



THE LAND STEWARD

Newsletter of the Finger Lakes Land Trust

Vol. 20, No. 4

working to protect the natural integrity of the Finger Lakes Region

Fall 2008

Land Trust Passes Milestone of 10,000 Acres Protected

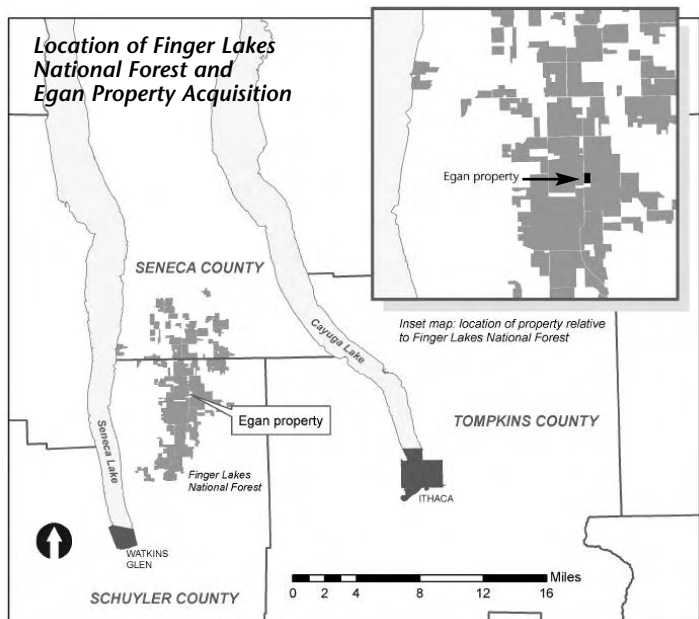
Land Trust Moves Quickly to Secure Key Parcel in National Forest

This past summer the Land Trust moved quickly to buy a 30-acre forested property in the heart of the Finger Lakes National Forest between Cayuga and Seneca lakes, protecting the parcel against likely subdivision and development while preserving forest habitat integrity and the scenic character of the area.

The Land Trust plans to maintain the property until federal funding can be approved for the Finger Lakes National Forest (FLNF) to purchase and assume stewardship responsibilities. This is the first partnership between the Land Trust and the FLNF.

The property's former owners offered the land for sale through a local real estate broker in the spring. They were open to purchase by the FLNF but were also willing to sell to other bidders. Alerted by FLNF to the significance of this land, the Land Trust was ready.

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KAREN EDELSTEIN

First Easement Completed in Onondaga County

When Bob Lockwood was a boy, his father's financial losses during the Great Depression forced his family to move from their home in East Orange, New Jersey, to a small house they owned in the country. That Christmas, Bob and his sisters told his parents that they didn't need to buy presents that year. "Living in

the country was enough of a gift," Bob recalled recently. Life in the country, and work on his neighbor's farm, was "the highlight of my life," he said.

Bob's love for the countryside is as powerful now at 86 as it was then. His daily sculling at dawn on nearby Otisco Lake is as much a spiritual experience as it is exercise. Bob plans to live and die on the beautiful Onondaga County hillside farm he bought as a young orthopedic surgeon 45 years ago. He grieved at the destruction of the land in New Jersey he loved so deeply as a young person, and he is determined that his Onondaga property will never be vulnerable to that kind of commercial sprawl.

Judith Lockwood is as committed to land preservation as her husband. She was born in Argentina, where her Jewish-Swiss mother and Christian-Swiss father escaped the Holocaust. Her mother had a lifelong interest in nature and was a strong influence in her life. The Lockwoods have funded a scholarship in her name with the Audubon Society.

Not only have the Lockwoods been excellent stewards of their land, but they also have donated five different parcels of land totaling 94 acres to Save the County Land Trust (an Onondaga County-based conservancy) to be preserved as natural areas. But what to do to insure the protection of the land they still had for their home, sheep, garden and new puppy? They wanted to continue living in their house, enjoy the beauty of the

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ANDY ZEPP

Pumpkin Hollow, viewed from the Lockwood property, is a significant wetland area within the Onondaga Lake Watershed.



PERSPECTIVES

Ten thousand acres of protected open space. We celebrate this major milestone alongside all who appreciate the natural beauty of our region. While the rather abstract number 10,000 is impressive in itself, the actual lands behind this number are much more so—from pristine lakeshore to scenic farmland, rugged gorges to delicate wetlands, deep woods to crystal streams. It has been our most profound pleasure to know these lands and know we've helped to conserve them for

the future of all who live in or visit the Finger Lakes.

Just as impressive is the mountain of work that has led to this accomplishment over the past 20 years: the work of volunteers and staff to identify and assess conservation priorities, reach out to landowners and local officials, negotiate conservation agreements, steward conserved lands, raise needed funds and, not least, build an organization to stand the test of time.

So today, take a moment to celebrate the fact that we can all enjoy these con-

served lands. Please visit one of our nature preserves to see a part of what we've accomplished together. Meanwhile, we continue to expand our land protection efforts. Our goals are ambitious, and time is always short.

I'm looking forward to celebrating the next 10,000 acres with you sometime soon.

