



THE LAND STEWARD

Newsletter of the Finger Lakes Land Trust

Vol. 22, No. 1

working to protect the natural integrity of the Finger Lakes Region

Winter 2009-2010

Easement Secures Lakeshore Woodlands, Preserving Scenic View from Taughannock State Park

Now, when visitors to Taughannock State Park look across Cayuga Lake to the shores on the eastern side, they can be assured at least a portion of the view will remain unobstructed by development.

Landowners and sisters, Barbara Kelliher Ross and Carol Ross Penhollow, have donated a new conservation easement in the town of Lansing to the Finger Lakes Land Trust. The property, a remnant of a fifth-generation family farm, features 47 acres of hillside forest with 2,000 feet of frontage on the Norfolk Southern rail line along the Cayuga Lake shore. The property has several rugged ravines as well as mature hardwood forest that supports a diversity of wildlife.

The Ross/Penhollow property is a windfall for the Land Trust, as the land holds an extremely high development value right on the lake and is located in an area experiencing increased development pressure. The land was a high priority for conservation because it is located in a Tompkins County-designated Unique Natural Area, preserves the view from Taughannock State Park across the lake, and plays an important role in helping to maintain the lake's water quality.

"We are proud of this land, which has been in our family for five generations, and we are pleased to have a small part in pre-



The Ross-Penhollow conservation easement secures 2,000 feet of frontage along the eastern shore of Cayuga Lake.

servicing the beauty and tranquility of the countryside surrounding Cayuga Lake," said Ross.

"Carol and Barbara's commitment to the long term conservation of their property is only exceeded by the exceptional natural and scenic qualities they are protecting," said Rocci Aguirre,

continued on page 9

Land Trust Acquisition Adds to Growing Network of Open Space in Ellis Hollow

One of the priorities of the Land Trust is to create and sustain greenbelts—contiguous parcels of land that protect critical habitat, provide corridors for wildlife, and preserve intact the unique natural landscapes that encompass the Finger Lakes region. A recent acquisition makes progress toward this goal by expanding an important greenbelt in Ellis Hollow, just east of Ithaca in the town of Dryden.

The property acquired by the Land Trust was part of a 60-acre tract along Ellis Hollow Creek Road that local resident Charles Pearman bought in 1968. A small portion of the property—approximately seven acres—sits on the west side of the road and includes a house, as well as a pasture where the Pearman family raised horses. The remainder of the property is on the east side of the road and is undeveloped, featuring a meandering

continued on page 8



Charles Pearman on the land he recently sold to the Land Trust that will become an addition to the Ellis Hollow Nature Preserve and known as Pearman Woods

PERSPECTIVES



One person can make quite a difference and Carl Leopold certainly did. As the founding president of the Land Trust, he led

the way during the early years and remained active until his passing on Nov. 18, 2009, at the age of 89.

As a scientist, Carl authored two landmark books on plant physiology. Through his pioneering work in ecological restoration, he demonstrated how tropical forests could be re-established on degraded farmland. And as the son of conservationist Aldo Leopold, he carried on his family's tradition of advocating for the adoption of a land ethic based upon the conservation of our natural resources.

I first read Aldo Leopold's *A Sand County Almanac* as a youth and it helped spark my interest in conservation. When I read of Aldo's musings about favoring his planted pines over encroaching hardwoods, I never dreamed that I would one day see these same pines holding up the roof of Carl's home!

Carl was passionate about the land and his passion was contagious. David Weinstein, a colleague at Cornell where Carl worked as a researcher at the Boyce Thompson Institute since 1977, recalled

working with Carl on a paper about how plants were flowering earlier and birds were moving north sooner because of climate change, and whether those trends were accelerating.

"I had grown used to getting filled with energy from each interaction with Carl over the years," David said. "His overwhelming optimism made me instantly believe, as he did, that there are

never any hurdles too high to prevent the right things from happening."

"He was very focused and so dedicated to protecting the environment—that was paramount to him," said

Betsy Darlington, the current stewardship advisor



BILL HECHT

*Land Trust
Founding President
Carl Leopold*

and the former director of stewardship at the Land Trust.

I remember well the organizational meeting where all expressed interest in creating the Land Trust but also wondered who might be willing to step up

to lead such an endeavor. Carl did not hesitate and successfully guided the organization through its first land acquisitions and the hiring of our first executive director.

Carl was president of the Land Trust's board from 1988 to 1991, and then served as a member of the board from 1991 to 1994. He also had an outstanding reputation in the Ithaca community, and as Betsy pointed out, his name helped the Land Trust gain credibility in its early years.

"He was always involved, and he continued to be very important in an advisory capacity," Betsy added. "He was a very wise person so his opinions about things were important to us. Everyone had a tremendous respect and admiration of him."

Carl leaves us all with a legacy that grows stronger with every additional acre conserved. By leading the way, he forged a path that will lead us to our goal of ensuring the natural integrity of our Finger Lakes region. He is someone who made a difference, and we will miss him.

—Andy Zepp

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Andy Zepp". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light background.

Land Trust Calls for Further Study of Proposed Marcellus Gas Drilling

In December, the Land Trust joined thousands of individuals and organizations who commented on the state's proposed framework for allowing the use of hydraulic fracturing techniques to extract natural gas from the Marcellus shale formation. The Marcellus formation underlies the entire region and is now recognized as one of the most promising natural gas fields in the country.

A lengthy review of the state's draft Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement (dSGEIS) led our board and staff to conclude that the document failed to adequately address a number of important issues, including the cumulative environmental impacts that would result from widespread gas drilling.

