

New Garden Township
OPEN SPACE REVIEW BOARD

2011 Annual Report

The Open Space Review Board (OSRB) remained very active during 2011. Among the notable activities and accomplishments are the following.

Open Space Preservation Activity

- New Garden Township now has an estimated 1044.9 acres of protected lands.
- OSRB, with BOS approval, is currently actively pursuing or has made proposals for eight of its highest priority properties for conservation easement or purchase totaling approximately 129.7 acres.
- Board members have also made significant progress towards trail easement agreements with three property owners.
- In total, Board members have contacted and had confidential discussions with 43 different property owners whose properties are of potential interest for purchase, preservation or trail easements.
- The OSRB has put together a standardized guide for discussion of Conservation and Trail Easements. It includes FAQ's useful web sites and sample agreements.

Board Membership Activities and Accomplishments

- In January, the Board of Supervisors confirmed the appointments of OSRB members Bernie McKay (2013) and Mary Sproat (2013) for the terms indicated.
- In February the OSRB, and later approved by the BOS, renamed several parcels for purposes of the annual inventory for the Chester County Planning Commission. Specifically:
 - a) The Phelps property on the east side of Penn Green Road was named –*Laurel Woods Preserve*, and its trail *The Laurel Woods Trail*.
 - b) The Phelps Property on the west side of Penn Green was named- *Steamer Stop Point Preserve*.
 - c) The former Lafferty property was named the *Mill Race Woods Preserve* and its trail the *Mill Race Trail*.
 - d) The former Szymanski Property was named the *Chandler Woods Preserve*.
- Also in February, the OSRB welcomed Erin Lee as the new consultant from Natural Lands Trust.

- In May the OSRB received copies of the *Botanical Survey of New Garden Township by Janet Ebert and Jack Holt*. The survey found that the Township possesses considerable biological richness including at least 795 species of plants. Of these, 493 are native plants including 10 listed by Pennsylvania as rare, threatened or endangered.
- Also in May the OSRB was notified it had been awarded a \$10,000 grant from the E.Kneal Dockstader Foundation for further development of New Garden Township Trails and provide ecological and historical education programs and materials. This proposal was submitted in conjunction with the Friends of New Garden Trails who through their volunteer efforts provided the grant's funding match.
- The OSRB continues to search for other grant opportunities.
- The OSRB had an information table at both the White Clay Creek Fest and at New Garden Day.
- OSRB members attended the Natural Lands Trust landowners' Meadowset Farm Recognition Event.
- During the year the members of the Open Space Review Board devoted 697 volunteer hours to Board activities.
- OSRB members have been in discussion with members of the Brittany Hills community concerning the potential acquisition by the HOA of several properties adjacent to that development.
- Many of the OSRB members were also active with the Friends of New Garden Trails, which was established by the OSRB.

New Garden Township Trail System

- During 2011, the Friends of New Garden Trail maintained the Laurel Woods Trail and completed the Mill Race Trail as part of the New Garden Township Trail System. In December, 2009 the plan of the *White Clay Creek Corridor Inter-Municipality Trail Link Study* was published. The plan was accepted by the Chester County Planning Commission as well as by the BOS of Franklin, New Garden and London Grove Townships in 2010. The Mill Race Trail, on New Garden Township owned property, is an important portion of that plan.
- The Mill Race Trail may be accessed from either Lavender Hill Lane where parking is provided, (Park in one of the designated spots on the right side of the road and walk down the hill toward the Kiosk and split rail fence.) or from Auburn Road. This trail is different

from the Laurel Woods trail in that it follows closely alongside the White Clay Creek. An official opening of the Old Mill Trail was held in October of 2011 after boardwalks were built and installed and the trail was graded. Approximately 80 persons attended the “Grand Opening,” walked the trail, and heard historical lectures on the train wreck of 1904 and on the original mill for which the trail is named.

- Volunteers worked more than 576 hours on the two trails during 2011, usually in small groups of 6- 10 of the most dedicated participants.
- The “Friends” have established an agreement with the White Clay Creek Watershed Association to establish its Tax Exempt status as a sub-group of the WCCWA.
- Recruitment of additional volunteers is an on-going effort. Anyone wishing to gain more information may visit the web site www.friendsofnewgardentrails.org or e mail Friendsofthetrail@aol.com.

The OSRB meetings are held at 7:00 PM on the third Tuesday of each month at the township building on Starr Road. Meetings are open to the public and all are welcome to attend.

Open Space Review Board Members

Bernie McKay (2013), Chairman

Mary Sproat (2013), Secretary

Gary Bell (2011), Vice Chair

Debbie Du Bois (2012), Treasurer

Don Peters (2012), Grants Coordinator

Chris Robinson (2012), Member

Rich Chadwick (2011), Member

Erin Lee, Natural Lands Trust, Consultant