



THE LAND STEWARD

Newsletter of the Finger Lakes Land Trust

Vol. 17, No. 4

working to protect the natural integrity of the Finger Lakes Region

Autumn 2005



BETSY DARLINGTON

The clear, cold waters of Bear Swamp Creek cascading over Carpenter's Falls and plummeting 90 feet to the forested canyon below

Land Trust Acquires Public Access to Carpenter's Falls; Campaign Launched to Save Additional Land near Skaneateles Lake

The Finger Lakes landscape is famous, of course, for its secluded gorges and stunning waterfalls. Residents and visitors alike know Watkins Glen, Taughannock Falls and Buttermilk Falls, to name some of the most popular. Many beautiful falls go unseen, however, tucked away in folds of open farmland and rendered inaccessible because they lie on private property.

In July the Land Trust announced its acquisition of a 30-acre parcel of land, including the primary public access to one of the region's most scenic waterfalls. Carpenter's Falls on Bear Swamp Creek near the village of New Hope, Cayuga County, drops 90 feet, making it the highest falls in the Skaneateles Lake watershed.

A classic example of a "hanging falls," Carpenter's Falls sits atop a deep, wooded gorge cut first by receding glacial meltwaters and then further eroded over time by runoff from seasonal precipitation. Now, the creek cascades off a sturdy, erosion-resistant shelf of Tully limestone. The softer shales beneath the limestone have been carved away to produce an impressive overhang, so that the water free-falls to the floor below. After a good rain, or during the spring snow melt, Bear Swamp Creek positively roars.

Carpenter's Falls lies roughly half a mile upstream from the Land Trust's existing Bahar Nature Preserve at the lower end of Bear Swamp Creek where

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Conservation Easement Gift Protects Fifth-Generation Family Farm

For keeping a farm alive 115 years in the Finger Lakes, a family deserves a road named after them. And beautiful Green Road in Bristol, Ontario County, is a just tribute to the Green family and their many years of stewardship.

In August, the Land Trust announced a conservation easement donated by Don Green that will permanently protect his 200-acre farm, worked by four generations of his family. Don's pregnant daughter, Bess, will soon move with her husband into the house that once belonged to her grandparents, adding the fifth and sixth generations to the farm.

Green Road bisects a beautiful little highland valley about 20 miles south of Rochester in an area where Don feels the encroaching pressures of new housing development. Within his

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Easement Gift Protects Land Adjoining Finger Lakes National Forest

The Land Trust is delighted to announce a new conservation easement in Hector, Schuyler County. Vic and Elaine Mansfield have donated the easement on their entire 70-acre property abutting the Finger Lakes National Forest. This acquisition furthers the Land Trust's goal of protecting lands adjacent to the National Forest, effectively expanding the boundaries of undeveloped forest in the area.

"If you look at a map of the Finger Lakes National Forest, it looks like a necklace of beads; it's discontinuous," Vic Mansfield said. "Our little piece is a contribution towards making a real wildlife corridor, to be part of a movement to create these ecological havens."

Vic bought the land and its broken-down 200-year-old farm-

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PERSPECTIVES



There are countless reasons to justify the cause of land conservation. On a daily basis, I speak with advocates who are passionate about conserving land for its value as wildlife habitat, for its scenic beauty, its productivity for agriculture, or its importance to water quality.

One of the most important reasons for conserving land is perhaps somewhat harder to articulate but is clearly demonstrated by the projects highlighted in this issue of *The Land Steward*. Each of them shows how land conservation can strengthen family and community ties — ties to the land as well as to one another.

The commitment of the Green and Mansfield families to their land, on one hand, has also served to strengthen their own families. By donating a conservation

easement, Don Green has helped ensure that a fifth generation of Greens will live on the farm. For Vic and Elaine Mansfield, their decision to donate an easement grew from their nurturing of their fields and forests over a 35-year period. While they nurtured the land, it in turn strengthened the bonds of their family and friends.

At Carpenter's Falls, generations of families have come together to spend hot summer days exploring its cascades and pools near the south end of Skaneateles Lake. I have many times seen the look of wonder in children's faces as they glimpse the thundering falls for the first time.

By acquiring the primary access to this natural area, as well as a similar site at Grimes Glen in Ontario County, the Land Trust is ensuring that families will still have the opportunity to strengthen

their relationships to each other while connecting with our landscape.

Whether through the use of a conservation easement or by direct acquisition, the Land Trust is maintaining our community's ability to link with the land. From the Green Farm to Carpenter's Falls and the Mansfield's Schuyler County tract, we are ensuring a richer future for our children.

While we're protecting wildlife habitat, prime farmland, and pristine watercourses, we're also ensuring that families will always have the opportunity to come together over shared traditions, natural wonder, and a common bond to the land.

