

Warren County Department of Land Preservation

2012 Annual Report

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Warren County Department of Land Preservation

Since beginning on June 12, 2002, the Land Preservation Department (LPD) has adhered to its charter by administering:

- The Farmland Preservation Program under the Warren County Agriculture Development Board (CADB)
- The Open Space Preservation Program under the Board of Recreation Commissioners (BORC)
- The Municipal and Charitable Conservancy Trust Fund under The Municipal and Charitable Trust Fund Committee (MCCTFC)
- Other preservation programs as directed by the Board of Chosen Freeholders (BCF)

The Open Space Trust Fund

To balance the needs of the farmland, open space and historic preservation programs, the Board of Chosen Freeholders allocates the trust funds as follows:

- 55% to the County Agriculture Development Board (CADB) for farmland preservation;
- 25% to the Municipal and Charitable Conservancy Trust Fund Committee (MCCT) for non-profit and municipal sponsored open space and historic preservation projects; and
- 20% to the Board of Recreation Commissioners (BORC) for acquisition of county parkland;

The Land Preservation Department Celebrates 10 Years!

The Open Space Trust Fund has enabled Warren County to:

- Preserve over **20,799 acres of farmland;**
- Acquire over **1,700 acres of parkland;**
and
- Participate in **100 historical and open space preservation efforts** with local non-profits and municipalities.

The Board of Recreation Commissioners (BORC)



The Board of Recreation Commissioners (BORC)

- The Department assists the BORC with recommending acquisition of lands in accordance with the County's Open Space Plan.
- In addition, the Department helps coordinate the use and improvement of parkland and promotes awareness of the county's natural resources.

Open Space & Recreation

Among other objectives, the County Open Space Plan encourages the Department to acquire targeted open space for recreation activities.

Acquisition Goals:

- Land bank as much land as possible for future use or conservation;
- Acquire properties along established and proposed trails, specifically the Highland/Warren Trail, abandoned railroad rights-of-way, and the Morris Canal to create high priority greenways;
- Acquire properties along streams and rivers to establish greenways and linear parks;
- Acquire environmentally sensitive sites;
- Acquire cultural, historical, and archeological open space sites; and
- Connect various open space reserves.

Recreation Goals:

- Develop a modes, passive recreation system in the short term that allows activities like walking, hiking, sight seeing, bird watching, etc.
- Provide opportunities for traditional uses such as hunting and fishing where appropriate;

(Source: 2008 Warren County Open Space & Recreation Plan)

Open Space Acquisition Strategies

- **Morris Canal Greenway**

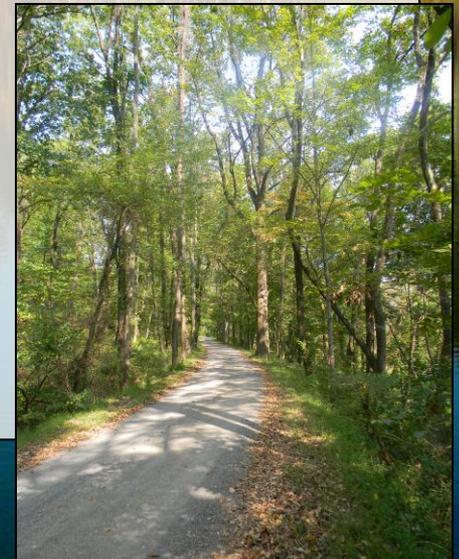
- Unique Features and Sites of Interest
 - Inclined Planes, Locks, Etc.
- Contiguous Tracts of Land
 - Adjoining Lots, Gaps, Etc.
- Population Centers
 - Phillipsburg (Lock Street & Plane 10)
 - Lopatcong/Greenwich (Strykers Road, Stine, & Plane 9)
 - Franklin (Breadlock Park)
 - Washington Township (Meadowbreeze Park)
 - Washington Borough/Mansfield (Port Colden to Port Murray)
 - Hackettstown (Florence Kuipers, Bilby Road, Etc.)

