



THE LAND STEWARD

Newsletter of the Finger Lakes Land Trust

Vol. 21, No. 4

working to protect the natural integrity of the Finger Lakes Region

Autumn 2009

Conservation Easement Anchors Portion of the Emerald Necklace in Town of Caroline

The southern end of the Willseyville Valley, close to the Tompkins-Tioga County line, is a landscape framed by steep wooded hillsides and mature forests. Willseyville Creek wanders through the heart of the valley here, a seam of scruffy brush and wetlands marking its meander south towards its eventual confluence with the Susquehanna River. It is an area that still offers long snapshots of pasture land and hay fields, of old farmhouses, and rural charm that belies its proximity to the City of Ithaca. It is a view that Carolyn and Anatol Eberhard have appreciated for decades as they commuted along Coddington Road to and from their jobs in town.

It is also a view they have watched slowly change as development pressure has gradually spiraled out of Ithaca into the rural suburbs, fragmenting forest blocks into building lots and converting open fields into home sites and small scale developments. Taken as a whole, these changes can have a profound effect not only on the scenic quality of an area but also on the ecological integrity of the entire region. In working with the Land Trust to permanently protect their 145-acre property along Coddington Road, the Eberhards were interested in preserving this ecology, as well as the rustic character that has defined their community over the years.

"We understand the significance of our property and its importance as habitat within the local ecosystem," said Carolyn Eberhard. "We also have worked hard to be good stewards over the years," Anatol added, "and at the same time have grown discouraged with the development that has slowly marched toward us. Working with the Land Trust has

continued on page 2



ROCCI ACUIRRE

Conservation easement donors, Anatol and Carolyn Eberhard, on their property in southern Tompkins County.

Land Trust Acquisition Links Thousands of Acres of Public Land

For the first time ever, thousands of acres of public land within the Canandaigua Lake watershed are now linked. Thanks to a timely acquisition by the Land Trust, the extensive upland forests of High Tor Wildlife Management Area are now joined to its lowland swamps and marshes.

The Land Trust completed its acquisition of the 72-acre Parish property in August, shortly after its acquisition of the adjacent Murray Estate property. The Parish property features wooded hillsides along State Route 245, while the Murray Estate parcel includes the northern half of Conklin Gully. Together, the two properties feature 10,000 feet of undeveloped road frontage.

This latest acquisition is the Land Trust's sixth to be completed in the vicinity of High Tor. The wildlife management area is recognized as a priority project within New York State's Open Space Plan

and has been identified as an Important Bird Area by Audubon New York.

The Land Trust ultimately intends to convey both properties to New York State as additions to the wildlife management area.

Fundraising to cover costs associated with the acquisition is now underway. Thus far, more than \$150,000 has been raised toward a goal of \$200,000 for the project.

If you'd like to learn more about the project, or to make a contribution, please contact the Land Trust's Director of Development, Jan Hesbon, at the Ithaca office or by e-mail at janhesbon@fllt.org.



BILL HECHT

The Land Trust's recent acquisition of both the Parish and Murray Estate properties will extend protection from Conklin Gully (center right) to State Route 245 (far left).

The Land Trust gratefully acknowledges Attorney John A. Polimeni of Canandaigua, New York for providing pro bono legal services in support of this project.



PERSPECTIVES

Extending beneath the entire Finger Lakes region, the Marcellus shale formation and its associated natural gas deposits have prompted a frenzy of speculation in recent months. Gas companies from across the country have come to the region seeking first to drill deep wells and then use a mixture of water and chemicals to fracture (“frac”) shale deposits, freeing the gas within.

Much concern has been expressed about the possibility of groundwater and surface water contamination, as well as impacts associated with the withdrawal of water from local watercourses. The effects

of heavy truck traffic associated with gas development have also been cited as an issue of particular concern. In addition, within New York’s forested Southern Tier, gas development will likely lead to the fragmentation of woodland habitat, diminishing its value for some wildlife species.

New York State recently released a hefty 800-page document assessing the effects of drilling within the Marcellus formation. Unfortunately, the document fails to adequately address these impacts, particularly the cumulative effects of the more than 1,000 wells that might be drilled over the course of the next decade.

The state is accepting comments on

the draft impact statement until November 30th. The document may be found at <http://www.dec.ny.gov/energy/58440.html>. Whatever you think about natural gas production in our region, take a look and make sure that your voice is heard.

No other issue has a greater potential to affect our region in the immediate future. While energy is essential for the future of our region, so is clean water and the integrity of our rural landscapes.

—Andy Zepp

Conservation Easement Anchors...

continued from cover

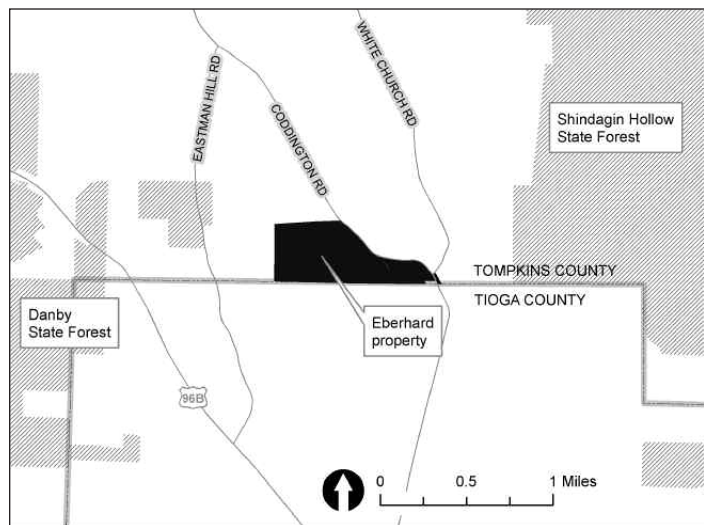
allowed us to leave a legacy that will benefit both the natural and human community of the area for years to come.”