— Andrew E. Zepp,
Executive Director

Land Trust Acquires Access to Carpenter's Falls

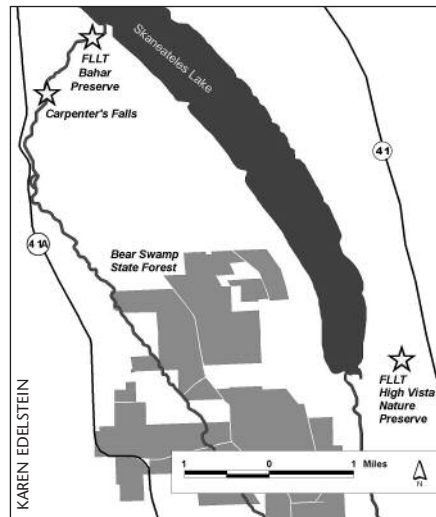
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the creek meets the lake shore. The new property extends from the falls, just off Apple Tree Point Road, downstream along the south side of the gorge. The steep terrain features a mature forest dominated by hemlock, red oak, sugar maple and ash.

In the 1800s, an old logging road up the gorge became known as the "jug path." When upland farm roads were impassable in the spring mud season, this path guided parched folks from the lake shore up to gin mills on the creek above Carpenter's Falls. People from all around tied their boats at New Hope Landing (the lower end of the Bahar preserve) and hiked up the steep, mile-long trail to fill their empty liquor jugs. How they made the trip back down to their boats is anyone's guess.

Land Trust board member Scott Winkelman, a Skaneateles native, has strong feelings for both the human and natural histories of Carpenter's Falls and Bear Swamp Creek. "Personally, it's been a lifelong dream for me," he said about the new purchase. "Always in the back of my mind was preserving sacred places like this. The bottom line with the falls is to preserve their natural integrity."

The gorge lies within an Important Bird Area, as recently designated by Audubon New York. Threatened cerulean warbler and wood thrush breeding habitat, in particular, will be protected by this new purchase. The Land Trust also holds a contract to buy adjacent land that would link Bahar with Carpenter's Falls, with the aim of creating an uninterrupted



mile-long corridor of conserved forested lands along one of Skaneateles Lake's most important tributaries.

The Land Trust has a working partnership with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). Carpenter's Falls and the Bear Swamp Creek corridor have long been identified as priorities within the DEC's Open Space Plan for land protection. The Land Trust intends ultimately to transfer the Carpenter's Falls parcel to the DEC for future management, while incorporating any adjacent acreage it may purchase into its Bahar Nature Preserve.

The Land Trust has recently launched a \$400,000 fundraising campaign both to cover the cost of this new acquisition and to pursue other conservation projects along the

creek and in the Skaneateles Lake watershed as a whole.

"We must act now if we are to conserve those lands that make Skaneateles Lake such a special place," said Land Trust Executive Director Andrew Zepp. "By acquiring key parcels and working cooperatively with landowners through the use of conservation easements, we can ensure that these areas aren't overrun by increasing development pressures."

Continued cooperation with the DEC and other conservation organizations, as well as creative partnerships with preservation-minded landowners is essential to the Land Trust's drive to protect as much land as possible within the Skaneateles watershed, as it is in *all* Finger Lakes watersheds.

— Eben McLane

PRESERVE PROFILE

The “Lost Gorge” of Sweedler Preserve

When I told people I planned to visit the Sweedler Preserve, no one knew the name. But after explaining how to get there – south out of Ithaca, then winding up a road past Buttermilk Falls – old-time Ithaca locals had invariably been there. They recollected with a hint of dreaminess how lovely it was.

The day I arrived and parked by the bridge that crosses Lick Brook, a summer drought had reduced the brook to puddles and trickles. The path appeared suddenly off the road, clearly marked by neat wood chips and blue paint blazes on trees. The sun-dappled path led through a forest of tall pine, maple and white oak. Cicadas rang. To the left of the path ran a small gorge, perhaps twenty feet deep and a child’s stone throw across. In spite of the drought, I heard the bell-like sounds of flowing water.



BETSY DARLINGTON

The lower amphitheater of Lick Brook Gorge at the Sweedler Preserve

After an easy ramble over a few fallen trunks and through pleasant woods, the path forked – a blue route straight ahead and a white trail to the right. I noticed the foliage ahead thinned, and a sudden haze of open air lay ahead. A few steps further along the blue path, in a moment that took my breath, the little gorge flared into a vast amphitheater that dropped straight down in craggy shale and limestone walls. When rains feed the Earth and water

flows, Lick Brook free-falls 140 feet from the newer upper carving into the ancient one below.

As the story goes, when the Land Trust approached Moss and Kristin Sweedler about 128 acres along Lick Brook, the Sweedlers said they were interested in land within 10 minutes from Ithaca with a pond for them and their two dogs to swim. When the Land Trust found a property that fit, the Sweedlers bought the parcel, and sold the Lick Brook gorge in 1993 for the same price, well below market value. Also, on the other side of the gorge, a wooded buffer lines the creek, thanks to a private conservation easement provided by owners Ree and Bill Thayer and a donation of land by John Babcock to Cornell Plantations.

