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FOR THE STATE TRAILS SYSTEM***

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## ***POTENTIAL TRAIL ROUTES FOR THE STATE TRAILS SYSTEM***

The public demand for trails in New Jersey is based on a number of factors. Population density contributes to a greater proportion of people that desire trails for specific uses. The currently available uses of recreational trails, as well as the absence of certain uses, together with the public demand placed on the resource, all contribute to a desire for additional trails.

There are many ideas of where new trails should be located in New Jersey. Factors considered by public agencies, trail groups and individuals to locate trails frequently include the criteria used to evaluate the trails considered eligible for designation as the regulations in Appendix IV. They also include general planning guidelines:

- Proximity to population centers. Trails are located where the people can most easily use them. Within New Jersey, the 1990 census listed the most populated counties as Bergen, Essex, and Middlesex. The greatest percentage increases from the 1980 census were in Ocean, Hunterdon, and Somerset counties. However, locating long distance trails in populated areas, or in a county such as Hudson, the most densely populated county, is difficult because of the lack of open space and generally higher purchase cost. The most frequently found source of new trails in populated areas is abandoned railroad rights-of-way or river corridors. Opportunities for long-distance trail development still exist in Ocean, Hunterdon, and Somerset Counties, and planning for trails should either precede or keep up with growth.
- Geographic representation. To have a statewide system of trails, representative sections of the state should be included. The mountains in the north, hills in the central Piedmont, coastal areas, the Pine Barrens in southern New Jersey, and the Inner Coastal Plain of central and southern New Jersey with flat lands and hills exhibit their own individualized scenic qualities.
- Presence of unique features. Natural phenomenon or cultural features unique to or representative of the state or region, which can be seen from a trail, are also considered.
- Cost of acquisition. Cost to acquire land for trails is weighed against other factors. If only a few or a single purchase can be made, this reduces the cost over the purchase of several lots from several individual owners. Also to be considered is the possibility of a donation of land.
- Cost of development and maintenance. The biggest expense of trail building is in bridge construction, particularly with abandoned railroad rights-of-way, where the structures have been removed by the railroad company. Other costs include trail surfacing, drainage work, fencing and gate installation, development of parking areas, etc.
- Linkage with existing public lands. Trails serve as greenways connecting open space nodes. They can also be developed to connect existing trails.
- Availability. Frequently, availability, or the willingness of a property owner to sell the property, is the deciding factor in acquiring land as public open space, and then weighed against the other factors.
- Public acceptance. Citizens from the municipality or region may support trail development. The presence of an organization formed to encourage trail acquisition and development frequently aids in a trail being developed for the public.

In 1992, the National Park Service and the National Parks and Conservation Association published the report *Toward a Regionwide Network of Trails for the Mid-Atlantic States*. For the report, recommendations were sought from trail groups and state and local officials about trails to include for a regional network within

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these states, including New Jersey. For New Jersey, 30 different routes were listed, including existing trails, abandoned railroad rights-of-way, and general routes for new trails. Existing trails such as the Appalachian Trail, Batona Trail and Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park were included. Some recommended routes included: an extension of Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park north to the Appalachian Trail at Delaware Water Gap; a trail along the route of the Morris Canal; a connecting trail between the southern end of the Sussex Branch Trail and Patriots' Path; a trail along the Delaware Bay from Salem to Cape May; extensions of the Batona Trail north to the Delaware River and south to Cape May County; an enduro intersecting trail network between Chatsworth and New Gretna in southern Burlington County. Linkage with existing trails, current use, and interest of a citizens group were the principal justifications given for including routes. Many of these suggestions, however, were not researched for particular routes or trail needs, nor were they being actively developed by either a governmental agency or trail group.

The following routes of potential trails include many of the recommendations from the federal report, and abandoned railroad rights-of-way, which have been surveyed over the last several years for their trail potential. These surveys examined the ownership, current condition of the pathway, and potential for conversion to a trail. Routes that are not abandoned railroad rights-of-way are those, which have been proposed in the past by user groups or public agencies. Their course need not necessarily take a straight line, but can follow river corridors, borders of property lines, road shoulders, or lands within a highway right-of-way. This listing of potential trail routes will be continually changing, as new routes are recommended by the public, studied, routes listed here become trails, or other routes listed here become unfeasible over time.

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## ***POTENTIAL TRAIL ROUTES***

### ***Allaire to Raritan Bay Greenway***

This route is in the planning stages, to be developed by Monmouth County as a multiuse trail and open space area. Planned to be 21.5 miles in length, it would link existing state, county and local parks, and use abandoned and inactive rail lines. The rail line is part of the Conrail network, formerly the Freehold and Jamesburg Railroad and the Central Railroad of New Jersey. At its southern end, it would begin in Allaire State Park, which would also link it with the Edgar Felix Bikeway through Wall Township, continuing northwest through Howell Township and Farmingdale Boro to Freehold Boro. From Freehold, it would turn almost due north through Freehold and Marlboro townships, and Matawan Boro. From there it would turn northeast through Aberdeen, and meet up with the Henry Hudson Trail, which would continue east to Atlantic Highlands near Raritan Bay. The route would pass through the Outer Coastal Plain and the rolling hills of the Inner Coastal Plain, crossing tributaries of the Manasquan River, Swimming River, and Matawan Creek. The greenway would pass through a variety of land use types, from mixed-oak forests, freshwater wetlands, farms, suburban development and towns. Because major sections of the route are inactive, a decision has yet to be made on the status of the line. If the line is to be reactivated, the county may consider a rail-with-trail. If the line is to be abandoned, then the county will pursue use as a trail and greenway.

