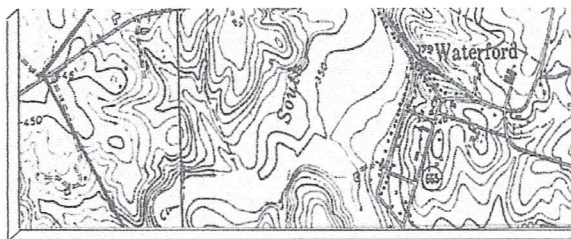


# farmland preservation report



*Policies & practices that protect farmland & urban edge agriculture  
Since 1990 ~ Deborah Bowers, Editor*

## Programs adjust to effects of downturn

**WEST CHESTER, PA** – Dramatic changes in the real estate market have affected farmland preservation on various levels, according to program directors and others interviewed by FPR in two of the nation's most progressive farmland preservation counties, one in Pennsylvania and one in New Jersey.

In Chester County, Pa., which ranks fifth in the nation for number of farm acres permanently preserved, some investment in platted lots is occurring, according to local experts but earthmoving is a rare sight.

"All of that for the most part has stopped," said Amy McKenna, a member of the Chester County Agricultural Land Preservation Board and an agent

with Country Properties of Unionville. According to McKenna, a decade of rampant growth in Chester is at an end. "Developers were purchasing and banking for future use. Those projects are not moving."

McKenna said the market is governed by what people want, and buyers she has worked with in recent years no longer want six-bedroom houses. They want energy efficiency and quality of life - time spent with family instead of a car, McKenna said, so they are seeking homes in town or close to work. McKenna said she noted a change in what customers wanted after Hurricane Katrina five years ago and the rise in gasoline prices.

*Continued on page 2*

## Md. court upholds MALPF subdivision rule

**ANNAPOLIS, MD** - The Maryland Court of Special Appeals Oct. 5 upheld a Washington County circuit court decision that part of a property under easement with the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF) could not be sold without approval of that board, even though the parcel was subdivided prior to easement sale. The program has always treated a farm as one property, even if comprised of multiple parcels.

The 264-acre property was placed under easement in 2002 and in 2005 the owner sold a 16-acre parcel without noting the easement restriction to the buyer and without obtaining approval. The transaction was fraught with errors: the buyer's title company failed to find the easement restriction because MALPF's title company had erred, recording the easement in Frederick County rather

than in Washington County; also, the buyer's title company failed to inform the buyer about an agricultural district agreement of 1999. Not until the owner sought approvals for developing the parcel did MALPF learn of the transaction and filed suit against both the seller and buyer. The state asked the circuit court of Washington County to declare the sale null and void and the buyer joined in the claim. The

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# Programs adjusting to new realities

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John Diament of Diament Construction had a somewhat different take on real estate activity in Chester.

"Large developers are looking for ground, but they are primarily focused on already approved and improved properties and there are enough of those still around because of foreclosure and lack of demand. They're being aggressive buying building lots in anticipation of a change in the market, because there are some real values right now."

Diament said that for the first time in his 33 years as a builder, he has seen the price of land drop. Diament agreed that "design parameters are changing" in the high end residential market and the size of new homes would see some trimming.

The change in the economic landscape is affecting government revenues. In Pennsylvania, property or real estate taxes are the only source of revenue for counties, so a slowdown in construction of new properties and vacated high-end homes means revenues are constricted.

The Chester farmland program has adjusted in

response to reduced program funds, but no farms have been lost, according to Bill Gladden, director of the county's Department of Land Preservation.

And, with development opportunities virtually absent, the preservation program is even more popular, Gladden said.

"Support for farmland preservation remains very strong at the township level. Owners of farmland are choosing to apply to the farmland preservation program at the highest levels ever. And the cost of preserving farmland is at levels which are approaching 10-year lows," Gladden said.

Circumstances for the applicants have been affected by the downturn as well, and that has brought about changes in how Chester's Agricultural Land Preservation Board approaches its mission.

