



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Honors D&R Greenway Land Trust with Environmental Excellence Award

Princeton NJ, December 10, 2004– D&R Greenway Land Trust received a New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Award from DEP Commissioner Bradley M. Campbell on November 16, 2004. This honor is presented to organizations in recognition of outstanding environmental performance, programs and achievements. D&R Greenway Land Trust won in the category of Open Space Protection and Preservation.

According to Commissioner Campbell "These awards recognize the leaders in New Jersey's towns, companies, authorities, and military bases who are achieving superior environmental performance. These leaders are setting the standard for innovation and commitment, while reminding us that the best ideas in environmental protection emerge from local problem solving rather than traditional regulation."

D&R Greenway Land Trust's groundbreaking work in the Sourland Mountains was the catalyst for the award. The Sourlands represent a wilderness close to a rapidly growing population, providing easy access to nature "in the backyard" of many local residents. D&R Greenway Land Trust has articulated a vision for the protection of this unique and irreplaceable resource and has taken effective action, accelerating the pace of direct land preservation and public education about the Sourlands to a local, regional and statewide audience. D&R Greenway Land Trust has established a base of land preservation in the Sourlands through permanent protection of 3,500 acres. Five years ago, D&R Greenway Land Trust was the only conservation group focusing on the Sourlands. Today, due to D&R Greenway Land Trust's steady leadership, the NJDEP Green Acres Program, The Nature Conservancy, the Sourlands Regional Planning Council, and all of the region's local communities have identified the Sourlands as a priority for preservation.

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Linda J. Mead, D&R Greenway Land Trust's Executive Director commented, "We are thrilled to have our work recognized by the State. What's even more important is that this award brings additional awareness and focus on the need for swift and decisive action to preserve as much of the area's watershed lands and biodiversity as possible. The Sourlands shelter the headwaters of eight of central New Jersey's major rivers and streams – the primary source of drinking water for our entire region. It also provides the contiguous, deep forest habitat essential for maintaining global populations of over 65 species of neotropical migrant birds."

The desire to protect this critical habitat inspired D&R Greenway Land Trust to initiate the first international partnership between two land preservation organizations. Los Amigos de Calakmul is a Mexican Land Trust, formed to protect the tropical forest surrounding the Calakmul Biosphere Reserve in the Yucatan, the winter habitat for the birds that breed in the Sourlands in the spring and summer. In 2004, D&R Greenway Land Trust and Los Amigos de Calakmul launched the Sister Land Trust Project, with the shared objective of protecting the critical habitat of both regions.

About D&R Greenway Land Trust

Celebrating 15 years of land preservation successes, D&R Greenway Land Trust is a non-profit organization founded in 1989. Their mission is to help safeguard the water quality, environment and livability of our region by permanently preserving watershed lands and large-scale landscapes and establishing *greenways*. *Greenways* are unbroken chains of preserved open space surrounding stream corridors, headwaters, water recharge areas and significant ecosystems. D&R Greenway Land Trust also encourages effective stewardship and management of this land and promotes educational and recreational usage consistent with the protection of its resources.

D&R Greenway Land Trust's operating region consists of over 1,500 square miles, encompassing portions of the Delaware, Raritan and Millstone River watersheds and the Delaware & Raritan Canal. This includes all of Mercer County and parts of Hunterdon, Somerset, Middlesex, Burlington and Monmouth counties.

Since 1989, D&R Greenway Land Trust has permanently preserved 7,355 acres of land valued at \$140.2 million. This represents 113 separate preservation transactions executed or facilitated by D&R Greenway Land Trust.

For more information please call 609-924-4646 or visit www.drgreenway.org.