

In summary it can be said that the Celery Farm in its undeveloped state represents a valuable resource to both the citizens of the Borough and the residents of downstream communities in that it moderates flood levels and is a potential source of potable water.

This report has been prepared by the following committee:

Darryl F. Caputo, assistant director, New Jersey Conservation  
Foundation

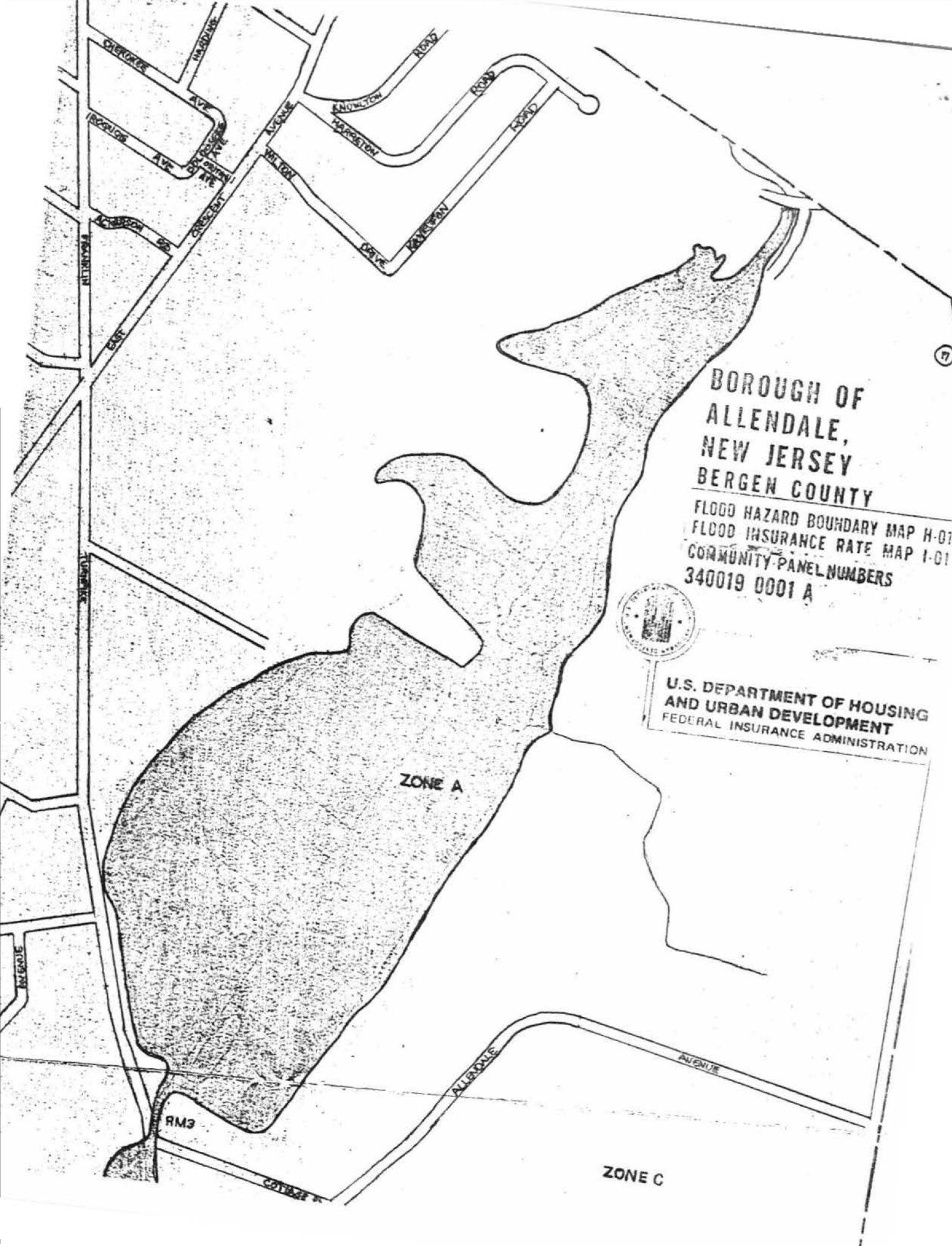
Seymour D. Goodman, soil scientist, U. S. Department of  
Agriculture

Kathryn H. Sjolander

Stiles Thomas

Martha Webster

Photographs of the Celery Farm accompanying the original copy of this report, which has been filed with the Department of Environmental Protection of the State of New Jersey, were taken by Nancy Van Arsdale.



