

(Mailed on Wednesday, October 31, 2007 to Josh Bruce,
Manager, Fort Washington State Park)

Re: Benjamin Rush mowing procedures
Dear Park Ranger Bruce:

I am the Secretary of the Delaware Valley Ornithological Club, an organization with over 300 members, mostly from the Philadelphia area. Concerning the mowing procedures at Benjamin Rush State Park, I am representing the club's position.

We are aware that earlier this year Keith Russell requested that mowing of the fields be done in late summer, and that when it was done, the fields should be cut in such a manner as to leave at least a foot of vegetation. Apparently Keith forwarded to you an email that I had sent him describing the fact that this did not happen this year.

We are also aware that you have since visited the park to verify the fact that the park's fields were mowed leaving much less than one foot of vegetation. Keith has since informed me that you are planning to take appropriate measures to insure that the park's fields can be mowed in late July or August next year and that at least a foot of vegetation will be allowed to remain after the mowing is completed.

I am writing now to THANK YOU for your prompt and friendly response to this matter. We certainly need more managers like you who are willing to factor in the local community's concerns in management decisions.

By the way, the Benjamin Rush Community Gardens are a wonderful place for migrating passerines in fall. I know of at least 14 species of sparrows that have been seen there, and I'm sure there are more. When the gardens are plowed under in late fall, there are no other places for those birds to go, as the situation stands now.

On behalf of the DVOC and everyone who enjoys visiting the Park, please understand that we are very appreciative of your efforts to protect bird populations in the park, which has been recognized as an Audubon Important Bird Area
http://pa.audubon.org/iba/facts_info_site_conservation.html.

Most Respectfully,
Frank Windfelder
Secretary, DVOC