

# Hedgerows

SPRING 2007 Published by the Washington Township Land Trust

*Support Local Land Conservation*

## Please Support the Land Trust

by Jim Fitterer

Did you know that there was once an 8 acre pond in the center of downtown Long Valley? Did you know that it used to power the grist mill which was the center of much of the activity in the Long Valley community? Well, it is true, and preserving that piece of land led to the first project of the Washington Township Land Trust.

The Washington Township Land Trust was incorporated in 1991 with a mission to protect and preserve the ecological, cultural, and historical integrity of the areas that contribute to and enhance the rural character of Washington Township and its environs. We began with the purchase of the Obadiah La Tourette Grist and Saw Mill and its land which once contained the pond located in downtown Long Valley.

Built around 1750, the mill was essential to the economy and development of German Valley and the surrounding agricultural community. For much of its history, it was the most successful business in the village, grinding grain and producing flour and animal feed. Later on, a saw mill was located in the rear of the grist mill and was used by the same farmers who cut timber from their land during the off seasons. Between planting and harvesting they brought trees to the mill to be cut into beams and boards. The finished lumber, rather than be marketed, was often returned to the farmer for use in farm improvements here in our community.

Today, 16 years later, our mission remains the same. What once was the pond is now a wetlands park. Now known as the Mill Pond Park, it has trails bordering the South Branch of the Raritan River. The park remains untouched with the exception of the Helen Andrews Memorial Garden and is an important habitat for many birds, reptiles, and amphibians. The mill itself has been stabilized and is undergoing a long, labor intensive, restoration. In addition, the WTLT has succeeded through various projects and partnerships in permanently protecting almost 400 acres of beautiful forest, farmland and critical water resources, and providing opportunities for public recreation. This year, we look to complete 3 more projects that preserve approximately another 125 acres as well as to begin a project that could preserve 140 acres.

All quality nonprofit organizations need financial resources to help achieve their goals. The Washington Township Land Trust has three basic means of financial support: financial grants, the business community and individuals. Your contribution is, and always has been, critical to our success.

On April 21, 2007 we will be holding our annual Wine Tasting event as part of our annual giving campaign at the Lodge in Schooley's Mountain Park. We hope you will attend.

Your generosity to the Washington Township Land Trust will ensure that we can continue with the restoration of the Obadiah La Tourette Grist and Saw Mill and can also continue to protect and preserve open space that is vital to our water supply, native wildlife and maintaining the rural characteristic of all the communities of Washington Township.



The Washington Township Land Trust

invites you to a

## Wine Tasting

Saturday, April 21, 2007

4 PM to 7 PM

at

The Schooley's Mountain Lodge

54 Camp Washington Road

Long Valley, New Jersey

\$45 Per Person in advance/\$50 at door

Tastings by Peapack Fine Wines

Hors d'oeuvres

Music by Susan Lembo and friends

RSVP by returning form on back page to

WTLT

P.O. Box 4

Long Valley, NJ 07853

Questions? Call Chris at 908-832-9603

## Mission Statement

The Washington Township Land Trust was organized to protect and preserve the ecological, cultural, and historical integrity of the areas that contribute to and enhance the rural character of Washington Township and its environs. The Trust also promotes public interest in conserving land for open space uses in harmony with the natural environment and acquires interests in land by purchase or donation. It also manages land and property easements for the benefit of the public and educates the public to be stewards of the land.

## 2007 OFFICERS

### PRESIDENT

Keith Hayes  
908.876.4603

### VICE PRESIDENT

Karen Richards  
908.832.7005

### TREASURER

Chris Steffan  
908.832.9603

### SECRETARY

Caryl Brackenridge  
908.876.4478

### NEWSLETTER

Paul Krylowski  
908.832.6936

### MILL OFFICE

12 East Mill Rd.  
Long Valley, NJ 07853  
908.876.5986

Color versions of this and past newsletters are available at [www.wtlr.org](http://www.wtlr.org)

## Sixteenth Annual Meeting

The Sixteenth Annual Meeting and Potluck Dinner was held on December 8, 2006. Once again we thank Tim Warrenner and the Long Valley First Aid Squad for arranging and lending us the warm and comfortable setting.

The WTLT will continue to benefit from the expertise and dedication of Karen Richards, Shirley Gillette, and Kriss Olsen who were re-elected to new three year terms on the Board of Trustees. Sitting as officers for 2007, once again, will be President Keith Hayes, Vice-President Karen Richards, Treasurer Chris Steffan and Secretary Caryl Brackenridge.



