

North American Land Trust plans to acquire historic Joseph Davis Tract in Delaware County

CHADDS FORD, PENNSYLVANIA, USA, June 10, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- North American Land Trust (NALT) today announced that it has reached an agreement to acquire the 16-acre historic Joseph Davis Tract in Chadds Ford, which played a role in the 1777 Battle of Brandywine and where the artist N.C. Wyeth once lived and worked.

NALT President Steven Carter said the nonprofit conservation organization plans to preserve the historic property forever and open it to visitors as a public preserve. NALT plans to offer historical and cultural programs at the preserve, develop hiking trails throughout the rolling fields, create pollinator habitat along the trails, and eventually move its headquarters to the Joseph Davis House.

"NALT is a national land trust, but Chadds Ford is our home," Carter said. "We are excited about the possibility of moving our headquarters to the Village of Chadds Ford and becoming a more visible part of this vibrant community."

Carter added: "We envision this preserve as an active historic, cultural, and natural resource attraction, bringing visitors from all over to Chadds Ford to share in our region's rich cultural heritage."

The Joseph Davis Tract would be NALT's second public preserve. In 2022, NALT opened the 72-acre [Brinton Run Preserve](#) to the public. The Brinton Run property, which is just over a mile from the Joseph Davis Tract, initially was considered for development. NALT and several partners were able to raise more than \$4 million to permanently protect the battlefield and natural lands.

Chadds Ford Township holds the permanent conservation easement on Brinton Run Preserve. Carter said Chadds Ford Township also would hold the permanent easement on the Joseph Davis Tract.

"On behalf of the Board of Supervisors and Open Space Committee, we are thrilled to be a part of preserving the historic 1597 Baltimore Pike property, formerly the residence of the esteemed N.C. Wyeth," Township Manager Lacey Faber said. "Partnering with North American Land Trust shows our continued dedication to conserving open space in Chadds Ford, safeguarding its history, and establishing a vibrant community."

Faber added: "This initiative underscores the remarkable collaborations among passionate professionals committed to land conservation. We are privileged to work alongside everyone involved, reaffirming our belief that together, we can significantly enhance our community and safeguard our natural heritage."

Carter commended the township for its commitment to conservation.

"Chadds Ford Township has been an amazing conservation partner," he said. "We believe that this public preserve will meet the vision of the township Master Plan for a park-like, village green setting connecting the preserve to nearby businesses with natural trails and paths."

NALT currently is working with historic and conservation groups, as well as local and state agencies, to raise the \$3.6 million needed to fully acquire the Joseph Davis Tract. One of those partners is the [American Battlefield Trust](#), which was instrumental in helping NALT acquire Brinton Run Preserve in 2021.

"With so much of the Brandywine Battlefield lost to development, the Joseph Davis Tract preservation project offers an exciting opportunity to protect an important historic site for future generations," said David N. Duncan, President of the American Battlefield Trust.

Duncan said the tract, which is along Baltimore Pike (U.S. Route 1), sits at the center of the Continental Army's main defensive line during the Revolutionary War Battle of Brandywine. On Sept. 11, 1777, the American forces engaged the British forces but ultimately had to retreat. Duncan said American General Anthony Wayne's Pennsylvania Division took up position on the Joseph Davis Tract and a four-gun battery overlooking Chadds Ford was set up to the left of the property.

The historic Joseph Davis House, originally built in 1725, sits on the 16-acre property. According to the Brandywine Museum of Art, N.C. Wyeth and his family lived in the house from 1907 to 1911. Wyeth converted a former carriage house into his studio, adding a skylight to his work space. There, he created some of his major artworks including his depictions of Native Americans and his illustrations for Robert Louis Stevenson's adventure novel "Treasure Island."

William L. Coleman, PhD, Director of the Wyeth Study Center at the Brandywine Museum of Art, said N.C. Wyeth found the setting at the Joseph Davis House very inspirational. Coleman said that inspiration was evident in the wide range of artwork he created in the studio.

"For that reason, NALT's plans to make this structure a publicly accessible, interpreted space is tremendously exciting and would make a major addition to the networked natural and cultural resources of our region," Coleman said.

Carter said the land trust and its conservation, historic and government partners will be raising

funds to complete the sale. Carter said the goal is to close on the property in the first quarter of 2025.

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About North American Land Trust

North American Land Trust is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization that conserves and stewards more than 138,000 acres at 574 conservation areas in 24 states. Based in Chadds Ford, PA, North American Land Trust is proudly Accredited under Pennsylvania Association of Nonprofit Organizations and, as such, is recognized as having met all the requirements of The Standards for Excellence®: An Ethics and Accountability Code for the Nonprofit Sector. For more information, go to our [website](#).

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