

**BRANDYWINE CONSERVANCY CELEBRATES 25TH ANNIVERSARY
OF KING RANCH CONSERVATION EASEMENT**

Thousands of acres permanently protected from development help keep Brandywine Creek watershed healthy

This fall, the Brandywine Conservancy marks the 25th anniversary of the permanent protection of the nearly 5,400 acre Buck and Doe Run Valley Farms property. Owned at the time by--and known locally as--the King Ranch, it was the largest privately owned contiguous property in Chester County, Pennsylvania.

The Brandywine Conservancy recognized the environmental importance of the unspoiled Buck and Doe Runs that flow through the property and made repeated efforts over more than a decade to protect this valuable resource. In 1984, the Conservancy's efforts paid off, resulting in the largest conservation easement in Pennsylvania history, and a new era in land conservation ensued. This major accomplishment catalyzed the preservation of a great deal of surrounding land. Since then, more than 20,000 acres have been placed under conservation easement to the Conservancy.

The Brandywine Conservancy's conservation easement on the former ranch lands permanently protects from development thousands of acres of grasslands and woods, plant and animal species, and, most importantly, the streams. Over eight miles of the Buck and Doe Runs and many more miles of smaller streams--all draining to the West Branch of the Brandywine River--are located there. This remarkable water source was and still is critical to maintaining the quality of the Brandywine River, the drinking water source for the City of Wilmington and other parts of New Castle County, Delaware.

In 1985, the 771-acre Laurels Preserve in the middle of the property was donated to the Conservancy. The Preserve is now part of a designated Important Bird Area and hosts numerous rare and endangered species.

Catalyst for Conservation - The Brandywine Conservancy's Success in Saving King Ranch Lands in Pennsylvania, a book documenting the history of this landmark conservation project and written by William D. Benson with contributions by David D. Shields, will be published in Spring 2010.

The Brandywine Conservancy, a nonprofit organization that preserves the environment and art of the Brandywine Valley and other selected areas, continues its work daily. Currently, the Conservancy has permanently protected more than 43,000 acres of land in Chester, Delaware and New Castle Counties in Pennsylvania and Delaware--much of it resulting from the success of this project.

The Conservancy's Environmental Management Center (EMC) is a leading local and national advocate for responsible land use and open space preservation. Staff members in the EMC's Land Stewardship Program work

with individual landowners to permanently protect their properties for future generations and to preserve water supplies. The EMC's Municipal Assistance Program (MAP) aids local governments and others with the development of plans, ordinances, regulations, and other measures to guide community growth and protect natural, historic, and scenic resources.

The EMC has embarked on a multi-year water resources program designed to promote and reinforce its commitment to sound water resource and watershed management and to help municipalities achieve better balance between land development and natural resource conservation. The work will include restoring the watershed through reforestation and expanding stormwater management systems to minimize the effect of development.

The Conservancy's Brandywine River Museum is internationally known for its unparalleled collection of works by three generations of Wyeths--N.C., Andrew, and Jamie--and a fine collection of American illustration, still life, and landscape painting. The museum features special exhibitions throughout the year and is open daily from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., except Christmas.

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