**BOROUGH OF  
ALLENDALE,  
NEW JERSEY  
BERGEN COUNTY**

FLOOD HAZARD BOUNDARY MAP H-01  
FLOOD INSURANCE RATE MAP I-01  
COMMUNITY-PANEL NUMBERS  
340019 0001 A



**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING  
AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT**  
FEDERAL INSURANCE ADMINISTRATION

ZONE A

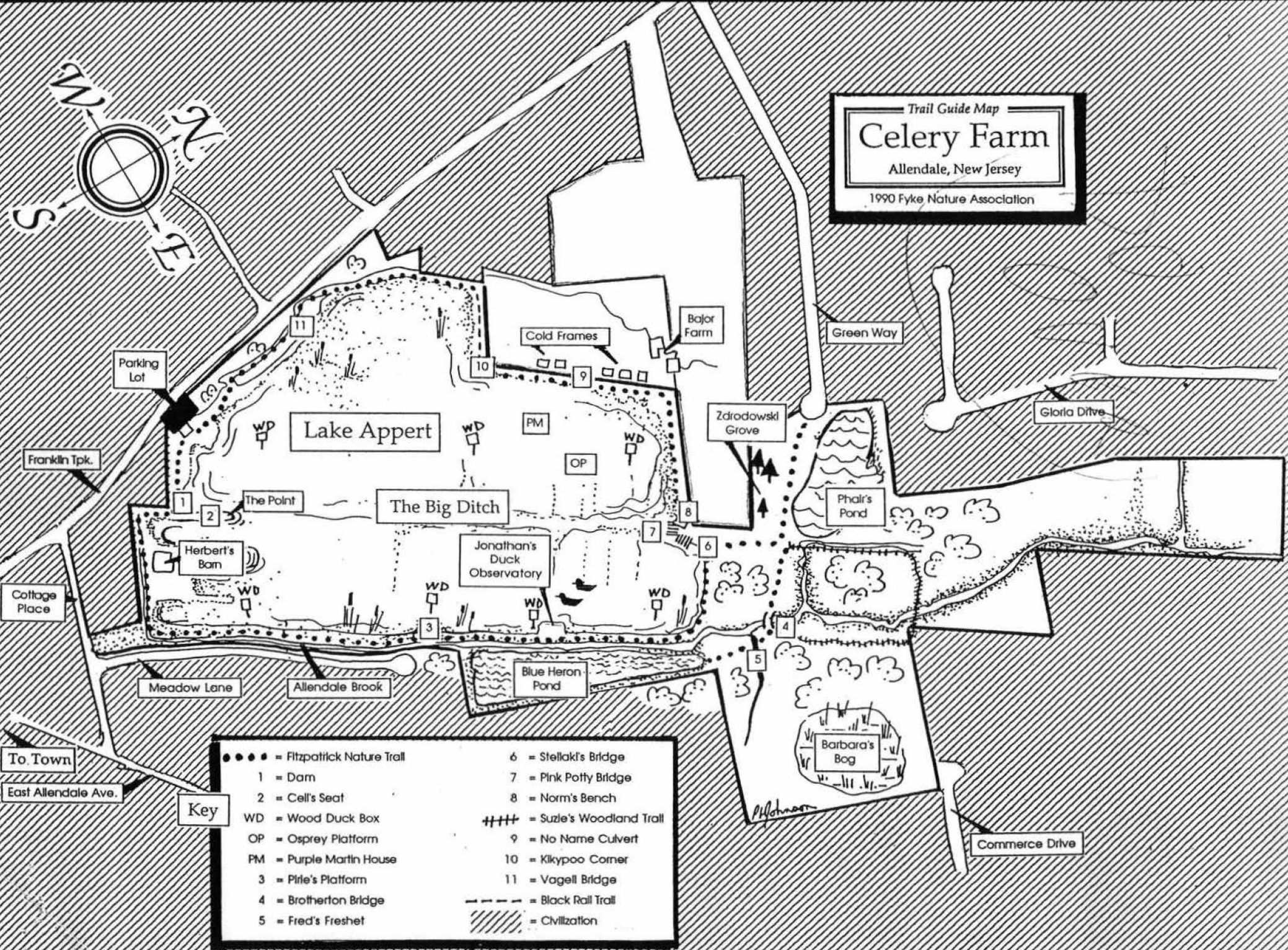
RM3

ZONE C





Trail Guide Map  
**Celery Farm**  
 Allendale, New Jersey  
 1990 Fyke Nature Association