The decision to permanently protect land under a conservation easement can spring from many different motivations. For some it is ecology- or habitat-based; for others it is a personal means to honor a generational or family connection to their land; and for still others it is a way to leave a conservation legacy for future generations. The reasons to place an easement on property are as diverse as the people and communities that exist throughout the Finger Lakes region. If there is a common thread that runs between easement donors, it is the deep and intensely personal connection these landowners have to their property. Anatol and Carolyn Eberhard are two such landowners, and the land they have placed into conservation easement is truly significant.

Located at the junction of White Church and Coddington Roads, a significant portion of the Eberhard property lies within the Tompkins County designated Unique Natural Area (UNA) known as Eastman Hill. With its steep, forested hillsides, Eastman Hill UNA is recognized for its importance for forest birds and for the diversity of plants that are found there, including at least one locally rare plant species. The property also plays a significant role in maintaining the water quality of nearby Willseyville Creek, a headwater stream of the Susquehanna River, and the White Church-Willseyville Swamp, another Tompkins County UNA.

“This is a spectacular property,” said Land Trust Executive Director Andrew Zepp. “We’re grateful to the Eberhards for their commitment to the land and we look forward to working with them in the future to care for this special place.”

The Eberhard property is compelling in another aspect as well. Positioned within close geographical proximity to both Danby and Shindagin Hollow State Forests, protection of the Eberhard land helps establish a critical wildlife corridor and a green link between the two public lands. With over 4,000 feet of frontage on Coddington Road, keeping greenways such as the Eberhard property from fragmenting into smaller development sites is vital to protecting the region’s natural resources and a key focus of the



Land Trust’s Emerald Necklace Campaign.

The property is also a wonderful example of how conservation easements can provide critical linkages or “anchors” between the public lands that make up the heart of the Emerald Necklace. Anchor pieces like the Eberhards allow the Land Trust to concentrate limited resources and focus outreach on specific conservation targets, such as adjoining neighbors, and perhaps open doors for future projects.

It is also the type of project that brings together diverse partners. Funding from an anonymous donor and a Natural Areas Acquisition Grant from Cornell University helped cover transactional and stewardship costs associated with the easement donation.

It is only through the combined efforts of proactive landowners and committed conservation partners that critical projects like the Eberhard easement come together. In the end, the success of the larger Emerald Necklace campaign will be measured as much by the personal efforts of these concerned landowners and organizations, as it will be in the number of acres preserved. And at least in this portion of Caroline, the view threading through the Necklace now has an anchor permanently keeping it intact.

—Rocci Aguirre

Gift Protects Important Floodplain and Creates New Natural Area

Waterways have a unique ability to define and link a whole host of different communities often in small ways that are barely given much thought. These connections can be ecological, like the hidden migration corridors of salamanders and frogs to and from the vernal pools where they were born. Or they can be human, like the clean water that flows from your kitchen tap or the swimming hole that cooled you down in the summer heat. With the rapid pace of development in many areas throughout the Finger Lakes region, protecting these waterways and the small parcels of wetlands and floodplains that sustain them can be a never ending challenge.