The vast gorge itself gave me clear views across Route 13 to hills in the west. A word of warning: wear good shoes, because from where the big gorge opens to the sheer expanse of sky through the trees, the blue path becomes steep, and full of rubble.

The gorge narrowed as I descended. At the bottom lay another smaller amphitheater, a sweet shale bowl with steep walls on three sides. Without water flowing, I climbed up into the bottom of the bowl, pitted with eroded indents, and looked up at my private stretch of sky. During richer times, water cascaded over the far wall, but now the rocks were simply moist. I sat by a small pool and watched a trapped school of about a hundred brown minnows. A frog splashed and darted beneath a rock.

To the left of the amphitheater, the white trail, one of the most used sections of the 800-mile Finger Lakes Trail, led back up the slope away from the gorge. The trail followed a low wet section parallel to the Conrail tracks. Here, the woods contain big sycamores, oaks and maples and an occasional smooth-barked, dense American Hornbeam (*Carpinus caroliniana*). As the trail wound up the hill along a rising rim, I glanced back. The train tracks cut through a green meadow and a wetland that surprisingly still held duckweed and water.

I looped back to the blue path along the top of a narrow pine-needled ridge that fell steep on both sides. To the left, the

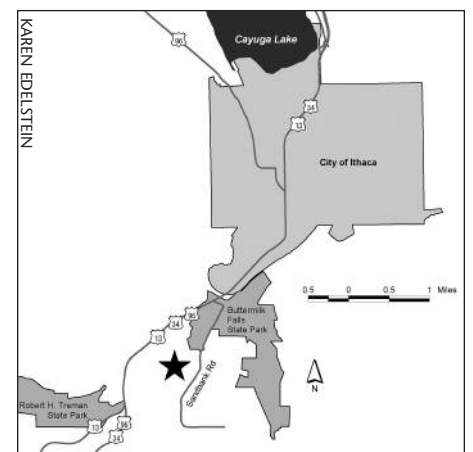


DICK RUSWICK

Lick Brook spilling over the lower falls at the Sweedler Preserve

gorge dropped with layered, shale walls carved by another stream, Spring Brook, also lean from drought. By the time I returned to where the big gorge opens up, I understood why people got that dreamy, reflective look on their faces when I mentioned the preserve along Lick Brook.

— Krishna Ramanujan



Directions to Sweedler Preserve:
From Ithaca, go south on Route 13. Take first left after Buttermilk State Park, on Sand Bank Rd. Bear right at the Y intersection, and park on the right. Finger Lakes Trail starts just before the bridge.

Conservation Easement Gift Protects Family Farm

continued from cover

little valley, rolling fields of hay extend in all directions, partitioned here and there by hedgerows of honeysuckle and wild grape vine. Roughly 160 acres of the 200-acre farm are field, the rest forming dense woodlot edges that give the farm a sense of protection and privacy. Indeed, Green Farm fills the entire view from the middle of Green Road.

Don's maternal great-grandfather, Robert Abbey, was the first family member on the land. Since then, the farm has been run by Greens. Farm life was never easy, Don recalled, but hard work, frugality and persistent management of the land paid off over time and kept the family together. "Farming is more than just a way to make a living," Don reflected. "It provides a social network of family living near each other and looking after each other. Sometimes it's the young looking out for the old, sometimes the old have to care for the young. It's been that way for us always."



Volunteer Sara Kersting with easement donor Don Green and his wife Nancy



The rolling verdant fields of the Green Farm are now protected for generations to come

Today the farm produces only hay – and lots of it – all of which Don himself cuts, rakes, bales and sells to nearby horse farms. In addition, Don actively manages the woodlots that supply him and his wife, Nancy, with winter firewood and saw logs for any new construction projects around the farm. Over the generations, the land has seen dairy cows, sheep, chickens and turkeys, with fields of corn and oats, hops and alfalfa.

Don feels a sense of relief about the conservation easement worked out with the Land Trust. He has finally been able to protect his land the way he has envisioned for many years. "I'd like it to stay in the family, of course, but I can't control that. It's up to the offspring," he said. "Still, it means a lot to me that the land stays open. My ancestors worked so hard – I want to keep it open for them especially."

A conservation easement is a voluntary agreement that specifies how owners can use their land, while protecting its important natural resources. Property subject to a conservation easement remains in private ownership and on the tax rolls. Terms of the easement are binding on future owners, ensuring permanent protection of the land. The Land Trust is primarily responsible for negotiating such easements and then monitoring them on an annual basis.

