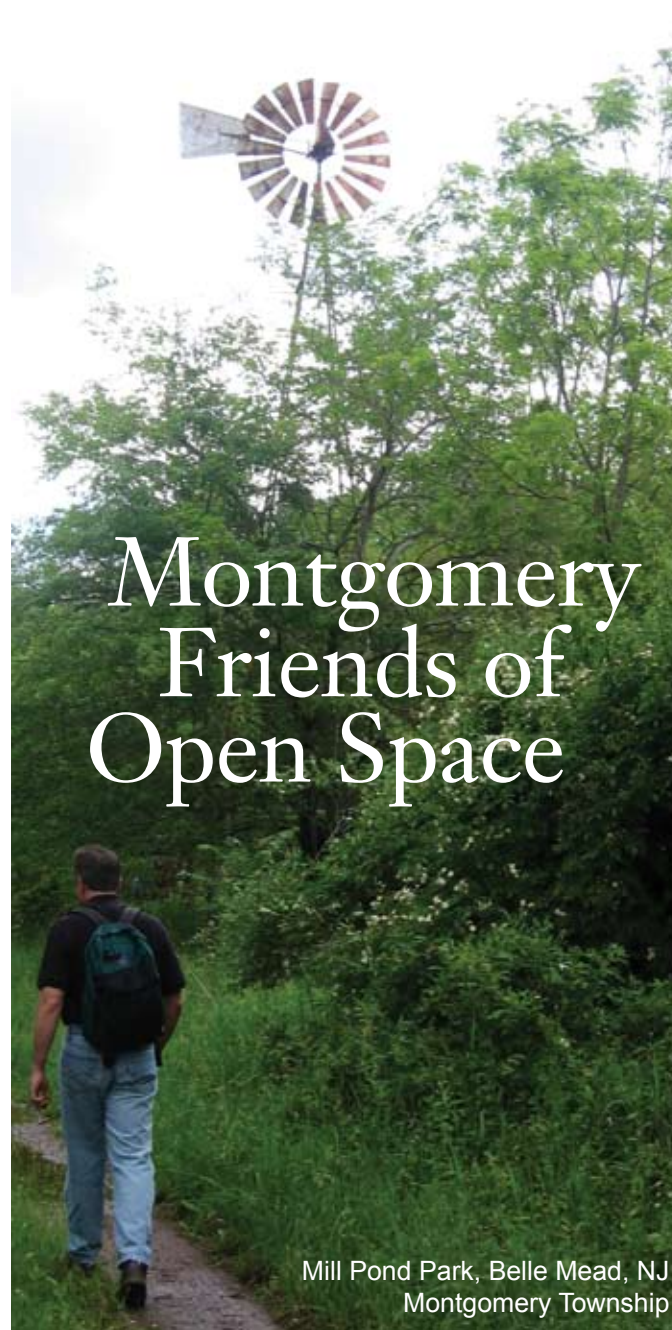


# Saving the Land

Twenty years ago, most Montgomery Township residents looked out their window at open fields and farmlands, even a forest. Today, such a view is becoming far more difficult to find. Montgomery Township's rural appeal has attracted a population that more than doubled in 25 years, from 9,612 in 1990 to more than 22,000 in 2005. Hundreds of acres that were once fields and farmland have disappeared in the face of explosive tract development. Today, our township continues to grow, creating a need for more schools and services and ever-increasing taxes to pay for them.

Montgomery Friends of Open Space was formed in 2002 in an effort to preserve what remains of the Township's farmland and natural areas. Montgomery Friends is an all-volunteer non-profit organization, made up primarily of residents of Montgomery Township and Rocky Hill. *The organization's purpose is three-fold*

- *To preserve remaining open lands in Montgomery Township*
- *To provide and support stewardship of the land that is preserved*
- *To sustain active farming by increasing awareness of agricultural issues and supporting local farmers' markets and farm stands in the Township*



## Montgomery Friends of Open Space

Mill Pond Park, Belle Mead, NJ  
Montgomery Township



Dalhousie Farm - View of upper fields of preserved lands along Cherry Valley Road

MONTGOMERY FRIENDS OF OPEN SPACE  
PO Box 287, Skillman, NJ 08558



Partners celebrate preservation of the Drake Farm – June 2007

## Preserving Open Space

Guided by the Township's Conservation Plan, *Montgomery Friends of Open Space* has been awarded \$1.7 million in grants to preserve farmlands, forests, streams, and flood plains, as well as to protect water quality and maintain historic and scenic views. *Montgomery Friends* often works in partnership with the NJ Green Acres and Farmland Preservation Programs, Montgomery Township, Somerset County, private foundations, landowners and other land trusts. To date, the organization has participated in the preservation of 316 acres including:

**The Platz Farm:** Montgomery Friends' first project was preserving 39 acres of farm fields along Dutchtown-Harlingen Road with links to the Montgomery and the Sourland Mountain Greenways. The group partnered with a larger regional land trust, D&R Greenway Land Trust, to complete the transaction.

