



Board of County Commissioners

County of Hunterdon
71 Main Street, Building #1
PO Box 2900
Flemington, NJ 08822-2900

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: September 14, 2021

Contact: Matt Holt, Commissioner

Matt.holt@co.hunterdon.nj.us

Shaun C. Van Doren, Commissioner

Shaun.vandoren@co.hunterdon.nj.us

Hunterdon Gains 75 Open Space Acres At No Cost To County Taxpayers

Hunterdon County will gain seventy-five additional open space acres near the Rockaway Creek in Tewksbury, at no cost to the County taxpayers, through approval of an agreement with the New Jersey Conservation Foundation (NJCF) to accept the new open space by the Board of Commissioners, on September 7th.

Commissioner Matt Holt, the Board's liaison for Planning and Land Use, stated, "The property, located on County Road 523, meets every criterion for open space preservation, as it contains the Rockaway Creek, a C1 stream for trout production, and is also the location of a tributary that feeds a small one-acre pond.

In return for gaining title to the acreage at no cost, the County is required to establish a Long-Term Stewardship Plan for the property, which is a beneficial tradeoff for adding seventy-five acres to the county's park system and preserving the property from development."

The NJCF received federal funding through a Highlands Open Space Grant to purchase the property from Belle Mead Development Corporation in Tewksbury.

Commissioner Shaun C. Van Doren, who formerly served as Mayor of Tewksbury, noted, "The preservation of this property ends a 40+ year saga of proposed office and housing development that was to have been built on this and adjoining property.

The proposed development precipitated numerous lawsuits, citizen action clashes, hundreds of planning meetings, not to mention significant proposed road widening, including 4 lanes on Route 523 to Route 22, which now won't be required.

Adding this parcel to the County's open space inventory adds to more publicly accessible land in the northern part of Hunterdon County. It continues the County's commitment to preserving environmentally and ecologically sensitive land along the Rockaway Creek corridor and in the Highlands region.

The Board appreciates the cooperation of the Conservation Foundation in helping to preserve this land."