



WILLISTOWN TOWNSHIP PARKS and RECREATION

Willistown Township 40 Lloyd Avenue, Suite 204-206 Malvern, PA 19355 610-647-5300

Okehocking Nature Center Update Fall 2010

The Okehocking Nature Center board of directors (board), including Willistown's director of parks and recreation, Mare McLoughlin, has been hard at work on a detailed feasibility study of the proposed nature center and its location.

Board representatives interviewed members of the community, directors of other nature centers, fundraising professionals, and educators and received input from Willistown residents through numerous public meetings. They sought early input from the township's planning and historical commissions and supervisors. They discussed the proposed project at length with experts in fields ranging from traffic engineering to landscape architecture and civil engineering. The board also received a project assessment from the Social Entrepreneurship and Community Leadership class of the Penn State master of business administration and master of leadership development program.

Simultaneously the board carried out its mission to connect people with nature by collaborating on the Okehocking Celebration Series events. The Willistown Parks and Recreation Department staff continues to seek creative ways to serve township residents. Through the nature center project (and as part of the inspiration for the project), we have brought together some outstanding programming partners, including the Upper Main Line Y, Great Valley School District, and Paoli Hospital, to help us provide entertaining and pertinent programs for Willistown residents. Engaging such partners is an efficient way for the township to provide a wide range of educational and recreational services without hiring more staff. Meanwhile the partners are fulfilling their missions through the activities and events at Okehocking. It's a win-win for all!

As a result of these activities, it became clear that there are immediate requirements for Okehocking that include shelter, restrooms, running water, parking, and improved access. Meeting these basic needs would go a long way toward making Okehocking a welcoming location-for special program participants and casual visitors alike! The board is working with Willistown Township to provide these accommodations. See willistownparks.org for updates, and we'll see you at the next Okehocking Celebration Series event! Visit [Okehocking Preserve](#).