



THE FOWWOS NEWS

Newsletter of *FRIENDS OF WEST WINDSOR OPEN SPACE*

Vol. 6, No. 2 • SPRING-SUMMER 2005

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THE FOWWOS FINANCIAL PICTURE

FOWWOS has income from five sources:

1. Dues paid by its members.
2. Voluntary contributions by members and nonmembers.
3. Grants restricted to specific uses from government and nongovernment sources
4. Grants of state funds in exchange for participation in the Clean Streets program.
5. Interest resulting from the investment of funds from these sources.

Dues: For the 2004 fiscal year, the 508 members in good standing paid a total of \$20,884 in dues, an average of \$41.11 per member.

Voluntary contributions: During the 2004 fiscal year, FOWWOS received \$12,272 in voluntary contributions.

Grants: To receive grant money, FOWWOS must apply for it and explain what its exact use will be. Most commonly, this is as FOWWOS's contribution toward the purchase of a piece of property, or toward the development of a specific hiking trail or other amenity on existing open space property. When FOWWOS disburses the grant, it may supplement the amount with funds from its own treasury. In that way, the members contribute directly to the purchase or development through the dues they pay.

In many cases, grants are awarded on a matching basis. That is, the grant is awarded only if an equal amount is contributed by another party. If the match is not obtained, there is no grant. Parties who provide the matching amount may be private organizations, other nonprofits,

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ROGERS FARM FINALLY PRESERVED

Now the Martians Can Land in Peace

In June, West Windsor Township finally took ownership of the historic 13-acre Rogers property on Clarksville Road in Grovers Mill. This newly-preserved open space property lies between the homes that face Clarksville Road opposite Grovers Mill Pond and those on the east side of Landing Lane. It is accessible from Clarksville Road by the driveway it shares with the 18th-century Rogers house, and by public easement from Landing Lane. The long-delayed closing brought a successful end to the concerted preservation effort led by FOWWOS President Mike Schuit. This was a true community project, with local residents and other individuals contributing over \$100,000 toward the \$1M+ purchase price. Mercer County and the state Green Acres program also made significant contributions, and the Delaware & Raritan Greenway provided essential help, as well.

Preservation of this property is important from both ecological and historic perspectives. As it includes a portion of the West Windsor Greenbelt along the west bank of Big Bear Brook and is contiguous with other preserved woodlands, it expands the local habitat for some of our area's rarest wildlife, including wild turkeys, blue herons, and, according to recent observations, bald eagles. Historically, the property lies at the heart of the Grovers Mill community, once visited by U.S. Presidents Cleveland and Wilson when they lived in Princeton, and by the fictitious Martians made famous by Orson Welles.

From the 1950s until 1999, the property was

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Friends Of West Windsor Open Space