Open Space Acquisition Strategies

- Natural Resource Areas
 - Unique Features and Sites of Interest
 - White Lake, Marble Hill, Oxford Mountain, Etc.
 - Contiguous Tracts of Land
 - Adjoining Lots, Gaps, Etc.
 - Population Centers
 - White Lake – North, Northeastern
 - Marble Hill – South, Southwestern
 - Oxford Mountain - Central

Open Space Recent Acquisitions

- **The Port Murray Preserve (December 2011)**
 - Unique Features and Sites of Interest
 - 140 acres of forest, streams, wetlands, and meadows.
 - Remains from Inclined Plane 5W and Trolley Line
 - Approx. 1000' of Intact Towpath & Canal Basin
 - Contiguous Tracts of Land
 - Adjoins State Property and connects to existing County Property.
 - Short walk from Bertland Heritage Area
 - Population Centers
 - Accessible from Port Murray
 - Near Elementary School & Ball Fields
 - Short drive from Washington, Oxford, & Hackettstown



Open Space Pending Acquisitions

- Pipeline
 - Over one dozen properties throughout the county which are being investigated
- Negotiating
 - 6 properties totaling 150 acres in 4 municipalities
- Under Contract
 - 4 properties totaling 36.5 acres in 3 municipalities

Open Space Maintenance & Stewardship

The Department oversees three sizable Natural Resource Areas, as well as several key sites along the Morris Canal Greenway.

Natural Resource Areas include:

- White Lake Natural Resource Area;
- Marble Hill Natural Resource Area; and
- West Oxford Mountain Natural Resource Area;

Morris Canal Sites include:

- Jim and Mary Lee Museum;
- Morris Canal Breadlock Park;
- The Dennis Bertland Heritage Area;
- Florence Kuipers Park and others.



Open Space Recreation & Preservation

Our goal is to maximize public use and enjoyment of recreation areas while protecting valuable natural resources by:

- Educating residents about open space recreation in person, at events, and online;
- Encouraging visitors to enjoy our natural and historical attractions;
- Providing parking areas and signage at trail heads;
- Clearing/marking trails and maintaining facilities; and
- Supporting ecological restoration efforts and sustainable stewardship practices.

Open Space Assistance

Interdepartmental Coordination:

- Working closely with the Planning Department to obtain grants for trail/facility improvement and outreach;
- Working with the Engineering and Road Departments to provide safe and accessible parking areas at trail heads to existing attractions;
- Work with the Public Information Department to create a website with downloadable brochures to encourage recreational tourism;

Open Space Assistance

Volunteer/Nonprofit Partnerships:

- Working with the NJ Youth Corps on regular mowing and maintenance schedule, as well as various special projects;
- Working with the Nature Conservancy to improve public accessibility and education at White Lake while facilitating important ecological restoration activities;
- Working with the Morris Canal Committee and Highlands Project to develop and maintain interpretive sites for public use;

**New Jersey
Youth Corps**
of Phillipsburg



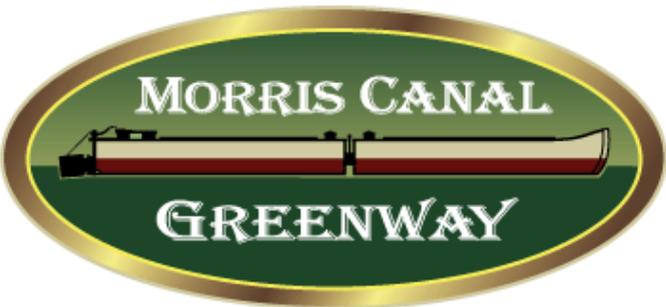
Mowing, Maintenance, & Special Projects Throughout The County



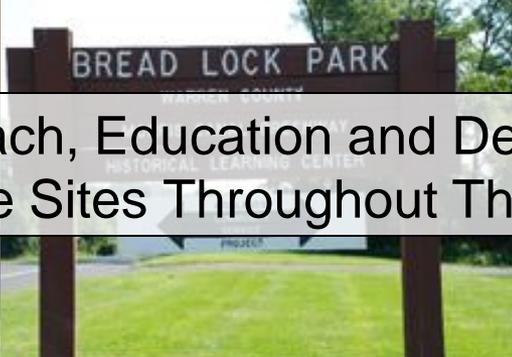


Public Outreach, Education, & Ecological Restoration at White Lake





Public Outreach, Education and Developing Interpretive Sites Throughout The County



The County Agricultural Development Board (CADB)



The County Agricultural Development Board (CADB)

