



The Land Steward

NEWSLETTER OF THE FINGER LAKES LAND TRUST

working to protect the natural integrity of the Finger Lakes Region

Vol. 24, No. 4 • Autumn 2012

Key Parcel in Skaneateles Highlands Targeted for Protection

The southern end of Skaneateles Lake is recognized as one of the most pristine spots in all of the Finger Lakes, well known for its verdant hillsides, steep cascading gorges, rugged lakeside cliffs, and sparkling waters. The Land Trust has been working with landowners in this area for several years now to secure key parcels through select land acquisitions as well as the use of conservation easements.

This effort is about to take a big leap forward, as the organization recently secured a purchase option for two parcels spanning more than 190 acres of scenic hillside on Skaneateles Lake's eastern shore. The properties extend for nearly two miles between existing protected lands and represent the single largest link in a growing network of open space lands that will ultimately extend around the southern half of the lake.

Discussions with landowners Bill and Leonard Burns led to recognition that their third generation family farm featured areas of steep slopes that were vital to the health of the lake but not essential to the future of their farm. The Land Trust also recognized the opportunity to provide increased public access to one of the most scenic areas in the entire Finger Lakes region.

A recently negotiated purchase option agreement with the Burns brothers gives the organization the opportunity to acquire these lands, provided that it acts by January, 2014.

While the Burns brothers have generously agreed to sell the land for less than its appraised value, the tract's scenic lake views hold considerable value. The Land Trust has set a goal of raising \$1 million to acquire the land, provide for public access through improvements to the site, and add to its stewardship fund to provide ongoing revenue for long-term management of the site.

The proposed acquisitions are remarkably diverse. They include rugged woodlands that border Randall Creek and several other streams cutting deep gorges and ravines through the property on their way down to Skaneateles Lake. Upland terrain includes mature forest, brush lands, and meadows. The larger parcel of approximately 188 acres extends from south to north, overlooking the lake. The second parcel of five acres is a corridor 50 feet wide and 4,000 feet long that extends east from State Route 41 to the Ripley Hill Nature Preserve, a 130-acre sanctuary acquired by the Central NY Land Trust last year

continued on page 4



PERSPECTIVES

We were just south of Aurora when I started to wonder if paddling more than 100 miles in a kayak was as good an idea as it had originally seemed. Cayuga Lake is particularly wide there, and strengthening headwinds and waves made us suspect that our destination of Long Point was actually moving away from us to the north.

That was near the end of our first day of what would be five days of paddling. We set out to get a firsthand look at shoreline conditions, visit local officials to discuss shoreline conservation and improvement projects, and also simply to enjoy ourselves.

Fortunately, we made our destination of Long Point on that first day, and on to Wells College, where we were overwhelmed by their wonderful hospitality. We continued paddling the length of Cayuga Lake and beyond over the next days, passing through the swampy bends of the Seneca River and numerous canal locks on the Oswego River before emerging into Oswego Harbor itself, our final destination.

And what did we see and what did we learn? Foremost in my mind is the remarkable beauty of our region—from the grandeur of Cayuga Lake’s still waters at dawn to the tremendous abundance of birds, fish, and turtles to be found along the banks of our slow moving rivers to the north. Another strong impression was of the wonderful hospitality provided by the residents of our region, who went out of their way to make us feel welcome wherever we went.

During the course of our paddle, I was also struck by how much pressure we put on our natural systems, particularly our lakes and rivers. We paddled past mile after mile of densely developed shoreline; in some

stretches, the cottages were so crowded that it seemed there was barely room for a single tree to grace the shoreline!

My last strong impression was one of tremendous opportunity. Paddling our lakes and rivers is a wonderful way to spend a day, a weekend, or even a week. And yet public access is limited, as are shoreline businesses that cater to paddlers and other boaters.

I came away convinced that we conservationists must redouble our efforts to secure our last remaining undeveloped shoreline—so little is left. We must also join forces with those who are interested in promoting water-based recreation in ways that are compatible with conservation. By working together, we can create a network of protected shoreline areas on each of the Finger Lakes that can also provide outstanding opportunities for paddling, fishing, bird watching, and other activities.

The creation of such a network will not only add to our quality of life but also enhance the appeal of the Finger Lakes as a tourism destination—an industry that last year generated \$2.6 billion in economic activity within the region.

If you’ve never tried it, go out and rent or borrow a kayak before our cold winter winds take hold. You’ll be glad that you did.