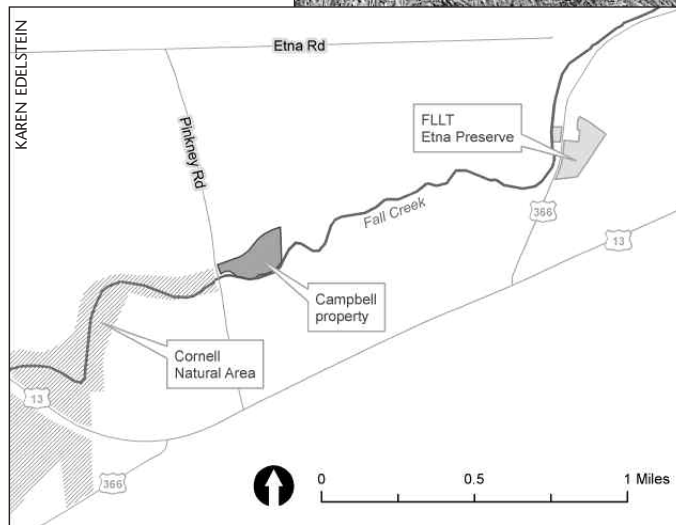
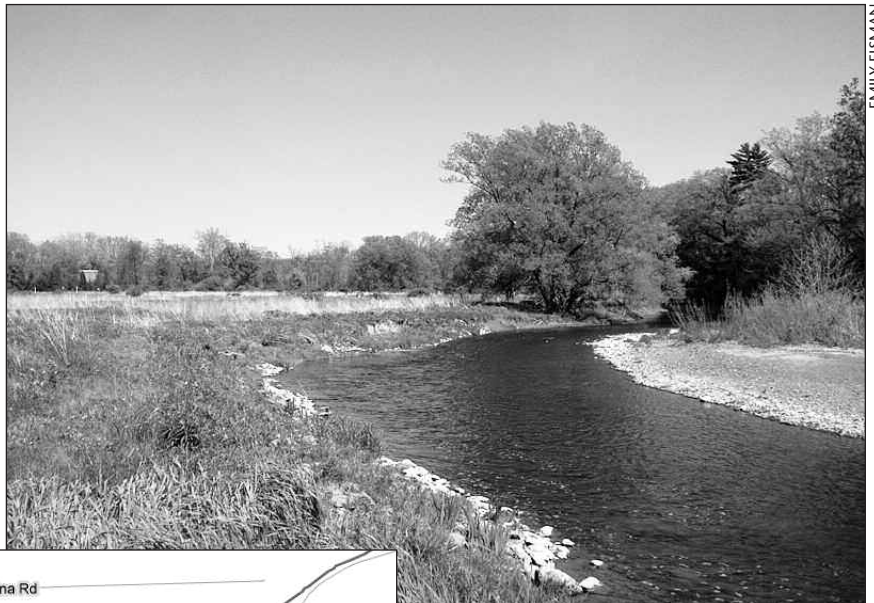
It is a challenge, however, that can be extremely rewarding when a project finally comes to fruition. The Land Trust recently facilitated the transfer of one such sensitive wetland parcel along Fall Creek from Beth Campbell and her family to the Town of Dryden in Tompkins County. This critical 12.2 acre floodplain parcel will be protected in its current natural state and will allow for public use as a conservation area. The Land Trust will hold and monitor conservation restrictions on the property.

The Campbell property will be named the Beth and Gordon Campbell Natural Area in honor of the several decades the Campbells have spent living on and caring for the land. Consisting of a large meadow with two narrow ponds and a number of informally maintained trails, the property includes more than 1,100 feet of frontage along a scenic, meandering stretch of Fall Creek. For many years a cow pasture, the land has gradually returned to a natural state over the last decade. The property regularly floods during the spring thaw, providing ideal amphibian and migratory bird habitat.

Today the property contains, as Beth's son Scott said, "an amazing variety of long grasses, milkweed and scrub brush." His family has worked both to prevent erosion on the parcel and to encourage wildlife by planting trees. And the wildlife is responding. Birds the family has seen include Northern Mockingbirds, Green Herons and a variety of swallows. In addition, beaver, muskrat, painted and snapping turtles now live in the ponds.

According to Dryden Environmental Planner Dan Kwasnowski, the Town of Dryden will manage the land as a natural area and park. For the time being, little enhancement for recreation is planned, but eventually the Town hopes to augment the present informal parking lot, plant trees in some locations along the river, and ultimately add nature education programming.

"Being that the site is in the floodplain and is mostly wetland,"



The Campbell property features 1100 feet of frontage on Fall Creek.

Kwasnowski said, "the conservation value of the land relative to water quality makes it a conservation priority on its own, but its existing public access and the potential for access to Fall Creek increase its attractiveness as a municipal conservation area and park." Adding further value to this parcel is the fact that it is adjacent to Cornell's Monkey Run Natural Area, already a popular spot for outdoor recreation.

The Campbell family's personal sense of land ownership has spurred them to seek the parcel's protection. "Our family believes emphatically in the notion of land stewardship, and that we have an obligation to look after whatever land we are responsible for," Scott Campbell said. He added, "We believe that this piece of land is precious and that the wildlife that call it home have a right to exist in their natural state...we also believe people should be able to enjoy this piece of land without disturbing its natural beauty."

Dryden Town Supervisor Mary Ann Sumner echoes this view, "Campbell Meadows is a beautiful and important riparian zone. We're proud to be entrusted with its stewardship and we look forward to making it available for town residents to enjoy its natural beauty."

Thus, to honor Beth and Gordon Campbell, this new preserve will provide for both the animals that live there as well as the human visitors who want to learn from visiting it, and will safeguard the memories that the land provided to the Campbell family.

—George Dillmann

The Land Trust gratefully acknowledges Attorney Elizabeth Bixler of Ithaca, New York for providing pro bono legal services in support of this project.

Wetland Restoration Partnerships Improve Water Quality and Wildlife Habitat

The Land Trust has been busy studying wetlands in the Finger Lakes. Protecting watersheds and restoring wildlife habitat are central principles of the Land Trust, and recent partnerships have shown the power of cooperation in achieving common goals.

Working with the Upper Susquehanna Coalition (USC) at the Goetchius Wetlands Preserve in Caroline, Tompkins County, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service in Moravia, Cayuga County, the Land Trust has helped to work out innovative and site-sensitive plans to encourage reestablishment of native plant communities that enhance both local water quality and local wildlife—with the promise of larger benefits.

Goetchius Wetlands Preserve:

Before widespread agriculture in the area in the 1850s, much of the valley where the Goetchius preserve lies was a forested wetland, an ideal buffer for water flowing south out of the valley, down to the Susquehanna River and, eventually, out to the Chesapeake Bay. But the results of wetlands clearing and draining by farmers wanting to grow field crops has been mixed for agriculture in Caroline, and many farms have folded over the years, leaving only marginal crop land at the verge of swamp—still a haven for migrating birds, local amphibians and insects galore.

