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Friends of Princeton Nursery Lands

Friends of Princeton Nursery Lands leaps into high gear! For many years, Friends of Princeton Nursery Lands has been working with local organizations and with South Brunswick Township to assure the preservation of the land once owned by Princeton Nurseries. We are proud of the role that we have played in the preservation of the over 240 acres of former Princeton Nurseries property. This includes scenic landscapes and historic properties that have been preserved by South Brunswick Township, New Jersey Green Acres, Princeton University, Wm Flemer's Sons, Inc. and Plainsboro Township.

But our work has just begun, and we face extraordinary challenges to assure that this historic and cultural landscape is restored and developed to its full potential. By working in concert with state and local government and organizations, we are helping to further the development of the potential of this extraordinary site, which we believe will serve as a resource for the entire region in years to come. We need your help to make FPNL grow. You can do this by joining us at walks, talks and events and by spreading the word.

Arbor Day Celebration....As many of you know, Mapleton Preserve had its "Grand Opening" on April 29th, 2006 when its gates were opened for an Arbor Day Celebration. The event, spearheaded by the D & R Canal State Park to celebrate the opening of their new Headquarters Building, attracted over 500 people for walks through the preserve, talks on Princeton Nurseries history, bluegrass music and networking with the over 20 community groups who set up displays for the event.

The day was glorious, and the dogwoods, viburnums, lilacs and wisteria that grace the Princeton Nurseries Kingston site were in full bloom. Friends of Princeton Nursery Lands played a major role in the planning of the event, designing and helping to stuff the invitations, preparing press releases for the event, and producing the flyer that was distributed to Kingston residents.

FPNL volunteers staffed our table at the event, which highlighted tree varieties developed by William Flemer III, of Princeton Nurseries fame. We also helped with tours of the Headquarters building and led an enthusiastic group of walkers on a tree tour through Mapleton Preserve. In addition, FPNL provided breakfast for dedicated volunteers who were honored for their service to the Dept of Parks and Forestry in an awards ceremony at Mapleton Preserve earlier that day.

Two door prizes for the Arbor Day celebration, a 'Snow Queen' Oak Leaf Hydrangea and a pair of 'Green Giant' arborvitae were awarded to new FPNL members. We are grateful to nearby Mapleton Nurseries, who generously donated the trees, which were won by Pete and Lucille Doviak and by Kathy Fauzt.

Speakers at the event included DEP Director Lisa Jackson, Congressman Rush Holt, Andrea Bonville, head of Princeton Nurseries' Research and Development in Allentown, and South Brunswick Mayor Frank Gambatase, whose tireless negotiations were instrumental in the preservation of the property. At the Arbor Day Celebration, Mayor Gambatase outlined the roles of all the key players in this historic acquisition which involved five years of negotiations between South Brunswick, Princeton University, Princeton Nurseries, Wm. Flemer's Sons, the Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) and the New Jersey Green Acres Program.

World renowned plantsman William Flemer III and his family had a front row seat of honor at the opening ceremonies. His son William Flemer IV gave a superb slide talk on the Flemer family, and provided bluegrass music, crooning with fellow musicians from the Riverside Bluegrass Band. Mountain View, a band from NJDEP also provided music.

Homecoming: Several past and present employees of Princeton Nurseries attended the Arbor Day Celebration at Mapleton Preserve. Many of them have expressed a strong desire to come back again and share stories of the days when Princeton Nurseries operated in Kingston, and to help with its restoration. We hope to be able to sponsor walks and talks in the future, so that the rich history of this site can be shared!

New Home for the D & R Canal State Park: Many of you may have noticed the new wooden signs at 145 Mapleton Road, Kingston, at the former entrance into Princeton Nurseries. The D & R Canal State Park is now headquartered in Kingston, in what was previously, the main Sales and Administration office for one of the oldest and most famous tree nurseries in the nation. The Superintendent of the Park, Susan Herron, now has her office there, along with DEP historian Vicki Chirco, and naturalist Stephanie Fox.

The staff is very excited to be in its new home, as they finally have an educational building to hold interpretive programs, as well as room to develop future exhibits to interpret the history of the canal as well as that of Princeton Nurseries. This newsletter will help to highlight upcoming events at the Princeton Nurseries Kingston site that are sponsored by the D & R Canal State Park. Another great way to find out about Park events is to check their website at dandrcanal.com.

