



Farmland Preservation: Owners Make the Difference

The Land Conservancy's Land Preservation Team speaks with landowners from all over the country and from all walks of life. For all the negotiations that we do and for all the wonderful projects that we've been able to accomplish, the partnerships and close working relationships with our farmland owners are particularly rewarding. Typically these owners have managed their property day to day for years, they know every inch of the landscape and a part of their heart and soul has been tilled into the property each year they have cultivated it. The patience and perseverance they have for the care of their land is inherent in their steadfastness in seeing their farms permanently protected.

In November The Land Conservancy successfully preserved two beautiful working farms: a farm ready to return to its equestrian roots and an active Christmas Tree Farm. In both cases, the farmland owners worked with our staff for a number of years, navigating the process to protect their farms. In each case the farm typifies what the state has coined as "Public Legacy, Private Ownership." The farms remain privately owned with farmland preservation easements purchased to permanently protect the land from future development.

The Land Conservancy partnered with Sussex County on both of these projects, each entity contributed 50% of the funding needed to close on the farmland preservation easements. Our funding was awarded by the State of New Jersey and we thank the staff in Sussex County's Office of Conservation and Farmland Preservation and our partners at the State Agriculture Development Committee for continuing to support farmland preservation in New Jersey. We also wish to congratulate Donna Traylor, the voice of farmland preservation in Sussex County. Under her direction, Sussex County has preserved 17,512 acres since 1990. We wish her well as she retires from the Sussex County Planning Department.

Beginning in October 2010 our staff met with the owners of Golden View Farm in Frankford Township to discuss options for protecting their family's farm. Three years later, almost to the day, this picturesque 75-acre former horse farm located in Frankford Township is now



Christmas trees line the rolling hills of the award winning Wintergreen Farm

permanently protected thanks to the perseverance of the owner and the dedication and technical expertise of The Land Conservancy's Land Preservation Team.

Golden View Farm is currently farmed for hay and future plans include returning the farm to its equestrian roots. Frankford Township itself is an important community in the agricultural landscape of New Jersey. It ranks 22nd out of all New Jersey municipalities on the New Jersey Department of Agriculture's 2006/2007 list of "Highest Municipal Concentration of Agricultural Land" in active agricultural use. It also ranks fourth in Sussex County in total acreage under farmland assessment.

The preservation of the Wintergreen Christmas Tree Farm in Lafayette Township began with a meeting at the family's home in 2010. William and Barbara Allison met with our staff to discuss how their farm would be permanently preserved. Building upon the Allison's commitment, The Land Conservancy submitted an application to the state through the non-profit farmland preservation program and the property was successfully preserved on the same day as the Golden View Farm.

(continued on page 2...)

Now Accepting 2014 Scholarship Applications

The Land Conservancy of New Jersey is accepting applications for our 2014 Scholarship Program. The Conservancy administers two Scholarships, the Russell W. Myers Scholarship and the Rogers Family Scholarship. The Conservancy's Scholarship Program will be awarding a total of \$15,000 in 2014. Each Scholarship will provide \$7,500 to a New Jersey resident pursuing a degree in environmental science, natural resource management, conservation, horticulture, park administration, or a related field.

The Land Conservancy's Scholarship Program has awarded \$194,000 in grants to 47 outstanding college students since its inception.

Applications must be postmarked by April 1, 2014. Interested students can obtain application forms and more information by visiting www.tlc-nj.org.

Outdoor Issues is published by The Land Conservancy of New Jersey, a nonprofit organization founded in 1981 to preserve land and water resources, conserve open space, and inspire and empower individuals and communities to protect land and the environment.

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From the President

The Land Conservancy is about to preserve its 20,000th acre, a remarkable achievement in a densely populated small state where land prices are so high.

As I have been contemplating the meaning of this achievement, it occurred to me what a strange measurement an acre really is. After all, 43,560 square feet is an unusual number to choose as a measuring stick. It turns out that an acre was first used as a standard of measurement during the Middle Ages. It was determined as the amount of land that could be plowed in one day with a yoke of oxen and measured by one chain in width (22 yards), and one furlong, or 10 chains in length (220 yards), yielding 4840 square yards. The more modern approximation of an acre is a football field.

