



# THE LAND STEWARD

Newsletter of the Finger Lakes Land Trust

Vol. 12, No. 2

working to protect the natural integrity of our region

Spring 2000

## Salmon Creek Bird Sanctuary Expansion Benefits Cerulean Warblers

Thanks to the conservation interests of landowners Lauren Kenworthy and her husband Eric Schaeffer, and the generosity of an anonymous donor, the Land Trust recently added a nine-acre parcel to the existing 16-acre Salmon Creek Bird Sanctuary. Lauren inherited this undeveloped land from her father, Bud Kenworthy, who died unexpectedly in 1998. Bud loved the woods along Salmon Creek, and the fantastic array of migratory birds that breed there each spring and summer. Bud taught at Cornell some years ago, and was widely respected for his human rights activism, especially in Latin America.

Lauren hadn't seen the property for many years, so last summer we toured it with her and her family. Lauren, husband Eric, and their two nature-loving, adventurous sons, Byron and Jesse (ages 4 and 2), made the trip to Lansing from their home in the Washington, DC area.

Two steep-banked streams traverse the Kenworthy property, a rugged topography that makes it less conducive to cabin construction than Lauren had

*continued on page 4*



Art by John Sillis

*The rare Cerulean Warbler requires mature flood-plain forest for nesting.*



Photo by Emily Litten

*Steep hills and forest characterize the new Beech Hill acquisition.*

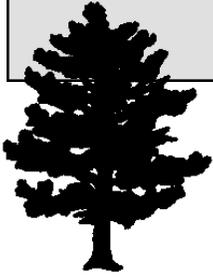
## Beech Hill Acquisition Protects Unique Natural Area

Directly west of the Lindsay-Parsons Biodiversity Preserve, a razorback ridge rises in tiers from the moraine on the valley floor to the 1840-foot summit of Beech Hill, where it merges with broad uplands rolling away southward from the Portage Escarpment. To the east it fronts the mile-wide glacial trough occupied by the present-day Cayuga Inlet. This outer face forms the glacially over-steepened wall directly opposite Thatcher's Pinnacles. To the west, the inner flank of the ridge falls steeply into the hidden valley of the Beech Hill Brook or South Branch of West Danby Creek, one of Tompkins County's Unique Natural Areas.

Through the generosity of an anonymous donor, the Land Trust recently purchased a rugged tract of forestland straddling this ridge. Our acquisition of 103 acres of woods and streams protects moist east-facing slopes which constitute the recharge area above a large beaver swamp lying partly within the Lindsay-Parsons Preserve. In winter-time the high hillside affords views of the extensive valley-head moraine at West Danby, one of the most remarkable expanses of glacial moraine topography in New York State.

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Land Trust 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting: May 7, 2000



## AT THE SIGN OF THE LONE PINE

There is a special satisfaction we feel when we are able to expand the boundaries of our protected areas. Often, the unique flora and fauna or stunning vista that drew us to particular lands and waters are not adequately protected simply by acquiring a single tax parcel.

Thus the addition of the Kenworthy parcel to our Salmon Creek Bird Sanctuary is another step toward our long-range goal of permanent protection of most of the 500-acre Salmon Creek Important Bird Area. Likewise, protection of the Beech Hill parcel next to the Lindsay-Parsons Biodiversity Preserve helps us expand protection for a large biological corridor across the ridges and valley floor of this diverse landscape.

Often, pursuit of our conservation goals means having both the patience and perseverance to work over time in protecting all the pieces of a particular habitat or ecosystem. That's why the expansion of protected areas around some of our nature preserves, through either land acquisition or conservation easements, is part of our strategic plan for land protection in the coming decade.

But there's a second part to our land protection strategic plan—one that's very exciting, but difficult, too. We need to identify worthy new sites for protection across the 6,000 square miles of our region and prioritize exactly which 5 or 10 projects each chapter will pursue in the next ten years. I am going to need help from our members and friends in compiling these lists. I hope to see many of you this spring and summer at chapter meetings to do just that.

Meanwhile, I encourage you to read the installments in the four new series in our newsletter covering the political, ethical,

technical, and biological aspects of our work. Our goal is to share our knowledge of the critical issues and complicated problems that land trusts must address. Merry Jo Bauer brings us her second installment on legislative news, and Dick Ruswick, an attorney on our Board of Directors, has given us a framework for understanding our long relationship as stewards of the land for our series on environmental ethics and actions.

