



Site Search

Search Local Business Listings

Search for keywords, people, locations, obituaries, Web ID and mor

Go

- Home
- News
- Weather
- Sports
- Entertainment
- Living
- Interact
- Jobs
- Autos
- Real Estate
- Rentals
- Classified Ads
- Shop

Top Stories

- Massive amount of garbage cleaned off beaches
- Panasonic moving from Secaucus to Newark
- Voters still split on Christie

Home > Mercer County

Large protection deal would save nearly 2,000 acres in Mercer, Burlington, Monmouth counties

Published: Tuesday, April 19, 2011, 7:00 AM

By Erin Duffy/The Times

Like 14 people like this. Be the first of your friends.

Tweet Share 14

Comment 1

Share Email Print



Martin Griff/The Times

Members of the Flemer family stand to be acknowledged during a ceremony on their Princeton Nurseries land in Upper Freehold Township yesterday. The family's property is part of a \$27.8 million deal to preserve nearly three square miles of farmland.

UPPER FREEHOLD TOWNSHIP — Surrounded by blooming magnolias and dogwoods, more than two dozen local and state officials gathered in Upper Freehold yesterday to announce the \$27.8 million preservation of nearly 2,000 acres straddling three counties including Mercer.

Cheered by news of the open space deal, environmentalist Linda Mead couldn't help but break out in song.

"This land is your land, this land is my land, this land is preserved for you and me," the D&R Greenway president and

CEO sang, riffing on Woody Guthrie's folk classic.

Billed as the largest farmland and open space protection deal in the state's history, the agreement will allow for the preservation of the huge Princeton Nurseries tract, which spreads across Upper Freehold in Monmouth County, Hamilton in Mercer and North Hanover in Burlington. The land area encompasses nearly three square miles.

One thousand acres will be set aside for open space, with plans for a 512-acre wildlife management area and another 500-acre addition to the Monmouth and Mercer county park systems.

The remaining 900 acres will be preserved through farmland easements, which allow land to be used only for farming and agriculture, protecting it from future development.

The purchase was forged with the cooperation of the Flemer family, who own and until now operated Princeton Nurseries.

Once one of the largest commercial nurseries in the country, the family ran its wholesale tree and

More Mercer County

- Most Comments Most Recent
- Mercer County stories with the most comments in the last 7 days.
- 247 Christie estimates changes in employee benefits will save \$870M a year
 - 132 Tea party members from across N.J. gather in East Windsor
 - 126 Trenton New Black Panther Party denounces neo-Nazi rally set for N.J. Statehouse
 - 92 Rutgers students march in New Brunswick to protest tuition hikes, N.J. funding cuts
 - 68 N.J. activist James O'Keefe encourages tea party members in East Windsor to conduct investigations

Most Active Users

- What's this?
- Users with the most NJ.com comments in the last 7 days
- 185 opieisback
 - 112 Ramparts
 - 95 MasterMix
 - 94 AlexinLodi
 - 92 BrassBand5

Users We Love

NJ.com user Lori
She submitted high school sports photos

[More Users We Love](#)

Connect with NJ.com

What's this?

shrub business first in Kingston before expanding to Upper Freehold more than 50 years ago.

The family's Kingston land was sold to Princeton University in 1985. During the ceremony, family member Bill Flemer remembered visiting what was once a stand of maples and finding instead an intersection.

Protecting this land was the only responsible thing to do, he said.

"Every shopping center, every intersection, every housing development built, it was somebody's farm before that," he said. "The beautiful thing is, this will still be a farm. After we're long gone, it will still look like this."

The nurseries' existing trees and shrubs have been sold to a Buffalo, N.Y., company.

Plans for the preserved land are still in the works, as the land agreement is still pending. State officials hope to close on the deal by early 2012.

The majority of the tract lies in Upper Freehold, and nursery roads are expected to be turned into trail systems for hiking, bicycling and horseback riding, while the wildlife area will continue to provide a home for birds such as pheasants and blue herons.

Of the 1,900 acres, 106 lie in Hamilton, where roughly 19 acres will be protected as a greenway bordering Crosswicks Creek, and another 87 acres sold as deed-restricted farmland.

