MUNICIPALITY OF PRINCETON
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MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor and Council
From: Inga Reich, PhD., *Open Space Manager*
Subject: Application for 2026 Green Acres Stewardship Grant
Date: February 17, 2026

Princeton is seeking funding through the State of New Jersey Green Acres Program for a project to restore 5 acres of native forest vegetation within Princeton's newest open space acquisition which is located on the eastern Princeton Ridge at the corner of Herrontown and Mount Lucas Roads.

The project area is situated in the eastern half of the approximately 90-acre, largely forested preserve. It was cleared of the natural forest vegetation for farming purposes more than 100 years ago and is now heavily overrun with invasive species such as multiflora rose, wineberry, Japanese honeysuckle, bittersweet and mugwort. There is currently an abandoned residence as well as two barns on the site which will be demolished in 2026 prior to the start of this project to ensure future safe public access to the site. The goal of the project is to restore the building footprints and the surrounding disturbed area by removing invasive species, planting native trees and shrubs and seeding the ground with a mix of native, shade-tolerant forbs and grasses, thus setting the area on a trajectory towards native forest establishment.

If funded, the project will commence in late fall 2026 and wrap up in late fall 2028. The Green Acres Stewardship Grant would cover 50% ($150,000) of the $300,000 that is estimated to be required for the completion of the project. The remaining $150,000 will be matched with open space taxes, volunteer hours and in-kind contributions.

The concept map, preliminary budget and Environmental Impact Assessment are attached to this memo.

A public hearing on the Stewardship Application will be held during the council meeting on February 23rd and minutes of this hearing will be submitted to Green Acres with the application.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions at (609) 921-7077 ext. 7635 or by email at ireich@princetonnj.gov.