
Subject: : Conservation

Topic: : East Brandywine / Struble Trail Access

Re: East Brandywine / Struble Trail Access

Author: : afishinado

Date: : 2008/9/25 9:25:38

URL:

Good to see something positive on the conservation / access front. This is a copy of an e-mail I received today from the Friends of the Struble Trail. Thanks to all that helped!

SUCCESS!!!

0519Shryock Property Settled In August, Now Owned by Natural Lands Trust!

Transfer to State and County Planned!

We Rock! Check out the Property You Saved with Your Letters and Donations!

In Neighboring News: Wallace Township Residents Need Help Fighting Proposed 600 Acre Development Site - Check out <http://www.watchourwaters.org>. Meeting tonight (Wed.) at 7:30 1250 Creek Rd, Glenmoore.

Dear Friends,

...We have accomplished our goal. On August 18th, Natural Lands Trust settled on the bulk of the Shryock property. Friends of the Struble Trail collected \$2,515.00 toward the purchase. The house, mill property, and five surrounding acres remain under the ownership of the current owner, with an easement through it between the house and the mill for the trail continuance. This works for everyone; the County & State were pleased to leave the liability of whatever clean-up might be on the mill property with the current owner, and the placement of the trail keeps it on higher ground which means less flooding maintenance cost for the county. All the acreage behind the mill and house parcel will be added to Marsh Creek State Park. The trail head parking is preserved as well as County Park property. The parcels will be transferred to the State Park and Chester County in the near future.

This victory represents about a year of constant organization, with pressure on, (and support for) our local officials as obstacles were overcome with perseverance. It is gratifying beyond measure to see people using it, accessing Marsh Creek again off Dorlan's Mill Road at the dam, and taking my kids back into the pretty places where Marsh Creek spills into the East branch of the Brandywine. Joe Delaney, who sets out seasonal bird boxes, took me on a guided tour, and I am eager to see the wintering bluebirds when they congregate. The 'bike guys' as I have affectionately come to know them, have offered to help blaze the planned trail through the mill property and up the hill into the park, so you won't have to use Dorlan's Mill Road anymore if you don't like mixing with cars. So we're not finished yet, but the heavy lifting for this piece of the trail has certainly been completed with gusto.

Many people made this happen. Without Rep. Curt Schroder, and his proactive mailings to people who

expressed interest in the project, I would never have known the key time to decide to become involved. His constant championing, willingness to open his appointment book and his office to meetings, and helpful communication were key to everything accomplished. He was my first big 'get' for the Rally in September, and I know that helped gain the confidence of the other elected officials that we had enough community support that they had to pay attention. Rep. Schroder's assistant, Becky Corbin, has also been genuinely terrific. Catherine Tomlinson, Upper Uwchlan Twp. Supervisor, was the one supervisor who unfailingly supported this project, and if she had not been on the council, I believe they would have caved to the developer before we had a chance to get involved. If she had her way, Upper Uwchlan would have orchestrated the sale the first time around and saved us all a lot of money. That took guts to keep her stand, and all of us who enjoy the property and value the water quality & habitat are in her debt. Carol Aichele also supported the project, and her willingness to take calls and (along with John Mikowychok) act on timely information where the County Parks Department needed to get involved were important as well. And finally in the major players, Jack Steffarud of Natural Lands Trust has my undying admiration for his unworldly patience in the land owner negotiations. He must really believe in the importance of this crucial property bridge between parks to deal with the fits and starts of this exasperating process.

I know it's boring to read a long thank you list, but I ask your grace in a case like this where so much had to come together...without the local environmental supporters Sen. Schroder & I invited to his office for that first meeting last August that got us running (Robert Lonsdorf of Brandywine Conservancy; Dick Whiteford of Defenders of Wildlife; Martin Page of the WC Bird Club; John Johnson, past Pres. of WC Fish, Game & Wildlife; Steve Duckinfield, local mountain biker; Sandy Moser, Gary & Susan Erb of WC Running Club), Brian 'Sure, you can design a website!' Poppe, and his wife Suzann, who designed our logo gratis; Rally speakers (Holly Merkel, avian census taker; Ray Crossen, Civil Engineer; John Johnson; Rep. Curt Schroder, Sen. Andy Dinniman's COS Stephannie McLimans, and Richard Sprengle, past Deputy Dir. of DCNR), Commissioners Aichele, Cozzone, and Farrell, (who were receptive and approved the county funding); Sen. John Rafferty (who sponsored the PA Capital funding), DCNR officials Lori Nygard and Michael DiBerardinis, Sen. Andy Dinniman, and finally, Gov. Rendell himself who signed the line item in the budget, we would certainly not have been successful. And don't forget to join GreenValleys.org, whose 11th hour sponsorship of the unexpected insurance requirement saved the Rally. Green Valleys is a wonderfully run, effective organization. Our group, Friends of the Struble Trail, wrote letters and made phone calls to all of these people, in an orchestrated manner as we needed them to pay attention...in a civilized, helpful way that let them help their constituents. And a quiet thank you as well goes to all the people whose jobs make it impossible to publicly share their knowledge where there might be political ramifications, but who found ways to educate me so we learned crucial environmental information we needed to be persuasive. Special thanks to Vanguard, Pook & Pook, and Mauger for their large donations...and to all of you, from the \$10 checks to \$100, who participated with your pocketbooks. We made a difference, and every time you or your children or their children use this trail, we will know we had a part in preserving it. There's a Settlement Map on our website...Go out and hike the (now) state park land. It's humbling and so cool that we helped save it!

Sharon

P.S. Wallace Township upstream on the Brandywine is fighting the same fight, on a Much Larger scale - 600 acres! See <http://www.watchourwaters.org> to learn about it. The developer's site is http://valhallabrandywine.com/discover/index.php/view/the_property Chester County asked Wallace supervisors to put the brakes on zoning variances to allow more evaluation, but the supervisors elected not to. The only way to fight it, as we did, is to go to township meetings and express distress. Theirs is tonight at 7:30 in the Wallace Twp. building at 1250 Creek Rd. in Glenmoore.