The Land Trust is particularly concerned that the state's draft impact statement fails to adequately address the protection of water resources, as well as forest fragmentation that would likely result from the extensive network of drill pads, pipelines, access roads, and compressor stations that would come with development of the gas resource—particularly within the largely forested Southern Tier. In addition, the dSGEIS places undue reliance on self-reporting by industry and mitigation strategies that are only suggested rather than required.

Natural gas development is not new to the Finger Lakes and, in fact, one can today see a number of producing gas wells set among farm fields in the northern part of the region. The proposed large-scale development of the Marcellus formation, and the associated use of hydraulic fracturing techniques present new challenges, however, and pose significant risks to the region's natural resources, particularly to the region's priceless water resources.

Consequently, given concerns about the state's dSGEIS, the Land Trust requested that the state withdraw the document so that it can be substantially revised and a more intensive assessment of the issues be completed. The Land Trust recognizes that the state must diversify its energy resources. At the same time, this must only be done in a way that ensures the future of the natural resources that serve as the basis for our economy and the quality of life we all enjoy.

For a complete version of the Land Trust's comments, please visit our website at www.fllt.org

Land Gift Honors Fitchen Family Legacy

Douglas Fitchen was a man who felt a deep connection to the open spaces of Tompkins County and showed it in the way he managed the 100 acres of land he owned bordering Shindagin Hollow State Forest in the town of Caroline. For him the connection to the landscape didn't end at his property line. As a member of the Land Trust since 1994, Douglas was an early supporter of the organization and saw it evolve into a regional presence focused on protecting the landscapes that define the character of the entire Finger Lakes region.



Located within one of Tompkins County's largest blocks of contiguous forest, the Fitchen property includes part of a county-designated Unique Natural Area.

With his passing in 2008, Douglas' family approached the Land Trust looking to find a way to honor his memory and protect the parcel of land that he had so carefully stewarded over the years. The property had clear conservation value; its richly forested hillsides and a shared boundary with Shindagin Hollow made it a priority site for the Land Trust within the Emerald Necklace focus area.

Daughter Sylvia Fitchen took the lead for her family in negotiations. In working with the Land Trust, the family clearly sought to honor Douglas' spirit and energy. This was clear in the insightful and sincere manner in which Sylvia worked with the Land Trust staff to settle her father's estate and craft a family legacy that would contribute to the larger mission of the Land Trust.

In the end, the family moved forward with a donation of the

entire property to the Land Trust. As part of the agreement, the Land Trust intends to donate approximately 20 acres of the property to New York State as an addition to the state forest. The remaining 80 acres will be sold subject to a conservation easement allowing the construction of a single home on the property and prohibiting further subdivision of the land. Proceeds from the sale of the land will fund long-term stewardship responsibilities of the Land Trust to the easement as well as land protection elsewhere.

"This wonderful gift from the Fitchen family will protect forest land that is particularly significant in that it encompasses a portion of Shindagin Hollow," says Land Trust Executive Director Andrew Zepp. "By expanding forest protection in this area, we'll secure habitat for a variety of wildlife species, ranging from songbirds to black bear."

As rural development pressures increase, properties like the Fitchens' become more and more valuable—to land preservationists as well as developers. Located within one of Tompkins County's largest blocks of contiguous forest, the property also includes part of a county-designated Unique Natural Area. This portion, to be conveyed to the state, features uncommon plants such as Goldie's fern and trees that are over 150 years old.

In a larger sense, the generosity of the Fitchen family highlights one of the key elements in the Land Trust's Emerald Necklace program. Donations—whether as gifts of property, or in the more typical form of conservation easements—underscore a private landowner's ability to make a lasting and profound contribution to the Land Trust's success in protecting valuable open space in our region. Such generosity of spirit transcends generations and helps to link individuals to the larger community and to the history of the land itself.

The Fitchen family gift goes far beyond the acres protected and the conservation values preserved. The final pieces of this project came together in early November of last year. In the middle of December, Sylvia succumbed to a long fight against illness. In working to preserve her father's legacy, she gave her voice to what makes land protection efforts like this resonate across generations. It is now a legacy that honors both a father and a daughter, and a family committed to their memory. It is a commitment that future generations will be immeasurably thankful for.

—Rocci Aguirre

The Land Trust gratefully acknowledges Attorney Kim Rothman and the law firm Miller Mayer, LLP for providing pro bono legal services in support of this project.

Bishop Preserve Linked to Cayuga-Seneca Canal Trail

Every now and then the Finger Lakes Land Trust comes to own a piece of land that is relatively small, with the hopes of connecting it to something bigger in the future. Such is the case with the 35-acre Bishop Preserve, which was donated to the Land Trust in 1993 by Bruce Bishop, and is located on the north side of West River Road in the town of Fayette, Seneca County, just a couple of miles east of Geneva. For more than 30 years Mr. Bishop worked to create a natural area from abandoned farmland, before turning the property over to the Land Trust so that the property could be enjoyed by the public. After marking hiking trails and installing a new sign and parking area at the preserve, local residents began

enjoying the quiet woods of the preserve and taking short walks there.

Now, however, the modest foot trails of the Bishop Preserve are connected to something much larger. Along the northern boundary of the preserve lies an abandoned railroad grade, paralleling the Cayuga-Seneca Canal. Through the diligent efforts of many volunteers and community leaders, this railway has now become the Cayuga-Seneca Canal Trail, which is currently under development, and will ultimately extend 19 miles from Seneca Lake State Park and Geneva through Waterloo and Seneca Falls to the Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge.

continued on page 4

Second Acquisition in Finger Lakes National Forest Expands Emerald Necklace

In November the Land Trust received a gift of 11 woodland acres from Chuck and Nancy Cladel, residents of central Pennsylvania with family ties to Ithaca. The parcel is located in the heart of the Finger Lakes National Forest in the town of Hector, Schuyler County.

