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Complimentary

January 24, 2008
Volume 6, Number 17
Two sections 52 pages

THE VOICE OF CENTRAL AND NORTH BUCKS COUNTY

Solebury set to purchase Ingham Spring

Negotiations for many
years finally bear fruit

Bridget Wingert

Solebury Township is taking the final step toward purchasing the 48 acres of Ingham Spring and its surroundings.

The supervisors voted last week to begin the formal process of transferring the site from the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission to the township.

"We are very optimistic that outside grants will offset much of the cost to the township," said Ruth Ann Wilson, chair of the board of supervisors. "Ingham Spring is of great significance to the region, its environment, culture and history. County, state and federal officials have all expressed a strong interest in preserving and protecting this beautiful resource."

The action came after decades of hearings,

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MARK LUDAK

Irreplaceable resource

Ingham Spring, which produces 2,000 gallons of water a minute, is an ancient spring that was used by the Lenni Lenape, who called it Achewetong. The limestone spring, which feeds into Aquetong Creek, once powered the mills downstream in New Hope.

Solebury is purchasing Ingham Spring

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planning and negotiation with state and federal agencies.

The township has spent much of its efforts on the Ingham Spring project over the last several years identifying outside funding sources and gathering commitments for repairs before taking title to the site.

The township expects to complete the \$7.5 million project at a net cost to Solebury of \$200,000.

State and federal agencies have committed to repairing the lake dam, which is estimated to cost \$6 million. The township negotiated to have up to \$837,000 of the costs of repairing the dam applied toward the purchase price of the property.

Sen. Arlen Specter and Rep. Patrick Murphy have added the lake dam repairs to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers program budget. State Sen. Chuck

McIlhinney and Rep. Bernie O'Neill have set aside \$1.4 million in state capital program funds for the site.

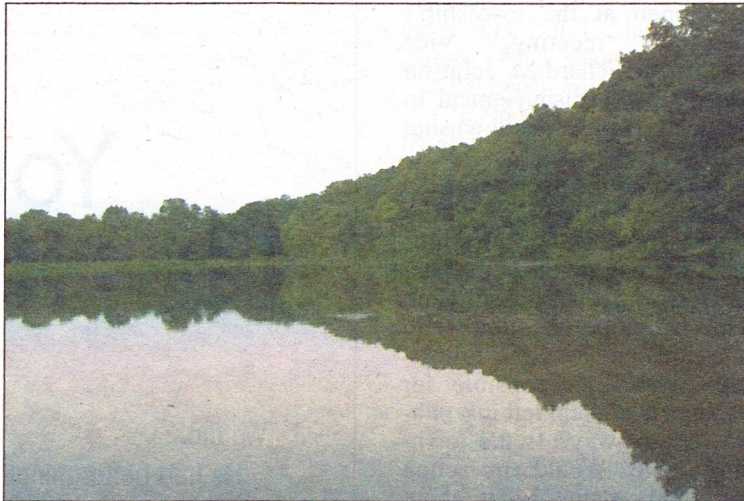
The township anticipates that the remaining \$414,000 to purchase the site will be offset by more than \$200,000 in Bucks County preservation grants. Ingham Spring is the only qualifying project in Solebury.

"When all of these grants are taken into account, the cost to the township is less than three cents on the dollar," said Wilson. "After many long years of careful planning and negotiation, we are finally able to purchase the site with a minimal investment, and focus our

efforts on restoring it for all of Solebury to enjoy."

Supervisors authorized township officers to execute an agreement with the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission for the transfer of the Ingham Spring site to the township. McIlhinney and O'Neill will introduce legislation authorizing the final transfer of the land after an agreement is made.

The parks and recreation board has been working on a master plan for Ingham Spring, using the site as a passive park with facilities for fishing, nature walking and an environmental education center.



Aquetong Lake at Ingham Spring.

MARK LUDAK