

EXISTING LAND USE

Growth and Development Overview

A community's growth and development is affected by a broad range of interrelating factors including such things as regional location, the transportation system, natural resources, land suitability for agriculture and development, available community facilities such as sewage disposal, condition of the general economy, local land values and real estate taxes. A change in one factor will in all likelihood result in a change in another factor, and the overall character of the community. In short, how a community's character has developed and how it will change into the future, are the result of a complex interaction of sometimes opposing forces ranging from no growth, exclusionary land use controls to unbridled commercial and residential development. Land use patterns in a community are the result of this complex interaction played out over the community's history.

The rural, scenic beauty of Blooming Grove Township is a key factor affecting growth and development. Rural areas close to urban centers attract residents who can easily commute to work or who can be employed anywhere via the use of computers and telecommunications. Their access to higher paying jobs has considerable effect on the local economy, land values and the cost of living for residents who rely on local employment. Blooming Grove Township is situated at a distance that enables employed residents to commute to nearby areas in Pennsylvania and the larger Metropolitan New Jersey and New York area.

Population growth has been significant in the past twenty years and continued strong population growth is expected as new homes are constructed and second homes are converted to full-time residences. However, given the proportion of state land and the Blooming Grove Hunting and Fishing Club holdings which appear to be largely secure from development, Blooming Grove Township holds less potential for development than many of the other municipalities in Pike County and the Pocono Mountains.

Land Use Overview

Existing land use in Blooming Grove Township is shown on the *Existing Land Use Map* which accompanies this *Plan*. The U.S. Census reports the Township at 75.3 square miles in area, which at 640

acres per square mile totals some 48,200 acres. While the Township population has been increasing and new homes are being constructed, most of the large scale subdivisions in the Township were platted in the 1960's and early 1970's, Hemlock Farms, Camelot Forest, and Tanglwood North, for example. In any case, the Township remains largely undeveloped and can be expected to remain rural for many years. Nevertheless, unless adequately managed the land development and population increases which are expected, even though not occurring at past rates, will have unwanted effects on the community.

Forest Land

Forest land remains the largest land use type in the Township and as noted in the 1986 Comprehensive Plan, *forest land and open space is the predominate picture one receives as traveling through Blooming Grove Township*. Forest land adds to the local economy via timbering and recreation and tourism use, and this open land serves to protect water quality and adds significantly to the quality of life in the Township.

The PA Bureau of Forestry owns and manages some 13,550 acres of the Delaware State Forest situated in the Township, the PA Game Commission owns another 7,920 acres in the Township as part of State Game Lands 180, and about 200 acres of Promised Land State Park are in the Township. This public land



View from Ranch Road

Blooming Grove Hunting and Fishing Club – A Brief History

In March of 1871, a group of forward thinking sportsmen and conservationists established the predecessor of our current Blooming Grove Hunting & Fishing Club through a purchase of approximately 12,000 acres in Pike County, Pennsylvania. The Club was established by legislative act of the Pennsylvania General Assembly and granted a charter as the Blooming Grove Park Association with the expressed purpose of “ giving a fuller development to field, aquatic, and turf sports, cultivation of forests, and of preserving and propagating the different varieties of game animals, birds and fish... ”. The Club established one of the very first management plans for this type of property. It embarked on a variety of management activities to protect and enhance the hunting and fishing opportunities, conserve the natural resources of fish, wildlife, water and forests, and provide for the enjoyment of numerous generations of sportsmen and women.

Today, Blooming Grove Hunting & Fishing Club consists of over 19,000 acres in Lackawaxen, Greene, Blooming Grove, and Porter Townships in Pike County, Pennsylvania. The Club affords members the chance to hunt native species such as ruffed grouse, turkey, white tailed deer and bear as well as a variety of stocked birds on our regulated shooting stations. Our streams provide the angler an opportunity to catch both native and stocked trout. Our own hatchery supplies over 16,000 brook trout a year for introduction into our streams and lakes. The Club has 6 lakes along with a variety of other features and activities of interest to our members and guests.

Source: Blooming Grove Hunting and Fishing Club

is largely undeveloped and is included in the forest land category, and taken together, represents 44% of the Township that is likely to remain undeveloped for the long term.

In addition, the Blooming Grove Hunting and Fishing Club owns 12,960 acres of land in the Township, most of which is forest or other open land. (See the map on preceding page and above sidebar.) The Club is very stable in terms of membership and commitment to maintaining its land and, similar to the Delaware State Forest and State Game Lands, can be expected to remain undeveloped for the long term. In addition, the Delaware Highlands Conservancy holds a conservation easement on the Mill Pond Preserve just south of Tanglwood North with some 300 acres in Blooming Grove Township. This 13,260 acres of additional land brings the *relatively secure from development* land to 71% of the total land area.

Agriculture

While farming was critical to the early settlers, commercial agriculture in Blooming Grove Township is now limited to one beef cattle operation. Located on Egypt Meadow Road, the Martin Farm includes some 300 acres. The Ivy Guild located in Lords Valley is also considered agriculture.



