

Agricultural Land Preservation Program 2022-2023 Annual Summary

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THE CORNFIELD

*I went across the pasture lot
When not a one was watching me.
Away beyond the cattle barns
I climbed a little crooked tree.*

*And I could look down on the field
And see the corn and how it grows
Across the world and up and down
In very straight and even rows.*

*And far away and far away--
I wonder if the farmer man
Knows all about the corn and how
It comes together like a fan.*

Elizabeth Madox Roberts



Acknowledgments



Board of Commissioners



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William Yerkes, III

John Ives, Administrator

Prepared by the Bucks County Planning Commission





Annual Summary

Farmland Preservation Annual Summary 2022 - 2023



*A FARM PICTURE.
by Walt Whitman*

*Through the ample open door of the peaceful country barn,
A sunlit pasture field with cattle and horses feeding,
And haze and vista, and the far horizon fading away.*

The Bucks County Agricultural Farmland Preservation Program (BCALPP) is committed to protect and promote continued agricultural uses on viable agricultural lands by acquiring agricultural conservation easements “in perpetuity” throughout the county. The program utilizes funds from state, county, local landtrusts, and local governments to purchase conservation easements on productive farmland. Farms considered for preservation are prioritized according to soil quality, location, conservation practices, and threat of development.

2021 Farms Settled in 2023

There were three farms from the 2021 Bucks County Agricultural Land Preservation Program Rankings that came to settlement in 2023.

The three farms settled include:

- Hunsberger Farm: 62.81 acres in Bedminster Township
- Heacock Farm: 30.29 acres in Bedminster Township
- Goldenberg and Burland Farm: 106.01 acres in Bedminster Township

2022 Farm Applications for Preservation

In January 2022, the county received 15 applications and the Board approved obtaining appraisals on the top two ranking farms. An additional farm was added due to a prospective 2021 farm pulling out and being removed from the 2022 Bucks County Agricultural Land Preservation Program Rankings. In addition, two farms were preserved utilizing rollback tax penalties collected from the 2022 County Clean and Green Program. The county partnered with Bedminster Township on those particular farms.

The status of the 2022 farms include:

- Kriechbaum and Reichner Farm: 14.55 acres in Bedminster Township (settled)
- Larry P. Campbell Farm: 35.31 acres in Bedminster Township (settled)
- Sarah Steel Farm: +- 25.00 acres in Bedminster Township (obtaining Independent Appraisal)
- Asser and Hodara Farm: 89 acres in Durham Township (settled)
- TNT Groundworks, LLC Farm: +- 17.94 acres in Riegelsville Borough (under survey)

2023 Farm Applications for Preservation

In January 2023, the county received three applications, all of which did not rank in the top portion of the 2023 Bucks County Agricultural Land Preservation Ranking List. The Board approved obtaining appraisals on the top five ranking farms.

The status of the 2023 farms include:

- Beers Farm: +- 17.83 acres in Bedminster Township (under survey)
- Kasher, Kendig, and Zappia Farm: +- 29.52 acres in Bedminster Township (Letter of Offer /Agreement of Sale)
- Rosenberger Farm: +- 42.34 acres in Hilltown Township (Letter of Offer /Agreement of Sale)
- Weikel Farm: +- 101.00 acres in Hilltown Township (Letter of Offer /Agreement of Sale)
- Staff Farm: +- 120.00 acres in Springfield Township (approval)



