



# New Garden Township Open Space Review Board *2015 Annual Report*



2015 was a busy and very productive year for the Open Space Review Board (OSRB). Among the notable activities and achievements are the following.

### **OSRB Administrative, Grant and Community Education Activities:**

- In January, the OSRB elected new officers: Chris Robinson, Chair, Don Peters, Vice Chair and Grants Coordinator, Stan Lukoff, Secretary, Dave Rickerman, Treasurer, and, Ben Marsden, Trail Steward, Vice Chair. There were two Board seats available.
- Don Peters Submitted an interim Final report for the PECO grant. He reported that only \$8,544 was expended out the \$10,000 available under the PECO Growing Greener Grant. He requested an extension until May 30, 2015 from the representative of the PECO Grant funds. The extension for expending the remaining funds was granted in March.
- In February, the Committee welcomed Kecia Crawl as a new member of the OSRB. One Board seat remained vacant. The OSRB voted to permit telephone attendance and participation at its meetings by members under special circumstances.
- Also in February, Don Peters reported on the progress of the New Garden Park Riparian Buffer Project (\$53, 000 project funded by PA Department of Environmental Protection through the WCCWA). The contractor reviewed an overall master plan for the project with the Project Executive Committee of which Don is the OSRB member. The plan included NO MOW areas adjacent to Lamborn Run, buffer plantings, enhanced pocket wetlands and interpretive signs.
- In May the OSRB shared a tent with the Friends of New Garden Trails at the Annual White Clay Creek Fest. A Trail & Open Space poster session was also presented at the annual meeting of the White Clay Creek Watershed Association Ann Faulds manned it for Chris.

-  In the Fall, the wetland enhancement took place. Eighteen volunteers from the University of Delaware planted 25 flats (or 1800 small native perennials) in the two adjacent wetlands to Lamborn Run. Installing  plants native to our region improves the biodiversity of an area by providing food and shelter for a larger variety of native wildlife. Species planted included Blue Flag Iris, Swamp Milkweed (host plant to the Monarch Butterfly), lavender Beebalm, New York Aster, Ironweed and Soft Rush. These plants were selected for their potential to compete with existing aggressive grasses while also providing wildlife benefits and improved aesthetics for visitors.

- A tree and shrub planting took place in early November which helps to mark the NO MOW flood zone. This will be followed by a live stake planting next spring. Live stakes are single stems of dormant shrubs that can quickly take root to help hold together eroding stream banks. Later, they mature into large shrubs which help regulate stream temperatures by providing shade to Lamborn Run.

- The OSRB reviewed its priority criteria for open space preservation and reaffirmed its ***Community Conservation Priorities*** as compiled by the Natural Lands Trust. There were no substantial changes since the last review in 2010. However, the maps need to be updated to include easements and purchases made during the interim 5 years. All current properties are in the highest priority categories.
- Members of the OSRB volunteered 404 hours of their time to their duties as Board members during 2015. Several OSRB members are also active with the Friends of the New Garden Trails, with the New Garden Lyceum renovation, and with the White Clay Creek Watershed Association.

### **Open Space Preservation Activity**

- During 2015 members of the OSRB had active contact with 9 property owners. This includes two properties where purchases of conservation easements are pending finalization. Combined these properties would add approximately 315 acres of preserved open space. Additionally, a potential agricultural easement would add approximately 140 acres. Together these properties would increase the Township's protected lands by approximately 40%. Two other substantial properties are under intermittent discussion concerning conservation easement between the OSRB and the current owners. Discussions with four property owners are progressing and nearing completion concerning trail easements.

### **New Garden Township Trail System**

2015 continued to be busy for the Friends of New Garden Trails. In addition to maintaining the Laurel Woods Trail and the Mill Race Trail the finishing touches were done on the Landenberg Junction Trail. These included:

- Installing kiosks in the parking lot.
- Building and installing a kiosk and observation platform at the beginning of the trail at the lower rail bed. This was an Eagle Scout project from Troop 53.
- Installing additional fencing and signage.
- Final grading of the trails, parking lot and access way.
- Holding an opening ceremony and dedication.