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- = Fitzpatrick Nature Trail
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July 1980  
The Record

# CELERY FARM

## Allendale sanctuary a wild, quiet world

By John Koster  
Staff Writer

A few feet off Franklin Turnpike, and less than a half-mile from busy Route 17, an overgrown trail leads to a leafy, marshy world where wild birds and animals live unmolested by man and machine.

It's the Celery Farm, a tract of land in Allendale that will be given to the borough when a state Green Acres grant is approved, perhaps in July. The land is now owned by the New Jersey Conservation Foundation, a Morristown-based group that paid \$170,000 for the land in January. The land was a celery farm in the 1940's and was purchased from the McBride family, the developers.

To bird fanciers like Stiles Thomas, an Allendale insurance broker and county-wide bird expert, who toured the tract yesterday, it is the buy of a lifetime.

### Three habitats

Locked between Franklin Turnpike, a farm and development tract, and an L-shaped leg of the Allendale Brook, the Celery Farm provides wild birds with three different habitats — woodlands, meadows, and marsh — and includes two swampy canals that host herons and other waterfowl, as well as a natural spring-fed pond with a surface area of almost an acre.

"It's all very wet," says Thomas. "That's what makes it so valuable to wildlife."

The 60 acres seem more like 600 from the inside, because of the thick foliage and the twisting trails. And touring the Celery Farm with Thomas is as good a way as any to learn about it, since few people know it better or appreciate it more.

The 56-year-old father of three grown daughters is so fond of the rugged property that, last year, he took up tightrope walking to learn to cross the felled trees and slippery waterpipes that make up the only bridges across the swampy streams in the sanctuary. using his ears

as much as his eyes and binoculars, he likes to keep tabs on the bird population.

"That's a cuckoo," he says of one unseen crier. "The cuckoo is one of the few birds that eats caterpillars, even gypsy moth caterpillars, and isn't bothered by the hairs. We need more birds like that. And look at that turkey vulture!"

### Red-eyed vireos

Sure enough, soaring high above the woods is a turkey vulture sloping its wings and dropping for an unseen landing in the woods. In short order, Thomas ticks off a green heron, red-winged blackbirds, swallows, mourning doves, Canada geese, mallard ducks, chickadees, thrushes, robins, a hawk, and red-eyed vireos. His favorite is the killdeer, a ground-nesting bird famous for its broken-wing dance, with which it lures potential predators away from its nest. Thomas simulates a predator and pursues the bird, which chirps piteously, luring him on, and then flees once he's far enough away from her unseen nest.