### ***Cape May Trail/Pennsylvania-Reading Seashore Line, West Jersey and Southern Railroad***

A trail spanning the length of the Cape May peninsula would connect public lands from the tip of Cape May to Belleplain State Forest in the north. The West Jersey and Southern Railroad route could be used for all or parts of this trail. This abandoned rail line runs approximately 35 miles from Cape May City through West Cape May Borough, Lower, Middle, Dennis townships, Woodbine Borough and Dennis Township again, all in Cape May County. The right-of-way

crosses into Maurice River Township in Cumberland County and ends at Route 646 in Manumuskin. The right-of-way varies in width up to 60 feet and rails are in place on the southernmost five miles and for the last two miles of the route. Just south of Rio Grande, the right-of-way splits and the other Pennsylvania-Reading Seashore Line continues north to Tuckahoe. Freight service has resumed, and that line is now known as the Shore Fast Line Railroad. From Rio Grande to Woodbine, a distance of 17 miles, Atlantic Electric transmission lines follow the West Jersey and Southern right-of-way. The path passes a municipal park, Cape May County Park, a gravel pit, Beaver Swamp Wildlife Management Area, and the Great Cedar Swamp. North of Woodbine, the route crosses Belleplain State Forest and abuts a small portion of Peaslee Wildlife Management Area.

Conversion of all or parts of the line to a trail, or its shared use as a trail, should be considered because the right-of-way could serve as a non-motorized alternative to Route 9 and the Garden State Parkway to access various points in Cape May County. Another significant reason for using the line as a trail is that the route is in close proximity or traverses various state, county, and local public lands. In addition, there are a number of private campgrounds that provide recreational opportunities in all parts of Cape May County. Because much of the northern portion of the line runs through Belleplain State Forest and is already owned and administered by the state, administration of a trail north of Woodbine would be best served by the Division of Parks and Forestry. Conversion by gaining easements south of Belleplain State Forest could be pursued not only by the state, but also by Cape May County with the cooperation of the municipalities. The Department of Environmental Protection is considering acquisition of the Cape May Point Branch abandoned rail line, which connects with this line in West Cape May. There is also a railroad group named "Cape May Seashore Lines" that is negotiating with New Jersey Transit Corporation to utilize the existing tracks and right-of-way from Cape May City to Rio Grande

to run excursions on an historic steam or diesel train. Securing easements rather than acquiring the right-of-way would probably be the best course of action because of the number of different owners, including the considerable amount of right-of-way owned by Atlantic Electric, and the possible use of part of the right-of-way as a tourist railroad.

### ***Central Railroad of New Jersey, Southern Branch***

The Southern Branch is an abandoned line running approximately 24.5 miles. It begins at Woodmansie in Woodland Township, continues south through Tabernacle and Shamong townships, all in Burlington County, before entering Waterford Township in Camden County where the line becomes active at Winslow Junction. The tracks and ties are still in place along almost the entire route. The right-of-way varies in width from 50 to 100 feet and the surrounding landscape is generally flat. After passing through Chatsworth in Woodland Township, most of the route is heavily forested on either side of the right-of-way with pine-oak forest, particularly through 14 miles of Wharton State Forest. The right-of-way also crosses ten streams, several fields, a huge cranberry operation, passes Apple Pie Hill, and occasional bogs adjacent to the corridor. Shared use of the line as a trail should be considered because the line is continuous, has good access, and nine of ten stream crossings have bridges intact. Most significantly, the right-of-way is a connector between Lebanon and Wharton state forests, passes near Atsion Recreation Area, crosses two major canoe routes on the Lower Atsion and Batsto Rivers, connects with the Batona Trail, passes very near historic Atsion Village and Carranza Memorial, and is in close proximity to Pasadena, Greenwood Forest, and Winslow wildlife management areas. There are also numerous locations along the route that contain significant habitat for endangered plant and animal species. The line is owned by the New Jersey Department of Transportation, with planned light freight use. Part of the right-of-way could be used as a trail.

### ***Central Railroad of New Jersey, Toms River and Barnegat Branch***

This abandoned line runs approximately 17 miles from the town of Barnegat in Barnegat Township and continues north through Ocean, Lacey and Berkeley townships, Beachwood and South Toms River boroughs to Dover Township where the line becomes active at Mule Road and remains active west to Lakehurst. The majority of the right-of-way is 50 feet wide with several stretches being as wide as 100 feet. The tracks and ties have been removed along the entire abandoned portion of the line. Much of the route closely parallels Route 9 until South Toms River, where it then parallels Route 37. From Barnegat to Waretown, the line passes through a wooded area before passing a commercial and light industrial area north of Waretown. After passing the front entrance of the Oyster Creek Nuclear Power Plant, the right-of-way goes through residential areas, passes several parks, the Ocean County Utilities Authority Water Pollution Control Facility, a large sand and gravel operation, and more residential and light industry near Toms River. Although the route runs through a number of residential areas, the homes are usually screened from view because the right-of-way is often lined with trees. All of the bridges remain, although they need decking and railings, except for a short span over the Middle Branch of the Forked River where the pilings and abutments are in place. In Dover Township, the right-of-way goes under the Garden State Parkway and remains intact.

The route passes several municipal parks including the Barnegat Township Youth Recreational Complex, a Lacey Township beach on Lake Barnegat, William Hebrew Park in Lacey Township, Garfinkle Park in Dover Township and a small community park in Berkeley Township. In addition, Cedar Creek is accessible to launch a canoe from the right-of-way.

