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AND LAND TRUST ALLIANCE

AMERICANS INVEST IN  
PARKS & CONSERVATION

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# LANDVOTE<sup>®</sup> 2009



## NATIONAL OVERVIEW

On Election Day 2009, voters across the U.S. once again demonstrated their commitment to supporting public investments in parks and natural areas. Despite some of the worst economic circumstances in years, voters in 13 states approved conservation finance ballot measures that will generate more than \$600 million to protect open space. Of the 40 measures on the ballot, nearly two out of every three were successful.

That voters continued to support open space ballot measures in 2009 should come as no surprise. As documented in TPL's LandVote Database ([www.landvote.org](http://www.landvote.org)), since 1988 voters have approved more than 1,700 measures yielding more than \$53 billion in conservation funding. This support—from voters of all political persuasions—has remained strong even during prior economic slowdowns. The 2009 results confirm that conservation remains a cause voters will support.

In New Jersey, voters approved the \$400 million "Green Acres" bond measure with 53 percent support, continuing a tradition of success dating back five decades. Since 1961, New Jersey voters have passed each of twelve state conservation measures put before them—an unblemished approval rate. Because New Jersey has long been considered a national leader in conservation finance, the 2009 measure was closely watched by conservation leaders nationwide. Its passage will allow the state's landmark conservation program to continue. The New Jersey victory is also a signal to other states that such measures can succeed even in a difficult economy.

Going into the 2010 election cycle, the outlook for conservation funding is good. Despite the large budget gaps, many states including California, New Mexico, Maine, Iowa, Oregon, Rhode Island, and Alabama could mount conservation finance measures this year, which together could yield billions of dollars in additional land-acquisition funding.

In these challenging times, elected officials are focusing on the economic benefits of land conservation. In New Jersey, open space yields \$10 in benefits for every dollar spent, according to TPL research. The understanding that open space constitutes a valuable public investment provided a strong argument for advocates in the New Jersey Legislature to put the 2009 measure on the ballot. The economic arguments for land conservation are likely to increase in importance during campaigns in 2010 and beyond.

As highlighted in a January 1, 2010, front-page article in the New York Times, the current economic downturn also has led to a new window of opportunity for land conservation—sometimes referred to as the recession's "green lining." Because of the decline in the real estate market, conservation has become a more attractive alternative to development for some landowners. This has made many properties more affordable and provided once-in-a-generation opportunities to conserve land once destined for development. To take advantage of these opportunities and preserve the places they find special, voters will need to continue their support for conservation funding measures.



The Trust for Public Land conserves land for people to enjoy as parks, gardens, and other natural places, ensuring livable communities for generations to come. Since 1996, TPL's Conservation Finance Program has helped to secure voter approval of more than 400 local and state ballot measures that have generated almost \$33 billion in new funding for parks and open space.

TPL offers Conservation Funding services to help land trusts, communities, and states, design, pass, and implement measures that dedicate new public funds for parks and land conservation. Services include:

- **Feasibility Research** – funding and measure options
- **Public Opinion Surveys** – gauging voter support
- **Measure Design** – optimal measure components
- **Effective Conservation Programs** – program design and evaluation

[tpl.org/services](http://tpl.org/services)

