



**B.S.A. Troop 54  
317 Lake Blvd,  
Lindenwold NJ, 08021**



Camden County Freeholders  
Camden County Parks Division  
Camden County Open Space Director Jack Sworaski  
Walt Whitman Arts Center  
c/o Elizabeth Hanson Kuehner Trust  
201 Cedar Avenue  
Somerdale, NJ 08083

Dear Sir or Madam

I am writing to you today regarding a parcel of land in Laurel Springs New Jersey that I think should be saved for future generations to enjoy. The family that owns the wooded lakefront land in Laurel Springs, together with the intended steward **Walt Whitman Arts Center**, are working diligently to conserve the 3-acre tract as Passive Open Space in perpetuity (they hope it will be called **Whitman Woods!**). The town of Laurel Springs is otherwise densely built-out as stated in its Master Plan. Walt Whitman summered here in the late 1800s, and walked Laurel Lake's banks daily; he called it "the prettiest lake in Europe or America," and drew inspiration here for *Specimen Days* and *Leaves of Grass*. As you know, Walt Whitman is a regional icon and a National treasure. His poetry is legendary. The Friends of Laurel Lake hope to save this precious Open Space from development. Residents use it daily as the area's only significant wooded place to walk with "Nature."

Funding for preservation could potentially come from the Camden County Open Space program. The town cannot afford to maintain it and has declined the county's offer to purchase it for the borough, yet the borough did endorse its future use as a park in Resolution #122-2010. To convince the Freeholders of the land's unique merits, the present owner and the Walt Whitman Arts Center (WWAC) were advised to gather **Letters of Open Space Support** from people and organizations of the community that feel in kind that the land should be preserved. I join with others in helping advocate to preserve and formally establish **Whitman Woods** in the same spirit that Walden Woods was famously saved in Concord, MA, by Don Henley of The Eagles.

The area around the lake is beautiful with trees that are ancient and abundant wildlife. Along with a wide range of small animals using this area as home, we have seen it used by Bald Eagles, Red Tail hawks, White Tail Deer, Beavers and numerous song birds that make any walk through this area enchanting with birdsong. This is worthy of preservation.

I want to add my and BSA Troop 54 support for Passive Open Space Preservation via WWAC stewardship of Whitman Woods (Block 61, Lot 1; Block 62, Lot 5; Laurel Springs, NJ)

In closing I include a quote from Theodore Roosevelt, 26<sup>th</sup> President of the United States of America, founder of the National Parks, Conservationist and Outdoorsman.

“Here is your country. Cherish these natural wonders, cherish the natural resources, cherish the history and romance as a sacred heritage, for your children and your children's children. Do not let selfish men or greedy interests skin your country of its beauty, its riches or its romance.”

— Theodore Roosevelt

Thank you for your time and consideration,

*Robert Taylor*

**Scoutmaster**

**Troop 54**

**317 Lake Blvd,**

**Lindenwold NJ, 08021**

**Phone \ 856-435-4521**

**E-Mail \ [rtaylor@opex.com](mailto:rtaylor@opex.com)**