The Grand opening and dedication was held on June 27th, 2015. For more information on the history of the development of this property and its trail see Appendix A.

Recruitment of additional volunteers is an ongoing effort. Anyone wishing more information or to sign up as a volunteer for either the Open Space Review Board or The Friends of New Garden Trails should visit the Township web page at [www.Newgarden.org](http://www.Newgarden.org) or [friendsofthenewgardentrails.org/](http://friendsofthenewgardentrails.org/).

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.

### **2015 Open Space Review Board Members**

<b>Chair</b>	<b>Chris Robinson</b>
<b>Vice Chair</b>	<b>Don Peters</b>
<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>Dave Rickerman</b>
<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Stan Lukoff</b>
<b>Member</b>	<b>Ben Marsden</b>
<b>Member</b>	<b>Kecia Crowl</b>

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## Appendix

### A Brief History of the Landenberg Junction Trail



The first contact with Mr. Hendrickson by the Open Space Review Board (OSRB) occurred in March, 2010. Discussions got serious when the property was placed on the market with Patterson-Schwartz in May, 2012. Bernie McKay, then Chair of the OSRB, got permission from the Board of Supervisors (BOS) to make an offer for purchase in June, 2012. In July, 2012 an offer was made with Open Space Funds and assistance of the National Park Service and the White Clay Watershed Wild and Scenic Committee. Then, through the title search process it was discovered that there was a problem with the access to the property. This problem

was solved in November, 2012 when Bill Skalish signed, on behalf of Landenberg Village, LLC, a quit-claim deed to the portion of his property that encompassed the access to the Hendrickson property. Settlement on the property was completed in December, 2012. Work by the Friends of New Garden Trails began almost immediately. The initial focus of the effort was making the access to the property wider and safer. A parking lot was also provided.

Subsequently in 2013, after a thorough review and documentation by the New Garden Township Historical Commission and approval of the BOS that the house had limited historical value, bids were solicited for the recycling and demolition of the existing house. Parts of the house were recycled and donated to Habitat for Humanity. The garage was saved for use by the Friends of the New Garden Trails. The demolition contract was awarded in December, 2013. Demolition of the house took place in January, 2014. By September, 2014 the area moved from house to a garden of native plants.





During the same period of time, and, as always, with aid of Dave Rickerman's expertise and equipment, a new drainage system was installed that connected three small ponds on the property.



From the acquisition of the property until the present trail improvement has continued. Major improvements have included fencing to both demark the trail and to ensure the privacy of the neighbors. Trail entry steps have been built as has a staircase that connects the two rail beds.



Signage has been added, two kiosks built, and stone has been used to grade the trails.



Additionally the garage has been painted, the electrical system relocated, and a rain barrel tank and picnic table have been added.



All this was done by a small group of community volunteers, *The Friends of New Garden Trails*. The required materials were paid for by grants from the E. Kneal Dockstader Foundation and the Green Region PECO Open Space Program and through the community commitments of time and money of local businesses.

Some additional property line survey issues further delayed the opening of the trail, but they were resolved in the spring of 2015 with the assistance of the Township attorney. The Grand Opening of the Landenberg Junction Trail was held on June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2015.



Joan Hendrickson Hannah, Steve Allaband, BOS Chair, Don Peters, OSRB & Friends of NG Trails

## **FUNDING**

### **Property Donated or Purchased with funds from the Following:**

Landenberg Village, LCC (William A. Skalish)

New Garden Township Board of Supervisors Open Space Fund

White Clay Creek Watershed Steering Committee (US National Park Service)

Municipal Grants Program, Commissioners of Chester County, Pennsylvania

**Property Improvements and Trail Construction with Grants from:**

Green Region PECO Open Space Funds

E. Kneale Dockstader Foundation

**Volunteer In Kind Contributions:**

Shane Morgan and Claudia West, Planning and Planting Design  
Consultants

V.P. Electrical Contracting

Laurel Valley Farms, Inc. Soil Division

David Rickerman, Tree Services Inc.

Friends of New Garden Trails and the White Clay Watershed Association

Members of the New Garden Township Open Space Review Board