



A Recent History of Land Preservation in Buckingham Township

As a result of two decades of leadership, enthusiastic support from residents and the embrace of Buckingham's landowners, our township has been able to preserve a significant portion of the community's agricultural and rural heritage, despite being in the heart of densely settled Bucks County.

Our residents may have different interests and outlooks, but are united in the concern for maintaining open space in our community. In the past twenty years, Buckingham voters have approved three different referenda to fund land preservation. As a result, we have kept a significant portion of the township free of development and Buckingham residents can continue to enjoy farmland, woodland and parkland that would otherwise have been paved over.

In 1995, Buckingham voters approved a referendum that permitted the Board of Supervisors to borrow four million dollars to establish a township land preservation program—making Buckingham the first municipality in Bucks County to do so. In 1999, residents approved a second referendum in the amount of 9.5 million dollars to continue the program. In 2008, with an amazing 82 percent voting in favor, voters overwhelmingly approved a third referendum which allows the township to borrow up to 20 million additional dollars to fund the next great push to preserve Buckingham's historic heritage of farmland and open spaces.

This article will bring you up to date on how the money has been spent since the third referendum was allocated in 2008. (The numbers on the map correspond to the property descriptions.)

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Working Together to Preserve Land

All of Buckingham owes a tremendous debt of gratitude to our residents who have overwhelmingly approved the three voter referendums and to those who have decided to place easements on their properties so that generations to come will be able to enjoy the farm fields and beautiful vistas that we all love.

What is the current status of the preservation bond? Of the \$20 million approved in 2008, because of prudent planning on the part of the Township staff and the Board of Supervisors, half is still left to purchase easements on additional parcels of land. We encourage any landowners interested in preservation to discuss the advantages of doing so with the township's Agricultural and Open Space Preservation Committee.

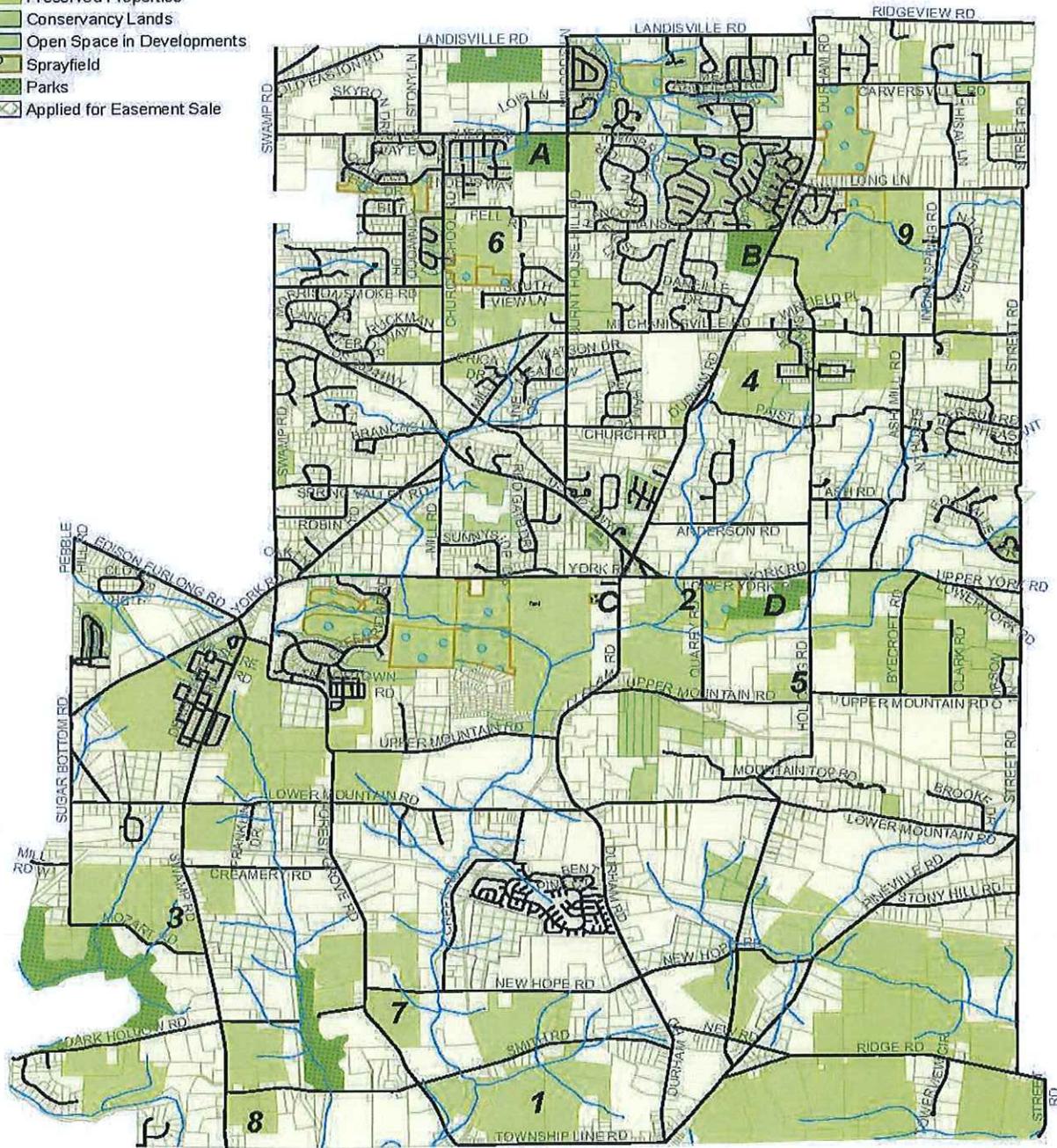
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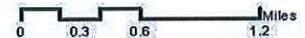
Buckingham Township Open Space Map

