



# Land Preservation

Buckingham Township September 2025

ENSURING OUR PAST HAS A FUTURE





# What is Land Preservation and Why it Matters

Land preservation is the protection of natural areas, farmland, and open spaces from development. For more than 325 years, Buckingham Township has been celebrated for its scenic landscapes, fertile farmland, and historic villages. In recent decades, rising development pressures have contrasted with residents' strong commitment to preserving Buckingham's rural character by putting conservation easements on farmland and open space.

- ✔ **Prevents Overdevelopment**  
Keeps farmland intact, deters overbuilding.
- ✔ **Supports Local Agriculture**  
Protects soil, crops, and rural economy.
- ✔ **Stormwater Management**  
Manages rainfall & reduces flooding through natural land cover.
- ✔ **Beautiful views**  
Preserved views enrich life experiences.





# Frequently Asked Questions

## 01 What is a “Conservation Easement”?

A conservation easement is a voluntary agreement by a landowner to sell the development rights of a property while still maintaining ownership. The conservation easement is recorded with the Recorder of Deeds in Doylestown, thereby giving notice to all future owners of the restrictions on the use of the property.

## 02 How is the value of my development rights determined?

The Township and you negotiate a sale price, just like any other sale, and a binding agreement is entered into based on the agreed upon easement price. However, by law the Township is not allowed to pay more than the appraised value of what it is buying. So the Township has an appraiser evaluate the fair market value of your property as it is presently and the value of your property after the easement. If the difference between those values is equal to or greater than the negotiated price, then the Township may proceed with the purchase. If the appraised value is less than the negotiated price, then you have the option to accept that lower price or cancel the sale.

## 03 Do I still own the land if I sell an easement to the township?

Yes, you will still own your land. A conservation easement does restrict your use of the property to agricultural uses such as growing crops, fruits, vegetables, nursery stock, keeping livestock, including horses, using the land for timber and wood products and aquatic plants and animals, and keeping fields fallow. The easement also allows for residential uses for those owning or managing the property.





## **04 Do I have the right to build on my property for personal and/or business use in the future?**

You may be limited in your ability to build additional dwellings or structures that are not considered essential for farming. The location of any building on the property for personal purposes will be restricted based on a predetermined building envelope that is identified during easement negotiations. All future building on the property is subject to township zoning regulations and the terms of the conservation easement.

## **05 Will the public have the right to use my property?**

No. A conservation easement does not grant public access to your property. The public receives the benefits of scenic beauty, fresh farm products and maintaining an important piece of our rural heritage.

## **06 What are the Township's rights?**

The township reserves the right to inspect the property to ensure that the owner complies with the terms of the conservation easement. The conservation easement gives the township the authority to enforce the terms of the easement if the conditions of the easement are violated.

## **07 For resale purposes, does a conservation easement affect the value of my property?**

The resale value of your property may be affected by the conservation easement as your property no longer retains its development value sold off through the sale of the conservation easement. The conservation easement may make your property more attractive to potential buyers not interested in development as the school district taxes on the property are frozen at the time of the conservation easement being sold and the property is taxed at its value as a farm, not as a potential housing tract, office building or shopping center.

# **FAQ's Part 2**





# FAQ's Part 3

## **08 How do I apply for a conservation easement?**

The township will provide an application upon request. Filing an application for consideration is not binding.

## **09 What factors determine if my property is eligible for a conservation easement?**

Factors for consideration of a conservation easement include but are not limited to (a) agricultural value, (b) scenic, historic and natural resource value, (c) location near other preserved properties and (d) development value. Members of the Agricultural and Open Space Preservation Committee will walk the property to determine if the township will move forward with making an offer for the purchase of the conservation easement. A copy of the evaluation form is available upon request.

Any recommendation by the committee must ultimately be approved by the Township Board of Supervisors.

## **10 Do I have to preserve my entire property?**

No, you are not obligated to sell a conservation easement for your entire property. Each property and the circumstances of every property owner are unique and the township works with the property owner to accommodate the specific set of circumstances within the parameters of the preservation program.

## **11 Am I required to accept the township's offer to purchase the easement?**

No, a conservation easement is a completely voluntary transaction.







Land preservation starts with a property owner's decision to protect their land for future generations

# How Land Preservation Happens



## Application

Property owners express interest through a formal application.