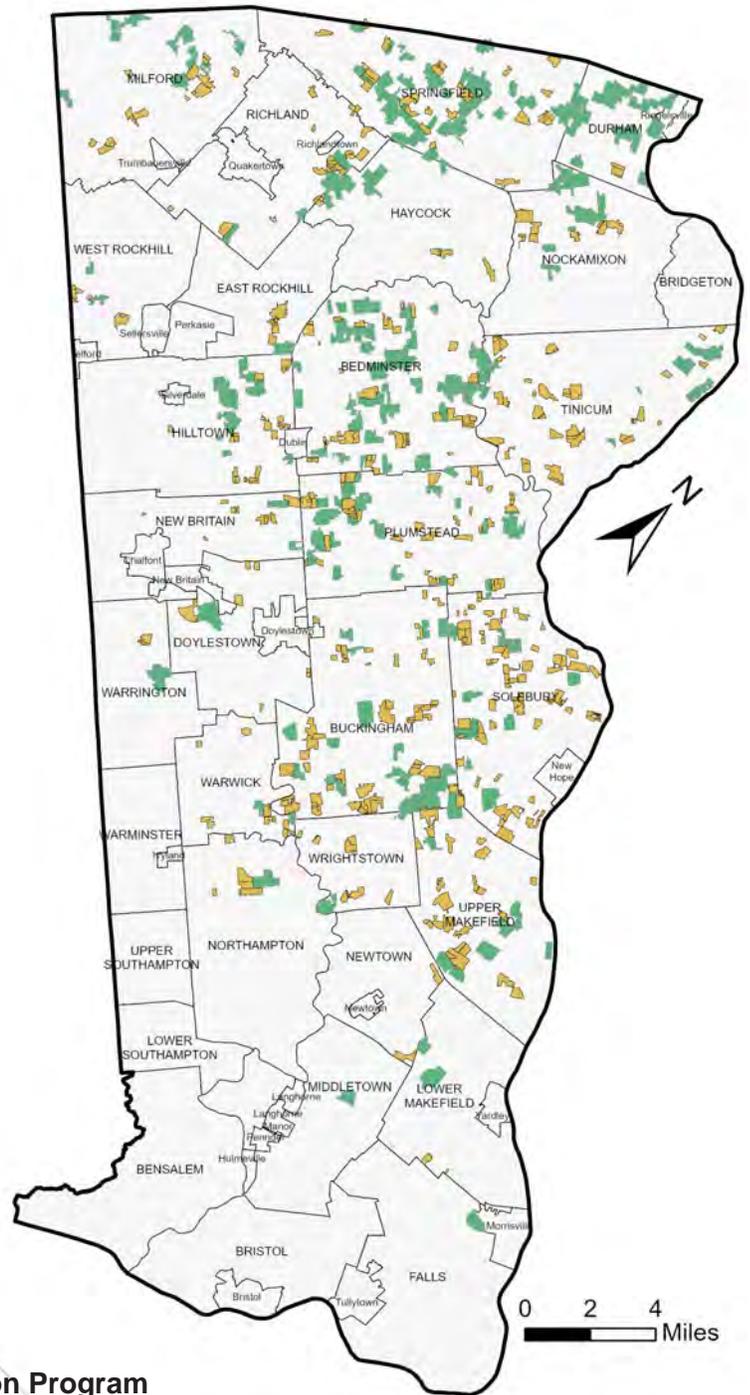
Preserved Farms Overview

TOTAL FARMS IN THE BUCKS COUNTY AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION PROGRAM

Bedminster.....	50
Buckingham.....	21
Doylestown.....	1
Durham.....	15
East Rockhill.....	2
Falls.....	1
Haycock.....	9
Hilltown.....	9
Lower Makefield.....	2
Middletown.....	1
Milford.....	14
New Britain.....	2
Nockamixon.....	9
Northampton.....	2
Plumstead.....	23
Richland.....	5
Solebury.....	8
Springfield.....	41
Tinicum.....	12
Upper Makefield.....	8
Warrington.....	3
Warwick.....	2
West Rockhill.....	2
Wrightstown.....	2

 **Farmland Preserved by Municipality**

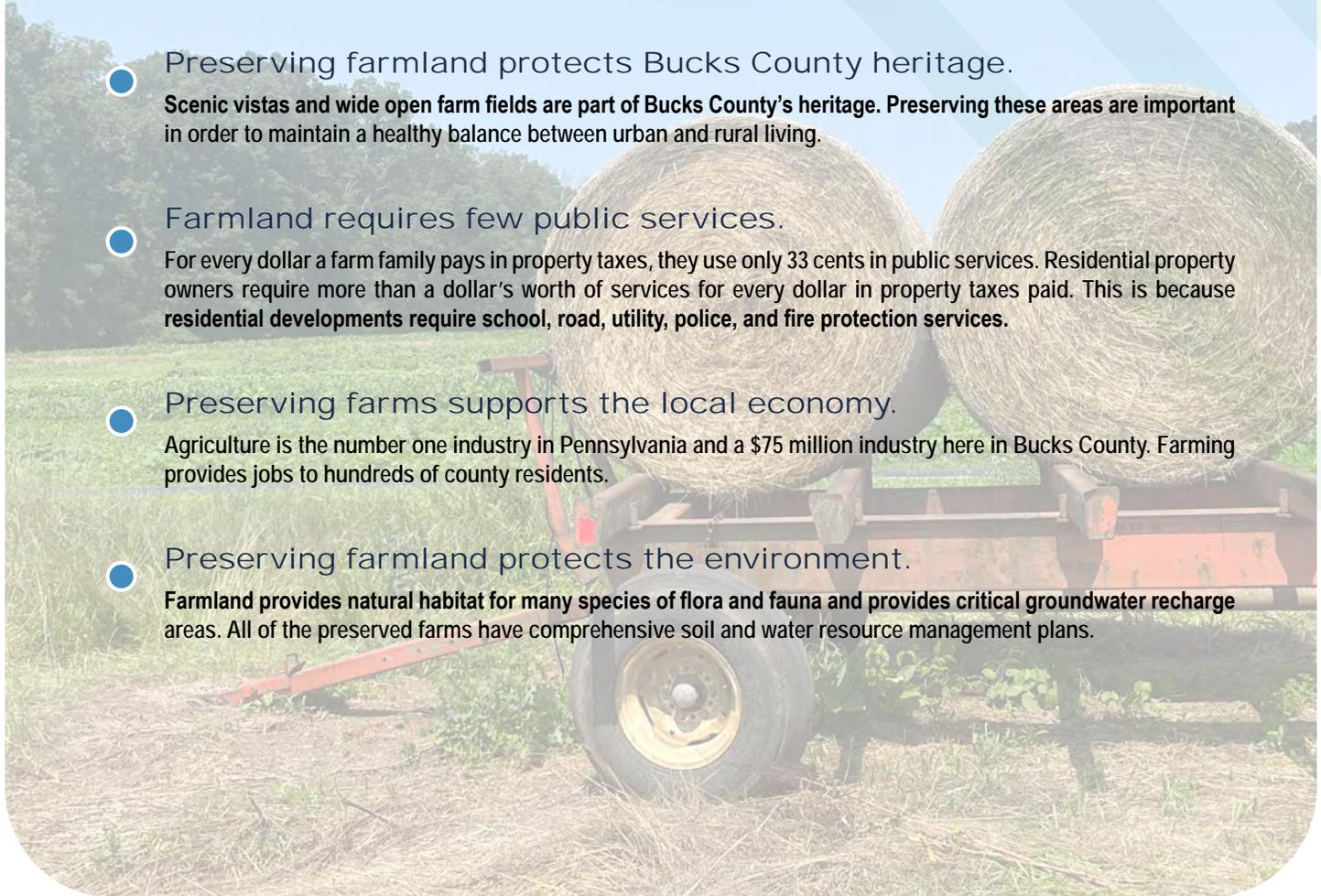
 **Bucks County Agricultural Preservation Program**