Gladden indicated that properties that "presented themselves as having extreme time sensitivities" are getting priority attention in the program, but not at the cost of farms that are ranked higher. This month 15 farms that were ranked the highest of those applying in last year's round, are on the county commissioners' agenda.

"We fully intend to favorably act on all 15 and those are the top ranked farms," Gladden said, but due to funding constraints, no others will be added.

"We are acting more on an as-needed basis than in the past," Gladden said. "While the number of farms and acres preserved have decreased as a result of this adjustment, we have not lost any farmland owners via land conversion."

Chester County's funding commitment to its farmland preservation program has told the tale of how real estate crunch that was happening in 2006 took time to show itself in decreased revenues and decreased program funds. The program reported \$9.5 million in FPR's 2008 survey, \$11.8 in 2009 and \$5.3 in 2010.

Like most of his counterparts, Dan Kennedy, Burlington County, NJ farmland program director, sits down with farmers and real estate business owners nearly every week as he works to build on the county's 50,000-plus preserved farm acres.

"Housing demand is decreased in Burlington

## farmland preservation report

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owner filed a counter claim that the subdivision predated the encumbrance and therefore was legal.

The circuit court ruled the conveyance violated both the district agreement and the easement.

The circuit court also agreed with the state, and the appeals court upheld, against the owner, that the definition of a subdivision in MALPF regulations prevails over the definition in Article 66B, the state's land use law.

"With a reported decision, the Foundation's legal position is strongly reinforced," said program director Jim Conrad. "This clarifies the law and will reduce challenges to the program from those who subdivide without permission."

The ruling can be found at <http://mdcourts.gov/opinions/cosa/2010/1017s09.pdf>.

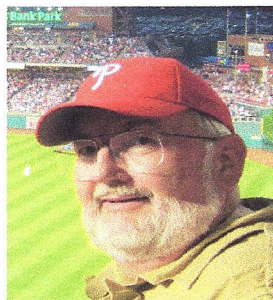
## The smart money is on preservation

BY MIKE MCGRATH  
Contributing Editor

I want to wind up this series of articles on "Big Thinking" for farmland preservation with some thoughts on the fiscal arguments for acting sooner, rather than later.

Trying to "grow" an agricultural easement program in a constrained fiscal environment is intimidating. But I believe that the circumstances today argue for this being the best time to preserve farmland in the last 50 years - and, maybe, for the next 50 years! Let me outline four reasons that the fiscal environment may be favorable. There are probably other reasons to act now, but these, in my opinion, are the biggest "money" reasons.

First, there are lower appraisals on farmland right now, meaning lower cost for easements. With a few exceptions, most agricultural areas with farmland preservation programs have seen dramatic drops in appraised values over the past three years. This drop mirrors the wider real estate market and



the economic stresses in the sector. In Delaware we have seen declines in value ranging from 40 to 60 percent from market highs three years ago. There are some real bargains out there relative to recent years. But these prices won't last forever. While I anticipate there will be a slow recovery in prices starting sometime in 2012, it will take a few years to clear developer inventories and see more traditional trends in value return. This means we have time to act, but we must move quickly. If we are to preserve 60 percent-plus of our remaining farmland, as suggested in an earlier article, we have about 10 years to get it done - at these prices.

The second "money" reason to preserve land now is the all-time low cost to borrow funds. Public sector bond rates are at record lows - at or below two percent! Buying any real estate interest with two-percent money is a smart move. In Delaware, over the past 60 years, the average rate of appreciation in land values has been close to seven percent annually. Reason #1 suggests that now is the time to buy. We should be borrowing all the money we can lay hands on right now. Legislators can be assured that buying an interest in ag easements appreciating at seven percent with bond money at two percent, makes them look very smart indeed!

