



Your Land & Water

A Joint Newsletter of
the Federation of Gloucester County Watersheds and
the South Jersey Land Trust



Summer 2004

"life does not exist without water"

LOCAL LAND PRESERVATION ASSISTANCE *by Chris Jage*

For the past year, the South Jersey Land Trust has been working with the Township of East Greenwich as its agent in preserving open space in the township. The land trust participated in the development of the Township's open space plan, prepared by the Morris Land Conservancy in early 2003. It became evident early on in that process that there were many environmentally critical parcels throughout the town, and that the accelerated pace of development had put almost all of them in immediate jeopardy. As a result, members of Town Council and the Open Space Committee approached SJLT to see if the trust could provide them with additional support.

Having never done such a "fee-for-service" venture before, it took some time and thought to work

out an arrangement. It would provide a real opportunity to preserve more land and sustain the work of the land trust. As a result, SJLT entered into a contract with East Greenwich Township in late 2003 and set out contacting landowners in the priority areas. To date several landowners have expressed an interest in preserving their land and are now on their way to permanent preservation. In many instances it has been the perspective and experience of SJLT that has helped some skeptical landowners realize the true benefits of preserving their land, enabling projects to move forward. SJLT sees this model of local government partnering with local non-profits as serving both parties extremely well,



*Warrington Millpond, East Greenwich is part of the Natural Heritage Priority Site
Picture by Suzanne McCarthy*

resulting in more land being preserved than if we worked independently. SJLT is exploring ways to encourage more local government and nonprofit partnering to more effectively reach our mutual preservation goals.

FLOODING IN GLOUCESTER COUNTY, 1940 *by Denise Stewart*

"Water rises to roof-tops..."; "Two hundred left homeless..."; "Twenty-eight bridges washed out or damaged..." "Woman and baby perish in rising flood waters..." "Crop damage heavy!" Sounds familiar, doesn't it, like recent scenes in Burlington County? But it's not! These are actual quotes from the *Gloucester County Democrat and Evening News* reporting on the flood that happened here on September 1, 1940. It was estimated that over one million dollars in damages (1940 dol-

lars) occurred as a result of the "Flood of the Century." Most communities within Gloucester County were affected in some way. Many roads were washed out, homes destroyed, people injured, and at least three deaths reported. Most of the County's twenty-two dams gave way to the fast moving waters, while few others held their position. Upper Salem County was affected too, with eight dams lost to flooding.

The total volume of rainfall was not reported. However, the rains

had been falling for over a week, with the worst of the storm hitting the area on a Sunday evening. A tropical storm was blamed for causing the disaster. Senator Robert C. Hendrickson surveyed the damages and promised state aid to the area. Some residents at the time remembered the flood of 1868, which swept away almost every mill dam in the county. So, the next time you see a report on a flood, know that it has also happened right here in Gloucester County.

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FEDERATION & SJLT



The mission of the Federation and its member watershed associations is to promote the preservation and protection of water resources within the watersheds of Gloucester County and adjoining areas. This is accomplished through education, advocacy, and land preservation.

Member Watershed Associations

Mantua/Woodbury Creeks WA
Raccoon/Repaupo Creeks WA
Oldmans Creek WA
Great Egg Harbor River WA
Upper Maurice River WA



The South Jersey Land Trust was organized in 1990 by a diverse group of residents to preserve significant areas of open space and irreplaceable natural resources in Southern New Jersey. It accomplishes this through direct acquisition, conservation easements, conservation planning assistance, promotion of ecotourism, and land preservation education.

