

## **PRESERVING TINICUM** *By Tim Hall*

When I think of land conservation, I imagine something like the view of Tinicum Park from Route 32 in mid-October: all those beautiful trees beginning to show their colors. Or, the serene, unblemished beauty of Upper Tinicum Church Road. Vistas that are available to me only because of the foresight of people who recognized that land needs to be protected. Not everyone sees land conservation through that lens. We all view it a little differently, but we all agree that we have a responsibility to protect and care for this land.

Tinicum Township, largely due to its natural topography, has an abundance of these spaces. From our 11 watersheds, to our palisades, Tinicum is chock full of breathtaking fields, pristine creeks, and dramatic rock formations. A big part of that abundance is due, at least secondarily, to the foresight of people who began the preservation movement in Tinicum.

People can argue about when and how preservation started, but everyone would agree the passing of the 2002 Open Space Bond Issue was a powerful statement from Township residents that preservation was a priority. Since the passing of that bond, more than 7,300 acres of Tinicum have been preserved. These properties account for nearly 38% of the Township and have been made through a variety of governmental and private resources: Agricultural and conservation easements, generous private donations, and State, County, and Township parkland initiatives. These efforts have had, and will continue to have, a major, lasting impact on Tinicum Township.

And that's the big thing about land preservation – it's a cooperative effort; landowners largely don't have the resources to set up easements that will exist in perpetuity, but they are the only ones with the authority to conserve land. Conversely, conservation groups have the means to ensure these easements are "forever" but no authority to place land in conservation. The preservation "movement" is really just the process of linking all of our individual efforts into a coordinated whole where we can better (more efficiently) preserve the land we love. Only when we work together can we ensure it will be protected forever.

When it comes to land preservation, you either anticipate the necessity well ahead of time, or you never realize you had the chance. When I see the small signs that frequent our roadsides announcing that "this land is permanently preserved", I feel a small tickle of pride because I live in a place where people get it. Conservation is about looking 100 years down the road and trying to imagine the responsibility we have to contribute to that future society. Generations from now when people continue to admire the breathtaking beauty of Tinicum Township, they will do so because of the wisdom and foresight of those who came before them. And, it's thanks to this foresight that we have the opportunity to continue this vital work.

If you would like to get involved in local land preservation, contact the [Tinicum Conservancy](#) (610) 294-1077 or the Tinicum Land Preservation Committee.