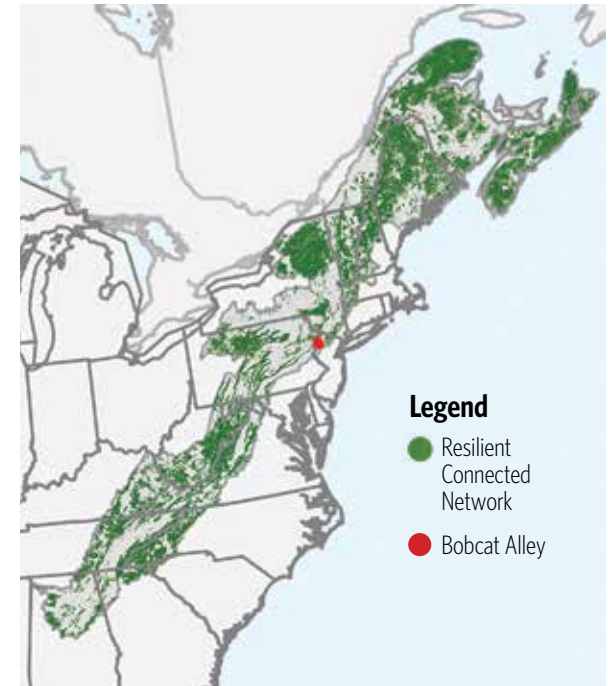
- 2 intrepid conservation staff
- 1 challenge-seeking Information Technology expert
- 2 innovative marketing masterminds
- 1,450 feet of Ethernet cable slogged through wet, muddy marshland
- 1 outdoor weatherproof, dustproof, high definition camera
- 1 high-speed internet connection
- 2 adult ospreys (mates for life) looking for the perfect platform to build a home
- Bonus points for 80 mph winds on day of completion

The Result? A live, bird's eye view of a healthy, contented osprey family with three chicks and more than 75,000 YouTube views!

Creating Connections

We continue to build upon our work in Bobcat Alley, a critical migration corridor linking the Appalachian Mountains to the New Jersey Highlands. Working with partners including the State of New Jersey, Ridge and Valley Conservancy, and Warren County, we have protected more than 1,300 acres to date.

Importantly, our vision for a resilient, connected wildlife corridor extends far beyond the borders of our own state; in collaboration with other TNC chapters, we will build a connected landscape that stretches from Alabama all the way to Canada, providing crucial migration pathways for wildlife as it adapts to our changing climate.



Award-Winning Conservation Blueprint

As the nation's most densely populated state, New Jersey has a critical need to balance land protection with intelligent growth. With that in mind, since 2015, The Nature Conservancy, Rowan University and New Jersey Conservation Foundation have led a statewide partnership of 21 government and nonprofit organizations to create the New Jersey Conservation Blueprint, an online, interactive mapping tool that provides the most up-to-date environmental and cultural resource data needed to prioritize land protection.

The Blueprint has been embraced by state and local governments, municipal environmental commissions, and nonprofit land trusts as they develop plans for protection of new open space and farmland preservation projects. The value of the Conservation Blueprint has been acknowledged by both the Association for New Jersey Environmental Commissions and the Governor's Environmental Excellence Awards for its value to New Jersey's conservation leaders and decision-makers.

The Blueprint is free and easy to use; access the tool at www.njblueprint.org.

COASTS



sand dredged from nearby boat channels. The key question for our three demonstration sites: would the marsh grasses recover and provide thriving habitat longer into the future? Fortescue marsh grasses returned to baseline, grasses at Avalon are on track, and both continue to grow. Birds, turtles and other marsh dwellers are making good use of the restored habitat. The sites have captured people's attention as well; other organizations and agencies are now replicating this restoration technique.

New Jersey's iconic coastal salt marshes – those expanses of tall grasses between the mainland and barrier islands – are incredibly hard-working. Salt marshes provide critical food and habitat for wildlife, filter stormwater, reduce wave energy and storm surge, and even sequester carbon. But many of these marshes are losing the battle with sea level rise, and some are quite literally drowning.

Since 2014, The Nature Conservancy and partners have been piloting an innovative technique that builds up the elevation of marshes with silt and

Along with partners, we will continue to monitor these marshes for at least two more years. In the meantime, we are applying our lessons learned at other locations. As part of the newly formed Barnegat Bay Islands Working Group, we are helping to identify ecological restoration needs for the 80+ small marsh islands throughout Barnegat Bay and will develop tools to help match restoration needs with channel dredging projects. Such matchmaking will provide marsh restoration projects with materials like sand and other sediments, as well as potential funding; both are much needed components for large-scale restoration of New Jersey's vast salt marshes.





Enhancing the Gandy's Beach Breakwater

In 2016, TNC and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) installed an oyster reef breakwater to reduce erosion along a half-mile of beach and marsh at Gandy's Beach. Monitoring results indicate that the breakwater is working: sediment has collected, edge erosion has slowed, reef habitat has increased, and wave energy has been reduced by an average of 40 percent. The reshaped beach is continuing to support critical horseshoe crab nesting habitat.

