

Open Space Committee making progress on many initiatives

Open space acquisitions

Franklin Township recently acquired an approximately 29 acre, forested parcel along the White Clay Creek. The purchase was financed by grants from the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR),— 45 percent, the Chester County's Preservation Partnership Program (CCPPP) — 45 percent, and Franklin Township's Open Space Fund (OSF) — 10 percent.

For a second property, we received a grant from CCPPP and will be applying to DCNR for funding this spring.

We are working with several other landowners to permanently preserve open space as farmland or natural land.

Botanical survey

A yearlong Botanical Survey of the Township will begin in February of 2007. Its purposes are to inventory the plant communities of the Township; identify areas and sites for preservation and management, including rare plant sites, outstanding natural areas (woodlands, wetlands, and meadows), stream and environmental greenway corridors; provide research usable for planning purposes; and assist in raising public awareness of

the Township's unique and special botanical and natural features. It will begin as a roadside survey before surveying specific parcels of special interest, after obtaining the agreement of the landowner. The White Clay Creek Management Committee and Franklin's OSF are funding the survey, both at 50 percent.

Trail feasibility study

We will begin a yearlong Township-wide Trail Feasibility Study in April. This study will be based on a conceptual trail system designed by the Open Space Committee and the Planning Commission with the help of The Brandywine Conservancy and The Natural Lands Trust.

The feasibility study is designed to guide Franklin's Board of Supervisors in their deliberations on how to proceed with obtaining easements, acquisitions, environmental studies, engineering designs, funding, etc. needed to build the Trail System. It will also provide up to three Trail Segment Master Site Plans that are required to apply for implementation funding from DCNR, Chester County, and other sources.

The feasibility study is funded by grants from DCNR (50 percent), PECO

Energy's Green Region Open Space Grant Program (15 percent) and Franklin's OSF (35 percent).

Riparian buffer restoration

We are considering a long-range project to restore forested riparian buffers that have degraded over the centuries. The primary objective is to protect and enhance water quality: The healthier the stream, the better it is able to process or degrade contaminants. The riparian forest provides food and habitat for life in and around the stream. Fallen trees and limbs create debris dams, which sustain aquatic habitat by providing food and cover. Riparian buffers intercept sediment, excess nutrients, and other materials from surface runoff. Trees convert nitrogen from excess nutrients into a form that sustains the growth of the forest.

More information

If you wish to preserve your land, follow the Botanical Survey, participate in the Trail Study, or rebuild riparian buffer zones, contact the Township Offices at 610-255-5212 and the Open Space Committee will return your call. More information is available on the Township's website.

With easement.... (cont. from page 1)

are eligible for conservation easements if there are natural resources (steep slopes, streams, woodlands, wildlife corridor) or it is used for agriculture. Nan doesn't raise or board horses on her property and there aren't any qualifying natural resources. Her property was eased for the view from the street. "It is a scenic point in the Township, looking across my fields towards Mrs. Vannoy's property. Now this view of open space will be protected forever."

"I want to encourage other large landowners in the Township to call the Township if they are considering any type of conservation easement. The Township will work

with them to help you determine the best way to protect your land for eternity," said Nan. "It felt good when I finished the easement because this farm will remain unchanged forever."

For other landowners that may be interested in easements and open space funding, call the Township Office at 610-255-5212. The Open Space Committee and the Supervisors will work with you to determine what programs would best fit into how you want your land preserved. There are a variety of state, county, regional, and local grant programs that can help landowners preserve their property's use forever.

Earned Income Tax Reminder

Filing the final return and paying Franklin Township's Earned Income Tax for 2006 is due to the township's tax collector—H. A. Berkheimer—April 15.

The required forms can be picked up in the township office or downloaded from Berkheimer's website www.hab-inc.com.

For questions, Berkheimer can be contacted at 610-363-7214.

For township residents that do not have the Franklin Township .5 percent earned-income tax taken out with payroll taxes, information on quarterly filing can also be found at the above website.

A wealth of news, including important information on stormwater management, is available on the township's website: www.franklintownship.us/