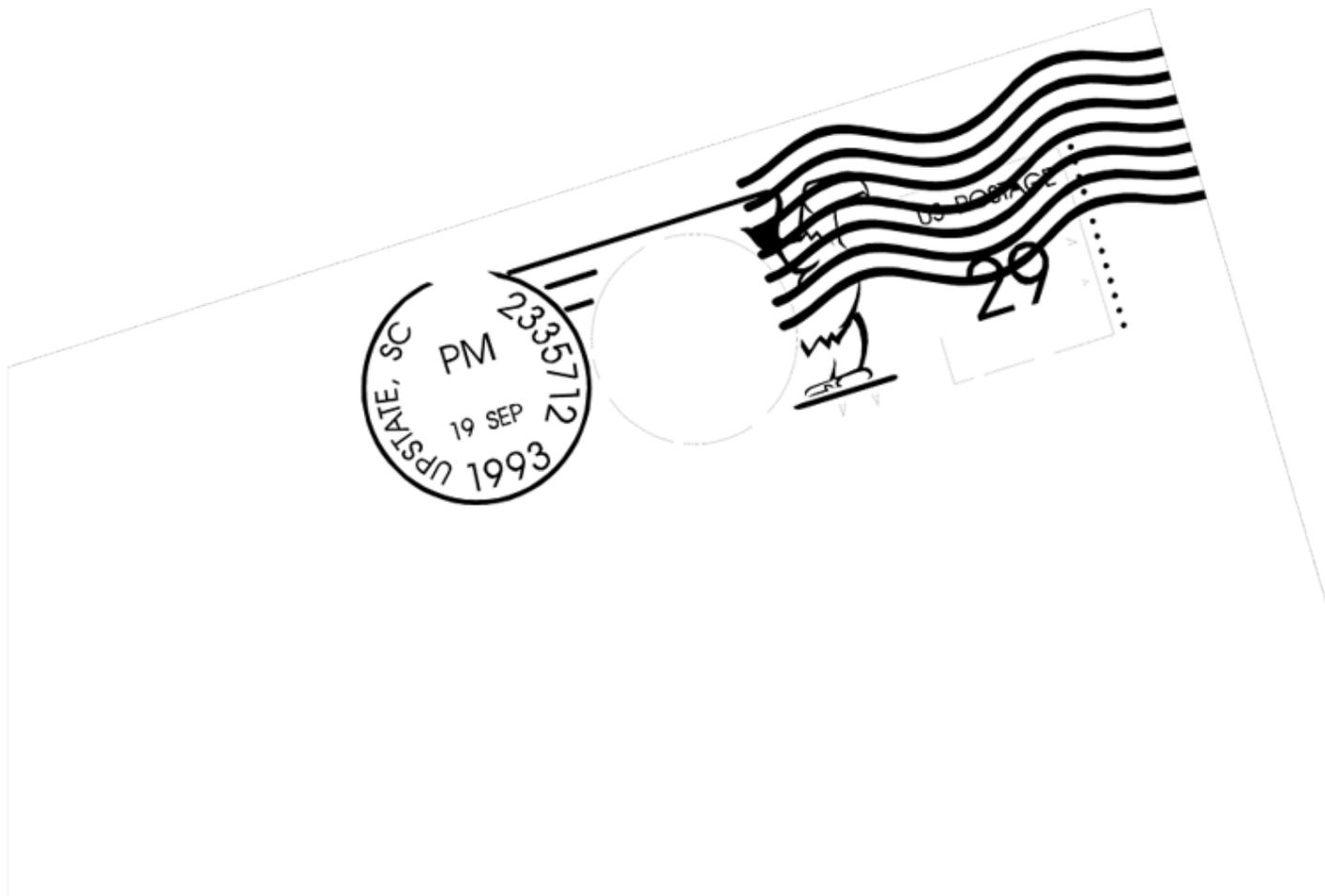


https://www.indianagazette.com/opinion/woods-issue-needs-further-conversation/article_bf30c2a2-e7bd-11ea-871a-bf712a534ec9.html

Woods issue needs further conversation

Aug 27, 2020



Since April 10, when Friends of White's Woods first learned about plans to rototill and timber White's Woods, FWW has worked hard to establish a public conversation about how to best care for the White's Woods Nature Center, a community forest purchased with Pennsylvania Project 70 monies and originally designated as a park that would be "left largely in its natural state" for hiking, biking, walking, bird watching and other forms of "passive recreation."

FWW distributed flyers and newsletters, wrote letters to the editor, contacted DCNR, developed a website, hired a consulting forester — and much more — in an effort to invite public participation regarding the long-term care of this beloved natural area park.

And, we asked questions at the board of supervisors meetings — until the most recent public meeting, when the supervisors announced they would no longer entertain any questions about White's Woods as long as they faced public scrutiny about their adherence to the principles of open government.

The township has refused to participate in public conversation about White's Woods, announcing that FWW's concerns about procedural matters (including those related to open government practices) filed in a legal complaint somehow renders it impossible for them to answer questions, or respond to letters, about the nature center.

FWW strongly urges that the township join with an array of experts and all stakeholders, including Indiana Borough and Indiana County residents — all interested Pennsylvania citizens whose public dollars made the purchase of this Project 70 park possible — to continue a public conversation regarding the rich possibilities for planning for the long-term health and vitality of this centerpiece of our community.

Solutions are born of conversation. Please rejoin the conversation.

David Dahlheimer

Indiana