Why Preserve Farmland?

- Farmland is a rapidly disappearing natural resource.
According to the American Farmland Trust, the United States is losing two acres of farmland every minute. Here in Bucks County, 71 percent of the county's farmland has been converted to non-farm uses in the last 50 years.
- Local farms provide fresh food at a reasonable cost.
Locally produced food is more nutritious and less costly. Transportation costs are high for foods that come from other regions. Bucks County farms provide a wide range of vegetables, meats, and dairy products that taste better.
- Preserving farmland protects Bucks County heritage.
Scenic vistas and wide open farm fields are part of Bucks County's heritage. Preserving these areas are important in order to maintain a healthy balance between urban and rural living.
- Farmland requires few public services.
For every dollar a farm family pays in property taxes, they use only 33 cents in public services. Residential property owners require more than a dollar's worth of services for every dollar in property taxes paid. This is because **residential developments require school, road, utility, police, and fire protection services.**
- Preserving farms supports the local economy.
Agriculture is the number one industry in Pennsylvania and a \$75 million industry here in Bucks County. Farming provides jobs to hundreds of county residents.
- Preserving farmland protects the environment.
Farmland provides natural habitat for many species of flora and fauna and provides critical groundwater recharge areas. All of the preserved farms have comprehensive soil and water resource management plans.





2022 and 2023 Funding Overview



In 2022, the BCALPP received combined county and state funds in the amount of \$1,328,918.00 for farmland preservation. This was the tenth highest allocation of funds awarded in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for farmland preservation. There is a two-year time frame to disburse the funds.

- Bucks County Appropriation: \$41,873.00
- PA Department of Agriculture Bureau of Farmland Preservation Appropriation: \$1,287,045.00

In 2023, the BCALPP received combined county and state funds in the amount of \$3,675,257.00 for farmland preservation. This was the eighth highest allocation of funds awarded in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for farmland preservation. There is a two-year time frame to disburse the funds.

- Bucks County Appropriation: \$1,077,647.00
- PA Department of Agriculture Bureau of Farmland Preservation Appropriation: \$2,597,610.00





