

Open Space Inventory in Morris Township

“Preserved lands and historic sites provide sustainable economic, aesthetic, environmental and recreational benefits. The benefits conferred contribute to a high quality of life for residents in our State – indeed, they are key among the factors that inspire people to both visit our State and to live, work and play here.”

--Garden State Preservation Trust, Report to the Governor and Legislature, (July 2000, page 4.)

This section of the *Open Space and Recreation Plan* inventories open space lands within the Township of Morris. The acreage totals correspond with the *Parcel Data Tables* in the *Appendix*. Also included in the *Appendix* is an accompanying table explaining the municipal tax codes used for the *Open Space Map*. The accompanying *Open Space Map* details the location of these properties and was developed with the Geographic Information System software Arcview 3.2. As noted on the *Open Space Map*, the Morris County Department of Planning, Development and Technology supplied the data for the base map. Some of these lands may have structures or other forms of development; vacant lands and outdoor recreation sites are noted. Privately owned property, even if partially developed, often represents an opportunity for open space preservation and is included in the inventory of potential open space.

Inventory of Potential Open Space Projects in Morris Township

The Open Space Inventory is a list of parcels in the Township that are potentially available for the purpose of preservation and protection for open space. Morris Township has many classes of parcels, which offer opportunities for open space preservation however some parcels in the list are not traditionally considered as potential property for open space. These include vacant land, residential lots, farmland, and tax-exempt properties.

In order to increase the amount of preserved land in the municipality, the Open Space and Recreation Plan recommends Morris Township use a diverse inventory of land. In Morris Township there are 242 acres of undeveloped, vacant land remaining in the Township (*Class 1*). Opportunities may exist to purchase larger residential properties, or a portion of these properties, in areas to expand existing parks and recreational facilities. For the purposes of defining as broad an inventory as possible, there are 471 acres of land that are assessed as residential property (*Class 2*) or as properties of “open space distinction, but less than 4 acres (see *Open Space Map*). There are also several farm parcels remaining in the Township, some are privately owned and some are owned and managed as farmland by educational institutions. This totals 119 acres in the Township (*Class 3*).

The Southeast Morris County Municipal Utilities Authority owns 40 acres in the Township for public water supply purposes. Morris Township is home to several private recreational facilities including the Spring Brook Country Club, Star Dust Pool, and the Morris County Golf Club, totaling 313 acres.

There are several different government entities that own land in the Township, including the state (Department of Defense, Department of Transportation, and Department of Human Services); county, and the Town of Morristown, totaling 371 acres. Morris Township also owns land in the Township for general municipal uses (outside of parkland) and this totals 83 acres. The Morristown and Erie Railway also owns one property in the Township equaling 10 acres.

Morris Township is home to the Morris Township School District and several private educational facilities including the Allegro School, Delbarton, Villa Walsh, Morristown Beard School, Seeing Eye, St. Elizabeth’s College, and The Peck School. Educational property in Morris Township totals 892 acres. A variety of religious and nonprofit organizations own land (161 acres) in the Township.

These lands are summarized as follows:

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|---|-----------|
| Vacant Land ¹ | 242 acres |
| Residential Properties >4 acres ² | 471 acres |
| Southeast Morris Municipal Utilities Authority ³ | 40 acres |
| Privately Owned Recreation ⁴ | 313 acres |
| State, County, & Town of Morristown ⁵ | 371 acres |
| Township Property (not on ROSI) ⁶ | 83 acres |
| Educational Property ⁷ | 892 acres |
| Farmland Assessed ⁸ | 120 acres |
| Railroad Property ⁹ | 10 acres |
| Religious and Nonprofit ¹⁰ | 161 acres |

Morris Township consists of a total of 10,128 acres or 15.8 square miles. Of this, **2,703 acres** as shown in this inventory are available for open space. This means that slightly more than **25% of the Township** is potentially available for open space. This diverse list includes parcels that may have structures upon them. Therefore, residential lots that do not offer public access but contain environmentally sensitive areas and/or commercial/industrial lots that contain aquifer recharge areas, are in fact candidates for preservation.

¹ (Class 1) - This does not include SEM MUA, private recreational land, private educational land
² (Class 2) – This also includes properties of “open space distinction” as identified by the Township Open Space Committee
³ (Class 1) – servicing Morris Township, Morristown, Morris Plains, and Township of Hanover
⁴ (Class 1, 4A) Morris County Golf Course, Spring Brook Country Club, Star Dust
⁵ (Class 15C) State = NJ DOT, NJ Dept. Defense, NJ Dept. Human Services; County Administration
⁶ (Class 15C)
⁷ (Class 1, 3, 15A and 15B)
⁸ (Class 3, privately owned)
⁹ (Class 15C)
¹⁰ (Class 15D, 15E, and 15F)

Preserved Land in Morris Township

Of the 10,128 acres in Morris Township *nearly 20% or 1,961 acres* are protected property through federally preserved, county preserved, or municipally preserved land on the Recreation and Open Space Inventory (ROSI). A copy of the ROSI is included in the *Appendix*. County parkland includes Loantaka Brook Reservation, the Traction Line Trail, Frelinghuysen Arboretum, Mennen Sports Arena, Patriots’ Path, Fosterfields, Lewis Morris Park, and the Washington Valley natural area. Federal property includes a portion of Morristown National Historic Park (74 acres).

These lands are grouped as follows:

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|--|--------------------|
| Federally Owned Preserved Open Space | 74 acres |
| County Owned Preserved Open Space ¹ | 1,395 acres |
| Township Owned Preserved Open Space and parcels listed on Recreation & Open Space Inventory (ROSI) | 492 acres |
| Total preserved lands: | 1,961 acres |

¹ County Parkland and Washington Valley Land