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It is with great pleasure and pride that we announce the realization of a 10-year dream: the purchase and preservation of the entire Erdenheim Farm!

In what is likely one of the most significant conservation transactions in the region's history, the remaining 426 acres of the Farm have been purchased and will be permanently protected through an extraordinary collaboration of public and private parties, including the Whitemarsh Foundation, Natural Lands Trust, Peter and Bonnie McCausland, state, county, and local governments, and numerous private individuals.

As one of the few remaining large farm tracts in southeastern Pennsylvania and the only one that still remains adjacent to the city of Philadelphia, Erdenheim Farm represents a unique and extraordinary example of our area's disappearing agricultural past. As a significant green space, it plays a critical environmental role in protecting the Wissahickon Creek, which begins in Montgomery Township and extends south through 11 municipalities to the Schuylkill River.

As many of you know, in December 2008, the Whitemarsh Foundation purchased the 98-acre Angus tract and placed it under a conservation easement. In this most recent transaction, the Foundation purchased an additional 91 acres of what is known as the Sheep Tract. The rest of the Farm—the 18 remaining acres of the Sheep Tract, most of the 101-acre Equestrian Tract (situated along Stenton Avenue), and the 140-acre Wissahickon Tract (encompassing the former Natural Lands Trust property along Stenton Avenue as well as the estate home)—have been purchased by Peter and Bonnie McCausland. In addition to the lands to be privately owned by the McCauslands, a member of the Dixon family will retain ownership of approximately 14 acres of the Equestrian Tract.

In exchange for the right to purchase the former NLT property, the McCauslands have agreed to place legally binding conservation easements on all but the 23 acres surrounding the estate home. As part of the conservation agreement, public trails will be established around the perimeter of the McCausland property, enabling completion of the Montgomery County Green Ribbon Trail linking Ft. Washington State Park with Morris Arboretum and Fairmount Park and providing an unbroken off-road link between city and suburbs.

“This community has been working to preserve this property since 2001,” said Hugh G. Moulton, president of the Whitemarsh Foundation and a long-time advocate for conservation, in a recent Natural Lands Trust and Whitemarsh Foundation press release announcing the purchase. “It is one of the most important landscapes left in the region and it is thrilling to see our efforts coming to fruition. We are very grateful to everyone involved, including Natural Lands Trust, whose participation and considerable expertise was essential, and to the McCauslands who ultimately brought us to the finish line.”

Peter McCausland and his wife Bonnie are long-time area residents as well as active civic leaders. The McCauslands intend to make Erdenheim Farm their home and to continue its agricultural activities.

While the preservation of Erdenheim Farm is now complete, the challenge to maintain and properly steward the property has just begun. As part of its stewardship obligations, the Whitemarsh Foundation will be undertaking a capital campaign, beginning in the fall of 2009, to establish an endowment to support the ongoing maintenance of the Angus and Sheep Tract properties under its care. Details of this campaign will be made available on this website in the near future.

Fulfilling its mission to preserve the Farm, the Whitemarsh Foundation, with the help of many other equally dedicated organizations, public entities, and individuals, has ensured that Erdenheim Farm remains “the jewel in the crown” of Whitemarsh Township, enjoyed and treasured by residents and visitors for years to come.

Please join us in celebrating this victory for our community, the region, and the environment.