

MILLSTONE TOWNSHIP

OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION & AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COUNCILS SPRING 2023

WAS THERE ALWAYS A WINDMILL AT THE THOMAS BAIRD HOMESTEAD?

The windmill era in rural Monmouth County was popular in the late 1800s through the early 1920-30s. It became a sign of a prosperous farm. It was advantageous to have the wind do the work of pumping water out of the ground in sufficient quantity to water the livestock and supply the farmhouse. The derricks contained large water storage tanks halfway up between the spinning wind-wheel and the ground. The storage of large quantities of water gave the farmers security of a consistent water supply for farm use including firefighting when buildings were hit by lightning. Unfortunately, this happened too often. It was easy to attach pipes to carry the water from the tank to the water trough for the livestock and to the house for bathing and cooking.



Today, we appreciate our predecessors and their ingenuity to use wind power to lighten their workload and take advantage of the potential of free, clean energy. “Everything old is new again” Jonathan Swift. Today we are greatly increasing our use of wind to create electricity.

Thomas Baird passed away on October 1, 1880. His will and Inventory of possessions showed that he owned a windmill on the Baird farm at the time of his death. The will named Thomas’ son, David Baird, to inherit the windmill along with the farm.



Percy & Hannah Van Zandt

On February 1, 1900, the *Monmouth Inquirer* of Freehold reported *David Baird’s Barn Burned*.

Augustus Baird was awakened on Saturday night at 10:00 to bright light shining in his window from the flames burning his father, the Hon. David Baird’s barn. He sounded the alarm by ringing the farm bell. Neighbors came hurrying to the scene. The stalk rick (stack) with 4000 sheaves of straw and the stall barn illuminated the country for miles. Two horses perished in the fire. Efforts were at once directed to save the adjoining buildings. The family, friends and neighbors valiantly fought the fire. The adjoining buildings burned but were not a total loss due to his windmill tank holding 25,000 gallons of water in reserve, the cistern with an equal amount of water, and two wells. A bucket brigade was formed using the pond water before the fire was extinguished. The wagon house and large barn were saved although suffered some damage.

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Baird Windmill Continued

David Baird published a Card of Thanks “I hereby extend my personal and sincere thanks to my many friends and neighbors who rendered such efficient and valuable aid in extinguishing the fire at my place on Saturday night last”.

HOW DID THE CURRENT WINDMILL GET TO MILLSTONE?

J. Percy Van Zandt of Montgomery Township was the first owner of the windmill where the windmill supplied water to both the J. Percy Van Zandt Co. and to Percy’s home. It also supplied water to other houses and rented apartments on the property and to a working dairy farm. After the New Jersey Museum opened in 1990, J. Percy Van Zandt donated the windmill to the museum where it stood for 25 years at its entrance. When the Museum closed in 2011 due to state budget cuts, the collections of farm equipment, artifacts, and pictures, were dispersed to organizations and museums where they could be seen and appreciated by the public. The Friends of Millstone Township Historic Registered Properties were the proud recipients of many items including the 1900s working windmill now so staunchly standing on the Thomas Baird Homestead (TBH) since November 2022.



On September 26, 2015, Mark Blackwell took on the challenge of overseeing the dismantling, transportation, and eventual raising of the windmill on the TBH. He assembled an all-volunteer crew consisting of a crane company, owner and son; volunteer construction savvy workers; an equipment company who donated tractor trailer and low boy and Mark supervising the dismantling, loading and moving of the 60-foot windmill convoy down the Turnpike to Millstone Township to be off loaded at our site. Several years passed and many challenges faced the Friends to find the resources necessary to safely raise the windmill. Finally in 2022, a plan came together. Funding in place, Mark contracted with Paul’s Windmill and Crane Services located in Fooseland, Illinois to coordinate the plan of the restoration of the windmill via sharing of pictures, emails, and many phone calls. Mark hired the crane crew and laborers to be on site when needed. November 17th, Paul arrived with work truck and parts to begin the restoration. In two days, he completed the replacement of damaged and/or missing parts, completed the poured foundation, erected the frame, installed the motor and blades, and installed the pump and plumbing. It totally takes a village to raise a windmill! We are proud to tell the story of the windmill on the early farms...a first source of clean energy.

Thank you, Mark for your leadership and volunteerism.

A Chapter Book is being written to tell more of the Story of Windmills, Gristmills and Lumber Mills—Story of Clean Energy. Be on the watch for its release.

Migratory Owls



Weighing only as much as a stick of butter, the Northern Saw-whet is the smallest owl in New Jersey. They are only in New Jersey from October to March and can be found in evergreen forests.