Third reason to act now? Our sellers of ag easements are eager and competitive. In a prior article I argued strongly for creating a system of buying ag easements that encouraged discounting by sellers. Even with the lower appraisals in Delaware we saw discounts in our last round of easement purchases that averaged 66 percent below market value! Sellers of ag easements are aware of the same trends I am discussing and are influenced heavily by favorable tax rules and the time value of money. Many farm owners are aware that developers and speculators have completely left the real estate market. They know it may be many years before there are lucrative offers out there again for their land. In addition, returns on farming have been pretty good here lately in Delaware. This combination of factors has tilted many towards preservation. In a competitive program they know they have to discount - and they are!

*Continued on page 7*



## news briefs

### New California law looks to cut cost of Williamson Act contracts

SACRAMENTO, CA - A bill championed by the California Farm Bureau Federation that enables counties to trim Williamson Act costs was signed by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger Sept. 27. The legislature passed the bill, AB 2530, without opposition.

Under the new law, counties will have the option of signing new Williamson Act contracts that end two years sooner and cut a landowner's tax break by 10 percent. The arrangement will allow a cost savings to the county and to the state when, and if, the state reimburses the county for the foregone revenues. The option, however, will only kick in when a county has not been reimbursed for at least half of its foregone revenues under the Williamson Act.

The legislation was sponsored by Assemblyman Jim Nielsen.

The state budget, just passed this month and three months late, provides \$10 million for Williamson Act reimbursements to counties, less than one-third of the 2008 appropriation for the program. In 2009, nothing was budgeted and counties shouldered the burden, but many warned the state they might not be able to continue the expense.

The Williamson Act, now in its 45th year, taxes farmland based on the lowest of three measures - its agricultural income, its acquisition value under Proposition 13 or its market value. Farmers who enroll elect either a 10-year or 20-year restriction on development in exchange for the lower tax rate. The program currently protects 16.5 million acres.

Proposition 13, a voter initiative passed in 1978, limits property taxation to no more than one percent above a property's full cash value.

### Ohio makes offers on 6,200 acres; bond money runs two more years

REYNOLDSBURG, OH - Ohio's Agricultural Easement Purchase Program announced Sept. 28 offers to preserve 6,200 acres on 37 farms, but money through the Clean Ohio bond approved by voters in 2008, has two more years to run before new funds will be needed. The program will have \$6.25 million this fiscal year and in 2012, according to program director

Kristen Jenson. A renewed funding stream has a good chance of coming about, she said.

"The Clean Ohio fund is a bipartisan issue, so it has support not only from the current administration but from the entire legislature. It was approved by voters overwhelmingly in all 88 counties."

Jenson said the next bond issue will be promoted by nonprofit stakeholder organizations urging support for conservation programs.

Last May, 203 farms applied to sell easements to the program, but the program was only able to make offers to 37 farms.

"This year we were able to provide offers to about 18 percent of our applicants, and that's an increase from the years 2002 to 2008, where we were only able to make offers to about nine percent. With the Clean Ohio Fund renewal [in 2008], we are actually able to provide more funding each year and therefore provide a greater number of offers."

Going to voters again "is an option... it really is a grassroots effort," she said.

Since the program began purchasing easements in 2002, it has preserved 33,460 acres in 33 counties. The department's donation program has preserved 6,310 acres, and its Tobacco Easement Program has preserved 2,940 acres, for a total of 42,710 acres.

### North Carolina program saves acres, helps boost local ag economies

RALEIGH, NC - The North Carolina Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation (ADFP) Trust Fund awarded \$2.3 million in grants this year that will help purchase agricultural conservation easements on 1,210 acres, help develop farmland protection plans, and help develop facilities producers can use for processing. The NC legislature appropriated \$2 million to the program earlier this year.

One grant to the Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project of \$7,500 will be used to organize a farmer-focused conference on how to develop marketing plans for local food products. Another grant of \$65,000 went to the Natural Capital Investment Fund to help buy grain-storage bins for minority and beginning farmers in Eastern North Carolina.