The new property has a forest mix of white pine, mature oak, maple and assorted other hardwoods. Several small vernal pools form in shallow depressions in the forest floor, and the property lies adjacent to wetlands. As such, according to Finger Lakes National Forest (FLNF) District Ranger Jodie Vanselow, the parcel provides a good habitat protection buffer for wildlife of many kinds. The donated land also provides a buffer for hikers along the nearby Interloken Trail.

As a National Forest “in-holding”—a piece of private property surrounded by public land—the Cladel property is especially valuable for its contribution to the integrity of FLNF woodland wildlife habitat as well as increased public access to forest recreation. This is the second such parcel the Land Trust has acquired within the FLNF in the last two years, having identified such lands as a conservation priority within the broader context of the Land Trust’s Emerald Necklace initiative.

The FLNF contains many in-holdings. Most of its current lands were originally established through federal purchase of marginal farmland in the 1930s and 1940s from landowners willing to sell and relocate to more promising futures. But not all owners were willing to sell, and the resulting mosaic pattern of privately-owned and federally-owned lands between Cayuga and Seneca lakes reflects this complex history.

The mosaic, or patchwork, character of FLNF lands presents a challenge to land conservation efforts, as many private in-holdings are susceptible to housing development, especially along the major roads.

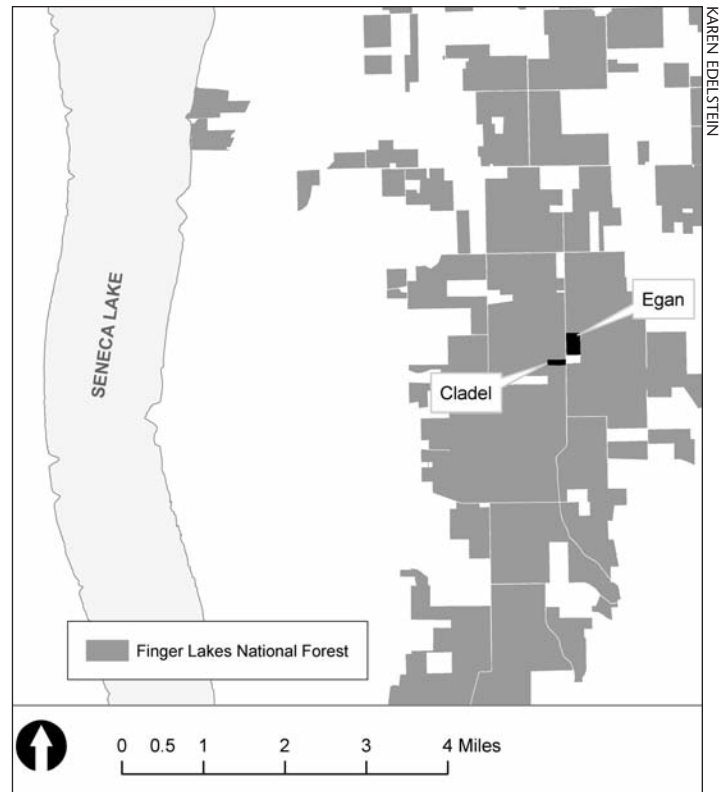
Potomac Road, on which the Cladel property lies, is the main north-south conduit through the National Forest. Last year, alerted by the FLNF, the Land Trust quickly purchased 30 acres just across the road from the Cladel property. Both Potomac Road properties will be conveyed to the U.S. Forest Service when federal funds eventually become available.

“This property adds another piece to the puzzle,” said Jodie Vanselow. “If you look at all the in-holdings [in the FLNF], it adds to a continuous green space and increased connectivity for wildlife.”

Chuck Cladel grew up in Ithaca, son of a Cornell professor. At home in central Pennsylvania, he and his wife, Nancy, are active in land conservation. In 1998, they were founding members of the Manada Conservancy, a land trust protecting local natural, historic, agricultural and scenic resources. Nancy is the organization’s president; Chuck is on the board of directors.

Together they bought the FLNF in-holding nearly 20 years ago, hoping to make it a quiet retreat on their visits to the Finger Lakes. Yet with responsibilities split between careers at home in Pennsylvania and the importance of spending time here with Chuck’s parents in Ithaca, their plans for the property never materialized.

In due course, they chose to unburden themselves of the property, eventually deciding on its donation to the Land Trust, to be conveyed to the National Forest, as their preferred option.



The Cladels’ recent donation of land secures an important inholding within Finger Lakes National Forest.

“This wonderful gift will help restore integrity to this diverse forest habitat,” said Land Trust Executive Director Andy Zepp.

—Eben McLane

The Land Trust gratefully acknowledges Attorney Peter Miller and the law firm of Adams, Theisen, May, Miller & Yehl for providing pro bono legal services in support of this project.

Bishop Preserve linked to...

continued from page 3

Land Trust staff and volunteer nature preserve steward Al Cardinale have already been working with Vince Scalise, chairman of the Cayuga-Seneca Canal Trail Association, to establish a connector trail between the new “Cay-Sen Trail” and the Bishop Preserve. Completion of the connector trail is scheduled for this spring. The other footpaths on the Bishop Preserve have also been maintained, and the Bishop Preserve is a good place to go explore if you haven’t been there before.

