



## **Menantico Creek Preserve in Vineland grows to 685 acres**

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VINELAND, NJ – New Jersey Conservation Foundation’s (NJ Conservation) Menantico Creek Preserve in Cumberland County just grew significantly, thanks to a public-private partnership led by NJ Conservation, the American Littoral Society and Cumberland County. Together they teamed up to acquire 85 forested acres adjoining the preserve that will provide space for recreation, as well as protect wildlife and water quality.

Earlier this month, the American Littoral Society purchased the 85-acre Feigenbaum property on Panther Road in Vineland for \$302,000, using funds from the New Jersey Green Acres Program, Cumberland County and the Open Space Institute. The property was transferred to the sole ownership of NJ Conservation, which acquired the Menantico Creek Preserve’s original 600 acres in 2018.

The Feigenbaum family expressed that they are “happy to know that the acquisition of our property will help to increase the size of the Menantico Creek Preserve.”

“Thanks to this great partnership, the Menantico Preserve now stands at 685 acres of protected open space,” said Rob Ferber, NJ Conservation’s Regional Manager for the Delaware Bay Watershed. “The preserve is near population centers in downtown Vineland and Millville, and we’re creating a trail system to make it a valuable resource for the community.”

The Menantico Creek Preserve features 2.2 miles of the Menantico Creek and its tributaries – part of the federally-designated Maurice Wild and Scenic River system. The Menantico Creek is one of the main tributaries of the Maurice River, which flows into the Delaware Bay. The property has extraordinarily high plant and animal diversity.

The newly-acquired property – located immediately to the south of the original preserve — has high conservation value, as it has never been clear cut for farming. Its old growth forest provides habitat for bald eagles, barred owls and red-headed woodpeckers. In addition, its dense system of tree roots and undisturbed soil filters out pollutants, helping to recharge the Kirkwood-Cohansey Aquifer, South Jersey’s main source of clean drinking water.

“We need to protect the land to protect the water,” said Tim Dillingham, Executive Director of the American Littoral Society. “This is an exceptionally valuable place and we are proud to have been part of the partnership that brought this all together. The Littoral Society continues to work in the Delaware Bayshore area because preserving open space will not only help save forests and wildlife habitat, but also improve water quality rivers in the bay and its tributaries. We thank the landowners and our partners at New Jersey Conservation Foundation, Open Space Institute and Cumberland County for the collaboration that made this possible.”



*The addition of 85 forested acres to Menantico Creek Preserve will provide more space for recreation, as well as protect wildlife and water quality.*

The addition of the Feigenbaum property is the second expansion of NJ Conservation's Menantico Creek Preserve supported through the Open Space Institute's (OSI) Delaware River Watershed Protection Fund, which seeks to protect water quality in the Delaware River Basin. The Delaware River Watershed Protection Fund is made possible with funding from the William Penn Foundation's Delaware River Watershed Initiative. Launched in 2014, the OSI Fund has protected more than 21,000 acres of forested land to filter the Delaware River Watershed, a source of drinking water for approximately 15 million people — including residents of Trenton, Philadelphia, Wilmington, and New York City.

"The Open Space Institute is extremely proud of our role in supporting the expansion of Menantico Creek Preserve, whose floodplain forest and wetlands are instrumental in safeguarding sources of clean drinking water within the Delaware River Watershed," said Bill Rawlyk, OSI's Mid-Atlantic Field Coordinator. "We applaud New Jersey Conservation Foundation, the American Littoral Society, and their partners for their tireless efforts to see this land protected, forever."

"The Green Acres Program was thrilled to participate in this important acquisition partnership," said Martha Sullivan Sapp, Director of Green Acres. "Preserving this property ensures the continued protection of wetlands and forested areas, both of which are critical to mitigating the effects of climate change."

“Cumberland County is thrilled to participate in the acquisition of this land for recreational and open space purposes,” said Douglas Albrecht, Director of the Cumberland County Board of County Commissioners. “It is one of the Commissioner Board’s priorities to support park development and encourage healthy activities like walking and hiking. This new amenity in Cumberland County is a great partnership with the New Jersey Conservation Foundation and we thank them for investing in our county.”

Before the Feigenbaum property could be approved for Green Acres funding, illegally dumped materials on the land had to be removed. In April, a group of more than 20 volunteers organized by Jason Howell of the Pinelands Preservation Alliance removed enough trash to fill a 30-yard dumpster. In addition, nearly 20 tons of asphalt that had been illegally dumped were removed and properly disposed of, along with tires and other materials.

The Menantico Creek Preserve is in close proximity to other preserved open space and farmland, including the Nature Conservancy’s Upper Manumuskin River Preserve and the state’s Peaslee Wildlife Management Area.

*NJ Conservation recognizes that the property, like the rest of New Jersey, is part of the traditional homelands of the Lenape people. We pay respect to the Lenape and other Indigenous caretakers of these lands and waters, those who lived here before, and the generations to come.*