



RANDY GEORGE  
MAYOR

## OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

BOROUGH OF NORTH HALEDON  
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March 24, 2022

Dr. Barbara Brummer, Director,  
The Nature Conservancy  
200 Pottersville Road  
Chester, NJ 07930

Dear Dr. Brummer,

I received a phone call from your representative, Scott Sherwood, yesterday, who informed me of your decision that you want the star on High Mountain removed within seven days. How unfortunate that without contacting me, you made an uninformed, unilateral, decision and gave the Borough of North Haledon an unrealistic timeframe to remove the star.

The person who contacted you has distorted and misrepresented the facts, and has actually lied in his emails to me and to you to the point that you apparently believe what he is saying; I do not. I am enclosing copies of his emails which are the ramblings of a person, who will not be persuaded by the FACTS. I have exerted extreme patience with him explaining the situation; now I will do the same with you – perhaps you will understand.

Over 20 years ago, one of my first official acts as being elected the Mayor of the Borough of North Haledon was to work with the Nature Conservancy (TNC) to have the Borough of North Haledon donate 95 acres to TNC and convince TNC to purchase another 30 acres at the north end of the borough so that they could be preserved and not developed as some elected officials wanted them to be. I believe that that is one of my finest accomplishments. That does not entitle me nor the Borough of North Haledon to use the preserve in any way we see fit. I just want you to know how important the preserve is to the Borough of North Haledon. Every other towns' mountains in the surrounding areas have been built on except the Borough of North Haledon; SUCH AN ACCOMPLISHMENT.

Soon after working with TNC, I saw a little blurb in the newspaper that downplayed the State of New York's role in proposing to sell the "doughnut" to a developer in the middle of Sterling Forest. I was the only elected local, state, or federal official to attend the hearing, and an article about that hearing was on the front page of the local section of the The New York Times, featuring me as the only elected official who attended the hearing, and at the next meeting, the room was filled with elected officials who denounced the possible sale, and the "doughnut" was preserved. The POWER OF THE PEOPLE won again.

I am giving you this background information so that you understand that it is not just TNC preserving property; I have spent my career protecting the High Mountain Preserve, and I will not have my reputation impugned by someone who distorts the facts and lies.

In the emails that I am enclosing, I will highlight the complainant's distortions misrepresenting the facts, and lies. I was given permission by your representative, Scott Sherwood from TNC, and Adam Taylor from the DEP, to allow the star to be on the mountain, and it was proposed by them to get a MOU "since there is currently no MOU regarding the operation of the star, TNC proposed one be entered into. Green Acres supports this proposal, and requests that any proposed MOU be forwarded for review and comment." The email goes on to say "please let me know if you have any questions and know I will be forwarding this email to Scott for his records." The email concludes with "thank you very much for your continued support for and efforts on behalf of New Jersey's parklands. CLEARLY, THE BOROUGH OF NORTH HALEDON WAS GIVEN PERMISSION FOR THE STAR TO BE WHERE IT IS FROM TNC AND GREEN ACRES.

As for the statement that the side of the mountain is being torn up – have you or one of your representatives – seen it in person? I know that you have not. Long before my time as mayor, people used to drive their vehicles up the fire road, which is located in the Borough of North Haledon, and from entrances in Wayne, to drive on the mountain; that stopped years ago, and North Haledon's Chief of Police, who grew up in North Haledon, informed me that the ruts that are apparently the bone of contention, have been there for decades due to the former motor vehicle traffic, and not created by the Borough of North Haledon. The Borough of North Haledon does not drive up the mountain on a daily basis to service the star since it is solar-powered with battery back-up for cloudy days.

I was asked by the Chief of Police and the Fire Chief to restore the fire road in case there was an emergency on the Borough's side of the mountain so that they could provide emergency services. During the summer months, the police are called to locate and rescue lost hikers in the preserve, and, unfortunately, one time a hiker passed, and the police, with their emergency ATV was able to locate and bring the unfortunate person down to the arms of their loved ones. The Borough of North Haledon takes its role of servicing the preserve seriously, and with all due respect, TNC should appreciate what the Borough does in keeping the preserve safe for people to use it. THAT IS THE REASON WHY THE ROAD WAS RESTORED.

The fire road was restored with shale pointed rocks; if an automobile was to try to drive up that road, it would either get stuck, or its tires would be ripped to shreds, so no one is illegally using that road. As for the comment that there is traffic on the fire road, it is not true. There is however, illegal ATV and motorcycle traffic in the preserve for years, and TNC has done absolutely nothing to curtail that activity, so please, don't anyone try to blame the Borough of North Haledon for that.



You would have known all this if you had taken the time to properly investigate the unfounded claims. I respectfully ask that either you or your representative contact me so that we can resolve this issue and go forward, and enter into a MOU so that the star can remain at certain times on the mountain. Hundreds, possibly thousands, take pleasure in seeing the star; compare that to the two complaints that I have received over the last two years. The Borough of North Haledon has done everything it can to protect the preserve, and I am very proud of the Borough's participation with TNC and Green Acres.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Very truly yours,

Borough of North Haledon

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Randy George".

Randy George, Mayor