—Chris Olney

For additional information about the Bishop Preserve, including a map and directions, please visit our website at www.flt.org and go to Protected Lands.

Land Trust Releases Conservation Plan for Seneca County

To guide future conservation efforts, both public and private, the Land Trust has produced *A Greenprint for Seneca County*. Funded by an anonymous donor, the greenprint is a plan that identifies links between the county's natural resources, its economic development and its overall quality of life. Its purpose is to promote the conservation of environmental assets which underpin Seneca County's economic, cultural and environmental vitality.

The plan was developed through systematic fieldwork and data analysis, as well as informal interviews with more than 30 landowners and local leaders. In addition, an advisory committee that included conservation professionals, as well as other stakeholders, met several times to provide input for the project.

The four key components of the greenprint are agriculture, tourism, surface water resources and eight natural resource focus areas. While these components presently contribute to the county's overall quality of life, the health of each could be improved.

The study found that a strong and diverse agricultural economy is the foundation of the county's economic and cultural vitality, with farms occupying 62 percent of the county's land area and generating \$84 million in sales. The Finger Lakes region is the largest wine producing area in New York, and Seneca County boasts the highest density of wineries in the state outside Long Island.

The greenprint notes, however, that sprawling development now poses a direct threat to the county's agricultural economy and, in some cases, is causing farming to become less profitable and viable. "Farms near businesses and travel corridors...are falling to development," notes the study's author Kris West, adding, "Even in areas of the county experiencing agricultural growth there is no guarantee that these trends will continue."

The study found that a strong and diverse agricultural economy is the foundation of the county's economic and cultural vitality, with farms occupying 62 percent of the county's land area and generating \$84 million in sales.

The document's recommendations include increasing public funding for farmland protection to support the conservation of large blocks of viable farmland and implementing land use policies and standards at the town level to minimize the impacts of residential development.

Tourism in the Finger Lakes Region is a \$2.7 billion industry—the highest in New York State outside of New York City, Long Island and the Hudson Valley. In Seneca County, tourism accounts for \$45 million in visitor spending, generating \$5.7 million in state and local taxes and employing nearly 900 people. Among those features that attract visitors is the county's unique position bordering both Seneca and Cayuga lakes with 72 miles of shoreline, as well as abundant scenic, historic and natural resources.

The study's recommendations regarding tourism include a systematic effort to maintain and enhance the county's rural

landscapes, the installation of interpretive signage to inform visitors about local resources, improved access to existing trails, and conservation of undeveloped lakeshore areas. All such steps must be done in ways sensitive to neighboring landowner concerns, the study asserts.

Protecting the county's surface water quality is paramount, the greenprint notes. Seneca Lake and Cayuga Lake have the potential to supply fresh water for many, many generations. There are threats to the lakes, however—primarily erosion and nutrient



BILL HECHT

Farms define the landscape of Seneca County, occupying 62% of the county's land area.

loading, inadequate stream buffers, failing storm water and wastewater infrastructure, and poorly planned development. Consequently, the study recommends acting to address these threats both by increasing the funding for, and improving landowner participation in, agricultural conservation and best management programs, upgrading problematic wastewater treatment systems, and boosting efforts to conserve lands that border streams which flow into the lakes.

As part of its review of the environmental strengths of Seneca County, the greenprint examines eight Natural Resource Focus Areas, including the following:

Scenic Lakeshore Areas – The report maintains that these areas constitute a "world-class scenic resource" with outstanding vistas; to protect them, development must be undertaken carefully, lest scenic views be diminished and erosion and water quality problems exacerbated.

Montezuma Wetlands Complex – Multi-partner conservation efforts are already underway within this important migratory bird stopover. Additional work is needed to protect and restore increased wetland acreage while providing for adequate upland buffer areas.

Finger Lakes National Forest – New York's only national forest features 16,000 acres of diverse habitats, including extensive grassland areas that have been recognized by New York Audubon as one of the state's Important Bird Areas. The forest is intermingled with private holdings, and it is recommended that these holdings be secured through conservation easements to ensure habitat integrity.

Other Natural Resource Focus Areas included in the report include remaining undeveloped shoreline properties; the Junius Ponds, a unique natural area featuring rare flora and fauna; the

continued on page 8

Scenes

from Around
Our Region...

BILL BANASZEWSKI



Winter vineyards overlooking Bare Hill and South Hill on Canandaigua Lake

Go to the winter woods: Listen there. Look. Watch. And “the dead months” will give you a subtler secret than any you have yet found in the forest.

—Fiona Macleod (1855-1905)

BETSY DARLINGTON



Winter hikers at the Ellis Hollow Nature Preserve

BETSY DARLINGTON



Tom Reimers (right) shows off a birch fungus to preserve steward Bob Corneau and others at last year’s Autumn’s End Nature Walk at the Steege Hill Nature Preserve.

BETSY DARLINGTON



Hikers enjoying a beautiful winter day at the Ellis Hollow Nature Preserve



Winter view of Canandaigua Lake from the Great Hill Nature Preserve

CHRIS OLNEY



Volunteers John Sirianni (left) and Tom Reimers replacing trail markers last fall at the Lindsay-Parsons Biodiversity Preserve

TOM REIMERS



Winter sunrise at the Stevenson Forest Preserve in Tompkins County

Land Trust Acquisition Adds to Growing Network... *continued from cover*

stream surrounded by a mature forest on both banks, wooded hills, and a scenic meadow.