## Mill Update

by Caryl Brackenridge

## Workshops at the Mill

The Land Trust is currently making plans to hold free workshops at the Obadiah LaTourette Grist and Saw Mill this spring and summer. The scope of the hands-on workshops and the dates offered will depend on the skill levels and the availability of those interested in participating.

The mill is a post and beam structure built circa 1750; and hand tools and historic methods are being used to restore columns, beams, floor joists, flooring, siding, windows and stone foundation walls.



If you are interested in participating in one or more workshops, please send us an email at [Obadiah1750@hotmail.com](mailto:Obadiah1750@hotmail.com). In addition to your name and telephone number, we would like to know what restoration subjects or skills you are interested in and when you would be available. We are looking forward to hearing from you and seeing you at the mill.

## Presidents Report

Presented December 2006 at the Annual General Meeting

Keith Hayes, WTLT President

### Fundraising/Membership

- We held our first annual Wine Tasting on April 22, 2006 at the Schooley's Mountain Lodge.
- Wine and vendors were provided by Peapack Fine Wines, music by Susan Lembo and Connor Dugan Leszczuk, and catering by Valley Restaurant. The evening was great fun and a financial success. We had 84 guests in attendance.

### Public Relations

- We published a spring, summer and fall newsletter. Paul Krylowski and the contributing writers continue to do an excellent job.
- Paul continues to keep the Website current; mill information, photos, events information and newsletters are available at [WTLT.org](http://WTLT.org).

### Mill

- Early in the year, volunteers placed a tarp over the exposed portion of the north wall on the 1st and 2nd floor levels. A volunteer also installed flooring from the 2nd to the 3rd bent, between the stairs and the east wall on the attic level. Other volunteers restored and painted window sash.
- During the year, thirteen windows were restored, 2 in the 1st floor south wall, 3 in the 1st floor

east wall, 4 in the 2nd floor east wall and 4 in the lower level stone foundation. This completed the scope of work for our grant from the Morris County Historic Preservation Trust Fund.

- Volunteer and community service workers fabricated and installed a guard rail on the 1st floor between the top of the lower level stairs and the 3rd bent.
- A leak in the 10 year old roof of the addition, which had resulted in rotted plywood under the shingles, was repaired by Seal-Tite Roofing.
- The Washington Township Historic Preservation Commission awarded a Historic Preservation Award to the volunteers of the Land Trust for the mill restoration.

### Window Adoption

- We have raised \$14,500 through our window adoption program so far.

### Parks

#### Crystal Springs Park:

- The culvert running under the entry road to the park was replaced by the New Jersey Water Supply Authority. Work was completed late in the fall.

(continued from page 4)

# American Persimmon

## *Diospyros virginiana*

by Keith Hayes

*While walking through the woods on a cold day in late October or early November, one may come across an odd tree bearing small orange fruit, many on the ground and quite a few still on the tree.*

*It would be a big missed opportunity if a few of these fruit were not picked from the tree and tasted\*. Once sampled, it would be hard to stop eating them. These sweet 1" to 1-1/2" orange fruits are the American Persimmon.*



photo courtesy University of North Carolina

Early European settlers to this country learned that this fruit was edible from the Native Americans, but they mistook them for a variety of Apricot due to their similar size and appearance. Their abundance and late fruiting made them a very valuable food source for the hungry settlers. While no longer an important food source for people, they are important for wildlife; they are a favorite of wild turkey, quail, deer, skunk, opossum, squirrel, fox, coyote, and very popular with raccoons.

Most of us have seen persimmons in the supermarket, but these are Asian varieties which are much larger. The persimmons in the supermarket are about the size and shape of the average tomato, the native variety is closer to the size of a golf ball. While they are all very sweet when ripe, the native variety is said to be the sweetest. Now, the word ripe is very important when eating any type of persimmon, to eat an unripe persimmon is an unforgettable experience that one will never repeat, the instant sense of puckering and cotton mouth is indescribable. While not harmful and only lasting a minute or so, it is quite unpleasant. Persimmons are best eaten when they are getting mushy and very soft, even wrinkled and spotty. This is one fruit that is best eaten when it looks like it should be thrown out, many people will only pick them after a frost, and they can even be eaten from the tree when frozen.

