

New Jersey Audubon and Monmouth Conservation Foundation Partner to Transfer Ownership of Scudder Preserve

MCF and D&R Greenway Land Trust join to ensure permanent preservation by co-holding conservation easements

BERNARDSVILLE, NEW JERSEY, USA, April 30, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- New Jersey Audubon (NJA), a private, not-for-profit, membership organization founded in 1897 with a focus on connecting people with nature and stewarding nature for future generations throughout New Jersey, announced the transfer of the 90-acre [Scudder Preserve](#) in Middletown Township, New Jersey to [Monmouth Conservation Foundation](#) (MCF), a nonprofit land trust focused on preserving open space throughout Monmouth County.



Photo of pond on Scudder Preserve; Photo Credit: Jena Cosimo

The Scudder Preserve consists of 90 acres of preserved habitat. The property was originally owned by Richard and Elizabeth Scudder. In 2007 Richard Scudder donated around 60 acres to NJA, and in 2012 the remaining 30 acres and homestead were gifted to the organization in Richard Scudder's will. The preserve sits on both sides of Browns Dock Road with nature trails winding their way through wooded, rolling hills, grasslands, streams, and a pond along the Scudder homestead.

"Our two organizations have taken a partnership approach in working together to make the transfer a success while keeping the environmental vision of the Scudder family intact and this beautiful space open to the Monmouth County community. This shift of ownership makes the most sense for both our organizations, allowing us to focus on our respective missions and geographies, while ensuring open space protection," stated Alex Ireland, president and CEO, NJ Audubon.

MCF is no stranger to the Scudder Preserve. As the nonprofit originally responsible for holding the conservation easements on the site, MCF has conducted annual monitoring visits and stayed in close communication with NJA as the landowner. As part of its mission to acquire and preserve open space and farmland and conserve natural habitats throughout Monmouth County in support of outdoor recreation, agriculture, clean water, and wildlife for long-term sustainability, MCF stewards 1,100 acres of conserved lands through 46 easements across the county.

The Scudder Preserve will remain permanently preserved under the current conservation easements, but

stewardship of the easements will be co-held by MCF's peer organization, the D&R Greenway Land Trust based in Princeton, New Jersey and MCF. Joining with another accredited land trust assures that the easement will continue and, in fact, be enhanced with further protections.

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Having our own preserve will allow us to engage with our community directly, model sustainable practices, and hopefully excite future generations to carry on our work to

#KeepMonmouthGreen”

*William Kastning, MCF
Executive Director*

Legally, the same organization cannot take title to the land while continuing to hold the easement(s) without having the interests merge and extinguish.

“D&R Greenway was happy to jump in to assist MCF with this permanent protection,” said Linda Mead, President and CEO. “This solution that brings together two sister land trusts and NJ Audubon is truly a partnership model that brings public benefit to everyone who lives in the region.”

“This collaboration enables MCF to solidify our organizational relevancy long into the future. In our 47 years, MCF has often acted behind the scenes to help

preserve some of Monmouth's most cherished parks, green spaces, and farms. Having our own preserve will allow us to engage with our community directly, model sustainable practices, and hopefully excite future generations to carry on our work to #KeepMonmouthGreen,” shared William Kastning, MCF's Executive Director.



MCF has secured a \$1 million donation from an anonymous donor in support of costs related to the Scudder Preserve improvement to the infrastructure, maintenance needs, as well as general operating expenses.

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