



MILLSTONE TOWNSHIP

AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

OPEN SPACE & FARMLAND PRESERVATION COUNCIL

Spring 2019

CLARKSBURG CULTURAL CENTER

GETS MORE LAND TO GROW

In December of 2018, Millstone Township purchased an open space property on Stagecoach Road which expanded the *Clarksburg Cultural Center* (CCC) Park, formerly the Clarksburg Methodist Episcopal Church, so that it can better serve the community. The additional space will provide much needed parking, ADA bathrooms, and a bicycle rest/repair stop. Currently, with the lack of bathrooms and the only parking available along dangerous Route 524, a 50-mph road with no shoulder, our concern for residents utilizing the center was of great concern. Fortunately, the land adjacent to the center became available and the township purchased it through the Monmouth County Municipal Open Space Grant and Green Acres Grant programs for \$255,000. In addition to being listed on the National and State registries, it has been added to our Recreation Open Space Inventory.



Perhaps you can remember several years ago, hundreds of residents signed a petition asking the Township to restore this historic site. Through other matching grants, funds were used to structurally restore the



building; to install a cedar shake roof and galvanized gutters, to repair and paint the interior and exterior surfaces; and to replace, like for like, the herringbone parquet ceiling and wide -board pine floors. The townspeople came together and pitched in to solicit in-kind donations of goods and services from the community. The first event held following the restoration, was the Open House—Time Capsule event in June 2017, attendance 200 plus. Many residents, groups, and school students placed

letters and memorabilia into the capsule. Won't it be exciting for those here to open it in 2069!

This year the Township will apply for a matching Development Grant from the Monmouth County Municipal Open Space Grant program to construct the amenities described earlier on this land. The future vision of the Clarksburg Cultural Center is to host historic, musical, art exhibits, reenactments and dramatic performances. The center is a wonderful gathering place for approximately 125 people. It has great acoustic qualities with the ambiance of an 1800s historic structure. It is the oldest surviving church in our town. The architectural significant and the wealth of history associated with this building is unique in the "Clarksburg Village". There is no other building of its kind existing in our Town perfectly suited as a showplace for these programs.



Barnegat Bay Preserve: Our Local Sanctuary

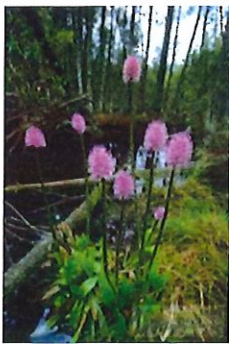
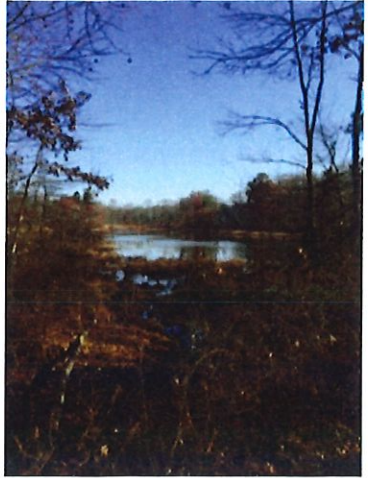
With matching grants from NJDEP Green Acres and Monmouth County Municipal Open Space programs, the OSFP has successfully acquired 13 acres of pristine and undeveloped land on 28 Burnt Tavern Road (i.e. Barnegat Bay Preserve).

Description

The majority of the Barnegat Bay Preserve is classified as emergent wetlands, scrub/shrub wetlands and forested wetlands comprising of open water (streams, a pond, marsh), and shrubs. It is also a home for deciduous wetland tree species such as Pin Oak, River Birch, Atlantic White Cedar, Red Maple, Pitch Pine, Swamp White Oak and Blackgum.

Environmental

Barnegat Bay Preserve is uniquely identified for its environmental sensitivity due to a combination of its rare plant and animal species along with its water recharge and flood prevention benefits. The property is in a critical area of the headwaters of the Toms River Watershed, a sub-watershed of the Barnegat Bay Management Area that flows eastward through the New Jersey Pinelands Management Area, a part of the Atlantic Coastal Watershed Management Region. The tributaries of the river run through the majority of the property containing a sizeable body of water. The wetland is an area that sustains hydrophilic plants that adapt to living in saturated soils which provide a unique habitat for wildlife. The wetlands also provide flood protection, erosion control, and improve water quality. The majority of the property houses species identified as State Threatened on the Monmouth County GIS NJIS and ESRI mapping.



