



THE FOWWOS NEWS

Newsletter of *FRIENDS OF WEST WINDSOR OPEN SPACE*

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FOWWOS AND THE NEW MASTER PLAN

Later this summer the West Windsor Planning Board will put the finishing touches on the new township Master Plan. This plan is important because it explains the township's land development policies. The new plan will reflect major changes that have occurred in West Windsor since the last full revision in 1978. Foremost among those changes is the recent effort to save our remaining open space, an effort in which FOWWOS has played a leading role.

During the building boom of the '80's, the Master Plan called for a 70:30 ratio of residential-to-commercial development. It stated outright that Mercer County Park comprised so much open space that the Old Trenton Road corridor would retain its rural ambience even if developed at a density of one house per acre. During the '90's, many residents became dissatisfied with this vision because they felt the plan would lead to too many houses and not enough open space. They

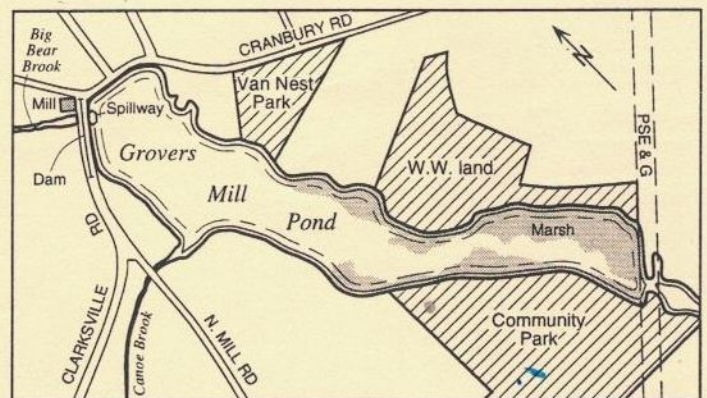
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THE CLEAN STREETS PROGRAM

New Jersey's Clean Streets Program provides a way for organizations such as FOWWOS to raise money to help preserve open space. Our program, which is administered by the Township, provides FOWWOS with \$8 for every hour anyone at least 16 years of age spends picking up litter around town. For those under 16, the stipend is \$4 per hour. Forms available from FOWWOS are filled out and turned in to the Township, which distributes the money to FOWWOS from funds provided by the State. Individuals and groups are encouraged to take part in this very useful and rewarding effort for the benefit of both FOWWOS and the Township. ☞

GROVERS MILL POND

Over seven years ago, the Grovers Mill Pond Master Plan Task Force presented a three-part pond rehabilitation plan to the Township Committee. The plan was accepted and widely viewed as the long-overdue solution for this neglected and sadly deteriorated body of water—the only lake West Windsor owns. Unfortunately for the project, a few months later the form of township government changed to Mayor-Council, and the plan was essentially forgotten. To be sure, the first step of the plan—the development of Van Nest Park—was completed, but only because it had already been started and the Township had received Green Acres funding for it from the State. The most important steps, the repair and upgrading of the dam and the restoration of the pond itself, have been in limbo ever since.



Impounded during Colonial times, the pond was formed by constructing a 400-foot long earthen dam across the shallow valley of Big Bear Brook. Since then the pond has served as a source of power for the gristmill and irrigation water for nearby farms. In 1931, the dam was greatly en-

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Grovers Mill Pond, cont.

larged to accommodate Clarksville Road, which traverses its summit, and the five-sided concrete spillway was built.

Repair of the dam is a safety issue. In 1980, the Federal Government declared the dam unsafe by newly adopted standards and ordered it upgraded, a task that was beyond the resources of the then private owner. Eventually, in 1987, the Township took ownership and formed a task force to develop a plan for repair and upgrading. During this time the State threatened the Township with legal action unless progress was forthcoming.

Under the resulting plan, the dam will be cleared of vegetation, regraded, and provided with an erosion-resistant covering that will allow it to be overtopped during heavy storms without danger of failure. Overtopping such as that in the aftermath of Hurricane Floyd last year, has occurred on average about every five years over

the past forty years. Each time, erosion has taken a toll on the downstream embankment. It is only a matter of time before serious damage to the road and homes downstream will occur if repairs are further deferred.

According to the plan's third step, the pond will be deepened to remove accumulated silt that has resulted in a maximum depth of less than four feet over much of its 37 acres. Vegetation growing up from the shallow bottom and an overabundance of nutrients in runoff from the upstream watershed have contributed to deterioration of the habitat for fish, reptiles, and amphibians that were once common. Painted turtles, spring peepers, and bullfrogs have been gone for more than a decade.

After many delays, it appears that work on the dam may begin this year. When completed, this project will enhance the recreational resources of the Township and bring new attractions to the parks that bound its shores. ☺

To join FOWWOS

Send name and address to:

FOWWOS
P.O. Box 73
Princeton Junction, NJ 08550

Enclose dues check made out to FOWWOS for one of the following memberships:

Regular (family)	\$25.00 per year
Silver	\$50.00 " "
Gold	\$75.00 " "

Membership dues and contributions are fully tax deductible.



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