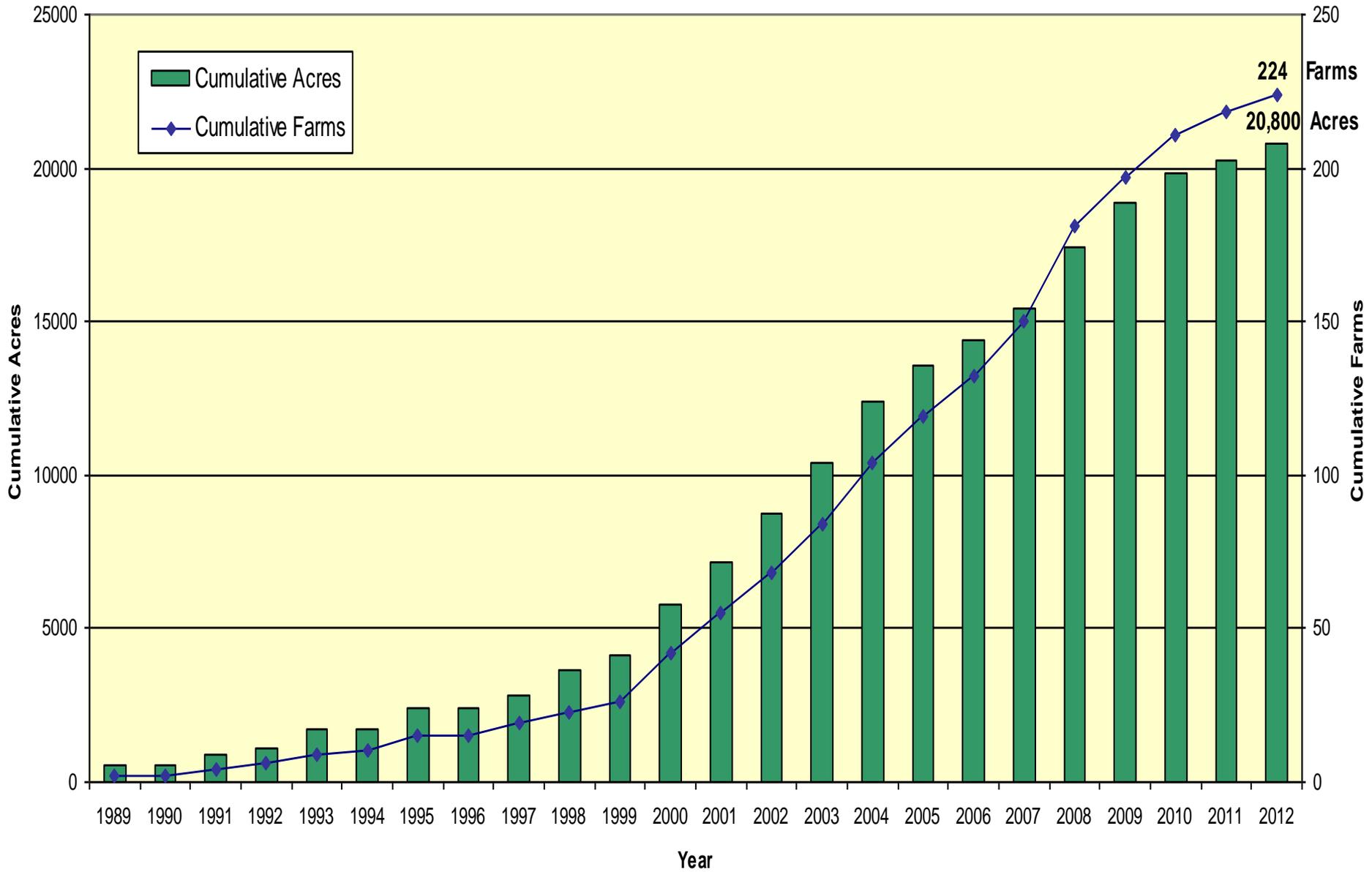
The CADB oversees the County Farmland Preservation Program and Right-To-Farm matters.

- Since the Farmland Preservation Program's inception in 1986, Warren County has aggressively pursued the preservation of its farmland, farms and farmers.
- To date, the CADB has preserved **224 farms** comprising about **20,800 acres** of farmland throughout the county.
- We anticipate one additional farm will close before year end, bringing the total to 225 farms comprising about 20,886 acres.

