

Landowners' Inspiration Spawns Conservation Plan

In 2002, Tom and Margareta Brokaw approached the Brandywine Conservancy with an ambitious plan to permanently protect their property in Kennett Township. The Brokaws want to limit further development and restore much of the property to its pre-agricultural condition. Working with the Conservancy, the Brokaws have begun to implement the plan by placing conservation easements on the most sensitive areas. With assistance from landscape architect Gary Burcham, Tom has carefully mapped and catalogued the natural resources on the property.

Appreciation for nature is deeply rooted in both Tom's and Margareta's families. Tom's great-grandfather was world-renowned illustrator Howard Pyle who drew inspiration from the Brandywine Valley for many of his paintings. Margareta, on the other hand, has a passion for saving the wild animals of the region. The catalyst for protecting the property, however, was a magnificent Swamp White Oak that Tom encountered during a walk one afternoon. Captivated by its beauty, Tom vowed then and there to protect the tree and others growing in the wetlands.

Several months after first contacting the Conservancy, the Brokaws donated their first conservation easement on land that flanks the West Branch of the Red Clay Creek just above its confluence with Bucktoe Creek. This year, the Brokaws will donate a second easement on approximately 75 acres that protects the Bucktoe Creek corridor on their property. The

easements restrict the permitted uses of the land but encourage activities by educational conservation organizations in the future.

As part of their long-term plan, for many years, the Brokaws have expressed interest in protecting land along Bucktoe Creek and the West Branch of Red Clay Creek. Consequently, their holdings have grown from an initial 80 acres in 1985 to 165 acres today. Looking toward the future, the Brokaws will continue to work with the Conservancy to preserve the rest of their property.