In 2007 the Land Trust joined with the USC, an association of professional conservationists dedicated to protecting the headwaters of the Chesapeake Bay, to purchase 35 acres of this marginal farmland, bringing the current size of the preserve to 73 acres. The property includes already existing wetlands as well as upland fields; a poorly drained five-acre field is being restored to wetland. Funds for the project came from Millennium Pipeline Co., which was required to mitigate impacts on wetlands associated with one of its pipelines.

The USC has the lead in the Goetchius restoration project.

For a wetland forest to flourish, according to Jim Curatolo, USC watershed coordinator, the soil has to be wet enough throughout most of the year to support typical wetland trees—red maples, swamp white oak, green ash, among others—without flooding them out.

To avoid flooding the swamp from field runoff, the landscape has been replanted and reshaped. Red maples were planted slightly uphill from the wetlands, recreating a part of the old transition from wetland forest to upland hardwood forest. Subtle “steps” have been graded across the gentle slope to slow the water runoff, and some of the land has been reshaped to mimic the “pit-and-mound” topography characteristic of older forests with vernal pools so vital to wood frogs and spotted salamanders.

Trees that are abundant in the nearby swamp have been planted in the newly wet soil and, once large enough, will shade the ground and enrich the soil through leaf litter so that understory swamp plants can establish themselves. A shallow pond has been dug nearby to ensure the trees have enough water for the first few critical years.

“Every wetland project is unique—it’s like an art,” Curatolo said. As for the future? Curatolo added, “We’ll plant it, build it, replant it, and monitor it for ten years. It should last forever.”

Owasco Flats:

Long recognized as one of the region’s premier wetlands, Owasco Flats at the south end of Owasco Lake provides exceptional habitat



BETSY DARLINGTON

Mike Jura (left) and Jeremy Waddell (right) of the Upper Susquehanna Coalition planting red maple trees as part of wetland restoration efforts at the Goetchius Preserve.

for fish and wildlife and plays a key role in maintaining the lake’s water quality.

Having been active in the Owasco Flats area for some time, in 2008 the Land Trust acquired 18 acres of floodplain at the western edge of the village of Moravia along the Owasco inlet. In partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Land Trust is working to restore a small, but vital, piece of wetland and stream-side habitat.

Approximately two-thirds of the acreage will remain in agricultural production, but the remainder of the property is getting a makeover.

Under the direction of US Fish and Wildlife biologist Eric Rozowski, six acres of the property have been graded and planted with native grasses and shrubs to help restore a healthy streamside environment for wildlife.

According to Rozowski, the restoration project has two main purposes: controlling a portion of the stream flow during times of high water to help reduce sediment runoff into the inlet channel and reestablishing wetland habitat for wildlife, including waterfowl and migrating shorebirds.

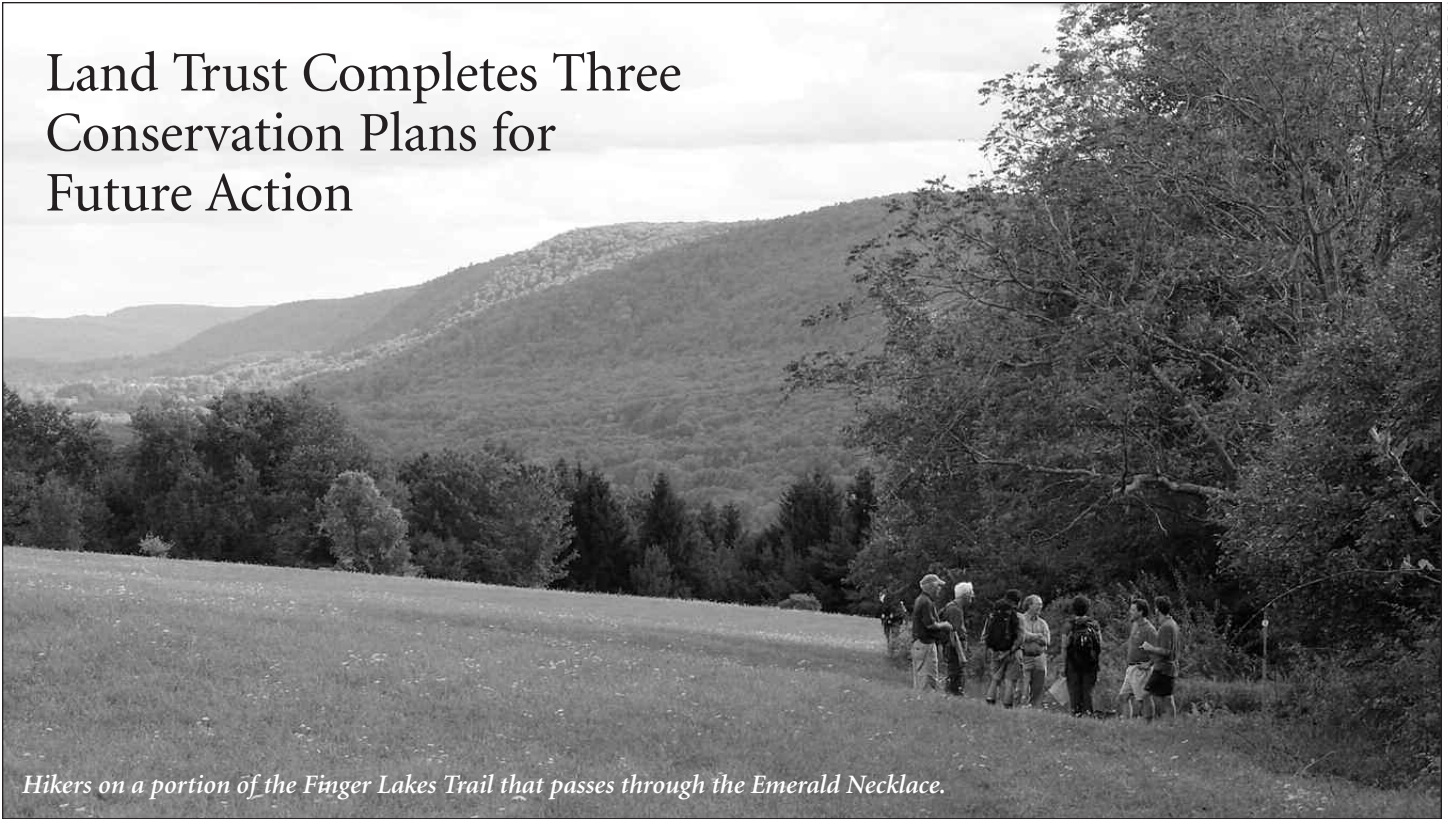
A catch basin has been created to capture a portion of flow, and outflow back into the inlet is now regulated so as to prevent silt and mud from being washed downstream into the lake. Native grasses and flowering plants will help retain topsoil in an area that has been washed out in recent years, releasing much harmful sediment into the inlet. Eventually, some of the new grasses will grow to as much as 8 feet tall and be able to outcompete the weeds that currently dominate the abandoned field. The site will be monitored for its progress and mowed annually to encourage native plant growth.