In 2004, Mr. Pearman and his wife Carol Skinner contacted the Land Trust about preserving the acreage on the east side of Ellis Hollow Creek Road. “We wanted to protect the land permanently,” Mr. Pearman stated, “and we knew the Land Trust shared our interest.” The initial discussions involved a conservation easement, but over time the negotiations evolved to an outright sale of a portion of the property to the Land Trust. A sale agreement was finally inked in November.

“We’re very grateful to Charles and Carol for their commitment to the land,” said Land Trust Executive Director Andrew Zepp. “He sold the land for far less than its fair market value.”

The Land Trust acquired a 39-acre parcel that will be known as Pearman Woods, a non-contiguous extension of the Land Trust’s nearby Ellis Hollow Nature Preserve. In conjunction with the acquisition, Mr. Pearman also donated a conservation easement on an adjacent 11 acres. Although the easement allows for the development of a single-family home in a specified area of the property, it protects a meadow along Ellis Hollow Creek Road and forested land adjoining the new preserve.

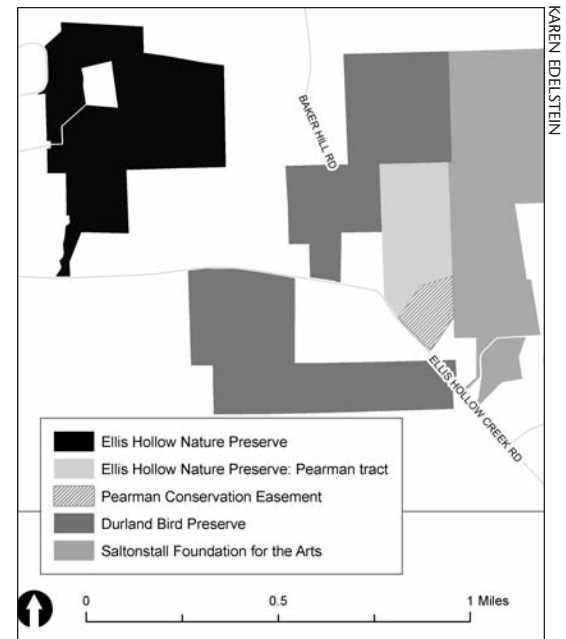
Two key factors made this acquisition a priority for the Land Trust. The first is its proximity to other protected land in the area. “This property is part of a growing network of conserved forest land on the north side of Ellis Hollow,” Zepp noted. Although the new preserve is approximately a mile away from the original 111-acre Ellis Hollow Nature Preserve, it is bordered on two sides by Cornell University’s Durland Bird Sanctuary, where locally uncommon birds such as the Winter Wren can be found. In addition, a third side of the property abuts forest land owned by the Saltonstall Foundation for the Arts, a 200-acre artists’ retreat.

In addition to providing the connective tissue between protected woodlands, the Pearman Woods property also includes a significant tributary to Cascadilla Creek, which is part of the Cayuga Lake watershed. The Land Trust has been active in protecting streams feeding Cascadilla Creek, including several running through the original Ellis Hollow Nature Preserve. The Land Trust also holds a conservation easement on wetlands bordering the creek. “The protection of the Pearman property helps further ensure water quality within Cascadilla Creek,” said Zepp.

This latest acquisition—the Land Trust’s sixth land protection project in Ellis Hollow—expands the Ellis Hollow Nature Preserve to 150 acres. In the coming year, a management plan will be developed to provide for appropriate public access and to address the control of non-native invasive plants on the Pearman Woods property.

Fundraising is underway to cover costs relating to the acquisition of Pearman Woods and the associated conservation easement. The Land Trust has already secured initial funding from the Park Legacy Fund—a grant made by Dorothy Park to the Land Trust in support of land conservation within the Cayuga Lake watershed—and an existing natural areas acquisition grant from Cornell University. To make a contribution, please contact Jan Hesbon, the Land Trust’s director of development, at the Ithaca office or by e-mail at janhesbon@fltt.org.

—Jeff Tonole



The Pearman property is now part of a matrix of protected lands in Ellis Hollow.

Land Trust Releases Conservation

Plan... *continued from page 5*

former Seneca Army Depot, a large block of natural habitat that hosts a unique herd of white deer; Canoga Marsh, a productive wetland on Cayuga Lake’s western shore; and areas of extensive grassland bird habitat in the central part of the county.

The report’s conclusion notes several tools that can support conservation efforts, while allowing land to remain privately owned, and thus on the tax rolls. Chief among these tools are conservation easements, technical assistance and incentive programs and strengthened land use planning at the local level.

—George Dillmann

The full report will be available on the Land Trust’s website (www.fltt.org) and in printed form in mid-March.



Vineyards contribute to both the agricultural and tourism economies of Seneca County.

Nine Mile Creek Dam Removal Helps Fish Make Their Way Upstream

Last summer the Land Trust joined a partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and others, on a partial dam removal project along Onondaga County's Nine Mile Creek. The Land Trust contributed interim funding for equipment involved in the dam removal—a small role in an important theater.

The dam removal occurred in the village of Camillus on land owned by the Central New York Land Trust (formerly Save the County). Completed in September 2009, the project was funded mainly through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Lower Great Lakes Fisheries Resource Office and made use of personnel from the Montezuma Wildlife Refuge.

According to Gian Dodici of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's New York Field Office, the service has been busy in the Nine Mile Creek watershed, working with many partners in Onondaga County to restore and enhance streamside habitat for migratory birds and a number of fish species, including Brook Trout, the official fish of New York State.