Friends of Princeton Nursery Lands honored with Historic Preservation award: Every year, the NJ Dept. of Environmental Protection's Office of Historic Preservation and the NJ Historic Sites Council honors individuals, groups and agencies working to protect the state's valuable historic resources. On April 29, 2006, Friends of Princeton Nursery Lands was one of the many groups honored for its role in the acquisition of the historic Princeton Nursery Lands Kingston site. Also honored were South Brunswick Township, Princeton University, the Kingston Greenways Association, and the Kingston

Historical Society. The New Jersey Historic Preservation Awards Program is held annually during National Preservation Week to increase public awareness of historic preservation; recognize projects of excellent quality and contributions by individuals, organizations and agencies; and acknowledge volunteer contributions to preserve historic resources.

Tree stories: Many of the varieties developed by Princeton Nurseries are top in their class and known the world over. One of the grandest features in the Mapleton Preserve is the rows of Ginkgos that are planted there. These slender columnar specimens are living fossils; recognizable Ginkgos are seen in the fossil record dating back over 270 million years. Ginkgos are dioecious, i.e. they have separate sexes, some trees being female and others being male. Although both are stately, the females produce copious quantities of fruit-like seeds in the fall, whose rancid odor many find quite objectionable.

Princeton Nurseries ‘Princeton Sentry’ Ginkgo is a sterile male selection, so bears no fruit. Selected in 1971 by William Flemer III, it was chosen as Tree of the Year in 1996 by the Society of Municipal Arborists because of its hardiness, and resistance to pollution, soil compaction and drought. Its spire-like habit and its resistance to pollution make it an ideal city tree, and its clear yellow fall foliage is striking. A picture of some of the ginkgos near the Headquarters Building, taken by Doug Kiovsy, is shown below.



!!COMING UP!!

May 25: *Tree Tenders*: Job got you down? Boss making you crazy? Need to work out some frustration and get some great aerobic exercise in the process? Join the Tree Tenders on Thursday evening May 25 from 6-7:30, as we take on the honeysuckle vines and wild roses that have overgrown some specimen Japanese red maples. It is very satisfying work, and will help save these trees from being lost in the underbrush. Gloves

and lemonade will be provided; long sleeves are recommended. Bring loppers or clippers if you have them. Contact Karen Linder 609-683-0483 for more information. Rain cancels.

June 11: *Walk in Mapleton Preserve:* Join Friends of Princeton Nursery Lands on Sunday, June 11th at 2:00 for a leisurely walk through Mapleton Preserve. The history of the property will be discussed and many of the fine trees on the property will be pointed out. The walk will start at the Headquarters building.

July 15: *Beginners birding:* Meet at the Headquarters Building for a birdwalk through Mapleton Preserve on Saturday at 9 am. Keys to successful bird identification will be highlighted. Led by Karen Linder. Bring binoculars if you have them.

We're looking for a Few Good Volunteers... Do you have time on your hands? Are you interested in history or nature? Do you have skills such as gardening or arborist experience, finance, website design or grant writing? If so, we would love to hear from you! Friends of Princeton Nursery Lands could use your help in the following areas.

- Working on historic preservation grants.
- Updating our website.
- Creating a professional mailing list
- Removing invasive plants
- Creating a nature or history program in your area of expertise
- Taking care of trees in the new Flemer Arboretum

If any of these projects sounds interesting to you, please contact Karen Linder at karen.linder@bru.bracco.com or call 609-683-0483. We would love to hear from you!

More to come....We hope that you have enjoyed this newsletter; the first of many to come. We are actively seeking new members to help us in our mission of helping to preserve and restore the Princeton Nursery Lands for the enjoyment of present and future generations. Your support is needed in the ongoing efforts to protect and restore this scenic historical landscape. We urge you to become a member of the Friends of Princeton Nursery Lands today!



Website....For now, the Friends of Princeton Nursery Lands website is being hosted by the Kingston Greenways Association (<http://www.kingstongreenways.org/pnl.html>), but we will be establishing a web presence soon. If you want to help with this, let us know!