The line from Barnegat to the Beachwood and South Toms River boroughs municipal boundary, almost 14 miles, is owned by HAG Holding Company, Inc. In South Toms River there are only two owners, a distance of a little over one-half mile. Dover Township owns the right-of-way for the last 2 1/2 miles in their township.

Significant reasons for converting the line to a trail include its use as a non-motorized alternative to Route 9, the route's proximity to various recreation areas, and its location in population centers, such as Barnegat, Waretown, Toms River and Silver Ridge Park, a retirement community in Berkeley Township. The state should consider acquisition of the line from Barnegat through South Toms River, a distance of approximately 14 miles. Dover Township's portion is already under municipal ownership.

### *Coastal Heritage Trail*

This route is currently being developed by the National Park Service as a "vehicle touring" route. Authorized by Congress in 1988 to "provide for public understanding and enjoyment of sites and resources associated with the coastal area of New Jersey," it explores the natural and cultural centers of the New Jersey coast from the mouth of the Raritan River, along the oceanfront to Cape May, to Deepwater along the Delaware Bay. The Garden State Parkway serves as the inland border along the Atlantic Ocean, and Route 49 is the border for the Delaware Bay section. The concept of the trail is to connect sites, which exemplify five major themes: maritime, wildlands, migration and habitats, recreation, and lifeways (prehistoric and historic industries and structures).

What should be included as a part of the Coastal Heritage Trail is a hiking and/or biking route as well. Certain sections of the route can be made accessible, using abandoned railroad rights-of-way or road shoulders. Railroads serviced the needs of the coastal communities during the late nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century, bringing tourists to the shore resorts, or transporting local goods to markets in the New York and Philadelphia areas. As such, the lines are an integral part of the heritage of coastal New Jersey. The Henry Hudson Trail running parallel to Raritan Bay is currently being developed as a bikeway by the Monmouth County Park System. The old Pennsylvania-Reading Seashore Line from Cape May to Woodbine Junction, and from Woodbine Junction to Manumuskin is wholly incorporated in the trail area. It connects public open space lands and serves as a migration route and

habitat for wildlife. Portions of the Central Railroad of New Jersey's Toms River and Barnegat Branch in Ocean County can also be converted to a trail and made a part of the Coastal Heritage Trail. Without an abandoned railroad running east-west in the vicinity of Delaware Bay, either road shoulders or purchase of individual parcels would have to be used for the pedestrian trail. Roads south of Route 49 receive very little traffic and could be used either temporarily or permanently as part of the trail route.

### *Cross-Jersey Trail*

The Cross-Jersey Trail and Greenway is proposed for approximately 100 miles from the Delaware River in Hunterdon County to Newark's Military Park in Essex County. The trail would use existing trails and rights-of-way in state, county or local parks when possible. The trail may traverse a variety of north central New Jersey landscapes including rolling hills, river gorges, floodplains, wet meadows and residential districts. The proposed trail begins at the town of Riegelsville at the bridge crossing the Delaware River into Pennsylvania. This information is derived from a report by Andropogon Associates for the Columbia Gas Transmission Company, since a portion of the proposed trail would follow the company's pipeline right-of-way. The first section would cover over 26 miles in northwestern Hunterdon County. Along this section, the corridor would travel in the Lower Musconetcong Valley, along the abandoned Lehigh Valley Railroad spur adjacent to the Musconetcong Nature Preserve, through farmland using the service road of the active New Jersey Central Railroad line, and form the High Bridge Loop encircling the Borough of High Bridge and connecting Voorhees State Park and Spruce Run Recreation Area.

The former High Bridge railroad line covers the next 15 miles, following the South Branch of the Raritan River through Ken Lockwood Gorge Wildlife Management Area and rural countryside, leading to the community of Bartley in Morris County. This section of trail is owned by Columbia Gas Transmission Company for a pipeline right-of-way. The company will provide a completed trail system on the old railbed after

constructing the pipeline and donate title of the land to Hunterdon and Morris counties. However, Columbia Gas is currently in bankruptcy proceedings and trail improvements have been suspended until the situation is resolved.

The next 38 miles of the proposed trail may utilize existing and proposed portions of the Patriots' Path in Morris County. This segment includes a route that parallels the Black River with its extensive marsh, the Mount Freedom Loop connecting Brundage and James Andrews Memorial Parks, traverses the Whippany River floodplain, and crosses Troy Meadows, ending at the Essex County Center for Environmental Studies.

Existing and proposed portions of Essex County's Lenape Trail would make up the last 24 miles of the proposed Cross-Jersey Trail. Starting at the Center for Environmental Studies in Roseland to Military Park in downtown Newark, the trail would use approximately eight miles of Public Service Gas and Electric Company transmission line rights-of-way and connect twelve county and municipal parks.

A coordinated effort from local, county and state agencies to acquire or secure easements along the proposed trail corridor will be necessary to ensure the success of a Cross-Jersey Trail and Greenway.

### ***East Coast Greenway***

The East Coast Greenway is a proposed off-road trail for bicycling, hiking, wheelchair users, runners and many other non-motorized forms of travel. The trail would link existing or already-planned trails by using various rights-of-way, including abandoned rail and canal rights-of-way, public parks, and other linear spaces to create a corridor connecting the major cities on the east coast. The first stretch of trail to be completed, by the year 2000, is planned to run from Boston to Washington D.C. Eventually, the goal is to extend the trail from Maine to Florida, connecting with other trails throughout. Although mostly off-road, development of bike lanes and sidewalks should be encouraged for segments of local streets.

