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News Release

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Verizon Signs 10-Year Wildlife Conservation Agreement at Verizon Center in Basking Ridge

Verizon Partners with NJAS and the USFWS to Improve Wildlife Habitat in New Jersey

Basking Ridge, N.J. –Verizon and the New Jersey Audubon Society (NJAS) have entered into a partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) as part of a habitat-restoration project at Verizon Center, the company's operations facility in Basking Ridge.

"Partnerships with NJAS and USFWS's Partners for Fish and Wildlife program can provide assistance to private landowners so they may take an active role in stewardship and conservation," said Brian Marsh, private lands biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. "Through the leadership and initiative of corporate and other interested landowners, private lands can continue to play an important role in the protection of fish, wildlife, and water quality. The USFWS commends Verizon's interest in creating and restoring wildlife habitat on their property."

Through the Partners in Fish and Wildlife program, Verizon, NJAS and the USFWS, will be restoring natural wildlife communities on approximately 25 acres of grassland, riparian and wetland habitats on the Verizon site. Additional areas will be enhanced as well.

The project is focused on improving buffer protection along more than 3,700 feet of the Passaic River, an area that is classified by the State of New Jersey as a trout production-category one waterway. The State designates waterways as category one because of their exceptional ecological significance.

"Enhancements to these critical areas will bring real benefits to the entire region," said Christopher J. Kelly, Executive Director of Real Estate for Verizon. "We are eager to work with New Jersey Audubon Society and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as we jointly look for ways to enhance a region that affects millions of New Jerseyans."

Tom Gilmore, president of the New Jersey Audubon Society, said, "By implementing this large-scale habitat restoration, Verizon will become a regional model of corporate stewardship. We hope other corporations will follow Verizon's example."

This buffer protection will also serve associated wetlands in the area, designated by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection as an “environmentally sensitive natural resource area” and “wetlands of exceptional resource value.” Implementing conservation practices can aid in natural resource functions, such as purification of air and water, flood mitigation, reduction of runoff, preservation of biodiversity, and the maintenance of overall ecosystem functions.

In addition, the enhanced habitats will benefit a variety of wildlife and bird species, including waterfowl, neo-tropical migrant bird species and several threatened and endangered species. Further ecological benefits from the enhancement will be the removal of invasive non-native vegetation and water quality improvement.

The project also provides protection of the upper portion of the watershed that flows directly into the New Jersey Natural Heritage Priority Site, known as the Great Swamp, located approximately 0.7 miles (4,154 feet) downstream of the Verizon property. The area has been identified as one of the largest sites for breeding of various threatened and endangered wetland-associated wildlife in New Jersey.

By actively managing and protecting natural resources through its participation in the Partners program, Verizon is demonstrating an outstanding commitment to sustaining native wildlife populations while providing a healthy landscape for the community at large. NJAS and USFWS welcome Verizon as a partner, solidifying a strong relationship with the community to foster environmental awareness and a conservation ethic while enhancing wildlife and natural systems in New Jersey.

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