Monitoring also identified one hot spot with significant erosion. New segments of breakwater were designed to complement the original oyster reef, and in the fall of 2019, volunteers helped TNC and USFWS build an additional 8,500 square feet of oyster castles and bagged shell breakwater. The American Shore and Beach Preservation Association recently named this project one of the Best Restored Shores in the country!

Championing Living Shorelines

Since 2015, TNC has helped 38 New Jersey municipalities to consider nature-based solutions in their coastal resilience planning, far exceeding our goal of engaging 25 communities to look beyond bulkheads and sea walls as the only answers to flooding and erosion. The tremendous demand for information from both the public and private sectors inspired us to update our Community Resource Guide for Planning Living Shoreline Projects; the Guide includes case studies of five projects we supported through our Living Shorelines Incentives Program.

During the fall of 2019, TNC conducted its third and final round of Living Shorelines Incentives Grants, making three more grants for a total of seven. One recipient, the Lighthouse Center in Ocean County, will be using wave attenuation devices to reduce the rate of marsh loss and allow its beach to re-establish itself. Another recipient, the Seaview community on Shark River Island in Neptune, plans to establish an upland berm, a marsh sill and install a concrete mattress designed to provide habitat for marine life and prevent erosion in tight spaces adjacent to boat traffic.

In addition to incentive grants and technical support, TNC conducted public workshops covering ecological considerations, permitting and funding sources. We also provided encouragement – since many of these techniques are new to New Jersey, these projects inevitably encounter challenges as they move through design, permitting and construction. We applaud the persistence of our grant recipients as they lead the way in adopting nature-based solutions!



RIVERS



When The Nature Conservancy planted our first tree in the Paulins Kill watershed in 2012, most state residents, even those working in conservation, were unfamiliar with this area of northwestern New Jersey. Our work in the watershed began with one local partner: the Wallkill River Watershed Management Group. Eight years later, both the watershed and conservation community are thriving. We have planted more than 57,000 trees throughout

the watershed, restoring over 140 acres of floodplain. TNC led a coalition of partners, including the NJ Division of Fish & Wildlife, NJ Office of Natural Resource Restoration, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and Warren County, to complete the largest dam removal in New Jersey history. Removing the Columbia Dam at the juncture of the Paulins Kill and the Delaware River has transformed the lower third of the Paulins Kill, and removal of the Paulina and County Line dams upstream, both of which are now underway, will open a total of 45 miles of mainstem river and tributaries. And new partners have joined in, including the Foodshed Alliance, which has established a farm on a preserve TNC protected in 2003 and will be hiring a Paulins Kill Watershed Coordinator, a position that we and our partners will jointly fund. With new state funding dedicated to conservation in the Paulins Kill, exciting work will continue to transform this watershed in the years to come!

Accelerating Dam Removals Statewide

New Jersey has 1,700 regulated dams, and according to the state Bureau of Dam Safety, nearly one-third of those dams are rated as high or significant potential hazards. Repairs are costly, and many of these dams are obsolete. But with limited funding available for dam removal, we must prioritize the most crucial removals.

The Nature Conservancy is leading a 16-partner Statewide Dam Removal Partnership to do just that, while also advocating for more dam removal funding and improvements to the regulatory process. We recently launched a website at njdams.org as a resource for dam owners, residents, and state and local officials. The Nature Conservancy is promoting the ambitious goal of 25 dam removals in New Jersey by 2025. To make that happen, we must help our partners build capacity to manage the complex and transformative dam removal process.



Macroinvertebrates like dragonfly larvae are indicators of good stream health. As part of our 10-year Measures & Monitoring program to document the results of our watershed-wide restoration efforts, TNC staff monitors macroinvertebrates at 23 locations along the Paulins Kill.



Technology in Conservation

Volunteer drone operators Chuck Gullage and Bill Leavens are helping us map changes to the Paulins Kill river and its floodplain following the 2018 removal of the Columbia Dam. Using drones rather than people to do this work is not only safer but provides a huge cost savings. Dam removal partner Princeton Hydro has done pro bono analysis of the drone data, which help us measure changes as the river and the floodplain return to a more natural state following the dam removal.

Greening Our Cities

For conservation to benefit all New Jerseyans, our work needs to touch down in the most densely populated communities in this most densely populated state – our cities. Just as in our land, freshwater, coastal and climate programs, working with partners is the key to the best possible results on the ground. Since launching our new Greening Our Cities program, TNC has spent time with city governments, nonprofit partners and grassroots organizations in cities like Elizabeth, Newark and East Orange to identify how TNC’s unique skills can add to success in the city neighborhoods that most need community green spaces. With a full-time program director building these vital relationships, we are developing an urban program rooted in intentionality, engagement, equity and accountability.



10

Everyone Gets a Garden!

