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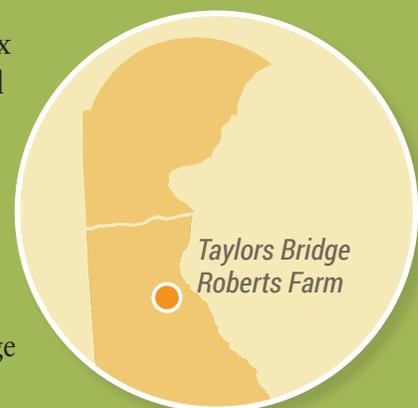
The Big Deal about Taylors Bridge Roberts Farm

For more than 50 years, Delaware Wild Lands has been strategically protecting land in and around Taylors Bridge. Located in southern New Castle County near Townsend, this area represents some of Delaware’s most pristine upland and coastal resources.

We are pleased to present another Taylors Bridge conservation success: the acquisition of 1,250 acres along Blackbird Creek and the Appoquinimink River.

The lands and waters that surround Taylors Bridge are a vibrant mix of coastal woodlands, freshwater ponds, rolling fields and salty tidal marshes. They provide important habitat for many species of birds and other wildlife. Protecting these resources helps to safeguard and improve the quality of our air and water.

With this acquisition, Delaware Wild Lands now owns and manages **more than 6,000 acres in New Castle County**—including holdings near Taylors Bridge—protecting our unique natural heritage now and for generations to come.





An aerial view of the Taylors Bridge Roberts Farm and a Great Egret (right)
© Andrew Martin, Delaware Wild Lands Field Ecologist

Putting the puzzle together

The Taylors Bridge Roberts Farm is especially important because it connects to other key land and waters in this sensitive ecological region. Protection of the Roberts Farm completes a crucial piece in the larger conservation puzzle by creating more than 10,000 acres of contiguous wildlife habitat in one of the most rapidly developing areas of the state.

Now protected forever, this block of 10,000 acres at Taylor's Bridge is comprised of 4,500 acres of land owned by Delaware Wild Lands and 5,500 acres of the state-owned [Cedar Swamp Wildlife Area](#).

This landscape also supports the health and vitality of other protected lands in the region including the Blackbird-Millington Corridor and the Blackbird Creek Reserve component of the Delaware National Estuarine Research Reserve ([DNERR](#)).

Genesis of Delaware's Coastal Zone Act

It can be argued that Delaware's environmental movement was born at Taylors Bridge.

In 1961 Shell Oil Company began purchasing land to construct an oil refinery along the northern shores of the Delaware Bay. This project threatened to undermine a way of life within Delaware's coastal communities and posed detrimental impacts to this fragile ecosystem.

Galvanized in opposition, a small but motivated group formed Delaware Wild Lands. They began acquiring strategic parcels around Taylors Bridge, **preventing Shell Oil from amassing the acreage needed for refinery construction.**

Recognizing the need for regulatory protection that would complement and bolster land acquisition efforts, the environmental visionaries of Delaware Wild Lands worked in earnest alongside Governor Russell Peterson to pass Delaware's Coastal Zone Act in 1971.