—Andy Zepp

Carpenter's Falls Transferred to New York State

Completing a process that began in 2005, the Finger Lakes Land Trust has finalized transfer of land to New York State which offers primary access to Carpenter's Falls in Cayuga County.

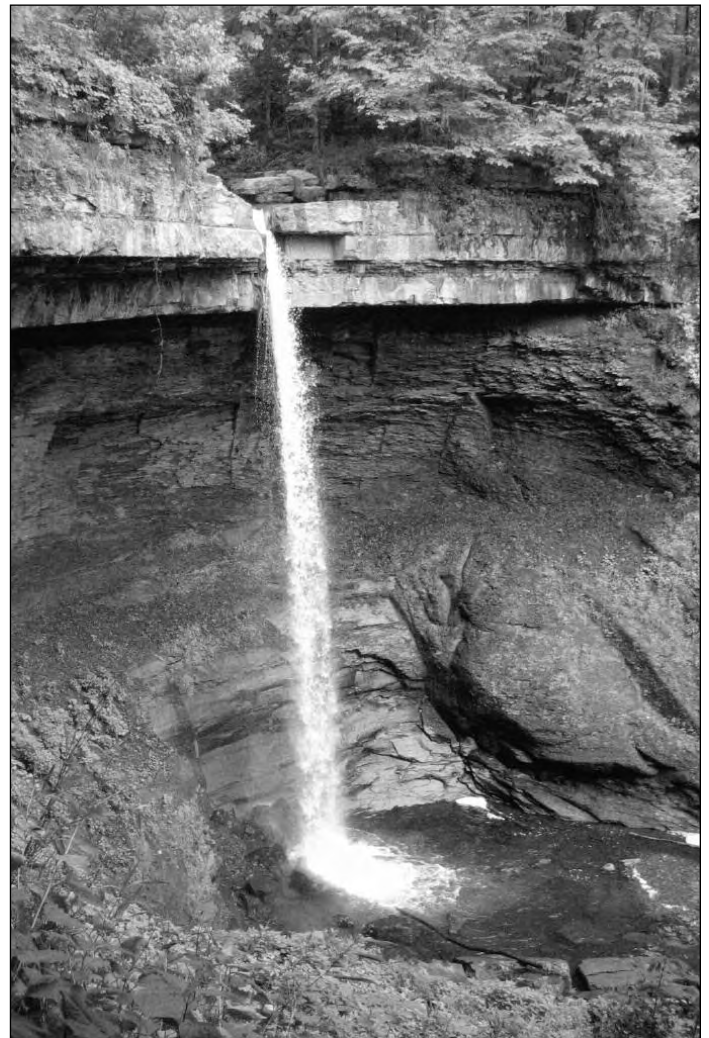
Carpenter's Falls, with its 90-foot drop into a steep gorge with forested cliff sides, is a popular destination for waterfall lovers. Located on the west side of Skaneateles Lake, about 13 miles south of the Village of Skaneateles, the falls are adjacent to the Land Trust's Bahar Nature Preserve.

This land transfer fulfills the Land Trust's plan to safeguard a full one-mile corridor of protected land along Bear Swamp Creek, extending from Carpenter's Falls to the shoreline of Skaneateles Lake. The dramatic elevation change along this corridor accentuates its natural beauty. Over the entire scenic one-mile distance, the drop in elevation—from the high falls to the shore of Skaneateles Lake—is approximately 420 feet, according to Scott Winkelman, a recent Land Trust Volunteer of the Year who worked tirelessly to protect Carpenter's Falls and Bear Swamp Creek.

Transferring management of this land to the state DEC had been part of the plan ever since the Land Trust purchased the access to Carpenter's Falls in 2005. The Land Trust now intends to work cooperatively with the state to develop a joint management plan that will provide for natural resource protection while allowing for appropriate public access.

Finally, the DEC's protection of this key piece of land along Bear Swamp Creek will further contribute to cleanliness of the creek's water as it winds its way down to Skaneateles Lake. Keeping the water clean helps insure that waterfall lovers and others will continue to have a pristine area from which to gain both stimulation and solace for many years to come, while also helping maintain the health of Skaneateles Lake. And that's important, considering the watershed supplies municipal water for over 200,000 people in Syracuse, the villages of Skaneateles, Elbridge, Jordan and other neighboring communities.

—George Dillmann



BETSY DARLINGTON

With the transfer of Carpenter's Falls to New York State, the Land Trust's goal of safeguarding a one-mile corridor of land along Bear Swamp Creek from Carpenter's Falls to the shoreline of Skaneateles Lake is now complete.

A Childhood Vision Remembered Protects 46 Acres in South Bristol

Dreams do come true.

Such was the realization made by Ontario County landowner Beverly Higgins in regards to the 46 acres of steep, forested hillside along County Road 33 in the town of South Bristol, on which she donated a conservation easement to the Finger Lakes Land Trust.

Protecting this land had special meaning for Higgins, because it lies near a lovely scenic overlook—a green valley, known as the ‘Jump Off,’ which has remained part of her imagination since childhood and inspired her to move to the area.

“When I was about seven or eight years old my family took a trip down to Ontario County Park and the Jump Off,” said Higgins. “I remember looking down into the West Hollow Valley and saying to myself that I would live there someday ... a child’s wish. I didn’t realize until I had purchased the property and had taken a walk up the hill that this was the same valley I had dreamed about as a child.”