Regular Meetings (Call to Confirm)

**Federation of Gloucester
County Watersheds**
4th Thursday of the month, 7 pm
Scotland Run Nature Center
Call: 856-694-3681
www.sjwatersheds.org

South Jersey Land Trust
3rd Thursday of the month, 7 pm
Scotland Run Nature Center
Call 856-589-2049

Bird Walks
1st Saturday of the month
Scotland Run Nature Center
For info on this and other programs, call
856-881-0845

Gloucester County Nature Club
2nd Thursday of the month, 7pm
EIRC, Washington Twp.
Programs on many nature topics
& great field trips.
Call 856-468-9272 or email Brian or Paula
Hayes at pnbhayes@aol.com

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO:

The **Environmental Endowment of New Jersey** for its grant in support of Federation work with municipalities on the new stormwater rules.

The **Coniglio Chiropractic Center** which made the Federation its non-profit recipient group for the month of April, resulting in a generous cash contribution. The Coniglio Center is located at 1144 Mantua Pike in Mantua (phone: 856-468-4200).

The **Wal-Mart Foundation** which made a substantial donation in support of the Federation's outreach program to label storm drains with a "Don't Dump" message. This program is done in conjunction with youth groups throughout Gloucester County.

To all the **nurseries** that supported our plant "auctions" at Earth Day and at WaterFest. They were most generous with their wonderful plant materials and gardening supplies. "See the full list on page 5 of the Spring edition of this newsletter.

Save The Date

Membership Dessert Party & Nature Walk

An evening of fun for members,
their families and friends
Aug. 26th (Thurs.) 6:30 pm
Scotland Run Nature Center

Bring a Dessert Bring a friend

For more info www.sjwatersheds.org
(856) 358-8960

HERITAGE WINERY

As you drive along Rt 322, in the farming town known as Richwood, NJ, you will notice many changes that are widespread in all New Jersey farming communities -- new homes standing on the once vast farmland. That is true with one exception - a sight long lost in this area since the late 1700's - grapevines.

There has been a Heritage family farming the land of Richwood since 1851, mostly as fruit orchards. In 2001, Bill and Penni Heritage planted a more commercially successful crop than the fruit trees - merlot, chardonnay, cabernet sauvignon, cabernet franc, and other test varieties of grapes. Heritage's grapes and wine are affected to a great extent by the farm's unusual climate. It contributes to the grapes' greater concentration of flavor.

Since 1851, the Heritage family has been one of the farming families that are the very fabric of the Richwood community. The Heritage Station winery, named for the railroad tracks that once crossed the farm, processes and bottles its own wines: Merlot, Chardonnay, Cabernet Franc, and Cabernet Sauvignon. Its fruit wines includes: Peach, Apple, Sugar Plum, Sour Cherry, and Blueberry.

The Heritage Station market offers its own jersey fresh fruit and vegetables including organically grown varieties. In addition, the bakery has a wide selection of home-made pies, breads, muffins and cookies, and sells beverages, handmade crafts, wine accessories and seasonal plants and flowers from the greenhouses. The market also offers farm entertainment and farm education, hay-rides, farm animals, fishing in the pond, and a 5-acre corn maze.



Wine and Cheese Tasting

Celebrating NJ Wineries Preserving Farmland

Saturday, October 2nd

6:00 to 8:00 pm

Heritage Winery

**480 Mullica Hill Road
(Rte 322, west of Rte 55)**

www.heritigestationfruit.com
856-589-4474

Tickets are limited

contact Christine
at 856-358-8960

\$10 - Members
\$12 - Non-members

Raffle Baskets filled with
books, goodies, and gift certificates

Fine Art Silent Auction

SUPPORT LOCAL FARMS

The Federation and SJLT strongly encourage the purchase of produce that is grown locally and of wines produced at local wineries. Look for the JERSEY FRESH label/signs on produce, shop at local farm markets, and tell your local supermarket that you want locally grown produce made available at the store during the growing season. It's fresher, better tasting, and healthier, and worth any modest additional cost.

Gloucester County is losing farming at a terrifying rate. Part of this is due to the pressures of development but it is also a reflection of the low profitability of farming in our area. It's hard for farmers to survive when imported produce causes prices

to fall below the cost of production.

