

Hedgerows

SPRING 2008 Published by the Washington Township Land Trust

Support Local Land Conservation



Lillis Property Successfully Preserved—154 Acres Added to the Preservation Roster

On January 16, 2008, the papers were signed to preserve a combination of once farmed fields and forested slopes located in the western part of Washington Township. A coalition of nonprofits and State agencies collaborated on this project.

Our own Tim Morris played a significant role in bringing this land preservation project to a close for all parties involved. The final cost was \$1.75 million which came from Washington Township Open Space Fund, Washington Township Land Trust, Morris County Municipal Utilities Authority and the Morris Land Conservancy.

Mildred Lillis, the property owner, passed away while on a trip to Israel in June 2006. She was first approached in the late 1990's about preserving the property but her lack of trust in government agencies hindered the purchase. Her death actually complicated the process according to Tim Morris. Tim first reported to the Land Trust Board of Trustees about this project in January 2007 when it was voted upon by the Board to move forward. Along with the normal requirements when closing on land, such as surveys, appraisals, environmental studies, and legal review; this project was complicated by all of the different entities involved. Part of the funding came from the Green Acres Program and the State Farmland Preservation Program while additional funding came from State sources interested in preserving the property for aquifer recharge protection, (a.k.a. drinking water).

One obstacle to overcome was the competing interests of two funding sources. Green Acres did not want to restrict property to passive recreation only and the MCMUA would only get involved if it was restricted. In the end it all worked out and we are indebted to Tim Morris for the time and effort he put in to accomplishing this preservation. THANK YOU!



The Washington Township Land Trust

invites you to a

Wine Tasting

Saturday, April 12, 2008

4 PM to 7PM

at

The Schooley's Mountain Lodge

54 Camp Washington Road

Long Valley, New Jersey

\$45 Per Person in advance/\$50 at door

Tastings by Peapack Fine Wines

Hors d'oeuvres

RSVP by returning form on back page to

WTLT

P.O. Box 4

Long Valley, NJ 07853

Questions? Call Chris at 908-832-9603

Find more news and information at www.wtl.org

Mission Statement

The Washington Township Land Trust was organized to protect and preserve the ecological, cultural, and historical integrity of the areas that contribute to and enhance the rural character of Washington Township and its environs. The Trust also promotes public interest in conserving land for open space uses in harmony with the natural environment and acquires interests in land by purchase or donation. It also manages land and property easements for the benefit of the public and educates the public to be stewards of the land.

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Mill Update

Historic Society House Tour



On December 8, 2007, our mill participated in the annual Washington Township Historic Society holiday house tour. The Obadiah LaTourette Grist and Saw Mill opened its doors to a large number of interested people. Mill volunteers were kept very busy answering questions as they guided visitors through the building. The mill is still a work in progress, so it was important to oversee our guests. Here are some of the photos, courtesy of Ken & Chris Steffan.



Caryl Brackenridge and Chris Steffan decorate for the event (upper left). Caryl (lower left photo), Jeff Donat (lower right photo), and Keith Hayes (background image), guided groups throughout the busy day.



Black Rat Snake (Pilot Black Snake)

Elapbe obsoleta

Harmless NJ Native

“You have snakes living in the wall of your house.” I had to make sure I heard that correctly. I was having my haircut and was engaged in our normal “what’s new” conversation. She repeated the story. The Black Rat Snake (left photo) was one of 2 snakes living in the wall of her home. The first was killed by her husband and this one I convinced them to capture so I could save it. Needless to say, I was the topic of conversation at the salon, “You want the snake!?”.

It seems the snakes were using a hole in the foundation to gain access to the homes interior wall (sounds like shoddy construction to me). What I tried to convey to the owners was the fact that this animal is a constrictor and eats rodents. There may have been a good reason why it was in their home... FOOD.

Photo Paul Krylowski

Her husband captured the snake while I was away on a fishing trip. Luckily constrictors can go a week or more without food so when I returned I retrieved it. The snake measured 6’ in length and was very docile. I released it on my property in Middle Valley and have not seen it since. My neighbor Bob Waters has lived in the valley for years and as a kid hunted many of the now developed fields in the area. He remembers seeing Rat Snakes locally but not in recent years.

That statement can be said for many reptiles and amphibians in NJ. The building practices of destroying habitat and the apathy of our society in regard to wildlife preservation has decimated animal populations. Luckily we are able to protect habitat through land preservation acquisitions such as the Lillis, Covalesky and Crystal Spring Farm properties this Land Trust has been involved in, with more to follow.



A few photos from the 2007 Annual Potluck Dinner. WTLT President Keith Hayes delivers 2007 report (top photo). Jim Richards, Evan and Laura Showell (2nd photo). Caryl Brackenridge, Keith Hayes, Susan Penney, and Kim Kaiser (3rd photo). Eric Kaiser and Alison Goessling (lower photo). Photos courtesy Chris Steffan.

Presidents Report for 2007

Keith Hayes, President Washington Township Land Trust, presented his report on WTLT events for 2007. He addressed the attendees at the annual holiday potluck dinner, held at the Long Valley Rescue Squad building on East Mill Road. The potluck dinner is a combination year-end social and business meeting. During this meeting, officers are nominated and voted upon.

