The Arc’s 14th preserve region lies in the densely canopied northeast quadrant of Adams County known as Mineral Springs. The Arc is very honored to be a part of this acquisition, especially since Hope Springs Institute, the original owner of the new preserve, and still its neighbor, generously donated the property at 50% of its appraised value. By this philanthropic act, Hope Springs made a major contribution to the required 25% matching funds for the entire Clean Ohio package awarded to the Arc in 2009.

Mineral Springs is rich in history. According to the Ohio Historical Society, “In 1840, local businessman Charles Matheny first began to promote the healthy qualities of the nearby mineral springs. Throughout the nineteenth and the early twentieth century, many people believed that water from the mineral springs had special medicinal qualities. In 1864, investors completed a hotel near the springs and named the resort Sodaville. Eventually Sodaville became known as the Mineral Springs Health Resort. Due to the popularity of the resort, owner Smith Grimes constructed an additional hotel in 1904. The original hotel burned in 1924, beginning the decline of the Mineral Springs Health Resort. In 1940, the resort closed and today is only a romantic footnote in the area’s history”.

Hope Springs Institute lies on the periphery of what was once the Mineral Springs Health Resort and is, in our perspective, its metaphysical resurrection, naturally in a further evolved way. The Institute, currently a non-profit endeavor that sowed its first seeds back in 1995, was founded on the vision of providing a healing retreat center for all people, especially women, who were looking for a quiet spiritual setting in which they could gather, have honest dialogue, connect to universal sisterhood and fraternity, and learn peaceful ways of sustaining relationships with each other (locally and internationally), and with the earth. It was a lofty and fertile vision, and it succeeded its transition from dream to reality. Today the center literally draws participants from all around the world. Hope Springs offers a retreat setting for medium-sized groups, catering some of the healthiest and most memorable meals we have ever experienced. The architecture of the buildings and the landscaping of the grounds gently blends into the wooded setting, inspiring visitors to hold the conviction that every decision affecting this facility was preceded with serious and thoughtful contemplation.

The 109 acres of Hope Springs Woods is a beautiful representation of an Appalachian forest. Lying on top of shale, it bears the classic acid soils of greater Appalachia – supporting an oak-hickory forest, in some locations with mountain laurel in the understory. When visiting the forest, no matter what direction a hiker turns, he or she just sees just more forest! The prevailing topographical feature in this region is Peach Mountain, an area known for its high elevation hills and a nearly contiguous forest canopy. The new preserve lies one property away from the 7000-acre General Electric engine-testing facility, a property functioning non-intentionally but no less effectively as an immense nature preserve. It also lies close to large tracts of timber-production lands once owned by Mead Paper Company and now in the hands of investment companies. There is potential in this new preserve region for significant expansion.

Hope Springs Woods Preserve will be the site of a new public trail system that will be accessible by membership or day passes. One of the nature trails will pass by what was once one of the developed springs of the Mineral Springs region in centuries past -- connecting visitors with a bit of local history. Development of the trails is planned for 2010.

For more information on Hope Springs Institute see their website at www.hopespringsinstitute.org.