The New Jersey portion of the trail is planned to begin as the route crosses the Goethals Bridge from New York and continues through Union County utilizing that county's park system. Following the Elizabeth River, the trail would traverse Mattano Park, Elizabeth River Park that includes Ursino Lake, and Galloping Hill Park. The trail would then use an existing corridor that links Black Brook, Lenape and Echo Lake parks and Watchung Reservation. The route has mostly on-road passage from Watchung Reservation through the boroughs of Dunellen and Middlesex in Middlesex County, roughly paralleling Route 22, before reaching the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park in South Bound Brook, Somerset County. Using the D & R Canal towpath as its main route, the trail would continue until reaching Trenton, where several roadways must be used before crossing the Delaware River via the Calhoun Street Bridge into Pennsylvania. The New Jersey portion of the Greenway covers approximately 54 miles.

As part of the 1992 National Trails Day celebration, the Delaware and Raritan Canal Towpath was designated as the first official link in the East Coast Greenway. In July of that year, an exploratory tour was conducted from Boston to Washington D.C. to help determine the best route, promote the concept, and demonstrate the trail's feasibility. Trail needs include a definitive route which may include easements, separate bike/walk lanes along roadways, a system of signs, brochures/maps and agreements for the responsibilities of maintaining the many trail segments incorporated into a continuous trail.

### ***Elizabeth and Trenton Railroad***

This abandoned line runs approximately 23.5 miles from Hamilton Township, Mercer County and continues northeast through West Windsor Township, also in Mercer County, through Plainsboro, South Brunswick and East Brunswick townships in Middlesex County. The right-of-way runs through Milltown Borough before ending in North Brunswick near the Cook College Campus. The majority of the right-of-way is 100 feet wide and is located primarily in the Inner Coastal Plain with the last few miles near Milltown being in the Piedmont Province. The route passes residential and business

areas, crosses fields and forested areas, traverses or is near various parks, crosses eight streams and two lakes, and links two college campuses. Public Service Electric and Gas overhead electric transmission lines run almost the entire length of the right-of-way. Public lands the path crosses or lies near include Mercer County Community College and Mercer County Park in Hamilton and West Windsor townships, Plainsboro Township Conservation Center in Plainsboro, and Davidson's Mill County Park, undeveloped Ireland Brook County Park and Pigeon Swamp State Park, all in South Brunswick. In North Brunswick Township, the path crosses the Farrington Lake Open Space and Conservation Area, is adjacent to Eisenhower Park, and reaches a portion of the Cook College Campus of Rutgers University at the northern terminus of the line.

Significant reasons for converting this line to a trail include the route's close proximity to a number of public recreation areas and the chance to link those areas as a greenway, its use as a non-motorized alternative to Route 1 between Trenton and New Brunswick, and the access it could provide to both Mercer County Community College and Cook College of Rutgers University. To make the line continuous, bridges over eight streams would need replacement, and the trail would have to be re-routed on local roads to reach the other side of Route I-295. The right-of-way would have primarily county or local interest, particularly since the majority of public land bordering the route is county or municipally owned. Because there are seven different municipalities involved, conversion by gaining easements could be pursued by Mercer and Middlesex Counties with the cooperation of the municipalities. Securing easements rather than acquisition would probably be the best course of action since P.S.E.&G. owns almost the entire corridor, including the transmission lines.

### ***Highlands Trail***

A trail route of over 100 miles that would be located within the Highlands Physiographic Province from the Hudson River in New York State to the Delaware River, is actively being studied by a committee of the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference, New Jersey

Conservation Foundation and various trail and conservation groups and governmental agencies. The study is being guided by the National Park Service under their Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance Program. The route or routes will rely to a great extent on connecting existing public lands and trails within them. Sections may also use privately-owned lands as well. Some portions of the route may be available for hiking only, others will be multi-use or spurs off of a main route. Committee members developing the route(s) have been meeting with local officials and holding public meetings to provide information about the planning efforts and receive input on route selection. For those portions to be included now on private property, a decision will have to be made as to who or what agency will either acquire those lands or seek a recreational use easement for them.

A portion of the trail has been designated on lands owned by the Newark Watershed Conservation and Development Corporation in Passaic County. Agreements with DEP's divisions of Parks and Forestry, and Fish, Game and Wildlife have also been approved for use of those lands for the trail as well.

Another trail proposal is being developed for a Fanny Highlands Trail, coordinated by the Morris Parks and Land Conservancy. It is proposed that the Fanny Trail Network will connect with the Highlands Trail, but be concentrated with the general area of Fanny State Park and northern Morris County. It would be developed as a multiple use trail system.

### ***Hudson River Waterfront Walkway***

The Hudson River Waterfront Walkway is planned to extend 18 miles along the west shore of the Hudson River from the George Washington Bridge in Fort Lee to the Bayonne Bridge in Bayonne, with access paths from neighborhoods and roadways where appropriate. Other municipalities the walkway will traverse along its north to south route include Edgewater in Bergen County and North Bergen, Guttenberg, West New York, Weehawken, Hoboken and Jersey City in Hudson County. This linear park would offer spectacular views of the Manhattan skyline and will link some of Hudson County's

historic railroad terminals. The walkway will improve access to the 1,100-acre Liberty State Park in Jersey City and the Palisades Interstate Park beginning in Fort Lee, and municipal parks.

In addition, the walkway would benefit community revitalization and provide natural resource protection. The project is designed to open the waterfront to residents and visitors after nearly a century of railroad, shipping and industrial use.

