



THE RAPTOR TRUST

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To Whom it may Concern,

On behalf of the Board of Trustees of The Raptor Trust, I wish to express our support for the protection and conservation of the ecologically important and irreplaceable 53-acre parcel of land known as The Drew Forest. The Raptor Trust is an internationally-known wildlife rehabilitation and environmental education center dedicated to the care of native wild birds.

The Drew Forest is many things: an important aquifer filter; a place for recreation; a necessary heat mitigation and carbon sequestration area in a time of increasing global temperatures; a valuable outdoor on-campus “lab” for the Drew University students; and an absolutely critical habitat for both migrating and nesting birds.

Hundreds of species of birds migrate through New Jersey each spring and fall migration season. Many species of beneficial songbirds, waterfowl, raptors and others nest throughout the region, including federally listed endangered and threatened species. These bird species – as well as many mammals, amphibians, reptiles and insects – help maintain a healthy ecosystem and ecological balance. They depend on undisturbed parcels of land like The Drew Forest, whether it be as a spot to feed and recharge on their perilous migratory journeys or to make the area home and raise their families.

At The Raptor Trust, we see the effects of the loss of this type of habitat firsthand, every day. We admit between 5,000 and 6,000 injured and orphaned patients in our clinic every year. The loss of a large, protected parcel of land would put more of our local wildlife at risk.

The Raptor Trust recognizes the Drew Forest as a highly diverse, ecologically important preserve in an area where such habitat is already in short supply, and its loss to development would have significant and long-term negative environmental impacts, both for wildlife and area residents. We urge Drew University – which calls itself “The University in the Forest” – to move forward on a path that will protect and preserve this unique piece of land.

Sincerely,

Christopher D. Soucy, EdM

Executive Director, The Raptor Trust