—Andy Zepp



32-Acre Purchase to Benefit Canandaigua Lake Water Quality and Wildlife Habitat

BILL DAVIS

The Armstrong acquisition adds to a growing network of protected lands on Great Hill and beyond.

This summer the Land Trust added to its conservation campaign in the Canandaigua Lake watershed by purchasing 32 acres of woodland in the Yates County town of Italy at the south end of the lake. The steep hillside property, located along South Hill Rd., was acquired from Naples residents Kevin and Kathleen Armstrong and will be managed as an addition to the Land Trust's Great Hill Nature Preserve.

The Armstrong property was identified as a conservation priority because of its location on the slopes of South Hill above the West River and its proximity to other protected lands in the fragile watershed, including several of the Land Trust's nearby holdings and the State's vast High Tor Wildlife Management Area. The Land Trust's activities at the south end of Canandaigua Lake focus on protection of the lake's water quality and its premier habitats for fish and wildlife. West River, the lake's principal tributary, is part of one of the largest wetland complexes in the Finger Lakes and is a popular area for kayakers, canoeists, and wildlife enthusiasts of many kinds. Recognized as an Important Bird Area by the National Audubon Society, the wetlands provide crucial habitat for species such as the Pied-billed Grebe, American Bittern, and Least Bittern. Thousands of acres in the West River valley and in the surrounding hills provide habitat for everything from nesting Bald Eagles to a growing population of black bears.

The Land Trust has been busy with projects in this area. In 2007 it acquired undeveloped floodplain property with 1,700 feet of frontage on the West River. The Perlman property, as it is known, abuts a piece of High Tor and combines with it to

provide a strong riparian buffer. An adjacent tract donated last year by Constellation Brands features an abandoned vineyard that the Land Trust and partners in the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation plan to restore as native grasslands with increased public access to wildlife.

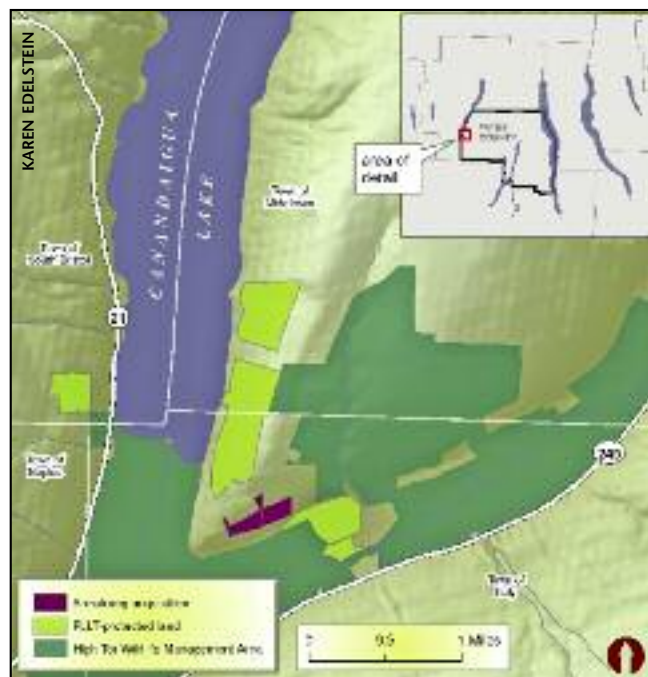
The new Armstrong acquisition joins these nearby properties as part of a growing network of conserved lands that enhance the natural beauty of the area.

The Land Trust's Great Hill Nature Preserve on the steep slopes above the lake, Conklin Gully conservation lands, Carolabarb Park on the southwest side of the lake, and Grimes Glen Conservation Area just to the south—taken together, they form a network of protected open space to supplement High Tor. Through future conservation ownership or easements, the Land Trust hopes to strengthen the interconnectedness of these open lands.

"Having a partner in the area makes acquiring land a lot easier because the State's acquisition process takes so long," said Mike Wasilco, wildlife manager for DEC Region 8, which oversees High Tor. "A land trust that can act to buy land an owner wants to sell now gives us some breathing room, since the landowner wouldn't want to wait around for the State process."

Protection of steep wooded slopes, such as those on the Armstrong land, is important in watershed conservation, as even sporadic development of single-family homes on such hillsides degrades the ability of the slope to act as a forest buffer controlling erosion with

continued on page 10





Key Parcel in Skaneateles Highlands Targeted for Protection *continued from cover*

with assistance from the FLLT.