Large areas of the waterfront have been targeted for redevelopment as mixed use, residential, commercial, office and recreational development. The walkway is being integrated into development plans that must be approved through Hudson River Waterfront Development Permits that are issued from the Environmental Regulation element of the Department of Environmental Protection. There are approximately four miles of completed walkway, with over one mile of the distance being in Liberty State Park and its promenade along the seawall on the Hudson River. Other completed sections include 1,000 feet of indoor walkway at the Harborside Financial Center and 500 feet at Grundy Park, both in Jersey City, 2,815 feet at Lincoln Harbor in Weehawken, 500 feet at the Hoboken Terminal, 1,160 feet at Palisades Hospital in North Bergen, 660 feet at a commercial plaza in Edgewater and 5,000 feet at Kill Van Kull Park in Bayonne. Most of the completed sections have parking associated with the completed waterfront projects. In addition to the completed sections, there are approximately three miles of interim walkway waiting to be completed. There is also a total of 1.25 miles of pier access available with piers in West New York, Weehawken and Jersey City. Another eleven separate development projects have approved state development permits, but are not yet built. These approved projects, including residential, retail and office space and marinas and hotels, will add almost three more miles of walkway. Other proposed segments will utilize roads, easements, Green Acres funding or are in the pre-application stage for permits. Two non-profit organizations, the Hudson River Waterfront Conservancy and the Trust for Public Land, are working with the DEP to help the Hudson River Waterfront Walkway be completed.

### *Lehigh and Hudson River Railroad*

This abandoned rail line runs approximately 27 miles in Warren and Sussex counties from just south of the Town of Belvidere in White Township through Belvidere Town, Liberty, Independence, and Allamuchy townships in Warren County and continuing into Sussex County through Green and Andover townships, Andover Borough, and back into Andover Township where the line becomes active at Mulford Station. The majority of the right-of-way has railroad ties partially intact, however, there are areas where the rails and ties have been completely removed. All twelve of the bridges crossing the Pequest River, Popahandusing Brook and several roads are intact and appear to be in good condition. The right-of-way is located within the Ridge and Valley Physiographic Province and runs along the Pequest River Valley for most of its length. Much of the route is relatively flat, although there is hilly terrain in the Pequest gorge, near the village of Allamuchy and to the north in Sussex County.

The route is almost entirely rural, passing through only several small towns including Belvidere and Buttzville and passing near the Borough of Andover. There are a number of scenic natural features along the L&HR abandonment including the line paralleling the Pequest River, the rich farmland at Great Meadows, the marshes near Allamuchy and the numerous lakes and swamps the route passes in the Andover area. Recreational areas accessed by the L&HR include Delaware River Access Site in Belvidere, Pequest Wildlife Management Area that includes the Pequest Trout Hatchery and Natural Resource Education Center, two municipal parks and the twenty-mile long state-owned Sussex Branch Trail. The route is also very near Jenny Jump State Forest and Allamuchy Mountain State Park. Other points of interest are historic buildings in Belvidere and the communities of Allamuchy, Andover, Tranquility and Great Meadows, and Kittatinny Valley State Park, which it crosses.

Converting this line to a trail would be significant because the entire right-of-way and all bridges are still intact, has good access, and connects to public lands including the Sussex Branch Trail which intersects the Paulinskill Valley Trail. This would form a loop of rail-trails, which would

greatly increase trail use opportunities. In addition, there are only seven property owners, with the majority of the right-of-way owned by one private holding corporation. The route would have statewide interest because of connections with other long-distance trails and other state-owned properties. A combination of fee acquisition and easements could be pursued by the state as the best course of action.

### ***Lehigh and New England Railroad***

This abandoned line runs approximately 21 miles in Sussex County from Swartswood Station in Hampton Township through Frankford, Wantage and Vernon townships before reaching the New York State line. The right-of-way is located within the Ridge and Valley Physiographic Province with the portion below Sussex Borough having gently rolling topography and the northern portion being very flat as it traverses the Walkill Valley. The route is almost entirely rural, passing numerous farms and forest with only the Borough of Sussex being a population center. Most of the bridges are intact and appear to be in good condition, although rails and ties remain. In most cases, the bridges cross streams less than five feet in width, including Papakating Creek, the Paulins Kill, and their tributaries. There is, however, a major interruption where a bridge is missing over the Walkill River. The majority of the right-of-way contains a buried pipeline for Elizabethtown Gas Company, which also owns much of the corridor.

Significant reasons for converting this line to a trail include the line's intersection with the state-owned Sussex Branch Trail and the Paulinskill Valley Trail. This would form a loop of rail-trails that would greatly increase trail use opportunities. Conversion to a trail would also allow users to access the newly created Walkill River National Wildlife Refuge and the Appalachian Trail, where a short segment of the right-of-way is used for the Appalachian Trail near the New York State line. The right-of-way would have statewide interest because of connections with the other long-distance trails. A combination of fee acquisition and easements could be pursued by the state as the best course of action.

### ***Lenape Trail Extension***

The Lenape Trail links county and municipal parks, historic landmarks and districts, schools and other points of interest in communities throughout Essex County. There are approximately 20 miles of existing trail with another 15 miles proposed. The completed trail will run from the West Essex County Park's Center for Environmental Studies where it connects with Morris County's Patriots' Path, to Military Park in downtown Newark. The Lenape Trail will also be the eastern terminus for the proposed Cross-Jersey Trail that will begin at the Delaware River and end in Newark. The main route has several branches that are either completed or partially completed. Proposed sections of the Lenape Trail would link together existing sections of trail and complete the trail branches that connect to the main route. Most of the proposed trail sections would use utility rights-of-way or other private land. Easements on private land and either licenses or easements on the rights-of-way will have to be negotiated. The single most important need is to fill in the gaps necessary for trail continuity. The largest such gap is 5-6 miles of PSE&G right-of-way from West Caldwell to Cedar Grove. Several bridges also need to be constructed along this route. Other sections needed for continuity include access through an industrial park connecting Community Park and the PSE&G right-of-way in Cedar Grove, securing an easement on property around the Newark-owned Cedar Grove Reservoir, an easement through private land to South Mountain Reservation, access through a Crystal Lake development to connect to Eagle Rock Reservation and Verona Park, and completion of the West Essex Greenway from Cedar Grove to Grover Cleveland Park. With county and community support, the completed Lenape Trail will become an asset to Essex County citizens as well as citizens throughout the state.