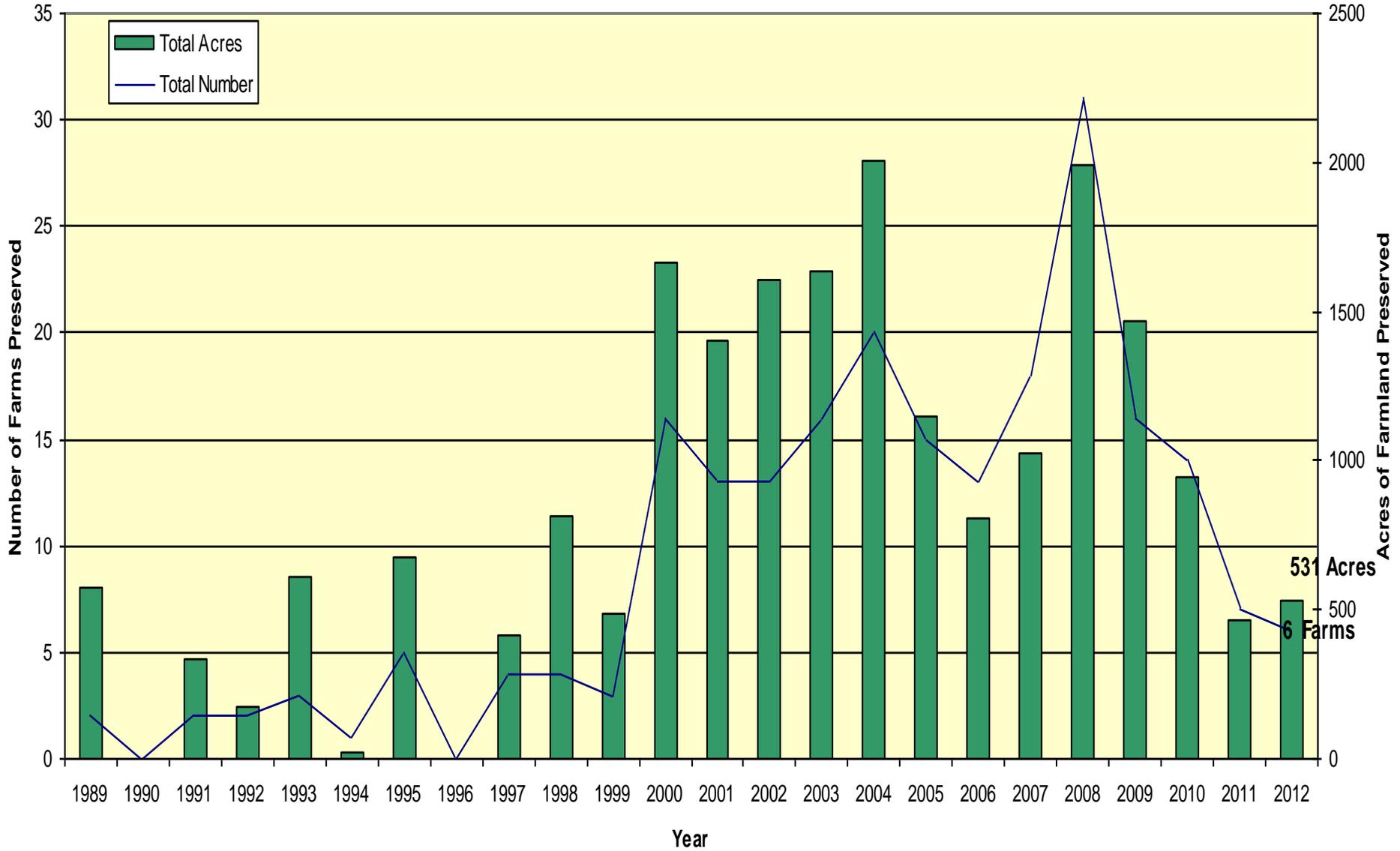


Warren County Farmland Preservation Program

Cumulative Preserved Farms & Acres Per Calendar Year



Warren County Land Preservation Annual Preservation Totals

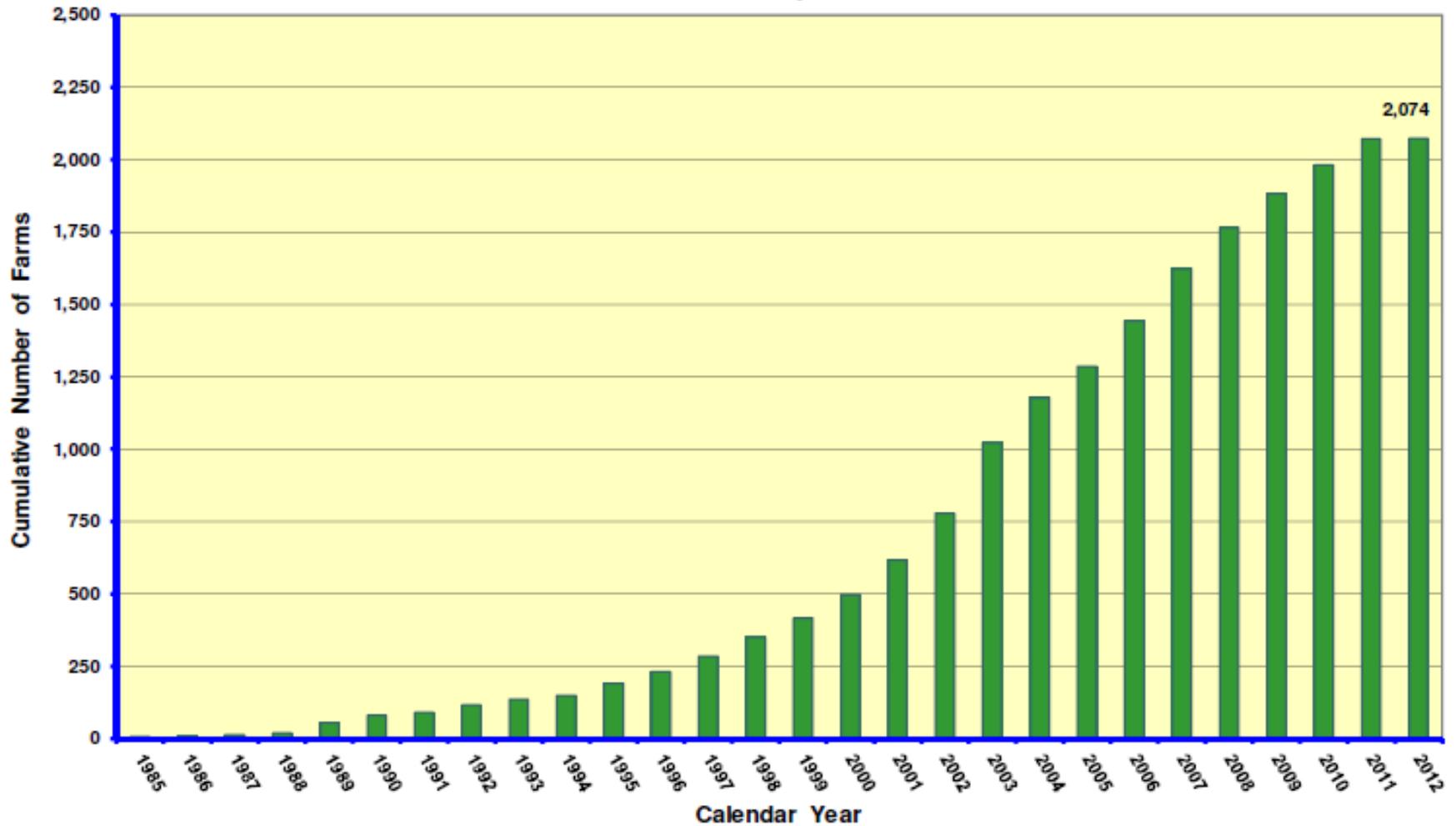


Peer Comparison

- Since the Farmland Preservation Program's inception in 1986, the SADC has preserved **2,074 farms** comprising about **195,797 acres** of farmland throughout the state.
- Statewide, Warren County accounts for **10% of preserved farms** and **10.1% of preserved farm acreage**.
- Out of 18 participating counties, Warren County ranks **3rd** in total number of farms preserved and **4th** in total acres preserved.

New Jersey Farmland Preservation Program PERMANENTLY PRESERVED FARMS BY CALENDAR YEAR

