



# New Jersey's Environments: Past, Present, and Future

*Neil M. Maher*

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Americans often think of New Jersey as an environmental nightmare. As seen from its infamous turnpike, which is how many travelers experience the Garden State, it is difficult not to be troubled by the wealth of industrial plants, belching smokestacks, and hills upon hills of landfills. Yet those living and working in New Jersey often experience a very different environment. Despite its dense population and urban growth, two-thirds of the state remains covered in farmland and forest, and New Jersey has a larger percentage of land dedicated to state parks and forestland than the average for all states. It is this ecological paradox that makes New Jersey important for understanding the relationship between Americans and their natural world.

In *New Jersey's Environments*, historians, policy-makers, and earth scientists use a case study approach to uncover the causes and consequences of decisions regarding land use, resources, and conservation. Nine essays consider topics ranging from solid waste and wildlife management to the effects of sprawl on natural disaster preparedness. The state is astonishingly diverse and faces more than the usual competing interests from environmentalists, citizens, and businesses.

This book documents the innovations and compromises created on behalf of and in response to growing environmental concerns in New Jersey, all of which set examples on the local level for nationwide and worldwide efforts that share the goal of protecting the natural world.

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