Preservation

The acquisition of Barnegat Bay Preserve enabled the protection its vital habitat for endangered and threatened species, that includes the Bog, Wood, and Spotted Turtle, Pine Barrens Tree Frog, Frost and the Fowler's Toad. It is also home to other mammals such as red and gray fox, coyotes, and white tailed deer. In addition, there is beaver present on the property as evidenced by gnawed trees and beaver dams.

The property also exhibits Swamp Pink, or *Helonias Bullata*, habitat. Due to overdevelopment and its low seedling establishment quality, this plant is listed as endangered in New Jersey and, according to the US Fish and Wildlife Service, is designated as federally threatened in its entire range. Since Swamp Pink has been sighted on several occasions in Millstone Township, this project will assure its preservation and proliferation in the Barnegat Bay Preserve.

Benefits

By taking an active role in preserving its heritage, Millstone Township recognizes that it needs to make different recreation and cultural opportunities available for its diverse residents. While protecting the headwaters of the Toms River Watershed, the Barnegat Bay Preserve is a sanctuary that provides wonderful opportunity for resource-based recreation that draws on the Township's natural regions for nature study, fishing, and bird watching. A proposed observation deck will enable bird watching that will include avian species observed within the emergent wetlands habitat in Millstone Township such as: Black Vulture, Bobolink, Field Sparrow, Great Blue Herring, Northern Harrier, Pied-Billed Grebe, Purple Martin, Red-Winged Blackbird, Rufous-Sided Towhee, Song Sparrow, Tree Swallow, and the Turkey Vulture. In addition, this nature observation deck can become a destination detour off the existing Doctor's Creek Trail, located just across the road from this property.

Join Us for the Weekend in Old Monmouth Event at the *Thomas Baird Homestead*

Saturday, May 4th, 10am-5pm **and** Sunday, May 5th, 12:00pm-5pm



The Friends of Millstone Township Registered Historic Properties and the *Millstone Township Historic Preservation Commission* will be hosting this free weekend of events **located at 24 Baird Road.**

Pictorial story, The 'Razing' of the Clarksburg Allen Barn and Carriage House
And the 'Raising' of the Structures at the Baird Homestead.

Sunday, Live sheep shearing 1:00—3:00 p .m. & Colonial Craft Demonstration

Check out other historic sites around the county at www.visitmonmouth.com/page.aspx?ID=3464

Letter from the Chair

Welcome to the Spring Update of the **Open Space & Farmland Preservation Council**. For those who may be new to Millstone or unfamiliar with this Council, our job is simple: the preservation of the quiet, rural lifestyle we have come to enjoy. How do we accomplish this? Our Council is comprised of dedicated volunteer residents who seek to maintain the peaceful and rural nature of our town. Towards this objective, they provide their efforts to identify open space properties that meet the goal of the township's **Open Space Recreation Plan (OSRP)** and the **Comprehensive Farmland Preservation Plan (CFPP)**. Properties are assessed for their quality, value, and availability. Once a property is deemed suitable, a fair offer is presented to the owner and, if accepted, the property is either acquired or preserved which is forever protected from future development. In addition and as a part of our post-closing duties, our members conduct stewardship visits of these acquired properties.

Currently, the OSFP has six properties in our active application pool with more applications expected. As mentioned, each application is carefully reviewed to determine the properties' suitability into the **OSRP** or **CFPP**. To offset the cost of purchase and aid in the acquisition of properties, OSFP partners with non-profit organizations such as **Monmouth Conservation Foundation**, the **State Agricultural Development Committee**, **Monmouth County Agriculture Development Board**, and **NJDEP's Green Acres**.

OSFP's stewardship program is a critical responsibility we provide for maintenance of our preserved properties. The purchase of a drone has enabled us to deliver a more comprehensive and thorough assessment of our properties' conditions. Prior to our drone acquisition, our members walked the lots exposed to environments, such as wetlands and heavy vegetation, which were impassable via foot or vehicle. However, our new drone enables us to oversee more properties as well as view them in their entirety.

In addition, the OSFP's most significant annual fundraising event is our popular Clam Bake which is held in June at the Wagner Farm Park. All township residents are welcome and can enjoy a variety of food (including lobster!) while helping to contribute to open space via ticket purchases to this event. Additionally, sponsors are a large part of our fundraising effort and their support enables the funding of critical ongoing preservation activities and critical purchases, such as our new drone. To everyone we say a big **"THANK YOU"**.

It is our hope you enjoy looking up at the stars on a quiet evening, noting the darkness and the silence. It is a wonderful thing to live in Millstone Township.