With this issue, we are introducing two new series for *The Land Steward*. Kat Lieberknecht will be instructing us on the technical aspects of land protection. We have nicknamed the series "Land Trust 101" to denote our goal of providing a solid education to our membership on the basics of using land protection tools and meeting the challenges of keeping our promise of perpetual protection. We are lucky to have a teacher like Kat for this series. She has a comprehensive knowledge of standard practices as well as recent innovations in the land protection movement.

A well-rounded education should include an appreciative understanding of the living beauty of our planet. Thus, we will save our last page for "A Closer Look," featuring a photo and essay series on the natural history of our region. We have many excellent photographers and naturalists among our members, and we hope they will collaborate in revealing to us the sweet details of the *real* world. Marie Read sets the stage with her evocative photos of a wetland scene and one of its residents. Naturalist Geo Kloppel enhances our experience of her images, interpreting Marie's work with his enchanting essay on Marsh Wrens. We invite your feedback on the new series, and welcome you as fellow students.

—Gay Nicholson, Executive Director

## A Good Example Inspires Others

When Debby McNaughton of Canandaigua read our winter newsletter, she was inspired by Tom Reimer's account of his assignment of survivor's benefits to the Finger Lakes Land Trust. As a state employee, Tom qualified for the Survivor's Benefits Program, which provides \$3,000 to his chosen beneficiary. Debby is also a state employee and, following Tom's example, she filled out the necessary forms to designate the Land Trust as her beneficiary.

Debby told us that the Finger Lakes Region is very dear to her, and that she has enjoyed birding, hiking, skiing, and kayaking in its many parks, preserves, and state forests. Debby's favorite place to kayak is Canadice Lake, and she hopes someday to own property there and

donate a conservation easement to the Land Trust. As with Tom, we hope it is many years before the Land Trust receives this gift. But we are grateful for Debby's help in solving the critical problem of *making sure* we have the financial resources to safeguard our protected lands in the future.

Norma Rumfelt of Livonia has also taken steps to insure the Land Trust's future. Norma donated a conservation easement on her 79-acre farm in 1998. Norma is understandably proud of her donated easement to protect permanently her farmland from development. But she recognizes the necessity of having a source of income to watch over and protect her farm in perpetuity. That is why Norma recently listed the Finger Lakes

Land Trust as the primary beneficiary of her annuity policy.

Norma is the fourth person to take this useful and important step in providing for the future of the natural landscapes of our region through a bequest to the Land Trust. (Rochester member Harmon Strong was the first.) We hope it is a comfortably long time before these benefits are paid. Yet it is an intriguing idea to think that such a simple step—each of us sharing some of our estate with the Land Trust—could collectively guarantee the strength and effectiveness of this organization to both steward what we have *and* continue adding special places to our roster of protected lands.

—Gay Nicholson

## How Long Is Forever?

*Conservation easement: A legal agreement between a landowner and a land trust or government agency that permanently protects land while the landowner continues to own it.*

—Land Trust Alliance

We, the members of the Finger Lakes Land Trust, pledge to steward and protect our conservation easements in perpetuity.

Perpetuity. By which we mean: forever. Um, what exactly did we just promise?

These words are so weighty that I find them difficult to say, much less comprehend. We have assured 36 families, as well as the public, that we will uphold certain land use restrictions in order to retain the natural characteristics of these properties.

Well, how long is forever? A decade? A generation? A millennium? Theoretically, forever is as long as humans and our property rights system exist. In reality, forever is until the terms of an easement are violated and a land trust is unable to find the resources, the time, or the will to defend it.

Our 1175 members provide the Land Trust with the majority of our funding, energy, and inspiration. Our members are the ones who will rally together when our easements are challenged, which means that we must have the knowledge and foresight to prepare for these violations. In short, WE are our "forever." By extension, we need to be familiar with our conservation easement program and understand the threat of easement violations.

Does the Finger Lakes Land Trust really need to worry about conservation easement violations?

