

## **New Jersey Audubon Receives \$250,000 Commitment from PSEG Foundation to create Urban Oases**

*New Jersey Audubon's most significant corporate partnership will better connect children with nature.*

Bernardsville, NJ – June 20, 2023 – New Jersey Audubon is thrilled to announce a \$250,000 pledge from PSEG Foundation to fund its Urban Oases: Connecting People, Wildlife, and Habitats in Greater Newark, NJ project. The project is part of an overarching initiative defined by the organization's Conservation Priorities, focused on expanding its programming to create more sustainable and resilient communities, particularly in urban communities. Through this effort, children will connect with nature in their own neighborhoods, while educational partners and community members engage in creating outdoor learning spaces and natural habitats where wildlife, especially butterflies, can thrive.

"We see the PSEG Foundation's articulated strategic pillars of Environmental Sustainability, Social Justice, and Equity and Economic Empowerment broadly mirrored in our own organizational priorities and in our newly developed conservation priorities," says Alex Ireland, New Jersey Audubon's President and CEO. "This exciting project will give even more New Jersey children a strong foundation for caring for our planet, which is critical today, and we are so grateful to the PSEG Foundation for their tremendous support."

PSEG Foundation has been partnering with New Jersey Audubon on school sustainability through Eco-Schools USA, a national green school initiative hosted by the National Wildlife Federation and coordinated statewide by New Jersey Audubon's education staff. *Bridges to the Natural World*, the organization's teaching guide, will provide a foundation for the Urban Oases project, directly supporting the investment that PSEG has made. Time-tested outdoor exploration and discovery activities will engage students in STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) education and the NJ School Learning Standards, including newly added climate change standards. Workplace development opportunities, through the PSEG Sustainability Ambassador intern program, will also play a role in the project's success.

"The New Jersey Audubon's community impact creates platforms for people to have ongoing curiosity and engagement with nature while supporting environmental sustainability," says Calvin Ledford, President PSEG Foundation and Director Corporate Social Responsibility. "We are pleased to provide ongoing support to the New Jersey Audubon. We look forward to seeing the program flourish and encourage young people to remain engaged with solving problems in their own environments."

Urban Oases: Connecting People, Wildlife, and Habitats in Greater Newark, NJ will progress in three phases; the first will develop partnerships among state level and community organizations; Phase Two will enhance and create outdoor learning spaces and site-specific curriculum. The final phase will provide continued professional development opportunities, while engaging families and reinforcing the value of using outdoor learning spaces and creating habitat in their own neighborhoods.

"This project represents New Jersey Audubon's most significant corporate partnership, offering extraordinary opportunity for the people of Greater Newark," states Kimberly Armenti, New Jersey Audubon's Vice President of Development and Communications. "At a time when people are yearning to connect with nature and to experience the health benefits of being outdoors, we are especially proud to partner with PSEG Foundation in providing equitable access to the natural world and to create a new legacy of inclusion in conservation."

## About New Jersey Audubon:

New Jersey Audubon (NJA) is a privately supported, not-for-profit, statewide membership organization. Founded in 1897, NJA is one of the oldest independent Audubon organizations. The mission of NJA is to connect all people with nature and steward the nature of today for all people of tomorrow. The organization is currently conducting the public phase of its SOAR Campaign, the largest comprehensive fundraising and awareness campaign in its 125-year history. To date, these efforts have raised \$12.84 million in gifts and promises toward a \$13 million goal. For more information, visit [www.njaudubon.org](http://www.njaudubon.org).

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