Legend

-  Streams
- Open Space**
-  Preserved Properties
-  Conservancy Lands
-  Open Space in Developments
-  Sprayfield
-  Parks
-  Applied for Easement Sale



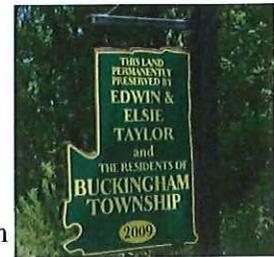
April 03, 2013



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#1. Histan farm: In May 2009, the township preserved one of the largest remaining pieces of land in Buckingham, 155 acres in Wycombe at the intersection of Smith and Forest Grove Roads. The property surrounds Wycombe, a village on the National Register of Historic Places and abuts the 67-acre Kessler preserved farm to the northeast.

The majority of the tract is under cultivation as a sod farm and a horse farm. The balance of the land is wooded, with numerous creeks and streams. The Mill Creek riparian corridor is located on the Histan property; it is where several unnamed tributaries converge. The land is home to abundant wildlife, including red tailed hawks.



Preservation Sign at Taylor Made Farm

#2. Taylor tract: In June 2009, the township purchased an easement on nearly 38 acres of land on Quarry Road and 202. The new owners have named their stables Taylor Made Farm, thus honoring the family who opted to remove the development rights from their land.

#3. Wicen farmland: In August 2009, the township preserved approximately 78 acres: 12.4 on the northwest side of Mozart Road and 65.8 on the southwest side of Swamp Road at the intersection of Mozart Road. The fields are regularly farmed for soybeans or corn. The funding for the Wicen easements came partially from a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, thus helping us leverage the funds available from the 2008 referendum.

#4. Langer Trycieki tract: A few months after the Wicen property was preserved, the township preserved 29 acres of land at 3235 Durham Road adjacent to the Village of Mechanicsville. If you haven't stopped for corn at TT Farms in the summer, put it on your must-do list!

#5. Goodwin nursery: December 2010 saw the preservation of 24 remarkably beautiful acres of land planted with specimen conifer or cone bearing trees on Holicong and Upper Mountain Roads. The site also boasts a farmhouse dating from 1833, which was the home of the Atkinson family for some 90 years. The famous Hermit of Buckingham, Albert Large, was spurned by a young woman from the Atkinson family and thereafter spent his days living alone on Buckingham Mountain. However, the hermit continued to spy on his love and left little gifts of medicinal herbs if someone in the farmhouse was ill.

#6. Feeny tree farm: In December 2011, the township was fortunate to preserve approximately 70 acres of land in the heart of the residential northern part of the township. This tract, which is being used to grow nursery stock, was one of the largest remaining unpreserved parcels in the area. Twelve acres were purchased outright to be preserved and used as part of the wastewater irrigation system, and the remaining acres were protected by an agricultural conservation easement.

Buckingham is the only township in the county to return all of our township treated wastewater effluent back to the underground aquifers via its slow cleansing passage through the soil, a process that has worked unfailingly for thirty years. The land can be appreciated from Church School Road, Fell Road and Smoke Road.

#7. Comly turf farm: Located on Forest Grove Road, this tract consists of nearly 56 acres including an irrigation pond fed by underground springs. From the road, the views stretch to Buckingham Mountain and Bowman's Tower. Preservation of the Comly tract was made possible by the generous contributions of the Buckingham Township Civic Association and the Buckingham Car Show—which provided the additional funding (\$25,000 from each group) that allowed the sale to go forward. The township is extremely grateful to both organizations.

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#8. Mc Henry (formerly Wicen) farmland: In June 2012, the township preserved approximately 44 gently rolling acres of farmland east of the intersection of Swamp and Smith Roads in Furlong. People passing this property can easily feel transported back in time to rural Buckingham.