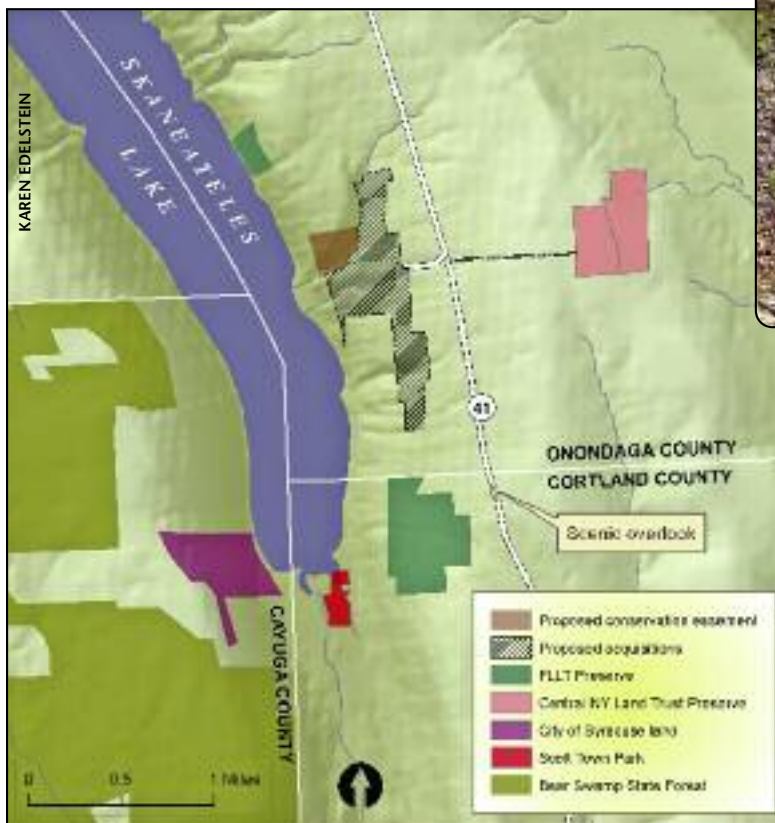
“The south end of the lake has been a combination of farms, fields, and forest for two hundred years,” said Land Trust board member and Skaneateles resident Doug Sutherland. “This acquisition is a key building block toward ensuring that it stays that way.”

Land Trust board member and limnologist Bob Werner adds, “This acquisition will safeguard an important part of the watershed and prevent erosion of steep slopes leading down to the lake. Protecting vulnerable land such as this is important to maintaining the high water quality that we currently enjoy on Skaneateles Lake.”

Once this acquisition is completed, the Land Trust will develop a management plan for the site that addresses habitat management as well as the provision of public access. Site preparation needs include the demolition of an abandoned



The Burns property includes rugged woodlands that border Randall Creek



house, the construction of a parking area, interpretive kiosk, scenic overlooks, and several miles of hiking trails.

The proposed acquisition follows seven other projects completed by the Land Trust in this area. Earlier accomplishments include the acquisition of the primary access to scenic Carpenter’s Falls on the west side of Skaneateles Lake; the establishment of the 120-acre High Vista Nature Preserve, a diverse forest located within an Audubon-designated Important Bird Area; and the recent protection of 1,300 feet of Skaneateles Lake shoreline through the creation of the Cora Kampfe Dickinson Conservation Area.

Fundraising is now underway. To learn about how you can help, please contact the Land Trust’s Director of Development Kelly Makosch at (607) 275-9487 or kelly@fllt.org.

Earth Share of New York

Take advantage of one of the easiest and most convenient ways to support the Finger Lakes Land Trust!

Hundreds of workplaces across the country give their employees the opportunity to make charitable gifts through payroll contributions. The Finger Lakes Land Trust is a member of EarthShare New York, a federated workplace giving fundraising entity that represents and supports the Land Trust and many other respected and responsible environmental and conservation charities. Federal employees may support the Land Trust in the annual Combined Federal

Campaign (CFC) by designating #71966 on their pledge forms.



Find out if **your** employer hosts a workplace giving campaign and if it includes EarthShare New York and its member charities. To learn more about how you and your workplace can support the Land Trust through an EarthShare New York charitable giving campaign, please call 607-275-9487, or visit EarthShare New York’s web site at: www.earthshareny.org.

115-Acre Jewel added to Emerald Necklace

In December of 1979, brothers Dan and Bill Halton, along with Bill's wife Kathy, bought 120 acres of undeveloped land in Danby, Tompkins County. Bill and Kathy moved onto the property, living at first in a rustic cabin without electricity or running water, then in a house built by Bill and his son. Dan lived and worked near Syracuse but maintained a hunting cabin on the property, where he bowhunted for many years.

