

Halfmoon Township has an area of approximately 14,000 acres including 3,200 acres of State Game Lands 176. The Township's population increased from 717 in 1980, to 2,375 in 2009 and to 2,549 in 2008, and is forecasted to grow to more than 4,300 by 2030. In 1999 the voters approved a referendum, enabled by passage of Commonwealth of PA Act 153, which enabled the collection of a 2 mil real estate tax for the preservation of open space. The Board of Supervisors formed an Ad Hoc Committee of Township Landowners to develop the Open Space Preservation Ordinance that would establish operating guidelines for the Open Space Preservation Board (OSPB) was appointed, many of those same Ad Hoc Committee members remained to serve on the initial OSPB. In the first phase of the program, the Township used the unique approach of leasing development rights from landowners with eleven or more acres for a period of 99 years. In 2004, three properties with a combined area of 232 acres were enrolled, but no new applications were received in 2005. Concerned about the lack of interest, the Supervisors, on recommendation of the OSPB, enhanced the program by authorizing advanced lease payments of up to twenty years. As a result, from 2006 through 2011, 25 new properties comprising of 1,776 acres were conserved. As of January 2017, there are 2,008 acres preserved for 99 years. To date, the Township has collected \$2,939,440.47 in taxes and interest for the OSPP and has expended \$1,775,533.27 from 2000-2015.

The Township amended its OSP Ordinance in 2008 to permit purchase of permanent conservation easements or fee simple acquisitions using Open Space funds. Using this Ordinance change, the Township worked with Clearwater Conservancy to create a wildlife corridor that crosses the developing Halfmoon Valley and links State Game Lands 176 with the wooded Bald Eagle Ridge. Of the 106 acres in the corridor, 40 acres will be owned by Clearwater Conservancy and permanently protected by a conservation easement held by the Township. To fund the conservation easement the Township budgeted \$200,000 in 2009 to purchase the easement. The remaining 66 acres of the corridor remains as private ownership and is protected by enrollment in the Township's OSPP Lease Program.

In 2011, the Open Space Preservation 5 Year Review Committee began its second review of the program, per Ordinance, and it was determined that a forecast model would benefit the program by helping predict future costs to sustain the existing leases and determine how many new acres could be obtained using this model. The Open Space Preservation 5 Year Review Committee also determined that there should be several changes made in the language of the Ordinance to protect the welfare of the taxes collected to benefit the OSPP. As of 2015, the Open Space Preservation Board worked to ensure all recommendations were addressed. As a result, the Board of Supervisors adopted a forecast model and approved and placed the Ordinance recommendations into the Ordinance.

In 2012, there was concerns again to interest in the program. In 2016, the Open Space Preservation Board began working with Centre County PACE Program staff to determine if the Township could work with Centre County to permanently preserve acreage within the Township by using the County program and working with funds from Halfmoon Township and State and or State/County monies. During budget discussions, the Open Space Preservation Board determined they were able to budget \$262,718.66 to help work towards the partnership with Centre County.