"I can't stress enough how important financial management is in being able to afford to do something like this, for me anyway. At one point I had to decide to be my own financial consultant to get things right the way I needed them to be. And then I had support from my family to do this," Don said. "A lot of people would have to sell and give up their land for their family and retirement. I wanted something different, both for my family's future and for the land."

"The Green family has given a tremendous gift to the community, and we hope that they will inspire others to act," said Land Trust Executive Director Andy Zepp. "Not everyone can donate a conservation easement, but Don and his family have made a long-term commitment to preserving both his family's way of life and his love for the land that nurtured him."

Don Green's sense of land stewardship may be ancestral in origin, but that sense has led him to a particularly personal accomplishment in working out his conservation easement.

"Sometime I'd like to do more for conservation," he said without irony. "Right now I'm busy with the hay and playing my cello, so I don't have lots of time, but someday I'd like to get more involved."

— *Eben McLane*

Land Trust Establishes Revolving Land Acquisition Fund – BorgWarner Morse TEC Provides Seed Grant

By allocating existing funds, as well as a lead grant from BorgWarner Morse TEC, the Land Trust recently established a revolving land acquisition fund to acquire priority lands that are at risk for development. The fund will allow the Land Trust to move quickly when lands within identified priority areas are listed for sale.

These funds were used in the recent acquisition of the Digney property at Carpenter's Falls. Fundraising efforts are now underway to replenish the funds used for this acquisition.

Though modest now, it is expected that the fund will grow substantially in the future. A first step in this direction was BorgWarner Morse TEC's recent contribution of \$5,000 and pledge of an additional \$5,000 for the fund. "We're delighted that BorgWarner has taken the lead in supporting this creative approach to financing conservation," says Land Trust Executive Director Andy Zepp.

"With development pressures increasing, we must act now if we are to conserve those lands that make the Finger Lakes region such a special place," adds Zepp. "As it grows, the revolving land acquisition fund will enable us to more effectively compete in the marketplace."

In some cases, it is expected that the fund will be tapped to facilitate the acquisition of lands that will be retained as dedicated open space. In other cases, the fund might enable the acquisition of lands that might be subsequently resold, subject to a conservation easement. The Land Trust will raise funds as needed to replenish the revolving fund, as it is used.

For additional information about this new fund, please contact Andy Zepp at the Ithaca office.

LEGISLATIVE NEWS – AUTUMN 2005

IN ALBANY

As noted in our last issue, the New York State Legislature did pass a proposed increase to the Environmental Protection Fund. The bill provides for \$150 million dollars, an increase of \$25 million dollars over last year. Disappointingly, that was the end of State Senate support for environmental measures.

A Clean Water Protection/Flood Prevention Act was introduced later in the summer. This bill would have protected wetlands 12.4 acres or smaller, which no longer enjoy Federal oversight. The bill had bipartisan support and passed easily in the Assembly 115-28. Governor Pataki also favored increased protection, having introduced his own “even stricter wetlands law” in order to close the loophole that leaves a

significant number of the state's smaller wetlands unregulated. However, the leadership of the State Senate refused to bring this measure to the floor for a vote, saying that New York's current protection is “adequate.” And so the measure died, at least for this legislative session.

The Community Preservation Act also fell victim to Senate leadership politics. This bill would allow towns to levy a 2% real-estate transfer tax (subject to voter referendum) to fund local open-space preservation. The Assembly passed this bill by a wide margin. Again, the Governor, in support, introduced his own version of the bill, but the Senate leadership failed to bring either measure up for a vote.

IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

Congress is on its August recess, with lawmakers visiting their constituents back home. Before they recessed, the major pieces of legislation they enacted were the energy bill and the transportation bill. They also held hearings around the “Charities Bill” in which the Land Trust Alliance is very interested. This involves giving tax deductions to donors of land or conservation easements, which is very important to our land preservation work. It was hoped that some resolution would be reached when Congress returns, but now Hurricane Katrina has wreaked such destruction in the south that surely all attention will be focused on that terrible situation. Land conservation advocates will thus have to wait.

— *Merry Jo Bauer*

Easement Gift Protects Land Adjoining Finger Lakes National Forest

continued from cover



EMILY EISMAN

Elaine and Vic Mansfield on the porch of their restored 200-year-old farmhouse in Hector

house in 1972, while a graduate student in astrophysics at Cornell University. Vic's and Elaine's mothers both cried when they first saw the run-down condition of their children's home. Today, 33 years later, Vic and Elaine greeted me and my husband in their lovely restored house.

Elaine was initially more cautious than Vic about a conservation

easement, but shortly after they began talking about the possibility, a neighbor died. The neighbor's widow brought in a lumber company which nearly flattened a beautiful stand of old oaks that Elaine had loved to walk in. “I decided that I didn't want this to ever happen here,” Elaine told me. “We want to give [the land] our best, and that convinced me.”