Trycieki Farm on Long Lane

#9. Thomas Trycieki (estate of Walter Trycieki) farm: As of March 2013, when it was preserved, this rectangular parcel of 70 acres will continue to provide watershed protection as well as beautiful views along Long Lane. Situated adjacent to the Derstein/Myer preserved parcel, a township sprayfield and the Paunacussing Nature Preserve, this property is crucial to protecting the Paunacussing watershed, which is one of only three designated high quality cold water fisheries in Bucks County. Fortunately, we will continue to see soybeans and corn growing there into the future.

Donating an Easement

Although Buckingham Township will not typically purchase a conservation easement on a parcel that is less than twenty acres, another preservation option exists. A homeowner can donate a conservation easement.

In 2007, the Township received conservation easements from two generous landowners. The first property, owned by Otto and Dae Bade, is a 10 acre parcel with a circa 1810 home and a stone bank barn. The second property, owned at the time by Michael Hierl, is a beautiful 10.4 acre horse farm that includes

a circa 1825 stone home located just outside the Mechanicsville Historic Village.

There are numerous potential financial benefits to donating a conservation easement on your property. These benefits include a charitable deduction on your federal income taxes with an IRS-qualified appraisal. We urge you to consult your tax or financial advisor for additional details on potential financial benefits.

Open Space for Recreation – Buckingham Township’s Parks

Unlike preserved farmland, which continues to belong to the landowner but cannot be developed, our parks are owned and maintained by Buckingham. They belong to us.

Buckingham Township has four existing parks and two more parks on the way. Existing parks include George M. Bush Park, at the corner of Burnt House Hill and Cold Spring Creamery Road, Hansell Park on Hansell Road, the Buckingham Township Wetlands Park behind the Township building on Hughesian Drive and Holicong Park on Route 263 at the corner of Holicong Road. (The letters on the map correspond to the property descriptions.)



Band Shell at Hansell Park

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Buckingham Township Wins 2013 Government Land Conservation Leadership Award

The Pennsylvania Land Trust Association honored Buckingham Township (Bucks County) with the 2013 Government Conservation Leadership Award for their demonstrated leadership in the conservation of our special landscapes and critical natural resources.

Andy Loza, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Land Trust Association stated, "I commend Buckingham Township's proactive and steadfast approach to land use planning and land conservation; the township's leadership has enabled this community to protect its treasured landscapes and preserve its quality of life."

The award was presented at the 11th Annual Pennsylvania Land Conservation Conference in State College, Pennsylvania. Maggie Rash, Township Supervisor and then Chairman, accepted the award on behalf of the township.



Buckingham Township in Bucks County recently received the 2013 Government Conservation Leadership Award from the Pennsylvania Land Trust Association. The township has been preserving farmland, parks, and other open space for the past three decades. Participating in the award presentation were, left to right, PALTA Executive Director Andy Loza, Buckingham Township Chair Maggie Rash, and Tom Gilbert, senior conservation finance director for the Trust for Public Land. (Photo courtesy of PALTA.)

Tax Savings

For taxpayers, the savings by not developing land are considerable. If you check your property tax bills, you will realize that only 3.6 cents of every tax dollar goes to Buckingham Township for Open Space, Ambulance and Fire Services; all voter approved. The rest of your property taxes go to Bucks County and the Central Bucks School District. Land preservation helps keep school taxes down by reducing the number of potential students and also contributes to a lower volume of traffic, better air quality, and an aesthetic that keeps our town beautiful and our property values high.

Refinancing = \$\$\$\$ Savings

In 2008 the residents of Buckingham voted to approve an Open Space referendum to borrow an additional \$20 million to purchase open space and agricultural conservation easements. On April 15, 2009 Buckingham issued the 2009 General Obligation Bonds of \$7,560,000 solely for the purpose of acquiring open space. The proceeds were used to purchase conservation easements on the nine farms discussed above.

In 2014, the Township refunded the 2009 General Obligation Bonds and issued 2014 General Obligation Bonds. Refunding these bonds saved the Township an estimated \$900,935 in present value savings on Open Space debt service. This is the highest level of savings (in dollars or percent) Buckingham has ever achieved. This wasn't the first time Buckingham refinanced our bonds to save money. In 2012 Buckingham Township refinanced two sets of bonds for a total present value savings of \$851,951. Overall, the Township has saved over \$1.7 million over the past three years on refunding of our Open Space Bonds.

As part of the issuance of these bonds, the Township requested a rating evaluation from Standard and Poor's. For the second time in as many years, Buckingham Township's rating was raised! In 2014, we became the only township or school district in Bucks County, and one of only seven townships in Pennsylvania to earn an AAA rating.