Tyler Christensen, founder and Executive Director of WBRG, banding a Northern Saw-whet Owl.



Winter is an exciting time in New Jersey because it brings snow, good cheer, and migrating owls from the north! In October, right before Halloween, adorable Northern Saw-whet Owls begin their journey from Canada and the northern United States to our backyards where they will hunt and wait out the cold months. These little guys are known to travel up to 35 miles a night and will sometimes migrate as far south as Florida. Because owls are nocturnal, or only awake at night, Northern Saw-whets snooze in evergreen trees during the day to recharge before hunting or continuing their journey at sunset.

Like the Northern Saw-whets, Long-eared Owls also migrate from the north to visit New Jersey in the winter. These beautiful birds have a distinct orange face disk and ear-tufts that help them blend in with their surroundings. During the day, Long-eared Owls often roost together. One roost tree in Europe was home to over 750 owls! Although Long-eared Owls typically patrol forests and fields for mice, voles, and shrews, they are also known to eat sleeping songbirds



Long-eared Owls find prey at night using their excellent eyesight and hearing. Their facial disk funnels sound into their ears, allowing Long-eared Owls to hear prey that is even under snow.

like Northern Cardinals. Because migratory owls are hard to see and are only here for a short time, we know very little about them and where they go. Wild Bird Research Group (WBRG), a local non-profit based in Pennington, New Jersey, is answering these questions by studying Northern Saw-whets and Long-eared Owls when most other animals are asleep. As a WBRG volunteer, I have had the amazing opportunity to assist with their owl banding projects.

Right before sunset, we set up long mist nets in the forest to catch owls passing by. Once we extract an owl from the net, we band its leg with a unique tag that identifies the bird and its original capture location. This information becomes extremely helpful if the owl is recaptured because researchers can read the tag and know exactly where the bird has been. WBRG has caught owls that were banded elsewhere in New Jersey and even in other states such as Michigan and Maine! Some of the owls we banded have even visited Canada. By passively tracking these birds, we learn a great deal about their But banding does not provide day-to-day information about the whereabouts of these owls. If a banded bird is never recaptured, we do not know where it goes after it is released. That is why WBRG began another project to track Long-eared Owls using tiny GPS transmitters that weigh only as much as two pennies. Once we catch and band a Long-eared



Making a mini-GPS backpack for a Long-eared Owl. These backpacks are temporary and fall off after a year or two.

Owl, we build it a mini backpack to keep the GPS transmitter snug and out of the way. These GPS transmitters are extraordinary because they allow us to pinpoint the exact location of owls using the same technology employed every day to navigate to a new place or find a misplaced smart phone. Therefore, we were able to track the daily movements of an owl during its stay in New Jersey and even find the trees it roosted in during the day.



Can you find the owl in this photo? We tracked this Long-eared Owl to its daytime roost using the location provided by its GPS backpack we installed the previous night.

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Migratory Owls Continued



Northern Saw-whets are not the only owls we catch. This curious Eastern Screech Owl was caught and shown during a public program. We still band Eastern Screech Owls even though they are not the focus of our Northern Saw-whet project.

This provided valuable information about which trees and habitats owls liked. Because WBRG designed these transmitters to stay on for a year or two, we have also collected important information about where Long-eared Owls go after they leave New Jersey. One owl that we tagged migrated to northern Quebec, Canada, where Northern Long-eared Owls have never been documented before! This same owl traveled 156 miles in one night. Learning more about these birds is fun and rewarding, and WBRG is always excited to share their findings with the public. Every year during peak migration from October to December, WBRG hosts bi-weekly public programs where visitors can learn about Northern Saw-whets, get a behind-the-scenes banding night experience, and observe owls up close. Although winter is coming to a close and we must bid our migratory friends goodbye, we are excited to see where our newest bandees will go. There is still much to learn, and projects like those run by WBRG give us a first-hand glimpse into the secret lives of owls.

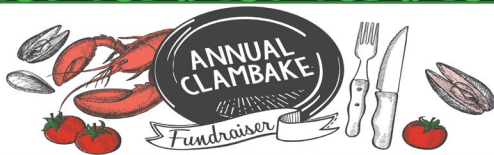
To learn more about WBRG, visit their website at wildbirdresearch.org



Although we do not know much about Long-eared Owls and their migration, organizations like WBRG are doing amazing research to answer these questions.