### ***Meadows Path***

This trail proposal is one of the few in the state to be located in an urban area, albeit in the open space areas of the Hackensack Meadowlands. The proposal is being developed by the Hackensack Meadowlands Development Commission as a 13 to 21 mile multi-use trail for hiking, mountain biking, and cross-country skiing. The path will pass through a cross-section of the Meadowlands open space areas, including extensive freshwater and brackish marshlands, landfills restored into parks, wooded uplands, and native grassland meadows. The marshlands in particular are renown for the abundance of waterfowl found there. The trail will mostly parallel the western bank of the Hackensack River from Losen Slote Creek Park in Little Ferry in the north, through Richard W. DeKorte Park in Lyndhurst, and continuing south to the Kearny Freshwater Marsh and what is now a landfill undergoing closure with improvements underway for developing trails and landscaping. The trail alignment is based on existing dikes, service roads, and railways, including those of the Transcontinental Gas Corporation, the New Jersey Turnpike Authority, New Jersey Transit, and Public Service Electric and Gas Company. Plans also include the establishment of a 3.5 mile spur trail off of the main path in Lyndhurst, which would connect the Bellemead Corporate Park and its commuter bus routes to the rest of Meadows Path. Continuing south, the trail will follow the route of the former Harrison/Kingsland rail line, ending at the West Hudson Park in Kearny.

Currently in place are 1 1/2 miles of wheelchair-accessible trails and boardwalks within DeKorte Park and a 2 1/2 mile loop trail connecting the park with the adjacent Meadowlands Corporate Center.

### ***Penn Central Railroad, Camden & Burlington County Branch and Union Transportation Company***

This abandoned line runs approximately ten miles in Burlington County from Mount Holly through Easthampton, Southampton, and Pemberton Townships before reaching inactive tracks within Fort Dix Military Reservation in New

Hanover Township. The tracks and ties have been removed along all but 50 feet of the entire route. The right-of-way varies in width from 66-100 feet and the surrounding landscape is generally flat. From Mount Holly to Pemberton, the route passes through forested areas, a residential area, crosses Rancocas Creek, runs a short distance along a fiber-optic cable line, and traverses the southern end of Smithville County Park and Historic District, connecting to the park's trail system. The Smithville complex includes an historic village, which is on the state and National Register of Historic Places. The route north of Pemberton crosses cultivated fields, passes several schools, and runs through hardwood forest for the last 1.5 miles.

Converting this line to a trail has merit because the line is continuous, has good access along the route and, most significantly, connects Mount Holly and Pemberton, with access to Smithville County Park between the two communities. The right-of-way could also serve as a bike route from Pemberton to the high school and elementary school near Fort Dix. The right-of-way serving as a trail from Mount Holly to Fort Dix would have primarily county or local interest. Because there are five different municipalities involved, conversion to a trail by acquisition or gaining easements would probably be best pursued by Burlington County with the cooperation of the municipalities. Burlington County already owns approximately 1.3 miles of right-of-way through the county-owned Smithville complex.

### ***Penn Central Railroad, Philadelphia and Long Branch***

This abandoned line (also referred to as Pennsylvania and Atlantic Railroad) runs approximately 27 miles from Pemberton Township and Pemberton Borough in Burlington County through Manchester and Berkeley townships in Ocean County before ending at the Garden State Parkway in South Toms River Borough. The route is located in the Outer Coastal Plain and the surrounding landscape is generally flat, with Pine Barrens forest being the predominant vegetation. In addition to the line traversing forested areas, it also crosses streams, several blueberry fields, and passes swamps, ponds and old cranberry bogs. The

right-of-way also runs near or through the communities of Pemberton, New Lisbon, Browns Mills, Whiting, and South Toms River. Jersey Central Power and Light electric transmission lines parallel the railroad right-of-way along much of the route. The majority of right-of-way is owned by J.C.P. & L.

Conversion of the line to a trail would be significant because the line is mostly continuous, has good access, only one bridge would have to be built, and would link various communities as the only west-east trail of this length traversing south-central New Jersey. In addition, the route connects Lebanon State Forest, 125 acres of Green Acres tax-exempt open space at Keswick Grove and the 378-acre Crossley Preserve owned by the New Jersey Natural Lands Trust. Less than 1/4 mile south of the right-of-way lies the 465 acre Hovnanian Sanctuary, which is owned by the New Jersey Audubon Society. There are also numerous locations along the right-of-way that contain suitable habitat for endangered animal and plant species. Because the route could have statewide interest, and approximately 3 miles traverse Lebanon State Forest, conversion of the right-of-way to a trail by acquisition or gaining easements would be best pursued by the Department of Environmental Protection with administration by the Division of Parks and Forestry.

