

History of Troy Meadows

Troy Meadows is a remnant of the last glacier, a part of ancient Lake Passaic. A huge mass of ice broke off the glacier and rested here, enclosed in a thick layer of glacial debris. As the ice melted and settled, a depression formed, lined with the sediments deposited by the glacier. At one time the meadows were part of a vast lake of glacial melt water that drained through the Great Falls of Paterson. Gradually, the water level dropped and marsh plants invaded the area.

Late 1930s— The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service proposed Troy Meadows as a national wildlife refuge to serve the greater New York metropolitan region, but the designation was never granted. Since the early 1950s, Troy Meadows has been reduced to half its original size. Troy Meadows continues to be endangered by development all around it.

1952— Wildlife Preserves was founded and incorporated by a group of philanthropic conservationists, including the organizations long-time President and Executive Director- ("Bob") Robert L. Perkins, Jr. of Tenafly, NJ. The fledgling corporation began fundraising from within and outside of New Jersey and started buying farm lots and meadowlands in the Passaic River Basin, including land in Troy Meadows, Hatfield Swamp, and along the Whippany, Rockaway, and Passaic Rivers in East Hanover, Hanover, and Parsippany-Troy Hills.

1954— The U.S. Department of the Interior rated Troy Meadows as the "highest quality inland wetland in the state of New Jersey" (a rating even higher than that of the Great Swamp).

Late '50s— Wildlife Preserves leases 1,000 acres of land at Troy Meadows to the US Fish and Wildlife Service for a national wetlands sanctuary. US F&WS appoints a refuge manager to Troy Meadows.

1961— The NJ Green Acres program was established and the state of New Jersey announced Troy Meadows as one of its first Green Acres Projects. Yet to this date, the state owns only about 20 per cent of Troy Meadows (with the major portion still in private hands).

1963— The New Jersey Supreme Court overturned the Township of Parsippany Troy-Hills' 1960 "Meadows Development Zone" in Troy Meadows (Morris County Land Improvement Company vs. Parsippany Troy-Hills Township). Under the Meadows Development Zone, the Township zoned Troy Meadows for flood retention and open space, but the Supreme Court ruled that the Zone constituted a taking of land for public purposes without just compensation, and was confiscatory and unconstitutional. The Township then rezoned most of Troy Meadows for "Recreation, Conservation, and Wildlife" (RCW), which was an apparent attempt to give uses to land in Troy Meadows, including uses to land that can be legally and reasonably developed.

1968— Wildlife Preserves conveys, at no cost to the NJ DEP, two tracks of land in the South end of Troy Meadows (December 31, 1968, now Block 764, Lots 73 and 46) totaling 49 acres under the express condition that the State shall "complete the Troy Meadows Project within three years," and if the condition is not carried out then the land shall automatically revert to Wildlife Preserves. The state has yet to carry out its obligation under the deed.

1969— The Algonquin Gas Transmission Company is granted an easement to build a gas transmission pipeline through Troy Meadows. After a contentious court battle, the State of New Jersey and Wildlife Preserves grant an easement to Algonquin Gas Transmission Company, signed by Governor Richard J. Hughes (Morris County Deed Book 2131, Page 685). The Deed of Easement expires in July, 2019 when the gas company has the option to renew the right-of-way for another fifty years "subject to negotiations."

1972— The NJ DEP authorizes Wildlife Preserves to (quote): "post and protect the State-owned property known as the Troy Meadows Natural Area located in the municipalities of Parsippany-Troy Hills and East Hanover Township." (November 6, 1972, by Director, Joseph J. Truncer.)

1973— The New Jersey Department of Transportation begins the construction of Interstate Route 80 and Interstate Route 280 through Troy Meadows, which dissects, divides, and degrades Troy Meadows.

1974— The State of New Jersey establishes the "New Jersey Open Space and Recreation Plan," prepared by Edwards and Kelcey, Inc., engineers and consultants. Troy Meadows, owned by Wildlife Preserves was named for public acquisition, including a description of its planned uses - Troy Meadows Natural Area - 2,550 acres located in Morris County - "with roadside displays and rest areas on the north side of Route 80 and south side of Route 280, including an interpretive center and hiking and bridle trails." (At that time Wildlife Preserves owned 1,850 acres of Troy Meadows. The State has acquired about 400 acres to date.)

1981— The NJ DEP and Wildlife Preserves entered into a contract to cooperate to protect and preserve Troy Meadows and Great Piece Meadows as a (quote) "high quality natural area sanctuary" for the public benefit. (December 2, 1981, by Donald T. Graham, Assistant Commissioner for Natural Resources.)

1985— Governor Tom Kean acknowledges in a letter that Troy Meadows is (quote): "of considerable ecological importance in New Jersey" and states that "the NJ DEP has earmarked nearly \$ 3 million to be spent over the next 5 years for state open space acquisition in Troy Meadows and while this amount falls far short of enabling us to

acquire the entire site, it represents a major financial commitment." (February 28, 1985.)

1986— New Jersey Freshwater Wetlands Protection Act (FWPA)

2003— The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) begins acquiring land on behalf of the State of New Jersey, Department of Environmental Protection in the Passaic flood plains through the "Passaic Natural Flood Storage Area" project (PNFSA).

The USACE offers to buy Wildlife's land in Great Piece Meadows, Little Piece Meadows, Hatfield Swamp, and Troy Meadows for the PNFSA project.

2008— Wildlife Preserves refuses to sell Troy Meadows to the State of New Jersey because the NJ DEP will not agree to deed restrict Troy Meadows against hunting.

2009— Wildlife Preserves sells part of Troy Meadows (North of Route 280) known as Hatfield Swamp to the Township of East Hanover and the Land Conservancy of New Jersey for a bargain price of under \$ 4,000 an acre with a Restrictive Covenant against hunting and a Management Agreement. The hunting rights are retained by Wildlife Preserves; the Restriction Covenant runs with the land in perpetuity.

2013— Wildlife Preserves begins an aggressive campaign to remove invasive species of plants from the meadows and woodlands at the north-end of Troy Meadows in an effort to enhance the freshwater marsh, forests, and wildlife habitat. All the invasive species—from phragmites—reed grass, Japanese barberry, to stilt grass are located and mapped for eradication..

Wildlife Preserves obtains a NJ Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) General Permit to spray herbicides on invasive plant species of Phragmites which is taking over meadows.

The project includes installing deer exclusion fencing around some of the woodland areas and replanting the meadows and woods with native plants species.

2014— Public Service Electric and Gas—PSE&G— upgrades its electric transmission line from Susquehanna, Pennsylvania to Roseland, New Jersey and through Troy Meadows.

PSE&G upgrades from a single 230,000 volts (230kV) line to a dual circuit 230kV / 500,000 volts (230kV/500kV) transmission Line. PSE&G replaces its rotted wooden boardwalk to a new fiberglass walkway—affectionate called the "Green Mile." It removes its existing 98-foot lattice towers and replaces them with 198-foot monopoles. Construction is done by helicopter (see video of construction on this site). The Green Mile walkway is elevated 5 feet above the marsh and it is a popular tour for birdwatchers of ducks and marsh birds.

2016— Wildlife Preserves opens the Troy Meadows Wetlands Mitigation Bank. It is an approved NJDEP wetland mitigation bank consisting of 560 acres at the north end of Troy Meadows.