

NEWS RELEASE FROM

French & Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust

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French & Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust Preserves Baldwin Long Property in Charlestown Township

July 26, 2021 - French & Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust has preserved forever 15 acres in Charlestown Township, northern Chester County, through a conservation easement on property owned by Nancy Long and her brother Tom Baldwin. The property is located within the Pickering Creek Watershed. The Pickering Creek and its tributaries are designated as having High Quality Water by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection. The easement was funded by Charlestown Township.

Unique to this property, 10 acres of the oldest trees are dedicated as an “Old Growth Forest for the Future,” with an additional 3 three acres designated as a “Forest Farm”.

According to Ms. Long and Mr. Baldwin, “Incorporating this protection strategy into an easement offers a new model to consider when woodland protection is foremost in a landowner’s mind.”

The 10 acres of old growth forest contain a rich interplay of species due to their unique number of layers, including networks of fungal webs in the soil, low flowering herbaceous plants in the understory and a rich variety of young, old and dead trees in the canopy. These trees will also help with water purification and carbon sequestration long into the future.

The three-acre Forest Farm has slightly younger trees, making it an ideal environment for growing specialty crops including nuts from hickories, walnuts and hazels, fruit from paw-paws, service berries, elderberries, currants, and raspberries and medicinal crops such as ginseng, goldenseal, native ginger and mushrooms. Also encouraged in this part of the easement is the ancient practice of coppicing, which involves the periodic cutting of young trees to ground level encouraging new shoots from the base. Depending on their age, the new shoots may be used to make brooms, baskets, tool handles or fence posts or many other useful and decorative objects. Coppicing has the added benefit of lengthening the life of a tree, as well as providing tender young leaves for insects, which are the primary protein source for many species of wildlife.

Ms. Long and Mr. Baldwin have ensured this woodland will remain intact by marrying the permanent protections offered by a conservation easement with a new way of utilizing its natural attributes.

About French & Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust

Land Preservation

Since its establishment in 1967, French & Pickering has protected more than 13,000 acres in northern Chester County through purchases, conservation easements and public/private partnerships. The non-profit organization works with landowners, townships, foundations and the state and county to purchase and monitor conservation easements, create parkland and preserve environmentally sensitive land.

Public Access to Preserved Lands

Now more than ever, outside recreational opportunities are important to our mental and physical health. These French & Pickering properties are open to the public and contain miles of marked hiking trails and scenic views:

The Great Marsh Preserve in East Nantmeal Township is over 550 acres of woodland wildlife habitat. This valuable natural space houses many species of birds and mammals and is an important source of clean water for the Great Marsh ecosystem.

The Thomas P. Bentley Nature Preserve in East Nantmeal and Warwick townships is a 108-acre site that includes the ruins of the Warwick Iron Furnace and the Exceptional Value south branch of the French Creek.