After the Haltons retired from their respective professions—Bill as a math teacher at Ithaca High School, Kathy as a nurse, and Dan as a water resources management engineer for the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC)—they began to contemplate how to preserve and protect the property from development for future generations. Their three-way joint ownership of the property also created inheritance complications.

Their solution was to establish a conservation easement with the Land Trust on 115 acres of the Halton property. The easement prohibits inappropriate development and surface development for gas extraction, but it allows other uses of the land such as sustainable timber harvesting (subject to a forest management plan approved by the Land Trust), agriculture, and low-impact recreation. Most importantly, the easement will remain with the property regardless of who owns it in the future, thereby protecting the land in perpetuity.

The flexibility of a conservation easement was a major attraction for the Haltons. Bill and Kathy raise a handful of chickens, goats, and sheep on the property, and they also harvest wood from the property to heat their home. "For us to continue owning the land and doing the things we've always done, while being able to protect it from development after we're gone—that sold me on the conservation easement," Dan said.

"Having the Land Trust involved in the easement was also important," Bill added. "We approached them because we knew they would share our values and land ethic."

For the Land Trust, the easement on the Halton property adds another link to the Emerald Necklace—a greenbelt of contiguous protected land surrounding Ithaca, stretching from the Finger Lakes National Forest in the west to the Hammond Hill and Robinson Hollow State Forests in the east. The Halton property adjoins Danby State Forest land and lies near several other protected areas.

"This latest addition to the Emerald Necklace is a fabulous piece of property," said Land Trust Executive Director Andy Zepp. "The parcel encompasses trout-spawning habitat, borders public forest land, includes extensive frontage on State Route 96B, and is located in close proximity to the Finger Lakes Trail."

Another attraction, for both the Haltons and the Land Trust, was being able to protect the diverse landscape of the property. Approximately half of the parcel, comprising much of the south side of Durfee Hill, is mature hardwood forest consisting primarily of white and red oak. This segment of the property is part of the Durfee Oak Woods, which has been identified as a Unique Natural Area by Tompkins County.

continued on page 8



*(left to right)
Dan, Kathy,
and Bill Halton
at the base of
Durfee Hill*

SCENES

from Around Our Region...