Vic and Elaine are active managers of their meadows and woods. With the guidance and help of forester Mike DeMunn, they have developed a ten-year plan to develop a woods that includes trees of diverse species and ages. “If you have nothing but ancient trees, you've got a vulnerable forest,” Vic explained. “One good season of disease or insect attack can wipe out the old forest; with no newer growth, it would take decades to restore.” So, despite the sorrow Vic feels whenever an old tree must go, they are culling the sick older trees to allow for newer growth.

On our walk, Vic and Elaine gathered acorns to plant later. Both expressed surprise that their oaks had produced so many

nuts in this drought season. They plant them in large brush piles to protect the seedlings from browsing deer. Surrounding young trees in a narrow enclosed area, using seven-foot mesh fencing, serves the same purpose. Although deer can jump over the fence, they are not likely to enter small enclosures.

Wherever there is bare ground, particularly after brush is burned, Elaine plants wildflowers. Despite the drought, there were lovely spots in the meadows with cosmos, bachelor button, purple coneflower, black-eyed Susan and others.

Elaine is a fitness trainer for elder women at the new fitness center in Ithaca; Vic teaches at Colgate University. They are both remarkably healthy and strong. Nevertheless, they feel relieved to know that regardless of what happens to them as they age, their land remains protected. “The conservation easement makes it sacred,” Elaine said. “This land has given me so many gifts; it's been a place of solace and nurture. We know we're not going to betray it.” — *Margot Brinn*



BETSY DARLINGTON

Scenic vista from the Mansfield property

Scenes' from Our Region...

ABBEY CHERNELA



Early morning autumn light at Grimes Glen

BETSY DARLINGTON



Young hikers enjoying the “Sunset Symphony” walk at Lindsay-Parsons Biodiversity Preserve, part of the Summer 2005 Talks and Treks series

“Never take things for granted... whenever you feel that there isn’t an ounce of good in the world, just take a walk down this path.”

— Comments from Visitors Log at Sweedler Preserve at Lick Brook

ROGER CASS



The waters of Grimes Creek cascading through the streamside forests of Grimes Glen

BETSY DARLINGTON



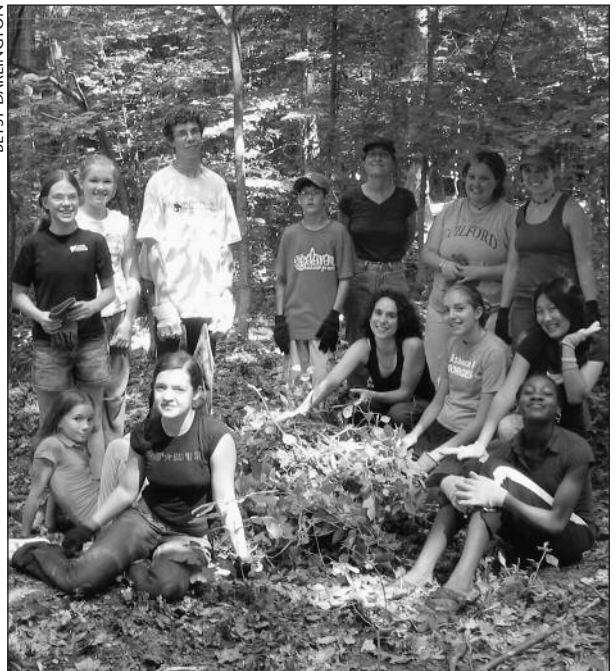
Ecologist Peter Marks (center) leads a group through “Martins Mysteries” at the Martin Preserve, part of the Summer 2005 Talks and Treks series

MARK WHITMORE



Board members Bob Growe and Jim Kersting with Director of Land Protection Betsy Darlington in Briggs Gully at the Wesley Hill Nature Preserve

BETSY DARLINGTON



Student volunteers from the Learning Web removing invasive Asian bittersweet at the Ellis Hollow Nature Preserve

DONOR PROFILE

An Angel Without Wings

After almost 20 years in the not-for-profit sector, there aren't a whole lot of giving stories that I haven't heard before. Don't get me wrong; I was moved to tears when a 40-pound sack of pennies mysteriously appeared on the Land Trust's doorway last year; and I still cry when Scrooge finally discovers the true value of benevolence. But every now and then a donor appears, often quietly and anonymously, and the story surrounding the gift is one that deserves to be told.

For the purposes of this article, I will refer to our donor as Gabriel. A steady supporter of the organization, Gabriel has been a member of the Finger Lakes Land Trust since 1999. There is, however, one not-so-small detail that sets Gabriel apart from most of our membership. Gabriel has never lived in the Finger Lakes region and, in fact, lives 3,000 miles away! While, in truth, the organization has a number of long-time members from outside the region, almost all have known ties with the area. Whether it was college, employment, perhaps a summer at camp, it's always something – that irrevocable connection, that sense of place – which seems to draw folks back to this magnificent landscape. For us at the Land Trust, Gabriel's connection to this area remained a mystery, until now.