Program Funding

Program Funding, 1989 - 2023

Year	County Appropriation	State Appropriation	Municipal Appropriation	Total
1989	\$400,000	\$1,661,106	—	\$2,061,106
1990	\$150,000	\$1,295,945	—	\$1,445,945
1991	\$250,000	\$1,304,600	—	\$1,554,600
1992	\$150,000	\$2,166,229	—	\$2,316,229
1993	\$150,000	\$2,127,452	—	\$2,277,452
1994	\$150,000	\$1,268,321	—	\$1,418,321
1995	\$500,000	\$1,873,667	—	\$2,373,667
1996	\$500,000	\$2,409,380	—	\$2,909,380
1997	\$500,000	\$2,661,238	—	\$3,161,238
1998	\$1,950,000	\$2,550,000	\$105,000	\$4,605,000
1999	\$2,000,000	\$5,481,912	\$2,727,623	\$10,209,535
2000	\$3,250,000	\$4,261,074	\$1,170,062	\$8,681,136
2001	\$1,350,000	\$3,504,089	\$752,685	\$5,606,774
2002	\$2,000,000	\$3,093,475	\$3,009,181	\$8,102,656
2003	\$2,000,000	\$3,077,266	\$2,866,428	\$7,943,694
2004	\$2,000,000	\$3,284,069	\$1,924,922	\$7,208,991
2005	\$2,000,000	\$2,752,365	\$2,483,793	\$7,236,158
2006	\$2,000,000	\$6,543,292	\$1,708,613	\$10,251,905
2007	\$2,000,000	\$2,991,194	\$1,010,244	\$6,001,438
2008	\$2,200,000	\$2,369,168	\$569,665	\$5,138,833
2009	\$2,721,381	\$1,817,242	\$3,408,405	\$7,947,028
2010	\$2,524,062	\$1,670,973	\$3,203,856	\$7,398,891
2011	\$2,648,597	\$2,295,754	\$1,522,197	\$6,466,548
2012	\$2,648,597	\$2,295,754	\$527,100	\$5,471,451
2013	\$2,542,032	\$3,093,255	\$1,013,560	\$5,635,287
2014	\$2,550,581	\$2,769,216	\$607,600	\$5,927,397
2015	\$2,627,357	\$2,831,683	\$215,524	\$5,674,564
2016	\$2,568,525	\$2,905,903	\$719,818	\$6,194,246
2017	\$2,616,601	\$3,058,052	\$238,134	\$5,912,787
2018	\$2,578,693	\$3,154,730	\$995,857	\$6,729,280
2019	\$1,635,738	\$2,868,432	\$3,614,786	\$8,118,956
2020	\$1,571,796	\$2,812,258	\$123,000	\$4,507,054
2021	\$1,601,297	\$2,777,250	\$400,450	\$4,778,997
2022	\$41,873	\$1,287,045	—	\$1,328,918
2023	\$1,077,647	\$2,597,610	\$674,675	\$4,349,932
Total	\$57,454,777	\$94,910,999	\$34,579,618	\$186,945,394

* to date, as of August 2023

Program Highlights



Current Totals

Since 1989, the current COUNTY totals (to present) include...

[244 Farms
18,770 Acres]

Since 1989, the current STATE totals (58 counties) through 2023 include...

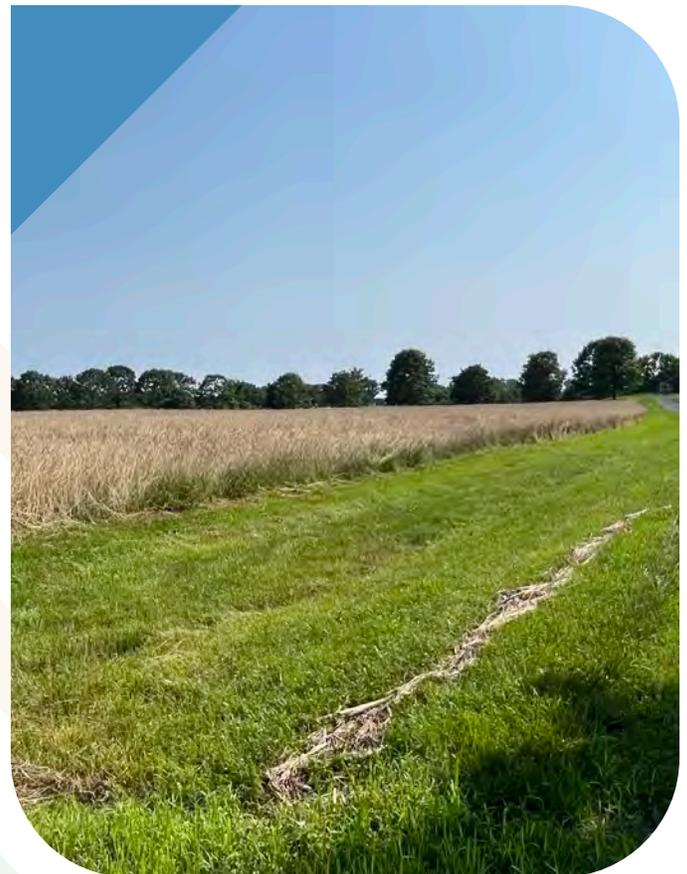
[6,180 Farms
622,238 Acres]

The current MUNICIPAL totals for preserved farmland include...

