

Dear Mayor Fiorenzo and Members of the Township Committee,

The Endangered Species Act is intended to protect and promote the recovery of animals and plants that are in danger of becoming extinct due to the activities of people. What is the new endangered species in the Township of Wyckoff?

Mature native trees and open space. In the past year, on our street alone, more than twenty trees have been felled, including a number on the township right-of-ways. This practice can be seen throughout the town.

Why do we care? Because we are a community of educated, intelligent citizens who understand the importance of established old growth trees and open space.

Tree-lined streets shade the pavement and help cool the entire neighborhood. (They can cut home cooling costs by up to forty percent.) Tree roots help clean rain water and add stability to the soil. Trees also add beauty, privacy to neighbors and grace to Wyckoff.

Enlightened public planning requires collaborative tools to protect what is left of open space. As Wyckoff building increases with ever-greater density, now is the time to take action on open space preservation. Value analysis that measures the acquisition of open space, changes in property taxes of nearby homes, avoided costs of public infrastructure of new homes, avoided cost of public service, lower capital cost of water management, lower operating cost for water management and other environmental factors proves the economic value of open space.

Do others agree on these issues? I don't know, but you now have the ability to use your power to find out. More than 1,100 of our citizens are asking you to do so, too. I respectfully ask the township committee put the two public questions—one concerning an open space trust fund, and the other, a tree ordinance—on the November ballot. As you know, you need to take action now.

Sincerely,

Peg Conley
Wyckoff