

# **Augusta Township Farmland Preservation Board Completed their First Conservation Easement Selter/Karnatz Farm Property**

A conservation easement is a legal agreement that permanently limits use of land in order to protect its value for environmental conservation. As is usual in the case of agricultural conservation easements, these properties are not open to the public unless specifically invited by the farmer. However, their owners' legally binding commitment to keep these lands free from development benefits and supports the Township's commitment to the health of the area's ecosystem. The Augusta Township Board of Trustees and Farmland Preservation Board are enormously grateful to the owners of this property for their commitment to keeping their lands open and productive forever.

Knowledge, experience, and support to accomplish this first project was provided by government partners at the county, state, and national levels.

Augusta Township's Farmland Preservation Board's first land protection project was completed on September 2, 2021. On that day, local landowners Jeffrey and Ronda Selter signed a conservation easement to protect 118 acres of their farm property on Tuttle Hill Road in Augusta Township. The property is on Tuttle Hill Road between Willis Road and Judd Road. It features over 100 acres of tillable land, along with a mature woodlot.

The project was made possible through the partnership of several groups and programs. Augusta Township relied upon their experience, guidance and cooperation. The project was nominated to the Natural Areas Preservation Program (NAPP) and reviewed by the Agricultural Land Preservation Advisory Committee. The project was a prime candidate for receiving federal funding through the USDA Agricultural Conservation Program (ACEP) via the Greenbelt's Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCP) area.

The Washtenaw County Parks & Recreation Commission (WCPARC) submitted the Selter Farm property application in February 2019, accepted the award in August 2019, and authorized the sales contract in December 2019. The purchase price totaled \$295,000. The Augusta Township's Farmland Preservation millage contributed \$50,000 and an ACEPALE grant was awarded for the remainder.

Augusta Township Farmland Preservation Board is excited that a true partnership with all parties was formed in the process and the magnificent open space farmland along Tuttle Hill Road are guaranteed to be there for future generations.