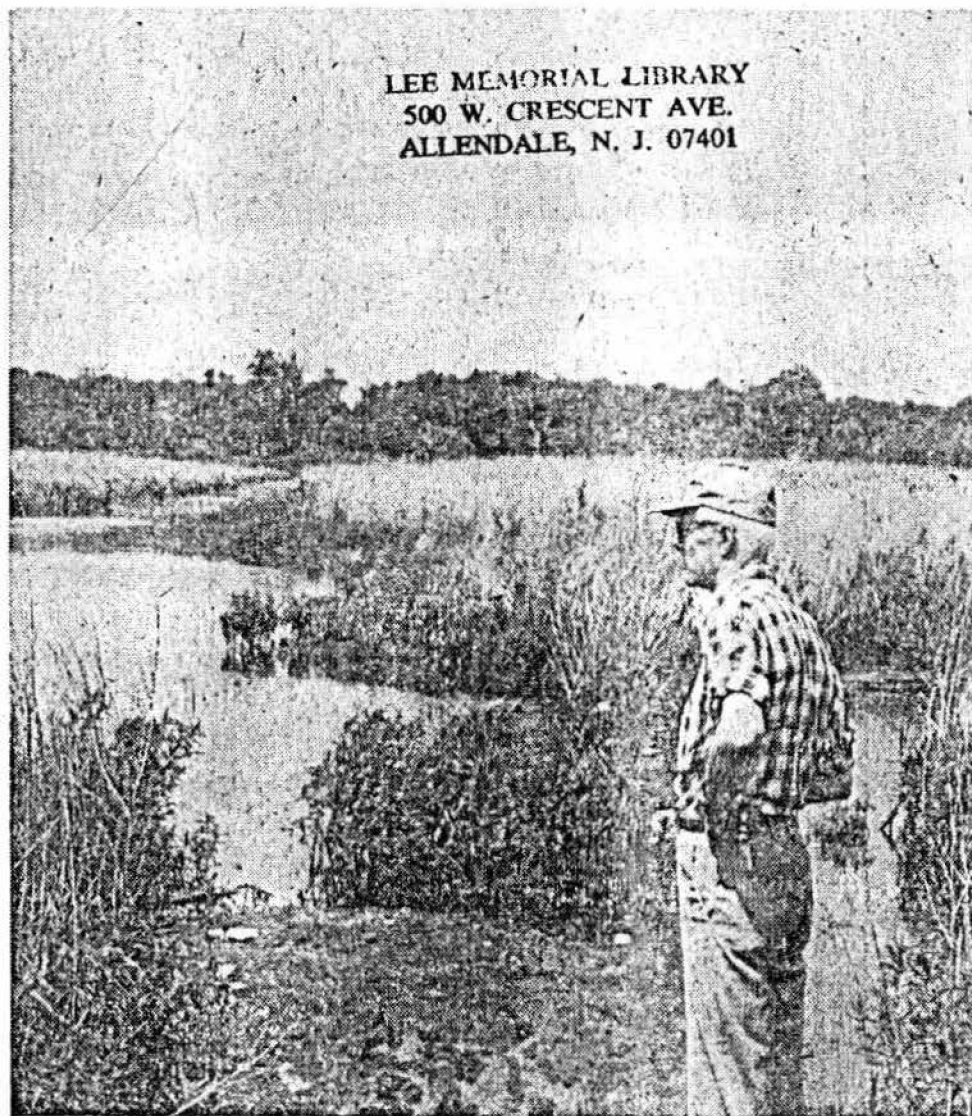
"I'm always careful not to step on the nest," he grins.

The birds, he says, have everything they need right inside the sanctuary. They even grow their own food, in a sense, by eating wild berries and fertilizing and planting the berry seeds in their own droppings.

The wildest and least accessible section of the sanctuary, 15 acres surrounded by streams that is connected to the rest of the tract only by a felled-tree bridge, is deep, silent woodland, a place where even the birds seem hushed and the civilized world could be 100 miles away.

"This was Rogers' pasture when I was a kid," Thomas notes. "The milk often tasted of onions. It's grown back in now."

Besides the 195 species of birds that have been recorded in the past 20 years — including a bald eagle and a peregrine



Staff photo by John Koster

### Stiles Thomas of Allendale, at the Celery Farm.

falcone — the site also hosts red fox, muskrats, rabbits, squirrels, raccoons, opossums, and an occasional deer. All hunting, fishing, and trapping is forbidden, but other than that, the land is open to bird-watchers, hikers, and any pic-

nickers who aren't afraid of roughing it on swampy trails and meadows.

"I think it's really great that the borough has been able to preserve all of this," Thomas says with a gleam in his eye. "I only wish it were bigger."

509 W. CRESCENT AVE.  
ALLENDALE, N. J. 07401



A winter glimpse of the Celery Farm. photo by Ruth Skouron

## Allendale Buys Celery Farm

The New Jersey Conservation Foundation (NJCF) announced last week it had sold the 60-acre Celery Farm wildlife sanctuary to Allendale, after holding it in trust for 15 months.

The private, nonprofit organization purchased the Celery Farm in December 1979 for \$170,000 from the McBride family at the Borough's request. The site was designated in the Borough's 1976 Master Plan for acquisition for public open space and conservation use.

Also involved in the transaction was a 4-acre conservation easement on adjacent land on both sides of Allendale Brook, purchased by NJCF for

Fisheries, Inc. to protect the farm and the stream corridor. NJCF transferred both the tract and the easement for its original purchase price plus its administrative expenses. The Borough received a \$122,500 grant from the state Green Acres Fund to help it pay for the property.

