



Photo by
Steve Trevisan

WASHINGTON

BERKS COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

TOWNSHIP

TOWNSHIP RECREATION NEWS

In the early Spring of 2024, the Recreation Advisory Committee finalized the Comprehensive Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces Plan. A copy of Plan is available for review on the Township's website (under Parks and Recreation) or in person at the Township Office. Moving forward, the Township is currently pursuing funding



opportunities to facilitate the development of a Park Master Plan for the Barto Community Park. We anticipate that the Master Plan will include the modernization of the current park facilities and the addition of more recreational opportunities, including shade trees, gathering areas, pickleball courts and walking & biking trails. The Recreation Advisory Committee and the Board of Supervisors would like to thank the residents for their participation in the Summer 2023 online recreational survey. Your input was instrumental in the development of the Comprehensive Plan and will help guide the Township during the preparation of the Barto Community Park's Master Plan and beyond. In other news, the Township has established a new nature preserve. The Naigle Nature Preserve & Woodlands is comprised of multiple open spaces and until a master plan can be developed for the preserve, is available to residents for passive recreation.

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Washington Township Information



Contact Information

Township Office
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Telephone: 610-845-7760 • Fax: 610-845-8499

Please visit our website at:

www.washtwpberks.org for additional information!

Board of Supervisors:

Chairman: Thomas Powanda

Vice Chairman: David Moyer

Supervisor: Romnie Long

Township Office Staff

Township Manager / Secretary: Susan Brown
email: sbrown@washtwpberks.org

Treasurer: Missy Swanson

Administrative Assistants: Darlene McIlvee & Maria Eddinger

Public Works Department:

Roadmaster: Brian Mohr

Crew Member: Jacob Long

Crew Member: Barry Maust

Crew Member: Thomas C. Milewski, Jr.

Crew Member: Josh Berner

Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator: Phillip Anstey

2024 Meeting Dates:

Meetings will be held at the Washington Township Municipal Building located at 120 Barto Road, Barto, PA 19504

January 2nd 5:30 p.m. (supervisors reorganization)

January 3rd 7:00 p.m. (auditors reorganization)

REGULAR SUPERVISORS MEETINGS 7:00 P.M.

January 25, February 22, March 28, April 25, May 23, June 27, July 25, August 22, September 26, October 24, November 21, December 19

SUPERVISORS WORKSHOP MEETINGS 7:00 P. M.

February 8, March 14, April 11, May 9, June 13, August 8, September 12, November 14, December 12

BUDGET MEETINGS 6:00 P.M.

October 14, October 15 (if needed)

WATER AUTHORITY (IF NEEDED) 6:30 P.M.

January 25, April 25, July 25, October 24

PLANNING COMMISSION 7:00 P.M.

January 4 (w/ reorganization), February 1, March 7, April 4, May 2, June 6, July 11, August 1, September 5, October 3, November 7, December 5

HEREFORD-WASHINGTON JOINT PLANNING COMMISSION 7:00 P.M.

March 12, June 11, September 10, December 10

ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COUNCIL (IF NEEDED) 6:00 P.M.

January 8, February 12, March 11, April 8, May 13, June 10, July 8, August 12, September 9, October 14, November 11, December 9

RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE 6:00 P.M.

January 9, February 13, March 12, April 9, May 14, June 11, July 9, August 13, September 10, October 8, November 12, December 10



EASTERN BERKS FIRE DEPARTMENT NEWS

Eastern Berks Fire Department is pleased to announce the purchase of a property at the intersection of Rt 100 and Hoffmansville Rd in Washington Township for use as a future firehouse. It currently contains a school bus business which will continue to occupy a majority of the building while the fire department begins to assess its needs for the future.

It was only last year that the department purchased land diagonally across the street at 1215 Route 100 in Washington Township, Berks County for the future home of a central fire station. They made several property improvements including: moving a utility pole, gaining PennDOT access, land studies and inspections, as well as installing their Fire Truck and Fire Danger signs. It was their intention to build on this site in the coming 3-5 years.

However late last year, the fire company was approached with the opportunity to purchase the property and the existing bus maintenance building at 1200 Route 100. After thoroughly vetting the land and buildings and coming to an agreement that they could afford with the landowner, they made the decision that this was an offer they couldn't refuse. The new site will allow a much larger facility for their current needs and future growth. There will be more room for apparatus, training, operations, office space, storage, and even possible rental space.