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In Memoriam

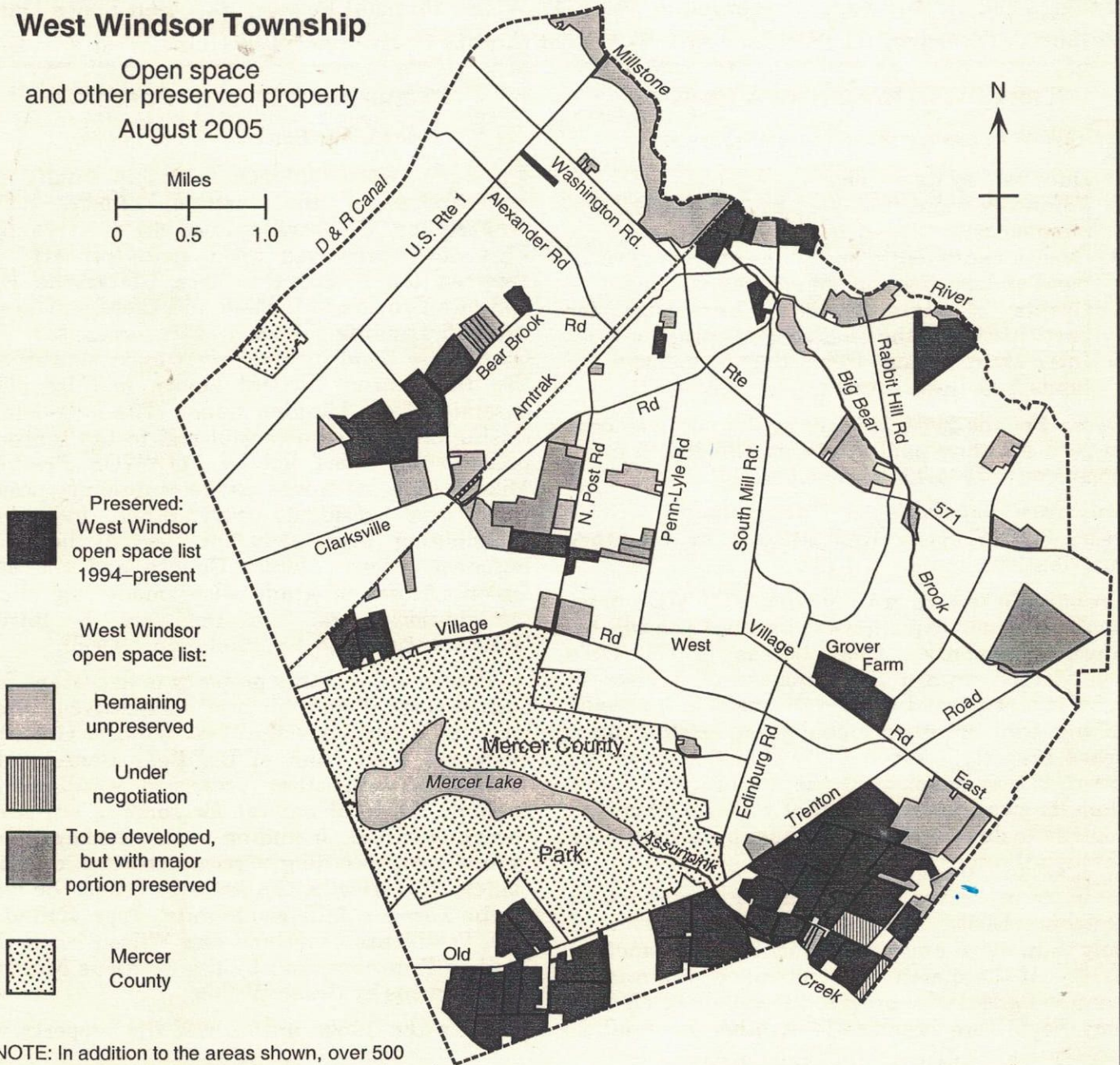
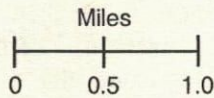
Bernt Midland (1927-1998), Founder
 Gil Gilmore (1922-1998)
 Ron Rogers (1929-1999)

E-mail: ek61@juno.com or FOWWOS@yahoo.com
 Web site: www.fowwos.org
 Meetings: First Tuesday at
 Town Hall, 7:30 p.m.

The newsletter *The FOWWOS News* is produced three times a year by Dick Snedeker and Alison Miller, co-editors
 FOWWOS is a nonprofit organization incorporated under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, E.I.N. 22-3419086

West Windsor Township

Open space
 and other preserved property
 August 2005



-  Preserved:
West Windsor
open space list
1994-present
-  West Windsor
open space list:
Remaining
unpreserved
-  Under
negotiation
-  To be developed,
but with major
portion preserved
-  Mercer
County

NOTE: In addition to the areas shown, over 500 additional acres within developments have been deed restricted through agreements with homeowners associations.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

A TRAIL TO EAGLE

Michael Hasling, a member of West Windsor Boy Scout Troop 40, recently led the building of a new hiking trail through the woods at the Rogers Arboretum. The trail, which served as his Eagle Scout project, is 5 feet wide and nearly 1200 feet long. In undertaking this project, with the cooperation of the township, Michael had the help of fellow scouts and other volunteers. In keeping with the oak tree theme of the arboretum the trail is known as the Water Oak Trail. It is marked by blue blazes.

The trail starts behind and to the right of the Rogers memorial. The township-approved route follows a generally northerly direction and then bears to the left, or, westward, ending at Clarksville Road near its intersection with Villa Drive. At two points it crosses an older trail that traverses another portion of the arboretum woods.