In late winter, Gabriel contacted the office about the possibility of making a large gift to the organization. Over the next few months, he worked hard with Land Trust Executive Director Andy Zepp to allocate his gift of \$100,000 in a manner that would best maximize its impact. They decided to spend \$40,000 to support the Land Trust's Stewardship Fund, \$30,000 for the Stewardship Fund on a 1:1 matching basis, and an additional \$30,000 to fund land protection projects on a 4:1 matching basis.

It turns out Gabriel was raised in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He fondly remembers taking childhood trips with his parents through the Catskills, Poconos, New England and other parts of the northeast. At the age of 10, a trip to the Finger Lakes Region of

New York left a big and lasting impression on him.

"I remember seeing my first bluebird during that trip," he said. "Oh yes, and Buttermilk Falls too. And those landscapes that were so different from anything that I had seen before."

In the 57 years since, he has been back only twice, the last time in 1963. Gabriel moved to the Northwest in 1958 where he has driven a bus for an urban transit system for the past 28 years. An avid conservationist, Gabriel is actively involved with a number of local organizations concerned with ecological restoration and land protection. He does not own a motor vehicle and is proud of that fact. "When I need to go somewhere, I use my bicycle, even for grocery shopping. It works out just fine," he asserts buoyantly.

When asked, "But why us? With all of your involvement with land protection efforts in the Northwest, why support the Finger Lakes Land Trust at the other end of the map?" Gabriel instantly responded, "Well for one, there's quite an abundance of public lands here in the west. In the east, the availability of public land is very limited. Secondly, the money was from my mother's estate. I know that she would have been very pleased with my decision to give the money to the Finger Lakes Land Trust. And thirdly, because of the organization's wonderful newsletter, *The Land Steward*. I really look forward to reading it." Asked to elaborate on this, Gabriel responded, "You know, I've seen quite a few newsletters. Yours is a cut above the rest: not too big, just the right size, covers lots of areas from differing viewpoints, great photos, and I particularly enjoy reading the people profiles."

Gabriel begins to wind up our telephone conversation and confides, "You know, I may live here in the Northwest, but my real roots are in the Finger Lakes: the hardwood forests, the warblers, the seasons, migrating birds, fireflies." I listen and think to myself how fortunate we are to have such enlightened guardians amongst us.

— Abbey Chernela

"I remember seeing my first bluebird during that trip... Oh yes, and Buttermilk Falls too. And those landscapes that were so different from anything that I had seen before."

We are deeply grateful for donations in memory of:

Georgia Furst

From

**David and Kathryn
Sadowsky**

Marco Hecht

From

Shondor Corporation

David Hamlin

From

Hugh Hamlin

Adolph Kazlauskas

From

**Molly and Barry Adams
Betsy Darlington**

Sylvia Oseroff

From

**Bernard and Eileen
Oseroff**

Betty Randolph

From

Rita and Joe Calvo

Clayton Wright

From

**Richard and Mary Lou Appel
Donald and Jody Cheney
Edythe Gansz**

**Elaine and Rodger Jackson
Richard and Edith McSorley
Brian and Mary Phillips**

**Norma Phillips
Ron and Amy Tschetter
Donald and Nancy
Zamperetti**

Our sincere thanks...

for a gift in honor of Marvin Freedman's 75th birthday and in loving memory of David Jay Freedman from Lisa, Carol, Lynne, and Marcy Freedman and their families.

Land Trust Welcomes New Staff – Expanding Capacity for Land Protection and Stewardship

The Land Trust is pleased to announce two new staff additions, as well as a long-planned transition for volunteer Director of Land Protection Betsy Darlington.

Raul Aguirre (Rocci) recently joined the Land Trust as its new land protection specialist. In this role, he will advance the Land Trust's conservation efforts within several landscapes identified as priorities for protection. This new position was established through lead funding from the New York State Conservation Partnership (a joint venture of the Land Trust Alliance and the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation), as well as support from several individual donors.

Rocci brings considerable conservation experience to his new role. Until joining the Land Trust, he worked on stream and river protection efforts, serving as Catskill Conservation Coordinator for the conservation group Trout Unlimited. Prior to that, Rocci worked in a variety of roles for both the National Park Service and the U.S. Forest Service.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY R. AGUIRRE

The Land Trust's new Land Protection Specialist, Rocci Aguirre

Joining the Land Trust as its new volunteer Stewardship Ecologist, Ithaca resident Mark Whitmore brings a variety of experiences to his new role. With a background in forestry and graduate training in forest entomology, Mark also ran a wine import business for a number of years.

As the Land Trust's Stewardship Ecologist, Mark will work on a variety of preserve stewardship issues including biological monitoring and the control of invasive plant species. He will also play an important role in documenting natural resources found on properties to be subject to conservation easement.