Fire Chief, Mike Mutter says the total cost of this purchase is less than what they would have spent on land development, design, and construction of a much smaller fire house at 1215 Rt 100. He says they are excited for their future and hopes the public will be as well.

They are now able to offer for sale the 3+ acres of land located at 1215 Route 100 to potential buyers with the confidence that it is ready to build on and worth the investment to anyone interested. The funds from the sale of this land will be used to improve our new location and replenish our savings.

The department appreciates the support and cooperation of the township, its officials and its residents during our search for land, and now this new opportunity for a central station within the township. Eastern Berks Fire is the primary fire service for Washington Township as well as the Boroughs of Bally and Bechtelsville, District Township, and a portion of Pike Township.



SPOTTED LANTERNFLY UPDATE

For the past ten years we in Berks County have been dealing with the invasive Spotted Lanternfly (SLF). By now everyone is familiar with its appearance and threat to fruit crops and several trees. So, this article will reference a few of the more practical aspects of SLF management.

Penn State Extension has a wealth of relevant information about the SLF. One of the more useful articles concentrate on making SLF traps. Many residents have discovered we can trap SLF nymphs with sticky bands around tree trunks. However, this method can have some unintended consequences including trapping birds and other insects & wildlife.

An effective alternative is a circle trap. This three page article describes in detail how to build a circle trap from common household items: <https://extension.psu.edu/how-to-build-a-spotted-lanternfly-circle-trap>.

An excellent starting point for learning more about the SLF is the PennState Extension SLF Management Resources at: <https://extension.psu.edu/spotted-lanternfly>. These resources include articles with instructions on locating, identifying, and treating SLF egg masses. Additional information is also available concerning pesticide efficacy/safety and business requirements for an SLF permit.

A promising recent development is the discovery that the Spotted Lanternfly is attracted to vibration, as that generated by a 60Hz power line. Read the short, interesting article about this new development at: <https://www.usda.gov/media/blog/2024/01/19/spotted-lanternfly-reveals-potential-weakness>.



VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED

There are openings on Township Committees including Recreation Advisory Committee and the Agricultural Advisory Council. Washington Township Committee openings can also be found on the Township website at www.washtwpberks.org.

Not all volunteers need to be committee members! If you are a township resident and would like to volunteer your time to participate with the planning efforts or just on the day of an event, Washington Township would like to hear from you. Depending on the event, volunteering with your kids can be a great opportunity to spend time with your family and meet other residents of the township. Volunteer applications can be found on the Township website or can be picked up at the Township office. If interested, please contact Township Manager Susan Brown at the Township office at 610-845-7760.



ATTENTION ALL RESIDENTS

Want to see your photographs in the next Township's Newsletter or on our website? The Township is always looking for amateur photographs to include in our newsletters or to be placed on our website. The photographs should include subjects, such as landscapes, sporting events, nature, or the environment. In order for your photographs to be considered, they should be taken only in Washington Township. Submit all photographs by email to parks@washtwpberks.org. We will notify you if your photograph(s) has been selected for use by the Township.



Photo by Lora Stull



Photo by Mark Bedle

*Thank you Lora and Mark
for your beautiful photos!*

COMMUNITY ROOM RENTALS

The Community Room may be used for activities such as parties, showers, meetings, dinners and other approved gatherings and can accommodate 60 to 70 persons comfortably. It is equipped with a kitchen sink, refrigerator, microwave oven, standard stove, air conditioning and lots of counter space.

Rental fees are as follows:

- Residents: \$150.00 (\$60.00 for rental and \$90.00 security deposit)
- Non Residents: \$175.00 (\$75.00 for rental and \$100.00 security deposit)

Township Committee Members:

- \$100.00 (\$40.00 for rental and \$60.00 security deposit). Note: This is a one-time use per year per family at this rate for all Committee Members.

Meetings:

- \$75.00 (\$25.00 for rental and \$50.00 for security deposit). Does NOT include use of facilities except for coffee and light refreshments.