Nine Mile Creek flows from Otisco Lake through a series of valleys downstream to Syracuse's Onondaga Lake. The primary aim of the Camillus dam removal project was to restore fish passage to upstream reaches of the historic waterway.

Using a hydraulic hammer and excavator, workers removed roughly three-quarters of the dam, leaving enough of the structure to maintain stream dimensions. Stone abutments on each side of the stream were left intact because of their historical significance.

Nine Mile Creek has long been an economic boon to towns along its banks. In the late 1700s and early 1800s, the swift waters of the creek powered saw and grist mills which helped create thriving communities, including Marcellus and Camillus.

Activity along the creek increased in the 1820s, when the original Erie Canal was built to the north of Camillus, offering the opportunity for a much wider distribution of local products from the mills. Because the canal required a reliable water source, the north end of Otisco Lake was dammed so that the lake and its Nine Mile Creek outlet could provide a reservoir for use in the



GIAN DODICI, USFWS

Jeff Graves, USFWS Heavy Equipment Operator, begins dam removal on Nine Mile Creek.

canal downstream. The Otisco Lake dam still exists.

During the so-called First Enlargement of the Erie Canal in the mid-1840s, engineers needed to divert water from Nine Mile Creek into the canal during dry months. They constructed a dam and accompanying feeder canal just to the south of downtown Camillus on Nine Mile Creek. This feeder canal ran through the village and eventually into the main canal. It was in operation during the summer of 1845.

The feeder canal entrance was blocked off long ago, when its usefulness disappeared as the Erie Canal changed course to the north. The canal bed is now

mostly covered by a tangled forest of Japanese Knotweed. But the rather elegant dam on Nine Mile Creek stood intact for more than 150 years.

One unintended consequence of this old engineering project was to restrict the natural movement of fish in Nine Mile Creek to suitable spawning habitat upstream. Occasional alterations to the Camillus dam during its use to the Erie Canal were more concerned with seasonal flooding than seasonal fishing.

After all these years, when the dam is no longer needed, it made sense to at least partly remove it to restore passage for the Brook Trout working their way upstream.

—Eben McLane

Easement Secures Lakeshore Woodlands...

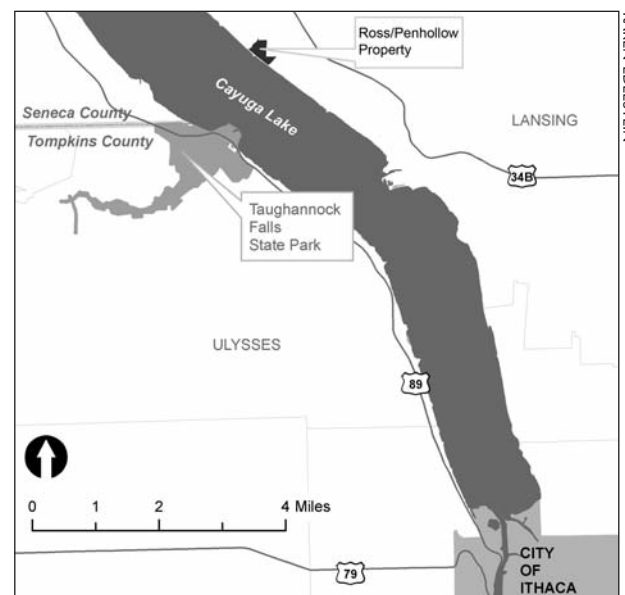
continued from cover

the Land Trust's director of land protection. "This extraordinary gift will benefit the family, the public, and the water quality of Cayuga Lake for generations to come."

The conservation easement will limit future development to a single home—in addition to one that already exists there—in a designated location that is designed to minimize impacts upon Cayuga Lake as well as the property's scenic character. Forestry activities may be conducted solely with the prior review and approval of the Land Trust, which will be responsible for holding and monitoring the easement agreement.

The Ross/Penhollow easement is the 69th conservation easement to be acquired by the Land Trust.

—Krishna Ramanujan



KAREN EDELSTEIN

Help Wanted!

Volunteer gardeners wanted to help tend the Land Trust's native plant garden in downtown Ithaca.

•••

Volunteer(s) needed to help distribute the Land Trust's newsletter in the Ithaca area.

•••

Please call Abbey in the Land Trust office at 607-275-9487.

Conservation Property For Sale

Conservation buyer wanted for 25-acre rural retreat located between Hammondsport and Watkins Glen.

Features fields and forest and borders state land. Conservation easement allows for single house on property.

Asking price is **\$49,000.**

Contact Dennis Carlson at 607-569-2020

Our sincerest appreciation for gifts in honor of:

Dr. & Mrs. Abraham Bezuidenhout
From
Drew & Mary Lee Noden

The Buckler Family
From
Jeff Tomasik

Patti & Jules Burgevin
From
Peter Burgevin & Margo Alexander

David & Edith Cassels
From
Kurt & Sorel Gottfried

Janis Chang
From
Emily Hostetter
Linda Meyer

Sybil Craig
From
Lisa & Jon Gandelot
Lewis & Beneth Morrow
Marilyn & Wayne Wiswedel

Betsy Darlington
From
Lois Darlington
Jean L. & Carl F. Gortzig

Ronald & Dora Donovan
From
Sonda Donovan

Tom & Maria Eisner
From
Ron Hoy

Jack Booker & Cornelia Farnum
From
Drew & Mary Lee Noden

Peter Kane
From
Ramya Kane

Anna Kunz
From
Cornelia & Lawrence Marks

Mr. & Mrs. Gene Lane
From
Karen Parker

Mary Ellen McDonald
From
Andrew McDonald

Judy Oplinger
From
Phaik Teoh

Eero & Blanche Ruuspakka
From
Catherine Thomson

Our deepest gratitude for thoughtful gifts in memory of:

Dr. Albert Craig Jr
From
Lewis & Beneth Morrow

Arch & Esther Dotson
From
Holly Gosse

William Garvey
From
Sally Garvey

Jason Gates
From
Kathleen Yen

Ben & Bessie Glazer
From
Jacob Glazer

Charles & Ann Jankey
From
Walter & Sarah Medlin

Anthony Jarczewski
From
Joyce Bleiweiss

Carl Leopold
From
Frank & Blythe Baldwin
Don Barber & Rita Rosenberg
Thomas Bjorkman & Ann Raffetto
Patti & Jules Burgevin
John Butler
Cayuga Bird Club
Cayuga Landscape Co.
Betsy & Dick Darlington
Peter J. Davies & Linda DeNoyer
Lina DiGregorio & Gabriel Shea
Nancy Dolge

Jeff & Jane Doyle
Karen Edelstein
Herb J Engman
Cornelia Farnum & Jack Booker
Clare Fewtrell

Finger Lakes ReUse Board of Directors
Nancy Freeman & James Wallace
Steffan Freeman

Friends of the Cayuga Lake Floating Classroom
Dr. Lowell Garner
Vicki Gayle

Kurt & Sorel Gottfried
Maureen Hanson
Donald & Marian Hartill
Mr. Howard Hartnett
John Henderson & Margaret Shepard

Ruth & Roger Hopkins
Andre & Jean Jagendorf
Audrey Kahin
Judy Kennison & Marlene Sack
Jim & Sara Kersting
Heinz & Judy Koch
Gilbert & Ilma Levine
Susanne & Jim Lorbeer
Danny Markus
Catherine McCarthy & Paul Davis

Bob McGuire
Fred & Elizabeth McLafferty
Eben McLane
Drew & Mary Lee Noden
Victoria Nuzzo & Bernd Blossey
Joan & Edward Ormondroyd
Joel Rabinowitz & Dorothy Pomponio

Rick & Valerie Rapport
Tom Reimers
Martha & Steve Robertson

Judy Rossiter & William Kaupé
Larry Russell
Ted Schiele & Christine Griffin
Lisa Schleelein
Carol & Ron Schmitt
Arnie & Mary Schwartz
Jan & Mike Shay

Marjorie Smart & Robert Camp
Laura Stenzler & Karel Schat
Anne & Robert Terrell
Mr. Cyrus Umrigar
Barbara Warland & Helen Gibson

Randy Wayne
Scott Wayne
Julia Webster
Thomas Weiler
David A. Weinstein & Christina Stark

Sylvia & Leonard Weinstein
Mary Westlake
Kathleen Yen
Andrew & Rocio Zepp

Dorothy McIlroy
From
John Henderson & Margaret Shepard

Christine Roberts
From
Diane Morton & Ken Kemphues

Odell Scott
From
Barbara Scott

Robert & Jonathan Thompson
From
Barbara & Hugh Chenoweth

A CLOSER LOOK

A Wonder of Nature's Design: The Ruffed Grouse

Imagine a mysterious creature of the woods. It sounds like an outboard motor. It has footprints like a dinosaur. It sleeps in snow caves. As hunters or other chasers would attest, it can defy even the most patient attempts to find it. Then when it does reveal itself, it is utterly impossible to miss, but only momentarily, as it shatters the silence with a sound like thunder, flees with startling speed, then vanishes again in the shadows.

Fear not. Doubt not. It's no yeti, nor Godzilla, nor Bigfoot, nor their bizarre hybrid offspring. This animal is real, and in fact locally quite common — not a fabrication of some creature-feature scriptwriter, but a true marvel of nature. The mystery beast is the Ruffed Grouse.

The species takes its name from a thick black frill of feathers on the neck, present with both sexes but most visible on the displaying male. Its scientific name, *Bonasa umbellus*, comes from the umbrella-like appearance of the unfurled ruff. Displays by both sexes in both courtship and distraction of predators reveal a spectacular tail as well, fanned out in a gaudy semicircle with a broad black subterminal band. Usually, though, both the ruff and the tail remain hidden, and Ruffed Grouse plumage

is most remarkable for its exquisitely complex patterns and subtle gray, brown, and rufous hues, which allow it to slip unnoticed through the dappled woodland understory. Because of this camouflage, people often miss seeing the bird, even when it's nearby, until it flushes with a loud, heart-stopping thrum of wings.

You might also detect Ruffed Grouse via its distinctive drumming, mostly in spring. This sound consists of extremely low-frequency pulses, so low indeed that often one actually *feels* the percussive beats before actually hearing them. Perched on a fallen log, the male grouse drums by beat-

ing his wings, slowly at first, then accelerating into a rapid revving roll of eight or more pulses per second. The wings do not follow the up-and-down motion of flight, but rather trace a peculiar rotational path, somewhat analogous to the butterfly stroke in swimming. Each rotation creates a momentary vacuum; the rush of air into this vacuum creates the sound.

Ruffed Grouse feed mostly on buds and catkins of deciduous trees, especially quaking aspen, as well as birch, cherry, and others. They manage to subsist on this diet, despite its low caloric density, because of two enlarged side pouches on the large intestine, called ceca. The ceca

rise to just above the freezing point, thus reducing the grouse's energy expenditure by 30 percent or more. (In the absence of deep snow, Ruffed Grouse roost in the branches of conifers.)