## Review Process

The township reviews eligibility by going on sight to the property & uses a dedicated rating system.



## Easement Agreement

Once the land owner and the township come to an agreement of the price, an Agreement of Sale is drawn up for the landowner to sign. The draft conservation easement is part of the Agreement of Sale. Once the township and land owner agree upon a price, an appraisal is ordered.



# Over 6,400 Acres of Land Preserved

Easements purchased by Bucks County: 728 acres

Easements purchased by Buckingham Township: 2352 acres

Easements purchased by Buckingham township and Bucks County jointly: 1162 acres

Land Gifted to Buckingham Township: 72 acres

Other Sources: Heritage Conservancy / Natural Lands Trust /Former Buckingham Civic Association/  
Concourse d'Elegance/ open space within developments/ Township Parks and Sprayfields





# The Wigand Property Donation

***23 acres in Buckingham Township***

Along Carversville Road, this land was subdivided into five buildable parcels.

***All of them were donated by the owner under one easement a true win for conservation.***

With about 12 acres of woodlands and six acres of rolling farm fields, this property adds to the rural character of the area and scenic views within the Paunacussing Creek Watershed.

Heritage Conservancy co-holds the easement with Buckingham Township.



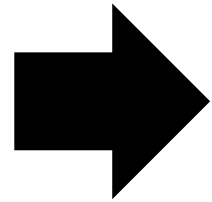
**HERITAGE  
CONSERVANCY**



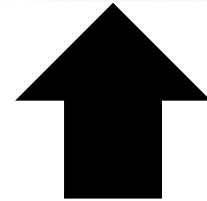


# Bonds and Property Tax

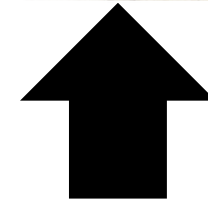
Township  
\$0.03



Bucks County  
\$0.17



School District  
\$0.80



## Buckingham Bonds

1995- We passed a \$4 Million Dollar Bond

1999-We passed a \$9.5 Million Dollar Bond

2008-We passed a \$20 Million Dollar Bond 82% voter approval rating!





# Agricultural and Open Space Preservation Committee

The Buckingham Township Agricultural and Open Space Preservation Committee, made up of residents and farmers, works to protect farmland, open space, and natural resources. The Committee advises the Board of Supervisors on preservation efforts, easements, and development rights, while also creating rules to guide its work.