THE ABOVE RATES ARE ACCEPTABLE FOR FOUR (4) HOURS. AFTER THAT, \$15.00 PER HOUR WILL BE CHARGED.

It is best to phone or stop in the Township Office first to look over the facilities. If you are interested in a particular date to rent the community room, the completed application (available on website) and a check made payable to Washington Township will reserve the date.



PICNIC PAVILION RENTALS

Consider having your family reunion or birthday party at our large picnic pavilions. We have pavilions available at both the Washington Township Park on Victoria Drive and the Barto Community Park on Barto Road. Each has electricity, nine - 6 person picnic tables and two - 8 person handicapped tables. There are port-o-potties nearby. Outdoor activities include a walking path, playground, basketball, and baseball & sports fields (when not in use with our sports teams' partners).

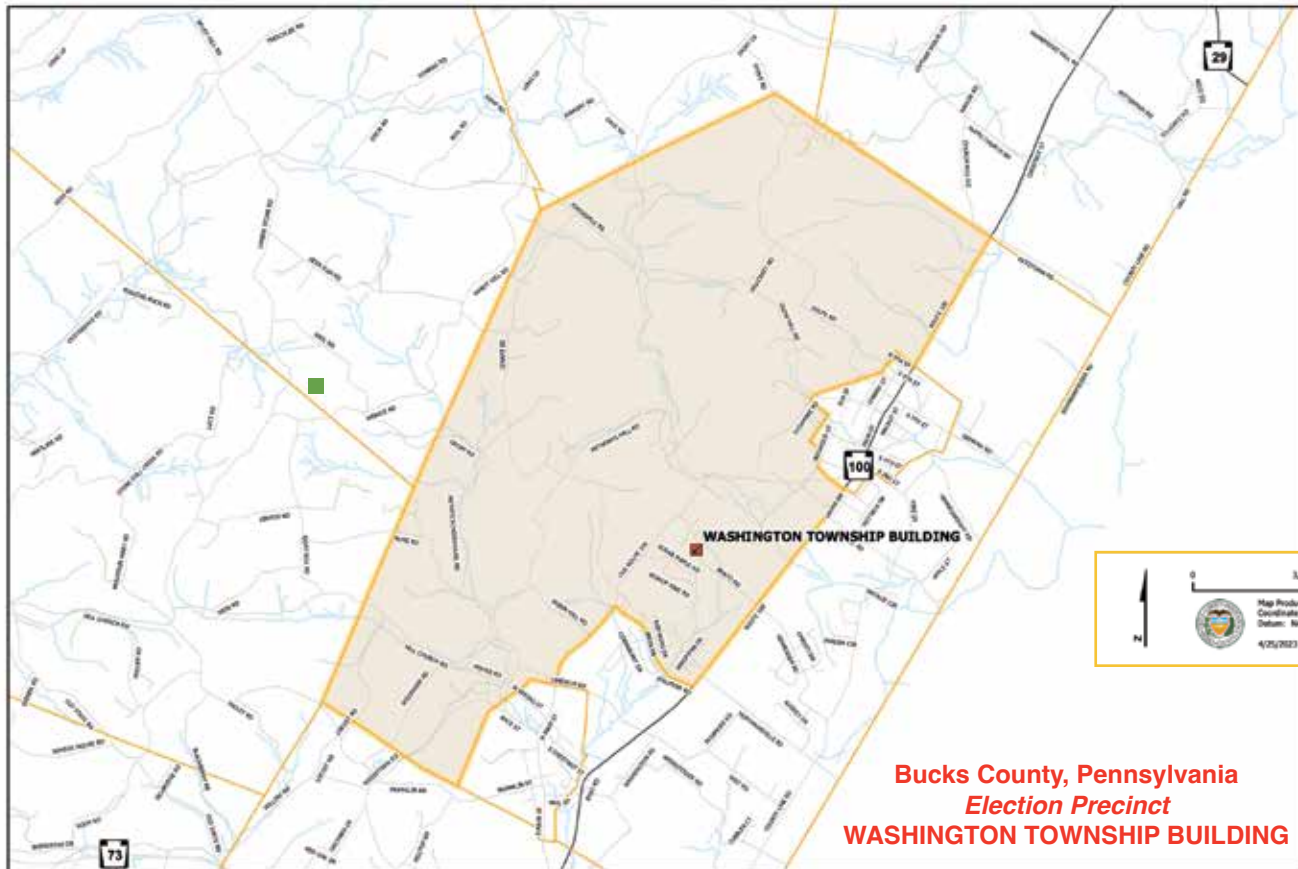
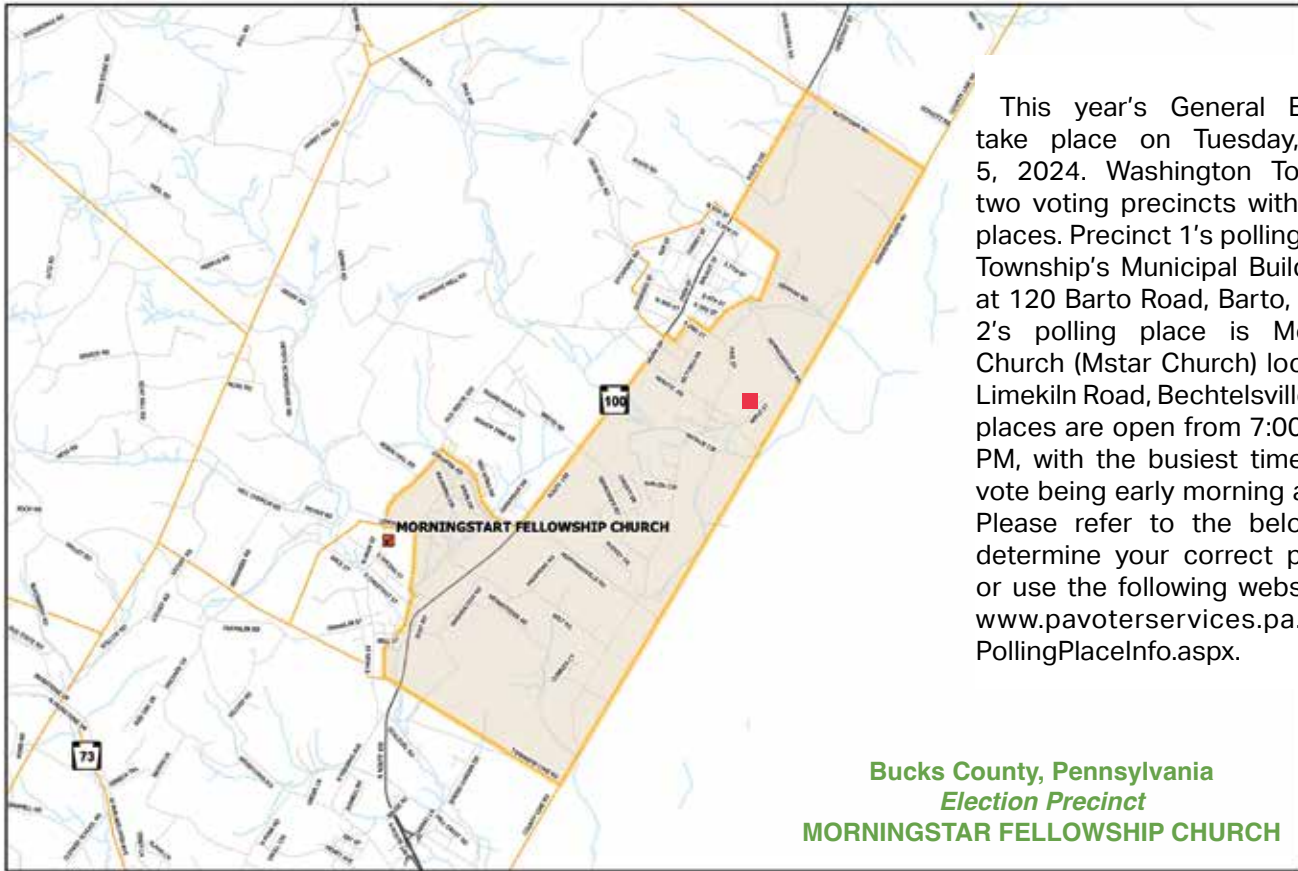
Rental Fees are as follows:

- Washington Township Residents: \$100.00 (\$50.00 for Rental and \$50.00 for Security Deposit) Please note: If no damage done to the pavilion area, the Security Deposit will be returned, thus the actual fee for a resident is \$50.00).
- Non-Residents: \$150.00 (\$100.00 for Rental and \$50.00 for Security Deposit) Please note: If no damage done to the pavilion area, the Security Deposit will be returned, thus the actual fee for a non-resident is \$100.00).