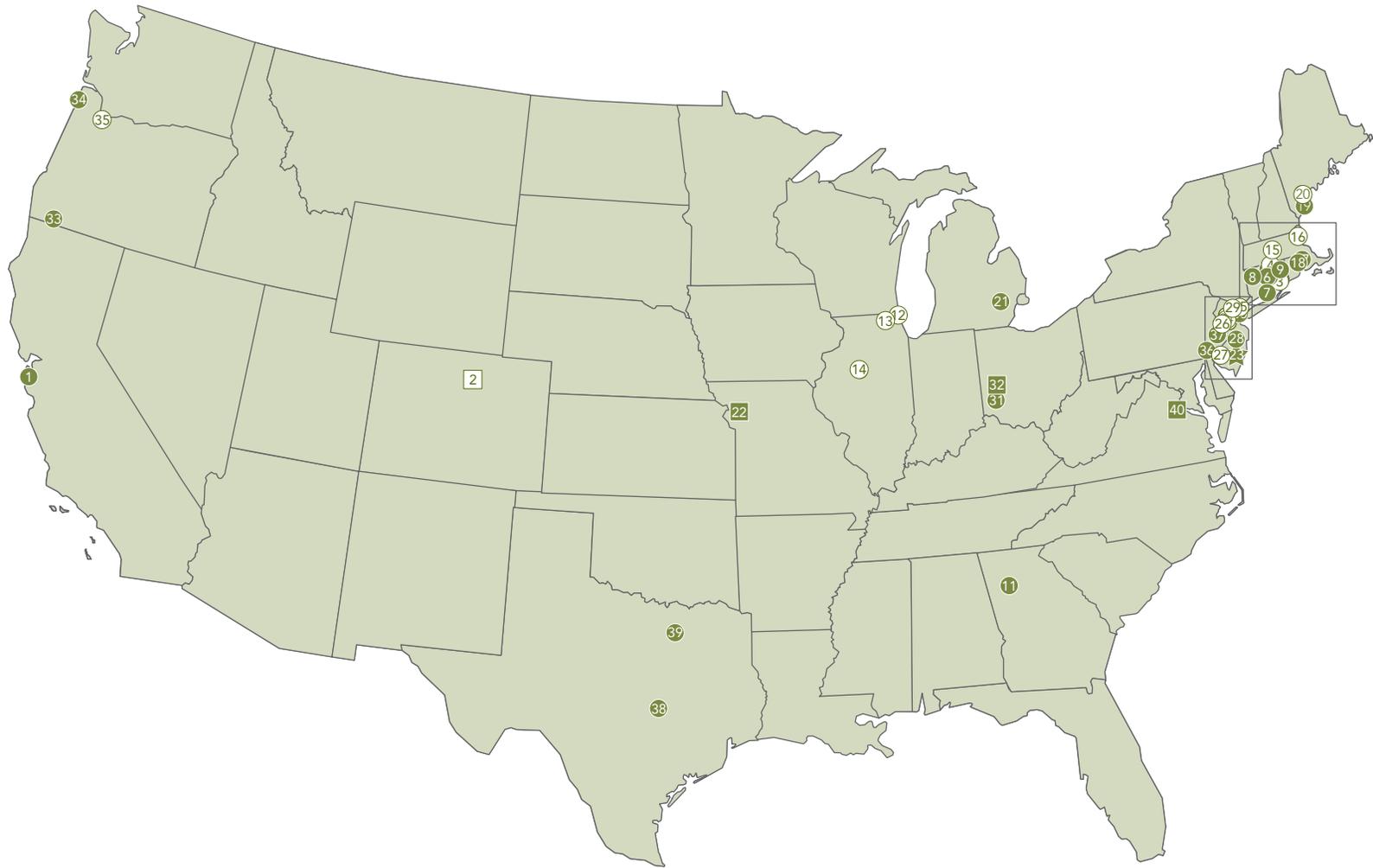


The Land Trust Alliance is a national conservation group that works to save

the places people love by strengthening conservation throughout America. It works to increase the pace and quality of conservation by advocating favorable tax policies, training land trusts in best practices, and working to ensure the permanence of conservation in the face of continuing threats.

Visit the Alliance on the web at [www.landtrustalliance.org](http://www.landtrustalliance.org) to learn about:

- **The Alliance in Your Region:** Land trust programs, grants, training, and accreditation
- **Public Policy:** Working with the Alliance to support land trusts' conservation goals
- **Resources:** Online learning, books, videos, brochures, training conferences, and events for the land conservation community
- **Land Trust Locator:** Finding a land trust in your area to connect with



