



*Protecting our resources,  
protecting our future.*

# Byram Township

## A Guide to Conservation Easements

June 2015

Johnson Lake

### Protecting Our Future

Byram is the “Township of Lakes,” and Byram’s residents are proud of their natural environment and the Township’s rural character.

#### The Master Plan

To preserve those qualities, the goals of the Township’s Master Plan are to protect natural resources, scenic beauty, and the traditional character of Byram’s tight-knit neighborhoods.

The Village Center on Route 206 will be the magnet for future growth, while the rest of Byram will be protected from residential and commercial sprawl.

#### Local Ordinances

Byram’s ordinances, which carry out the goals of the Master Plan, allow for growth but prevent that growth from harming the natural resources that define Byram and that are essential to its future.

#### A Good Future

Byram’s residents and businesses have invested in Byram and realize that its future depends upon good planning and the responsible stewardship of natural resources.

To make sure that Byram remains a good place to live and work, it is critical to protect our drinking water, our lakes and streams, our forests, and the Township’s rural character.

### What Is A Conservation Easement?

A conservation easement is a legal obligation by which a property owner or developer agrees to restrict the use of part of a property to protect environmentally sensitive features.

An easement is a perpetual legal agreement, and every subsequent owner of the property is bound by the terms of the easement.

Byram Township holds these easements in trust for the benefit of all its residents, while the land itself remains in private ownership.

### Why Is It Important To Maintain Conservation Easements?

Easements are put in place to protect resources that are critical to the entire community. Failure to maintain them is a breach of trust and puts community resources at risk.

Generally, conservation easements keep lands in a natural state and prohibit actions that put resources at risk, such as:

- Clearing or grading stream banks, floodplains, wetlands, or lakeshores;
- Cutting trees on steep slopes or where there are large areas of contiguous forest or important wildlife habitat;
- Disturbing or building on steep slopes, floor-prone areas, stream buffers, or critical shorelines;
- Disturbing or building on ridgelines or hillcrests.



Musconetcong River

## The Planning Board And Easements

When Byram's Planning Board approves a development project, the Board often requires easements to protect critical natural areas and preserve their ecological value.

These easements are held in trust for all the residents of Byram. Typically they protect:

- Lakes, streams, and rivers;
- Steep slopes;
- Ridgelines and hillcrests;
- Flood-prone areas and wetlands;
- Forested areas.

Disturbing these areas can result in:

- erosion, flooding, stormwater damage;
- loss of forests and wildlife habitat;
- water quality impairment in lakes and streams, affecting recreational use, property values, wildlife, and scenic beauty;

- depletion and contamination of drinking water;
- higher costs for the Township, especially in dealing with storm and flood damage;
- higher costs for residents, especially in dealing with damage to lakes and wells.

## Protecting Our Easements

Byram is compiling an Easement Inventory, which will be used to help monitor and enforce easement requirements.

A monitoring schedule will be established, and easements will be inspected to see if they are functioning as intended.

The Township will host a public meeting to discuss easements and how to maintain them. Landowners will be encouraged to work with the Township to maintain their easements and to help make Byram a better place for all residents, now and into the future.

## Is There A Conservation Easement On Your Property?

Easements may be described in the deeds and surveys possessed by most homeowners or may be discovered through title searches.

Easements may be found in:

- deeds;
- separate deeds of easement;
- surveys;
- official resolutions and plats approved by Byram's Planning Board.

The Township can provide Planning Board resolutions and plats.

The Township will also use the new Easement Inventory to help inform property owners about easements on their land and will help explain the conditions of the easements and how to abide by them.

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Lubbers Run