It is best to phone the Township Office FIRST if you are interested in a particular date to rent the pavilion to be sure that the pavilion is free for your special event. That way you can reserve the date, fill out the Application along with your check to reserve the pavilion and return to the Township Office.



TOWNSHIP ELECTION INFORMATION



HOW CAN YOU PROTECT WATER RESOURCES AND DRINKING WATER QUALITY?

How can you protect water resources and drinking water quality?

Do you have a stream or pond in or near to your property? Does your property drain into streams or ponds?

A riparian buffer is a vegetated area near a stream, creek, pond or lake that helps to shade and protect the waterway from nearby land uses. A forested buffer is essential for a healthy stream, providing vital habitat for wildlife and acting as a sponge to absorb polluted stormwater runoff before it can enter the stream.

Designing Your Riparian Buffer

When planning your buffer, it can be helpful to break your planting up into three zones, with zone 1 starting at the water's edge and zones 2 and 3 moving further inland. Each zone is designed to provide different benefits to the stream and should consist of certain plant species.

Zone 1 - begins at water's edge and consists of large native trees and shrubs that can tolerate wet conditions. This provides bank stabilization and shade for the stream; and also leaves, berries, and other organic material provide food and habitat for aquatic organisms.

Zone 2 - next to zone 1, consists of a variety of native trees and shrubs. This slows stormwater runoff which prevents erosion and recharges the groundwater supply. The vegetation helps to absorb nutrients and pollutants carried by stormwater runoff.

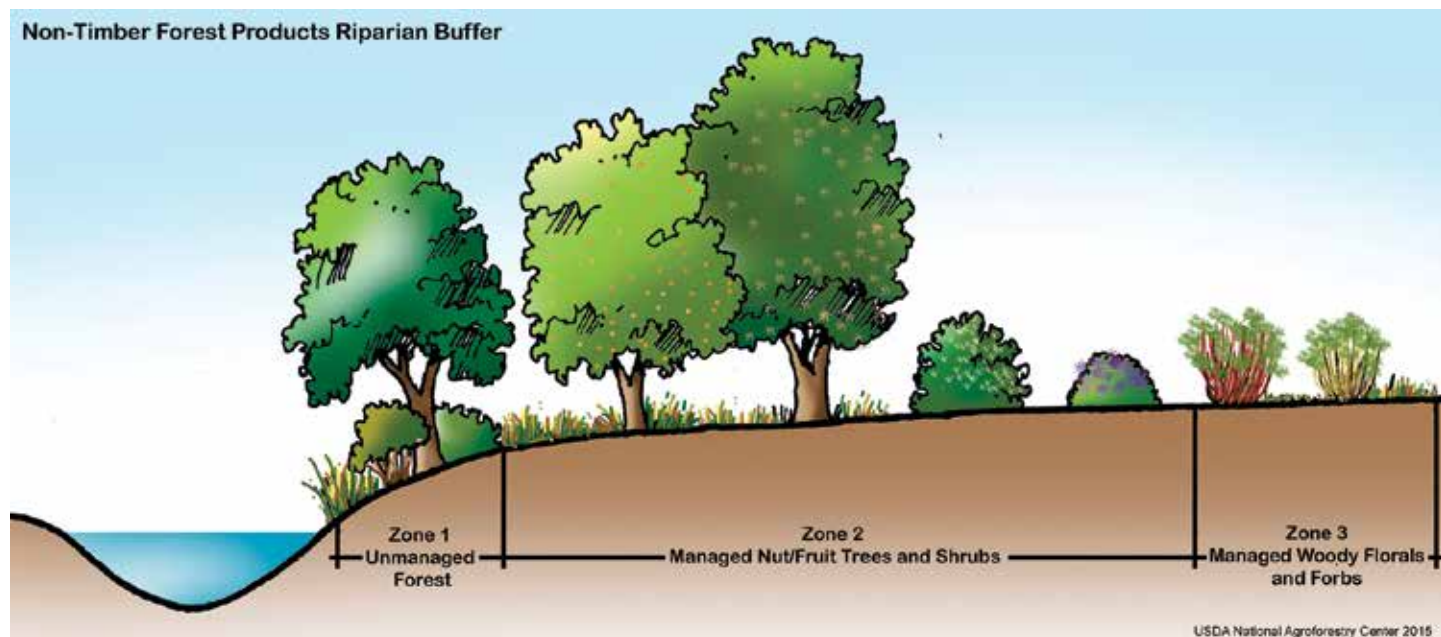
Zone 3 - next to zone 2 and the furthest inland, consists of native grasses and wildflowers. This is designed to slow and capture sediment, nutrients and other pollutants.