With the addition of these two new positions, the Land Trust's long-time volunteer Director of Land



PHOTO PROVIDED BY M. WHITMORE

New volunteer Stewardship Ecologist, Mark Whitmore

Protection will be able to fulfill her goal of becoming the Land Trust's Director of Preserve Stewardship. While Betsy has long been involved in preserve stewardship activities, she comments, "I am now looking forward to being able to focus my energies on the stewardship of our 24 nature preserves."

Please join us in welcoming aboard Rocci and Mark and giving Betsy a round of applause for her many years of donated service as Director of Land Protection. We all look forward to continuing to work with Betsy in her new volunteer role as Director of Preserve Stewardship.



BETSY LANDRE

New volunteer Director of Preserve Stewardship, Betsy Darlington

Land Trust Board and Advisory Council Grow

Congratulations and welcome back to incoming Board member Jim Fralick. An active member of the Land Trust since 1999, Jim was previously an officer, serving as Secretary, on the Board of Directors in 2001. Jim holds a Ph.D. in Economics from Syracuse University where he is also Adjunct Professor of Economics at the University's Maxwell School. Jim served as President of the Canandaigua Lake Watershed Alliance (formerly Canandaigua Lake Pure Waters) from 2001 through 2002 and is currently Chairman of the Board of Directors of Canandaigua National Bank.

At the same time, we would also like to welcome two new members to the Land Trust's Advisory Council, Suzanne Lee and David Zorn. Suzanne Lee has served as the President of the Community Foundation of the Elmira-Corning Area for the past 11 years. A graduate of LaSalle University, Suzanne has over 20 years of experience in fund development. David Zorn is Executive Director of the Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council. David received his Master's Degree from Shippensburg University and his areas of expertise include land use, watershed restoration, economic development planning, as well as geographic information systems, remote sensing, and socio-economic and demographic analysis.

Please join us in welcoming Jim Fralick, Suzanne Lee and David Zorn!

Wanted:

Volunteer to fill Land Trust brochure boxes at various locations in Ithaca.

Time commitment of one to two hours every two or three weeks. The boxes are located everywhere from East Hill to Triphammer Mall to Elmira Rd., own transportation necessary. If interested, please call Emily at the Ithaca office.

Our sincere thanks for gifts
in honor of the Bar Mitzvah of:

Joshua Rothenberg
From
Eric Alani and Esther Racoosin
Chip and Wendy Aquadro
Antonie Blackler
Rita and Joe Calvo
Mary Campa
Hannah Feldshuh
Harvey and Bryna Fireside
Thomas D. Fox
Myra and Michael Gordon
Sarah How and Jim Alexander
Hendrina Krol and Ynte Schukken
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Diane Rubenstein, Rachel Protter,
Philip Protter
Mary Salton
Judy Saul and Regi Teasley
Helen Saunders
Eliza Sherpa
Justin Shubert
Uriel Walker
Gertrud Wolfner



Thanks to the efforts of volunteers Merry Jo Bauer and Rosemarie Parker, the Land Trust's native plant garden was a constant source of visual splendor for many.

Our sincere thanks
for a gift in celebration
of the graduation of:

Kurt Rogers
From
John Rogers and
Claudia Stoscheck

Our deepest
appreciation for gifts in
honor of the weddings of:

Nancy Franz and Bill Gahnz
From
Nancy Potter
Rachel Byard and Simon Garcia
From
Cheryl Deane and Joshua Henry
Peter and Doris Walsh
Linda Buttell and David Woodard
From
Friends at the
Cornell Theory Center

Thank you to

Nigel P. Kent and Roger Cass
for donating many beautiful
photographs of Grimes Glen.

...

A big thank you to
National Trails Day
Volunteers

*For their hard work in helping
us maintain the trails at the
Great Hill Nature Preserve*

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The forest is healthier and the trails
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And thank you to all the many other
volunteers who assist the Land Trust
in so many different ways. Your efforts
make it possible for us to continue
and grow.

Thank you to everyone
involved in making our 2005
Talks and Treks series a success!

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From
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From
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for a gift in honor of

Jim Kersting
From
Rachel Luyben
"For teaching me the value of
our beautiful land"

A CLOSER LOOK

The Bitter of Asian Bittersweet

George Robinson, chair of the New York Invasive Plant Council, says that Asian bittersweet is one of the worst weeds in New York. "It can get 4 inches in diameter; it's creating massive thickets and makes walking in the woods very unpleasant; it'll trip you up and grip you by the neck. It's the grapevine from hell."

And that's not the worst. This thick, fast-growing vine kills by wrapping so tightly around trees that it strangles them. And if the trees don't succumb to the stranglehold, Asian bittersweet has such plentiful foliage that it kills by depriving them and neighboring plants of sunlight. Conservation New England notes that the plant will actually uproot smaller trees with its massive weight.