The Celery Farm, formerly known as Wolf Swamp, was a prosperous source of produce for over half a century, beginning in the late 1800s. Straddling Allendale Brook in its headwaters, it acts as a giant sponge for the Upper Saddle River watershed. Keeping it in its natural

prevent flooding in downstream communities by maintaining the natural flood water storage capacity of the absorbent marshland which paving and construction would obliterate.

The swampland was scooped out by glacial action thousands of years ago and once formed a lake. The area was reportedly inhabited by members of the Leni Lenape tribe and numerous Indian artifacts have been found on the site. The property provides habitat for a wide variety of plant and animal life, including 17 species of waterfowl such as the mute swan, green-winged teal and

## The Celery Farm

# 60 Acres of Tranquility And Wildlife Refuge

Valerie Turer

The Celery Farm: 60 acres of woods, open fields and marshes, visited by egret, ibis, bittern and an astonishing inventory of other birds and waterfowl. Useful as well as beautiful, it is a natural flood storage area within the Passaic River basin. Located in an increasingly developed suburban region, it is a wild place that those seeking inner renewal can visit.

When Allendale took title to the Celery Farm 10 days ago, several people closely involved in the effort to acquire the property breathed a sigh of relief. Notable among these were Stiles Thomas of the Fyke Nature Association and Borough Administrator Norma Colburn, who supervised the tedious 3-year-long project of filling out forms, forms and more forms.

The time-consuming process of complying with the requirements for Green Acres funding culminated with the purchase of the property. Mrs. Colburn and Mr. Thomas then sought the assistance of wildlife refuge experts, with whom they met recently to devise a plan for improvements consistent with the goals of passive recreation and habitat preservation. They consulted with conservationist Kent Hardmeyer and biologist Dave Smart, who work for the Soil Conservation Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Also participating in the discussion were Corinne Leparik, Allendale's Recreation director, and Pat Mahoney, treasurer of the Junior Woman's Club of Allendale. The Juniors have designated the Celery Farm as their Community Improvement Project and hope to aid in raising funds needed to make the sanctuary accessible to hikers, birdwatchers and others, while keeping it