Caring For Your Riparian Buffer

Early on, you will need to maintain your buffer regularly to ensure it functions properly. Once it is established, you will

want to monitor it periodically and perform any necessary maintenance. Here are some common maintenance tasks you will need to keep in mind: water your plants weekly when they are first planted and during droughts; weed around the base of trees and shrubs and remove any invasive species; do not use pesticides in riparian areas; mow Zone 3 once or twice a year as needed to prevent overgrowth; protect your plantings from deer browse and rub by using tree tubes or fencing; prune any dead, dying or diseased branches from your trees and shrubs.

Source: Information - Perkiomen Watershed Conservancy



USDA National Agroforestry Center 2015

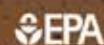
Stormwater: Where It Flows, Everything Goes

When it rains, snows, or sleet, water hits hard surfaces and takes anything on that surface with it, through drains, pipes, and ditches to local rivers, lakes, and streams.



Where Stormwater Flows, Everything Goes

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2024 EVENTS CALENDAR

Premier community events in the Washington Township area

June 15th – First Responder's Day w/Bike rodeo & car seat check + Sidewalk Chalk event (BPA)

June 22nd – ACL Cornhole Tournament (BPA)

June 23rd – Berks Nature Lecture (RAC)

June 28th – Line Dancing (BPA)

August 3rd – Veggie Swap (RAC)

August 9th – Line Dancing (BPA)

August TBD – StoryWalk (BARDS)

September 7th – Veggie Swap (RAC)

September 13th – Line Dancing (BPA)

September 28th – Fall Fest/Touch-A-Truck (BPA)

September TBD – Annual Dog Swim (BARDS)

October 5th – Veggie Swap (RAC)

October 11th – Line Dancing (BPA)

October 26th – Trunk or Treat (RAC)

October TBD – Truck or Treat and Free Movie (BARDS)

November 23rd & 24th – Craft Show (BARDS)

November TBD – Bechtelsville Bonfire (BPA)

November TBD – Washington Township Bonfire (RAC)

December TBD – Santa in the Park (BPA)

Event Hosts:

BARDS – Bally Area Recreation Development Society

BPA – Bechtelsville Park Association

RAC – Washington Township Recreation Advisory Committee

Event details can be found on each host's Facebook page or website.

Washington Township is also a member of the Pottstown Area Regional Recreation Committee (PARRC) to partner with nearby communities that share recreational events and resources. Please look at the upcoming events that are posted on their web site at www.parrc.net and explore the recreational activities that our region has to offer!

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INVASIVE PLANT SPECIES INFORMATION

Invasive species have been introduced to our State and Township through both accidental importation and historic & current horticultural practices. Invasive Species pose a risk to our native vegetation and forests by primarily outcompeting native species for light and nutrients. As a homeowner, you can help in eliminating invasive plant species by removing them from your property. Below is a list of four invasive plant species we have present in our Township and additional information about their removal:

Autumn Olive: This ornamental shrub was introduced in North American in the mid-1800s. Autumn olive will grow pretty much anywhere and are typically found along roads, in active & abandoned pastures, at forest edges and disturbed soil locations. Due to its rapid growth rate, it will outcompete native vegetation and because of its ability to create its own nitrogen, it alters the chemical composition of the soils around it, preventing the growth of native plant species. More information regarding Autumn Olive and how to control it can be found on the PennState Extension Website: <https://extension.psu.edu/autumn-olive>.



