

2008 Green Futures Achievement Awards

Upper Pottsgrove Township: Open Space Referendum

For decades, people in suburban and rural communities have discussed, studied, and argued about ways to keep important lands open and protected. In Upper Pottsgrove Township, local officials and community volunteers have done more than talk about land preservation – they have taken assertive actions, resulting in the protection of over 170 acres of land.

A passion for conservation is the common thread woven throughout this group of community partners. Formed in 2005, the Open Space Committee meets regularly to discuss and recommend measures for acquiring, protecting, and maintaining open space. The key to their success, according to Herb Miller, committee chair, is effective communication with the commissioners. “Our volunteer groups work like a Swiss watch, in sync with committee chairs and commissioners,” says Miller. Without these partnerships, the complex process of securing land conservation projects would not be possible.

The community effort to pass the 2006 open space tax referendum reflects the ongoing commitment to protect land and water quality in the township. Providing as much

as \$275,000 annually for the acquisition of open space, this voter-approved increase in earned income tax passed with a 60 percent majority. The referendum funded the townships’ \$800,000 acquisition of the highly valued Stauffer and Lamb properties, adding an additional 24 acres of open space. Also anticipated is the purchase of four additional properties with funds obtained as a direct result from the tax referendum. This could result in more than 300 acres of protected land by the end of 2008.

Along with open space preservation, the township is equally enthusiastic about establishing a trail system. The stream corridor known as Sprogels Run provides a forested buffer for the protection of water quality and is slated to have a 4.5-mile trail built which will connect to the Schuylkill River Trail. Financing for construction of the Goose Run Trail was recently secured. With assistance from Rouse-Chamberlin builders and the Pottstown Area Health and Wellness Foundation, this is yet another example of the essential partnerships needed for conserving and protecting the natural beauty in Upper Pottsgrove Township.



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