DONALD SPECKER

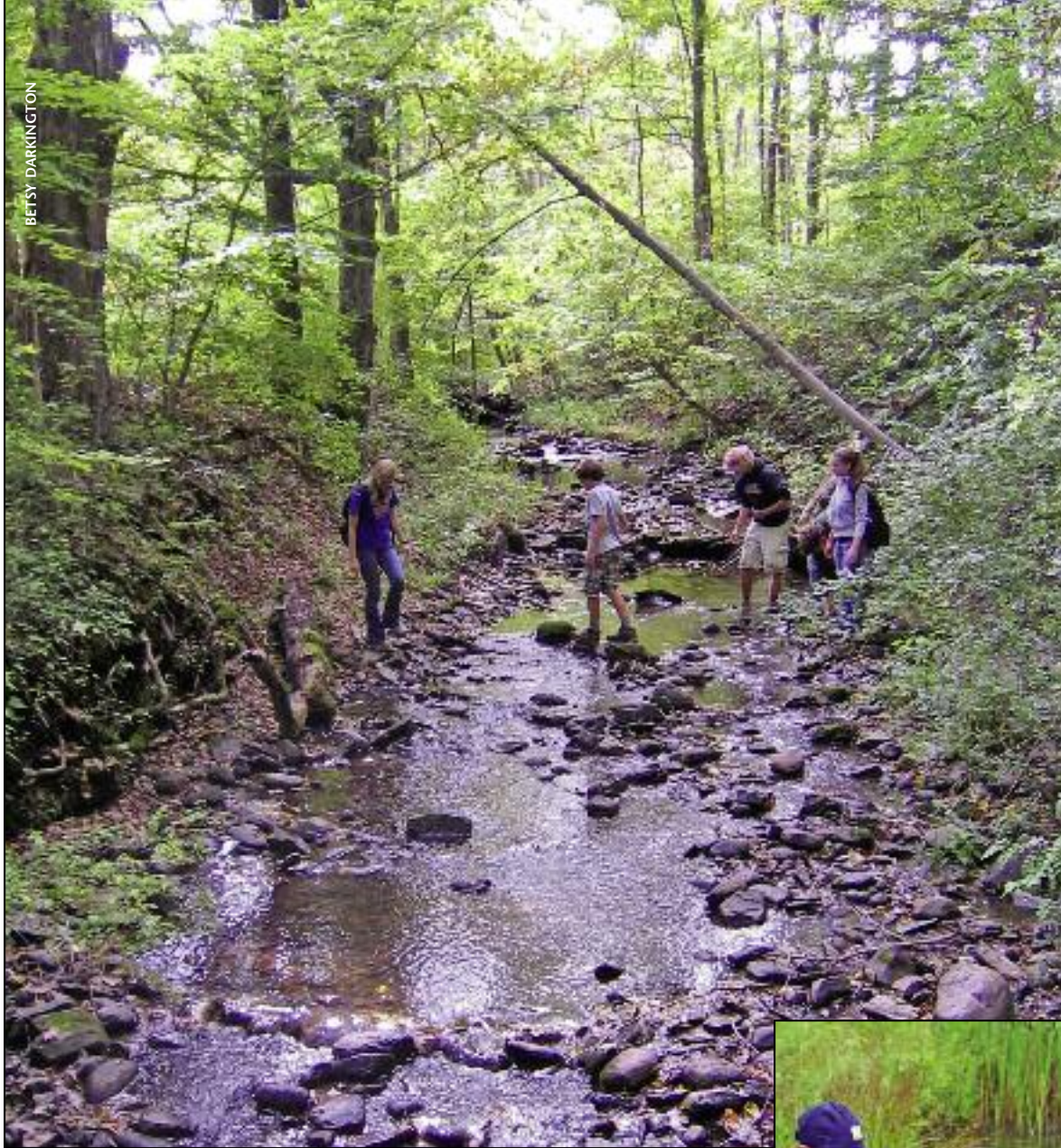


Land Trust board, staff, and partners cutting the ribbon at the dedication of the VanRiper Conservation Area in Seneca County



*(standing left to right)
Volunteers John Smith, Roger Hopkins, Bob McNamara, Betsy Darlington, and Ithaca College intern Anthony Perrotti with (seated left to right) Land Steward Jason Gorman and Ithaca College intern Katie Currier in front of the kiosk they just finished at the VanRiper Conservation Area in Seneca County*

CHRIS OLMLEY



Members of the Cornell Herpetological Society on a recent field trip to the Lindsay-Parsons Biodiversity Preserve in Tompkins County

A few captivated participants watch as naturalist Angela Cannon-Crothers reveals the hidden life that lives below the water's surface, at the Wesley Hill Nature Preserve in Ontario County, part of the 2012 Summer Talks & Treks series.

Our intrepid team of Ithaca-to-Oswego kayakers standing in front of the bus donated by Southern Tier Kayak Tours' Aaron Myers (kneeling)



115-Acre Jewel added to Emerald Necklace

continued from page 5

At the base of Durfee Hill, there is a swath of open meadow running through the center of the property, which the Haltons have maintained while fighting off an infestation of invasive honeysuckle shrubs. Closer to Route 96B, the property features wetlands in the riparian corridor surrounding Danby Creek, which flows through the Halton property.

The varied terrain on the Halton property means there is abundant wildlife to be found. The Haltons have seen river otters on Danby Creek, and there is also ample evidence of beaver activity. Ospreys, bald eagles, and great blue herons have been visitors, along with coyotes, deer, and black bears.

To help cover the easement's transaction costs, the Haltons made a generous contribution. In addition, the Land Trust was able to secure a grant from Trout Unlimited's Chesapeake Bay Coldwater Land Conservancy Fund. The Fund provides matching grants to land trusts and conservation agencies to permanently protect habitat for Eastern brook trout through land acquisitions and conservation easements. Danby Creek is a NYSDEC-designated trout spawning stream that is an important coldwater tributary of Willseyville Creek, which eventually drains into the Susquehanna River and Chesapeake Bay.

"We would like to thank Bill, Kathy and Dan Halton, along with Trout Unlimited and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for their financial support of this project," said Andy Zepp. "We also appreciate the efforts of our partners at the NYSDEC and the Leon Chandler Chapter of TU, both of which supported our grant application."

With this transaction, the Land Trust now holds nearly 100 conservation easements in 12 counties throughout the Finger Lakes region.
—Jeff Tonole

The Land Trust gratefully acknowledges Attorney Richard P. Urda of Ithaca for providing pro bono legal services in support of this project.