Multiflora Rose: This ornamental shrub was also introduced in North American in the mid-1800s. Multiflora Rose will grow anywhere from full sun to shade and are typically found roadside, active & abandoned pastures, forest edges and under forest canopy. Due to its formation of dense thickets, it will outcompete native vegetation. More information regarding Multiflora Rose and how to control it can be found on the PennState Extension Website: <https://extension.psu.edu/multiflora-rose>.

Mile-a-Minute Weed: This trailing vine was introduced in York County, PA in the 1930s. Mile-a-Minute Weed will grow anywhere with sun and are typically found roadside, active & abandoned pastures, wetlands, streambanks and forest edges. Due to its rapid growth rate and dense foliage, this weed blankets and suffocates native vegetation. More information regarding Mile-a-Minute Weed and how to control it can be found on the PennState Extension Website: <https://extension.psu.edu/mile-a-minute>.

Japanese Barberry: This ornamental shrub was introduced in North American in the 1875. Japanese Barberry will grow anywhere with full sun to shade and are typically used as a living fence or for landscaping beds. Due to its ability to rapidly spread by seed dispersal and infest forest understory, it is now considered an invasive weed by the United States Department of Agriculture. In 2021, Pennsylvania began to phase out the sale of Japanese Barberry with a complete ban took place in October 2023. Residents are encouraged to manually remove any Japanese Barberry they have planted on their properties. More information regarding Japanese Barberry and how to control it can be found on the PennState Extension Website: <https://extension.psu.edu/japanese-barberry>.

Golden Bamboo: This plant is popular for many home gardeners wanting to plant a natural privacy screen, or to add height to their garden plantings. However, this non-native invasive grass is capable of escaping from residential areas and into natural spaces where it forms dense monocultures, competing with native plants. Food resources and habitats for wildlife are degraded by invading bamboo. More information regarding Golden Bamboo and how to control it can be found on the University of Maryland Extension Website: <https://extension.umd.edu/resource/containing-and-removing-bamboo/>

The general rule of thumb when addressing invasive plant species is to start in areas that are less infested. Eradicating highly infested areas is difficult, if not impossible, but also starting small gives one a sense of accomplishment. Also, pay special attention to the control method(s) listed in the links provided. Using the wrong method or at the wrong time, may result in further spread of the invasive species and also result in wasted money and resources.



RED BARN RECYCLING CENTER

Thank you for recycling!

Recycling center hours of operation are on the **First Saturday** of the month from 9:00 - 11:00 AM; and on the **Third Wednesday** of the month from 7:00 - 8:00 PM. (No Wed. nights November-February due to winter weather) **The center is for Washington Twp. Residents only.**

The Red Barn recycling center is operated by **volunteers, and we can always use more volunteers.**

Due to overall safety, **we only want the volunteers to be in the recycling center.**

For 2024 our recycling center is accepting the following materials:

- Corrugated Cardboard – please separate and drop off at the front of the Red Barn.
- Aluminum Cans – please separate and drop off at the front of the Red Barn. No pie plates or foil accepted
- Comingled plastics, metal and cereal boxes – please place in the small brown dumpsters located in front of the Red Barn. No glass is being accepted
- Newspaper, mail, office paper and magazines – please place in the green dumpster at the rear of the Red Barn

No plastic bags accepted, even if it has a recycling symbol. Take plastic bags to the grocery stores.

Nothing else please! When in doubt, leave it out. Also, the items need to be clean – please wash them out. No pizza boxes. **The volunteers don't have the time to sort your items.** We need you to do this! Please sort at home.

You can check the Berks County Solid Waste Facility website about other items, such as electronics and appliances.

Thank you for your cooperation and teamwork, and patience with occasional changes. And a big thank you to our long-term recycling partner, Cogle's Recycling. We are all working together to assure proper recycling and keep these materials out of the landfills and oceans.



Washington Township Environmental Advisory Council and the recycling team

REFLECTIVE ADDRESS SIGN PROGRAM

To avoid delays with emergency responses to Township properties, Eastern Berks Fire Department has a program to provide road side reflective address markers and to document special conditions that responders should be aware of. The price per sign has increased to \$30. Eastern Berks Fire Department is providing the signs as a public service and only charges the actual cost of the signs. Please contact the Township at 610-845-7760 to order your sign.