### ***Pennsylvania-Reading Seashore Line, Bridgeton Secondary***

The Bridgeton Secondary runs for 18 miles between Glassboro in Gloucester County and Bridgeton in Cumberland County. Within Gloucester County it runs through Glassboro and Elk Township; within Salem County, through Upper Pittsgrove Township, Elmer Boro, and Pittsgrove Township; and in Cumberland County, through Upper Deerfield Township and Bridgeton. The line is located in the Outer Coastal Plain with flat to slightly rolling topography throughout the entire length. Oak-pine forests, orchards, agricultural fields, and villages predominate the landscape, with only some residential development and light industry nearby in Glassboro and in Bridgeton. In fact, the line passes through what is probably the most extensive orchard area of New Jersey, in southern Gloucester and northern Salem

Counties. Besides Glassboro and Bridgeton, the only community of any size that the line passes through is Elmer, with a population of 1,570. A major break in continuity occurs at the intersection with Route 55, about two miles south of Glassboro.

Because several roads cross any portion of the right-of-way, access is possible for both short or long trips. The bedding throughout the entire length is a cinder base and in good condition. Although the only public land that the right-of-way passes directly next to is a municipal park in Elmer, other recreational lands are nearby, including the Glassboro Wildlife Management Area, Parvin State Park (one mile to the east), and a private campground at Garrison Lake in Elk Township. Consolidated Rail Corporation (Conrail), which abandoned the line in 1984, is the largest single landowner with 11.6 miles of the line. Elmer Boro and Elk Township own sections of the line within their respective municipalities. Private individuals own the remaining sections.

Legislation had been introduced in the New Jersey Assembly to include the Bridgeton Secondary Line in a rail-banking bill, funded from the New Jersey Bridge Rehabilitation and Improvement and Railroad Right-of-Way Preservation Fund Act. However, the line was later dropped from consideration because of the expected expense of crossing Route 55.

Even with a major interruption at the Route 55 crossing, conversion of the right-of-way to a trail is recommended. The line offers sufficient length in either direction of Route 55. Surrounding land use is diverse, and access and parking are possible at several locations. Unless a bridge were requested to be built over Route 55, no other bridges would have to be built, therefore keeping development costs down. Some clearing would have to occur as part of normal maintenance. A trail would be available for non-motorized uses, including hiking, horseback riding (except in Glassboro), and mountain biking.

The Department of Environmental Protection has stated that it will not acquire the line. However, the counties or municipalities could acquire their sections for a trail.

### ***Pennsylvania-Reading Seashore Line, Newfield Branch***

The Newfield Branch of the PRSL originally started in Atlantic City in the east and ran to Newfield, in eastern Gloucester County. From there another line went north to Camden. Now, the abandonment runs from Route 40/322 in Egg Harbor Township to Newfield, a distance of about 27 miles. Although the abandonment extended to Newfield, adjacent property owners in Buena Boro and Newfield have incorporated the line into their own lots, sometimes erecting buildings on the former right-of-way. For this reason, the western terminus recommended is Route 54, allowing for a route of about 23 miles.

The rails and ties are still in place in the eastern section for about 3 1/2 miles. Some of the route is overgrown, but for the most part, the line has a cinder-based path. High tension electric lines use the right-of-way for approximately three miles, east of Mays Landing. The route passes through Pine Barrens forests of pine-oak, oak-pine, hardwood swamp forests and occasionally, white cedar swamps. Some suburban residential developments are found along the path in the eastern end, and in Hamilton Township, near Mays Landing, which is roughly the mid-point of the route. In the western part of Hamilton Township it passes through the small community of Mizpah, and in Buena Vista Township, the community of Landisville, where it is crossed by an active Conrail Line running north from Vineland. Within Mays Landing, the county seat, the right-of-way is incorporated into a small park, across from the northernmost stretch of the tidal Great Egg Harbor River. There are also two municipal parks the route connects, as well as a preserve of the New Jersey Natural Lands Trust near Mare's Run, and a private camp ground in Buena Vista Township. A bridge crossing the Great Egg Harbor River is still standing, and is used for fishing. Particularly scenic areas include the crossing of the Great Egg Harbor River, where the bridge crosses just downstream of the Lake Lenape dam, and the crossing of Mare Run, a tributary of the Great Egg Harbor River. At this location, the route is bordered on one side by white cedar swamps and on the other, abandoned ponds of what was once a sand and gravel mine.

The Atlantic County Utility Authority has acquired a great deal of mileage in the eastern section for a sewerage line, although the line above ground is intended to be used for a bicycle path. The county is also in the process of acquiring the rest of the line to continue the bicycle path.

### ***Six Mile Run Trail System***

The Six Mile Run Trail System is a potential trail network located on approximately 3,000 acres adjacent to Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park, and west of Route 27 in Franklin Township, Somerset County. The area is within the Six Mile Run Reservoir site, administered by the Division of Parks and Forestry and assigned to D & R Canal State Park. Six Mile Run is a tributary of the Millstone River. Extensive vistas of rolling agricultural land interspersed with woodland make up the landscape, although residential development is planned for much of the surrounding area. With many farmsteads remaining from the early 1800s, much of the Six Mile Run area is on the State and National Register of Historic Places.

A proposed trail system would exist within a 20-foot wide corridor adjacent to lands currently or recently under agricultural tillage. A mowed grass surface trail system is anticipated to be over 37 miles long with numerous loops of varying lengths. With a 20-foot wide corridor, the trail would be multiple use and available for horseback riders, hikers, cyclists and cross-country skiers. A trail system at Six Mile Run should help relieve overcrowding at D & R Canal State Park and Somerset County facilities.

The site was originally purchased by the State of New Jersey in the 1960s and 1970s for the construction of a water supply reservoir and associated recreation. Until the Water Supply Authority decides if there is a need for a reservoir in this area, the Six Mile Run Reservoir site has been assigned to D & R Canal State Park for administration. The trail system would be excluded from leased agricultural lands, and any trail planning efforts would include farmers leasing those lands. A non-profit organization, Friends of Six Mile Run, is leading the way in support of developing a trail system.