Paddling for Conservation

In July, an intrepid band of conservationists paddled from Ithaca to Oswego to assess shoreline conditions, meet with local officials, and consider the potential for the development of "water trails" to enhance recreational opportunities, while at the same time building support for the protection of undeveloped shoreline.

Land Trust Executive Director Andy Zepp and Board President Stu Schweizer joined Stewardship Director Chris Olney, State Parks Conservation Planner Sue Poelvoorde, Tompkins County Planner Ed Marx, and Senior Cayuga County Planner Geoff Milz for the 110-mile journey, which was completed over the course of five days.

The group paddled the length of Cayuga Lake, followed the Seneca River east to the Oswego River, then turned northward to Lake Ontario. Overnight lodging included a dormitory at Wells College in Aurora, camping at Howland Island State Wildlife Management Area on the Seneca River in Cayuga County, and stays at two riverside inns in Baldwinsville and Fulton.

Reflecting on the trip, Ed Marx commented, "What struck me most about the trip was the diversity of the waters and environs we paddled through: from the open waters of Cayuga Lake through the impounded river segments of the canal to the Great Lake harbor in Oswego. While man's influence on nature was evident, ospreys, terns, kingfishers, and Great Blue Herons were our constant companions and reminders of the resilience of nature."

A summary of trip observations with photos may be found on the Land Trust's web site at www.flit.org



Success in Numbers

The Land Trust successfully completed 15 land protection projects during the 2011-2012 fiscal year. These ventures will forever protect 1,022 acres of the region's most significant open space lands.

Projects were completed across five Finger Lakes counties and collectively secure roughly two miles of stream frontage, a square mile of rich farmland, and more than 300 acres of mature forest. The Land Trust also educated more than 500 community leaders, conservationists, interested adults, and curious children through a variety of free programming, and stewarded over 13,000 acres of existing Land Trust protected property.

It was a big year in the Land Trust's effort to protect farms and promote local agriculture. With partnership from New York State's Department of Agriculture and Markets, support from municipalities, and the commitment of landowners, the Land Trust completed conservation easements on five family farms, totaling 630 acres, in the Canandaigua, Seneca, Keuka, and Skaneateles watersheds. These efforts will help keep land in agriculture and will protect some of the vineyards, scenic pastures, iconic vistas, and rural character of the region.

Efforts to conserve the open spaces and rugged forests that host an abundance of native plant and animal species were equally successful. This year, FLLT completed five projects totaling over 310 acres of prime migratory bird habitat, Unique Natural Areas, swampy woodlands, and towering white pine forests.

Whenever possible, the Land Trust focuses on protecting lands that are contiguous to existing holdings or that buffer public open space. For example, this year FLLT completed its fifth project near Bristol Harbor in the Canandaigua Lake watershed and closed on conservation easements bordering Cornell's Arnot Forest and an existing Land Trust easement property.

In addition to lands protected through conservation easements, a collective 36 acres of land were added to three existing preserves. The Land Trust secured over 2,000 feet of streamside frontage on Fall Creek, the largest tributary to Cayuga Lake, partnered with the Upper Susquehanna Coalition on two wetland restoration projects at the Goetchius Wetland Preserve, and added important bird habitat to the Dorothy McIlroy Bird Sanctuary in Cayuga County. FLLT also worked with landowners and partners to sign three separate purchase agreements that will set the stage for big news in the months to come.

To increase understanding of the region's natural assets, as well as the use of conservation tools such as easements, the Land Trust educated more than 500 community members through a combination of field trips, seminars, and public workshops. Presentations to landowners and local officials were held in partnership whenever possible with Cornell Cooperative Extension, regional planning and development boards, and the New York Forest Owners Association. Across the region, adults and children of all ages enjoyed the 15 naturalist-led field trips we offered to the community free of charge through the organization's Talks and Treks series.

The Land Trust hired a second full-time land steward, had the help of six college interns, and was supported by more than 200 volunteers over the course of the year. Why did FLLT need all of these extra hands? To help monitor the 240 miles of boundary and 35 miles of hiking trails it has promised to protect in perpetuity.

In addition to ensuring the protection of 30 preserves and 95 conservation easements, FLLT land stewards, interns, and volunteers were busy with the development of appropriate public access and significant site improvements at three recent Land Trust acquisitions: the VanRiper Conservation Area on Cayuga Lake, a parcel adjoining High Tor Wildlife Management Area near Canandaigua Lake and the Berntsson-Millier addition to the Land Trust's Roy H. Park Preserve near Ithaca. These three preserve properties will soon be open to the public with new parking lots, educational kiosks, and new trails designed for wildlife watching and quiet recreation.