North Carolina's Eastern Region, an economic development agency, received \$100,000 to create farmland protection plans for four counties. The work will be similar to that carried out at Ft. Bragg to both boost agricultural profitability and steer residential development potential away from areas used for



military training operations. North Carolina's Eastern Region is a 13-county partnership promoting economic development.

## IRS letter ruling may lay aside Maryland program's perpetuity issue

**ANNAPOLIS, MD** - An IRS private letter ruling or written determination addressed to the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation in August could signal an end to the question of whether MALPF easements guarantee perpetuity, as required by law, for those claiming charitable deductions in bargain sales.

In two cases earlier this year, in Harford and in Baltimore counties, the IRS challenged charitable deduction claims from easement sellers. The challenges were eventually withdrawn following an amicus request filed by MALPF for the Harford case. The IRS claimed that an amendment to program law in 2004 declaring the program's easements were in perpetuity, in effect confirmed that easements prior to that time were not.

The letter states that the amendment to the Maryland law terminating the perpetuity clause, "is not inconsistent with the perpetuity requirements for a qualified conservation contribution."

MALPF easements had contained an "escape clause" that allowed making a case for termination after 25 years. The 2004 amendment eliminated the clause.

According to program director Jim Conrad, while the IRS doesn't give assurances that MALPF easements won't be challenged again, "they've already withdrawn twice. If there's another challenge, we will just file another friend of the court brief."

## FRPP final rule publication expected soon; states to receive FY '11 allocations

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** - The final rule for the Farm and Ranchland Protection Program (FRPP) is due to be published soon, said FRPP program manager Mark Rose on Oct. 21, and notice of allocations to states will be sent the week of Oct. 25, he said.

Rose said a lot of the concerns of the states were addressed in the final rule. "We've recognized the needs within the statute. Their comments and suggestions were considered and we looked at what Congress intended. Some of the comments couldn't be addressed," he said.

Without passage of the ag appropriations bill that contains \$160 million for FRPP, USDA is operating under a continuing resolution through Dec. 3, meaning last year's amount of \$150 million is the working budget.

## state briefs

**In West Virginia...** The Berkeley County Farmland Protection program holds 30 easements on 2,900 acres and has a new program director, Robert White. White is the program's second director, following Greg Carnill. White will oversee five upcoming settlements that will add 639 acres to the program tally.

**In North Carolina...** Seven land trusts in North Carolina have earned accreditation from the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, an independent agency of the Land Trust Alliance. Three of those gained the recognition within the last few months.

**In Wisconsin...** Another 21,867 acres have been identified for Agricultural Enterprise Areas (AEA) in the state's Working Lands Program. The next application period is underway to add an additional 250,000 acres to the program this year. Once an area is designated as an AEA, eligible farmers owning land within the AEA may enter into a farmland preservation agreement. This enables the landowners to receive tax credits in exchange for keeping their farm in agricultural use for at least 15 years. Official designation of the AEAs will take effect on Jan. 1 after being ratified by DATCP this fall.

**In New York...** The Town of Ulysses will consider a farmland protection strategy plan this month put together by a private consultant

and Cornell Extension. **In New Jersey ...** The SADC completed its draft regulations that would establish an agricultural management practice (AMP) -- or standards -- for eligibility for right-to-farm protection for the on-farm generation of solar energy. A written comment period ended Oct. 8. Last Jan., a law became effective that will allow landowners to install solar, wind or biomass energy generation systems on farms. The law identifies allowable limits and criteria for these activities on preserved farms, and for qualifying for farmland assessment and right-to-farm protection on both preserved and non-preserved farms.

**In Maryland ...** Baltimore County recently opened its new Baltimore County Center for Maryland Agriculture. The \$10 million, 14,200 square-foot facility includes offices for FSA, NRCS, Baltimore Co. Soil Conservation District, Cooperative Extension, as well as office space for the county's five land trusts to share. Called the Agriculture Center, the facility includes 149 acres and has already begun projects including a multi-year rotational grazing and forage research and demonstration project. An open house will be held Nov. 6.

