



## Mountain Retreats are Back!

We're excited to announce this year's schedule of events and cannot wait to welcome you back to the mountain.



### Healing the Heart Through Writing and Art

March 31-April 2

Facilitated by: Juanita Kirton & Julie Bond Genovese

Go Here For More Info  
<https://kirkridge.org/events/healing-the-heart-through-writing-and-art/>

By Art Charlton

**WARREN COUNTY** - Warren County continues to aggressively protect its remaining farmland, with 13 farms totaling more than 1,190 acres permanently preserved by the County and its partners in 2022.

The total cost of preserving these lands was \$5,232,545. Toward this, the State Agriculture Development Committee (SADC) contributed about 70 percent, the County of Warren about 28 percent, and municipalities about 2 percent.

"Preserving these 13 farms cost the County less than \$1.5 million. For every \$1 we spent on farmland preservation this year, we received \$2.50 towards these projects as a match," explained Board of County Commissioners Director Lori Ciesla. "The State, municipalities, and nonprofits have been great partners in helping to fund these projects and this has helped the County leverage its funds to preserve even more land," she added.

According to the Warren County Department of Land Preservation, the County has permanently preserved 326 farms comprising more than 28,468 acres of land. Out of the State's 21 counties, Warren County ranks fourth in total farmland acres preserved and third in total farms preserved, behind only Hunterdon County (462 farms preserved) and Salem County (396 farms preserved). Moreover, out of the seven counties located within the New Jersey Highlands Region, Warren County ranks first in total farmland acres preserved (22,746 acres preserved) and first in total farms (251 farms preserved) within the Highlands Planning and Preservation Areas.

Farmland also has been preserved in all but three of Warren County's 22 municipalities, the Department reports. Being more developed, Hackettstown, Washington Borough, and Phillipsburg lack farmland. More than 1,000 acres of farmland has been preserved in each of 10 municipalities: Allamuchy, Blairstown, Frelinghuysen, Greenwich, Harmony, Hope, Knowlton, Mansfield, Washington Township, and White. Additionally, and notably, over 3,000 acres of farmland have been preserved in two of Warren County's municipalities: Pohatcong Township with 3,169 acres and Franklin Township 3,659 acres.

The County is working to preserve more targeted farms within the County's Agriculture Development Area, including those within the Highlands Agricultural Priority Area, but will assist any interested landowners who are located within the County to evaluate their preservation options. Through the farmland preservation program, the development rights to the land are sold to the County so that the land must always remain in agriculture as working lands. Unlike public parkland, preserved farmland remains in private ownership and is not open to the public.

"In Warren County, agriculture is a \$90 million dollar a year industry," County Commissioner Jason J. Sarnoski explained. "Farming also supports many ancillary businesses while requiring very little in the way of municipal services. Not only are we protecting this land for future growers, but farmers can reinvest the proceeds from preservation back into their operations to buy equipment, supplies and even more land. This helps keep agriculture viable," Sarnoski said.

Although the County has preserved more than 28,000 acres of farmland, Warren County's Director of Land Preservation, Corey Tierney, cautions, "Some people hear that big number and think we're done. But that's only about 38% of the county's 72,000 acres of productive farmland. And that 72,000 acres of farmland is only about one-third of the County's total size. Over 60 percent of our farmland in Warren County remains unpreserved."

"In the face of growing development pressure, we are aggressively preserving our remaining farmland," emphasized Commissioner James R. Kern III. "Warren County is committed to our farming heritage and we will pursue any opportunity with a willing seller. We cannot force farms to be preserved but we always will be an option for our farmers. Our corner of New Jersey puts the garden in 'Garden State' and this board will continue to keep Warren County in that category," Kern said.

The County currently is processing 28 farmland preservation applications totaling 2,362 acres. It expects to permanently preserve another 12 farms totaling in excess of 1,000 acres in 2023. The State and County continue to preserve and encourages anyone interested in preserving their land to contact the Land Preservation Department at (908) 475-7750.



### SLATE BELT REPUBLICAN ASSOCIATION ANNOUNCEMENT

### THE SLATE BELT REPUBLICAN ASSOCIATION INVITES DEDICATED

### REPUBLICANS INTERESTED IN MAKING A DIFFERENCE AND RUNNING

### FOR LOCAL BOROUGH, TOWNSHIP, OR SCHOOL BOARDS TO OUR MEETING.

WHEN: TUESDAY FEBRUARY 14<sup>TH</sup>, 7:00 PM

WHERE: AT THE TROLLEY SHOPS GARAGE

257 E. CENTRAL AVE.

EAST BANGOR.

WE WELCOME YOU TO BRING YOUR PETITIONS FOR SIGNATURES OR DISTRIBUTION, AND WE WILL BE ABLE TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT RUNNING FOR OFFICE.



**Any Republican wanting to support our candidates may join us.**