[478 Parcels
13,738 Acres]

Inspections

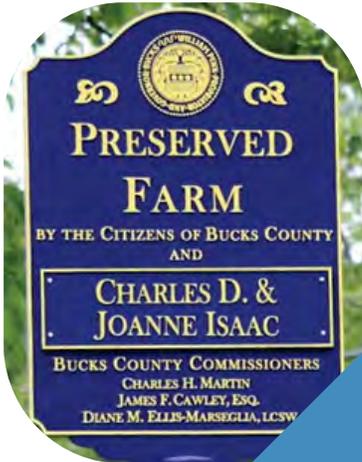
The BCALPP oversees farm inspections on an annual and biennial basis. In 2020, the county contracted with the Land Trust of Bucks County, located in Bedminster Township, to perform inspections on our agricultural conservation easements that were secured through the Agricultural Land Preservation Program. As required by Chapter 138e. Agricultural Conservation Easement Purchase Program, an annual report summarizing the number of inspections and violations detected was submitted to the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Farmland Preservation complying with the March 1 deadline.





Program Highlights

Signage



The BCALPP is working with Innovative Signs, Inc. (Longwood, FLA) to fabricate cast aluminum signs, plaques, and posts for farms that have recently been preserved and signs that have been stolen or are in disrepair. Installation of the latest signs is anticipated in the Fall of 2023 and performed by the Bucks County General Services Division.

Outreach, Partnerships, and Activities

Besides evaluating farm preservation applications and implementing the program requirements, the Board and staff provide administrative and technical support to local farmers, municipal officials, realtors, and the general public. For many agricultural conservation easement purchases, the county partners with the state, local municipalities, and local land trust non-profits. Other outreach and activities include:

- Update and provide information for farmers and the public on the Agricultural Preservation Program page on the county website
- Partner with and assist local municipalities to purchase agricultural conservation easements
- Partner with and assist local non-profit land conservancies to purchase agricultural conservation easements and perform property inspections
- Assist the Bucks County Planning Commission (BCPC) with review of Agricultural Security Area submissions from municipalities in accordance with the provisions of Pennsylvania Act 43 of 1981, the Agricultural Security Act
- Assist the BCPC with preparation of planning documents, such as the Bucks 2040 County Comprehensive Plan
- Periodically present county agricultural and program updates to various groups that include the Bucks County Association of Township Officials, county

municipalities, Bucks County Planning Commission, PA Bureau of Farmland Preservation

- Participate in programs offered by the Pennsylvania Farmland Preservation Association

For more information, contact John Ives, Director of Agricultural Land Preservation and open Space Programs, at 215.345.3409 or jives@buckscounty.org



Program Highlights



Timeline and Milestones

May 1989

The Bucks County Commissioners appoint a nine-member Bucks County Agricultural Land Preservation Board to develop and oversee a county farmland preservation program. Bucks County was the fourth county in Pennsylvania to develop a farmland preservation program. There are now 58 counties with farmland preservation programs.



200th Preserved Farm - Litzenberger Farm, Nockamixon Township, Preserved 2017

November 1997

The Bucks County Open Space Task Force recommends the adoption of a \$59,000,000 Open Space Program over a ten-year period that will support Farmland Preservation, Natural Areas Protection, Municipal Open Space, and Parkland expansion throughout Bucks County. Over 15,000 acres were protected through this program.

September 1990

The first two farms are preserved through the program. Easements are acquired on the 118-acre Leonard Crooke Farm and the 87-acre Charles Frederick Farm. Both farms are located in Buckingham Township.

November 2007

A second Open Space Task Force recommended \$87,000,000 over a ten-year period to fund Farmland Preservation, County Parkland, Natural Areas, Municipal Open Space, Historic Preservation and Delaware Riverfront protection.

October 2007

The Bucks County Agricultural Land Preservation reaches 10,000 acres of preserved farmland with the preservation of the Scott and Stephanie Bauman Farm located in Milford Township.

July 2017

The Bucks County Agricultural Land Preservation Program preserves its 200th farm. Total acreage preserved is 16,192.

August 2015

The Bucks County Agricultural Land Preservation Program reaches 15,000 acres of preserved farmland at the Middletown Grange Fair with the preservation of the James and Terry Jacklin Farm in Springfield Township.

August 2019

The Bucks County Agricultural Land Preservation Program has preserved 17,711 acres since 1990.

August 2018

The Bucks County Agricultural Land Preservation Program reaches a significant Milestone of 17,000 acres preserved.

May 2021

The Bucks County Agricultural Land Preservation Program exceeded 18,000 acres of preserved farmland

August 2020

First farm in Bucks County and the state that four entities (state, county, local municipality, a nonprofit organization) partnered to acquire a conservation easement, Blue Rock Farm in Bedminster Township (90.17 acres).

March 2022

Preserved 243.70 acres in Springfield and Durham Townships (Millett Holdings II Farm, LLC), the third largest agricultural conservation easement in the County.