At all times of the year this tree can be identified from its distinctive bark which is a dark color and textured like the skin of an alligator. The tree will be anywhere from 30' to 70' in height and may grow singly or in small colonies. The leaves are dark green and up to 4" in length, they turn a brilliant golden yellow in the fall. In late May the trees will bear creamy white flowers up to 1/3" long, they will be very fra-



photo courtesy Duke University

grant. The flowers are a favorite of honey bees and pollination is required to produce fruit. When growing seedlings or buying trees, it is important to note that 9 out of 10 seedlings can be female. If the sex of the trees cannot be determined, it is best to plant 10 to insure pollination for fruit production. As mentioned above, the fruit is a golden orange color and shaped like a golf ball sized tomato, with the four calyx lobes (the calyx lobes look like four petals on top of the fruit) still attached to the top of the fruit.

The wood of the persimmon is also of importance due to its impact resistance. It is used to make golf club heads, tool handles, billiard cues, mallets and loom shuttles. It is thought that the replaceable teeth in some of the gears in the LaTourette grist mill are made from persimmon wood.

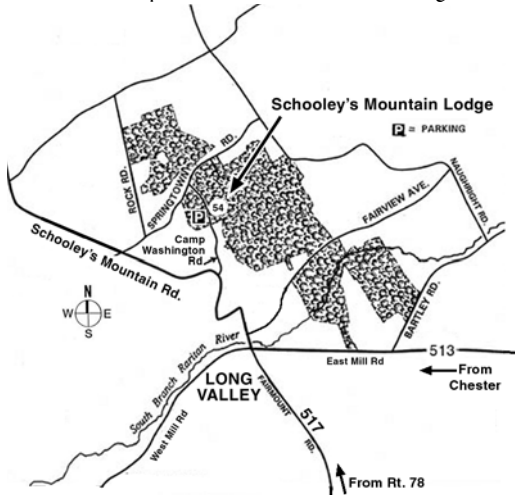
When the tree was more common it was often one of the first invaders of abandoned fields due to its popularity among various types of wildlife. Today, the tree is very rarely found and is now listed as a threatened species in New Jersey. Since this would be a great tree to plant to help reestablish an important native, I've placed an order for 10 trees this spring; maybe in a few generations the offspring of my trees will be found all over this area. Possibly, future generations will be able to enjoy these treats during a brisk fall walk in our local woodlands.

**\*Never eat fruit picked up off of the ground; the risk of serious illness from *E-Coli* contamination and various parasites is always high. Wildlife will almost always be eating the same fruits and berries that we like and their droppings can contaminate everything that touches the ground.**

## Wine Tasting Event

Saturday, April 21, 2007  
 4 PM to 7PM  
 at The Schooley's Mountain Lodge  
 54 Camp Washington Road  
 Long Valley, New Jersey

Mark your calendar. It is back! You will not want to miss this wine tasting event to be held at the Schooley's Mountain Lodge. This is a wonderful venue located in Schooley's Mountain County Park. Peapack Fine Wines has again graciously agreed to handle the wine selections and has arranged for multiple vendors to supply an assortment of wines for your tasting pleasure. Valley Restaurant will prepare our hors d'oeuvres and Susan Lembo the live music. It is not too late to purchase tickets and for you last minuters, so check our web site for updated information. [www.wtlt.org](http://www.wtlt.org)



## Presidents Report (continued from page 2)

- Tim Morris met with representatives from the State Beneficial Insect Laboratory to inspect a stand of Hemlock trees in the park. This was to consider the release of predatory beetles to counteract damage from the Woolly Adelgid, an invasive species from Asia.

### Mill Pond Park

- Chris and Caryl have continued to keep the trails clear in the park and also supervised two cleanup days this past year, utilizing volunteers and trustees.

### Land Research

#### Covalesky Property

- In May the Land Trust and Washington Township closed on the purchase of the Covalesky

property. This property consists of 89 wooded acres on Schooley's Mountain.

#### Boyle Property

- The New Jersey Conservation Foundation has purchased this 35 acre parcel in Middle Valley to save it from a development offer. The WTLT and the New Jersey Water Supply Authority will purchase the property from the NJCF in the near future.

#### Obituaries

- On June 17, 2006, Stan Andrews passed away. Stan was our only Trustee Emeritus and will be greatly missed. There is an obituary for Stan in our Spring Newsletter which can be read at [WTLT.org](http://WTLT.org).



Wine Tasting  
 \$45 Per Person

(all but \$15 is tax deductible, contributions are fully deductible)

- Yes, I plan to attend with \_\_\_\_\_ guests
- No, I am sorry to miss it, but would like to make this donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to: Washington Township Land Trust  
 P. O. Box 4  
 Long Valley, NJ 07853



Washington Township Land Trust  
 PO Box 4  
 Long Valley, NJ 07853-0004

Nonprofit Organization  
 PRSRT STD  
 U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
 Long Valley, NJ 07853  
 Permit No. 99