

NEWS RELEASE

County of Warren, New Jersey



Freeholders Approve Funding for Five Open Space and Historic Preservation Projects from Dedicated Trust Fund

(WHITE TWP., NJ – November 13, 2019) – The Warren County Board of Chosen Freeholders awarded five grants totaling \$500,000 for open space and historic preservation projects recommended by the 12-member Municipal and Charitable Conservancy Trust Fund Committee (MCCTFC).

The grants are through Warren County’s Open Space Trust, which is funded by a voter-approved dedicated tax. Since the program began, 158 grants have now assisted local historic and open space projects in each of Warren County’s 22 municipalities.

“I want to thank the applicants for all of their hard work, and the Trust Fund Committee members for generously volunteering their time to review the applications, visit the sites and thoughtfully consider the merits of each.” said Corey Tierney, Director of Land Preservation. “Last but not least, I especially want to thank the Freeholders for continuing to support this program. Warren County boasts so many great natural and historic resources – it’s wonderful to see our community protecting these sites.”

“These five projects demonstrate that Warren County’s municipalities and nonprofits have an important role in preserving the best of our County,” Freeholder Director Jason J. Sarnoski said. “We are pleased to assist in directing the dedicated tax dollars to these worthy projects.”

Freeholder Richard D. Gardner, liaison on land use and heritage issues, thanked the MCCTFC members for “doing a great job” analyzing the funding requests, explaining that the volunteers who serve on the committee are “really looking at the projects, physically going out and looking at every project to make sure that they’re spending the taxpayers money in a correct manner.” He also praised Tierney and the Land Preservation Department staff for their efforts to ensure the funding process is well-run.

“The recipients of these grants are well deserved. Many of these projects are iconic to their respective communities,” Freeholder James R. Kern, III said. “I am proud to continue the tradition of funding the recommendations of the Municipal and Charitable Conservancy Trust Fund Committee,” he added.

The following projects have been approved:

Knowlton Township Historic Commission – Ramsaysburg Homestead

Award of \$225,000 for the continued stabilization and restoration of the tavern, cottage, and barn at the Ramsaysburg Homestead. Restoration work of the tavern will include providing barrier-free access to rear porch and installing lighting and heat. Restoration work to the cottage will include interior and exterior finishes, in addition to some improvements to the barn in order to enhance programmatic and cultural events.

Situated along the Delaware River just south of the Water Gap in Knowlton Township, the Ramsaysburg Homestead is a



12-acre historical park and the remains of a fifty-acre tract settled in 1795 by Irish immigrants James and Adam Ramsay in what was then New Jersey’s northwestern frontier. An earlier tavern continued by the Ramsays, a store established by them and eventually a post office, a lumberyard, a sawmill, a storehouse, a blacksmith shop, tenant houses and other buildings, either built or acquired by the Ramsays, comprised the principal elements of the homestead and hamlet bearing the Ramsay name. The buildings currently being restored – a tavern, barn, cottage, smokehouse and shed – were built from 1800 to 1870, and represent the activity that occurred at the homestead during its heyday.

Pohatcong History & Heritage Society - Shimer Mansion



Award of \$75,000 for continued building rehabilitation including the reintroduction of utilities and to provide ADA compliant building accessibility, among other repairs.

Shimer Manor is a substantial three-story Italianate country residence constructed by banker and gentleman farmer William B. Shimer in 1850. It became the centerpiece of a 120-acre rural estate in then Greenwich Township along the Morris Canal. It was an area landmark referred to as “The Pines” and was annexed

as the northern end of Pohatcong Township in 1881. Shimer oriented his house at a major fork along the New Brunswick Pike and the house was included as an etching on the first wall map of Greenwich Township.

Harmony Township – Van Nest / Hoff / Vannatta Farmstead

Award of \$75,000 to install farmstead utilities and to restore the interior of the summer kitchen. Originally built before the American Revolution, the buildings on site at the Van Nest / Hoff / Vannatta

Farmstead in Harmony Township proudly display the architectural and agricultural heritage of our nation throughout three centuries. The initial tract of land was 768 acres and settled circa 1763 by John Van Nest, who constructed the oldest core of the stone



farmhouse. The land was transferred to John and Abel Hoff in the early 19th century and the house was expanded circa 1810. In 1856 William M. Vannatta obtained the southern half of the then 590-acre property. Today the historic site draws hundreds of visitors by offering various events throughout the year.

Alpha Borough – Alpha Parkland East Addition

Award of \$25,000 to acquire a 1.2-acre lot as open space. Adjacent to the Alpha Parkland East property that was acquired by the Borough with the help of a 2016 County grant, this lot will protect a forested buffer between the park and nearby railroad. The site also is the location of a former Vulcanite train station. Born as a “boom town” in 1911, Alpha was the industrial heart of rural Pohatcong Township that centered around two limestone quarries and attendant cement mills that began operating in the late 1800s. Many of the workers were immigrants, mostly from Italy and Eastern Europe, including Hungary, Slovakia, and the Russian Empire. Immigrants who came through Ellis Island on their way to Alpha would have boarded the CRRNJ passenger train in Jersey City and disembarked at the Vulcanite Station.

The Land Conservancy of New Jersey – Yards Creek Preserve

Award of \$100,000 to acquire a 126-acre property to be known as the Yards Creek Preserve.

Located in in the northern portion of Blairstown Township, the Yards Creek Preserve will be owned and managed by the Land Conservancy of New Jersey, headquartered in Boonton, NJ. Working with the Delaware River Watershed Initiative, a science-based effort lead by the



William Penn Foundation and its partners to protect the Delaware Watershed and its major tributaries, the Land Conservancy of New Jersey identified this property as a priority for preservation. Located along the eastern slope of the Kittatiny Ridge southeast of the Yards

Creek Reservoirs, the property contains forested headwaters and a tributary to the Paulinskill as well as critical wildlife habitat for threatened and endangered species including hibernaculum for the long-eared bat. Additionally, the property's upland forest contains habitat for species such as bobcat, barred owl, northern goshawk, and red shouldered hawk, among others.

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