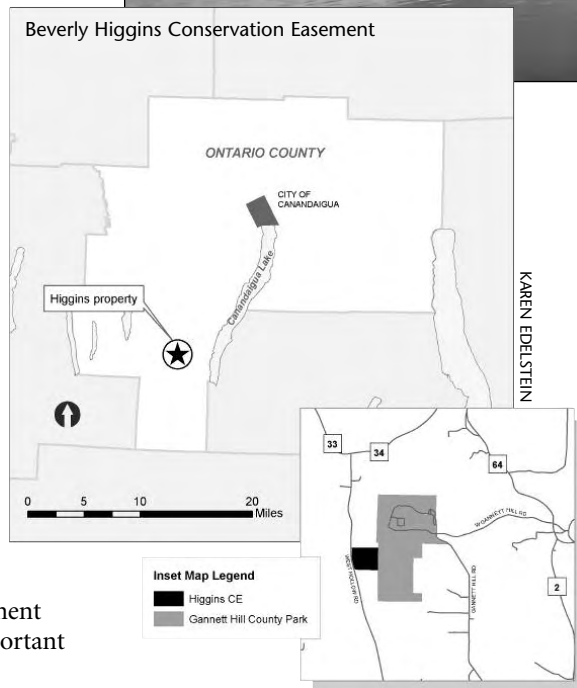
The property, which marks the Land Trust’s 61st conservation easement and ninth in Ontario County, is adjacent to Ontario County Park at Gannett Hill, just south of the popular ‘Jump Off’ overlook. Ontario County Park trails and the Bristol Hills Branch of the Finger Lakes Trail follow the ridge line above the Higgins property, so this conservation easement provides a forest buffer for this important trail network.

The upper slopes adjacent to Ontario County Park support a mature Appalachian oak-hickory forest, a climax forest community common in the Bristol Hills region. It features tall trees and a sparse understory, punctuated by a mix of spring ephemerals. The Higgins property boasts impressive examples of northern red, white and chestnut oak trees. Intermittent streams transect the property and provide conduits for water draining from the uplands to the lowlands.

The lower slopes on the Higgins property show the influences of former landowners who grazed livestock and planted fruit trees decades ago. These slopes are characterized by younger,



BETSY LANDRE



KAREN EDELSTEIN

Scenic view of the Higgins conservation easement property and Gannett County Park.

He added that the land above Mud Creek on the Higgins property is among the steepest hillsides in the area, so protection of the hillside forest will minimize erosion that could adversely affect water quality and aquatic habitat.

The easement also secures habitat for a variety of woodland species, too. Higgins regularly sees signs of black bear living on the slopes above her home. Fox, deer, owls and a variety of songbirds are also frequently observed.

“The Finger Lakes Land Trust is delighted to accept the donation of a conservation easement on the Higgins property,” said Zepp. “We are gratified that another landowner who cares deeply about the natural character of the region has come forward to work with us to protect resource values that benefit many.”

For Higgins, donation of the conservation easement brings a certain satisfaction. “There is incredible peace of mind knowing that my little bit of earth will be preserved,” she said.

—Betsy Landre

successional northern hardwood forests—one of the stages in the process of pasture reverting to mature hardwood forest.

“I am very pleased to have an organization like the Finger Lakes Land Trust available to hold conservation easements,” said Higgins. “It is extremely important to me that some land is preserved from development.”

Hand in hand with preserving the natural landscape, water quality protection is another benefit of this conservation easement. “This portion of Mud Creek is very dynamic and is heavily influenced by storms,” explained Andrew Zepp, executive director of the Finger Lakes Land Trust.

The Land Trust gratefully acknowledges Attorney Kelly Gilman and the law office of The Brocklebank Firm in Canandaigua for providing pro bono legal services in support of this project.

Land Trust Secures 14th Easement Protecting Six-Mile Creek

When Dan Karig and Joane Molenock first occupied their land along German Cross Road in Dryden, their aspirations for it were simple. “We never wanted to develop the land,” said Karig. “The goal was just to let it go its own way.”

Over the years of their stewardship, the land indeed has largely gone its own way. About one-third of the 40-acre tract is a riparian floodplain along Six-Mile Creek. Another third is mixed hardwood forest, including some trees that Karig estimates are more than 150 years old.

consultation to Tompkins County on groundwater monitoring around the Landstrom Landfill. In addition, he serves on the town of Dryden’s Conservation Board.

Amid his diverse environmental and scientific pursuits, Karig also happens to be a world-class athlete. He has won several national championships in cross-country skiing for his age class. Last year, having just entered the 70+ age group, he took a silver medal at the world championships. He is also an elite competitor in marathon canoeing, having won national championships in both solo and pairs races.

Molenock, too, has varied interests and achieve-

restoration and stabilization to take place only according to a written management plan consistent with relevant regulations. The easement also protects a buffer zone up into the hardwood forest area. Protection of this expanded zone greatly increases the conservation value of the easement, providing for significant stormwater and erosion protection. Moreover, in addition to granting the easement itself, Karig and Molenock have agreed to cover survey costs and to provide a contribution towards long-term stewardship and maintenance.