## Date of first Committee Meeting

December 5<sup>th</sup>, 1996

## Board of Supervisors

Ray Stepnoski

Janet French

Henry Rowan

## Volunteer Members

Leonard Crooke

Margaret Ritchie

Thomas M. Trycieki

Joan Garb

Jim Lyons

Maggie Rash

W. Roy Kolb



Thomas Trycieki, George Bush, &  
Leonard Crooke

## Establishing Preservation Criteria

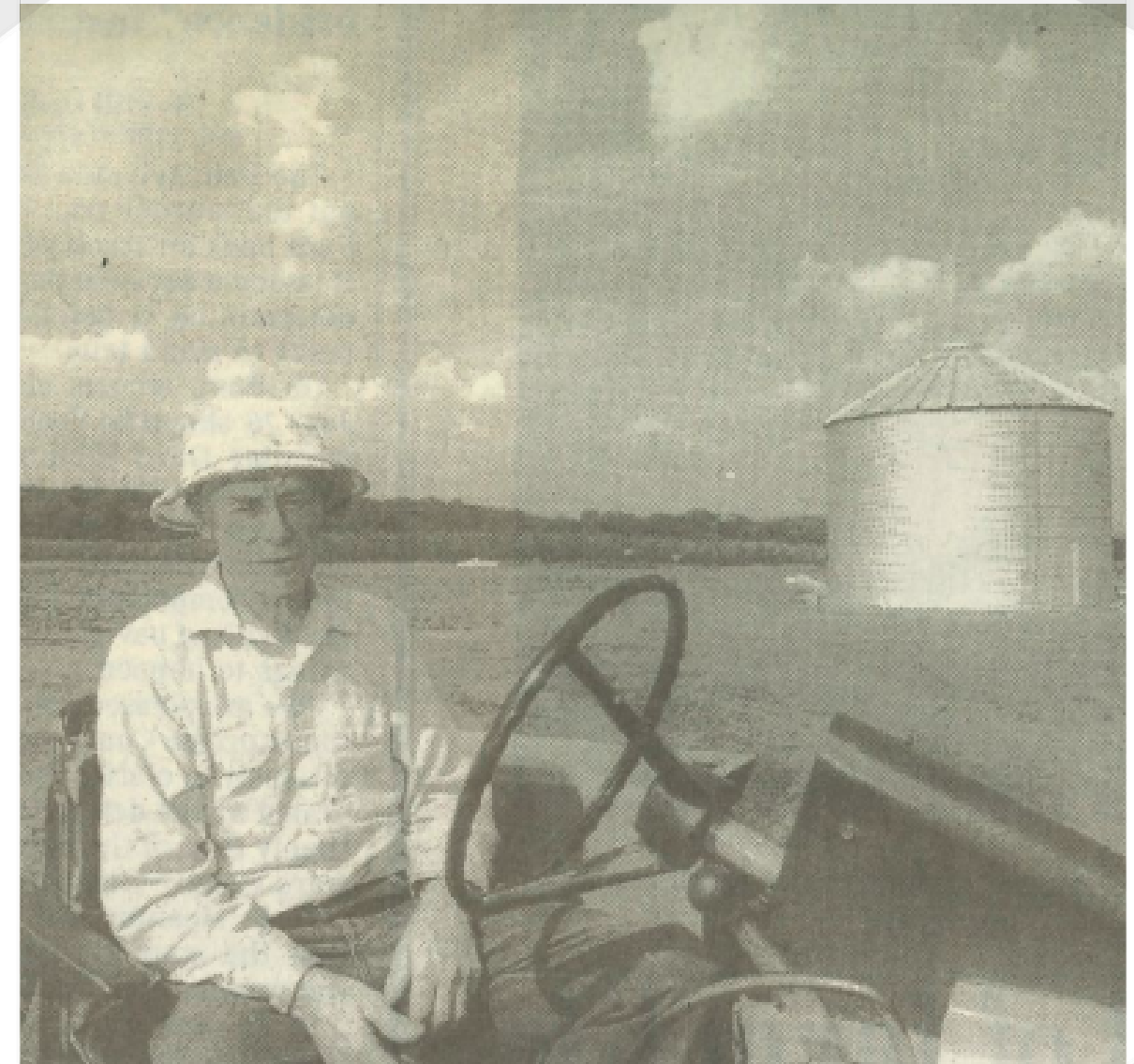
- Location & site factors
- Proximity to other preserved parcels
- Historic qualities
- Rural character
- Scenic value
- Contribution of farming to the community
- Emergency purchase needs





# Slack Farm A Window to Buckingham's Past

In August 1996, ***Buckingham Township finalized its first farmland conservation easement purchased solely by the township***, protecting the 37-acre Fred Slack Farm in Forest Grove. This was a milestone while seven other Buckingham farms had already been preserved through county and state programs, the Slack Farm was the first preserved entirely with township funds. For over 56 years, Fred Slack had worked the same land his father once farmed, producing tomatoes, corn, hay, pumpkins, and strawberries for local markets and canneries. While many neighboring farms were sold for development, the Slack family chose preservation, ensuring their land would remain farmland forever. The township, using voter-approved bond funds and supported by local leadership, secured the easement, demonstrating Buckingham's long-term commitment to protecting agriculture and open space for future generations.



*Fred Slack*





# Preservation in Action

## Why We Preserved (Then)

Faced with illness and the chance to sell, preservation was the only way to keep the farm. This allowed us to buy out family shares, secure ownership, and protect land from development.

## What It Gave Us (Then & Now)

Financial stability to continue farming.

Safeguarded a family legacy dating back to 1926.

Guaranteed the land would remain open space and farmland.

## Preservation Today

Keeps the farm connected to the community through pick-your-own crops and the market.

Provides fresh food, family experiences, and open space that benefit Buckingham.

Ensures the farm remains a local landmark and heritage site.