Nearly all of Gloucester's farms are family-owned and operated. Farming must provide a reasonable income if farm families are to choose farmland protection over sale for development. This benefits the rest of us by providing the fresh vegetables and fruits for which New Jersey is famous, as well as maintaining the rural landscapes we value.

Wineries using the grapes that are grown locally have provided an economic solution for some farmers. Support for their endeavors means becoming familiar with local winery brands and requesting them at your liquor store. You can also visit local wineries and purchase directly.

THE COMEBACK "KID" - *Jim Black*

Hopping onto the New Jersey "Endangered Species" list in 1979, the Pine Barrens tree frog has many unique characteristics. Despite its tiny inch and a half long body, this colorful little guy has a hearty appetite for mosquitoes. With the on-going threat of West Nile Virus, carried by the mosquito, this is a very good thing. Another good thing about our vibrantly colored Pinelands inhabitant is that it has been recently "down-listed" from "endangered" to "threatened," due to being locally abundant in areas of New Jersey.

The New Jersey Endangered Species Conservation Act named the Pine Barrens tree frog, "Species of the Month in May" and it has come to be known as the "comeback kid."

Pine Barrens Tree Frog Facts:

- **Coloring:** A rich emerald green overall with a purple (plum/lavender) stripe that is trimmed in white... the underside of its hind legs are a brilliant yellow to orange in color.
- **Call:** A series of nasal honks described as being a "quonk-quonk-quonk."
- **Breeding/Habitat:** backwater areas, slow moving streams, cranberry bogs, mucky soils and ponds that are dominated by shrubs and vegetation. Breeding areas such as ditches, Atlantic white cedar swamps, and shallow pools where the water is dilute and acidic are ideal. The frogs deposit eggs in May and June and by July and August they are adults.
- **Regions:** The species was first



Hyla andersonii

Photo courtesy of Blaine Rothauer

described in New Jersey. Also found in North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and western Florida, the Pine Barrens tree frog does not seem to occur anywhere else in New Jersey outside of the Pine Barrens.

The tree frog's population is recognized as being more secure in our state these days thanks to the establishment of the Pinelands National Reserve in 1978, which is currently protected by the Pinelands Protection Act and the Pinelands Commission's Comprehensive Management Plan for the Pinelands region.

For more information:
USGS Frog and Salamander Guide:
<http://www.npwrc.usgs.gov/naream/idguide/index.htm>

'TIS THE SEASON TO BE SWIMMING

Swimming is fun, and a healthy way to spend leisure time. As every home pool owner knows, maintaining a pool is not all fun and games. A major concern is the amount of chemical compounds involved.

To be sure that pool chemicals do not cause environmental harm or get into drinking water supplies, NJ DEP recommends that any discharge produced by back flushing pool filters, or resulting from draining your pool for any reason, be directed to wastewater treatment facilities. This does not include storm sewers; water flowing through a storm sewer system enters a waterway directly without any treatment.

One practical alternative may be to discharge pool water onto lawns and shrubs, allowing sediment, and solids to settle out while the discharge filters into the ground. Do not

discharge pool water near or into a septic system.

Another important consideration is conserving water and energy. Installing a pool cover and keeping the pool covered when not in use can save you hundreds of gallons of water each month, and cut your pool-heating bill dramatically. (Most pool heating costs are incurred when "top off" water is heated.) You can also reduce evaporation by sheltering the pool from winds by using hedges or fencing as windbreaks. Finally, if you reduce the total volume of water in your pool slightly, less water will spill out as happy swimmers splash and play.

By keeping your pool in good shape, maintaining it on a regular basis, and by implementing techniques to reduce water loss, you can begin conservation at home.

Calling all Volunteers

Can you help staff the community day booth for a couple of hours at:

South Harrison Days
Aug. 27th & 28th (Fri. & Sat.)

Franklin Twp. Day
Sept. 11th (Sat.)

West Deptford Community Day
Sept. 18th (Sat.)

Swedesboro/Woolwich Day
Oct. 2nd (Sat.)