Program Highlights

2023 Bucks County Agricultural Land Preservation Board Members

Kenneth Goldenberg, Chair
Martin Schaefer, Vice Chair
James B. Nilsen, Treasurer

Bartley E. Millett
David R. Wolfinger
Kenneth W. Bupp

Jonathan R. Snipes
William H. Yerkes III
Wesley M. Schmidt

Online Resources



<https://www.agriculture.pa.gov/Pages/default.aspx>
https://www.agriculture.pa.gov/Plants_Land_Water/farmland/Pages/default.aspx



<https://farmland.org/>



<https://pafarmlink.org/>



<http://www.pafarmland.org/>



Check out our new web presence!
BucksCounty.org/AG

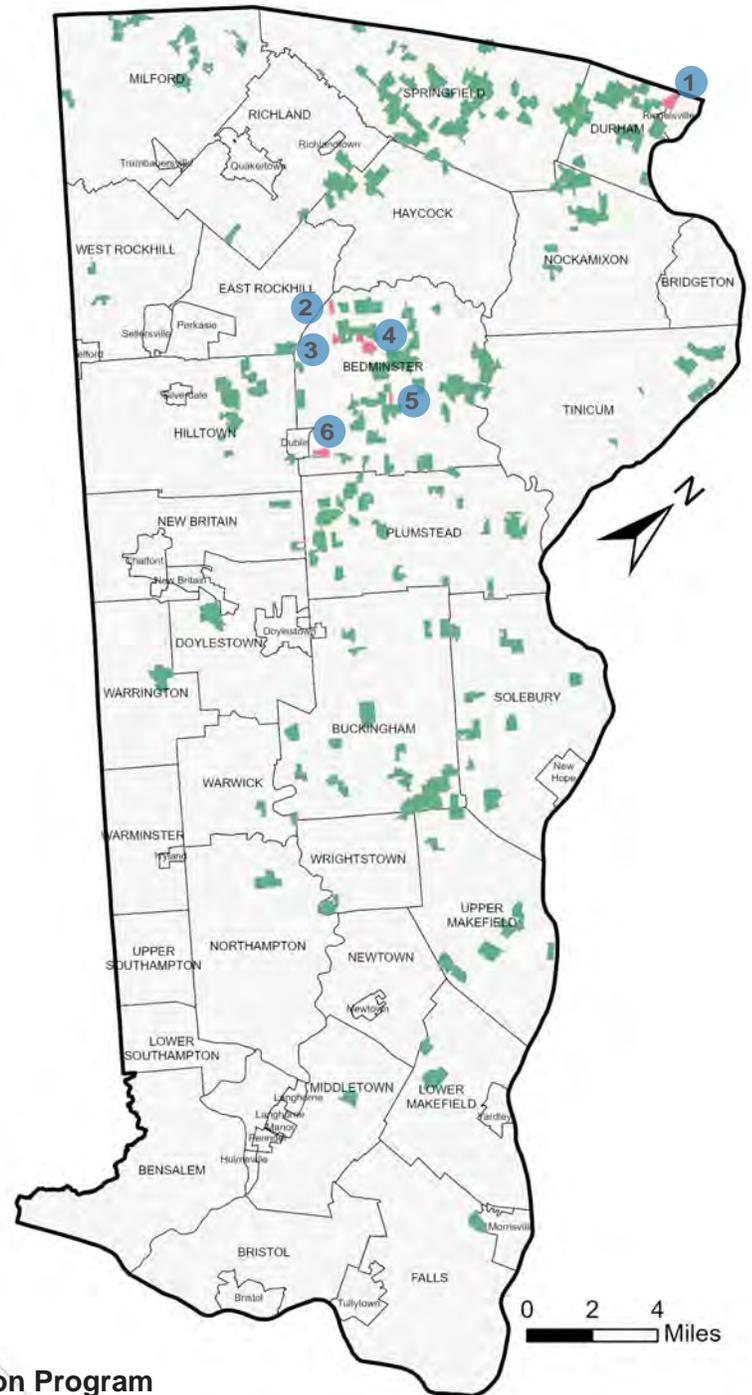
It has interactive maps, the farm preservation application, and many other documents and links.

2022-2023 Farms Preserved



Preserved Farms Overview

- 1 Asser Hodara Farm
- 2 Campbell Farm
- 3 Heacock Farm
- 4 Goldenberg Burland Farm
- 5 Kriechbaum Reichner Farm
- 6 Hunsberger Farm





Showcase of Farms Preserved

John and Kathryn Hunsberger Farm

Bedminster
Township

62.81-acre
easement

The Hunsberger Farm is located at 235 Smith School Road (TMPs #01-011-120-002; #01-011-120-006; #01-011-124) in Bedminster Township. The agricultural conservation easement on this tract totals 62.81 acres. The Hunsberger Farm is predominately a crop farm operation and ranked #1 on our 2021 application list.