Tasks in building the trail included the trimming of overhead branches and the removal of briars and underbrush, rocks, roots, garbage, and other impediments along the way. A post bearing the name "Water Oak Trail" was also installed. To mark the edges of the trail, lengths of deadfall logs were cut and laid along the edges of the right-of-way. The ends of the logs were blazed with blue paint. Construction began in November of 2004 and was completed in March of 2005.

To raise money for the project, Michael sold home-baked cookies and hot chocolate at youth soccer games during the fall of 2004. He and his volunteers spent 280 hours to plan, develop, and complete the trail, which is a great asset to the arboretum. It provides sanctuary for those seeking a beautiful path to walk among the woods remaining in our township. ☺

LATEST OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION DATA

The map on page 2 summarizes the latest data on open space preservation in the township. To date, 1,605 acres have been preserved, or 62 percent of the 2,576 acres that comprise West Windsor's open space list of properties qualifying for state and county reimbursement. Of the 99 properties on the list, 41 have been preserved. The preserved properties amount to 9.6 percent of the township area of 16,803 acres. Overall, including land owned by the county and state within the township, a total of 7,974 acres have been preserved, or 47.4 percent of the township. A major contributor to this total, of course, is Mercer County Park. ☺

The FOWWOS Financial Picture, cont.

other government entities, or, of course, FOWWOS itself. In the past, FOWWOS has received matching grants from all of these sources.

Most recently, FOWWOS has applied to the state Green Acres program for substantial new funding to be used toward the purchase of additional open space properties. If such a grant is awarded, however, but the deal for the designated properties falls through, the grant funds, including any interest that may have accrued as a result of their short-term investment, must be returned to the state or other source.

Interest. Routinely, the income from dues and contributions is deposited in a bank account, normally split between checking (for paying bills) and certificates of deposit at the most favorable rate available.

EXPENSES

Aside from the disbursement of funds toward the acquisition of property and the development of amenities as explained above, the only expenses FOWWOS has are those associated with the production and mailing of the FOWWOS News, and the mailing of renewal and other notices to members. Included in these expenses are a bulk mailing permit and a post office box.

PROPERTY OWNERSHIP

Although a few properties have been acquired by the township or other entities with the aid of a contribution of non-grant funds from the FOWWOS treasury, FOWWOS has chosen not to retain ownership, even partially, in any property.

During a typical closing transaction, when a property is purchased by the township with FOWWOS's help, FOWWOS technically owns the property for a brief period of time, during which deed restrictions can be placed on the property that limit how it can be used by its new owner, West Windsor Township. FOWWOS's role is thus that of a facilitator and contributor in land preservation deals, not as a steward of preserved land. That is the role of land trusts, such as the Delaware & Raritan Greenway, which are set up specifically to own the property they purchase for preservation.

We hope this brief description of the FOWWOS financial picture will help explain how the organization works in fulfilling its land preservation objectives. ☺

Rogers Property, cont.

operated by its owner and FOWWOS co-founder Ron Rogers as a Christmas tree farm. Following his death in 1999, his family continued the operation until 2002. The property will now join the township's preserved open space devoted to passive recreation such as hiking and nature observation. It is possible that a portion of the Millstone River trail network will traverse the region. There is also a plan to plant some of the open areas with American Chestnut trees, in an attempt to reestablish this once plentiful but now nearly extinct species in the area. ☺

7 cents per hundred dollars of assessed valuation. Funds from this tax typically provide 35 percent of the cost of a preserved property.

But the total open space tax we pay is really 9 cents, with the other 2 cents going to Mercer County. We get a substantial portion of this back through the county's contribution of 15 percent toward the cost of property preserved either by purchase or farmland preservation. To date, the county has reimbursed West Windsor a total of over \$2.6M toward our eligible open space purchases. In addition, the county and state farmland preservation authorities have contributed another \$5.8M. These figures represent 100 percent of the obligations from these sources. In short, Mercer County has been a very supportive and cooperative partner in our open space preservation program, and we hereby express our appreciation. ☺

**MERCER COUNTY OPEN SPACE TAX
HELPS WEST WINDSOR**

The people of West Windsor are justly proud of their commitment to open space preservation, expressed primarily through our open space tax of

To join FOWWOS

Send name and address to:

FOWWOS
P.O. Box 73
West Windsor, 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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