**Now in our 3rd generation, with the 4th on the horizon,  
*Excited to celebrate 100 years in 2026.***



**100%  
NON-GMO  
Grower**



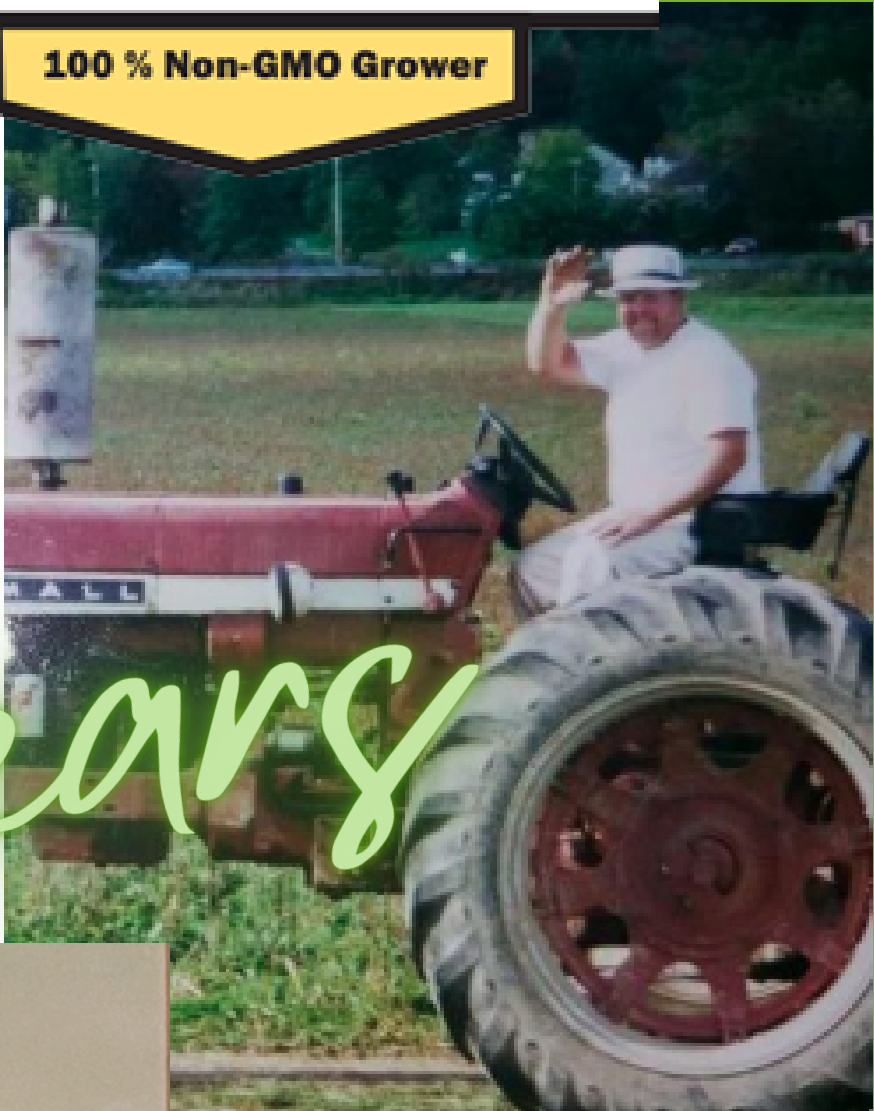






# NONE SUCH FARM & MARKET

100 % Non-GMO Grower



