



Franklin Township Newsletter

Chester County, PA

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Message from the Chairman

Welcome. Thanks for checking out the latest Franklin Township newsletter. Please always feel free to make any suggestions for content in future issues.

A frequently cited expression concerning real estate is that the top three factors are location, location and location. Coincidentally, there are three top factors in achieving success in keeping an area as rural as legally achievable..... willing landowners, willing landowners and willing landowners. Pennsylvania state law is extremely biased in favor of subdivision and sprawl, so willing landowners are absolutely crucial to success in land preservation efforts. Here again, Franklin Township is blessed with many conservation oriented property owners who are working with Franklin's tireless Open Space Committee.

To put it mildly, the permanent preservation of property, by working with willing landowners and various funding sources, is a complex and lengthy process. This makes it crucial to not "count chickens before they are hatched." That said, within the next 3-6-9 months, for those wanting to see Franklin remain as rural as legally achievable, there will hopefully be numerous fabulous success stories to report—thanks to willing landowners.

We sincerely hope that you find these newsletters informative and helpful. Should you have any questions about information in the newsletter, or any other Township related matters, please always feel free to get in touch. My personal contact info is 610-255-4592 or rwwhipple1@aol.com.

Dick Whipple, Chairman FTBOS

Documenting FT's Plant Diversity

There were 850 different plant species found in Franklin Township as Janet Ebert and Jack Holt walked the roads, streams, and some properties of Franklin Township from February through October of 2007. This makes Franklin Township's plant diversity the second highest in the region (first place goes to Kennett Township with 862).

According to Phil Geoghegan, chairman of the Open Space Committee, the Township had the botanical survey done to guide the Open Space Committee in determining what properties had botanical resources that should be protected through in-fee or easement acquisition. The botanical survey also supports the larger effort spearheaded by the White Clay Creek Watershed Management Committee to document the botanical resources throughout the watershed.

Of the 850 species, 583 or 68.5 percent, were native species and 267, or 31.5 percent, were non-native plants. Sixteen plant species of special concern (e.g., Rare, Endangered, etc) were found at 42 sites. Over 20 Exceptional Natural Areas and Rare Plant Species Sites were documented. A number of promising sites, which were not surveyed because of lack of time or access, have been listed for further work.

One of the fascinating discoveries of the Survey was a white buttercup that hasn't been seen along the East Coast since the 1920s. This and a second site that was recently found in Fair Hill are the only two sites known. According to Ebert, this discovery would not have been made without the Township project.

The Open Space Committee and Township Supervisors will use the information to guide selection of sites for preservation (many of



This meadow along Church Hill Road was identified as an Exceptional Natural Area.

the Exceptional Natural Areas are already preserved or have plans for preservation), to plan trails to point out or avoid rare plants, and to design trails to educate the Township's and regional residents - especially the children - on the diversity and value of these resources and efforts to protect them.

The White Clay National Wild and Scenic Management Committee/National Park Service, a TreeVitalize grant, and Township Open Space Funds funded Franklin Township's Botanical Study. The Brandywine Conservancy and the Franklin Township Open Space Committee assisted Ebert and Holt with the survey.

Ebert and Holt's detailed report, Botanical Survey of Franklin Township: Including Identification of Exceptional Natural Areas and Rare Plant Species Sites. Fieldwork 2007, Report 2008 can be found from a link on Franklin Township's website: www.franklintownship.us.