“Even though small, the project can provide the benefit of educational opportunity for the local population, even for schools,” Rozowski said.

A recent visit to the site revealed a heron and a sandpiper hunting in the wetland pool surrounded by lush grasses—just a few months earlier, this same spot consisted of bare soil and corn stubble.

—Eben McLane, with additional reporting from
Jacqueline Stuhmiller and George Dillman

Land Trust Completes Three Conservation Plans for Future Action



Hikers on a portion of the Finger Lakes Trail that passes through the Emerald Necklace.

In September and October, the Finger Lakes Land Trust completed conservation plans for the Emerald Necklace, a 78-mile stretch of the Finger Lakes Trail as it relates to the Emerald Necklace, and the southern half of the Skaneateles watershed.

For starters, the Emerald Necklace refers to a proposed greenbelt, which when completed will link 50,000 acres of protected open space within the hills and valleys surrounding Ithaca. The Emerald Necklace includes natural features that extend from southwestern Seneca County and eastern Schuyler County, through southern Tompkins County and into northwestern Tioga County. The area includes waterways and wetlands, steep hills with north-south valleys, and habitat for many breeding and migratory birds, river otters, bobcat, trout and myriad other species. Also, the Finger Lakes Trail passes through the Necklace.

In recognizing the area's important conservation value, and to create a strategy for protecting the area from encroaching development, the Land Trust completed a study in mid-September that for the first time provided a unified and comprehensive assessment of the area. The study also suggested conservation priorities, which the Land Trust and its partners will use to focus their efforts. The project drew from past conservation studies, field surveys, plans for portions of the Emerald Necklace, and interviews with local experts.

Through these planning documents and interviews, the study found that the Emerald Necklace already features a solid foundation in 50,000 acres of public land. These acres include Finger Lakes National Forest, nine state forests, two state parks, eight Land Trust preserves, Connecticut Hill Wildlife Management Area, and more.

The Finger Lakes National Forest and Connecticut Hill have been recognized as Important Bird Areas by Audubon New York. The reports also showed that bobcat, fisher, river otter and black bear are moving into the Emerald Necklace area and depend on travel corridors and intact blocks of habitat to protect them from

vehicles, pets and predation.

Also, the Emerald Necklace extends across the Great Lakes and Upper Susquehanna River watersheds and features many wetlands that provide a link between the two watersheds for river otters, amphibians, reptiles, and more. Some 42 unique natural areas include high quality examples of natural communities, rare plant and animal populations, geologically important features and beautiful vistas.

The study also outlined ten conservation priorities for the next decade, depending on available opportunities and funds. Some highlights include:

- Texas Hollow in northern Schuyler County, with almost 1,000 acres of upland and wetland forest within the Texas Hollow State Forest. Surrounding the state forest, priorities include protecting streamside habitat to the north and south as well as key forest parcels to the east.
- The 588-acre Cayuta Lake in the town of Catharine in northern Schuyler County. Priorities include protecting wetland tracts upstream of the lake's inlet, to ensure water quality; upland forest breeding bird habitat to the east; and wetlands associated with the lake's outlet along with a rugged gorge through which Cayuta Creek passes.
- In the towns of Ithaca, Enfield and Danby, the Gorges Focus Area holds two state parks with forested ravines, pools and waterfalls that attract thousands of visitors annually. Protection priorities include upstream buffers to ensure the water quality of Buttermilk Creek, Lick Brook, and Enfield Creek; expanding protection of the Finger Lakes Trail corridor; and securing key forest parcels that adjoin the two state parks.