## National Election Results 2009

## Funds Approved

State / Jurisdiction	Date	Status	Yes	No	Description	Funds Approved	
						Total	Conservation
① CA Portola Valley	Nov. 3	Pass	66%	34%	4-year, 2% utility tax renewal for open space purchases	\$984,000	\$984,000
② CO Boulder Co.	Nov. 3	Fail	48%	52%	15-year, extension of 0.25% open space sales tax		
③ CT Chester	Nov. 10	Fail	35%	65%	Bond for the purchase of open space		
④ CT Ellington	Nov. 3	Fail	44%	56%	Bond for open space and recreational lands		
⑤ CT Glastonbury	May 19	Pass	75%	25%	Bond for the purchase of Winter Hill Farm	\$3,875,000	\$3,875,000
⑥ CT Glastonbury	Nov. 3	Pass	62%	38%	Bond for open space	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000
⑦ CT Guilford	Jan. 27	Pass	85%	15%	Bond for the purchase of two properties for open space	\$15,450,000	\$15,450,000
⑧ CT Harwinton	Nov. 24	Pass	71%	29%	Purchase of 64-acre property for open space	\$800,000	\$800,000
⑨ CT Mansfield	Nov. 3	Pass	61%	39%	Bond for the acquisition of open space and recreational lands	\$1,052,450	\$1,052,450
⑩ CT South Windsor	Nov. 3	Pass	63%	37%	Bond for the preservation of open space and farmland	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000
⑪ GA Marietta	Nov. 3	Pass	51%	49%	Bond for park acquisitions and improvements	\$25,000,000	\$5,000,000
⑫ IL Grayslake Community PD	Apr. 7	Fail	47%	53%	8.9-cents property tax increase for the purchase of open space		
⑬ IL Nunda Twp.	Apr. 7	Fail	41%	59%	Bond for the preservation of open space		
⑭ IL Washington Twp.	Apr. 7	Fail	30%	70%	Bond to acquire and preserve open space		



Measures 2009		Pass	Fail
Co.	County	■	□
Bor.	Borough	●	○
Twp.	Township	●	○
PD	Park District	●	○
	State	★	☆

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## Funds Approved

State / Jurisdiction	Date	Status	Yes	No	Description	Total	Conservation
15 MA Hardwick	Apr. 13	Fail	46%	54%	Community Preservation Act, 3% property tax surcharge		
16 MA Lynnfield	Apr. 13	Fail	19%	81%	Community Preservation Act, 3% property tax surcharge		
17 MA Rehoboth	Apr. 6	Pass	61%	39%	Community Preservation Act, 1% property tax surcharge	\$2,933,280	\$977,760
18 MA Seekonk	Apr. 6	Pass	53%	47%	Community Preservation Act, 1.25% property tax surcharge	\$5,310,680	\$1,770,227
19 ME Scarborough	Nov. 3	Pass	68%	32%	Bond for the conservation of natural areas	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000
20 ME Windham	Nov. 3	Fail	47%	53%	Bond for the preservation of Clark Farm		
21 MI Webster Twp.	Nov. 3	Pass	60%	40%	5-year, 0.5 mill property tax renewal for open space and farmland protection	\$853,665	\$853,665
22 MO Platte Co.	Aug. 4	Pass	54%	46%	10-year, 0.5% sales tax renewal for local parks including land acquisition	\$76,000,000	\$10,000,000
★ NJ New Jersey	Nov. 3	Pass	53%	47%	Bond for open space, parks, farmland, and historic preservation	\$400,000,000	\$400,000,000
24 NJ Bridgewater Twp.	Nov. 3	Fail	50%	50%	5-year, 1-cent continuation of open space property tax		
25 NJ Hillsdale Bor.	Nov. 3	Fail	47%	53%	1-cent property tax to establish an open space trust fund		
26 NJ Readington Twp.	Nov. 3	Fail	45%	55%	2-cent property tax increase for open space and farmland		
27 NJ Mantua Twp.	Nov. 3	Fail	39%	61%	5-year, 2-cent property tax increase for open space preservation		
28 NJ North Hanover Twp.	Nov. 3	Pass	54%	46%	5-year, 7-cents property tax increase for open space and farmland preservation	\$824,981	\$824,981
29 NJ Park Ridge Bor.	Nov. 3	Fail	45%	55%	Continuation of 1-cent property tax for open space, farmland, and recreational lands		
30 NJ Old Tappan Bor.	Nov. 3	Pass	54%	46%	Continuation of 1-cent property tax for open space, farmland, and historic preservation	\$2,580,000	\$2,580,000
31 OH Five Rivers MetroParks	Nov. 3	Pass	71%	29%	10-year, 1.8 mill replacement levy for park operations and preservation of natural areas	\$179,000,000	\$10,000,000
32 OH Franklin County MetroParks	May 5	Pass	58%	42%	10-year, 0.75 mill replacement and increase property tax for parks and wildlife habitat	\$215,000,000	\$107,500,000
33 OR Ashland	Nov. 3	Pass	59%	41%	20-year, 5% meals tax extension with 80% of the revenue for the sewage capital projects and 20% for open space purchases	\$30,000,000	\$6,000,000
34 OR Cannon Beach	May 19	Pass	51%	49%	Bond for the protection of Ecola Creek watershed	\$4,000,000	\$4,000,000
35 OR Tigard	Nov. 3	Fail	47%	53%	Bond for the purchase of land for natural areas, parks, and trails		
36 PA Pennsbury Twp.	Nov. 3	Pass	62%	38%	0.34 mill property tax increase for open space	\$5,000,000	\$5,000,000
37 PA Plumstead Twp.	Nov. 3	Pass	51%	49%	Bond for the acquisition of parks and recreational lands	\$4,500,000	\$4,500,000
38 TX Hutto	Nov. 3	Pass	51%	49%	Bond for parkland acquisition and improvements	\$3,300,000	\$1,000,000
39 TX Plano	May 9	Pass	59%	41%	Bond for park improvements and acquisition	\$48,700,000	\$15,200,000
40 VA Stafford Co.	Nov. 3	Pass	54%	46%	Bond for parks and recreation	\$29,000,000	\$5,300,000