Glassboro Unity Day
Oct. 9th (Sat.)

STOP THE SPRAWL - Step #3 - *Suzanne McCarthy*

This is the third in a series of articles on the steps you can take to influence local development. The first article (Step #1 - Fall 2003 newsletter) advised learning about the Master Plan & the zoning of your municipality. The second article (Step #2 - Winter, 2003) focused on the types of development applications that may come before your town's land use boards. This article describes the sequence through which a development is approved, and your potential role in that process.

By the time many people become aware of an application to develop a property in their town, it is often too late to have any effect on the outcome. To have input into decisions about a specific project, you need to know about it in time. This means being alert to what's going on in your community by:

- Reading legal notices and minutes of Board meetings (Planning & Zoning), at the town offices.
- Connecting with the Environmental Commission (E.C.), which usually reviews applications ahead of time.
- Studying plans for a project in advance of the hearing on it. These are available at the land use office of your town.

It also helps to know the process of major subdivision approval:

1. A developer can request, or a town can recommend or require a **pre-application conference** about a proposed project. This usually occurs before a detailed site plan is drawn up and involves review of a less expensive concept plan.
2. The developer **submits an application**, with detailed drawings of site features, subdivision layout,

roads & parking, emergency access, utilities, grading, landscaping, stormwater management facilities, sewerage, and protection of natural resources.

3. The **application is reviewed** by the municipal engineer and planner, and can be reviewed by the E.C. Written reports are prepared for the Board. A **site inspection** can be called for by the reviewing Board or the E.C.
4. If all requirements for submittal have been met, the **application is deemed complete** and a hearing on it is scheduled.
5. A **public hearing** is held, with required advance public notice of the hearing time, date, & place. Property owners within 200 feet of the project property are notified directly. At the hearing, the application is presented and expert witnesses may offer testimony. The Board and the public can question the applicant and experts. There is also a period for public comments and recommendations.
6. **Preliminary approval** is granted or denied. This decision is based on the facts received from all sources and reviewed by the Board, including review of the project's conformance with applicable ordinances and regulations.
7. When Preliminary Approval is given, conditions may be imposed on the project by the Board. Once these have been met, **Final Approval** may be granted.

There are legal limits on the time a reviewing Board may take to make decisions. It must be understood that all significant alterations and conditions are added to plans at the Preliminary Approval stage.



Thus, it is imperative to participate before and at Preliminary Approval if you wish to influence project decisions. The public hearing is your opportunity to provide input directly.

At the hearing it is important to give the Board relevant information and documentation of facts, rather than simply objecting to the project. A good approach is to frame specific concerns in the form of questions that should be considered, or that point up any limits or inconsistencies in expert witness testimony ("Are you aware that..."). You may also raise questions about compliance with ordinances and other environmental protection programs.

If you and your neighbors have a strong objection to project specifics, it may be worth retaining an attorney and/or hiring expert witnesses to represent the group and present testimony.

Participating directly in the review process of development applications in your municipality does take time, but it's an important way to help manage the growth in your community. It's step #3!

With thanks to the South Branch Watershed Association and to the Association of NJ Environmental Commissions (ANJEC) for helpful materials. Thanks also to Jay Mounier for his review of all three articles.

Join the Federation of Gloucester County Watersheds



- Basic Membership - \$15
- Contributor Membership - \$35
- Sponsor Membership - \$100
- I would like to volunteer

FREE BONUS: You will automatically become a member of your local watershed association.

Name _____

Address _____

Town _____

State _____ Zip Code _____

E-mail _____

Send this form along with your check to
FGCW, PO Box 233, Glassboro, NJ 08028

Join the South Jersey Land Trust



- Basic Membership - \$25
- Contributor Membership - \$35
- Sponsor Membership - \$100
- I would like to volunteer

Help preserve the lands
that you care about!

Name _____

Address _____

Town _____

State _____ Zip Code _____

E-mail _____

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All Memberships are tax deductible.



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