
Press Release

NEWS

Burlington County
Board of Chosen Freeholders
Mount Holly, NJ 08060
Office of Public Information
Phone 609-265-5028/Fax 609-265-5151
www.co.burlington.nj.us



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Ralph Shrom

Wednesday, August 25, 2010

(609) 265-5028

WILLINGBORO LAKES TO COME UNDER COUNTY PARKS SYSTEM

Freeholders Vote To Accept Ownership of Creek-Front Recreation Site

Burlington County Freeholders today moved a major step closer to bringing Willingboro Lakes under the umbrella of the County parks system by voting to accept ownership of the 105-acre recreation site from Willingboro Township.

It may be another four to six weeks before title actually changes hands. Even then, no major changes are planned for the site, certainly not in the near-term, according to Freeholder Bruce D. Garganio.

“We view the site as a gateway to the county park system, and with its location on the Rancocas Creek, and its proximity to other park properties, we’ll look for creative ways to tie it into the other sites by land and water,” said Garganio.

“As it is now, the property has two gorgeous fishing lakes and an existing network of meandering trails. Our immediate goals will be to make some basic improvements, and to the extent possible, improve access.”

Those improvements will include upgrades to the parking area for the entrance off Beverly-Rancocas Road, adding security gates and trash cans, and placing some new signage, particularly on the trails.

Garganio commended Willingboro Council, and in particular, Mayor Eddie Campbell, Jr. and Councilman Nathaniel Anderson, for working cooperatively with the County.

-more-

PRESS RELEASE: Willingboro Lakes – 8/25/10 – Add One

“They ask that, going forward, we take input from residents on new recreational facilities or other proposed improvements in the park, and we certainly will do that,” he said. “We’ll still be looking at passive recreation.”

Willingboro Lakes fits neatly into the County’s linear park plan along the Rancocas Creek. Other parks in the Rancocas Greenway include Pennington Park in Delanco, Boundary Creek National Resource Area in Moorestown, Long Bridge Park in Hainesport, Smithville Park and Smith’s Woods in Eastampton, and the undeveloped Anderson Farm site in Delran.

Willingboro Lakes was known as Olympia Lakes when it was purchased for \$2 million in 1997, in a unique transaction that resulted in Willingboro Township taking title. A State Green Acres grant funded half the cost, and the remaining \$1 million was funded by a low cost Green Acres loan financed in equal portions by the County and the real estate developer which then owned the property.

The County had no park plan or formal open space acquisition program at that time, so freeholders had no interest in owning the property. In more recent times, Willingboro officials indicated that maintenance and improvement of the park was beyond the township’s current financial means.

“You might say we have come full circle,” said Garganio. “We’re partnering with Willingboro once again, and, once again, the real winners will be County residents.”

###