

**Ocean County Natural Lands Trust Fund
Minutes of Advisory Committee Meeting
April 22, 2026**

Present: Alan Avery (Chair), John Bacchione, William Fox, John Peterson, Jennifer Kuhn, & Michael Mangum.

Also present at the meeting were: Frank Sadeghi (Commissioner, NLT Liaison), Sam Ellenbogen (Commissioner), Laura Benson (County Counsel), Anthony Agliata (OCPD), Tom Thorsen (OCPD), Nicole Leaf (OCPD), Chris Palmieri (OCPD), & Fred Vahlising (Public).

1. Call to Order

2. Roll Call

3. Approval of Minutes: February 25, 2026

A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Mangum and seconded by Ms. Kuhn to approve the February 25, 2026 meeting minutes. Mr. Bacchione abstains, rest in favor, motion carried.

4. Program Update: 30,481.87 acres

- Closings:

- #768 Forked River Mountains – Leone, Lacey Twp., 98.89 acres – The first closing is located in the Forked River Mountains target area. It is directly adjacent to the future location of a trailhead, and preserving it expands on Ocean County’s total inventory in the Forked River Mountains.
- #809 Roosevelt City Street Vacations, Manchester Twp., 209 acres – Manchester Township has recently vacated a various number of roads in the Roosevelt City target area, which adds a total of 209 acres to the total program acreage.
- #787 Cedar Creek – Dupignac, Berkeley Twp., 0.11 acres – This closing is located in the Cedar Creek acquisition area. It is adjacent to the Barnegat Branch Trail and Cedar Creek campground.
- #788 Cedar Creek – Holm, Berkeley Twp., 0.35 acres – Another closing located in the Cedar Creek acquisition area. Staff continues to target parcels in this area to acquire as much land in the vicinity as possible.

5. Old Business

- Old Business:
 - #755 Cosmo's Inholding, Berkeley Twp., 1.25 acres – This nomination is surrounded by Ocean County Natural Lands Trust Fund properties and is located adjacent to the Florence T. Allen Ext. II preserve. After prior review, the owner has agreed to donate the property, on condition that the County handles all due diligence costs. Acquiring the property would be beneficial for the future plans regarding the New Jersey Pulverizing Recreational RFP. The Advisory Committee advised staff to order consultant testing on the property prior to accepting the donation.
 - #800 Harbor Court Peninsula, Berkeley Twp., 0.53 acres – Staff completed a site visit on this nomination in March. The property was a former group home which has discontinued operations after a structural fire. The structure has noticeable burns along the sides of the home, but other than that the property is still standing. The bulkhead is in good shape with a dock that extends outward into the Toms River. As of now, it is unknown if the Township is willing to support the acquisition for the County to include the property into its preservation program. The Advisory Committee advised staff to move the property to hold unless Berkeley Township provides a resolution of support in the future.

6. New Business

- New Business:
 - #806 New Egypt Speedway, Plumsted Twp., 41.76 acres – 41+ acres in Plumsted Township that is known as the New Egypt Speedway Racetrack. The nomination has several structures, bleachers, and other items that would have to be demolished if the Ocean County Natural Lands Trust purchased the property. The asking price for the nomination is \$11,500,000 and assessed at \$1,132,200. The owner of the property, Fred Vahlising was present at the meeting. Mr. Vahlising mentioned that continuing operations has been difficult, and he would prefer if the County could purchase the racetrack and continue its operations as is, since the New Egypt Speedway Racetrack is a staple to the community and Ocean County. The Advisory Committee informed Mr. Vahlising that if this property was purchased by the Natural Lands Trust, those proposed uses would not be permitted, and that the acquisition would be best suited for another entity. Move to hold.
 - #807 Tuckerton Grove, Tuckerton Boro., 1.59 acres – This nomination is vacant land which is located behind a residential home. A portion of the Tuckerton Creek Tributary runs through the property which connects to Pohatcong Lake. Majority of the property is covered in wetlands and its associated buffer. The asking price is \$235,000 and it is assessed at \$130,800. The Advisory Committee felt that the asking price for the property was too high considering the nature of the parcel, and advised staff to see if the property owner would be interested in donating the property.

- #808 Lakewood Country Club, Lakewood & Jackson Twp., 369.97 acres – The final nomination is approximately 369+ acres which is situated in both Lakewood and Jackson Township. Roughly 207 acres of the nomination is located in Lakewood Township, with the remaining 162.97 acres located in Jackson Township. The property is currently being utilized as a public golf course with two restaurants on site. A deed restriction covers the golf course, which states that the land must remain as a golf course until the property owner decides to pursue a separate use in a site plan. Due to the size of the nomination, the zoning of the property differs throughout the area, from Open Space Preservation District, Residential, and Limited Commercial zones. The remaining land could eventually be targeted for development if not preserved. The asking price is \$250 million and it is assessed at \$11,137,000. The Advisory Committee authorized staff to order consultant testing on the property to assist future appraisers with determining a more accurate market value.

7. Public Comment

No comments were made by the public.

A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Fox and seconded by Mr. Mangum to move into Closed Session at 6:25 p.m. All in favor, motion carried.

A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Peterson and seconded by Ms. Kuhn to move back into Open Session at 6:29 p.m. All in favor, motion carried.

Mr. Avery stated that in closed session one nomination was discussed. There is one nomination that the Committee will take action on.

#790 Long Swamp Ext., Plumsted Twp., 110 acres

A **MOTION** was made by Mr. Mangum and seconded by Ms. Kuhn to recommend to the Board of Commissioners the fee simple acquisition of the Long Swamp Ext. property under the Ocean County Natural Lands Trust Fund, 110 acres in Plumsted Township for an amount not to exceed \$600,000.00. Roll was called, all in favor, motion carried.

- 8. Adjournment:** A **MOTION** was made by Ms. Kuhn and seconded by Mr. Peterson to adjourn the meeting at 6:30 p.m. All in favor, motion carried.

9. Next Meeting: May 20, 2026 at 5:30PM

Respectfully Submitted,



Chris Palmieri
Assistant Administrative Analyst