The Land Trust Alliance (LTA)

recently conducted a nationwide survey of conservation easement violations that have occurred from the beginning of conservation easement use through 1999. They found 115 major easement violation cases, ranging from the illegal removal of vegetation to the construction of prohibited structures. Lawsuits were filed in 21 cases, while the rest were settled without litigation. The survey also reported that the average legal cost of defense was \$9,100; this figure does not include other costs, such as staff time, associated with the enforcement of violated easements. Our Land Trust has had three easement violations, all by adjoining property owners.

One of the most dramatic violation cases reported in the survey involved the French and Pickering Creeks Conserva-

*In reality, forever is until the terms of an easement are violated and a land trust is unable to find the resources, the time, or the will to defend it.*

tion Trust in Pennsylvania. The Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruled that a group of landowners violated a conservation easement when they constructed a new house that was prohibited on the property. The house was demolished in 1997 by court order, after a nine-year legal battle that cost the land trust \$100,000.

The good news from the LTA survey is that easements have held up to challenges. Still, upholding easements—whether in or out of court—costs land trusts money, energy, and time. The old saying about a good offense being the best defense couldn't be more apt. Drafting clear easements, securing endowments for stewardship and enforcement, conducting annual monitoring visits, and having continuous communication with landowners are all ways that land trusts can work to prevent violations.

How can individual members help prevent easement violations?

• *Develop your knowledge base about conservation easements.* Check out our webpage at [www.fingerlakeslandtrust.org](http://www.fingerlakeslandtrust.org) or the Land Trust Alliance's webpage at [www.lta.org](http://www.lta.org). Stop by the Land Trust office for a brochure and other written materials on easements.

• *Be an ambassador for the Land Trust.* As land trusts and easements continue to grow in popularity, your neighbors and friends will have more questions about our mission and how we achieve it. Get the word out! Be willing to explain easements and land trusts to interested folks. Host a dish-to-pass at your home; invite your friends and Land Trust staff to discuss easements and other land protec-

tion tools. Suggest that people contact the office for answers to more in-depth questions or for written materials.

• *Volunteer with the Land Trust.* Volunteer to be a steward of one of our conservation easements or nature preserves. Help us develop stronger relationships with real estate professionals and others that regularly deal with easements. Have some more ideas? Let us know!

The events of the next ten years will teach the land trust community much about the strength and longevity of our conservation easements. But I'm certain of one thing: a knowledgeable and active membership will make forever last much longer. In the previous *The Land Steward*, President Irene Szabo completed her ode to "drones" by reminding us that we have promises to keep. It's true.

—Kat Lieberknecht

## Need the Perfect Gift...

...for your land-loving friends? Check out our new, really neat Land Trust hats (baseball style) for a minimum donation of just \$16, our beautiful Land Trust T-shirts, birdhouses, and wonderfully comfortable Leopold benches! Gift memberships or donations to the Land Trust make the perfect gift for those who crave nothing but more protected land!

# THE ETHICS OF CONSERVATION

## Enfeoffment - A Basis For Environmental Ethics

Dawn. The quail breaks from cover and flies off under the scuttling clouds. Its flight is watched by a man. He sits astride his horse in the midst of a lush English meadow. Another rider approaches. He is clad, like the first, in the habiliments of a knight: chain mail with hood and a surcoat of woven flax. The pennon at the tip of his lance flutters in the freshening breeze. They greet one another in French as is the wont of Normans. The year is 1066. The two men are about to engage in the act of enfeoffment: the feudal investment of land from lord to vassal.

They dismount. The lord reaches down and finds a symbol of the land: a clod of dirt or a twig. He hands it to the

raiders, to husband and increase the land's riches, and to return to the lord the surfeit of the produce.

What does this have to do with us third millennium Americans? Plenty. Those of you who are landowners, look at the deeds to your properties. How many of you know what an "appurtenance" is? How many of you realize that the reason the deed was given not only to you, but also to your "heirs, distributees, and assigns forever" is a direct result of the rule in *Shelley's Case* (1581)? Modern American real estate law remains rooted in old English law, and the taproot reaches all the way to the Norman Conquest.

True, the traditional English con-

hydrogen? Do we not all owe to those who have gone before, and those who are to follow, a blood bond that requires us to preserve this garden we occupy? If we accept this concept of vassalage, then we must accept that our property ownership is limited and carries with it certain responsibilities. These obligations include the duties to protect the ecosystem from foreign invaders, to enrich the fecundity of its biodiversity, and to return to the Earth anything in excess of our needs.

