



News Release

Contact:

Jo-Ann Munoz

Director of Communications

Delaware & Raritan Greenway

609-924-4646 ext. 125

jmunoz@delrargreenway.org

Two Critical Properties in Two Communities Create Allentown Greenbelt

**For Immediate Release
June 22, 2004**

UPPER FREEHOLD TOWNSHIP, June 22, 2004 -- Today Delaware & Raritan Greenway, central New Jersey's regional land trust and Mayor John A. Mele of Upper Freehold Township announced that 30 acres formerly owned by Stuart Reed have been sold to the Township for recreational purposes. Mayor Mele, an advocate for open space and farmland preservation, stated, "This is the first and only parcel of land that Upper Freehold Township owns for recreational use. Unless we continue to aggressively pursue opportunities like this, we will risk rapid over-development of our community at a great cost to our citizens."

D&R Greenway had obtained the 30 acre property from Mr. Reed in Upper Freehold through a tax-free exchange for 50 acres in Washington Township, Mercer County, previously owned by Mr. Reed's sister, Ellen Powner. The 50 acre property had been purchased by D&R Greenway from Mrs. Powner in January and a state farmland preservation easement was placed on the property to ensure that it would forever be preserved for agricultural use.

"Two wonderful properties in two communities have been protected from development by this unique combination of several sales and an exchange," explained Linda Mead, Executive Director of the D&R Greenway. She recognized Dennis Davidson, former Deputy Director for the NJ Green Acres Program and now Director of Land Preservation for D&R Greenway, for bringing to bear thirty years of expertise in structuring this milestone transaction.

Mr. Reed will operate the Washington Township acreage as a sod farm. For the next two years he will continue the sod farm operation on the 30 acres just sold to Upper Freehold Township. The first year's production will be a sod crop. In the second year an athletic grade sod will be planted for use by the local community.

D&R Greenway was assisted financially at the outset of these transactions through a generous loan from the Open Space Institute. The Farmland Preservation Easement on the Washington Township property was made possible by grants of 50% of the easement cost from the NJ State Agriculture Development Committee and 25% each from Mercer County and Washington Township.

“Many people and organizations deserve thanks for helping make all of this happen. This includes the Open Space Institute, Mayor John Mele of Upper Freehold and former Mayor Douglas Tindall of Washington Township, Mercer County and, most of all, the Reed family, who agreed to a generous bargain sale of the land.” added Linda Mead. “The benefits of this project to the local community include preservation of its farming heritage, creation of new recreational lands, and the protection of a greenbelt on the edge of Allentown that maintains the town’s historic identity.” The preservation of this land contributes to the Crossroads of the American Revolution, a proposed National Heritage Area that celebrates New Jersey’s revolutionary landscapes.

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About Delaware & Raritan Greenway

Celebrating 15 years of land preservation successes, Delaware & Raritan Greenway is central New Jersey’s regional land trust. Their mission is to safeguard the water quality, environment and livability of our area by permanently preserving its watershed lands and large-scale landscapes. Since 1989 D&R Greenway has preserved 7,090 acres of land valued at \$133.1 million. The Reed property is the first that the organization has preserved in Monmouth County.

In 2005, D&R Greenway plans to open *The Greenway Center*, a focal point for land preservation in New Jersey. *The Greenway Center* will offer programs and resources to engage and strengthen the capacity of municipalities, grassroots organizations and other groups to protect and effectively manage land. D&R Greenway’s staff will provide hands-on education, technical assistance and direct action to assist their preservation partners in achieving their goals. *The Greenway Center* will also provide a home for the D&R Greenway.

For the second year in a row Charity Navigator, America’s premier evaluator of independent charities, has awarded D&R Greenway four stars – their highest rating – for excellence in the area of strong fiscal management

For more information please contact D&R Greenway at 609-924-4646 or at info@delrargreenway.org.