**In Michigan...** Journalist and food system program founder Patty Cantrell has left the Michigan Land Use Institute to strike out as a food system developer. She founded MLUI's Food and Farming Program and has specialized in local food economics over the last decade.



*Burlington, continued from page 2*

County but the amount of decrease depends on what housing type you are talking about," Kennedy said. "The smaller the unit, the higher the density and the more walkable and accessible to public transportation, the better that sector of housing is fairing in Burlington County."

Kennedy thinks the county's rural zoning of 1:3 and up will show some effectiveness now that high-end housing's bubble has burst.

"I personally believe that this is the portion of the housing market hardest hit -- new and existing residential-- and the last to come back...if it ever does. Some would argue that this portion of the housing market was fueled by unhealthy lending practices, and if this nation has the capacity to learn from its mistakes, may be a architectural blip in history. I think this is what owners of farmland zoned at 10 acre minimum lots fear, which is why farmland preservation is still an option on the table."

TDR sales are a noted economic indicator in Burlington. Kennedy pointed out slow sales and a nose-dive in prices paid, from about \$30,000 per one-quarter credit to \$17,000, which may be the new low, he said. The Pinelands Purchase of Development Credit (PDC) Program is "working at a snail's pace." Chesterfield Township's TDR program is just as slow, but prices have not dropped by as much, Kennedy said.

Acres preserved in Burlington through TDR and PDR include 13 blocks of greater than 1,000 acres each, one of those nearly 10,000 acres. "A bottom line is that farmland is still appraising in the farm belt with a highest, best use of residential development and yielding easement values high enough to get deals done. Most landowners understand the market very well. Some are in positions that farmland preservation can help them out of," he said, including large platted tracts developers have walked away from, and those in estate status.

"What do those landowners do? So our goals haven't changed and I think we've effectively argued that even though development pressure is less today the goals remain the same and if we can reach those goals cheaper, with today's values being 30-40% lower than a few years back, then all the better. The strategy and pitch [are] different but the goals are the same. Making landowners feel like we are getting their land on the cheap is not an effective pitch. That is the pitch to the elected officials. That is the reality."

"What once was robust demand for housing in rural areas - mainly large houses on large lots- is no longer the case," said Mark Remsa, director of Economic Development & Regional Planning for Burlington County. He pointed out a number of factors, including aging baby boomers, plummeting home values, loss of jobs and fear of job loss, are causing people to desire more modest homes. He added another local factor. "I hear of a lot of complaints that property taxes in these types of rural areas have risen sharply."

## tom daniels

# Look for partners in preservation

BY TOM DANIELS  
Senior Contributing Editor

When the funding gets tough, the tough go looking for partners to help preserve farmland. In other words,



farmland preservation administrators should not be shy about proposing new partnership arrangements with partners from the public or private sectors. But partnerships are more than just a melding of money. They can have pitfalls as well as preservation benefits. So, it is important to structure a partnership to clarify each partner's role and financial obligation.

The first question to ask before entering into a joint preservation deal is: How does my organization benefit and how do other organizations benefit from the partnership? Obviously, mutual benefit can create a win-win situation; but it is also prudent to ask: Is this the best arrangement for the landowner? And does the landowner have concerns about working with more than one preservation organization?

The following are partner relationships that can succeed when the agreements clearly spell out what each partner is expected to do:

### 1. Cooperative Agreement.

This is a formal document for a long-term partnership in which the organizations agree to share information about potential land



preservation projects and to jointly preserve land. This type of agreement is most common between a local government and a land trust. The particulars of each joint preservation project must still be worked out.

2. *Advanced Acquisition Agreement.* A local government and a land trust can enter into an agreement in which the local government asks the land trust to acquire a conservation easement on a specific property and in return the local government agrees to pay the land trust for the easement acquisition cost and related expenses by a certain date. The land trust will assign the easement to the local government. An advanced acquisition agreement is used when the local government cannot move fast enough to preserve a specific farm, but the land trust can.

