

# Garnet Oaks



*Mile-long woodland trail winds through a 24-acre conservation area*

**Location:** Foulk Road, Bethel Township, Delaware County, PA




**Developer:** Realen Homes, Ambler

**Development Period:** 1992 - 1994

**Size:** 58 acres, mostly forested

**Percentage of Open Space:** 50%

#### **Project Highlights**

-  76 single-family homes
-  24-acre wooded conservation area
-  Diverse recreational opportunities and extensive trail system highlighted by a mile-long trail

**Description:** Over half of this 58-acre site is conserved as permanent privately-owned open space. Smaller lot sizes, 10,000-20,000 sq.ft, did not hinder sales. In fact, the open space enhanced the sales of these smaller lots in two ways: increased absorption rates and higher prices for those lots that abut the open space according to developers' own sales data for lots adjoining open space versus no open space.

**Conservation Areas:** In addition to wetlands, the development preserves secondary features

including a line of mature sycamore trees, an existing farm lane, a stone wall and springhouse and several areas of healthy deciduous upland woods.

**Landscape Stewardship:** Realen Homes took special measures to protect the trees on individual house lots and within the street right-of-way. They collaborated with the Morris Arboretum in preparing a training manual for subcontractors and conducted training sessions in tree conservation practices.



*The developers preserved a line of mature sycamore trees*



*Amenities include a well-equipped playground, trails with boardwalk and quiet picnic grove*

**Recreation and Amenities:** The centerpiece of Garnet Oak's open space is the near mile-long woodland trail which winds through the 24-acre conservation area connecting a well-equipped playground and a quiet picnic grove to the street system in three locations. The trail traverses areas of wet soils elevated on a simple low wooden boardwalk and features numerous small plant identification tags for various trees along the trail. Realen's staff also designed and produced an eight-page trail brochure for residents, which illustrates the flora, fauna and environmental areas, and the historic features along the trail.

**Stormwater Management:** The trail guide highlights the developer's use of low-lying woods as a temporary detention area for which many trees within the preserve would have been removed to provide for a conventionally-engineered basin.



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