Finally, the vassal's rights in the property ended with his life. Consequently, the vassal was not permitted to commit "waste" on the property. Waste was generally considered to mean anything that would detract from the value of the land after the life of the vassal. So too, we must realize that as mortal beings we can possess our land only during our lifetimes. Our possession is but one link in the mail, one drop in the ocean of time. The right to possess the land after we die remains in the greater whole. Therefore, as good vassals, we should commit no waste but return the land as environmentally rich as when we received it.

—Dick Ruswick

*Do we not all owe to those who have gone before, and those who are to follow, a blood bond that requires us to preserve this garden we occupy?*

vassal. By this transfer of the symbol, the lord gives to the vassal the use of the land for his life. By accepting the symbol, the vassal agrees to the responsibilities associated with the enfeoffment. These duties include the obligations to protect the lord from foreign

cepts of real property contain no environmental philosophy. Yet the ancient rules of enfeoffment provide an apt framework for such an ethic. After all, are we not all vassals of the chain of life, a double-helix chain, woven with nucleotides and forged with bonds of

## Salmon Creek Bird Sanctuary Expansion

*continued from page 1*

hoped. When the Land Trust approached her with an offer to purchase the land and help protect the threatened Cerulean Warblers and other bird species, she agreed to sell her parcel. As Lauren and Eric's boys grow up, they will be able to visit the property and appreciate the birds and other wildlife that their grandparents loved and their parents helped to protect.

The Salmon Creek woods comprise one of the National Audubon Society's 127 Important Bird Areas in New York State. About 500 acres of this section of the Salmon Creek stream corridor and adjoining hillsides are a Cerulean Warbler hotspot, with 43 pairs nesting

there, according to a 1998 Laboratory of Ornithology census. The Land Trust hopes to continue to expand the protected lands of Salmon Creek, ensuring the breeding success of the Cerulean Warblers and the many other species that use this area.

Although it's hard to recall in March what the woods look like when they are filled with the songs and colors of beautiful neotropical migratory birds, these yearly visitors will return! Mark your calendars now for a Land Trust bird walk to see the Cerulean Warblers and other birds of Salmon Creek on Saturday, June 10 at 8 AM. Ornithologist Ken Rosenberg will

lead us. He'll also help us spot breeding bird activity for the new *Atlas of Breeding Birds in NY* project. Meet at the intersection of Brooks Hill Road and Salmon Creek Road in Lansing (four miles north of Ludlowville). Please join us!

—Karen Edelstein and Betsy Darlington



## VOLUNTEER PROFILE

### Merry Jo Bauer

Volunteer Merry Jo Bauer was born in Milwaukee, raised in a small Indiana town, and went to high school in Connecticut. She studied sociology and psychology at the University of Connecticut where she was awarded a B.A. degree in Sociology. But her true vocation was teaching, and while she was employed in social work she began to study for teacher certification. Her subsequent teaching career (kindergarten, first and second grade) spanned 32 years, 26 of them in the Ithaca City School District. She is married to Rollin Bauer, who was for many years Associate Curator of the bird and mammal collections at Cornell. They have four grown children and seven grandchildren.

Hiking with her husband and learning about birds kindled Merry Jo's love

of nature and the outdoors. She read an article about the Land Trust in the *Ithaca Journal*, so when a notice appeared that Betsy Darlington was leading a walk at the Stevenson Preserve, she decided to go. Impressed with the beauty of the Preserve and the Land Trust's role in preserving it, she signed on as a member at the end of the walk. Later, she became a volunteer in response to an appeal in *The Land Steward*. She puts in many long hours helping out with essential office work, such as sending out membership renewal notices and thank you letters. Without her leadership on these tasks, the staff would be hard pressed to keep up with these responsibilities. She also writes "Legislative News," a new feature in *The Land Steward*.

Although she has retired from teaching, Merry Jo maintains an active connection with the Ithaca City School

District, mentoring new teachers, serving on the District's Affirmative Action Committee, and volunteering at Enfield and Beverly Martin schools. She is a member of other environmental groups, among them The Nature Conservancy and Greenpeace. Further interests include: the history and writings of Native Americans; politics (a "political junkie," she enjoys working in election campaigns); wildflower gardening; and traveling, either abroad or in the eastern U.S. to visit her grandchildren.