Open Space for Recreation – Buckingham Township’s Parks

A. George M. Bush Park

George M. Bush Park, our newest park located in the Cold Spring Creamery area, is named after the late George M. Bush, Esquire, who served as Township Solicitor for 25 years and was an integral part in procuring the first agricultural preservation conservation easements in the Township. This neighborhood park serves both active recreation and family activities. The 49 acre park is home to multiple soccer, all purpose, baseball and softball fields, as well as a sand volleyball court. Each weekend is filled with games for our local sports organizations. The park also has a large tot lot, bathroom facilities, a picnic pavilion and a large playground sandbox which is perfect for our youngsters.



The pavilion at George M. Bush Park

B. Hansell Park

*Be sure to check out the
Buckingham Summer Concert Series
next summer*

Hansell Park is a 39 acre neighborhood park with a focus on more passive recreation. Although there are several multi purpose fields and a softball field, Hansell Park is best known for its trails and trail amenities. There are mile markers, doggy bags for dog walkers and bird watching areas along the meandering trails. Hansell Park is also the host of the Buckingham Township Summer Concert Series, where residents and friends can relax under the stars and listen to different bands in our bandshell every Thursday night in the summer months. When the weather permits, the Township is also known to host a late summer/fall movie night in the park.

C. Buckingham Township Wetlands Park

The Buckingham Township Wetlands Park is located just behind the Township building between the Township offices and Buckingham Elementary School, all part of the Hughesian Trust property. This park was created through a partnership between Buckingham Township and Orleans Homebuilders as part of a Growing Greener Grant. The park was designed to serve as an outdoor classroom for Buckingham Elementary School and as a wetland demonstration project for builders and engineers looking for environmentally sound ways to handle stormwater runoff. The project was designed to protect Lahaska and Watson Creeks, two of the region’s vital watersheds, by redesigning and retrofitting a basin area to retain water longer, to treat stormwater runoff, to allow for maximum recharge and to take advantage of the wetlands already on site. The installation of riparian buffer plantings provided additional water quality treatment as well as attracted wildlife to the park. Many varieties of birds and other wild creatures have been documented by a naturalist at the wetlands.



Flowers in bloom at the Wetlands Park

Trails and educational signage were installed to meander through the wetland areas creating an “outdoor classroom” ending in a gazebo area where residents and students can relax and view the cattails and accompanying wetland wildlife.

D. Holicong Park

Holicong Park off Route 263, is the original park for the Township. The 21 acre park is home to multiple all purpose fields, a basketball court and pavillion area. Its location makes it an ideal park to host many of our local youth sports organizations and other events.

*Buckingham Township's next park will be
an
"All-Inclusive Park"*

Holicong Park (Expansion Plan)

In 2007, the Township purchased additional land adjacent to the existing Holicong Park which would bring the new Holicong Park to a total of 75 acres. The township obtained a Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) Planning Grant to create a Master Site Plan for the development of this park expansion. The Township Supervisors along with the Park and Recreation Commission Members sent out a park survey to our residents to gather opinions for our new park expansion. In the end, the Township's Master Site Plan includes two baseball fields, three soccer/all purpose fields, a pavilion, tot lot and trails along the perimeter.

Buckingham Township then obtained a Department of Community and Economic Development Greenways, Trails and Recreation Programs Grant in the amount of \$250,000 that will go towards the construction of the expansion. The Township is presently finishing construction documents and obtaining the necessary permits and hopes to start construction in either Fall 2015 or early Spring 2016.

All-Inclusive Park

Buckingham Township is in the early planning stages for creation of an all-inclusive playground; a place where children of any ability can play together. We are currently looking to secure the land and will then be looking into grant opportunities and other funding sources for its planning and construction.

Buckingham Trail Awareness Day—Sunday September 20, 2015

Please join the Township in our first Buckingham Township Trail Awareness Day sponsored by the volunteers of the Buckingham Township Park and Recreation Commission.



GEORGE M. BUSH PARK: 10:00 AM

4 mile bike from GMB to Doylestown

35- 40 min. ride via the Cold Spring Trail to the Maplewood connection to Doylestown

PAUNACUSSING PRESERVE: 11:30 AM

1-2 mile nature walk

45-60 min. walk to discover one of Buckingham's hidden gems (open to the public)

Located off Holicong Road-(Rt.413)

Please park on grass in indicated areas

HANSELL PARK: 1:00 PM

2 mile bike from Hansell Park, down the trails along Hansell Road and back to Hansell Park

20-25 min. ride along secluded trail

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Doylestown, PA
Permit No. 25

Buckingham Township
P.O. Box 413
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BUCKINGHAM TOWNSHIP

Board of Supervisors
Jon Forest, Chair
Maggie Rash, Vice-Chair
Paul Calderaio, Member

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A Special Thanks to the volunteers of the
Buckingham Township Agricultural and Open Space Committee

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Susan W. Sciacca

Jon E. Yerkes

Thomas A. Gilbert

Muriel Dunn Gordon

Rochelle Turchen