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Scenes' from Around Our Region...



BILL BANASZEWSKI ©

Ice forming on Canandaigua Lake.



ROGER HOPKINS

Celebrating the Land Trust's 20th anniversary this summer.

CHRIS OLNEY



Volunteers Andrew Roe (left) and Randy Lee working to maintain the meadow at the Park Nature Preserve.



Participants on a geology walk at Conklin Gully pause for a brief rest while exploring the gorge.

“Let us not forget our local trusts and duties...Let us especially remember our lake and its shores...May we all do something so that after another hundred years, our successors shall meet together and rejoice and thank us for what we have done.”

— John D. Barrow
Centennial Address (1876)
Skaneateles, NY



Eli Haines-Eitzen holds a spotted salamander on a recent species inventory field trip to the Stevenson Forest Preserve.



Land Trust volunteers work with volunteers from Dominion Transmission to install steps at the new Kingsbury Woods Conservation Area.



Mycologist Kathie Hodge identifies a mushroom and talks about its biology and structure on a recent walk at the Ellis Hollow Nature Preserve, part of this summer’s Talks and Treks series.

Land Trust Completes Three Conservation Plans for Future Action *continued from page 5*

- Other priorities include protecting lands associated with Six Mile Creek's headwaters, the drinking water source for the City of Ithaca; establishment of a 300-foot-wide trail corridor along the Finger Lakes Trail that would ensure the wild character of the trail while also providing a natural corridor for wildlife; and acquiring key parcels or establishing conservation easements around state forests to minimize habitat fragmentation.

The second study, which was also completed in September, offers an analysis of a 78-mile stretch of the Finger Lakes Trail that passes through the Emerald Necklace. The study was undertaken in partnership with Tompkins County's planning department, with additional support from Schuyler County Planning.

Overall, the Finger Lakes Trail spans 900 miles, with a 563-mile main section that links Allegheny State Park to the Catskill Mountains. One major concern for the trail segment associated with the Emerald Necklace is that nearly 12 miles of walkway runs along the side of public roads, a stretch that has increased by 2.5 miles since 1971, due largely to development pressures. The plan documents natural resources along the trail, identifies future threats, and presents strategies to protect and enhance the trail corridor. Ultimately, the study helped the Land Trust and its partners prioritize steps to ensure a permanently protected, scenic off-road corridor.

Key recommendations of the trail plan include:

- Securing permanent protection of the entire Finger Lakes Trail within the Emerald Necklace, with the goal of protecting a corridor width of at least 300 feet.
- Launching a systematic effort to work with private landowners to secure the permanent protection of important open land spaces, with emphasis on the use of conservation easements in conjunction with access easements for the trail.
- Encouraging towns along the trail to appreciate the trail's value and to develop or strengthen land-use planning tools for protecting the trail and to buffer it from nearby development.
- Developing four trail gateways near major state highways to bolster public access to the trail and offer interpretive kiosks for nearby natural and cultural resources.

The Land Trust is now working with the Finger Lakes Trail Conference, as well as the Cayuga Trails Club, private landowners and government conservation agencies to make these plans a reality.

The third conservation plan, released in October, assessed the value of natural resources found around the southern half of the Skaneateles Lake watershed and outlined steps to protect this extraordinary area from increasing development pressure.

The beautiful Skaneateles Lake has relatively low nutrient levels, making its water extremely pure—so pure, in fact, that it remains one of only six unfiltered drinking water sources in the country, from which the City of Syracuse draws 43 million gallons of lake water per day on average. To keep the water so pure into the future, careful attention—especially when it comes to development—must be paid to both the shoreline and every tributary that feeds the lake. Also, the southern half of the lake's watershed encompasses a scenic mosaic of rich farmland and verdant woodlands, punctuated by rugged gorges and pristine wetlands.

The biggest threat to Skaneateles Lake comes from development pressure. To date, these pressures have largely been experienced at the northern end of the lake, within the Town of Skaneateles. Concerns are growing, however, about the prospect of



The southern end of Skaneateles Lake – pictured here from our Bahar Nature Preserve – has been the focus of one of the Land Trust's recently released conservation plans.

development moving south into the four rural towns that border the lake's southern half.

An important part of the planning process was outreach to local officials and landowners within these four towns, which are located within three different counties! Interviews revealed a strong appreciation for the area's natural resources, and support for conservation, as well as increasing concern about the region's future.

Based on the study, the Land Trust recommends undertaking four initiatives to:

- Systematically and permanently protect important open land space through the acquisition of conservation easements, both through purchase and donation. Priorities include undeveloped lakeshore, large tracts of farmland, and steep woodlands overlooking the lake.
- Strengthen local land use planning by promoting clustered development and undertaking conservation analyses of future development proposals.
- Create a scenic byway around the lake, with scenic overlooks and interpretive kiosks.
- Enhance recreational opportunities at the south end of the lake by creating a "ridge to ridge" hiking trail that would link State Routes 41 and 41A; and securing public access to the lakeshore.

