



Monmouth County Park System Freneau Woods Park

PROJECT INFORMATION

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

This project involves the creation of a new County Park in the northwestern portion of Monmouth County, on the borders of Aberdeen and Matawan, along the headwaters of Matawan Creek and the southern boundary of Lake Lefferts. The park currently consists of two properties acquired since 2011 and now totals 155.4 acres. The goal is the creation of a Regional Park to eventually be 400 acres or more in size as acquisition activities continue.

The Freneau Woods project has been collaborative effort with support from Senator Joe Kyrillos, the Board of Chosen Freeholders, Aberdeen Township officials, the Monmouth Conservation Foundation and the New York/New Jersey Baykeeper. The initial acquisition of park property was the purchase of the Estate of Fariello property. A subsequent acquisition is the large tract known as the Aberdeen-Wilson Tract that was once approved for the development of nearly 500 homes.

The new park is called "Freneau Woods Park" after Philip Morin Freneau (1752-1832), who played an important role in the Revolutionary War and is known as the "Poet of the American Revolution." Freneau grew up in Matawan, graduated from Princeton University in 1771 with future president James Madison and many others who went on to great distinction, and was a friend of Thomas Jefferson. A writer, naturalist, patriot, debater, sea captain, prisoner of war, and abolitionist (later in life), Freneau was best known for his inspirational poetry and influential political articles in support of the American Revolution.

REASON FOR PROJECT:

Comprised primarily of woodlands at the headwaters of Lake Lefferts along the County's northwest border, the park protects critical wildlife habitats and bolsters water quality in the region. Eventually the park will offer trails and other recreational amenities while leaving most of the park undeveloped for visitors to enjoy passive recreational activities. The park represents the largest significant park in the Northwest corner of the County and provides nearby access to a Regional Park to residents of Aberdeen, Matawan, Marlboro, Hazlet, Keyport and Union Beach.

DESIGN APPROACH:

At this time, Freneau Woods Park is intended to be a "passive park" that will likely be developed with trails and picnic facilities intended to provide access to the wilderness around the southern end of Lake Lefferts. It should be noted, however, that Regional Parks can serve many functions and can combine the functions of recreation, conservation and special use areas, providing a mix of recreational opportunities and facilities while preserving at least eighty percent (80%) of the park as forests, fields and other natural or managed habitats (including farm fields).

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS:

The acquisition process has included a number of complicated land transactions and has required site remediation on a number of sites. These include the removal of underground storage tanks, contaminated soil and miscellaneous debris from the site.

PROJECT STATUS:

The Park System has bought two properties since 2011 for a total of 155.4 acres. There are two additional active acquisition files open that are intended to secure an additional 41 acres for the park.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

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