



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
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## **Bucks County Historical Society, Doylestown Municipalities Work Together on Fonthill Stormwater Management Project**

**DOYLESTOWN, PA** – The Bucks County Historical Society (BCHS) and Doylestown Borough have partnered together for the benefit of the community to environmentally manage stormwater runoff at Fonthill Castle grounds which are located within the Doylestown Township.

The local entities recently signed a stormwater easement agreement with construction work now underway on Fonthill’s meadow field, sited east of Fonthill Castle’s historic Sycamore Allee, along East Court Street. The new drainage channel will replace the existing manmade ditch and wind through the field while preserving historical features on the property.

“The Borough’s project to manage storm water runoff at Fonthill Castle dovetails perfectly with BCHS’s master plan to transform the grounds of this National Historic Landmark and enhance the 69-acres of privately owned land open at no charge to the public while upholding Henry Mercer’s vision and long-lasting legacy in Bucks County,” said Kyle McKoy, BCHS President and CEO.

The project’s origin dates back to February 1990 when the Federal Government (DEP) instructed each state to manage silt and eroded sediment. Through the federally mandated program MS4 (Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System), the state of Pennsylvania forwarded the project to the Doylestown Borough and Doylestown Township. The borough approached BCHS to allocate the stormwater management project for Fonthill, which BCHS operates, because of stormwater runoff that flows into the borough. The borough received permits from the township and sent out a bid. The contract was recently awarded to Land-Tech Enterprises, Inc. of Warrington, PA, a specialty contractor with expertise in landscaping, masonry, demolition, concrete and earthwork.

The construction staging phase began November 4 and involved set up of a temporary work area and the arrival of heavy equipment and materials. The plan includes a 90-day work schedule, barring any delays due to inclement weather. Funding is provided by the Doylestown Borough which is also managing the work and future maintenance.

In addition to benefiting the Fonthill Castle property and the Doylestown community, the stormwater management project is expected to generate a positive environmental impact for Cooks Run, Neshaminy Creek, and ultimately the Delaware River.

The Delaware River is the longest undammed river east of the Mississippi, and has more than 2,000 tributaries. One of those tributaries is Neshaminy Creek, a stream 40.7 miles long that runs through the Township of Doylestown. The Neshaminy Creek watershed is a highly developed suburban landscape where impervious surfaces cause frequent flooding by restricting groundwater recharge and increasing contaminated stormwater runoff.

Cooks Run is a stream with about a 3.3-square mile watershed and discharges into Neshaminy Creek. Both Neshaminy Creek and Cooks Run have been listed on the State's 303(d) List of Impaired Waters since 1996 due to siltation, sediment, and pollutants from urban runoff and storm sewers. Fonthill is located within the Cooks Run subwatershed.

Stormwater management within the Fonthill project site will promote the health, safety and welfare of the Neshaminy Creek Watershed. Green stormwater infrastructure will remove surface stormwater and its impacts, recharge groundwater, provide passive irrigation, support future landscape plantings, and help re-establish water courses throughout the site while protecting against immediate downstream erosion and flooding.

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### **About the Mercer Museum & Fonthill Castle**

Located in Doylestown, Bucks County, PA, the Mercer Museum and Fonthill Castle are historic castles celebrating the legacy of Henry Chapman Mercer (1856-1930), American archaeologist, anthropologist, ceramicist and scholar. Both sites are operated by the Bucks County Historical Society (BCHS).

The Mercer Museum, one of Bucks County's premier cultural attractions and a Smithsonian affiliate, features both local and national seasonal exhibits as well as a core museum collection of over 17,000 pre-Industrial tools. This permanent collection offers visitors a unique window into pre-Industrial America through sixty different crafts and trades and is one of the world's most comprehensive portraits of American material culture. The museum also features a research library that is a center for local history related to Bucks County and the surrounding region, with its roots dating back to the founding of the Bucks County Historical Society in 1880.

Fonthill Castle was built between 1908-1912 and was the home of Henry Chapman Mercer. Mercer built Fonthill Castle as his residence and showplace for his collection of tiles and prints. The castle serves as an early example of reinforced concrete and features forty-four rooms, over two hundred windows, and eighteen fireplaces. Fonthill Castle's interior features Mercer's renowned, hand-crafted ceramic tiles designed at the height of the Arts and Crafts movement.

The Mercer Museum is located at 84 South Pine Street, Doylestown, PA, 18901. Fonthill Castle is located at 525 East Court Street in Doylestown, PA, 18901.

The Mercer Museum & Fonthill Castle are open Tuesdays – Sundays from 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. For up-to-date ticket and schedule information, please visit [mercermuseum.org](http://mercermuseum.org).

For additional information, please contact:

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