

2008 Green Futures Achievement Awards

Limerick Township: Kurylo Farm Acquisition

Connections are to open space preservation what imagination is to art. Connections inspire people to see things differently. Connections engage and motivate people. Hiking across boulder-strewn ridges, through ancient forests, and along streams focuses attention on the need to preserve and protect open space. Connections reveal possibilities by demonstrating that trails and preserves can be home to wildlife as well as people when development is accomplished thoughtfully and in balance with nature.

Thus the opportunity to create new connections inspired a collaborative of citizens, township officials, land owners and private land-preservation organizations to acquire and preserve a 90-acre farm in Limerick Township. The Kurylo Farm, situated on the northern edge of Limerick Township, is adjacent to more than 400 acres of public game lands. The project will connect a greenway through Limerick and Lower Frederick Townships and to the Perkiomen Trail, which connects central Montgomery County to the Schuylkill River Trail.

A 160-acre preserve called the Stone Hill Greenway, a joint project of Limerick and Lower Frederick Townships, adjoins the game lands and will be a connection to the lands of the Valley Forge Audubon Society's Meng Wildlife Preserve and Bird Sanctuary, multiplying the impact and value of the Kurylo Farm acquisition.

The Kurylo Farm's possibilities were so important that the township risked acquiring substantial debt to support the project, knowing that they might not receive funding from the State of Pennsylvania. The acquisition succeeded because it united the vision of township supervisors, the enthusiastic embrace by the Open Space Committee, and an effective volunteer-driven fundraising effort in support of the acquisition. Senator John Rafferty and Representative Tom Quigley provided important support. Land owners, Stan and Ron Kurylo generously offered a significant price reduction from the appraised value to assist with the funding package needed to preserve the property. Many local conservation organizations provided enthusiastic letters in support of the project.

The Kurylo Farm acquisition, due to its location and extensive network of connections to other preserved spaces and trails, has important regional implications. It will create another link in community-based protection of the nationally recognized Highlands Region while extending a wildlife corridor and providing a buffer for the state game lands—protecting both from further suburban encroachment. Additionally, it will provide connections to existing Limerick Township parks and to an array of landscapes, view sheds, and recreational opportunities.



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