By completing these studies, the Land Trust now has plans for future action driven by detailed analysis. Over the coming years, the Land Trust hopes to use this information to take intelligent and thoughtful steps to protect the region's natural resources and wildlife habitats into perpetuity.

The Land Trust is grateful to the New York State Conservation Partnership Program, a joint program of the Land Trust Alliance and New York State, for supporting conservation planning within the Emerald Necklace and the Skaneateles Lake Watershed. The Land Trust also thanks the Allyn Foundation and the Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board for their support of the Southern Skaneateles Planning Project and the New York State Quality Communities Program for its support of the Emerald Necklace/Finger Lakes Trail Corridor planning study.

Copies of the plans are available at the Land Trust's web site – www.flit.org.

—Krishna Ramanujan

Board Developments

The Land Trust's Board of Directors continues to expand with the addition of new board member Marianne Young.



New Land Trust Board Member Marianne Young

Marianne Young is President of Market Street Trust Company in Corning, a client-owned wealth management firm providing professional services in financial planning, investment management, tax and estate planning and philanthropic advisory services.

Before joining Market Street Trust, Marianne practiced law at Harris, Beach & Wilcox, where she focused on corporate and banking law. She holds a J.D. degree from Cornell Law School and was admitted to the New York State Bar Association in 1992, where she is currently a member of their Trusts and Estates Law Section. She is a past President of the Board of Trustees of the Rockwell Museum in Corning, as well as a trustee of the Alternative School for Math and Science, a private middle school located in the Corning area. Marianne is married and has three sons. The family enjoys hiking on the Catharine Valley Trail, spending time on Seneca Lake, and many other outdoor activities that our scenic region provides.

Welcome aboard Marianne!

Staff Developments

The Land Trust welcomes new staff member Megan Fenton. Megan will take over the position of Land Protection Specialist formerly held by Jamie Hawk. She will hold a joint staff position for both the Land Trust and Cornell Cooperative Extension of Yates County established as the result of an expanded partnership with Extension to protect the region's most productive farmland and at the same time educate farmers and local officials about options for conserving prime agricultural land.



Land Protection Specialist Megan Fenton

Megan is a recent graduate of Cornell University with a Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Sciences. Having grown up on a small farm and vineyard in the Finger Lakes region, Megan brings with her an extensive and broad range of experiences that will prove useful in her new role.

"Coming from an agricultural background, I fully understand the importance of protecting land," Megan said. "And I feel honored to work for an organization that shares my enthusiasm for protecting and participating in that community in a sustainable manner."

Our congratulations and welcome to Megan Fenton and our very best wishes to Jamie Hawk in his future endeavors.

We are deeply grateful for donations in memory of:

David Hamlin
FROM
Bonnie Hamlin

Henry Hirschland
FROM
Janet Hirschland

Robert Earl Hopkins
FROM
Betsy and Dick Darlington
Alayne Evans
Paul and Josephine Mikula
Drew and Mary Lee Noden
Tom Reimers
Anne Shapiro

Daniel MacBeth
FROM
Lee and Bruce MacBeth

Mary Rogers
FROM
Mary Hood

Anne Schaff
FROM
Anthony and Elisabeth Basinski
Ralph and Judith Boston
Margaret Botsford
David and Debra Brown
Wendy Cimmet
Betsy and Dick Darlington
Walter and Joan Gage
Roslyn Litman
Pauline F. Pickett
Hans and Christa Spalteholz
Jerome and Mary Van Buren

Joyce Woodruff
FROM
Charles Woodruff

Our sincere thanks for gifts in honor of:

Louise Craig
on her 50th Birthday
FROM
Sybil Craig
Lee and Staffan Lundback
Hadley Matarazzo

Bill Hecht
FROM
Jeffery Simek and
his "Westy" friends

Jan and Susan Suwinski
FROM
Karen Eldredge

VOLUNTEER WANTED

to help scan documents a few hours a week in the Land Trust office.



Conservation buyer wanted...

for 20 acre rural retreat located between Hammondspport and Watkins Glen.

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

Asking price is \$53,000
Contact Dennis Carlson at 607-569-2020



EarthShare®
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**One environment.
One simple way to care for it.®**

Workplace Giving:
The 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

**Does Your Company Match your Gift?
Ask them? Send the Forms to the Land Trust.**

Make a Gift from Your Investments!
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.

How it works

- You transfer securities to the Land Trust.
- The Land trust sells your securities and uses the proceeds for its programs.



Benefits

- You receive gift credit and an immediate income tax deduction for the fair market value of the securities on the date of transfer, no matter what you originally paid for them.
- You pay no capital gains tax on the securities you donate.
- You can direct your gift to a specific purpose or unrestricted use by the Land Trust.
- You have the satisfaction of making a significant gift now or funding a life-income gift that benefits the Land Trust later.

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

Our many thanks to the following partners, friends, and volunteers, whose generosity helped make each of the Land Trust's 20th Anniversary Events so wonderfully successful:

Bellwether Hard Cider
Cayuga Lake Watershed Network
Cayuga Nature Center
Cornell Plantations
Cornell Raptor Program: John Parks
Edible Finger Lakes
Finger Lakes institute
Happy Goat Farm
Hartmann's Old World Sausage
Heron Hill Vineyards
Susan Hurwitz
Ithaca Bakery
Ithaca Children's Garden
Debbie Koop
Anne Landre
Littletree Orchards
Museum of the Earth
New York Wine and Culinary Center
Purity Ice Cream
Randall-Standish Vineyards
Red Jacket Orchards
Tompkins County 4H
Wishing Well Vineyards

Time is Running Out!!!

