



Solebury Messenger

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Transfer of Ingham Spring to Solebury Is Imminent

*Grants Reduce Township Cost to
Three Cents on the Dollar*

A Little History

After 12 years of complex negotiations and many twists and tangles, the Township seems finally on a straight and smooth path to taking ownership of Ingham Spring and the surrounding lake and property.

A previous Board of Supervisors began the process in 1996, but negotiations with numerous state and federal agencies, boards, and commissions over the preservation and transfer of the historically significant, ecologically sensitive property were enormously complicated.

Whether to transfer the 45-acre property to the Township outright or share ownership of the property, who would take responsibility for extensive repairs to the dam, what role the state might play after the transfer of the property, and crafting the most prudent agreement for Solebury residents and taxpayers were some of the issues that needed to be resolved before the transaction could go forward.

After many years of discussion and study, and with the constant support of several area lawmakers, the Township and state have begun the formal process of transferring the property to Solebury.

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Ingham Spring (cont. from page 1)

Historic and Natural Cornerstone

The year negotiations between the Township and the Pa. Fish and Boat Commission started was the same one in which residents overwhelmingly passed Solebury's first land preservation referendum (1,083-87), and from the start, it was clear to Township officials that the transfer of the Ingham Spring property to Solebury was a perfect fit with the municipality's new preservation mandate.

Deeded by William Penn to James Logan just one year before the 1702 incorporation of the Township, the property has historical significance that extends as far back as the Leni Lenape people who occupied the area before European settlers arrived.

In addition, Ingham Spring is the largest cold-water limestone spring in the five-county region surrounding Philadelphia, and many native species of plant and animal life call the property home.

The earlier Board—and subsequent Boards in the years that followed—all believed that repairs to the dam should be made so that the spring would continue to provide a source of water for the lake, that the entire property should be protected by a conservation easement, and that the site should be used for activities that showcase local history and the environment.

Finally!

The current Board of Supervisors voted in January to begin the formal process of transferring the Ingham Spring property to Solebury Township.

Solebury plans to use federal, state, and county grant funding to finance much of the cost of the purchase and dam restoration project. When all is said and done, the Township expects to complete this \$7.5 million project at a net cost to Solebury of just \$200,000—or three cents on the dollar!

“Outside grants will offset much of the potential cost to the Township,” said Board Chair Ruth Ann Wilson. “Ingham Spring is



INGHAM FALLS—The beautiful Ingham falls flow into the stream below at a rate of approximately 2,000 gallons per minute. As Supervisor Chair Ruth Ann Wilson has said, Ingham Falls “can serve as a constant reminder to us of the abundance and beauty we enjoy in Solebury—and of the care we must take to understand and carefully manage our water resources.” (Photo by Mark Ludak of Lambertville, N.J.)

of great significance to the region—environmentally, culturally, and historically. Consequently, county, state, and federal officials have a strong interest in helping us preserve and protect it.”

The significant savings is expected to result from several successful agreements:

- The Township successfully negotiated to have up to \$837,000 of the costs of repairing the dam applied toward the purchase price of the property.
- State and federal officials have committed to paying for repairs to the dam, estimated at more than \$6 million: U.S. Senator Arlen Specter and U.S. Representative Patrick Murphy added the repairs to the 2008 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers program budget, and state Senator Chuck McIlhinney and state Representative Bernie O’Neill have set

aside \$1.4 million in state capitol program funds for the site.

- The Township anticipates that the remaining \$414,000 needed to purchase the site will be offset by more than \$200,000 in Bucks County preservation grants—funds for which only Ingham Spring qualifies in Solebury.

“When all of these grants are taken into account, the cost to the Township will be less than three cents on the dollar,” said Wilson. “We are finally able to purchase the site with a minimal local investment, and can begin to focus our efforts on restoring it for all of Solebury to enjoy.”

Once the formal transfer of the property is completed, the Solebury Parks and Recreation Board will resume developing a Master Plan for the site, with the input and involvement of residents and volunteers. ♪