Cumulative Farms Preserved by Calendar Year



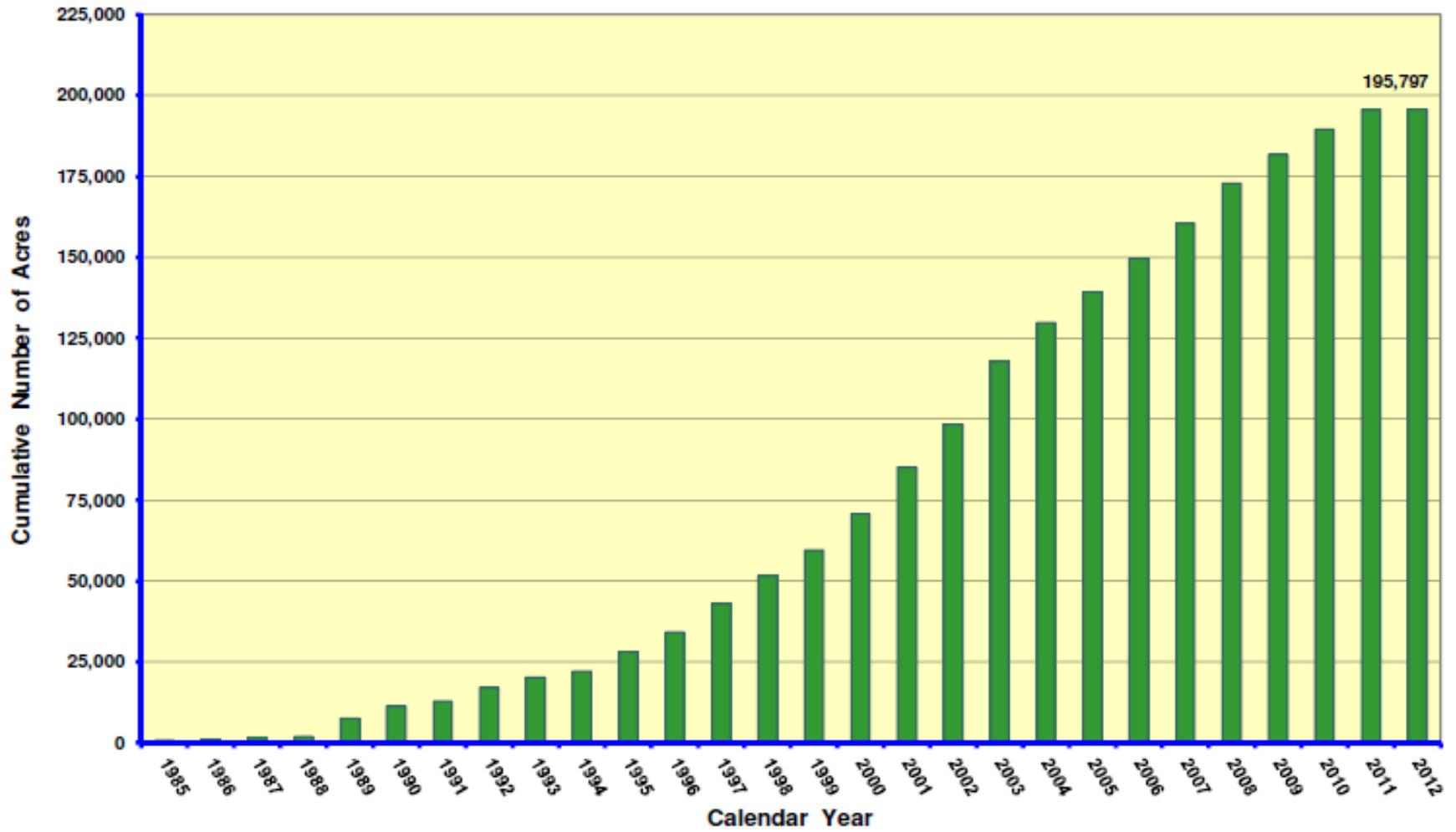
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Source: **New Jersey State Agriculture Development Committee**

As of January 13, 2012

New Jersey Farmland Preservation Program
PERMANENTLY PRESERVED ACRES BY CALENDAR YEAR

Cumulative Acres Preserved by Calendar Year



Leveraging Our Investment Through Partnerships



- 2012 YTD, the total cost to preserve approximately 531 acres was \$2,662,194.
 - The SADC contributed \$1,707,039 (or 64.1%)
 - **The County contributed \$596,429 (or 22.4%)**
 - Municipalities contributed \$262,583 (or 9.9%)
 - Nonprofits/Others contributed \$96,141 (or 3.6%)
- In other words, for every \$1 the County spent this year, the State, Municipalities, and Nonprofits matched \$3.46 towards farmland preservation.

Value of Agriculture To Warren County



• Agriculture Products Sold:

Crops:	\$43,622,000 (58%)	8 th in State
Livestock & Poultry:	\$31,855,000 (42%)	1 st in State
Total:	\$75,477,000 (100%)	7th in State

(2007 Census of Agriculture)

