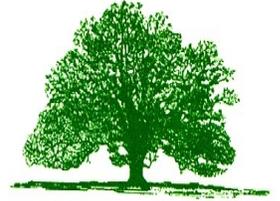




Washington Township Open Space Advisory Committee



2015 Annual Report

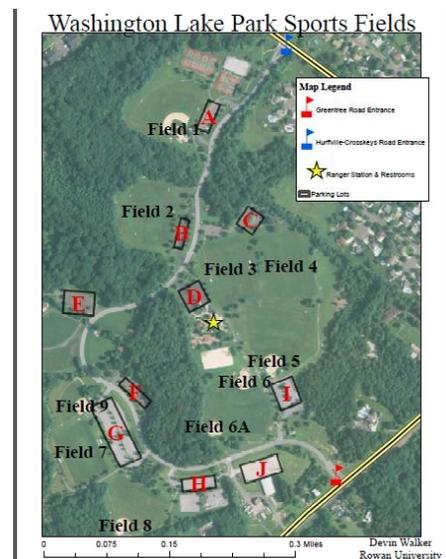
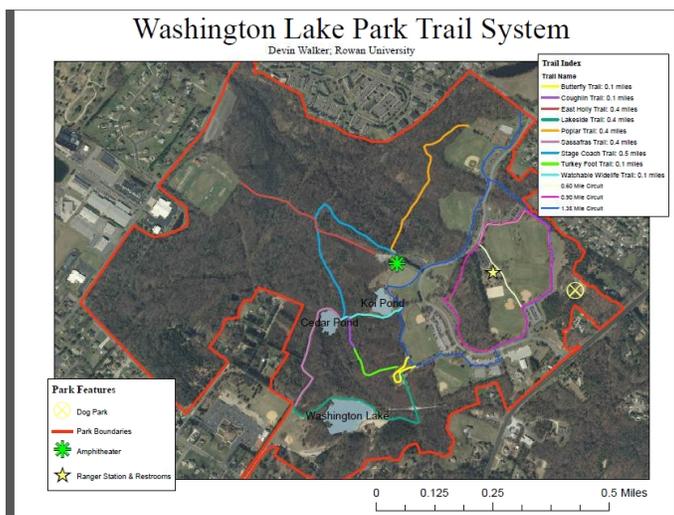
The Washington Township Open Space Advisory Committee (WTOSAC) completed its 15th year in 2015. The Committee, comprised of nine core members, worked diligently to evaluate potential open space purchases, to enhance the Township's existing open space, to plan for future use of available funds, and to involve the community with its activities. Since 2001, the township has permanently preserved 10 properties totaling more than 337 acres.

The following are highlights of the 2015 accomplishments:

- The WTOSAC continued its reforestation efforts by overseeing the planting and maintenance of trees on the storm water basin adjacent to the Twin Ponds development and the open space area behind and parallel to Winchester Drive. Additional potential areas for reforestation were discussed and shared with the Township Public Works Department.
- WTOSAC members assisted in the repair of a deer fence damaged by this year's June micro-burst storm. The WTOSAC had coordinated with the South Jersey Land & Water Trust and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to install the fence in an area of Township open space containing the endangered plant Swamp Pink



- WTOSAC members toured several open space properties in the township to better understand the status of the properties and to facilitate the planning process.
- WTOSAC members examined maps/plans of several properties whose owners were considering selling their properties to the Township as open space. Site visits were also conducted.
- WTOSAC members met with two Boy Scouts who were working on their Eagle Scout projects. The Scouts wanted to secure the Committee's input before finalizing their projects to enhance Washington Lake Park.
- WTOSAC members conducted inspections of the trails in Washington Lake Park, and made recommendations for trail upgrades, maintenance, and signage. These tasks were coordinated with the Park Rangers.
- WTOSAC members participated in Earth Day projects throughout the Township.
- WTOSAC members continued to investigate the feasibility of establishing a community garden in the Township.
- On October 23, 2015, two WTOSAC members attended the 90th Annual Conference of the New Jersey Shade Tree Federation. The members' attendance and completion of "Core Training" allows the Township to apply for a number of grants to address forestry issues within the Township.
- WTOSAC members assisted Rowan University Intern Devin Walker with her project to utilize GPS to properly map all of the trails in Washington Lake Park as well as the Park's boundaries.



- The WTOSAC met with Township residents to discuss the potential rehabilitation/development of Township open space.

The Committee's goals for 2016 and beyond:

- Continue to recommend to Mayor and Council additional open space acquisitions.
- Recommend additional reforestation projects using money from the Tree Trust Fund and to secure a grant to prepare a Community Forestry Management Plan.
- Identify those areas of the Township in need of beautification and initiate projects to address the issues.
- Create an updated open space master plan, a natural resource inventory, and a comprehensive open space/recreation plan.
- Formulate criteria to guide the judicious use of Open Space Trust Fund monies.
- Cooperate with the South Jersey Land & Water Trust to conduct nature walks in Washington Lake Park.
- Create a GPS map of Grenloch Lake Park.
- Continue to address a number of issues in Washington Lake Park, including the following:
 - cleaning up the area around the Park's maintenance building
 - enhancing the entrances to the Park
 - hiring a forester to review the condition of trees in the Park and to
 - make recommendations on how to address the many felled trees
 - establish a program that would properly care for the existing trees
 - address any reforestation that may be required
 - develop the Chapel Heights entrance and the immediate area of Washington Lake into an environmental area with the removal of all debris and the enhancement of existing trails
 - construct a bridge across the spillway at Cedar Pond
 - preserve and properly manage the Atlantic Cedar stand in the Park
 - create trail guides for each of the Park's trails
 - initiate a "Pride in My Park" campaign that would advertise the many attractions of the Park and to encourage citizens to monitor the Park's condition and to report issues to the Park Rangers
 - establish proper irrigation of existing and future gardens
 - maximize the use of the greenhouse to propagate bedding plantings for the Park

This report was prepared by the Washington Township Open Space Advisory Committee and respectfully submitted by:

Leon Lakritz, Chairman
Washington Township Open Space Advisory Committee

2/1/16