“Land protection in the Six-Mile Creek watershed is critical for ensuring adequate clean water for the people who live and work in Ithaca, and for maintaining important green space and wild lands

BETSY DARLINGTON



(left to right) Land Protection Specialist Rocci Aguirre, Dan Karig, Joane Molenock, and Executive Director Andrew Zepp celebrate the signing of the Karig-Molenock easement.

A pine/spruce plantation on a plateau makes up the final third of the property.

In late August, Karig and Molenock secured lasting assurance that this land will be left unmarred by human activity into the future, by donating a conservation easement to the Land Trust. The easement is the 14th held by the Land Trust along Six-Mile Creek, the source of municipal drinking water for over 35,000 Ithacans. Land Trust easements in the creek’s watershed now protect more than 740 acres, with another 140 acres under the Land Trust’s direct ownership as the Park Nature Preserve.

This generous donation is only the latest among Karig’s many local conservation efforts. A professor emeritus at Cornell, Karig has specialized mainly in marine deep-water structural geology, but has also taken an avid side interest in stream-channel dynamics. This interest has led Karig to play a leading role since his retirement in developing and advocating strategies for managing sediment flows via Six-Mile Creek into Cayuga Lake. He has provided *pro bono*



SANDRA BONANNINO

The Karig-Molenock conservation easement features 1,500 feet of frontage on Six-Mile Creek, the drinking water supply for the City of Ithaca.

ments, including local conservation work. She has used her background in biology to assist with macroinvertebrate surveys in Six-Mile Creek. She is an accomplished grower of hybrid orchids, having won many prizes at shows and received special awards from the American Orchid Society. Molenock’s interest in orchids has extended to the identification and preservation of local native orchids, particularly a concentration of uncommon Round-leaved Orchids on Hammond Hill.

The Karig/Molenock easement will protect the riparian corridor from logging and development, with any riverbank

in Tompkins County,” said Land Trust board chair Chris Proulx. “Conservation easements are a great way for individual landowners, like Dan Karig and Joane Molenock, to secure a legacy for the next generation while maintaining ownership of their land. We are thrilled to be partners in conservation with them.”

—Mark Chao

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

Town's Help Improves Public Access at the Bishop Preserve

The Seneca County town of Fayette recently flexed its muscles, contributing several substantial and welcome improvements for visitors to the Land Trust's Bishop Nature Preserve near Geneva, NY.

The town's Highway Department removed an abandoned car from the area and replaced a culvert on the preserve's main trail. Most important, the Highway Department constructed a much-needed parking lot for the preserve. Thanks also to Fayette, a gravel path now leads visitors comfortably a short distance from the new parking area to the preserve's main hiking trail. Seneca Stone, a local business, donated the gravel.

The preserve is a primarily wooded, 35-acre parcel given to the Land Trust in 1993 by Helen Bishop, whose husband, Bruce, planted 30,000 shrubs and trees on the property over 30 years of tending to this land. It is now a wonderfully wildlife-friendly area that borders state land on the Seneca-Cayuga canal.

Land Trust volunteer Jim Engel was instrumental in the Bishop improvements. He contacted Fayette's highway superintendent, Ros Parks, to begin the process and played a major role in the working group that planned the projects. And, critically, Engel convinced Verizon to move a utility pole located where the new parking lot needed to go.



(left to right) Preserve donor Helen Bishop, Highway Superintendent Ros Parks, Land Trust volunteer Jim Engel, Deputy Supervisor Don Maybury, and Executive Director Andy Zepp celebrate the new parking area at the Bishop Nature Preserve.

"The highway department and town of Fayette board were extremely cooperative and helpful throughout the process," said the Land Trust's Director of Preserve Stewardship Betsy Darlington. "Ros Parks... was very anxious to have the job be first-class and reflect well on the town."

Since cars travel quite fast on River Road, getting preserve visitors' parked cars off the shoulder and into a dedicated parking lot made the road safer for all.

The result was to not only make the road safe but also raise the preserve's profile and ease of use. "Everyone involved agreed," said Darlington, "that it was important to improve public access to the preserve."

—George Dillmann

To get to the Bishop Preserve from Geneva, travel east on Route 5 & 20. Turn right (go south) on to Route 96A. Cross the bridge over the canal, and make the first left onto West River Road. The preserve's new parking lot will be on the left after less than a mile, opposite house number 536.

Land Trust Moves Quickly to Secure Key Parcel in National Forest *continued from cover*

"The Land Trust was very responsive, understood the value of the property and acted quickly," said Mike Liu, district ranger for the FLNF. "It was a very positive experience and, if other opportunities came up in the future, we would welcome the chance to work together again."

The FLNF contains many such properties, called "in-holdings," or private properties mostly surrounded by wild public lands. Indeed, a map of the FLNF resembles a patchwork quilt. The lure of easily accessible in-holdings for developers is understandably high, as is the desire of the FLNF to conserve these very same properties. Especially because the newly acquired in-holding contains significant frontage on Potomac Road, the main north-south road through the National Forest, both the FLNF and the Land Trust recognized the urgency to stay ahead of developers.