What is it? There are three plants called bittersweet. The first is bittersweet nightshade (*Solanum dulcamara*). This is the true bittersweet, non-invasive and unrelated to the next two. The second is the native bittersweet, (*Celastrus scandens*), a lovely fall foliage plant which is becoming increasingly rare, possibly due to competition with the third, a far more vigorous variety. This is Asian (or Oriental or Asiatic) bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*), and that's our invasive pest.

Asian bittersweet is a woody vine, most recognizable by its yellow fruit which splits to reveal showy, bright red seeds. It also has blunt thorns on its lower stems. The native bittersweet, besides lacking thorns, has more ovate leaves, and its fruit appear only at the tips of the vines, while the Asian variety has them all along the vine.

It's found along forest edges, woodlands, along paths, roads and any disturbed areas - in short, anywhere there's an opening and some sun. Unfortunately, the plant seems to survive in deep shade as well, where it patiently takes down some trees to make a happier habitat for itself.

In New York, the infestation is heaviest in the Hudson Valley,



Asian bittersweet with its stranglehold on a tree.

and it can be found in the Finger Lakes region. So far the vine hasn't yet spread to the Adirondacks, according to Dr. Robinson.

Asian bittersweet first migrated to the U.S. in the 1860s, brought in as an ornamental. Arts and crafts people use its lovely winter fruit to make winter wreaths. Songbirds love the fruit, too, and are the major disperser of its seeds. The birds seem to prefer the plant's more plentiful, brighter seeds over those of the native species.

Dr. Robinson says that the plant's invasion has been noticeable for the last 10 years. When asked why, if the vine has been around for 140 years, it is only now such a big problem, he listed several possible explanations:

- Development has created more of the open, disturbed habitat the plant enjoys.
- People are planting it more. Gardening has become a huge hobby, and nurseries sell this popular plant, often mistaking it for the native variety.
- Bird populations have recovered after the ban on DDT and have played a bigger role in seed dispersal.
- Climate change may be contributing as well, though just how, is not known.

Unfortunately, deer don't seem to like its leaves!

What can we do to slow the spread of this vine? If you have an Asian bittersweet in your yard, consider destroying it - no mean feat! If it's fruiting, put the cuttings in a plastic bag and put them in the landfill (not your compost!) Cut the vine at its base and be prepared to continue to do so for several years. Herbicides are available as a last resort. Finally, if you see the Asian variety at nurseries, pipe up.

Those who want attractive vines to plant in their gardens can find alternative, non-invasive plants for garden ornamentals, such as clematis and trumpet honeysuckle. Some native vines that provide food for butterflies and songbirds are native bittersweet, trumpet creeper, passionflower vine, pipevine and native wisteria.

This wonderfully successful plant doesn't belong here and poses an increasing threat to native plants we should be protecting.

—Margot Brinn



A fast growing woody vine with blunt thorns, Asian bittersweet is now considered to be one of the worst non-native invasive plants in New York State.

JAMES H. MILLER, USDA FOREST SERVICE, WWW.FORESTRIMAGES.ORG

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AUTUMN 2005 CALENDAR

Saturday, October 8th, Hike to Carpenter's Falls with the Cayuga Trails Club.

Come see Carpenter's Falls in its autumn glory. To carpool from Ithaca, meet at the Ithaca Shopping Plaza near Taco Bell at 8:30 am. The group will be gathering at the Carpenter's Falls parking area off Appletree Point Road around 9:30 am.

Saturday and Sunday, October 8th and 9th, 10:00am – 4:00 pm, Fall Family Weekend at Indian Chimney Farm on 404 Conlon Rd. in Lansing. Join the Finger Lakes Land Trust and the folks at Indian Chimney Farm for fall farm fun. Land Trust staff member Karen Edelstein will lead a nature walk at the farm on Saturday at 2:00 pm. For other events throughout the weekend check out www.IndianChimneyFarm.com or call (607) 533-8866.

Wednesday, October 12th, 2:00 – 6:00 pm. Chicken BBQ to Benefit The Campaign to Save Grimes Glen. The event will be hosted by the Bath National Bank of Naples and take place in front of the bank at 184 South Main Street in Naples. The price is \$7.00 for one dinner, or \$8.00 with beverage included. Proceeds to benefit the Land Trust's Campaign to Save Grimes Glen. Tickets maybe purchased in advance at the bank, the Mitchell Joseph Insurance Co. in Naples, the National Bank of Geneva in Canandaigua, or by calling the Land Trust office at 607-275-9487.

Saturday, November 12, 1:30 PM: Year End Nature Walk at the Steege Hill Preserve. Led by Bob Corneau and Betsy Darlington. From Rt. 86 (formerly Rt. 17) take exit 49. Go south on Orcott Rd. Turn right on Rt. 64, then right on Rt. 352, take next left onto South Corning Rd. Cross the bridge and go left on Steege Hill Road. Parking lot on left.

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.