The preservation of this farm is important, because it will preserve 62.81 acres in a growing development area just northeast of Dublin Borough. It will protect scenic farmland in a dense area of the county. The farm is contiguous to a small preserved farm through the county program and within a mile radius of three preserved farms. The farm is highly visible from the road and contains prime agricultural soils. The total purchase price for the agricultural conservation easement was \$1,004,960.00 for 62.81 acres, which equates to \$16,000.00 an acre. This farm will have four co-grantees, which include the state, county, Bedminster Township, and a local land trust: Heritage Conservancy, Inc. It will be the 48th farm preserved by the county program in Bedminster Township.





Jeffrey and Darlene Heacock Farm



**Bedminster
Township**
**30.29-acre
easement**

The Heacock Farm is located at 396 Sweetbriar Road (TMP #01-006-013) in Bedminster Township. It is a crop and pasture farm operation and ranked #5 on our 2021 application list. The agricultural conservation easement on this tract totals 30.29 acres.

The preservation of this farm preserves over 30 acres that is contiguous to an already preserved 97.50-acre farm that was preserved through the county program. In addition, the proposed preservation is within a mile radius of five preserved farms, all of which total over 360 acres. The farm is visible from the road and contains prime agricultural soils. The total purchase price for the agricultural conservation easement was \$363,480.00 for 30.29 acres, which equates to \$12,000.00 an acre. This farm will have the state and county as co-grantees and be the 46th farm preserved by the county program in Bedminster Township.



Showcase of Farms Preserved

Larry P. Campbell Farm

The Campbell Farm is located at 2819 Creek Road (TMP #01-001-017) in Bedminster Township. The easement will be held by two grantees: Bucks County and Bedminster Township. The farm is 82 percent crop-land that grows corn and soybeans.

The Bucks County Agricultural Land Preservation Farm Board approved the use of 'bargain funds' to assist Bedminster Township in the acquisition of the easement on the 35.31 acres. Bargain funds are funds associated with the interest collected from the County Clean and Green (Rollback Tax Penalties) and utilized on farms that have applied to the program and are low on the ranking list. The bargain funds provide an option for farms that may never reach the top ranking numbers to be preserved. This farm represents the 49th farm preserved by the county program in Bedminster Township.

Bedminster
Township

35.31-acre
easement





Mathew Goldenberg and Kelly Burland Farm

The Goldenberg Burland Farm is located at 1100 Slotter Road and 801 Sweetbriar Road (TMPs #01-006-022; #01-006-049; #01-006-050; #01-006-051.001) in Bedminster Township. The agricultural conservation easement purchased on this farm totals 106.01 acres. The farm is predominately a crop and pasture farm operation with a livestock component and ranked #6 on our 2021 application list.

The farm is contiguous to two already preserved farms that total over 195 acres. In turn, those two farms are adjacent to over 113 acres of preserved farmland. With the addition of the Goldenberg Burland Farm, a cluster of over 400 acres of protected farmland has been preserved through the county program. In addition, the proposed preservation is within a mile radius of eight preserved farms. The total purchase price for the agricultural conservation easement was \$1,220,175.10 for 106.01 acres, which equates to \$14,000.00 an acre. This farm will have the state, county, and Bedminster Township as co-grantees and be the 47th farm preserved by the county program in Bedminster Township.

**Bedminster
Township**
**106.01-acre
easement**





Showcase of Farms Preserved

Richard Kriechbaum and Kimberly Reichner Farm



The agricultural conservation easement on the Kriechbaum/Reichner Farm totals 14.55 acres. The farm is located at 473 Hill Road (TMP #01-012-023) in Bedminster Township. The easement will be held by two grantees: Bucks County and Bedminster Township. The farm is over 80 percent crop-land that grows corn, flowers, and operates a small livestock component.

The Bucks County Agricultural Land Preservation Farm Board approved the use of 'bargain funds' to assist Bedminster Township in the acquisition of the easement. Bargain funds are funds associated with the interest collected from the County Clean and Green (Rollback Tax Penalties) and utilized on farms that have applied to the program and are low on the ranking list. The bargain funds provide an option for farms that may never reach the top ranking numbers to be preserved. This farm represents the 50th farm preserved by the county program in Bedminster Township.

Bedminster
Township

14.55-acre
easement





□ Solomon Asser and Gabriella Hodara Farm

Durham
Township

89.00-acre
easement

The Asser Hodara Farm is located at 845 Springhill Road (TMPs #11-002-057; #11-003-008) in Durham Township. The agricultural conservation easement totals 89.0 acres. The farm is a crop and pasture farm operation and ranked #2 on our 2022 application list.