3. *Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).* For a joint land preservation deal, the MOU spells out who is responsible for how much funding and when, and who is responsible for monitoring and enforcing the conservation easement. An MOU can also be used between a local government and a land trust to secure an option to purchase a conservation easement at some future date and at a certain price agreed upon by the landowner and the two preservation organizations.

4. *Incentive Partnership.* The Lancaster County Agricultural Preserve Board gives preference to farmland preservation deals in those townships where the township government is contributing at least \$30,000 to the deal. Another example is in Chester County, Pa., which created a specific program for incentive funding.

The largest source of partner funding right now is probably the federal Farm and Ranchland Protection Program. But the program faces a funding challenge in the 2012 Farm Bill, given the enormous size of the federal budget deficit.

The benefits of partnerships are potentially very broad: a)

preservation of key properties in a timely manner; b) maintaining preservation momentum in the face of budget cuts; c) wider support for farmland preservation arising from a public-private partnership; and d) a positive experience in doing a joint preservation deal can set the stage for more joint projects.

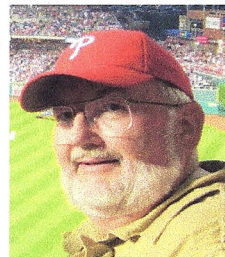
The possible downsides are: a) turf battles—struggles over who gets credit for the deal and who is responsible for monitoring and enforcing the conservation easement; b) one or more partners pulling out of a deal; and c) a deal that benefits one organization much more than another and leaves a feeling that one of the organizations “got used.”

A well-crafted agreement can help minimize any downsides of your joint easement deals and keep farmland preservation in the public eye. Because all politics is local, local preservation partnerships will be part of the political landscape, because stretching dollars is something all elected officials like to see.

## mike mcgrath

*continued from page 3*

While some of us may cringe at buying easements at these steep discounts, those of us serious about



the urgency of preserving our vanishing landscape should steel our nerves and plunge ahead. Finally, the biggest “money” reason to preserve farmland now is the impact it has on lowering the costs of future government capital and operating expenses. Really, this one is a two-way affair - more preservation and better urban planning. Sprawl (using more and more land for the same increment of

growth) is costing the U.S. billions every year - and this runaway expense has been growing for 30 years or more. There are many approaches to controlling sprawl but ultimately land has to be “protected” from urban development or it will eventually be converted from open space to urban uses.

Enter farmland preservation. A few years ago, with the help of economists at the American Farmland Trust, Delaware took a look at the situation. What we found was dramatic. From 1984 to 2004 the amount of land used for each increment of urban growth had quadrupled to nearly two acres for every new dwelling unit. This included all urban land uses - residential, commercial, industrial, institutional. What happened in the fiscal arena? Just as dramatically, the per capita capital expenses (adjusted for inflation) also quadrupled! In sprawl-related operating expenses, like school bus transportation, the impact was even more dramatic, with per pupil costs (adjusted for inflation) going up by five times!! These kinds of numbers should scare legislators into action. Almost every state is feeling the real impact of sprawl-related costs. These costs are straining budgets, putting projects behind schedule and forcing tax burdens to increase. All these effects are felt politically and will cause many incumbents to lose their jobs. This gets the attention of politicians!

In the end the American public - the voters in your jurisdiction - will decide where farmland preservation is headed. I hope I’ve laid out some serious reasons why we should be pushing for a much larger effort to protect America’s farms, ranches and forests. I know many of you care deeply about this cause that will have such a dramatic effect on generations of Americans. I believe many of our fellow Americans care, too, and will respond to a clarion call for action. Maybe it’s time to blow the trumpet!



## back page briefs

### EPA, HUD announce grants for sustainable development

WASHINGTON, D.C. - HUD announced Oct. 14 nearly \$100 million in grants in the Sustainable Communities and Regional Planning Grant Program. The new program assists localities in creating and implementing regional plans



that integrate affordable housing, economic development, land use and transportation to build livable, sustainable communities. The program is part of the Partnership for Sustainable Communities. Both EPA and DOT helped develop the program and reviewed applications. In a related announcement, the EPA awarded technical assistance grants to eight communities for sustainable growth including historic preservation and downtown revitalization.