Last year's conservation successes were possible because of generous support from over 1,900 members and partnerships with landowners, non-profit organizations, local businesses, and government agencies. These numbers speak not only to the success of the Land Trust but also to the ability of people and organizations to come together to protect what is truly valuable. Behind these statistics are the stories of people's connection to the land—a first walk in the woods, catching crayfish with children, learning how to tell an oak from a maple, or perhaps, a place to make a living. Each story is unique and reflects the core of the Land Trust's work. —Kelly Makosch

Accomplishments during the last fiscal year included two wetland restoration projects at the Goetchius Wetland Preserve in Tompkins County.





32-Acre Purchase to Benefit Canandaigua Lake Water Quality... *continued from page 3*

sediment flow downstream into sensitive wetlands. Both local watershed planning and development pressures in the area have increased awareness of the impact of housing development on such slopes.

Kevin Armstrong noted another impact of new housing over the roughly 40 years since he bought his property: "There are many people who would see the land as something to be developed just for the views alone. Over the years, I've seen quite a bit of development up there... and it's had an impact on wildlife, on [lowering] overall populations."

Armstrong and his wife are both avid hunters and conservationists. As former president and a current board member of New York Bowhunters Inc., he has been invaluable over the years in helping to build a bridge between the Land Trust and the community of hunters, fishermen, and outdoorsmen throughout the region.

Back in the 1970s, while working at Eastman Kodak in Rochester, Armstrong found himself exploring the terrain around Naples and Italy every free moment he had. He had fallen in love with the area and leapt at the chance to buy wooded property he could hunt on as his own.

"I am thrilled that the Land Trust has the property now. I trust them completely in management and stewardship," he said.

Reflecting on a trip to the lochs of Scotland a few years ago, Armstrong said: "It seemed so much like the Finger Lakes to me in some ways, but the people there have a different attitude toward land use. It was so beautiful to see those lochs completely undeveloped along the shoreline, and I couldn't help but think how different our Finger Lakes would be if land were set aside in trust for everyone."

—Eben McLane

The Land Trust gratefully acknowledges Attorney Laurence Karz of the law firm of Hall & Karz in Canandaigua for providing pro bono legal services in support of this project.

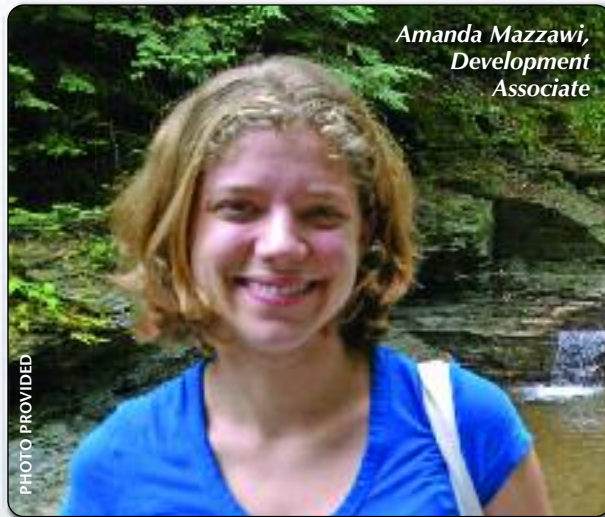
STAFF Developments

We are delighted to announce the hiring of Amanda Mazzawi for the position of Development Associate.

As the Land Trust continues to grow, Mandy will help us expand our marketing services and enable us to continue to provide top notch services to our growing membership.

Mandy has a bachelor's degree in biology from North Carolina State University in Raleigh and comes to us from the National Academies in Washington, DC where she was Senior Program Assistant. Mandy brings with her strong organizational skills and a passion for our mission.

"I realize the importance of the work you all are doing," Mandy said. "And I'm truly excited by the opportunity to work with the Land Trust team as its Development Associate to help further the protection of this beautiful region."



Please join us in wishing Mandy a hearty welcome!

Our appreciation for gifts in honor of:

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Cornell University Dept of Biomedical Engineering

Hilary Fraser and Michele Morris

FROM

John and Robin Moss Hinchcliff

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Our deepest gratitude for thoughtful gifts in memory of:

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Jeff Jordan

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Betsy and Dick Darlington

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Raymond and Kathleen Winthrop

Odell Scott

FROM

Barbara Scott

A CLOSER LOOK

Our Prickly Relationship with the Teasel

Today, the town of Skaneateles is known for its quaint main street and its clear lake. In the nineteenth and early twentieth century, however, it had a very different claim to fame: it was the center of the U.S. teasel industry.