According to Mike Liu, conservation of the property helps preserve interior forest habitats often lost through fragmentation and development. The interior forest is home to a variety of wildlife and beloved of recreational users on the Backbone Trail, a multi-use trail for horseback riding, hiking, biking, cross-country skiing and snowmobiling.

As a result of the purchase, a key right of way issue along a portion of the Backbone Trail has been resolved so that, as Land Trust Executive Director Andy Zepp put it, "Hikers will be able to enjoy the mature forest and not find themselves staring into someone's backyard."

The FLNF is the only National Forest in the state of New York. Administered with the Green Mountain National Forest in

Vermont, the FLNF maintains its own local offices and management team and maintains its own forest plan. The forest's 16,200 acres span Schuyler and Seneca counties in the southern hills between Seneca and Cayuga lakes.

Most of the current FLNF lands were originally established through federal purchase of marginal farmland in the 1930s and 40s from landowners willing to sell and relocate to more promising futures. The Hector Land Use Area, as the mosaic pattern of new federal lands was called, eventually became the Finger Lakes National Forest in 1985.

Increasingly popular as a year-round outdoor recreation area, the FLNF has over 30 miles of trails for many different recreational uses. Extensive and varied forest, steep gorges, upland ponds with nearby marshes, and open fields provide a full array of habitats for birds and other wildlife. More than half of breeding bird species in the state can be found there, according to Mike Liu.

The remains of many old farms, some dating from the early years of white settlement in the late 1700s and early 1800s, are scattered throughout the forest. An old well and barn foundation on the Land Trust's recent Potomac Road purchase reveal the land's agricultural origins, although the property is now almost entirely forested.

In many cases, these old homesteads still literally bear the fruits of past farm labor. Apple, pear and cherry trees, as well as a variety of summer berries, provide hungry hikers with a welcome pause for both nourishment and reflection on the agricultural

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Scenes' from Around Our Region...

BILL HECHT



Friend and volunteer Tom Reimers presents departing Director of Preserve Stewardship, Betsy Darlington with a “bouquet” of garlic mustard at Betsy’s “semi-retirement” party in July.



(left to right) Land Trust volunteers Bruce Johnson, Roger Hopkins and Dave Schurman with the new Salmon Creek Nature Preserve sign they just finished installing.

“I think having land and not ruining it is the most beautiful art that anybody could ever want to own.”

— Andy Warhol

JIM KERSTING



Rob Wink (left), conservation professor at Finger Lakes Community College, leads a paddle trip on the Honeoye Inlet as part of this years Talks and Treks series.

CHUCK FEIL ©



Beautiful Canadice Lake, one of the only two Finger Lakes that remain undeveloped.

ROGER HOPKINS



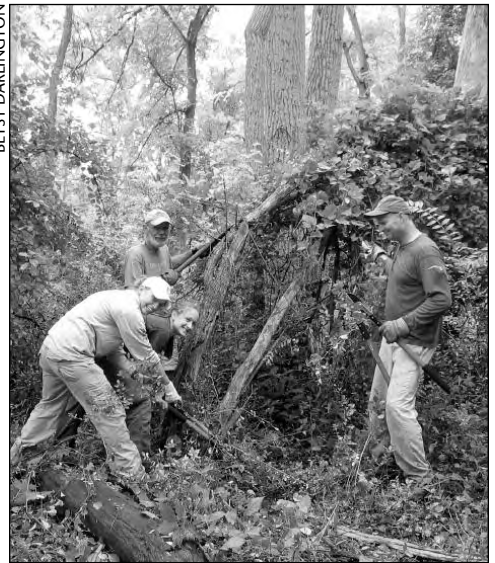
Dan and Pam Maurey, stewards for the Parker Nature Preserve in Steuben County, help install the new preserve sign.

BETSY DARLINGTON



Members of The Cornell Herpetological Society surveying the Cayuga Inlet Conservation Area for amphibians and reptiles.

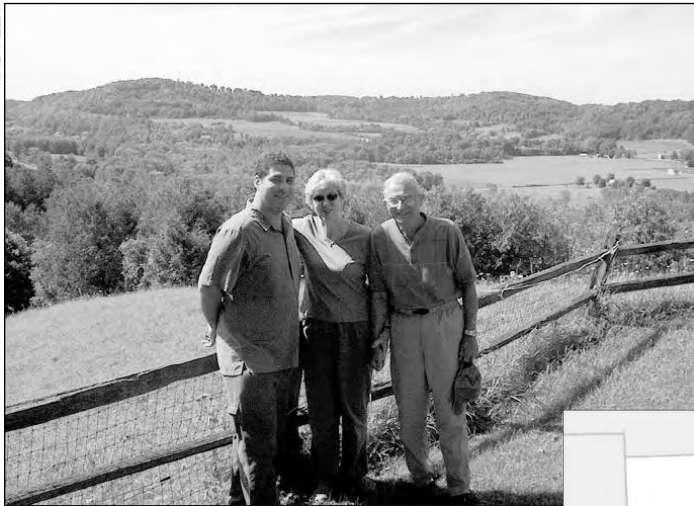
BETSY DARLINGTON



Land Trust volunteers Tom Reimers (left) and Ron LeCain work with NY State Parks staff to control invasive vines at Buttermilk Falls State Park.