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### How is conservation funding calculated by LandVote?

LandVote only tracks conservation measures considered by voters: ballot measures. LandVote tracks two major types of conservation ballot measures. The first type are ballot measures that authorize sales, property, income, and other taxes to pay for conservation. These are often called "pay as you go" funding sources. When a ballot measure authorizes a new tax, LandVote counts the estimated revenue generated for the duration of the tax. When the tax is not limited to a specific term, a duration of 20 years is used to generate the figure. In all cases the total funds generated over the life of the measure are conservatively estimated and do not reflect likely increases in the tax base. When a ballot measure increases an existing open space tax, LandVote counts only the value of the added increment. A second type of ballot measure is the bond measure, a ballot question that authorizes the use of bonded indebtedness (general obligation bonds) for the purpose of financing capital improvements such as land conservation. In tabulating results, LandVote counts the face value of the bonds authorized, rather than the much higher value of repaying the bonds in the future. Bonds usually extend for 20 or 30 years.

### How does LandVote estimate all the amounts from ballot measures in 2009?

LandVote tabulates local and state conservation ballot measures in two ways: 1) the total funds expected to be generated by the ballot measure including components in addition to land acquisition, and 2) the conservation funding for land acquisition and protection. Both sets of figures document and help explain the substantial voter support that exists for conservation and the voters' willingness to pay for conservation.

## CONSERVATION STATISTICS AND TOOLS



### LandVote Database and Mapping

TPL's online database of conservation finance ballot measures since 1988 now allows you to display and compare information on maps.

[landvote.org](http://landvote.org)



### Vote for Land and Water

Your Partner for Successful Public Funding of Conservation

[conservationcampaign.org](http://conservationcampaign.org)



### Online: The Conservation Almanac

The definitive, comprehensive online resource of local, state, and federal land conservation statistics, now with an advanced mapping feature, including parcel-level views of land acquisitions and conservation spending.

[conservationalmanc.org](http://conservationalmanc.org)

### NEW: The Conservation Program Handbook

A comprehensive, easy-to-understand guide to initiating and evaluating a local conservation program.

[tpl.org/publications](http://tpl.org/publications)

### LandNotes:

The new blog for conservation professionals and volunteers. Conservation strategies, resources, and highlights from around the nation.

[landnotes.org](http://landnotes.org)

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