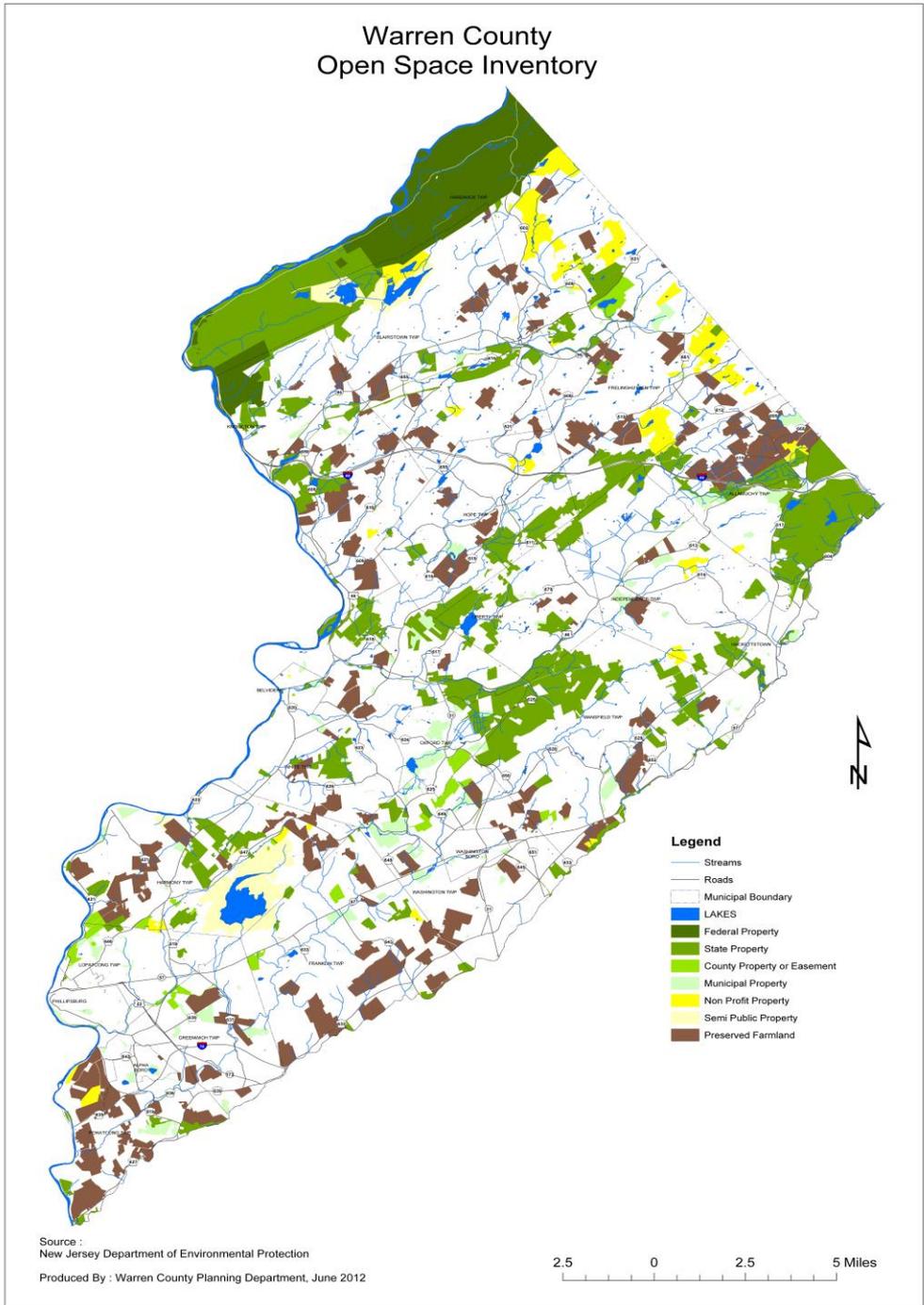
- Supports ancillary businesses, such as equipment suppliers and livestock veterinarians
- Provides indirect support to the local economy by offering seasonal employment opportunities for young residents and seasonal workers who, in turn, patronize local stores and businesses
- Provides a greater economic benefit to the local community than other kinds of land uses because, contrary to residential neighborhoods and commercial districts, farms require little if any municipal services. *(2008 Farmland Preservation Plan)*

Warren County:
232,207 total acres

Warren County Farmland:
933 farms; 74,975 ac.
(07' USDA Census of Agriculture)

Preserved Farmland:
223 farms; 20,676 ac.

Preserved Farmland
accounts for:
8.9% of Total County Land
27.5% of County Farmland



Farmland Preservation Current Applications

- 18 farms totaling 1,371 acres have applied for preservation and are currently in some stage of the process.
 - 10 farms are County applications
 - 5 farms are Municipal-PIG applications
(County participates in process and financing)
 - 4 farms are Nonprofit applications
(County participates in process and financing)
- 1 additional farm totaling 86 acres may close before year end.

Right-To-Farm Program

- In addition to preserving farmland, the CADB also oversees the county's Right-To-Farm Program under N.J.S.A. 41C-1 et seq.
- The purpose of the Right-To-Farm Act is to protect responsible commercial farmers from public and private nuisance actions and unduly restrictive municipal regulations.
- The CADB resolves a number of Right-To-Farm matters each year.