First Easement Completed in Onondaga County *continued from cover*

ANDY ZEPP



Land Protection Specialist, Rocci Aguirre with Judith and Robert Lockwood on their scenic property.

landscape, and be sure the land would not succumb to the “cancerous” sprawl, as Bob put it, encroaching closer and closer to his farm. His grown children, despite their love for the farm they grew up on, each have “their own callings,” Bob explained, and don’t want the farm.

The answer came through Judith’s work with the Syracuse Garden Club, where she is in charge of national legislation issues. She heard about conservation easements while attending a conference in Washington, DC several years ago. She immediately understood that this legal agreement which considers both the landowner’s needs and future land conservation needs of the property was the best solution to their passionate commitment to preserve their land while continuing to live in their home. It didn’t take long to convince Bob.

They decided to ask the Land Trust to be the agency to administer their easement because, according to Judith, “The Finger Lakes Land Trust is very knowledgeable and experienced about putting easements together.”

Recently, the 77-acre Lockwood donation became the first conservation easement for the Land Trust in Onondaga County.

The property is located adjacent to Pumpkin Hollow, in the town of Onondaga, a significant wetland area within the Onondaga Lake Watershed. The newly protected parcel also extends the lands previously donated by the Lockwoods to Save the County.

According to Sandy Bonanno, who surveyed the land for its conservation value, “The rarest features of the Lockwood property are the small calcareous springs seeping to the surface. These fens support some of the most interesting and rare vegetation in the state. Besides, it’s just a gorgeous woods.”

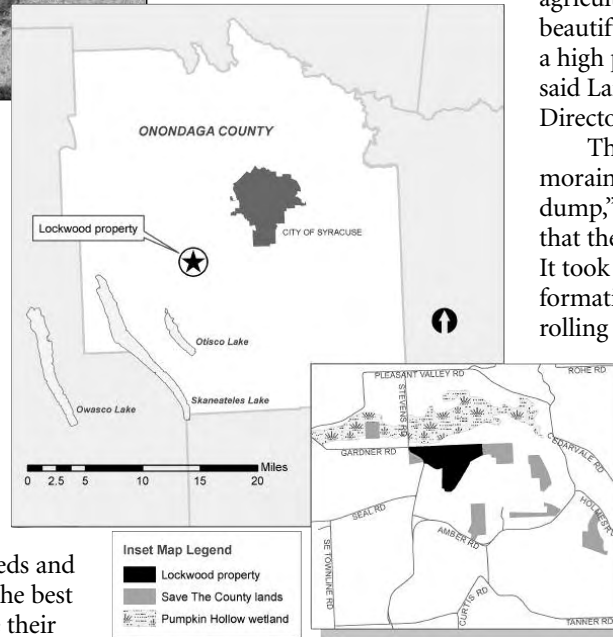
In addition to the lovely forests and fens, the Lockwood property supports fields, sheep pasture and some prime

agricultural land. “This is a beautiful property, and it was a high priority for protection,” said Land Trust Executive Director Andrew Zepp.

Their land sits on a glacial moraine—“the glacier’s garbage dump,” as Bob calls it, but one that the Lockwoods love dearly. It took thousands of years for the formation of these beautiful rolling hills. Another few

thousand years created its blanket of exquisite vegetation. And in one year of creating the conservation easement, the Lockwoods’ generosity has insured that this beauty be reserved for future generations.

—Margot Brinn



The Land Trust gratefully acknowledges Attorney Mary Schubert and the law firm of True, Walsh, & Schubert, LLP for providing pro bono legal services in support of this project.

Land Trust Moves Quickly to Secure Key Parcel in National Forest *continued from page 5*

history of the area.

The new purchase adds to the Land Trust’s Emerald Necklace Project, the aim of which is to identify and conserve lands that, when strung together and added to existing public properties, will protect a chain of pristine forest arcing below the south end of Cayuga Lake. The FLNF is a particularly significant gem in the emerald necklace.

Money for the purchase came from the Land Trust’s internal revolving land protection fund, established in 2007 for use in circumstances where quick, decisive action is needed. The fund is used to purchase “at risk” properties and is replenished either when private fundraising efforts are complete, or when the Land Trust sells the property to a public conservation agency, such as the FLNF.

In the case of the Potomac Road in-holding, funds for the purchase came from proceeds of the sale of the Carpenter’s Falls access property to the state. (See article on page 2.) In turn, money for the Carpenter’s Falls purchase in 2005 also came from the revolving fund. When the FLNF has the funds to buy the Potomac Road parcel, the Land Trust will then use the proceeds to secure other lands that require rapid conservation action.

“It’s important to note,” said Andy Zepp, “that public funding sources like state or federal government agencies aren’t able to respond as quickly to immediate needs. We’re fortunate to have some flexibility with our revolving fund.”

— Eben McLane

Coast-to-Coast for Conservation Update

At press time, our two intrepid cyclists (Jim Kersting and Brad Edmondson) and one selfless gear-hauler and campsite-finder (Sara Kersting) had just entered the Badlands of South Dakota. They are now officially five weeks into their ten week cross country bicycle trip that is raising funds for the Land Trust. In five weeks time they have crossed the Rockies, ridden through miles of spectacular scenery, met the governor of Wyoming and pedaled through some unforgiving weather.

