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Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
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Room 308, Main Capitol
Harrisburg, PA 17120

CONTACT: Terry Brady
(717) 877-6315

DCNR GRANT HELPS CONSERVE LAND IN LOWER SUSQUEHANNA GREENWAY

LOWER WINDSOR TOWNSHIP, York County -- To foster open space preservation, protect the watershed and promote outdoor recreation and heritage tourism in the Lower Susquehanna River watershed, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Secretary Michael DiBerardinis today presented a \$1.4 million grant for the preservation of three land tracts.

The funds were presented to the Farm & Natural Lands Trust of York County for payment toward the acquisition of two properties, totaling approximately 59 acres, in Hellam and Lower Windsor townships, and Wrightsville Borough, York County. Earmarked for passive recreation and preservation of open space, the properties are linked by the Mason-Dixon Trail.

The DCNR grant is matched by the donation of a third 2.25-acre property that is known as Historic Pleasant Garden and is also in Lower Windsor Township.

All three properties, along with the Highpoint Scenic Vista and Recreation Area, will be part of the new Susquehanna Heritage Park under development along the river.

“Preservation of these three properties is a great example of people working together toward a shared goal — this is exactly what our Community Conservation Partnerships grants are designed to promote,” said DiBerardinis. “Here we have private land owners; county,

township and borough officials; organizations; and a land trust all united to protect open spaces and create recreational and heritage tourism opportunities in York County.”

Land trust representatives and local officials joined the DCNR secretary at a ceremony hosted by the Lancaster-York Heritage Region at the Highpoint Scenic Vista & Recreation Area.

“The Farm and Natural Lands Trust of York County is pleased to be able to play a part in the preservation of these properties,” said Michael Goodling, president of the organization.

“Preserving our special places through acquisitions and conservation easements will enhance the quality of life for our residents and will also benefit future generations.

“I want to thank the private landowners in this partnership who have made a commitment to preserving this inspiring and significant landscape through their cooperation and donation of land valued at various levels. Without DCNR and the commitment of these private landowners — County Line Quarry, Grove Enterprise LLC and John and Kathryn Zimmerman — these transactions would not be taking place.”

Specifically, the grant aids in preservation of:

- Wilton Riverside Lands — This 44-acre parcel is adjacent to the Susquehanna River and includes a portion of the Mason-Dixon Trail. The site connects to other portions of the Susquehanna Heritage Park by the trail and is located along the Lower Susquehanna Greenway;
- Oscar Leibhart site — Roughly 15 acres, this parcel is a National Register of Historic Places archeological site. It is part of one of the last known villages of the Susquehannock Indians dating to the late 1600s. The site is adjacent to Safe Harbor Water Power Corporation’s Klines Run Park and will also be connected by the Mason-Dixon Trail to other parts of the Susquehanna Heritage Park;
- Pleasant Garden — A renovated home constructed in the 1730s on 2.25 acres now serves as the office of the Lancaster-York Heritage Region, one of 12 state-designated heritage areas. The facility will be used to provide recreational and educational opportunities relative to the cultural and environmental resources of the Susquehanna River Greenway. The property was donated by John and Kathryn Zimmerman to the Lancaster-York Heritage Region in support of the Susquehanna Heritage Park.

DiBerardinis said today's grant presentation comes just six months after he announced Governor Edward G. Rendell's pledge to invest \$2 million to help protect 3,500 acres of open space in Lancaster and York counties for outdoor recreation, wildlife habitat and heritage development.

At that time, DiBerardinis said the money would help the Lancaster County Conservancy purchase the lands along the Lower Susquehanna River from PPL Corp. The company intends to donate the money to the new owners as part of a sustainable endowment fund that will be used to manage and improve public access to the lands.

Today's grant presentation was the highlight of a two-day visit to the Lower Susquehanna during which the secretary toured the river by kayak and pontoon boat; inspected utility companies' lands along the waterway; and addressed area government, business and conservation leaders.

DiBerardinis commended the strong partnerships demonstrated by many, including the Farm and Natural Lands Trust of York County; Lancaster-York Heritage Region; Archaeological Conservancy; Mason Dixon Trail System; Hellam and Lower Windsor townships; and Wrightsville Borough.

Funding for the grant comes from the Keystone Fund, a DCNR account generated from a portion of the realty transfer tax. For more information about DCNR's grant program, visit www.dcnr.state.pa.us and click on the "Recreation and Conservation" quick link.

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