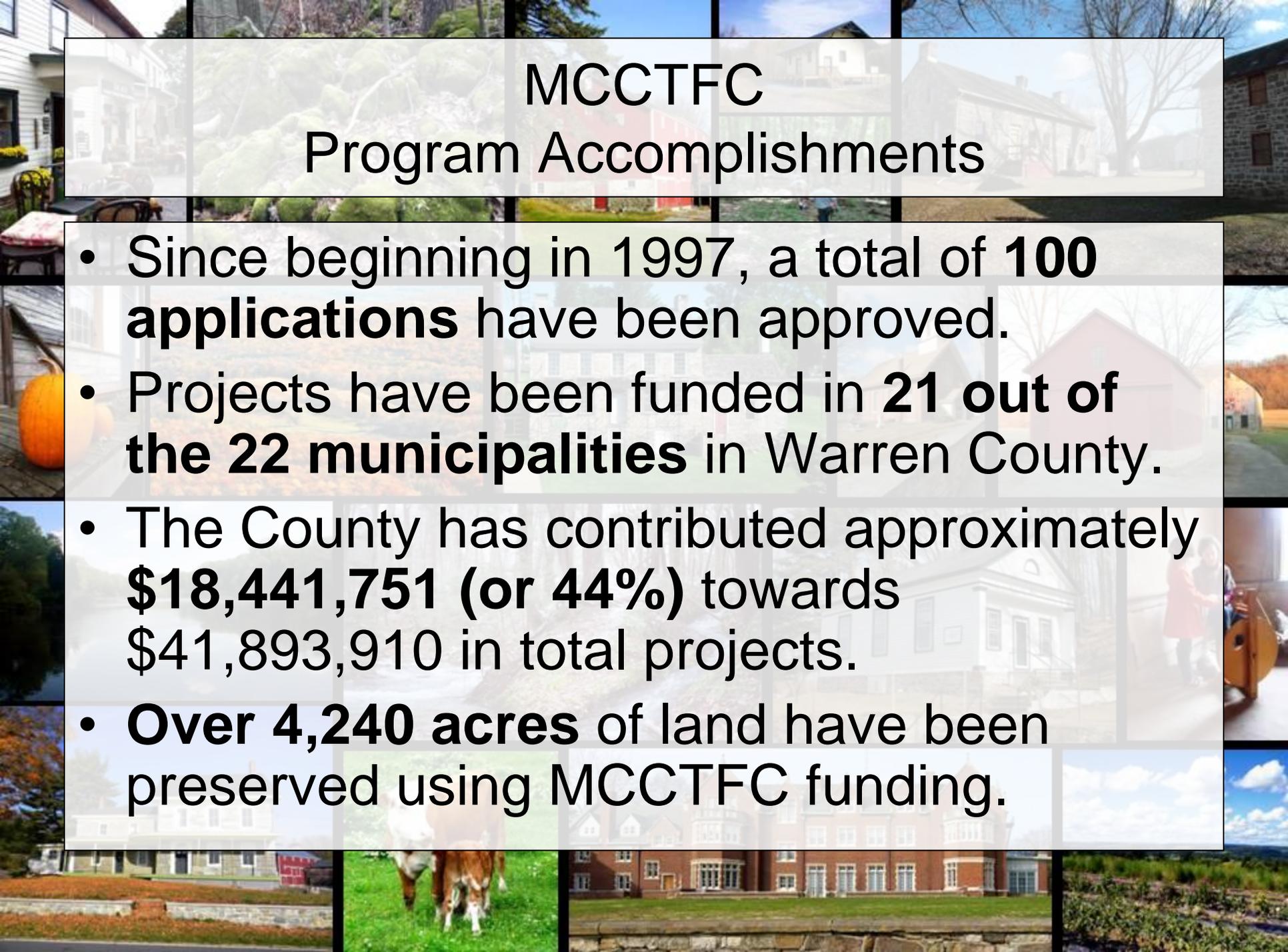
The Municipal and Charitable Conservancy Trust Fund Committee (MCCTFC)



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The MCCTFC consists of 12 members who review, prioritize and recommend municipal and charitable conservancy projects for funding by the Freeholders.

- Projects may include:
 - Open Space Acquisition for recreation and conservation,
 - Farmland Preservation, and/or
 - Historic Preservation (acquisition, stabilization and renovation).



MCCTFC

Program Accomplishments

- Since beginning in 1997, a total of **100 applications** have been approved.
- Projects have been funded in **21 out of the 22 municipalities** in Warren County.
- The County has contributed approximately **\$18,441,751 (or 44%)** towards \$41,893,910 in total projects.
- **Over 4,240 acres** of land have been preserved using MCCTFC funding.



MCCTFC 2011 Projects

- Last year, 22 applications were submitted with initial requests totaling \$4,914,531.
- 17 historic and open space projects totaling \$3,171,900 were approved.
 - 4 projects totaling \$706,900 will help preserve 355 acres of open space, with the county contributing less than 28% towards the total project costs.
 - 13 projects totaling \$2,465,001 will help preserve historic sites and structures in 9 municipalities.



MCCTFC 2012 Applications

- This year, 13 applications were submitted with initial requests totaling \$2,705,481.
 - 3 applications would preserve approximately 148 acres of open space.
 - 10 applications would preserve sites and structures in 8 municipalities.
- \$1,200,000 is budgeted for funding MCCTFC projects.
- Recommendations will be made later this year.