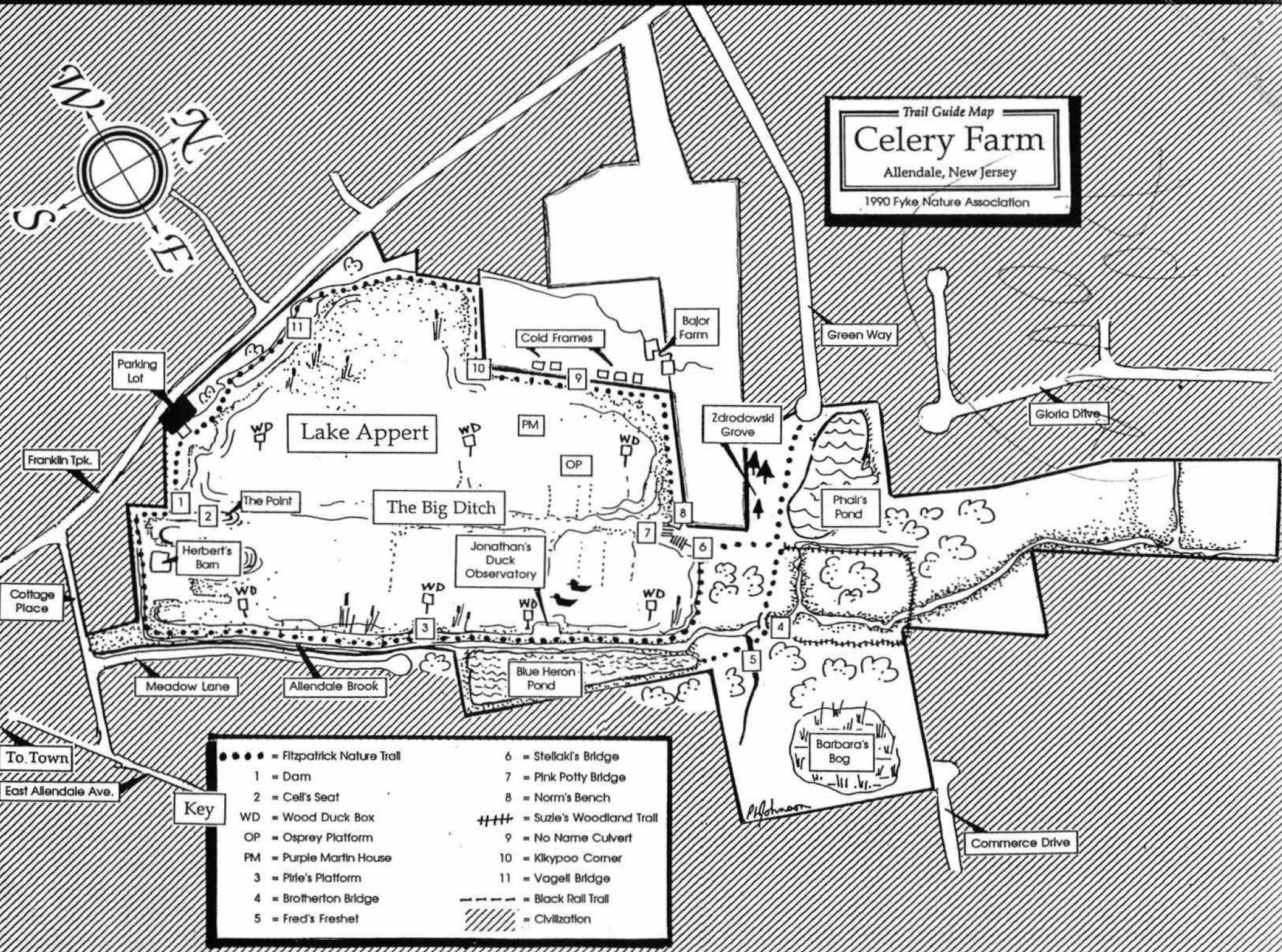
Mr. Thomas, who has conducted numerous tours of the Celery Farm over the years, said it would be highly desirable to have a trail going around the entire perimeter; a few bridges will be needed to span the brooks. Several proposals were considered for continuing the trail through the muddy southern section of the farm. A 3 foot wide, 200 yard long boardwalk built on piles seemed to be the most practical concept with the least negative impact on the terrain. Mr. Smart offered to provide designs for the boardwalk as well as for bridges, signs and parking areas. All the projects will be studied in greater detail with particular emphasis on determining their cost.

Presently the water level of the marsh can be regulated by a pump at its southern end. The pump was last used in June 1980, at which time the monthly electric bill was \$200. Consideration is being given to the construction of a small dam that would replace the costly pump in the attempt to keep marsh waters from flooding adjacent properties.

The Mosquito Control Commission will provide labor for the job since maintaining a proper water level is one of its objectives. Funds for the material would have to be found elsewhere. Mr. Hardmeyer promised to have an engineer from his department look over the possible dam site and provide design plans.

There will be a dedication ceremony soon to mark the acquisition of this rich diverse wildlife habitat. The Celery Farm will become a sanctuary not only for plants and animals but also for those human beings who know, as Henry Thoreau did, that "in wildness is the

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Parking Lot

Franklin Tpk.

Cottage Place

To Town

East Allendale Ave.