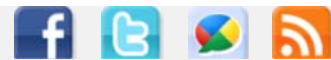
Bob Martin, the commissioner of the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) called the land acquisition a fitting way to kick off the start of Earth Week.

"This is a truly beautiful landscape with scenic views and is a remarkable preservation opportunity right in the heart of the most densely populated state in the nation," said Martin. "I commend the Flemer family and all of the partners for having the foresight to recognize its importance and then working together toward its preservation."

Like Martin, numerous officials noted the spirit of cooperation that helped transform the preservation of the Princeton Nurseries land from an idea four years ago to reality today.

The \$27.8 million deal uses more than \$16.4 million in state, local and nonprofit open-space funding sources for the purchase of land for the wildlife management area and the parkland additions, including \$7.2 million pledged by the DEP, \$7 million from Monmouth County and \$1.7 million of Mercer County open space funds. The State Agriculture Development Committee and its partners are providing an additional \$11.4 million to purchase farmland easements.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.



All Facebook & Twitter accounts »

Recommendations

-  **Rutgers to permanently cancel annual Rutgersfest concert**
5,725 people shared this.
-  **Giants to open 2011 season vs. Redskins, 10 years since 9/11**
408 people shared this.
-  **Panasonic will move North American headquarters from Secaucus to Newark**
250 people shared this.
-  **The Star-Ledger wins Pulitzer Prize for 'The Wreck of the Lady Mary'**
636 people shared this.

Facebook social plugin

Popular Tags

What's this?

- bordentown-township camden-city chris-christie east-windsor ewing hamilton-mercer-county hightstown hopewell-borough hopewell-township-mercer-county lambertville lawrence-mercer-county newark nj-weather pennington plainsboro princeton-borough princeton-township princeton-university robbinsville rutgers-university tony-mack trenton trenton-police union-city-hudson-county west-windsor



Home News Weather

Sports | Entertainment | Living | Interact | Jobs | Autos | Real Estate | Classifieds | Shopping | Place an Ad

Share this story      

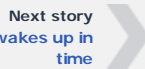
Story tools  Email  Print

More stories in Mercer County



Previous story
[Robbinsville High baseball team wakes up in time](#)

[Robbinsville High baseball team wakes up in time](#)



1

Comments

 Feed

 Post a comment



goatproud

April 19, 2011 at 9:03PM

 Follow

I love nature but cant afford more costs. Just wondering if the local residents property taxes will go up because of this ? Upper Freehold already built a middle school many of us felt was not truly necessary.

 Reply  Post new

 Inappropriate post? [Alert us.](#)

Site Search | **Search Local Business Listings**

Search by keyword, town name, Web ID and more... **Go**

[Site Map](#) | [Advertise](#) | [Contact](#) | [Make us your home page](#)

- [Your Photos](#)
- [Your Videos](#)
- [Blogs](#)
- [Forums](#)
- [NJ Shore](#)
- [NJ Weddings](#)

- [Post a Job](#)
- [Post a Free Classified Ad](#)
- [Sell Your Car](#)
- [Sell/Rent Your Home](#)
- [Apartments & Rentals](#)
- [Claim Your Business Listing for Free](#)

- [Business](#)
- [High School Sports](#)
- [NJ Lottery](#)
- [New Jersey Politics](#)
- [Obituaries](#)
- [Pets](#)

- [Subscribe to our content \(RSS\)](#)
- [Sign up for news alerts](#)
- [NJ.com Twitter feed](#)
- [Ledger Live vodcast](#)
- [View NJ.com mobile site](#)
- [View mobile product offerings](#)



Special home delivery offers!

[The Star-Ledger](#) | [The Times, Trenton](#) | [The Jersey Journal](#) | [Gloucester Co. Times](#)
[The News of Cumberland County](#) | [Today's Sunbeam](#)

© 2011 New Jersey On-Line LLC. All Rights Reserved ([About Us](#)). Use of this site constitutes acceptance of our [User Agreement](#). Please read our [Privacy Policy](#). [Community Rules](#) apply to all content you upload or otherwise submit to this site. [Contact interactivity management](#).