

18: OPEN SPACE AND PRESERVED LANDS

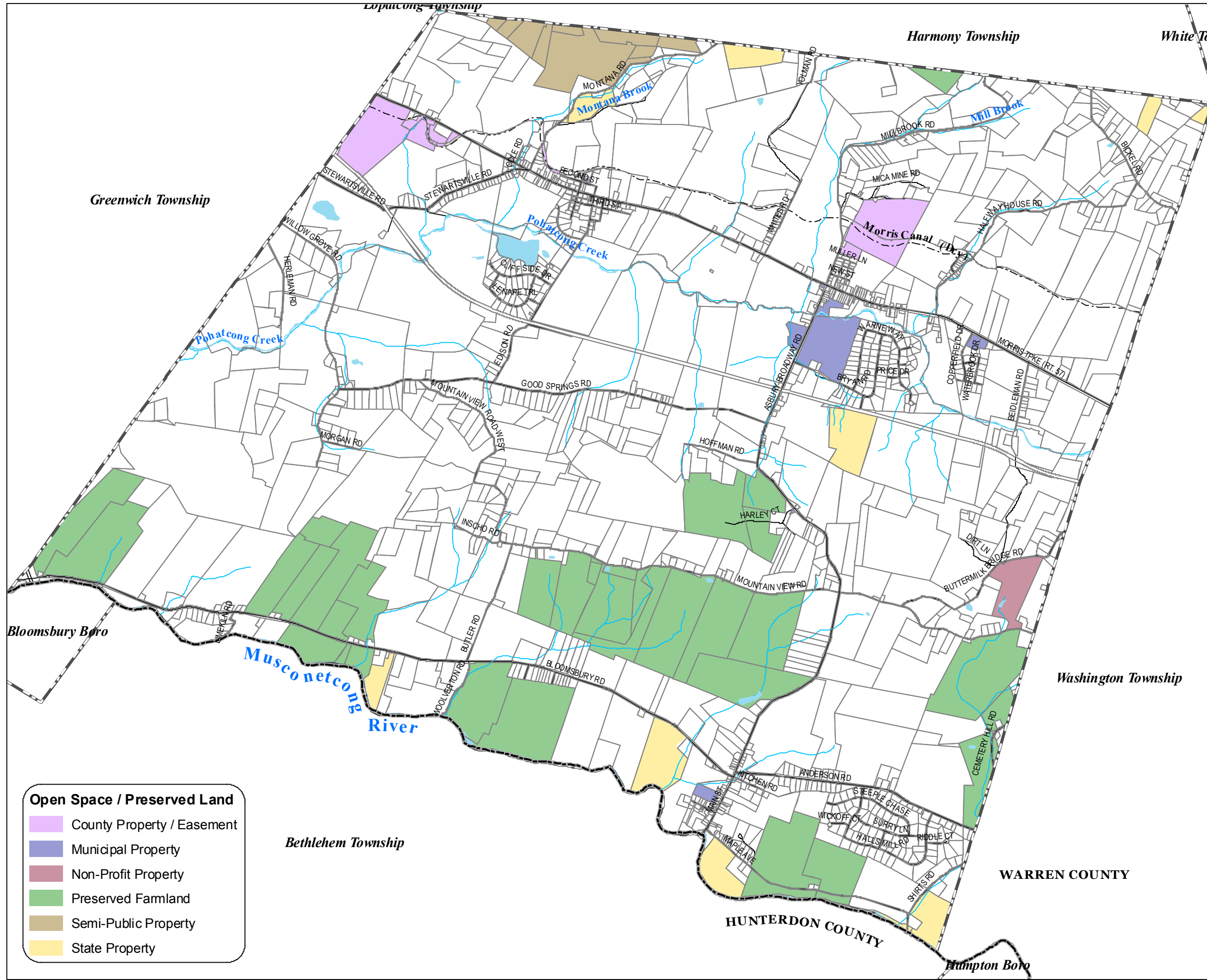
The Warren County Open Space Plan (1999) defines open space as land acquired and dedicated to remain undeveloped. These land areas may include waterbodies, ridgelines, steep slopes, woodlands, grasslands, and agricultural lands. These features make up the character of the area and should be considered whenever sites are evaluated for acquisition. Areas designated for open space can protect many natural resources, such as the quality and quantity of surface and groundwater, cultural and historic areas, and view sheds. Open space acquired now can serve to satisfy the recreational needs of residents as development occurs in the future.