Meadow Lane

Allendale Brook

Blue Heron Pond

Commerce Drive

Lake Appert

Lake Appert

The Point

The Big Ditch

Herbert's Barn

Jonathan's Duck Observatory

Cold Frames

Bojor Farm

Zdrowski Grove

Green Way

Gloria Drive

Phal's Pond

Barbara's Bog

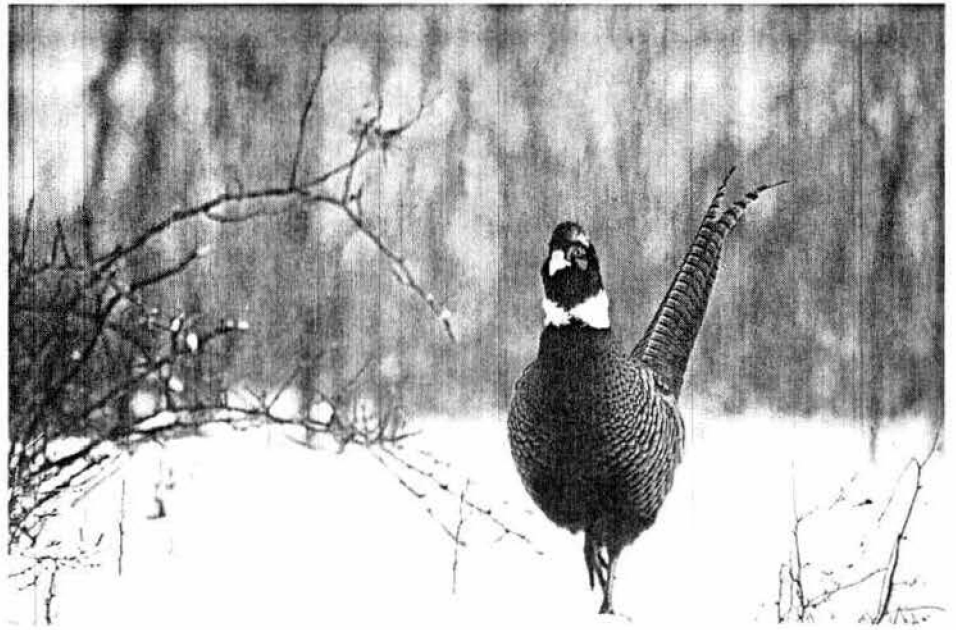
# THE CELERY FARM CONSERVATION AREA

If you promise not to tell anyone, I'll tell you about a delightful place to watch birds. It's in Allendale. We've all heard the horror tales about national parks being trampled by hordes of people and you wouldn't want to be responsible should this happen here, would you? So, assuming you've crossed your heart and hoped to die, I'll disclose the details so that *you* alone can visit this bird sanctuary. And remember, this is just between the two of us. If you encounter someone on the trail, don't let on that I was the one to divulge this well-kept birding secret.

In 1981 the borough of Allendale acquired a sixty-acre parcel of black earth wetlands. Since then, an additional twenty-seven acres were obtained from neighboring property owners and eleven acres will soon be added from the adjoining Bajor Farm. (See map.) Acquisition of the Celery Farm was made possible by the New Jersey Conservation Foundation. They bought the property and held it until the town could arrange for repurchase with funds from New Jersey's Green Acres Program.

When title passed from the conservation foundation to the town, Mayor Edward FitzPatrick, who was instrumental in bringing this all about, authorized the Fyke Nature Association (FNA) to be responsible for the development of the land as a nature preserve. He also appointed me to be the park's new marsh warden. Since then, the association has installed a mile and a quarter nature trail and has constructed observation platforms, bridges, and boardwalks. It has also engaged in a number of other projects, some successful, some not. The wood duck nesting-box program is one of the successes. Seven houses were erected and they've been in use for many years. They're cleaned, repaired, and replenished with fresh sawdust each winter. This is the best time for maintenance because it's easy to reach them from the ice. Although one winter I fell through the ice and was saved by my companions John Brotherton and Mike Frantz. Both seem to think I should be forever grateful for this, even though the incident happened years ago. Is there no statute of limitations for this sort of thing?

Our ongoing tree swallow nesting experiment is quite revolutionary. It was found that bird houses placed at the



*One of the Celery Farm's "pampered" pheasants.*

GERALD BARRACK

Celery Farm were invariably used by "Bully, the English Sparrow." But, it was noted that tree swallows successfully raised young, without interference, in a three-inch pipe that stuck out of the marsh. Consequently, we erected eight more pipes and the swallows love them. Fortunately, "Bully" doesn't. The pipes are plugged about seven inches from the entrance, so that the birds don't slip down into the water, and a "ladder" of quarter-inch hardware cloth is placed in the tube to facilitate exit and entry. The nesting part of the pipe is either horizontal or at a 45-degree angle. Admittedly, the tubes aren't attractive, but they're much more practical and longer lasting than wooden houses.

Our attempt to reintroduce the ring-necked pheasant to the Celery Farm has met with comparative success. After a male was found in the phragmites in 1991, we purchased and released some hens and they've fledged twenty-one young so far. Funds for this were provided by several philanthropical individuals. The pheasant flock is admittedly pampered. Feed, donated by Wild Bird Market Place of Midland Park, is provided during the winter to aid survival. Of the birds, that is, not Wild Bird Market Place.

Now for the failures. We thought we could attract purple martins to the farm

by erecting a very expensive house. But the martins have ignored it even after we painted it purple. I don't believe they eat a thousand mosquitoes a day, anyway. There, I've said it and I'm glad.