As Kersting recently reported, "Seeing landscape pass



Brad Edmondson (left) and Jim Kersting taking a short breather as they cross the Big Sioux River in Iowa.

by at this incredibly slow pace, you begin to notice subtle changes in the terrain in as little as 60 miles, like seeing sage give way to grassland or cotton woods give way to oaks as we crossed the 100th meridian in South Dakota—events you would never notice in a speeding car."

So far, the dynamic duo has raised over \$33,000 for the Land Trust's new stewardship initiatives! If you haven't pledged yet, make your gift today by going to www.flit.org or www.c2c4conservation.org

Land Trust Hires Director of Stewardship

Following a lengthy search and review of some highly qualified applicants, we are pleased to announce the hiring of Chris Olney as the Land Trust's new Director of Stewardship.

Chris comes to us from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's central office in Albany, where he served as Conservation Easement Program Planner for one of the largest conservation easement programs in the nation. Prior to that, Chris was the Director of Conservation for The Catskill Center for Conservation and Development, where he was responsible for all aspects of the

organization's Land Conservation and Natural Resources Program. A seasoned land protection professional, Chris is co-author of *The Catskill Park: Inside the Blue Line* and has authored numerous articles on land management and protection.

Having grown up in Ontario County, Chris is a native son of the Finger Lakes Region and looks forward to being able to return, bringing his passion and skills for land protection back to the



New Director of Stewardship Chris Olney out for a hike with daughter Grace.

region he so loves. "I have sadly seen special outdoor places that have helped to define me as a person become lost to housing development," Chris said, "and I look forward to now being able to give something back to the place I came from."

With Chris' arrival, longtime volunteer Director of Stewardship Betsy Darlington will transition to her new part-time role as the Land Trust's Stewardship Advisor.

Welcome aboard Chris, and congratulations Betsy!

Land Trust to Offer Emerald Necklace Workshops

The Finger Lakes Land Trust will provide two workshops in Tompkins County this fall to provide information about the recreational and open space resources of the Emerald Necklace, as well as the latest tax incentives associated with conservation easements. The Emerald Necklace is a string of public forest highlands arcing below the south end of Cayuga Lake that stretches from the Finger Lakes National Forest in the northwest to Hammond Hill State Forest in the east.

Consultant Mark Whitmore will share findings from his yearlong assessment of the Emerald Necklace Greenbelt and the associated segment of the Finger Lakes Trail. The workshops are part of an ongoing effort to develop a comprehensive protection plan for the area.

IN CAROLINE

Thursday, October 16th at 7:00 pm
Town Hall, 2670 Slaterville Road

IN DANBY

Monday, November 17th at 7:00 pm
Town Hall, 1830 Danby Road

For more information on these workshops, please call the Land Trust office at 607-275-9487

Eat at Maxie's Supper Club and Oyster Bar and help the Land Trust raise funds for the Emerald Necklace Conservation Project!

Maxie's Supper Club and Oyster Bar in Ithaca is hosting a bake sale to raise funds for the Land Trust.



**MAXIE'S
SUPPER CLUB**
AND OYSTER BAR

This just isn't any bake sale. For those readers who know Maxie's, they know that their desserts are a far cry from the hardened rice crispy treats and mushy lemon bars of most bake sales. Delight in chocolate marquise cake with raspberry sauce or sink your teeth into Maxie's famous key lime pie, all while raising funds for the Emerald Necklace project.

Visit Maxie's between October 13th and October 26th, make a \$10.00 donation, and get a coupon for a free dessert the next time you visit Maxie's. All proceeds benefit the Land Trust's Emerald Necklace conservation project.

Thanks to Chick Evans and the entire Maxie's crew for making this possible!



Earth Share
OF NEW YORK

Finger Lakes Land Trust is a member of Earth Share New York and encourages state, federal, and corporate employees to support the Land Trust's work through payroll deduction.
CFC #71966

Is the Stock Market Getting You Down?

A Gift to the Land Trust Can Help Lift You Up.

Even with the recent volatility, your stocks may still be highly appreciated. You will not pay capital gains tax on a gift of appreciated securities to the Land Trust, and your gift is valued on the date of transfer at its full fair market value.

Contact Abbey Chernela at the Land Trust; 607-275-9487; abbey@fltl.org

You Can Conserve Land For Future Generations

Protection of land begins with YOU... From gifts during your lifetime and after.

More than 10,000 acres protected since 1989.

YOU can conserve land now and in the future!

Invest in the mission of the Land Trust through gifts from your estate.

Be satisfied knowing that a bequest from your estate will conserve lands in the future.

Let us know of your intention, and you will become a member of the Land Trust's White Pine Society.