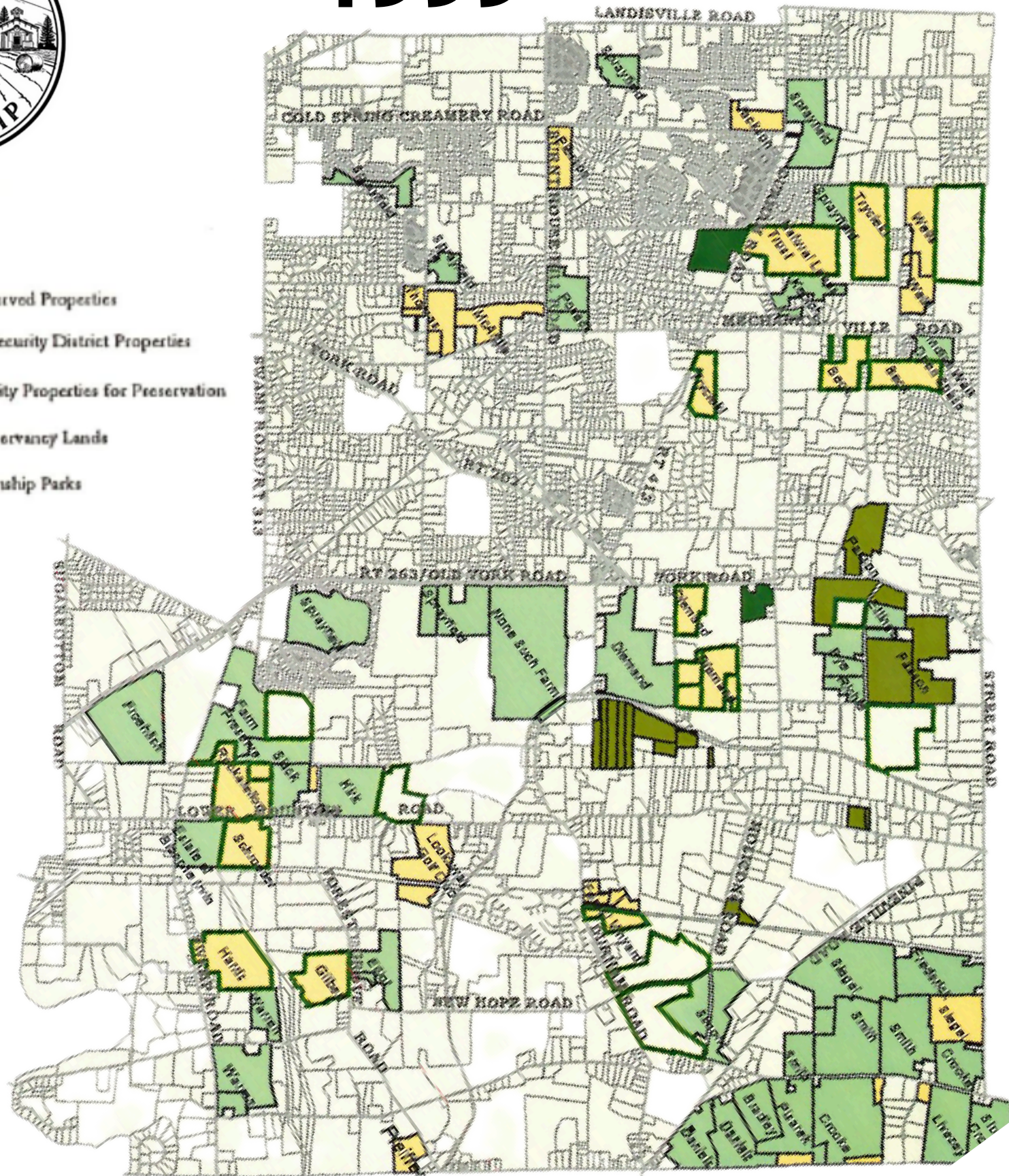




1999

Legend

- Preserved Properties
- Ag Security District Properties
- Priority Properties for Preservation
- Conservancy Lands
- Township Parks