About six years ago an osprey platform was installed with almost as much fanfare as the Iwo Jima flag-raising. On one day, one osprey alighted on the thing and consumed one fish. It didn't even spend the night. It's not easy being the marsh warden, and one thing you find out quickly is that birds display little gratitude.

Every year FNA invites the public to witness the autumnal spectacle of hundreds of waterfowl flying in to the Celery Farm as darkness descends. This event provides sustenance and socializing for both parties. The flights start in late August and continue until winter. From the number of arrowheads found at the farm, it's almost certain that members of the Leni-Lenape Indian tribe knew of this convocation of ducks and geese, too.

A total of 225 species of birds have been recorded at the farm. This past spring Charlie Mayhood and his New Jersey Audubon World Series group saw or heard 70 in one morning! A few of the more unusual birds found over the years (in no particular order) are: yellow-headed blackbird, yellow-throated warbler, northern shrike (every few



years), great cormorant (summer of 1994), Wilson's phalarope, black and king rails (which possibly nested), and prothonotary warbler and barn owl (which didn't). January is a good time to observe Virginia rails here. As many as seven have been seen at one time along the northern trail, usually near "Pink Potty Bridge." Late afternoon is the best viewing time.

If you visit the Celery Farm in mid-May, the dawn chorus will include the *fitz-bew* of the willow flycatcher and the rollicking purple finch-like song of the orchard oriole. If your hearing is acute, you may hear the low, rapid *doo-doo-doo* of a male least bittern. One you're sure to hear is the warbling vireo. It sings the entire spring and summer long. As an aid to recognition, Gordon Schultze, Lorrimer Sanctuary director, has put its rapid song to words as: "I'll see you and seize you and squeeze you till you squirt."

While on the subject of hearing, are you aware of Schultze's Paradox—when a song is recognized, the bird will be closer than it would have been in one's youth? Something like that. This applies to AARP members only.

From time to time, usually in late summer or early fall, several of us engage in what we call "An Hour on the Tower." What we do is position ourselves

on the fifteen-foot Pirie platform to see how many birds we can see and hear during a sixty-minute period. The record, to date, was attained on the morning of 9 September 1990, when Charlie Mayhood, Gordon Schultze, and I logged forty-two species. Not bad when one considers that two of us are legally deaf and that I had a hangover. One day when I didn't, Charlie and I saw a peregrine falcon fly by the tower and seize a green-winged teal!

The trails at the Celery Farm are maintained by Ken Appel, John and Pat Brotherton, the warden, and other dedicated members of FNA. The town has no appropriation for the farm; consequently everything is done by volunteers. On the first Saturday of April, my wife Lilly and her Garbage Girls pick up the trash that's accumulated during the year. She's recently noted that there's been a change in the litterers' beer preference. Budweiser, in spite of those frogs, is slowly being eased out of first place by that upstart, that "Uncommonly Smooth" Red Dog.

Judy Cinquina, teacher/lecturer/writer, has never been to England, but when she visits the farm she has the feeling that it must be very much like that beautiful country. And it is. See if you don't feel the same when you walk the trail along the Allendale Brook.

There are a couple of ways to visit the Celery Farm. One is to contact Gordon Schultze or Leslie DiCola at Lorrimer Sanctuary in Franklin Lakes (201-891-2185). Lorrimer has three guided spring trips and you're welcome to join them. But if you'd like to do it on your own, here's how to get there: Travel north 7.2 miles on Route 17, from Garden State Parkway exit 163, to the Allendale exit. Proceed westward on E. Allendale Avenue for 1.0 miles to Franklin Turnpike. Turn right (north) and drive 0.2 miles to a small marked parking lot on the right. This is three houses past Cottage Place. Walk the trail counterclockwise in the morning and the other way around in the afternoon. For the Anglophile, read anticlockwise. I forget why we do it this way, but there's a perfectly logical reason.

When Richard Pough, the great conservationist and ornithologist, saw the Celery Farm long before it was purchased by the borough, he commented that "if it could be preserved, the nature club would have a reason for being." How fortunate FNA is to have been asked by the town to oversee management of this eighty-seven acre treasure. You alone are invited to look it over. But don't forget, mum's the word.

—Stiles Thomas