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted food insecurity issues in many urban communities, including the Fairmount neighborhood in Newark’s West Ward. TNC is working with Groundwork Elizabeth, the Victoria Foundation, the Greater Newark Conservancy and a resident-led group called Friends of Fairmount Greenspaces on the #EveryoneGetsaGarden project to help provide fresh food and gardening education. We worked with the project team to survey local residents, hold an information session and distribute garden starter kits, including vegetable and herb plants, seeds, soil and Garden 101 instructions, with follow-up virtual gardening lessons. We’re also working with the City of Newark to identify vacant spaces in the neighborhood that can be rejuvenated as community gardens for next year.



Laying the Groundwork

One of our earliest partners was Groundwork Elizabeth, a nonprofit dedicated to building healthy, sustainable, and equitable communities. A project to design a rain garden and green master plan for the Elmora Public Library and community garden was an exciting opportunity to work together. Our team connected Groundwork Elizabeth with Rutgers and funded their design of the new master plan with the goal to improve stormwater management. Our land stewards then installed a green roof on top of a shed to collect rainwater, not only reducing runoff in the library parking lot, but providing water for the community garden!

LEFT TO RIGHT A Newark resident collects seeds for her Everyone Gets a Garden starter kit. © Tenisha Malcolm/TNC; TNC staff install a green roof at Elmora Public Library © Lily Mullock/TNC.

Tackling Climate Change

The science is clear: climate change poses a real, immediate and growing threat to our planet. Here in New Jersey, we are already familiar with some of its impacts, such as increasing temperatures, rising sea levels and more frequent storms. Importantly, New Jersey can also be part of the solution. The Chapter is using our science-based, collaborative, non-partisan approach to help our state achieve its bold commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.



Spotlight on Electric Vehicles (EVs)

The transportation sector is the largest single source of greenhouse gas emissions in New Jersey, responsible in recent years for more than 40% of the state's emissions. It is therefore key to reduce New Jersey's total emissions. TNC is promoting clean energy transportation alternatives to corporate and government audiences as well as individuals.


To build public awareness, TNC and partner Montclair Film screened the documentary *Happening: A Clean Energy Revolution* for a full-capacity audience and led a robust panel discussion following the film.

In October 2019, TNC and our partners, NJ Sustainable Business Council (NJSBC) and nonprofit Ceres, brought together 40 representatives from businesses large and small to share information about electrifying corporate fleets and increasing charging capacity. Participants gave the event high marks, and some corporations in attendance subsequently added charging stations at their facilities.

TNC contributed to a collaborative effort encouraging passage of bi-partisan, comprehensive legislation to establish goals and incentives for the increased use of plug-in electric vehicles and infrastructure in New Jersey. We created and distributed an EV infographic to get accurate information out to the public and government officials. Working with NJSBC and Ceres, we secured signatures from businesses on a letter of support for the EV legislation that was sent to the governor and legislators. Governor Murphy signed the legislation into law on January 17, 2020 - a huge win for New Jersey's clean energy future!

CAMPAIGN FOR
The **REAL** 
NATURE *of*
NEW JERSEY
 **2014-2020**

 **\$87 Million**
 Raised

63,168 
 People contributed

 Giving from
100%
 of New Jersey counties 
115 New Legacy gifts

17 Days from dam removal until return of shad to the Paulins Kill

47.7 Miles of new or enhanced trails

100,000 Trees planted

5,989 Acres protected

97,500 Cubic yards of sediment used in marsh restoration

249 Osprey hatched on TNC-managed land



THANK YOU



**Message from
Campaign and
Board Chair
Mark DeAngelis
and New Jersey
State Director
Dr. Barbara
Brummer**

We are pleased to announce the successful completion of our *Campaign for the Real Nature of New Jersey*, surpassing our goal with a grand total of \$87 million. Your commitment and belief in the urgency of conservation brought us to this moment. Every gift from a TNC-NJ member, every realized bequest, and every gift from our extraordinary Trustees and Conservancy Council members helped us reach this milestone. Thank you for believing and for caring enough to donate so generously.

The accomplishments you read about here are your accomplishments. Thank you for all you are doing to protect the *real* nature of New Jersey.

The \$80 million Campaign for the Real Nature of New Jersey was launched in 2014 to generate the resources needed to accomplish The Nature Conservancy's ambitious conservation objectives. The New Jersey Chapter thanks the following major contributors - along with all our other generous supporters - whose gifts and pledges helped us surpass our goal and accelerate protection of lands and waters in New Jersey and beyond.

Anela Kolohe Foundation
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BAPS Charities, Inc.
Estate of Peter Bardach
Barr Foundation
Mr. Jonathan B. Bellack
Glenn Boyd and Lisa Ani Garapedian
Franta J. Broulik
Dr. Barbara and Mr. Thomas Brummer
Lisa C. Caplan
Climate Resilience Fund
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Denise and Mark DeAngelis
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NATURE
THANKS
YOU



View from High Rocks Overlook at Johnsonburg Swamp Preserve © Jeff Burian/TNC