

THE SUPPORT OF VOLUNTEER CONSERVATION GROUPS

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It is a pleasure and an honor for me to represent this morning the several volunteer groups which co-operated with the Citizens' Committee for the Preservation of Mettler's Woods. Naturally, I am most familiar with the role of the Garden Club of New Jersey and its member clubs throughout the State, but today I speak for all the volunteer organizations which gave help as well as for the garden clubs.

It is most encouraging to note that support came from many sources. Throughout our state and nation there are innumerable organizations dedicated in whole or in part to the preservation of natural areas and to their proper use. The underlying principle in all these is that the present generation has a duty to pass on to the next generation the priceless treasures it has received.

Since its organization in 1925, the Garden Club of New Jersey has sponsored many projects in the field of conservation. The Blue Star Memorial Highway, the Arboretum in Greenbrook Sanctuary, garden therapy in military and veterans hospitals, and scholarships to camps and conservation workshops are examples of state activity in the conservation of natural and human resources. Individually, garden clubs sponsor countless local conservation and civic projects. The support which our garden clubs gave to the preservation of Mettler's Woods is just another illustration of their basic philosophy.

Similarly, the New Jersey Audubon Society, as well as the National Audubon Society and other Audubon groups devote much of their resources to natural area preservation and conservation. The aims of the New Jersey Audubon Society are to fight unremittingly for the wise use of our natural resources, to campaign for intelligent and planned co-operation among conservation groups, and to provide information on animal life and its importance in conservation. Bird-watching in the early morning mists is one of the Society's great pleasures, but the birds themselves must be protected and places for them to live in safety must be reserved. This means that attention must be given also to water supply and food resources. To cite a recent example, the New Jersey society played an important role in helping to save Island Beach. In other parts of the State are sanctuaries set aside by the help of Audubon groups where nature instead of man is left in charge. It is not surprising that members of the Society responded so generously to the appeal for the preservation of Mettler's Woods.

The youngest organization of the groups which assisted the Citizens' Committee was the Nature Conservancy, a non-profit corporation of national scope which received its charter in Washington, D. C., in October, 1951. Its unincorporated predecessor was the Ecologists' Union established

in 1946. That organization was the outgrowth of the Committee for the Preservation of Natural Conditions of the Ecological Society of America first appointed in 1917. In a historical sense, therefore, Nature Conservancy is well past its majority. The charter stated that particular objective of the corporation shall be "to preserve or aid in the preservation and proper use of our natural resources, to engage in or promote the study of plant and animal communities and of other phases of ecology and to promote education in the fields of nature preservation and conservation."

The Nature Conservancy initiates projects and assists others. It serves as a clearing house for all those working to preserve areas. It seeks funds also from societies, foundations, and individuals for its own projects and for those which are approved by it. Under this policy, the Citizens' Committee for the Preservation of Mettler's Woods was given most important scientific and financial aid. Through it the second largest gift was obtained. Other projects recently assisted have been the saving of a large tract of the so-called eastern sequoia, or bald cypress, in the Corkscrew Swamp of Florida, the Mianus Gorge stand of ancient hemlocks and hardwoods which straddles the New York-Connecticut line, the Sunken Forest on Fire Island and Dome Island in Lake George, New York.

To each and all of these organizations, and to others which gave help, I extend sincere thanks for their essential support.

In the name of these organizations, I should like to pay tribute to Professors Cole, Buell, Johnson, and Small for their untiring efforts to "save Mettler's Woods." Their devotion to the cause was an inspiration, their success well deserved.

And I should like to congratulate the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America for its action in establishing such a splendid memorial to former President Huteson. If I may be permitted a seasonal metaphor, we deem it a privilege to have helped advance the line until this star quarterback could carry the ball across the goal.