



# STRATEGIC PLAN

2024 - 2026

PLANNING THE FUTURE OF MONMOUTH COUNTY

Released August 2023

## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In the 46 years since Monmouth Conservation Foundation's founding, there have been pivotal moments that have made it a better and stronger organization. Today, we are excited to share the latest such milestone with you as we look to the future: a just-completed, thoughtful and thorough Strategic Plan that will inform our work going forward and ensure we are meeting the changing needs of those we serve and of MCF itself.

This road map for the next three fiscal years is the result of six months of work and the generous input of a range of stakeholders including donors, volunteers, board members, former trustees, and public officials at the municipal, county, and state levels. We were assisted every step of the way by our nonprofit consulting partners at The Munshine Group, including President and CEO David Munshine.

From the work of the Strategic Plan Task Force, to the extensive interviews, to benchmarking and data analysis, to a focused and productive retreat, key themes and goals emerged. Also coming from this process was a reimagined mission statement and creation of a vision statement for MCF, which will help guide us all going forward.

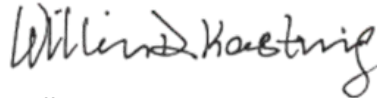
As you will see, three crucial priorities were identified and plans developed to address each. Those priorities are 1) MCF's core mission-driven work, 2) educational outreach, and 3) communications and fundraising. The plans are ambitious and the goals, we believe, achievable.

We know this is a time of change, from our climate to the needs of our communities to our post-pandemic world.

MCF is proud to undertake the work needed to stay relevant and impactful for years to come, while staying true to our cause, excited to share the highlights of our new Strategic Plan, and grateful to all who made it possible.



Matt Cohen  
President, Board of Trustees



William D. Kastning, AICP  
Executive Director



SCUDDER PRESERVE  
Photo by: Jena Cosimo

## MISSION

Monmouth Conservation Foundation's purpose is to acquire and preserve open space and farmland and conserve natural habitats throughout Monmouth County in support of outdoor recreation, agriculture, clean water, and wildlife for long-term sustainability.

## VISION

To lead conservation and education efforts to preserve and protect our natural environment, so all individuals and communities have access to and can benefit from open space and nature for generations to come.

## MONMOUTH CONSERVATION FOUNDATION

# VALUES

- MCF's commitment is as strong as ever to preserving and conserving open space and avoiding unbalanced development and unchecked exploitation of land and natural resources.
- Monmouth County is known for its beauty, as well as its diversity of flora, fauna, and topography. MCF is devoted to protecting its fragile natural lands.
- MCF recognizes the importance of creating parks located in underserved neighborhoods.
- MCF is about the preservation and conservation efforts today and for the generations to come, collaborating with other private and public organizations, to accomplish common goals.
- MCF seeks to exemplify a diverse, equitable, and inclusive organizational culture as represented through the board, staff, and preservation projects and programs accomplished.



## STRATEGIC PRIORITY #1: CORE MISSION-DRIVEN WORK

Work assertively to preserve remaining, eligible undeveloped land in Monmouth County and effectively steward both existing and future easements. Continue MCF's work to #KeepMonmouthGreen by safeguarding at-risk natural habitat buffering sensitive military operations at Naval Weapons Station (NWS) Earle and preserving the last remaining farmlands and open spaces in our region.



