

# **NEWS RELEASE**

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**From the Brodhead Watershed Association**

***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

Saturday, February 08, 2020

## **A "ForEvergreen" home for the BWA and PHLT on the historic Brodhead Creek**

On July 15, Stroud Township Supervisors, Ed Cramer, Daryl Epply and Jim Decker, approved a 25-year renewable lease granting BWA and its partner Pocono Heritage Land Trust (PHLT) the use of the former Evergreen Golf Club building on Cherry Valley Lane in Analomink. The site will serve as a permanent base for offices, storage, displays, educational events and meetings.

The lease is the latest step in the development of a public-private stewardship. In May of 2013, Stroud Township acquired the building as part of its purchase of the 42-acre former golf course with Open Space funds, renaming the site ForEvergreen Nature Preserve.

BWA Board member Patricia Kennedy explained, "A ForEvergreen project planning team with members from both BWA and PHLT has been working with the township since early 2013 to make the project a reality."

According to Stroud Township Supervisor Ed Cramer, "the purchase was made with the intention of creating a nature preserve on this unique creek side parcel. It made sense to us to invite the BWA and the PHLT, as two of the region's longstanding, well-regarded, non-profit conservation organizations, to join Stroud as stewards of the site."

Supervisor Daryl Epply said, "BWA and PHLT can occupy the building and assist the township in fundraising for the building's renovation and with expertise in the conversion of the grounds from a golf course to a public nature preserve."

The township has already improved the parking area. The grounds are open on a limited basis for passive public uses such as walking and running on the trails and catch and release fishing in the creek.

In addition to support from the township and from organization members and supporters, the partners have already secured several grants for the project. In June 2013, author Dave Morine, a retired acquisitions specialist from the Nature Conservancy (TNC), helped the partners find the first "seed" money. The ForEvergreen Nature Preserve Project was awarded a \$25,000 grant by internationally renowned conservationist, Dan

Lufkin, on behalf of the Peter Jay Sharp Foundation. The grant requires a dollar-for-dollar match.

In April, 2014, the Pennsylvania Environmental Council awarded BWA a \$5000 Pocono Forest and Waters Conservation Landscape Mini-Grant. Lori Colgan, a PHLT Board member and plant biologist, administering the grant, said, "The grant is being used to design and install a rain garden and take the first steps to restore the preserve's habitat with native plants. We also plan to have an Earth Day celebration in 2015 to reach out to the community." Colgan praised the township for its financial and in-kind support of restoration efforts.

Don Miller and Don Baylor, both members of the planning team and of the local chapter of Trout Unlimited (TU), secured a National TU "Embrace a Stream" grant, to identify and protect wild trout in Monroe County. Wild trout have been found in the section of the Brodhead adjoining the property. With assistance from the state Fish and Boat Commission and Stroud township, Miller and Baylor have already posted the preserve with "Open Space Wild Trout" education and special regulation signs.

Miller, a local naturalist and BWA/PHLT board member, described the property as one with "unique grassy meadows, ponds and wetlands in the midst of forested hills where the Brodhead Creek 'doubles' at its confluence with the Paradise Creek." Miller believes the site will provide an unmatched opportunity to showcase ways that volunteer organizations can act with local government to protect land and water resources for all to enjoy.

The local architecture firm of Schoonover and Vanderhoof has been engaged to provide a preliminary assessment of the building's structural condition and to make recommendations on renovation or replacement options.

Jason Smith of Hanover Engineering joined members of the landscape subgroup of the planning team to explore the full 42-acre parcel with the goal of developing ideas for appropriate restoration of the site and creek side from golf course to nature preserve.

Scott Miller, a local CPA and president of PHLT, is heading up the capital campaign for the project.

Doug Swift, president of the Brodhead Forest and Stream Club located just upstream of the preserve, and a BWA/PHLT Board member, said. "You can't find a trout stream east of the Mississippi that's any better than the Brodhead Creek on the ForEvergreen Preserve. By protecting this property, Stroud Township has created a trout fishing opportunity of national significance right here in Monroe County."

To hear more about the plans for ForEvergreen and to learn how you can help, please come out for this year's BWA Ramble on August 10 at the new preserve.

The Brodhead Watershed Association is a non-profit environmental organization formed in 1989. BWA is dedicated to protecting and preserving water resources and the environment of the Brodhead watershed and the water quality of the Brodhead, Cherry, Marshalls, McMichael, Paradise and Pocono creeks and their tributaries. The BWA assists municipalities, residents, businesses and groups with protecting natural resources through education, workshops, seminars, public programs and stream monitoring.

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