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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**D&R Greenway Land Trust Partners with 3M and The Nature Conservancy
to Expand Preservation in the Sourlands**

PRINCETON, NJ, September 14, 2006 -- In June of 2004, 3M pledged \$1.5 million to The Nature Conservancy earmarked for the preservation of central New Jersey's Sourlands forest. The Nature Conservancy sought the expertise and track record of D&R Greenway Land Trust in preserving lands in the Sourlands region, to determine where and how to spend it.

The 90 square mile Sourland region is one of the most environmentally sensitive areas in New Jersey. The Sourlands contain the headwaters of more than a dozen streams which are the source for much of the drinking water in central New Jersey. Its unbroken forests provide habitat for a wide variety of plants and wildlife, including 65 species of neotropical migratory birds. As a significant corporate presence in this part of New Jersey, 3M was committed to providing what The Nature Conservancy calls a "transformative" gift, one that would significantly accelerate the pace of land preservation and stewardship in the Sourlands. According to Keith Jacobs, plant manager, 3M Belle Mead: "Protecting and preserving the Sourlands is very important. 3M is proud to join The Nature Conservancy in helping make this possible."

State funding for land preservation was generated by the passage of the 1998 Referendum by the voters in New Jersey, approving an annual dedication of \$98 million to preserve natural lands and open spaces, parks, working farms and historic sites for a 10-year preservation program from 2000 through 2009. To date, these public dollars have been almost completely allocated, especially funding grants for non-profit conservation organizations and county and municipal programs. In order to continue the pace of land preservation, funding sources from the private sector need to be identified and leveraged. 3M's gift is exactly the kind of leadership private sector contribution that is required to close the public funding gap.

The Nature Conservancy asked D&R Greenway for help in determining the most effective way to express 3M's gift, based on the organization's knowledge of the region and strong reputation and relationships with landowners. According to Bill Rawlyk, D&R Greenway's Director of Land Preservation, "Many factors were taken into consideration when identifying potential properties for preservation. One of the most important of these was the presence of high quality intact forests and wetlands. Equally critical was each property's proximity to other protected lands. Contiguity of preservation enhances the conservation value of all the properties involved."

After weighing all the variables, D&R Greenway recommended six properties to The Nature Conservancy and 3M. As all partners agreed, D&R Greenway initiated negotiations with each of the landowners and began to develop the total funding package for each property's preservation.

In the absolute, these six properties represent 287 acres of newly protected land. They are, however, important keystones that connect groups of preserved lands in adjacent townships or municipalities. The first three properties to be preserved are the Belotti-Shulman property in Hopewell, the Hornickel property in Hillsborough and the Omick property in East Amwell.

"The Belotti-Shulman property is particularly significant," commented Linda Mead, D&R Greenway's Executive Director. "In itself, it is a beautiful 29-acre tract of old growth forest. It represents, however, the "missing link" that now provides an unbroken connection for over 2,620 acres arching across the Sourland ridge above Hopewell."

In total, the Hornickel property is a magnificent, 100-acre forest that has been carefully managed for the past 50 years. "We are committed to preserving the land we have lived on and have grown to love," said landowner Suzanne Hornickel. "We are delighted that D&R Greenway was able to structure a viable preservation transaction that will enable us to remain on our property, and also ensure its protection, forever."

The Omick property in East Amwell is another 60 acre tract of unbroken woodland. The abandoned mill ponds scattered throughout the property have evolved into sedge bogs that support communities of rare native plants. Kurt Hoffman, Mayor of East Amwell, declared "Thanks to the vision of D&R Greenway, the support of The Nature Conservancy, and the generosity of 3M an important ecosystem will be permanently protected for future generations."

3M's funding enabled D&R Greenway to purchase the Belotti-Schulman property outright through a bargain sale agreement. Financing for the Omick preservation was sourced from East Amwell Township as well as from the 3M gift. Somerset County provided the majority of the funding for the Hornickel property, with dollars from 3M completing the project.

In allocating 3M's gift, The Nature Conservancy required that 10% of the total purchase price of each property be placed into endowment, to ensure perpetual stewardship of all properties preserved with 3M funds. "We believe that the careful management of natural resources on protected lands is necessary to assure the land's long-term ecological health. This includes offering recreational opportunities for public enjoyment", said Dr. Barbara Brummer, State Director for The Nature Conservancy. 3M's stewardship endowment was placed in D&R Greenway's Land Management Fund, thereby entrusting D&R Greenway with the care and protection of these three properties in perpetuity, in accordance with the organization's stewardship practices that follow the guidelines established by the National Land Trust Alliance.

The Sourlands continue to be a priority focus area for D&R Greenway Land Trust's preservation efforts. These six new preserved properties will contribute to the ongoing partnership between D&R Greenway and the NJDEP Green Acres Program to preserve the land and natural resources of central New Jersey's last wilderness. D&R Greenway is grateful to 3M, for their recognition and support of the vital need to protect this eco-region and to The Nature Conservancy, for channeling the resources to realize 3M's goals.

About D&R Greenway Land Trust

As central New Jersey's leading non-profit land preservation organization, **D&R Greenway Land Trust** works in all six counties of this region – Burlington, Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth and Somerset – where, since our founding in 1989, **we have led the preservation of 8,780 acres valued at \$193.4 million, encompassing 156 individual properties.** Our mission is to preserve and protect a permanent network of natural lands and open spaces, creating the conditions for a healthy and diverse environment to flourish and providing the public with appropriate access to these lands, encouraging active lifestyles and a greater appreciation of the natural world. D&R Greenway Land Trust also works to inspire a conservation ethic, promoting policies, educational programs and partnerships that result in a public commitment to land preservation. For additional information about D&R Greenway Land Trust, please visit www.drgreenway.org.

About The Nature Conservancy

The New Jersey Chapter of The Nature Conservancy, a non-profit organization that works to preserve the plants, animals and natural communities that represent the diversity of life on Earth by protecting the lands and waters they need to survive. In New Jersey, the Conservancy has protected 56,000 acres and currently manages 37 nature preserves. Please visit us on the web at www.nature.org.