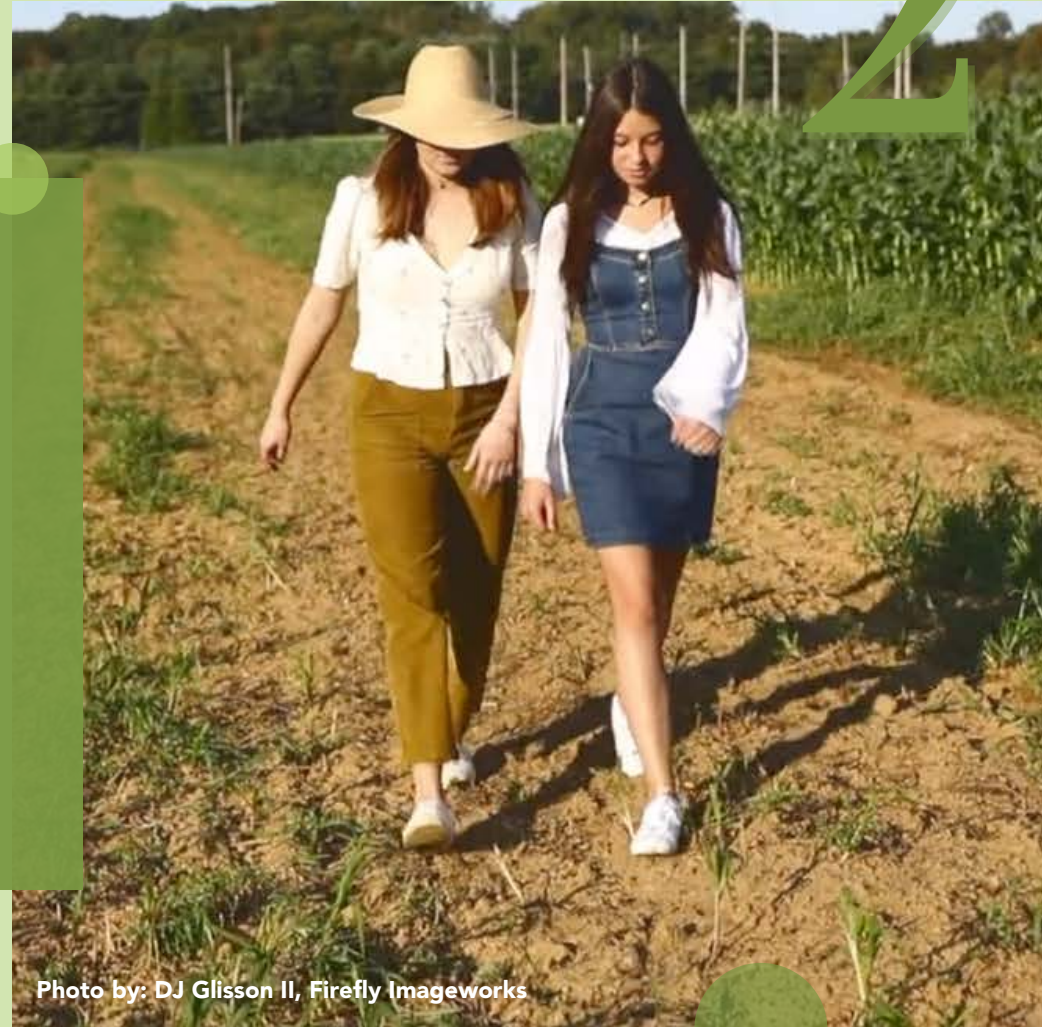
CONOVER FARM  
Photo by: Tina Colella Photography

- Collaboratively preserve open space and farmland within the 20,000 acres of undeveloped, not yet preserved land in Monmouth County
- Continue to effectively steward conservation and agricultural easements
- Further develop a preservation program in partnership with the US Department of Defense (DOD) Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) Program to preserve land nearby to NWS Earle within the identified Military Influence Area (MIA)
- Ensure at least half of all park development projects in pipeline are within underserved communities
- Establish new and improve existing relationships with government agency partners, nonprofit organizations, and other environmental advocacy groups

## STRATEGIC PRIORITY #2: EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH

MCF will establish a hands-on education and outreach plan to reach Monmouth County residents of all ages focused on environmental sustainability and quality of life related to our mission.

- Hire staff to direct educational programming
- Re-establish and expand K-12 educational initiatives
- Create mobile education unit
- Devise plan for MCF land ownership
- Include underserved populations in all educational outreach and planned land ownership
- Develop in-person and virtual programming for all ages



## STRATEGIC PRIORITY #3: FUNDRAISING & COMMUNICATIONS

MCF will strengthen its image and identity, and build capacity through communications, marketing, engagement, and fundraising.

- Hire staff to manage communications and marketing
- Create clear, concise, compelling messaging that conveys MCF's relevance and impact
- Enhance ambassador program for board members
- Redesign MCF website
- Grow MCF's social media presence
- Establish strategies to gain new donors and funding opportunities
- Host strategic fundraising events
- Increase visibility across Monmouth County and expand constituent base
- Attain reaccreditation from the Land Trust Accreditation Commission



MCF honored Gloria and Len Nilson (pictured above, center) at the 2022 Fall for Conservation Cocktail Party for their decades of involvement and support of our mission. For 26 years, Gloria has lent her time, expertise, and leadership as an MCF Trustee, currently serving on our Executive Committee. Both she and Len have made a significant impact as steadfast advocates and generous philanthropists here and throughout our community. MCF's Nilson Society has been created to honor those who include MCF in their estate plans, just as Gloria and Len have done.



McCLEES CREEK AND THE NAVESINK RIVER  
Photo by: Tina Colella

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**The earth is a fine place  
and worth fighting for.**  
**- Ernest Hemingway**

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Photo by: P. Karaz



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