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88-acre Historic Revolutionary War Site Protected

MEDIA, Pa., September 4, 2018 – The 88-acre Osborne Hill Farm is quintessential Chester County countryside with rolling fields, early 19th century buildings, and pastures. But this landmark site is most notable for its role in American history as the promontory where British General William Howe surveyed the Battle of Brandywine during the Revolutionary War. Today, conservation nonprofit Natural Lands announced it has placed Osborne Hill under conservation easement, ensuring its permanent protection.

“It’s hard to imagine such a peaceful, beautiful spot being at the epicenter of the Revolutionary War’s longest and largest battle,” said Natural Lands President Molly Morrison. “Natural Lands is thrilled and honored to have helped ensure this historic property will have a future free of development.”

Straddling Birmingham and Westtown Townships, the property contains farm fields and pasture, a stone farmhouse built in 1809, and about 30 acres of woodlands. Osborne Hill Farm was named for former owner Samuel Osborne who purchased the property in 1727.

Osborne Hill Farm is among nearly 500 battlefield acres that have been protected within Chester County alone. The battlefield, however, measures 35,000 acres, and encroachment by Philadelphia-area development is always a threat. In a 2007 report to Congress on the status of Revolutionary War and War of 1812 battlefields, the National Park Service identified Brandywine as a national priority for preservation because of its historic significance and opportunities to preserve intact battlefield landscapes.

The conservation easement was made possible with a \$1.3 million grant from the American Battlefield Protection Program’s Battlefield Land Acquisition Grants, which are funded through the Land and Water Conservation Fund and administered by the National Park Service; American Battlefield Trust members; Chester County – Preservation Partnership Program; Mt. Cuba Center; Commonwealth of Pennsylvania – Department of Community and Economic Development with funds from the Marcellus Legacy Fund; the Virginia Cretella Mars Foundation; and a donation from the landowner.

"The American Battlefield Trust appreciates the opportunity to work with Natural Lands and other partners to preserve Osborne Hill, from which British and German troops launched their major attack in the Battle of Brandywine," Trust President Jim Lighthizer said. "We applaud the landowner's willingness to protect in perpetuity this sacred place where future generations can understand and appreciate the sacrifices made to secure our independence."

In a joint statement, Chester County Commissioners Michelle Kichline, Kathi Cozzone, and Terence Farrell said, "Yet again, partnership has played a great role in the preservation of this historic landmark. We thank Natural Lands for its leadership in pursuing the conservation easement for Osborne Hill Farm and are pleased to be part of it."

"It is wonderful news that the Osborne Hill property, part of the historic Brandywine Battlefield landscape, will now be preserved forever," said Ann Rose, president of Mt. Cuba Center. "Mt. Cuba Center is appreciative of the work that Natural Lands has done to bring together a variety of partners to secure this important conservation achievement."

"One of the most enduring tributes to those who made history at Osborne Hill Farm is to preserve its rolling hills and natural features for generations to come," said U.S. Rep. Ryan Costello of West Goshen Township. "This collaborative effort led by Natural Lands demonstrates how the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund continues to deliver significant and lasting results for Chester County. From my first day in Congress, I have strived to protect local historic gems, irreplaceable open space, and vital watersheds through unyielding support of the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Moments such as this remind me how fortunate I've been to work side by side with Natural Lands and other conservation allies while fighting to protect this critical federal funding source."

Said PA State Senator Tom Killion, "Saving Osborne Hill Farm is critical to preserving both our history and our land. Future generations will now be able to experience this beautiful landmark. Natural Lands is a leader in our regional conservation efforts, and we are immensely grateful for their decades of important work."

"Molly Morrison once said preserving land is like assembling a complicated puzzle," said PA Representative Carolyn Comitta. "I want to thank Natural Lands together with the many individuals and non-profits, local, county, and state agencies who have devoted time and resources to add their key piece to the preservation of this heritage landscape—beautiful historic open space preserved for posterity."

Natural Lands is dedicated to preserving and nurturing nature's wonders while creating opportunities for joy and discovery in the outdoors for everyone. As the Greater Philadelphia region's oldest and largest land conservation organization, Natural Lands has preserved more than 125,000 acres,

including 43 nature preserves totaling more than 23,000 acres. Some 2.5 million people live within five miles of land under the organization's protection. Land for life, nature for all. natlands.org.

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