The Martin Farm

Residential Land

Dwellings in Blooming Grove Township are concentrated in a number of platted private residential subdivisions and on individual lots located along public roads. As noted earlier, most of the large scale residential subdivisions in the Township were platted 30 to 40 years ago and are listed on the *Early Large Subdivisions Table* which follows. In more recent years most subdivisions created a relatively small number of lots when compared to the early subdivisions

Hemlock Farms was one of the earliest planned residential subdivisions in the Pike County and with its almost 3,700 lots is the largest ever platted in the County. Most of Hemlock Farms is located in Blooming Grove Township with small number of lots in Dingman Township and a number in Porter Township. (See *Map of Hemlock Farms Figure* on the following page.) While all of the subdivisions have contributed to population increases, Hemlock Farms has been central to the growth and development of the Township and has, in large part, stimulated much of the business activity along Route 739. With its Community Association serving as the governing body, Hemlock Farms operates much like a municipality providing a range of community facilities and services such as road maintenance, long range planning, recreation facilities and programs, environmental management and emergency services.

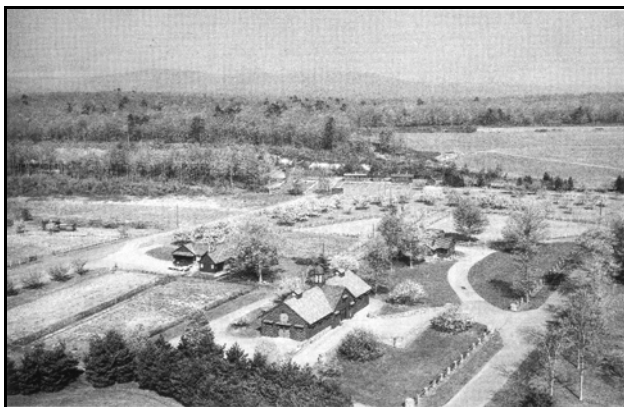
Subdivision Name	Developer	Approval	Acreage	Lots
Blooming Grove Acres	Swezy, Charles	1969	20	10
Camelot Forest	Colorado Inc.	1967	102	135
Hemlock Farms *	Western Heritage	1963	4,262	3,869
Hitching Post	Greeley Homes Inc	1980	36	38
Lawyers Club	Lawyers Club Inc	1977	40	10
Lewis Miller	Miller, Lewis	1957	12	23
Lords Valley Inter.	Lords Valley Inter. Inc.	1975	262	53
Mel-Chris Woods	SML Inc	1972	106	61
Sandy Hill Court	Boehm, Joseph	1974	28	19
Sky-Top Ranches	Gumblet, Gabriella	1975	154	34
Tanglewood North *	Tanglewood Lakes Inc.	1971	450	370
Whispering Pines	Swezy, Charles	1986	40	19
White Birch Run	Mary Costa	1977	200	64
Zane Blaine	Blaine, Zane	1971	20	49

Early Residential Subdivisions in Blooming Grove Township
(Source: Pike County Comprehensive Plan.)

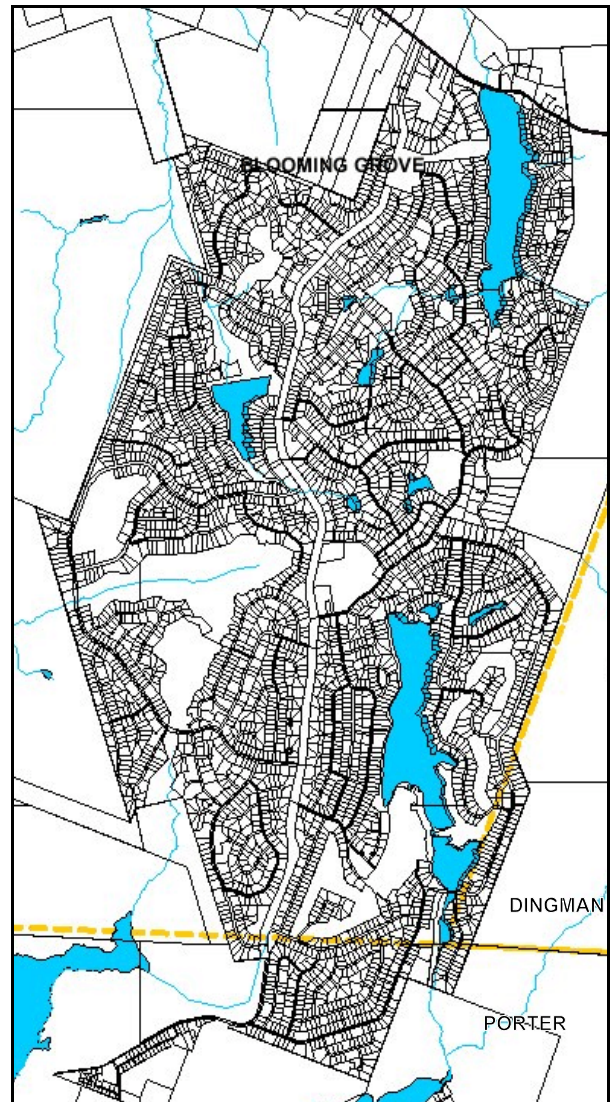
Hemlock Farms



Hemlock Farms Clubhouse



Historic View of Stables and Conference Center
(Source: Hemlock Farms Souvenir Journal, 2003)



HISTORY OF HEMLOCK FARMS by Helen Yale

The recorded history of Hemlock Farms begins in the years immediately following the American Revolution when the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania began issuing land grants in this area where 12 men each received about 400 acres of land in what is now Hemlock Farms. By the late 1920s this land had passed into the hands of three of these parties.