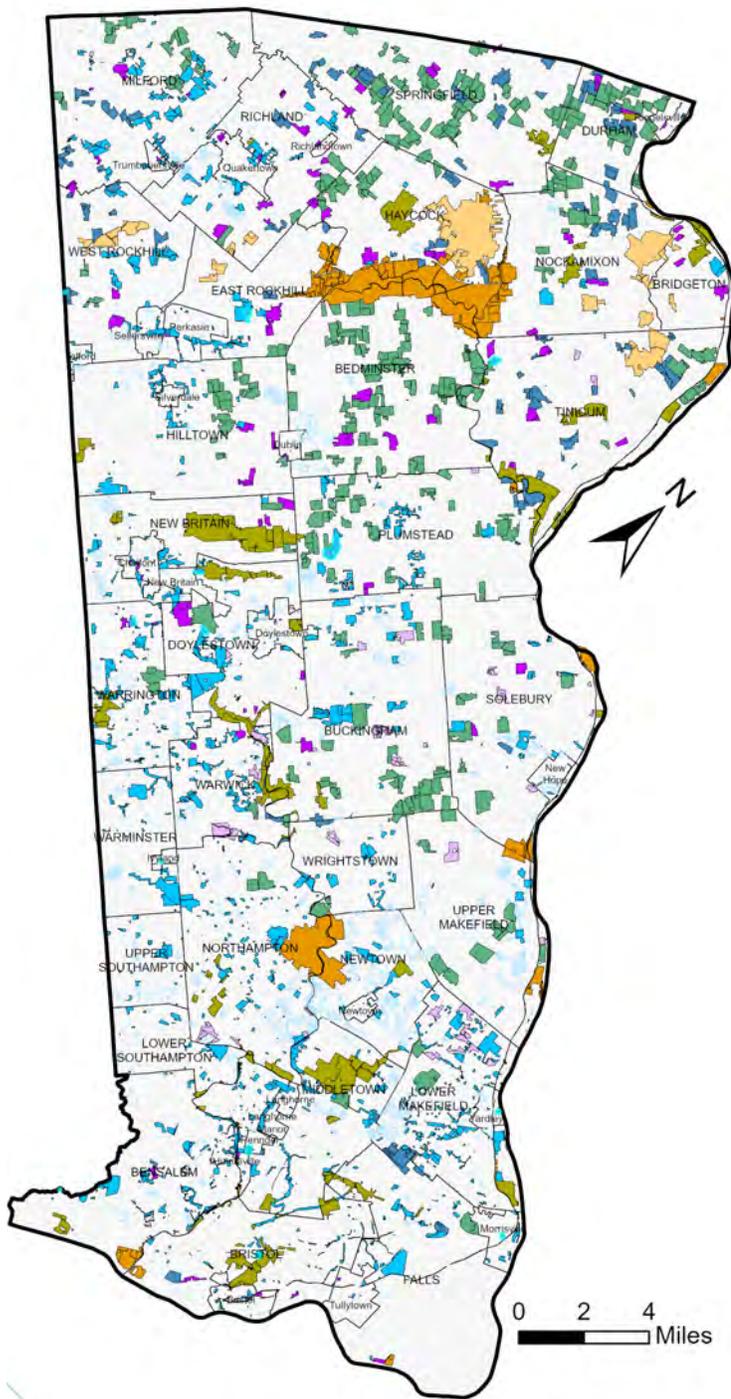
The farm is contiguous to an already preserved 100 plus-acre farm that was preserved through the county program and within a mile radius of five other preserved farms. The total purchase price for the agricultural conservation easement was \$801,000.00 for 89.0 acres, which equates to \$9,000.00 an acre. This farm will have the state as the primary grantee on the easement and be the 15th farm preserved by the county program in Durham Township. The state funded 100-percent of the overall easement cost.





Ag Preservation & Open Space

Agricultural Preservation and Open Space Programs



STATE PROGRAMS

-  State Parks & Open Space
-  State Gamelands

BUCKS COUNTY PROGRAMS

-  Bucks County Agricultural Preservation Program
-  Bucks County Parks and Open Space

LOCAL INITIATIVE PROGRAMS

-  Bucks County Municipal Open Space Program
-  Bucks County Land Trust Owned Property
-  Bucks County Natural Areas Program
-  Municipal Parks and Open Space
-  Homeowners Association Property



The Almshouse Neshaminy Manor Center 1260 Almshouse Road
Doylestown, Pennsylvania 18901
P: 215.345.3400 | F: 215.345.3886

 BCPC@buckscounty.org

 BucksCounty.gov/PC

 [Bucks County Data Portal](http://BucksCountyDataPortal)

 www.linkedin.com/in/BCPC



COUNTY COMMISSIONERS:
Robert J. Harvie Jr., *Chair*
Diane M. Ellis-Marseglia, *LCSW, Vice Chair*
Gene DiGirolamo, *Secretary*