### ***Sourland Mountain Trail System***

This trail system stretches over the Sourland Mountains in three counties. The Sourland Mountain Preserve is located on over 1,670 acres in Hillsborough and Montgomery townships in Somerset County. The preserve is part of the biologically and historically diverse Sourland Mountains, which lie within the Piedmont physiographic region. In June 1995, the Somerset County Park Commission dedicated three trail loops totaling four miles as part of the Sourland Trail System. The preserve will eventually contain over ten miles of easy, moderate and rugged trails when the trail system is fully developed. There are also plans for developing trails for the disabled. The Sourland Mountains extend into southern Hunterdon and northern Mercer Counties to the Delaware River where there are other possible trail connections in those portions of the Sourlands.

Many citizens in this region are working towards establishing a greenbelt that would connect existing protected properties including the N.J. Natural Lands Trust Highfields Easement (part of the former estate of Charles Lindbergh), Hunterdon and Mercer County landholdings, and the Agnes DeWitt Girl Scout Camp. The local group leading the way in this endeavor is the Sourland Regional Citizens Planning Council. The preserve also has trail linkage possibilities to the Raritan, Millstone and Delaware River corridors, as well as the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park.

### ***Warren Grove Multi-use Trail System***

The Warren Grove Multi-use Trail System is a potential trail network consisting of many miles of existing sand "roads" through the New Jersey Pine Barrens. The trail system includes flatlands typical of the Pine Barrens, but also has many pine-covered hills, which would make it one of the more diverse trail systems in the Pine Barrens. The routes are primarily in southwestern Ocean County and southeastern Burlington County in the general vicinity of the town of Warren Grove. Potential trails may traverse sections of Penn State Forest and Warren Grove Recreation Area. The routes would consist of a series of short and long-distance loops, many of which are currently used

for enduro motorcycle events. Because of the remoteness of the area and the thick sand base of existing pathways, these trails could allow multi-use activities including horseback riding, mountain biking, and motorized trail use. Hiking would also be a use, although with the soft-sand conditions, the routes may not be as appealing to hikers as the other trail uses. Although the paths exist already, much of the land is in private ownership and trail use is neither allowed nor denied, there is no system of marked paths giving directions, parking is haphazard and not designed for trailers, and no maintenance takes place. Acquisition and designation as trails would improve conditions in this region.

### ***Watchung Trails***

Different trail proposals centering on the Watchung Mountains are in various stages of development. In some cases the general proposed routes overlap, in other cases they extend out in different directions. But for the most part, they connect Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge on the west in Somerset County and end in the east in the vicinity of Union County's Watchung Reservation.

The Second Watchung Trail, proposed by the Somerset County Planning Department, would traverse Second Watchung Mountain in Somerset County. The route would begin in Pluckemin in Bedminster Township, run through Bridgewater and Bernards townships before ending in either Warren Township or Watchung Borough, a distance of eight to ten miles. If the trail were to extend into Watchung and reach the Union County line, there is a possibility for connections to the existing Watchung Reservation, a Union County park. The proposed trail would be primarily a hiking trail because of severe use limitations, such as steep grades, roads, etc. Some of the trail mileage could include horseback riding as another use. Some easements have been secured through dedicated funding from property taxes in Somerset County. The county is also working with municipal officials to establish a trail connecting the First and Second Watchung Ranges.

The New York-New Jersey Trail Conference has proposed a "Watchung Trail" which would run to

the north and west of the Second Watchung Trail. This hiking trail would originate at Patriots' Path, west of Morristown and part of the Morris Area Trail System, and pass through several public open space lands, including Morristown National Historic Park, Morris County's Loantaka Park, and Union County's Watchung Reservation and Rahway River Parkway. The total length would be approximately 27 miles, of which 19 would be on existing park lands. The path would cross cut all three of the Watchung ridges. It could potentially connect with the Lenape Trail in Essex County, using streets to access the Trail in South Mountain Reservation.

The Watchung Reservation trail system has the potential to be designated to the State Trails System. It has 26 miles of bridle trails within the park, and an equestrian center with a stable for boarding horses, trailer parking area, and several outdoor rings. The park also has an historic village and an additional 40 miles of trails for hiking. Some hiking trails are extremely eroded on hillsides and wet in lowland areas. Officials attribute this problem to increased use by mountain bikers, and secondarily to horseback riders detouring off of the bridle paths. Park officials are trying to work with bicycle and hiking clubs to do some restoration work on the trails. If measures are taken to resolve the environmental problems, the trail system would be eligible for designation to the

State Trails System.

### *West Wharton Multi-use Trail System*

The West Wharton Multi-use Trail System is a potential trail network located in the western portion of Wharton State Forest, west of Route 206. A number of miles of existing sand "roads" traverse this lesser used area of Wharton. Bisecting this area is the Southern Branch of the Central Railroad of New Jersey, which is another potential trail route identified in this plan, and continues northeast through Wharton into Lebanon State Forest. Sand routes in West Wharton intersect with the rail corridor at various points. These existing pathways could form a network of routes that allow for multi-use activities including horseback riding, mountain biking, hiking and motorized trail use. The area is used for enduro motorcycle events by special permit. A marked trail system in this area would be the only other long distance trail system in the Wharton State Forest area, other than the Batona Trail, which is only available for hiking. Although the area can be used now for trail activities, no paths are marked or maintained as trails, and developing them as trail routes would require posting with directional signs, parking areas, and maintenance.