George M. Brewster and sons, who owned a construction firm, built the George Washington Bridge which connects New Jersey to New York. To get away from his primary residence in Hackensack, New Jersey and relax, William, a young executive in his father's firm, initially purchased 1500 acres of land in the Pocono Mountains where he built a home in the 1930s. He then purchased additional land making it a total of 4,500 acres where he built a riding stable, a boathouse with guest apartments above it, a large hangar for his hydro-airplane after flights from Hackensack, New Jersey, a heated swimming pool, a nine-hole golf course, a bowling alley and pheasant pens with brooding houses. He called his estate Camp Hemlock. He had a staff of 35 to 40 in residence operating dairy farms, carpenter shops, garages and milking stables. We have been told that President Franklin Roosevelt and Great Britain's Winston Churchill secretly met at Brewster's house to consult and discuss the progress of World War II. After the war, the maintenance became increasingly difficult. All the property was acquired by the Western Heritage Properties, Ltd., (later known as Abbey Glen Ltd.) a Canadian developer, in January, 1963 for \$700,000. The developer turned over the golf course, stables, the former Brewster residence and several other buildings to the newly formed country club which is now Lords Valley Country Club, a private club housed within the gates of Hemlock Farms. The pro shop used to house the bowling alleys and the golf bag house used to be the Brewster slaughterhouse and cold-storage plant. The tower at the entrance to the club, which was originally 20 feet taller, provided a panoramic view of the lake and surrounding area and also housed generators, which supplied the estate with electricity before public utilities existed in this area. It was also used to release pheasants from the top for pheasant shoots.

In 1972 the developers began to turn over the property to the Community Association at which time about 1,000 homes had been built. Today there are over 3,100 homes with about one-half year round families. The Community has 72 miles of paved roads, three lakes with four beaches, two outdoor pools and an indoor pool, 10 tennis courts, two paddleball courts, two ballfield complexes, two basketball courts, two bocce courts, a state of the art playground, a teen center and a day camp.

Commercial/Industrial

Taken as a whole, commercial land in Blooming Grove Township represents only a very small proportion of the total land area. Commercial development is most concentrated along Route 739 south of I-84 with a number of business also located around the intersection of Route 739 and Route 434, including the Pike County Concrete and Lords Valley Towing which are the only industrial facilities in the Township. A number of small businesses are scattered throughout the remainder of the Township, ranging from auto repair to a bar/restaurant. Many home occupations are also operating in the Township, but given the nature of many such business which often have no exterior facilities, the number of such enterprises cannot be accurately assessed. The 2000 Census reported 122 Township residents as self-employed, 52 as working at home and nine unpaid family workers. In addition, the Pike County Business park, which has Township zoning approval, is located off Route 434 comprising some 600 acres, although no firms have chosen to locate in the park.



Route 739 Businesses



Pike County Concrete

Public and Semi-Public Land

When the public forest land comprised of the Delaware State Forest and State Game Lands 180 is not included, relatively little land is in public ownership in the Township. The Township Building parcel on Route 739 totals only three acres. The Blooming Grove Fire Company is situated on one-half acre. The Fire Company substation on the Blooming Grove Road is on land leased from the Blooming Grove Hunting and Fishing Club and as are the Pike County offices on Route 402. Pike County owns 270 acres off Route 739 which includes the Pike County Jail and other facilities which are detailed in the *Community Facilities and Services Section* of this Plan. PennDOT operates from a maintenance depot surrounded by State Forest Land off Blooming Grove Road.

Potential for Development

In terms of land availability, Blooming Grove Township holds potential for further development. While it is true that many parcels cannot be developed because of natural limitations such as poor soils, wetlands and steep slopes which make lots unsuitable for on-lot sewage disposal systems, the existing parcels in the municipality include a number of already subdivided lots which are suitable for home construction. The area also includes many larger parcels with acceptable soils that can be developed.

However, as noted earlier most of the private land in the Township is held by the Blooming Grove Hunting and Fishing Club and development on that land is not anticipated in the long term. Development of this and other privately held open land will be limited by owner commitment to maintaining its current use and ability to pay the taxes based on its recreational value compared to its value for development. Nevertheless, the Township must be prepared to manage whatever development is proposed by adopting, administering and updating the necessary land use management regulations.