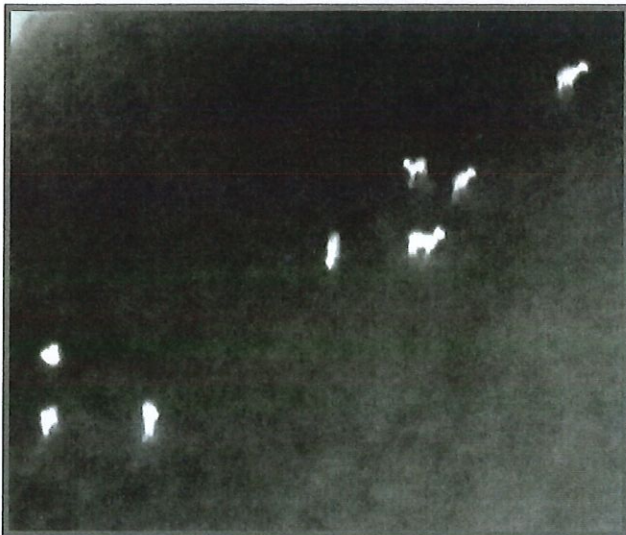
For those who would like more information, we invite you to explore our website at <http://www.millstonenj.gov/openspace.html> or on Facebook at Millstone Open Space and Farmland Preservation.

Kelly Scott

Open Space & Farmland Preservation Council Chair

Utilizing Modern Technology to Help In Preservation and Deer Management

One important mandate of the Millstone Open Space & Farmland Preservation Council is to promote the preservation of open space and farmland within our township. As part of promoting the benefits resulting from preserving farm operations, our team members assist the Millstone Twp. Economic Development Council in supporting the agricultural industry.



In 2018, by use of modern technology to incorporate new methods to accomplish our goals, the council began using commercial drones to quickly survey properties which have been identified for open space, farmland, and recreation preservation or acquisition. This visual perspective has provided us with geographical data which has been challenging to achieve through conventional methods.

In 2019 we look forward utilizing the drone to accomplishing more tasks, such as stewardship and helping the NJDEP with our annual deer population count. With the use of infrared lenses, we will be able to capture an accurate count in order to understand the plan required to maintain our deer population. The photo is an example of how we perform accurate deer count quickly and safely.

The acquisition of equipment, such as a drone, has been possible through the diligent efforts of the open space council members and the generous sponsorship contributions received from our annual clam bake. As we continue to adopt modern technologies and methods, the council will continue to safely and diligently taken every precaution to use the technology respectfully and responsibly.

Deer: Identifying the Numbers

In continuing to address Millstone's deer population issue and investigating the establishment of a deer management plan, a base count needs to be assessed. This count is important to understand the approximate deer population per square mile and establish a baseline for the Township. The practice of a spotlight deer count is one method in achieving an accurate deer tally.



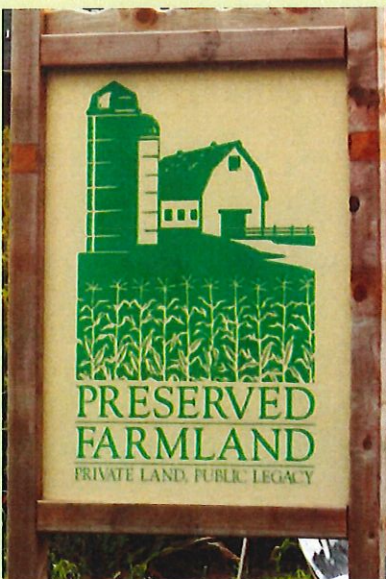
In early March, along with other Millstone volunteers, I was fortunate to participate in one of these counts, along with two New Jersey Fish & Game (NJFG) biologists. Together, we surveyed Millstone over the course of three nights where NJFG provided all of the equipment needed, as well as their valuable experience. This deer count endeavor required driving through Millstone roads at night, searching with spotlights. In order to complete an accurate survey, we recorded deer numbers, their distance from roads, and GPS corresponding coordinates. There were more than 300 sightings where we counted more than 1,000 deer.

In order to determine the number of deer per square mile, the information collected will be used by NJFG to enter into a deer population formula (results of this formula were not ready at the time of this publishing).

Overall, this was very eye-opening experience where I was able to observe firsthand the abundance of deer in our town. This process will help create a dialogue and help understand the challenges we face with overpopulation. Keep an eye out for the published results of this survey when they become available.

For your safety, when driving our roads please be alert for deer at all times.