Snow roosting isn't the Ruffed Grouse's only amazing adaptation for winter. Each fall, Ruffed Grouse grow comb-like fringes, called pectinations, on the sides of their toes. These fringes act as snowshoes, distributing the bird's weight to prevent sinking, and leaving telltale saurian tracks in the snow. The pectinations are shed in spring.

The species resides year-round across the northern United States and Canada.

Ruffed Grouse occupy various wooded habitats, but prefer sites with a mix of young and old forest, with dense ground cover. In our region, Ruffed Grouse habitat has probably increased over the last century, as former agricultural land has reverted to forest. As our lands continue to change, we can expect grouse distribution to change too, with local declines where forests reach full maturity, but continued presence where logging, fire, and further abandonment of farmland creates early successional forest.

The relationship between bird and habitat is the quintessence of the Ruffed Grouse. Its adaptations are so perfectly suited to its surroundings that the landscape is as much a part of the bird as the bird is part of the landscape. To share our lands with such a creature is a joy and a privilege — not only for the excitement of actual encounters in the field, but also just for the simple knowledge that this wonder exists among us. More entertaining than movies, more marvelous than myth, the Ruffed Grouse is a miracle of real life, close to home.

—Mark Chao



MIKE HOPIAK

The well camouflaged Ruffed Grouse sits on her nest.

prolong digestion time, enabling more thorough absorption of nutrients from large volumes of mostly fibrous matter.

Winter survival for Ruffed Grouse requires not only sufficient caloric intake, but also retention of body heat. For this, Ruffed Grouse have evolved a remarkable behavioral strategy. Just before nightfall, given sufficient snow cover, a grouse will plunge head-first from the air into a snow bank. The bird then creates a small hollow, barely larger than its body. Here the grouse spends the night, sheltered from the wind. Warmed by the bird's body, the temperature inside the snow burrow can

Finger Lakes Land Trust

Officers:

Chris Proulx, *President*
Howard Hartnett, *Vice President*
Bob Werner, *Secretary*
Burch Craig, *Treasurer*

Board Members:

Katherine Borgella Stu Schweizer
Jim Fralick Stephanie Sechler
Steve Green Doug Sutherland
Bob Growe Marianne Young
Barbara Hamlin

Advisory Council:

James Byrnes Robert Mrazek
Thomas Eisner Mark Stash
John Fitzpatrick David Zorn
Alexa Gifford

Staff:

Andrew Zepp, *Executive Director*
Rocci Aguirre, *Director of Land Protection*
Abbey Chernela, *Office Manager*
Karen Edelstein, *GIS Projects Manager*
Emily Eisman, *Outreach and Membership Manager*
Megan Fenton, *Land Protection Specialist*
Jan Hesbon, *Director of Development*
Betsy Landre, *Senior Field Representative*
Chris Olney, *Director of Stewardship*

Newsletter Editors:

Eben McLane
Krishna Ramanujan

Newsletter Layout:

West Hill Graphics, Inc.

Advisors:

Legal Counsel: Elizabeth Bixler; Randy Marcus; Miller Mayer, LLP; Peter Miller; Richard Ruswick; True, Walsh, & Schubert, LLP
Forestry Consultant: Michael DeMunn
Founding President: A. Carl Leopold
Stewardship Advisor: Betsy Darlington



Finger Lakes Land Trust

202 E. Court Street
Ithaca, New York 14850
Ph: 607-275-9487 • Fax: 607-275-0037
email: info@fllt.org • www.fllt.org

Western Lakes Office

P.O. Box 620
Candaigua, NY 14424
Ph: 585-880-9934



Finger Lakes
Land Trust
202 E. Court Street
Ithaca, NY 14850

Return Service Requested

NON-PROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
LODI, NY
PERMIT NO. 1

WINTER 2009-2010 CALENDAR

Saturday, February 27, 10:00 am – 11:30 am

Hemlock Hike at Carpenter's Falls and Bahar Preserve.

Cornell Coop. Ext. of Onondaga County and the Finger Lakes Land Trust will host a hemlock hike/snowshoe at Carpenter's Falls Unique Area and Bahar Preserve on the western shore of Skaneateles Lake. Experience the winter beauty of the forested ravine along Bear Swamp Creek, as we take a close look at the local hemlock trees that line the hillside. Forest Entomologist Mark Whitmore will teach hikers about the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid, a non-native insect pest that threatens the health of local hemlock stands. Participants should meet at the Carpenter Falls parking area, at the intersection of Carver Rd. and Appletree Point Rd. Dress for the weather and bring snowshoes, if desired. Group size is limited; please call Cornell Coop. Ext. at (315) 424-9485 ext 0 to register.

Wednesday, March 31, 7:00 pm – 8:30 pm

Land Conservation: Tools to Protect Gorham's Rural Character

While Benefiting You the Landowner.

The Town of Gorham Conservation Board and the Finger Lakes Land Trust are co-sponsoring this program to share information about the tools and opportunities that are available to landowners to conserve and protect their land, receive potential tax incentives or credits, and help preserve the rural character of the Township of Gorham. The program will be held at the Gorham Fire Hall, 4676 Kearny Road in the Town of Gorham, Ontario County. Refreshments and snacks will be provided.

See our web site for maps and photos of the preserves.

WALKS GO RAIN, SUN OR SNOW. PLEASE BRING SNACKS AND WATER, AND WEAR STURDY SHOES. CALL THE LAND TRUST AT (607) 275-9487 FOR DETAILS.