**The Dalhousie Farm:** This former sheep farm along Cherry Valley Road, consisted of approximately 100 acres of open fields, streams, an upland forest, a pond, and meadows. The land is owned by the Raymond family, who will continue to live on the farm. Montgomery Friends, together with the Township, purchased a conservation easement of 34 acres allowing for a public pathway in the future. An agricultural easement on 57 acres will ensure that it remains in farm use.

**The Nicolaysen Tract:** Montgomery Friends and the Township collaborated on the purchase of this 95-acre property from the Nicolaysen family in 2006. Located near Linton Drive, this preserve includes a forest, a pond and fields, as well as agricultural and public easements.

## Dutchtown-Harlingen Road Farm Field:

Working with the Township Committee and a neighboring landowner, Montgomery Friends preserved 16.8 acres for farm use. An 8.4-acre conservation easement provides for public pathways. This parcel formed a trail linkage to the west, and reunited the historic Hoagland Stryker house with the one remaining adjacent farm field.

**The Thomas Property:** Part of Cherry Valley Greenway, a 2.17-acre conservation easement provides an important connection to the existing pathway system.

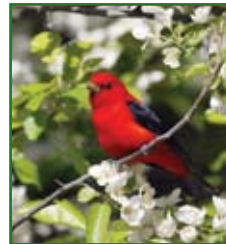
**The Drake Farm:** This 64 acre family farm on Route 518 in Skillman, farmed by the Drake family, was preserved in 2007. Beautiful views, community supported agriculture, and public access were all achieved through a partnership with Montgomery Township, NJ DEP, the State Agricultural Development Committee, D&R Greenway Land Trust, along with the Drake and Huebner families.

## To Provide Stewardship of Preserved Lands

Montgomery Friends maintains and enhances the conservation values of the land it has preserved. Volunteers from Montgomery Friends and the Township Open Space Committee remove invasive plants, seed new meadows, plant trees and grasses, and connect preserved lands and parks by building pathways. For example to enhance a refuge for migrating birds, volunteers planted over 1000 native trees on the 95-acre Nicolaysen preserve in Skillman. Other projects have been carried out to control soil erosion and flooding. Montgomery Friends and the Township are committed to making lands more accessible so that every Montgomery resident can easily access the pathway system on preserved lands.

Visit our website:

**www.montgomeryfriends.org**  
for news and upcoming projects.



Scarlet Tanager, a species found on Sourland Mountain, part of Montgomery Township

## To Sustain Active Farming in Montgomery Township

Montgomery Friends is dedicated to working with the town and landowners to help farmers stay on their land. Montgomery Friends established a local Farmers Market in 2003 to provide fresh, locally grown produce, poultry, organic vegetables, homegrown fruit, and flowers, for residents of Montgomery and surrounding municipalities. The Country Gentleman Farm Market will be operated by the Huebner Family who were conservation buyers of a large portion of the Drake farm.

## Guiding and Advising Landowners

Montgomery Friends' work also involves educating landowners about the financial benefits of preserving their land. Each situation is unique and requires different expertise and resources. Since its founding in 2002, Montgomery Friends has raised more than \$1.7 million dollars in grants from these programs plus donations from members and others to preserve open space.

## We Need Your Help to Complete a Green Infrastructure

There are still many acres of open space that can be preserved in the Township. Much work lies ahead. State funds are often limited. This can change, but for now Montgomery Friends has to raise money for land acquisition, as well as for stewardship. If we are to succeed in preserving more forests, farms, and natural areas, and taking proper care of those lands, we must have more volunteer assistance. In addition to helping in our stewardship events, we need help with membership drives, organizing volunteers, fundraising, communications and assistance at the farmers market. This is work that is as rewarding as it is urgent.

Please join us in preserving Montgomery Township's open space by filling out and mailing the membership form in this brochure. **Please be sure to include your e-mail address.**



Montgomery Friends Farmers Market

Clip here and mail with your check today!

**WE NEED YOUR HELP TO COMPLETE A GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE FOR MONTGOMERY TOWNSHIP!**  
**YES, I WANT TO HELP PRESERVE OPEN SPACE IN MONTGOMERY TOWNSHIP!**

Please enroll me as a member.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ (as it should appear in the Annual Report, or note if you prefer to not be listed)  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

\$20 - Student/Senior     \$35 - Individual     \$45 - Family    (we do not sell our e-mail or mailing lists)  
 \$250 - Sponsor     \$500 - Benefactor     \$1,000 - Preservation Leadership     \$100 - Sustaining

My check, payable to Montgomery Friends of Open Space is enclosed.

Please mail to Montgomery Friends of Open Space, PO Box 287, Skillman, NJ 08558. All donations are tax deductible.

I am interested in helping with:

Stewardship/trail projects     Membership/Fundraising     Communications/Education     Farmers market

*Thank you for supporting land preservation in Montgomery Township*



Question Mark, species of butterfly in central New Jersey