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**STATE LAND ACQUISITION EXPANDS CRANBERRY MOUNTAIN WILDLIFE
MANAGEMENT AREA BY A THIRD****Acquisition to Protect Land in the New York Highlands Made with
Federal Grant Funding and a Private Donation**

The Cranberry Mountain Wildlife Management Area has expanded by a third with New York state's acquisition of a 261-acre property in Putnam County that is prized for wildlife habitat and water quality protection, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Commissioner Joe Martens announced today. The property, known as North Hollow, is located within the Great Swamp watershed and was acquired by the state with federal grant money and a private donation.

"Adding North Hollow to the Cranberry Mountain Wildlife Management Area will preserve forested and watershed land for use by the public for expanded recreational and sportsmen activities," Commissioner Martens said. "This acquisition is an example of how New Yorkers can benefit when state, federal, non-for-profit and private entities all work together to achieve a common goal. The preservation of North Hollow will be a valuable addition to a network of protected lands within the Highlands and Great Swamp areas, further protecting one of the largest freshwater wetlands in the state that is home to many plant and animal species."

DEC sought to add the North Hollow property to its 467-acre Cranberry Mountain Wildlife Management Area to further protect the Highlands region for its abundant natural and cultural resources. The Cranberry Mountain WMA now totals 728 acres. Since 2006, DEC and the Trust for Public Land, a national conservation organization, have worked with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the family of the late Gerald Blumberg, a long-time resident of the Hudson River Valley, to conserve the property.

North Hollow features steep upland forests protecting the nearby Haviland Hollow Brook, a pristine trout stream. The brook watershed connects with the Great Swamp, Croton River and reservoirs in the New York Highlands that provide drinking water to New York City. The area is used for such recreational activities as hiking, cross-country skiing, hunting, fishing and trapping.

A federal Highlands Conservation Act grant for \$653,500 was used toward the purchase of the property. The federal program is administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and is designed to assist Connecticut, New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania with conserving land and natural resources in the Highlands region.

The Highlands Conservation Act grant required a non-federal match on a dollar-for-dollar basis. The Blumberg family generously donated half the value of the property to meet the federal match requirement.

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Marc Matsil, the Trust for Public Land's New York State Director said: "Completing the conservation of the North Hollow property is a vital addition to the Cranberry Mountain Wildlife Management Area. The Trust for Public Land is grateful to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation for its dedication to protecting land in the Highlands and to the New York congressional delegation for their commitment to the Highlands Conservation Act, which made this project possible. This diverse cover type provides superb recreation opportunities and great economic value by enhancing regional ecotourism and builds on the vital work of the State and the New York City Department of Environmental Protection to safeguard drinking water for millions of New Yorkers."

Senator Greg Ball said: "As Chairman of the New York Legislative Sportsmen's Caucus and an avid sportsman myself, the expansion of the Cranberry Mountain Wildlife Management area couldn't make me happier. I believe it is vital to protect our watershed, promote strict clean air initiatives, and preserve natural wildlife areas and I look forward to working together to continue to keep Putnam County, and the Hudson Valley as a whole, beautiful by preserving our environment."

Ron Essig, Acting Chief of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Division of Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration in the Northeast Region said: "The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has been pleased to have the opportunity to assist the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation in protecting the North Hollow Property by awarding a Highlands Conservation Act grant to the Agency. This project is a great example of the important conservation results that can be achieved with Highlands Conservation Act funding, and illustrates what a difference the Act can make in assisting states with protecting the natural resources of the Highlands Region."

New York City Environmental Protection Commissioner Carter Strickland said: "Land acquisition is an important tool for the protection of water quality. The purchase of this 261-acre parcel that sits within the Croton watershed will keep this land unspoiled. Having the Trust for Public Land and the State of New York take steps that are in concert with our own, means a great deal to the nine million New Yorkers who rely on this water source for their daily drinking water needs."

Lawrence S. Blumberg, a New York City attorney and seller of the land said: "My father acquired this land over 50 years ago. During this time, he turned down many offers to develop or sell the property because he was waiting for something special. Several years ago, before his death in 2009 at age 97, he was so happy and gratified to know that we were working with The Trust for Public Land. I know that he would be very proud that his land has been preserved forever."

Jim Utter, Chairman, Friends of the Great Swamp (FrOGS) said: "FrOGS is thrilled this area is protected and thanks Larry and Robyn Blumberg, DEC, TPL, and the Highlands Coalition for making it happen. This parcel is critical in maintaining the exceptional water quality and ecology of Haviland Hollow Brook, a major tributary of the Great Swamp, and the acquisition by DEC ensures it remains pristine. We hope the matching parcel on the south side of the Hollow will also be protected soon."

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Raymond Merlotto, Putnam County sportsman and DEC Region 3 representative to the Fish & Wildlife Management Board: “The Cranberry Mountain Wildlife Management Area is an important destination for sportsmen and women from throughout the Lower Hudson. The addition of the North Hollow property to Cranberry Mountain will provide not just expanded opportunities for the region's hunters and anglers, but the acquisition will also provide further protection for the Croton Watershed, the Great Swamp and other important resources in the area that provide habitat vital to the fish and wildlife that thrive there.”

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