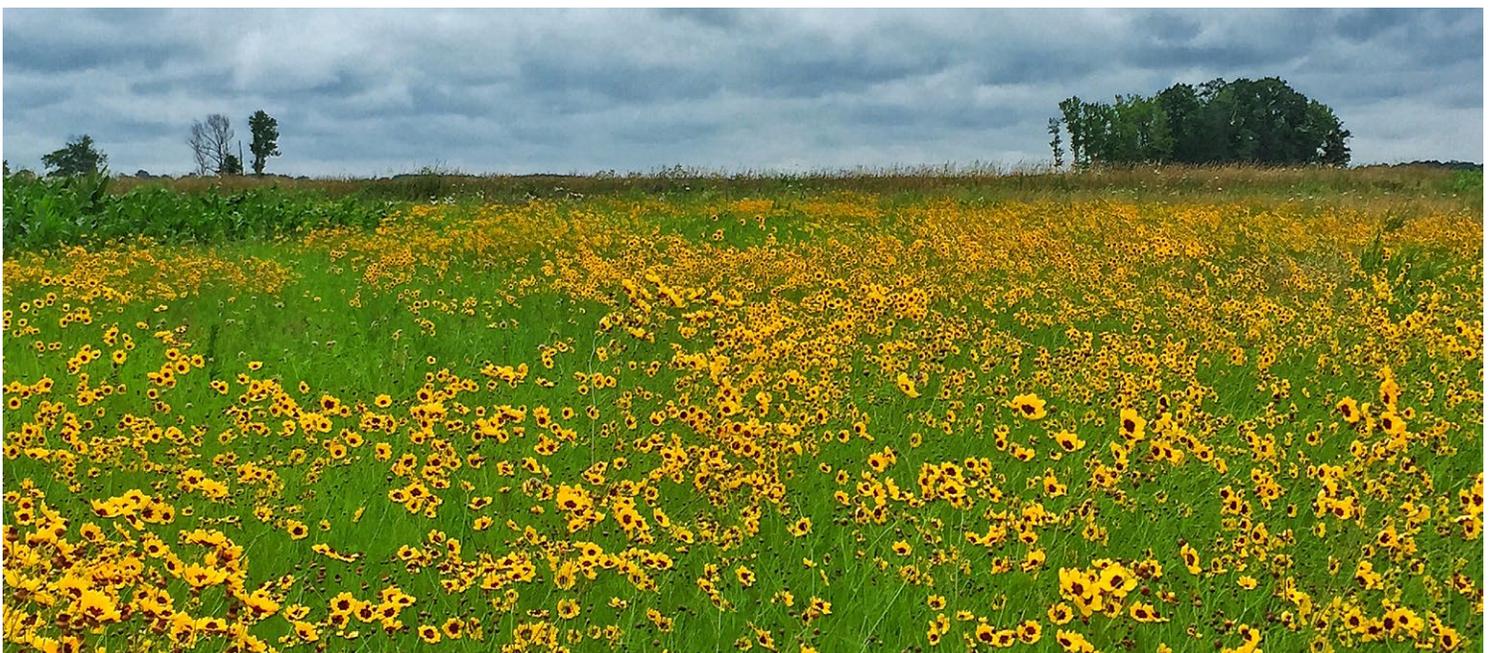
In the wake of this success, Governor Peterson appointed a Board member of Delaware Wild

Lands to chair the committee that accomplished the signing into law of **The Wetlands Act in 1973**, ensuring further protections for tidal wetlands and larger freshwater areas.

Beyond Delaware, the environmental movement was building momentum across the nation. The success of the first Earth Day in 1970 was followed quickly by the establishment of the United States Environmental Protection Agency and passage of the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, Endangered Species Act and the federal Coastal Zone Management Act.

In the following years, Shell Oil mounted several unsuccessful legal challenges to the Coastal Zone Act and eventually abandoned its plans to build a refinery complex in Delaware. In 1984, Delaware Wild Lands and the State of Delaware celebrated a major victory and purchased 2,700 acres from Shell Oil.

Today, protection of an additional 1,250 acres at the Taylors Bridge Roberts Farm represents another exciting chapter in Delaware's conservation history.



Coreopsis in full bloom at the Taylors Bridge Roberts Farm
© Bill Stewart

Our project partners

With great foresight over many years, the Roberts Family carefully wove together several farms into 1,250 acres. The family's love for the regional landscape is readily apparent by how thoughtfully they managed the working farmland and peaceful marshy vistas. Because of their efforts, the Roberts Farm has long been considered a conservation priority.

The Taylors Bridge Roberts Farm was purchased solely with private funding, in partnership with [The Conservation Fund](#) and the [Mt. Cuba Center](#).

The new owner, Delaware Wild Lands, is assessing the natural resources of the farm and developing a long-term management plan. Funds required to cover the costs for ongoing stewardship are still to be raised.

THE
CONSERVATION FUND



© Jim Graham

The Roberts Farm into the future

Although the details of the management plan are not yet defined, this land will remain an important community asset.

Traditional uses of the land that sustained the Roberts Family for generations will be continued. Agricultural fields will be plowed and planted; hunting and trapping leases will be carefully managed. Periodic programs will be scheduled, including canoe tours and birding walks. School groups will be encouraged to use the land for research and educational study.

The first opportunity for the public to experience the Taylors Bridge Roberts Farm will be an Open House event in Spring 2016.

For updates, sign up on the [Delaware Wild Lands](#) website.



Read more at dewildlands.org

Check us out on Facebook and Instagram

[Facebook.com/DelawareWildLands](https://www.facebook.com/DelawareWildLands)

[Instagram.com/delaware_wild_lands](https://www.instagram.com/delaware_wild_lands)

[Delaware Wild Lands](#) (DWL) is a nonprofit conservation organization founded in 1961. We are the largest not-for-profit non-governmental landowner in Delaware, with significant holdings in all three counties.

We protect and restore Delaware's important natural areas by purchasing strategic parcels of land. Traditional uses of land, such as hunting, farming, and forestry are integral to our management regime and important aspects of Delaware's economy and cultural heritage.

Our organization has played a pivotal role in the permanent protection of more than 31,000 acres throughout Delmarva. Today we own more than 21,000 acres of wetlands, farms and forests that are actively managed for improved wildlife habitat, clean air and pure water.