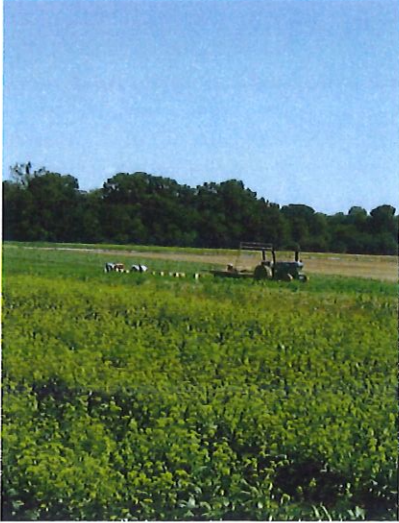
Millstone Township Preserved Acreage Keeping Count (in Acres)



Agricultural Easement	128.80
Camps (Deed Restricted)	106.78
Conservation Easement	107.46
Conservation Easement w/ Agricultural Opportunity	31.08
County	1,825.35
Farmland Preservation	1,277.41
Joint with State	49.63
Private Open Space	106.19
State	2,624.67
State/Conservation Restriction/Easement	16.15
Township	810.66
Township/Open Space Easement	32.75
Township/Trail Easement	19.11
Township/Wildlife Corridor Easement	4.60
Grand Total:	7,140.65

Farming (More Than Just Food)

Here in Millstone we have all seen the "No Farmers No Food" bumper stickers on muddy pick-up trucks. We assume farmers will feed our world population, projected to be 10 billion by the year 2050. However, we rarely think of the ecological, sociological and economic aspects of agriculture here in Millstone. Some of these include clean water issues, climate change, wildlife habitat and mere aesthetic benefits from farming.



Most of us in town are using private wells for our drinking water. It is of the utmost importance that our ground water remains clean and healthy. Research shows farms utilizing best management practices with planting seasonal crops and winter cover crops help improve the quality of our watersheds. Surface water runoff and erosion can carry contaminants into our waterways leading to pollution of our waters. Farms act as giant filters. As water percolates through top soil contaminants are trapped. Later, they are broken down by microorganisms in the soil resulting in a cleansing of our ground water.

Climate change and global warming are hot issues today. Most believe agriculture will be adversely affected by extreme weather events. Elevated temperatures and intense rains lead to greater soil erosion and soil degradation. Global warming is projected to have many effects on our farms. There will be greater pressure from pests, diseases and weeds. Over the past 250 years the 3 major causes of increased

greenhouse gases have been fossil fuels, land use (deforestation) and, yes, agriculture. Agriculture is believed to be responsible for a quarter of total global greenhouse gas emissions. A paper published in the Journal Science Advances suggests modern U.S. agriculture can help sequester significant amounts of carbon. As a result, greenhouse gases can be reduced by 21 percent annually, under best case scenarios. Future research into carbon sinks and biochar, both forms of carbon sequestering, can prove to reduce greenhouse gases even further. Farming could be an answer to global warming.

With more development going on in and around Millstone, habitat for wildlife is shrinking. Agriculture is increasingly being impacted by this habitat change. Farms are suffering greater damage from deer and geese. Township residents are also seeing more health issues and property damage. The introduction of a wildlife management plan for farmland, park lands and Township open space could greatly reduce this 2problem.

Millstone is a beautiful place to live. Part of that beauty is in our farmlands. The vistas that our horse farms, nurseries and hay and grain fields provide are breathtaking. Local farm markets allow the opportunity to buy vine ripened fruits and vegetables freshly picked. And, most likely, you will be on a first name basis with a farmer.



TOWNSHIP OF MILLSTONE
Agricultural Advisory Council
Open Space & Farmland Preservation Council
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Farmland Preservation Council**

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Agricultural Advisory Council

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Tom Dancer
Shirley Pinhas
Kate Posten

Nancy A. Grbelja, Deputy Mayor*

13th Annual Clambake Fundraiser
Sponsored by the Agricultural Advisory Council and the
Open Space & Farmland Preservation Council

**Sunday
June 9, 2019 at Wagner Farm Park**

Adult Tickets are \$34.00 if purchased before May 30th.
Choice of 4 items from the menu and one dessert item:

- Lobster with an ear of corn
- 6 Shrimp Cocktail
- 6 Roasted Clams
- 6 Clams on 1/2 Shell
- 12 Steamers
- BBQ Pork Sandwich
- Hot Dog
- Hamburger

Tickets must be purchased in advance.

Contact :
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to purchase tickets or if you need additional information.