So how much land does 20,000 acres comprise? It is the equivalent of 31.25 square miles or an area about one third larger than Manhattan island. The 20,000 acres preserved by the Land Conservancy includes 350 different transactions, 21 of which were land donations. Forty-five of these projects have been additions to State Parks and Wildlife Management Areas, including 12 additions to the Wildcat Ridge Wildlife Management Area in Rockaway Township alone. We have added land to 10 different County Parks including South Mountain Reservation in Essex County, the Ramapo Reservation in Bergen County (the largest County Park in New Jersey), and 8 different parks in Morris County. We have preserved 50 farms totaling 4,030 acres.

Of course The Land Conservancy's most important focus over the past 14 years has been protecting our drinking water. We have preserved 15,051 acres in the Highlands, where nearly two thirds of New Jersey residents get their drinking water. In this region, we have helped the Morris County Municipal Utilities Authority, Southeast Morris County Municipal Utilities Authority (which provides water to Morristown, Morris Plains, Morris Township and Hanover), the New Jersey Water Supply Authority and North Jersey District Water Supply Commission preserve 3,563 acres surrounding their reservoirs, wells, and watersheds.

Water quantity has been a more recent focus as we have been helping towns move people out of harm's way of floodwaters while creating more river-based recreation land. We have helped to purchase 13 flood prone homes along the Delaware River in Harmony Township and 37 more in Pequannock where the Pompton Riverwalk, a multi-purpose public pathway, will soon take their place.

Surely clean water, locally grown food, new recreational trails and parks in place of flood-prone homes are better ways to measure what we have accomplished than ungainly acres. But however we measure it, 20,000 acres is a wonderful achievement that The Land Conservancy could never have accomplished without the continuing commitment of you - our friends, members, and supporters. We plan to celebrate this achievement throughout 2014 and hope that you will join us.



David Epstein
 David Epstein, President

18 Successful Seasons and Counting!

Now in its 18th year, our *Partners for Parks* program continues to put teams of volunteers from area corporations to work on one-day stewardship projects at a variety of public parks and historic sites throughout northern New Jersey. Through "hands on" experience, these volunteers benefit from team building and acquire stewardship skills, while having the satisfaction of improving the environmental health of parks in their communities. Six projects were completed this fall.

A group of GlaxoSmithKline volunteers helped beautify historic Craftsman Farms in Parsippany by clearing and pruning shrubs, weeding the main trail, and spreading wood chips. A second GlaxoSmithKline volunteer group pruned and prepared the native wildflower garden for the winter at The Land Conservancy's WildAcres headquarters in Montville.

Mars employees worked at Historic Waterloo Village in Byram, creating a new entryway for the village and then carved 10 pumpkins for the upcoming Halloween party for area children. Another group of volunteers from Mars assisted with fall clean up at The Land Conservancy's Community Garden at South Branch Preserve in Mount Olive. They spread 15 cubic yards of wood chips, mowed, pruned, turned over the compost area, and created 5 new plots.

Selective Insurance volunteers removed 100 tires from a tire pit at Antler Ridge Wildlife Refuge in Frelinghuysen and stacked them in a pyramid shape to create a future garden display.



Mars, Inc. employees at The Land Conservancy's Community Garden at South Branch Preserve

The Daily Record held their Make a Difference Day projects at the Historic Cook house located in East Hanover. Volunteers removed an amazing amount of invasive Japanese stilt grass from the flower beds. Additionally they also pruned trees and shrubs, spread 8 cubic yards of wood chips, and planted flowering cabbage plants.

"The enthusiasm and hard work that the volunteers display at all the projects is contagious. Regardless of what project or task is requested, they all pitch in 100% and we are proud of their accomplishments." stated Barbara McCloskey, Conservancy *Partners for Parks* program manager.

Thank you to our 2013 sponsors: **BASF, Merck, Daily Record, Investors Bank, Novartis, PSEG, and United Water.**

Would you like to include this in your legacy?



This view from the Hawkwatch in Rockaway Township is less than 10 miles from developed residential and commercial properties, and countless stores and restaurants. Thanks to the work you support through The Land Conservancy, this beautiful spot will remain unspoiled today, tomorrow, and for generations to come. Did you know that there are ways for YOU to leave a lasting legacy that includes fresh air, pristine drinkable water, important farmland, grand vistas, and open spaces?

