

Dear Mayor Watson,

The Woodford Cedar Run Wildlife Refuge is an institution and an important part of the social fabric of Medford Township for nearly seventy years. The refuge reflects our community's cherished love of wildlife and a well-known destination for schools and families of Medford Township for generations.

The Problem: Today, the current pandemic has exposed the refuge to unprecedented losses of revenue and donor support due to cancelled school programs, a closed nature center and store sales that exceeds over \$100,000. While operating the largest wildlife hospital in New Jersey, we have continued this public service as we receive hundreds of injured, maimed, or ill wildlife per month that are brought to us by caring citizens from the region. While the nature center is closed; we have kept the trails open as the public visits and walk the trails while maintain safe distances and wearing their protection.

The Solution: As a taxpayer in Medford Township, I have been contributing my property taxes for the Medford Township Open Space, Recreation, Farmland and Historic Preservation Trust Fund for years. I understand that the trust fund had \$3,340,000 in a 2019 audit and that collectively the taxpayers of Medford pay \$730,000 every year. We would like for Medford Township to grant the refuge \$100,000 now to ensure its economic survival now!

The justification:

- The referendum question expressly stated that the dedicated tax could be used for the development and maintenance of such lands (public open space and conservation lands).
- The refuge provides education programs for children in area schools, nature programs for families and run the largest wildlife hospital in NJ.
- The refuge lands are protected public open space and on the township's Recreation and Open Space Inventory since 1997.
- The history of the refuge is a living legacy of the Woodford family who were the leading advocates preserving the Pine Barrens decades ago.
- The refuge has not needed public funding till now while providing conservation and passive recreation services tax free till now for all the residents of the Township and neighboring communities.

Time to Act: We believe that the town's fund should be used to help the Woodford Cedar Run Refuge stay open while we all weather pandemic. Please grant \$100,000 to the Woodford Cedar Run Wildlife Refuge immediately to help them survive this once in a lifetime crisis!

Sincerely