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OKEHOCKING NATURE CENTER UPDATE FEBRUARY 2007

Partners Vision Workshop Convened

The township's preparation to build a nature center at Okehocking Preserve continues. The working mission of the Okehocking Nature Center *is to enhance people's relationship with nature, sense of community, and knowledge of natural resource stewardship, thus improving their life experience and creating life-long advocates and practitioners.* The working vision statement of the Center is that *the future of conservation, environmental stewardship, and environmental recreation depends upon providing a place in nature, about nature, for people. The possibility and benefit of such a place is emotional, physical, and spiritual well-being for the people in the nature center community. Love of nature and the care of it will go with people to their own properties, resulting in wide-reaching, regional, natural resource improvement.*

The township intends to carry on and expand its Okehocking partnerships—many of which were established as a part of the first acquisition grant applications in 2000—to assist in achieving the vision, mission and purposes of Okehocking. Utilizing the Preserve as an outdoor classroom and laboratory, the partners will offer educational and interactive programs that further their mission and coincide with the center's mission and purposes. Local educational and environmental organizations have expressed a need for such a partnership with Willistown Township.

On December 11, 2006, the township convened a vision and planning workshop to provide an opportunity for future and potential partnering organizations to express the possibilities of their partnerships and to help develop the vision and early program description for the center. Attendees included:

Richard Menn, Chester County Master Gardeners

Sandy Claus, Great Valley School District Community Programs

Derek Stedman, Habitat Resource Network of Southeastern Pennsylvania

Warren Graham, Open Connections Property Manager and Steward; and Cindy Pizziketti, Program Coordinator

Brian Raicich, Upper Main Line YMCA, Director Environmental Education Program and Camps; and Sally Leathersich, Associate Director of Environmental Education and Arts

Lisa Rubin, Willistown Conservation Trust, Associate Stewardship Manager

Mary H. McLoughlin, Director of Parks and Preserves, Willistown Township

Could not attend:

Jim Rapp, Malvern Boy Scout Troop 7, Local Boy Scout Liaison

Susan Cooker, National Wildlife Federation, Certified Habitat Steward

Consultants:

Don Watson, FAIA, CIP, EarthRise, Interpretive Design Facilitator, www.donaldwatson.com

Muscoe Martin, AIA, LEED AP, Principle, M2 architecture, www.m2-arch.com

Luncheon guests included:

Norman MacQueen, Chairman, Willistown Township Supervisors



Attendee list continued:

Joe Tankle, CEO, Upper Main Line YMCA

Bonnie Van Alen, Executive Director and President, Willistown Conservation Trust

The workshop was a resounding success, and we look forward to continued coordination with all of these organizations on the partnership opportunities at Okehocking.

We would like to send special thanks to Ed Shanaughy, Willistown resident and partner of Our Deli and Meats in Paoli, for his generosity in donating a *scrumptious* Our Deli catered lunch for the workshop participants—THANK YOU ED!

Garrett Barn Removed

The Garrett barn, located behind the farmhouse near the Route 3 entrance to Okehocking, has been removed because of structural and safety issues. The stone has been stockpiled on the property, and some wood flooring, siding, and incredible 30- to 35-foot beams have been salvaged. The intent is to utilize these materials in the Okehocking Nature Center.