

FARMLAND PRESERVATION, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE TRUST FUND



COUNTY OF SUSSEX

What is the 2015 Farmland Preservation, Recreation, and Open Space Trust Fund ballot referendum? A question asking voters to allow the Board of Chosen Freeholders to continue the current Farmland Preservation, Recreation, and Open Space Trust Fund levy. A “Yes” vote will mean that, rather than expiring on January 1, 2016, the existing program will continue. It does not create a new tax.

How was the Farmland Preservation, Recreation, and Open Space Trust Fund (Trust Fund) created? The Board of Chosen Freeholders created the fund through ballot referendums in November 2000 and again in November 2005, which were overwhelmingly passed by Sussex County residents. Both referendums provided for the expiration of each authorization after a period of 10 years.

How is the current Trust Fund funded? Through a property tax assessment determined annually by the Board of Chosen Freeholders, at a rate not to exceed 1.5 cents per \$100.00 of total County equalized real property valuation. The Board of Chosen Freeholders also determines the distribution of funds. This means that the amount collected and distributed may vary from year to year.

What is the current rate? The 2015 rate is \$0.00231005 per \$100.00 of total County equalized real property valuation, or approximately \$7.20 per household.

How does the Trust Fund work? The Trust Fund is divided into two separate categories, each having its own distinct goals and objectives. The Farmland Preservation Program uses Trust Fund dollars to purchase development easements on farm land, forever protecting the agriculture use.

The Open Space program uses Trust Fund dollars to acquire land and/or water areas for the protection of ecologically sensitive areas; preservation of areas of scenic, cultural or historic value; public outdoor recreational facilities (active or passive); preservation of lands of exceptional flora or fauna; and for the protection of critical water supplies.

Projects are selected through an open and competitive process, governed by State and Local statutes. Funds can only be used to purchase land in Sussex County from willing sellers on a voluntary basis. The County does not condemn property if the owner is unwilling to sell.

For additional information please visit the County’s Open Space [page](#).