About the Author

Morgan Mark is a PhD student in the Department of Ecology and Evolution at Rutgers University. She is a Millstone resident who graduated from Millstone Middle School in 2014 and Biotechnology High School in Freehold in 2018. During her undergraduate studies at Rutgers, Morgan fell in love with ecology research and outreach and has volunteered with several non-profit organizations including Conserve Wildlife Foundation of New Jersey, Wild Bird Research Group, and Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space. She now studies snakes, owls, bats, and wildlife diseases and is a wildlife educator with the Rutgers Wildlife Conservation and Management Program.



AT WAGNER FARM PARK
Eat In or Take Out

1ST SEATING 2ND SEATING
1:00PM - 3:00PM 3:30PM - 5:30PM

TICKETS

ADULT - \$50
CHOICE OF 4

CHILD - \$15
CHOICE OF 2
EXCLUDES LOBSTER

SUNDAY JUNE 4, 2023
WAGNER FARM PARK
Dine In or Take Out

Adult - \$50.00 (choice of 4)

Child - \$15.00 (choice of 2 -excludes
lobster)

- Lobster with ear of corn
- 6 Shrimp Cocktail
- 6 Roasted Clams
- 6 Clams on ½ shell
- 12 Steamers
- Hot Dog
- Hamburger
- BBQ Pork Sandwich with coleslaw

Tickets must be purchased in advance by May 26th

To purchase tickets, contact:

Andrew DeFelice, 470 Stagecoach Rd. Millstone Twp. NJ 08510

Phone: 732-446 4249 X1601 Email: a-defelice@millstonenj.gov

Make Checks Payable To: MILLSTONE TWP OPEN SPACE TRUST

Letter from the Chair

Millstone Township proudly continues its endeavors in farmland preservation and supporting a diverse agricultural industry through local, county and state initiatives. Within an hour to the major metropolitan areas of New York City and Philadelphia, Millstone Township is truly a unique setting with its rural character and abundance of natural and cultural resources.



Approximately 50% of land in Millstone Township is actively farmed today. Land which boasts some of the best prime soils across the Garden State for agricultural viability. This key component to any farm is the reason many farmers choose to establish their agricultural operations within the township. The desirable land hosts a true array of farms which showcase traditional grain and crops, vegetables

and fruits, equine and livestock production, nursery and horticulture operations, beekeeping, herbs, exotic produce, pick your own operations, community supported agriculture (CSA) programs and agritourism.

With such a multifaceted agricultural industry in the township, the significance of farmland and open space preservation cannot be overlooked. Preservation initiatives assist not only the farmer and landowner but directly impact the many residents who call Millstone Township home. The benefits of farmland and open space preservation correlate with a healthy environment, control of urban sprawl, support of public recreation projects, protection of water quality and natural resources, and simply provide a superior quality of life.

With challenges to the viability of farms and the remaining unpreserved open space, the time to preserve as much land within the township is at a crucial crossroads. It is a paramount principle that the residents of Millstone Township embrace the many ongoing farmland and open space projects that the volunteer members of the Agricultural Advisory Council and Open Space Preservation Council are working on for the greater good. There is no better time than the present to preserve our farmland and open space for the benefit and enjoyment for future generations.



Amy Lynn Butewicz
(Chair of the Agricultural Advisory Council)

TOWNSHIP OF MILLSTONE

AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COUNCIL
OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION COUNCIL
470 STAGE COACH ROAD
MILLSTONE TOWNSHIP, NJ 08510

PRSR STD
ECRWSS
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
EDDM RETAIL

LOCAL POSTAL CUSTOMER

Agricultural Advisory Council

Amy Butewicz, Chairperson
George Asprocolas, Vice Chairperson
Pat Butch *Kate Posten*
Randy Peck
Chris Morris, Twp. Committee Liaison

Millstone Township Committee

Al Ferro, Mayor
Chris Morris, Deputy Mayor
Eric Davis
Michael McLaughlin
Tara Zabrosky

Open Space Preservation Council

Kelly Scott, Chairperson
Mark Blackwell, Vice Chairperson
Amy Butewicz *Jeff Smith*
Gene Madeam *Jeff Ziner*
Diane Morelli
Eric Davis, Twp. Committee Liaison



"A Weekend In Old Monmouth"
at The Baird Homestead
Self Guided Tour

Saturday, May 6, 2023 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM
Sunday, May 7, 2023 12:00 PM – 5:00 PM

New this Year—Windmill

More info call 609-915-3444 or
609-290-8229

www.visitmonmouth.com



4-H at
The Baird Homestead
"April Showers"
A Victorian Afternoon Tea

April 23, 2023 at 2:00 PM
Allen Barn Tickets \$30
VIP Tickets \$45
All food is homemade by 4-H

More info call:
609-290-8229