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**Coalition Urges Marple Township Board of Commissioners to
Protect Old Growth Forest**

Marple, PA - A coalition of organizations is urging the Marple Township Board of Commissioners to protect one of the last old growth forests in eastern Delaware County and vote against a proposed development plan that would clear-cut 89 acres of this forest. The Don Guanella woods is a 178-acre forest that has provided many environmental and recreational benefits to Delaware County for years, but is now threatened by the development proposal.

For several years the Archdiocese of Philadelphia has been attempting to sell off Don Guanella Woods for development schemes, despite hundreds of residents urging preservation of this unique forest and beloved open space where many families had recreated for decades. Recently, Marple Township's own Planning Commission voted (4-2) to deny recommending Sproul Road Developers Plan to the BOC because of the gross harms it would cause. Now it comes down to the verdict of the Marple Board of Commissioners on Monday, December 14th when they vote on the development plan.

"The Township has an obligation to uphold Pennsylvania's Environmental Rights Amendment and protect the people's right to clean air, pure water, and a healthy environment. The Don Guanella woods are vital to the local community, providing them with the environmental, health, and recreational benefits we all deserve. To do anything but deny the development plan would be irresponsible and fly in the face of Pennsylvanians' rights," said **Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper and leader of the Delaware Riverkeeper Network.**

"Delaware County's Planning Department has long identified the Don Guanella forest as a prime conservation target. This ecologically sensitive and environmentally constrained wooded oasis is the last of its kind in eastern Delaware County and represents the last large habitat for many species which have been crowded out by decades of reckless overdevelopment. In fact, of the nine collar counties surrounding Philadelphia, Delaware County ranks dead last in open space preservation. Saying no to 'Sproul Road Developers' irresponsible proposal would be a great start to addressing that dismal record," said **Ken Hemphill, communications coordinator for Save Marple Greenspace.**

"The towns officials must do what is right and best for the community and those communities that WILL suffer downstream. They have the evidence. They have the information about problems with traffic, flooding, air quality and water quality. DCVA asks for the town to do what is right," said **Jaelyn Rhoads, President, Darby Creek Valley Association.**

"We call on the Township to demonstrate leadership and deny this large housing development to protect a valuable forest that absorbs stormwater runoff, preventing downstream flooding and pollution impacts to a pristine stream," said **Joseph Otis Minott, Executive Director and Chief Counsel of Clean Air Council.**

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