**Do You Own an IRA?
Are YOU Older than 70½?**
(Before December 31, 2009)

If you answer YES to all,
then YOU own an asset that can make a wonderful gift to the Land Trust.

IRS regulations permit a gift up to \$100,000 from your IRA to the Land Trust.

If YOU are age 70½ and IF YOU act before December 31, 2009, you will not be taxed on this Qualified Charitable Distribution.
But you must ACT soon!

Contact Jan Hesbon, FLLT Director of Development
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A CLOSER LOOK

The Surprisingly Common Bobcat: A Loner in Our Midst

Each year, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) receives many reports from people who think they have seen cougars or lynxes, both considered extinct in New York.

Sometimes these mysterious animals turn out to be nothing more than house cats, fishers, or even dogs. If it really is a large wild cat, it's almost certainly a bobcat (*Lynx rufus*). A recent rash of local media coverage—the animals have been spotted in Canandaigua and Lansing—might lead you to think that bobcats are rare in this area, or that they are recent arrivals. Although sightings of this secretive and solitary animal may be newsworthy, the animals themselves are fairly common. Unless you live in the middle of a city, chances are very good that a bobcat lives somewhere nearby.

The bobcat is a stocky animal about the size of a cocker spaniel and weighing twenty to thirty pounds. Its species name, *rufus*, is Latin for “red,” and in forested areas bobcats tend to be reddish-brown above, white below. (In drier climates, and in the winter, their coats are more grayish.) The bobcat's fur is marked with black spots and bars, patterns that render it almost invisible on the sun-dappled forest floor. From a distance, the most obvious difference between the bobcat and a gigantic domestic cat is the former's very short (“bobbed”) black-tipped tail. If you are fortunate enough to see the animal up close, you will notice a ruff of facial hair and large ears topped with black tufts that may act as antennae. Hind legs that are longer than the front legs give the bobcat more power when jumping, as well as a bobbing gait.

Historically, the bobcat was present in all lower forty-eight states, but the cat was exterminated in the intensely cultivated midwest and the heavily populated eastern seaboard. However, it seems to have made a remarkable comeback in recent years: currently, it is found in every state except Delaware. Despite the pressures of development and widespread hunting and trapping, most populations seem to be stable or increasing, and possibly even spreading.

This success story is attributable to several quirks of bobcat biology, as well as a few serendipitous events caused by human activity. The bobcat is a density-

dependent breeder: the fewer cats there are, and the more food there is, the more litters will be born. Thirty-nine states, including New York, allow a bobcat harvest, but thanks to the animal's reproductive habits, these harvests don't seem to have put a dent in the population.

their prey and raise their young. As Nathan Roberts, at the Cornell Department of Natural Resources, puts it: “All they need is a bush to hide behind, and a rabbit, and that's bobcat habitat.” Over the last century, the abandonment of farms in upstate New York has created a patchwork of forest and farmland that is perfect for this little predator.

Interestingly, although humans have often made life hard for the bobcat, they may also have contributed to its success.



BILL BANASZEWSKI©

A stocky animal about the size of a cocker spaniel, the bobcat has large ears topped with black tufts that may act as antennae.

Furthermore, the bobcat's solitary nature means that populations are not as susceptible to communicable diseases as are social animals like the raccoon.

Unlike the lynx, which prefers the snowshoe hare, the bobcat will prey on everything from voles to small livestock. Bobcats are nothing if not enterprising: in the Adirondacks, a significant part of the cat's winter diet is made up of deer, including full-grown bucks that can be five or more times its size.

Bobcats are also successful because they are habitat generalists. They can live just about anywhere—from swamps to forests, desert to “urban edge”—as long as there is sufficient cover for them to stalk

Cougars compete with bobcats and may even kill them where their territories overlap, so the extirpation of the larger cat in the northeast may have benefited the smaller. Farming and logging in northeastern forests destroyed lynx habitat but created ideal conditions for the bobcat. Global climate change may turn out to be the greatest boon of all for the feline. Bobcats, unlike lynxes, are not suited to deep snow. If milder winters with less snow are in our future, it is likely that the bobcat will expand further north and into higher elevations, at the expense of its shyer and less adaptable northern cousin.

—Jacqueline Stuhmiller

Finger Lakes Land Trust

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AUTUMN 2009 CALENDAR

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 1:00 PM

Autumn's End Nature Walk at the Steege Hill Nature Preserve.

Join Stewardship Advisor and naturalist Betsy Darlington and Preserve Steward Bob Corneau for an end of fall hike at the Steege Hill Preserve.

Directions to the Preserve: From route 17 in Big Flats, take exit 49. Turn south from the exit ramp and go to Olcott Rd. At T intersection, turn right on Rt. 64 (unmarked), and right again on Rt. 352. Turn left on So. Corning Rd., cross the river, and turn left on Steege Hill Rd. Go about 1 mile and pull into the parking lot on the left, just before the pipeline cut. (Or park off the pavement on the shoulder of the road.)

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.