### SW Michigan Land Conservancy gets LTA national award

HARTFORD, CT - The Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy received the National Land Trust Excellence Award Oct. 3 from Land Trust Alliance president Rand Wentworth. The award



Award ceremony at Rally

was presented at the organization's annual Rally in Hartford. The Conservancy created an innovative model for prioritization that incorporates broad stakeholder involvement and geographic information systems analysis to identify areas with critical conservation values for protection and management. Stakeholders involved included federal and state agencies, county officials, conservation districts, township and city officials, community foundations, private conservation organizations, universities, nature centers, community leaders, and landowners.

The Land Trust Alliance recog-

nized the success of this model and provided a Strategic Conservation Planning grant to prioritize conservation actions in and around the 25,000-acre Barry State Game Area. Implementation began immediately as a private family foundation, engaged in the planning process, stepped forward to make its core mission be the protection and restoration of priority lands. A \$1 million North American Wetland Conservation Act grant was awarded.

### NJ judge approves public wells on protected farms

WASHINGTON TWP., NJ - A New Jersey superior court judge ruled Oct. 2 that a municipal utility can condemn part of a farm in a Morris County Agricultural Development Area to construct public wells. While the acreage affected was less than one acre, the ADA involvement triggered a review by the State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC).

Last July SADC concluded the plans of the Washington Township Municipal Utility Authority "would cause unreasonably adverse effects upon the Agricultural Development Area (ADA) and State agricultural preservation and development policies." The SADC and the Morris County Agriculture Development Board urged the utility to find alternative sites for the wells. Another farm property was also affected.

According to the utility, additional water supply was needed to correct inadequate water services in the community of Schooley's Mountain. Robert Smith, the owner of the property affected by the judge's decision, opposed the wells. He indicated in testimony he intends to preserve his farm despite the condemnation.

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## conferences

**Nov. 1-3, Fairlee, VT:** *Women in Sustainable Agriculture* conference. See <http://www.uvm.edu/wagn/?Page=conference/index.html&SM=conference/sub-menu.html>.

**Nov. 11 - 13, Albany, NY:** *It Takes A Region 2010 ~ A Working Conference to Build Our Northeast Food System*, the conference of the Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group. Registration thru Oct. 22 @ \$140, after \$180; includes meals. See <http://www.ittakesaregion.org/background.html>.

**Nov. 18, Columbus, OH:** 11th Annual Ohio Farmland Preservation Summit will be held at Ohio State University's Columbus campus. The theme is "*Setting the Agenda: The Next Decade of Farmland Preservation in Ohio*." Register for \$40 at [www.agri.ohio.gov/farmland](http://www.agri.ohio.gov/farmland) or call 614-728-6210. Speakers will present on a variety of topics, including the national and state perspectives on farmland preservation. The annual summit is the largest statewide farmland preservation gathering in the nation, according to a press release.

**Nov. 23, Allentown, PA:** *Intensive Training in Organic Vegetable Production for Educators & Service Providers*, sponsored by PennState Cooperative Extension at the Lehigh County Ag Center. Contact Tianna DuPont at [attdupont@psu.edu](mailto:attdupont@psu.edu).

**Feb. 3-5, 2011, State College, PA:** *Farming for the Future*, annual conference of the Pa. Association for Sustainable Agriculture. See <http://www.pasafarming.org/our-work/farming-for-the-future-conference>.

**May 19-21, 2011, Harrisburg, PA:** *Pennsylvania Land Conservation Conference*, sponsored by Pa. Land Trust Assn. Proposals due by Nov. 1. See [http://conserveand.org/conferences/10/request\\_for\\_proposals](http://conserveand.org/conferences/10/request_for_proposals).