

Monmouth Conservation Foundation
President's Message to MCF's Returning and New Trustees
June 18, 2026

As incoming president of the Monmouth Conservation Foundation, I welcome our returning and new trustees to MCF's 2027 fiscal year. MCF's achievements are the result of the substantial contributions, time, and efforts of our trustees, officers, and staff. And at this time, I especially recognize and thank Immediate Past President Matt Cohen for his leadership in the past several years.

Monmouth County, about 665 square miles (about 300,000 acres), has a varied and beautiful landscape, including farmlands, hills, streams, wetlands, rivers, towns, and, of course, our Atlantic coastline.

Of course, Monmouth County is in central New Jersey, and New Jersey is in the central area of our country's Northeast Megalopolis. New Jersey, with a population of more than 9 million, is our nation's most densely populated state. And our county, with a population estimated at more than 650,000 and increasing, is among our state's most populous counties. Given these circumstances, MCF recognizes that there will be development in our county. But that development must be appropriate, i.e., protective of our natural resources and quality of life.

The effects of land development are insidious and, although the effects of particular development may be difficult to exactly quantify, the cumulative effects of much development have harmed our natural world. Esteemed biologist Edward O. Wilson, Ph.D. has reported that due to habitat loss alone, the rate of extinction is rising. The Cornell Lab of Ornithology has found that, since 1970, North American wild birds have declined in number by about 30 per cent and continue to decline in number. Accordingly, Dr. Wilson has proposed setting aside half of our planet's surface to save the life-forms that compose it. In our county, only about seven per cent, i.e., about 30+ square miles (about 20,000 acres), remains undeveloped, i.e., at risk. Yet pressure for development here continues and has even intensified.

Our natural world is inspiring to many and the life support system for all, and our county's voters have consistently supported protection of our natural areas and open spaces. Our county's numerous municipalities and the Monmouth County Park System (MCPS) operate parks, recreation areas, and conservation areas. The State of New Jersey maintains the Monmouth Battlefield State Park and the Allaire State Park in our county. Part of the federal Gateway National Recreation Area is in our county. And these areas are well loved by our county's residents.

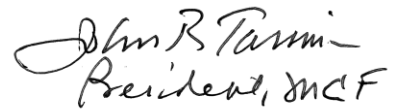
MCF, founded in 1977 (as the Monmouth Parks Foundation), is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and our county's only land trust. MCF assists and works collaboratively with private individuals

and with local, county, state, and federal governments to protect our natural resources and provide recreational opportunities. MCF's services include the following: MCF communicates and meets with landowners and officials, inspects lands, and assists in coordination and determination of the best means to protect farmlands, open space, and natural resources. MCF advances payments to engineers, surveyors, and other consulting professionals to facilitate investigations of environmental features and factors affecting lands proposed for acquisitions, easements, etc. MCF acquires titles to lands for later conveyance to local public entities for parks and other open spaces. And, in the recent past MCF accepted title to Scudder Preserve (adjacent to the MCPS's Huber Woods Park), where we are working to restore and enhance native habitat, establish trails, and to restore structures for use as MCF's offices and as an environmental educational center.

MCF has assisted in the preservation of more than 9,700 acres of open space, including more than 24% of the MCPS's 18,000+ acres. MCF, through 46 conservation easements, responsibly and consistently oversees protection of critical natural areas on 900 acres. MCF has also contributed to improvements of urban parks, e.g., in Asbury Park and Long Branch. MCF also runs a robust educational outreach program via the MCF Conservation Wagon, delivering hands-on education to schools and community events across the county.

As MCF approaches the 50th anniversary of its founding, rest assured that when you support MCF you are making a difference for the better! And I thank you again for joining in MCF's mission of protection of beautiful Monmouth County.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John R. Tassini". Below the signature, the words "President, MCF" are written in a similar cursive style.

John ("Jack") R. Tassini
President