Mill

Caryl Brackenridge reported that two completely restored windows have been installed in the mill and three new window frames have been fabricated and installed. In addition, sheathing has been added around the windows and frames on both the west and north walls. The west wall, first floor windows are now completed.

SPOOM

Caryl Brackenridge stated that the Mid-Atlantic chapter of SPOOM (Soc. for the Pres. of Old Mills) is holding its 2008 conference at Cooper Mill and she has requested that the LaTourette Mill be considered for the tour.

Historical Society House Tour

The Mill was on the Historical Society House Tour on December 8 and resulted in our front page photo of Chris Steffan in the Observer Tribune.

Two LaTourette brothers read about the Mill on our web site and came for a tour.

Window Adoption

30 windows have been adopted, raising \$15,000, there are 25 more available.

Public Relations/Newsletter

Paul Krylowski has been keeping the website updated. We published a Spring, Summer and Fall Newsletter this year.

Parks

Mill Pond Park

Chris Steffan and Caryl Brackenridge have continued maintenance of the Mill Pond Park.

Eagle Scout Project

Brian Dickson's Eagle Scout project is to identify and mark trees, clear paths and map them.

Crystal Springs Park

The barn and houses have been demolished and the park has been returned to

a more natural state. One of the houses has been left for possible future park use.

Crystal Springs Artifacts

Doug Kiovsky of the Hunterdon Park System has given WTLT some artifacts from the demolished farmhouse. They included silver coins, a doorknob, a latch, and some copper flashing. He also gave WTLT several pictures of the buildings and a brief history of the Roth family who owned the property from 1947-1976.

Fundraising Events

Fall Festival

The WTLT participated in the Fall Festival held at the Middle School.

50/50 Raffle

This was the first WTLT 50/50 fundraising raffle. We sold \$10 tickets from April through November and raised \$1,300 for the WTLT. We got a great deal of exposure by selling tickets at Shoprite, Krausers, and Valley Restaurant as well as the Fall Festival.

Wine Tasting

We held the 2nd annual Wine tasting at the Schooley's Mountain Lodge and also published an event brochure. The event was a financial success and the brochure brought in an additional \$3,000.

Land Acquisition

Lillis Property

There has been a sudden flurry of activity and it appears that the closing is imminent. (Update, The property closed in January)

Obituaries

(Oct.) We were sorry to see the passing of John Blaiklock. He was a recent volunteer who helped Caryl and Chris with window restoration work at the mill.

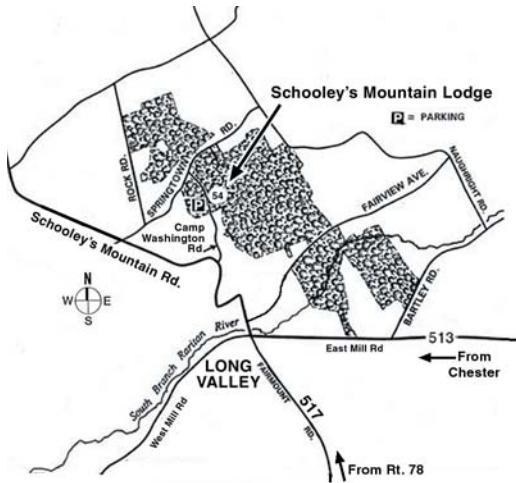
Wine Tasting Event

Saturday, April 12, 2008

4 PM to 7 PM

at The Schooley's Mountain Lodge
54 Camp Washington Road
Long Valley, New Jersey

Mark your calendar. It is back! You will not want to miss this wine tasting event to be held at the Schooley's Mountain Lodge. This is a wonderful venue located in Schooley's Mountain County Park. Peapack Fine Wines has again graciously agreed to handle the wine selections and has arranged for multiple vendors to supply an assortment of wines for your tasting pleasure. Valley Restaurant will prepare our hors d'oeuvres. It is not too late to purchase tickets. Check our web site for updated information or a larger downloadable pdf map with directions. www.wtlt.org



WT Environmental Commission hosting "Weed Warriors" in Long Valley

Help the environment by learning to recognize invasive plant species in the landscape and learning techniques to deal with them

On Saturday, May 31st, the Washington Township Environmental Commission and the South Branch Watershed Association will be sponsoring a Weed Warrior Event. The workshop will start at 9am and go to approximately 12 pm. The workshop will consist of an education/training session and time in the field. The presenter will be Michael Van Clef, a consultant to Conservation Resources and an expert in rare and invasive species management and natural resource management and policy.

Participants should bring gloves, a pruning saw or lopping shears and should dress appropriately for field work. The workshop will be limited to 40 people. Registration is required. For additional details and to register for the event, please go to:

<http://www.wtmorris.org/town/enviro/invasive/weeds/weedwar.php>.

Contact Kathy Smith (Washington Township Environmental Commission) at 908-876-9479 for any questions.



Wine Tasting
\$45 Per Person

(all but \$15 is tax deductible, contributions are fully deductible)

- Yes, I plan to attend with _____ guests
- No, I am sorry to miss it, but would like to make this donation of \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

Make checks payable to: Washington Township Land Trust
P. O. Box 4
Long Valley, NJ 07853



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