

Lehigh Valley Greenways Conservation Landscape SUCCESS STORY

By: Heritage Conservancy,
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Jacobsburg Blue Mountain Landowner Outreach 2013

SUMMARY

Bushkill Township, with assistance from Heritage Conservancy and other partners, has spent several years preserving land and building a trail along the Sobers Run corridor in order to connect Jacobsburg State Park to the Blue Mountains. Jacobsburg, while containing one of the largest areas of contiguous woodlands in the Lehigh Valley, is an island ecology which would worsen upon further development of the area. Sobers Run corridor offers the most direct and intact ecological connection between Jacobsburg and the Blue Mountains. Through education and outreach programs, landowner workshops, collaboration with funding with partners, and landowner negotiations Heritage Conservancy and Bushkill Township continue to protect this critical linkage.



CHALLENGE

The establishment of greenways and trails is seen as a high priority by many residents in Bushkill Township and surrounding region, however the portion of the Jacobsburg and Blue Mountain connection north of State Route 512 has proven to be a challenge. Many landowners located along the proposed greenway and trail route greatly oppose it for many different reasons. In some cases the proposed trail would pass right by a landowners' house and they were concerned about their privacy and the potential of increased crime along the trail. There was also a concern that the greenway/trail would reduce home values. There was a need to further educate the landowners along the proposed trail route about the positive aspects of trails and if needed develop an alternative trail route.

FUNDING

Grant Award:

\$5,000.00

Match:

\$4,998.00

Total Project Cost:

\$9,998.00

PARTNERSHIP IS KEY

Bushkill Twp: \$4,283



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SOLUTION

Heritage Conservancy and Bushkill Township provided a series of landowner workshops to address the concerns of landowners along the proposed Bushkill Trail by informing them of the positive aspects of greenways and trail in their community. We also met with landowners on an individual basis to discuss land conservation options.

RESULTS

Through the process of landowner outreach we were able to convince some of the property owners to allow the trail and greenway to incorporate their land but still a few key landowners resisted. We ultimately had to develop an alternative trail route and we are currently in the process of negotiating with a new set of landowners that are very receptive to the extension of the greenway and Bushkill Trail in order to connect Jacobsburg State Park to the Blue Mountains. This alternate route will support the trail connect to the 90 acres Ballas Township Park and potentially provide a safer place for trail users to cross State Route 512. Overall the total number of acres preserved by Bushkill Township along the greenway is 630 acres.

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