The goals of farmland preservation are similar to other open space preservation efforts, which seek to limit development, preserve scenic views, promote agricultural land uses, maintain hydrologic functions, and preserve specialized ecotone habitats. Preserving farmland can ensure a community's agricultural character for generations despite the pressure to develop.

Preserving and obtaining open space and farmland is largely accomplished through two means: 1) implementation of regulatory constraints requiring that future developments be designed in a manner consistent with local, state, and federal guidelines related to preservation planning and 2) the acquisition of specific properties deemed important as open space by defined criteria. Franklin Township contracted Morris Land Conservancy to complete an up-to-date Open Space and Recreation Plan. This plan was completed in January 2006 and details the preservation methodology used by the Township, as well as an inventory of preserved lands and recommendations for further acquisition. In addition to the Open Space and Recreation Plan, the Highlands Act and the New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan directly influence future development within the Township and guide preservation of lands.

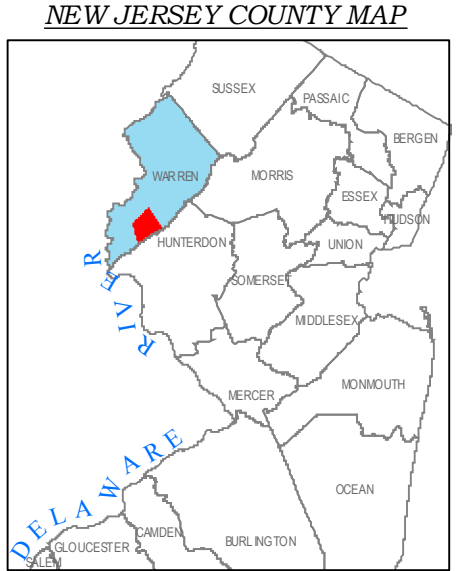
Franklin Township has been very successful in preserving open spaces in the Township ([Figure 17](#)). With public support, the Township's open space trust fund has increased from two cents per one hundred dollars of assessed property value in 1999 to a rate of six and one half cents in 2005. Voters have consistently approved rate increases since the creation of the open space fund in 1999, but this latest increase to six and a half cents, the highest in Warren County, has been implemented by municipal ordinance number 2005-15. The Township has also been able to secure funds for purchasing open space from other sources, including: the State Agricultural Development Committee (SADC), the Warren County Agricultural Development Board (CADB) and from an SADC Planning Incentive Grant (PIG).

Franklin Township encompasses a total of 15,360 acres. Of this total, 2,427.49 acres or 15.8% of the Township is preserved open space land. Most open space acquisition has been focused on farmland preservation as an attempt to preserve the Township's agricultural heritage. In total, 36 parcels of farmland have been preserved for a sum of 1,791.32 acres. NJDEP- owned open space accounts for 159 acres and Warren County owned open space accounts for 174 acres. A 60-acre property is now pending purchase by the Township, 40 acres of which will be slated for active recreational use.

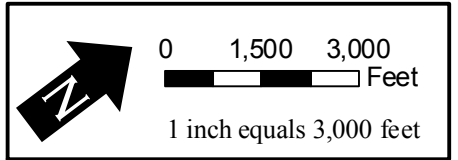


Open Space / Preserved Land

- County Property / Easement
- Municipal Property
- Non-Profit Property
- Preserved Farmland
- Semi-Public Property
- State Property



PRINCETON HYDRO, LLC.
 1108 OLD YORK ROAD, SUITE 1
 RINGOES, NEW JERSEY, 08551



SOURCES:

- Parcel, roads and the Franklin Township Boundary data obtained from Warren County Planning Dept. "This map was developed using the Warren County New Jersey, Geographic Information System digital data, but this secondary product has not been verified by Warren County and is not county-authorized."
- Surface water data obtained from the NJDEP, Division of GIS.
- Open Space data also obtained from the Warren County Planning Department. Data obtained in October of 2006.

**FIGURE 17
 OPEN SPACE AND
 PRESERVED LANDS**

NATURAL RESOURCE INVENTORY
 FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP
 WARREN COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

Legend

- County Boundary
- Municipal Boundaries
- Parcels
- Roads
- Ponds/Lakes
- Streams**
- Streams
- Morris Canal (Dry)

