



Text File

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Bill No: 2010-1205, **Version:** 1

Committee: City Council

Status: Adopted

WHEREAS, in 1948, M. Graham Netting, former director of the Carnegie Museum of Natural History, explored the wilds of Western Pennsylvania in search of an unspoiled, pristine place to establish a biological field station for scientists to study the natural environment; and,

WHEREAS, in 1956, M. Graham Netting's search ended when he found a tract of land in the Laurel Highland sustained by a stream called Powdermill. He believed this to be the finest natural area in Western Pennsylvania. Netting convinced the owners, the Scaife and Mellon families, to donate 1,100 acres and to provide funds to acquire additional land. Today, it is the internationally known 2,200 acre Powdermill Nature Reserve, revered for its exceptional stream quality, bird banding program and unrivaled diversity of Western Pennsylvania flora and fauna; and,

WHEREAS, Powdermill Nature Reserve is both a place and a philosophy. It stands as a symbol of the human vision for both scientist and philanthropist alike. This most valuable nature reserve is used by scientists to monitor and study changes in the local ecology and wildlife populations. It has served as a refuge for many plants and animals which, as a result of habitat destruction, are now becoming increasingly rare in our region as their habitats are destroyed. Powdermill Run, the mountain spring stream that traverses the mixed deciduous forest property, was found to be one of the very few unpolluted streams available for ongoing studies of aquatic life; and,

WHEREAS, the mission of the Carnegie Museum of Natural History is to collect and care for specimens and artifacts that document the history of life on Earth. Through field studies and collections-based scientific research, the Carnegie Museum of Natural History generates new knowledge and promotes stewardship of the Earth and its natural resources. Through public exhibitions, programs, and educational partnerships, it shares the results of its scientific research, in order to enhance scientific literacy by illuminating the processes of evolution and adaptation that have shaped the diversity of our world and its inhabitants; and,

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees of the Carnegie Museum are now contemplating the leasing of Powdermill Nature Reserve for shale gas exploitation. The lure of millions of dollars in shale gas royalties has prompted officials at the Carnegie Museum of Natural History to study whether to permit drilling on the Marcellus shale range at its Powdermill Nature Reserve in Westmoreland County.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Council of the City of Pittsburgh conveys to the Board of Trustees of the Carnegie Institute this Will of Council in order to implore them to reject any and all offers of shale gas exploration and extraction. The Council also wishes the Trustees to know that it will support them in any and all actions necessary to preserve the natural integrity of Powdermill Nature Reserve and encroachments that would destroy the inherent nature of Powdermill. We exhort the Trustees to stay true to its mission and the

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vision of M. Graham Netting and the thousands of people who have contributed financially and scientifically to the preservation of this most special place in Pennsylvania.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Council conveys to the Board of Trustees the words of Rachael Carson to consider as it is confronted with this decision: “The most alarming of all man's assaults upon the environment is the contamination of air, earth, rivers, and sea with dangerous and even lethal materials. This pollution is for the most part irrecoverable; the chain of evil it initiates not only in the world that must support life but in living tissues is for the most part irreversible. In this now universal contamination of the environment, chemicals are the sinister and little-recognized partners of radiation in changing the very nature of the world - the very nature of its life.”