You can support the work of The Land Conservancy in addition to your membership and annual gifts and make more scenes like the one above possible. There are a variety of options for you to continue the vital work of The Land Conservancy of New Jersey through your will or estate plan. You can make a gift through a variety of financial vehicles:

- ♦ Retirement plan assets
- ♦ Bonds
- ♦ Stock
- ♦ Life insurance
- ♦ Securities
- ♦ Real estate

Your contribution will sustain The Land Conservancy's efforts in three vital areas - Preservation, Stewardship, and Education. Please join us in making New Jersey an even better place to live, work, and raise a family. For more information on The Land Conservancy of New Jersey's gift planning options, please contact Christi Rokicki at (973) 541-1010 x25 or crokicki@tlc-nj.org.

Think Spring!

Plots are available now for the 2014 Growing Season at The Community Garden at South Branch Preserve

Novices and master gardeners are invited to purchase a 10x10 foot plot at The Land Conservancy of New Jersey's Community Garden at South Branch Preserve located in Mt. Olive Township. The 2014 gardening season will run from March 15 to November 15. The annual membership rate for residents of Mt. Olive Township and members of The Land Conservancy is \$30 per plot and the rate for non-residents and non-members is \$40 per plot. There is a one-time irrigation fee of \$30 for each plot, paid the first year only.

Join us for our upcoming *In the Garden* workshops. They are free and open to the public!

In the Garden... Workshop Series

Tuesday, April 8, 7:30 pm

What's Eating My Vegetables and Plants?

Mt. Olive Township Library
 202 Flanders-Drakestown Rd., Flanders, NJ 07836

Tuesday, April 29, 7:30 pm

Bringing the Butterflies To You

Mt. Olive Township Library
 202 Flanders-Drakestown Rd., Flanders, NJ 07838

Saturday, May 3, 10:00 am - 2:00 pm

Organic Seedlings Sale

School Lunch Farm
 69 Stevens State Park Rd., Hackettstown, NJ 07840

The Community Garden is part of South Branch Preserve which is comprised of more than 400 acres purchased to protect the headwaters of the South Branch of the Raritan River, a drinking water supply source for over 1.5 million New Jersey residents.

For more information, to reserve a plot, or to volunteer, contact Barbara McCloskey at The Land Conservancy at (973) 541-1010 x14, or at gardenmanager@tlc-nj.org or visit www.tlc-nj.org/communitygarden.

(... Farmland continued from page 1)

Wintergreen Tree Farm borders Frankford Township and has been in agriculture production since the 1700's. Wintergreen Farm was originally a dairy farm that was converted to a tree farm 52 years ago. In 2012 the farm won second place in New Jersey Christmas Tree Growers Association Spruce Division.

Land Preservation Director Sandy Urgo explains, "Farm owner Bill Allison has taken a unique property and made it a beautiful and thriving agricultural operation. The work and effort that has been invested in Wintergreen Christmas Tree Farm is apparent to everyone who visits. It is a very special place and we were happy to preserve it for more people to enjoy in the future."

Farm owners interested in preserving their agricultural lands for future generations may contact Sandy Urgo and her team for assistance at (973) 541-1010 x30 or surgo@tlc-nj.org.

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www.tlc-nj.org/ride

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Conservancy Applies for Land Trust Accreditation Renewal



The Land Conservancy is pleased to announce that we are applying for renewal of our accreditation with the Land Trust Accreditation Commission. The Land Conservancy has been accredited since July 2009. The Commission recognizes land conservation organizations that meet national quality standards for protecting land for open space, recreation, watershed protection, and agricultural retention.

"The Land Conservancy is renewing its accreditation to continue to show our members, partners, supporters, and landowners that as a nonprofit land trust organization we act in a transparent manner with the highest

ethical and professional standards," explained Rory Corrigan, Chair of our Board of Trustees. "The Land Conservancy is taking this next step to encourage others to become accredited and ensure that only the highest standards are being used for all land preservation transactions in New Jersey."

The Commission invites public input and accepts signed, written comments on pending applications. Comments must relate to how we comply with national quality standards. For the full list of standards see <http://www.landtrustaccreditation.org/tips-and-tools/indicator-practices>. To learn more about the accreditation program and to submit a

comment, visit www.landtrustaccreditation.org, or email your comment to info@landtrustaccreditation.org.

Comments may also be faxed or mailed to: Land Trust Accreditation Commission, Attn: Public Comments: (fax) 518-587-3183; (mail) 36 Phila Street, Suite 2, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866.

Comments on our application are due by June 1, 2014. For further information about The Land Conservancy, our programs, and our application for renewal of accreditation, please visit our website at www.tlc-nj.org.

THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS SUPPORTERS AND VOLUNTEERS!

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