Teasels (*Dipsacus spp.*) are a prodigiously spiny Old World genus of flowering plant that can grow six or more feet high. On first glance, the teasel might be confused with the thistle, another tall, prickly non-native often found growing in sunny, disturbed areas. However, the teasel is easily identifiable by its unusually large (up to 4" long), oval flowerheads. Tiny flowers, ranging in hue from white to purple, initially open in a band around the middle of the inflorescence; as the first blossoms fade, the flowers directly above and below them come into bloom, creating two bands of color that travel in opposite directions. The seedheads often remain through the winter, creating starkly elegant patterns against the snow.

The teasel's common name comes from an Old English word, *tæsan*, meaning "to pull apart." (It is the same root of our word "to tease"; composure frays under constant vexation, just as fiber does.) The bristly seedhead of the teasel has been used since time immemorial to card wool. In nineteenth-century woolen mills, teasel heads were used to brush the woven fabric (a process known as "raising the nap") in order to create a soft, uniform surface. They are superior for this purpose—wire brushes often damage the fibers—but they wear out quickly, so that they must constantly be replaced. In the 1830s, an enterprising apothecary named Dr. James Snook realized that Skaneateles had the perfect climate and soil composition to grow this useful crop. He imported the European cultivated variety (*D. sativus*), and soon Skaneateles teasels were not only consumed domestically but also exported to Europe. The industrial use of teasels was eventually phased out in the mid-twentieth century when foreign competition forced the U.S. woolen industry to cut costs wherever it could.

The plant that was once the pride and joy of Skaneateles has become a thorn in the side of much of the U.S. and southern Canada. It has long since naturalized in many areas and forms intensely prickly and hardy monocultures that crowd out native vegetation. Cultivated teasel is now possibly extinct in the Finger Lakes, having been supplanted by two wild strains: the common teasel ("wild," "fuller's," or "Indian" teasel, and confusingly identified as both *D. fullonum* and *D. sylvestris*) and the cut-leaved teasel (*D. laciniatus*). These

plants were probably introduced to the continent by early settlers, and their seeds may also have been accidentally mixed with those bound for Skaneateles fields.

Once teasels become established in an area, they are hard to eradicate. Their basal leaves shade the ground so that nothing else can grow and their long, thick taproots make the plant resistant to both drought and physical removal. They can tolerate soil salinity (in the Finger Lakes, a side effect of salting roads in winter), and their seeds are not damaged by water; as a consequence, they have spread rapidly along both highways and waterways.

Remarkably, this endlessly adaptable plant also appears to be partially carnivorous. The genus name *Dipsacus* is derived from the Greek for "thirst," a reference to the cup-like leaf bases that fill with rainwater. These phytotelmata, as such tiny pools are known, may be designed to discourage aphids from climbing the stem. They often contain the bodies of unfortunate invertebrates, which the teasel seems to be able to digest, though the mechanism by which it does so

is not yet known. A rich diet of insects greatly increases seed production, all the more impressive when one realizes that a single plant can produce over two thousand seeds.

Teasels are hard to eradicate from the landscape, not merely because of their astonishing ability to use every resource at their disposal, but also because many people find them both useful and beautiful. Their handsome flower- and seedheads attract both birds and insects, and their popularity in floral arrangements has made them a common cemetery weed. The seedheads are sometimes used to make toys and decorations, and are still considered to be superior tools for cloth finishing. *D. fullonum* can even be used to create both blue and yellow dyes. Various parts of the plant are used in folk medicines; legend has it that the water from the leaf bases makes a very effective beauty treatment. Despite its noxiousness, it's impossible not to find the teasel rather endearing: like the settlers who introduced it, it is hardy, a bit odd, and wonderfully stubborn—a very American weed, in its own way.

—Jacqueline Stuhmiller



A patch of common teasel

Finger Lakes Land Trust

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Finger Lakes Land Trust

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Autumn 2012 Calendar



SUNDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2:00 - 4:00pm

Tree Identification Walk at the Sweedler Preserve at Lick Brook. Led by naturalist and outdoor educator, Akiva Silver, the walk will focus on identification, natural history, wildlife value, and the role of invasive plants in the forest as well as survival uses of trees and shrubs. From Ithaca, take Rt. 13 south. Turn left on Sandbank Rd., just past Buttermilk Falls State Park. At Y intersection, bear right on Town Line Road; park on right side of 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.