



news releases

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**DEP DEDICATES CAPE MAY WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA,
STOCKS TROUT IN STATE'S SOUTHERNMOST TROUT POND**

(12/P32) TRENTON - The Department of Environmental Protection today formally dedicated the Cox Hall Creek Wildlife Management Area, made possible by a Green Acres Program purchase of the former Ponderlodge Golf Course in Lower Township on the ecologically important tip of the Cape May peninsula.

"The DEP has worked very closely with the local community every step of the way in the acquisition and restoration of this site, which provides critical habitat to a wide variety of plant, animal and bird species in one of the state's most ecologically critical regions," Division of Fish and Wildlife Director David Chanda said during dedication ceremonies today. "Equally important, this Wildlife Management Area is providing wonderful opportunities for the public to enjoy nature and the outdoors."

The dedication of the Wildlife Management Area, which is located in the Cox Hall Creek watershed, was marked by the release of more than 500 trout raised at the DEP's Pequest Trout Hatchery into Flynn's Pond, an eight-acre lake in the heart of the Wildlife Management Area.

The opening day of trout season, falling on April 7 this year, is the most anticipated day on the annual fishing calendar. Prior to opening day, the DEP stocks more than 180,000 trout in nearly 200 waterways, followed by the stocking of nearly 400,000 more trout over a seven-week period. Flynn's pond, now the state's southernmost trout water body, will receive some 2,000 trout in the coming weeks.

"Fishing is part of our heritage, and this location gives our residents another place to relax, enjoy the natural beauty of the setting, while hopefully enduring the occasional interruption of landing a fish," said Lower Township Mayor Michael Beck. "The handicapped accessible fishing pier will make it possible for all to participate, including those limited by disabilities. This former Ponderlodge site has become part of the daily routine for many of our residents, and the addition of a stocked pond gives us all another reason to visit this area. We appreciate the opportunity to partner with DEP on this project and other projects in the future within our township."

Cox Hall Creek provides habitat for juvenile and adult bald eagles, osprey, American kestrel, and a variety of swallows, warblers, woodpeckers, flycatchers and a host of other birds.

Because of its unique configuration and geographic location along the Atlantic Flyway migration route, millions of songbirds, raptors, and shorebirds are funneled into the lower portion of the peninsula. This area also serves an essential role during the migration of many bat, butterfly, and dragonfly species.

The Ponderlodge Golf Course is the centerpiece of \$8.4 million in Green Acres land acquisitions that led to the creation of the Wildlife Management Area. The Division of Parks and Forestry also utilized nearly

\$892,000 from the constitutionally dedicated Corporate Business Tax and other capital funds to demolish buildings, improve roads, install the dock and make other capital improvements.

The site has quickly become popular with local residents for bicycling, walking, fishing and bird watching. The Wildlife Management Area was closed for several months in early 2011 for the demolition of a lodge and other structures and for improvements to the trail system developed from a former golf cart path network.

The DEP's Division of Fish and Wildlife has been restoring and enhancing the course, marking trails, adding interpretive signs, installing nest boxes and placing a universally-accessible fishing pier in the pond. In addition the DEP is working with the Conserve Wildlife Foundation of New Jersey on multiple habitat restoration projects and a backyard habitat demonstration area at the site. So far, over 1,500 trees have been planted as part of this effort.

The stocking of Flynn's Pond includes 480 production-run brook trout and 50 bonus broodstock brown trout. A production-run trout averages 10.5 inches and weighs about a half pound. Broodstock fish are 2 to 4 years old that exceed 18 inches in length and weigh more than 1.5 pounds.

The bonus broodstock program provides anglers with the opportunity to catch the trout of a lifetime, which can weigh as much as eight pounds and run 24 inches long. Flynn's Pond was chosen to be in the bonus brood stock program because of its proximity to a large population center in a county with limited trout fishing opportunities.

For more on New Jersey Wildlife Management Areas, visit: <http://www.nifishandwildlife.com/wmas.htm>

For more information on trout fishing, visit: http://www.state.nj.us/dep/fqw/trtinfo_spring.htm

For more information on capital improvements to New Jersey's parks, forests and wildlife management areas, visit: www.nj.gov/dep/parksandforests/cbt/index.html

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