2025

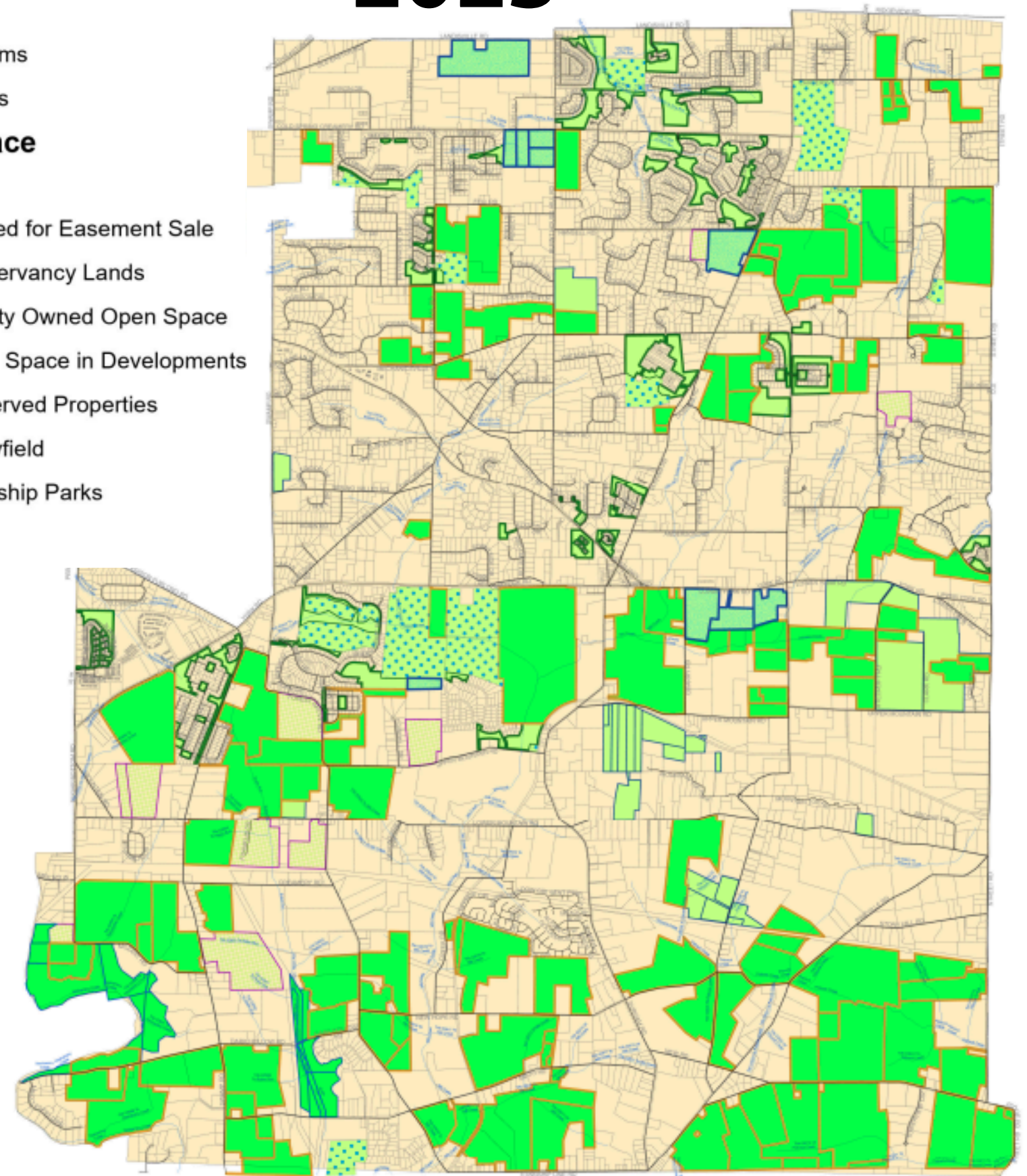
Legend

- Streams
- Roads

Open Space

Type

- Applied for Easement Sale
- Conservancy Lands
- County Owned Open Space
- Open Space in Developments
- Preserved Properties
- Sprayfield
- Township Parks



Mapping Buckingham's Preservation Story





# Farm Markets & Roadside Stands serving Buckingham Residents



**Maximucks Farm and Garden**  
**5793 Long Lane Rd, Buckingham, PA 18902**

**McArdle's Holiday Farm**  
**4316 Mechanicsville Road**  
**Mechanicsville, PA 18934**

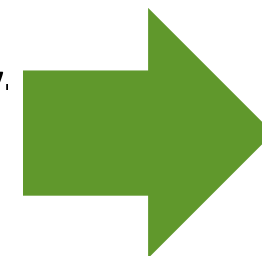


**Thomas M. Trycieki Farm**  
**Mechanicsville, PA 18934**

**Serwell Farms**  
**Buckingham, PA**



**List of Farms, Agribusinesses,**  
**Pick Your Owns, CSAs**





# This Presentation is Dedicated to:



**George M. Bush, Esq.**  
25 years as Township Solicitor



**Janet French**  
Former Board of Supervisor Instrumental in preserving  
Buckingham's legacy

**Jon Ericson Yerkes**  
February 17, 55- March 3, 2025  
None Such Farms



**To the Board of Supervisors**

**Maggie Rash • Jon Forest • Paul Calderaio**

**For their leadership and commitment to preservation.**

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