Thank You

Washington Township would like to thank the businesses that appear in this newsletter and recognize them each as supporters and cornerstones of our community. For it is with their contributions that this newsletter has been produced at no charge to our residents. The Town would like to further request that citizens, in response, patronize these businesses first when given a choice and let them know that you saw their ad in this newsletter.



2024 TAX RATES

The Washington Township Supervisors have approved lowering the Township Real Estate tax rate for 2024 9.26%, from a rate of 2.70 mills to 2.45 mills. You will have to look closely to see this on your bill as the reduction only applies to the Township portion of the bill. The County and School District Real Estate tax rates are both going to increase for 2024 and will overshadow the progress made on taxes by the Township.

2024 PAVING & ROAD PROJECTS

Our 2024 road paving projects will include the resurfacing of all the roads in Victoria Village (Laura, Lindy, Stacey, and Victoria Drives). It is anticipated that these projects will begin after the end of the 23/24 school year. The township will also be working on repairing winter damage and general road surface maintenance throughout the year. Based on available information, the PADOT will be working on completing the bridge project on East Chestnut Street and commencing work on the resurfacing of Route 100 and upgrades to payment marking at the West Branch Perkiomen Creek bridge on Forgedale Road.

In addition to paving projects, the Township is moving forward with installing a crosswalk on Niantic Road at the Washington Township Park. The new crosswalk will allow park users to safely traverse Niantic Road.

WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT THE WEATHER?

It can be overwhelming when we constantly read about severe storms, floods, droughts, and wildfires whose severity and occurrences are increasing, due to our earth's atmosphere warming. This warming is documented by weather history over the past 100 years. Our Township and surrounding communities have recently experienced some devastating floods and just last summer large portions of the United States had to deal with smoke pollution from massive wildfires located in Canada.

What can we do about this? A lot.

The warming of earth's atmosphere is in part, due to carbon concentrations increasing in the atmosphere. Man-made carbon, in the form of carbon dioxide, is mostly produced by emissions from burning fossil fuels. Green vegetation absorbs the carbon. Tropical rainforests in South America and other areas of the world are critical for heavy volumes of carbon absorption.

But what about our backyards here in eastern Pennsylvania? For our part, plant more trees to help reduce atmospheric carbon concentrations. Oaks are the best carbon-absorbing tree, but any type of hardwood tree will help to reduce carbon in the atmosphere. If you own forestland, look into the Family Forest Carbon Program sponsored by The Nature Conservancy.

What else can we do? Turn portions of your property into a native species natural meadow that absorbs more carbon than a mowed lawn. This is attractive, especially if wildflowers are present, and is valuable for insect populations that



songbirds need to feed on. Whether you have 2-5 acres, or only a small house lot, native species gardens are possible. This means less mowing, and lawn mowers and tractors emitting carbon! More information about native species meadows can be found at: <https://extension.psu.edu/warm-season-grasses-and-wildlife>.

Of course, there are other ways to reduce our carbon footprint. For example, hybrid vehicles, solar power systems, and limiting air travel, can significantly reduce one's carbon footprint.

What if our individual life is carbon-zero: we absorb the amount of carbon that we produce? Wow! Let's all do our part, and our property is a wonderful place to start.



Fireworks Safety

Fireworks are often used to mark special events and holidays. However, they are not safe in the hands of consumers. Fireworks cause thousands of burns and eye injuries each year. People can enjoy fireworks safely if they follow a few simple safety tips:

BE CAREFUL!

- » Be safe. If you want to see fireworks, go to a public show put on by experts.
- » Do not use consumer fireworks.
- » Keep a close eye on children at events where fireworks are used.

CONSUMER FIREWORKS

NFPA is opposed to consumer use of fireworks. This includes sparklers and firecrackers. Even sparklers burn hot enough to cause third-degree burns.



FACTS

- ! Fireworks cause an average of almost 18,500 reported fires per year.
- ! Sparklers account for more than one-quarter of emergency room fireworks injuries.



Your Source for SAFETY Information

NFPA Public Education Division • 1 Batterymarch Park, Quincy, MA 02169

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