For more info: Jan Hesbon, Director of Development 607-275-9487 or by e-mail to janhesbon@fltl.org

We are deeply grateful for donations in memory of:

Dr. Albert B. Craig, Jr.
FROM

Edward and Ruth Atwater
Kathleen Ford
Gill Foundation

Jean France
Marilyn and Edward Ingalls
Todd and Hadley Matarazzo

Virginia Tesch
FROM

Kay Brugler

Gordon Shay
FROM

Skippy Raines

Alice Luce Kiersznowski
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Lakeshore Teachers Association

Louise Carpenter
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Jessica Carcich
Carolyn Kenyon

Ernie von Borstel
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Barbara and Christine Lester

Don and Edith McClain
FROM

John and Donna McClain

Mitchell Smith
FROM

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Our sincere thanks for gifts in honor of:

Jeff Blackman
FROM

Marilyn and Jerry Passer

John Sage and Barbara Smith
FROM

Daniel and Jean McPheeters

Michelle Cannon
FROM

David Giuffrida

John and Linda Wickwire
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John and Robin Moss Hinchcliff

Ari Epstein and Rima Shameih
FROM

Barbara Bank

A CLOSER LOOK

The State of the Unionids: Freshwater Mussels of the Finger Lakes Region

The freshwater mussel (family *Unionidae*) is surely one of the most unassuming animals of the Finger Lakes region. At first glance, mussels look like nothing so much as algae-colored rocks, oddly incongruous with their colorful common names: fat mucket, Wabash pigtoe, pink heelsplitter. However, when the algae and mud are cleaned away, these bivalves display a strange, muted beauty. The outsides of their shells are often streaked with subdued colors while the insides are lined with a pearly white nacre. In the rainbow mussel (*Villosa iris*) the nacre is iridescent.

Mussels may seem stolid, but in fact they are quite finicky. The water in which they live must be rich in oxygen, calcium and organic matter. It must also be very clean and preferably running. They must live on sand or fine gravel, substrates into which they can burrow and anchor themselves. The cold, dark waters of the steep-sided Finger Lakes offer few footholds for mussels, though a handful of species can be found along the shores. Shallow, nutrient-rich lake waters are home to more unionids (as our native mussels are called), while polluted inlet areas contain very few. Most species, though, inhabit lake tributaries and rivers away from human activities that spoil water quality.

The mussel's most unusual requirement is the presence of a suitable fish host during spawning season. All mussels begin life as *glochidia*, tiny larvae that look a little like adult mussels and a lot like the business end of a Venus's fly trap. If the *glochidia* cannot quickly attach themselves to the gills or fins of a suitable fish, they will die; if they implant on a fish of the wrong species, they will be destroyed by the fish's immune system. Some female mussels simply release their larvae into the water and hope for the best; more enterprising species use remarkably realistic "fishing lures" to attract the right hosts. Within a few weeks, the encysted larvae develop into juvenile mussels, at which point they drop off—hopefully into the right substrate—and begin the first day of the rest of their lives, which may be many decades long.

Although none of the mussels native to the Finger Lakes region are in danger of extinction, many populations have been decimated by environmental degradation. Mussels are highly vulnerable, not only because they live in fragile environments but also because they are very set in their ways. If conditions become

inhospitable, they have few options. Mussels can clam up temporarily to avoid pollution or predators, move at a glacial pace toward what appear to be better conditions, or burrow into the substrate and hope that things improve. Such defensive tactics serve them well when they are threatened by foraging muskrats or raccoons, or during such temporary natural events as drought. However, they are ineffective against devastating anthropogenic changes in the landscape, such as dam building or removal, dredging, pollution, sedimentation and the introduction of nonnative species.

Perhaps the biggest threat native freshwater unionids face is the exotic zebra mussel (*Dreissena polymorpha*). This tiny bivalve, imported from Eurasia in the ballast water of ocean-going ships, colonizes hard surfaces like the undersides of boats, the insides of water-intake pipes and, most important, the shells of live native

mussels. Native unionids are often literally smothered to death by zebra mussels, covered with such dense accretions that they cannot open or close their shells properly. Although shorter-lived than native species, zebra mussels mature more quickly, breed far more prolifically, can survive out of water for weeks, are able to live in brackish or polluted water and filter out even the tiniest organic particles at a furious rate. Bodies of water infested with zebra mussels are eerily clear.

The relationship between mussels and humans has always been antagonistic. A "pearl rush" in the 1880s caused several species to go extinct. Far more destructive was the button industry, which destroyed millions of tons of mussels for the sake of their shiny nacre; the industry collapsed in the middle of the 20th century when the mussel beds finally disappeared. Long before European colonization, mussels were exploited by native peoples as a source of food, tools, and jewelry. Archaeological evidence even suggests that the large-scale cultivation of maize may have caused a precipitous decline in mussel populations a thousand years ago, as early agricultural activity increased siltation in rivers and streams, despoiling the pristine waters the mussels need to survive.

—Jacqueline Stuhmiller



DAVID ZANATTA

New York's lakes and streams are host to a variety of freshwater mussels.

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FALL 2008 CALENDAR

The Land Trust will provide two workshops in Tompkins County this fall to provide information about the recreational and open space resources of the Emerald Necklace, as well as the latest tax incentives associated with conservation easements. *See article on page 10 for details.*

Thursday, October 16th at 7:00 pm: in Caroline at Town Hall, 2670 Slaterville Road

Monday, November 17th at 7:00 pm: in Danby at Town Hall, 1830 Danby Road

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

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