

MCLT Winter 2011 Newsletter

Subject: Cover Story – Moran Preservation

Title: **Partners Join to Preserve 81 Acres Near Evansburg State Park**

An agreement that was ten years in the making came to a triumphant closure this past December when Montgomery County Lands Trust, the Moran family, and Worcester Township signed the documents to permanently preserve 81 acres in Worcester Township. The privately owned Moran property connects in one corner to the 3700-acre Evansburg State Park and lies within close proximity to Methacton High School. Identified as a Montgomery County Natural Areas Inventory landscape, the special parcel will have a public trail installed as part of the agreement. Montgomery County Lands Trust worked closely with Worcester Township who had selected this parcel as its top priority. Worcester used its own substantial contribution of \$337,000 to leverage \$800,000 in funding from Montgomery County and \$700,000 from Pennsylvania's Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. Funds were used by Montgomery County Lands Trust to purchase the development rights and to keep the privately owned land open as a preserved landscape.

The Moran property is not only strikingly beautiful. It has high natural resource conservation value. Its diverse landscape contains mature woodlands that are contiguous to the Pennsylvania Highlands Region. The parcel features meadow, wooded stream buffers, tributaries to the Skippack Creek, and nationally significant wetlands – all elements that add to its value for preservation. The future trail through the private land will link to Evansburg State Park affording the public and Methacton High School students, teachers, and athletes a safe, off-road pathway to train and make their way to the state park for field trips.

Rich in history, the Moran parcel was previously owned by the SGF (Samuel G. Friedman) Vacation Camp where from 1923 to 1976 it served as a camp for underprivileged Jewish boys – most of whom hailed from Philadelphia at the time. Former campers feel a strong kinship with the land and have maintained a friendly relationship with the Moran family. They even hope to assist with installation of the trail.

Jake Lea, Director of Land Preservation for Montgomery County Lands Trust, put in countless hours on this project. He reflects that the conservation of the Moran property is particularly rewarding because it satisfies so many conservation goals. “It is a property that contains scientifically significant natural resources, while at the same expanding a county greenway. It connects existing preserved open space to the state park while simultaneously preserving a priority parcel in Worcester's Open Space Plan. It also provides a long-sought Worcester trail corridor while concurrently protecting beautiful mature woodlands and sensitive wetlands. It was gratifying to have so many different partners work toward the common end of conserving this property.”

Keep an eye on your Inbox for news of our soon-to-be-released video on the Moran project!

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