Photo by Betsy Darlington

—Ed Ormondroyd

## LEGISLATIVE NEWS

The high-priority items for the U.S. Congress in this election year are social, economic and health-care issues. Environmental issues may not get a wide hearing. "UNLESS" (as the Lorax said) "someone like you cares a whole awful lot."

Our voices need to be heard. Surveys show that the large majority of Americans are committed to preservation and clean-up of the environment, yet legislators often don't believe it until they have the phone calls, letters, emails or faxes in hand. Each of us can be that voice.

In Washington, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) bill of last session has been christened anew as the Conservation and Reinvestment Act (CARA). Its number is HR 701 in the House and S.25 in the Senate. (The details of this bill were in the Winter edition of *The Land Steward*.) The most important parts of the bill remain

- the permanent funding of the LWCF using royalties from off-shore oil drilling;
- "fully funding" the LWCF to the tune of \$900 million annually.

For those of us in the Finger Lakes,

the most direct benefit of CARA would be the "stateside funding" which can be used to purchase open space and recreation areas. The "national" part of the money is usually used to buy huge tracts of land to augment National Parks or to save some large treasure from destruction or development.

There are 292 congresspersons as co-sponsors of the House bill, including Finger Lakes Representatives Boehlert, Houghton, Slaughter, and LaFalce. In the Senate, New York's two Senators are co-sponsors of S.446 which gives the same benefits to the LWCF but does not encourage further off-shore oil drilling as S.25 does. Hopefully, a compromise can be reached.

Meanwhile, pending legislation in Albany concerns "personal watercraft." Yes, they mean jetskis. New York is a state blessed with hundreds of lakes of all sizes. Jetskis are not only noisy and potentially dangerous, but they pollute both water and air.

Currently, municipalities aren't allowed to make regulations beyond those stipulated by Navigation Law. This

law was amended in 1990, 1996 and 1998 to regulate the operation of jetskis, yet they continue to be a concern to many. A few communities have gained protection for some of the smaller lakes by way of specific amendments to the Navigation Law, or because the lakes provide them with drinking water.

The "Jet-Ski Bill" would amend the New York State Navigation Law, which regulates the waterways of New York. If this bill becomes law, all local governments will have the opportunity to govern the use of jetskis on local waters. In the Senate the bill is S.5309 and in the Assembly it is A.8-097-A.

The Adirondack Park Agency (APA) voted unanimously in January to classify a 14,700 acre expanse of land, known as the Whitney Tract, as wilderness, the most restrictive land use designation. Environmentalists had been working for that designation for two years. This must be approved and signed by Governor Pataki.

The promised list of State legislators will appear as an insert in the June edition of *The Land Steward*.

—Merry Jo Bauer

# LEARNING & LAUGHING AT LAND TRUST EVENTS



Photo by Allen Quirk

*Ed Kanze, reading from his book, The World of John Burroughs, at the latest installment of our Voices of the Earth series.*



Photo by Allen Quirk

*Gary Pelton and Mary Woodsen (above), and Judy Pierpont and Carl Leopold (below) enjoying themselves at our Holiday Party.*



Photo by Allen Quirk



Photo by Betsy Darlington

*Intrepid snowshoeing land protection volunteers, exploring the Martin Nature Preserve*

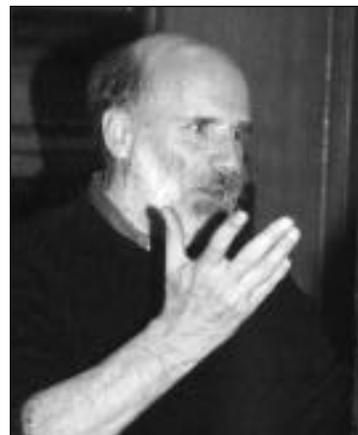


Photo by Allen Quirk

*The Land Trust co-sponsored a public lecture on January 31 by Chuck Matthei of Equity Trust. Chuck spoke about the social and ecological benefits of partnerships between conservation and community land trusts.*

## Beech Hill Acquisition Protects Unique Natural Area

*continued from page 1*

Where the undulating upper margin of the moraine laps against the true wall of the valley, the bed of the never completed Pennsylvania & Sodus Bay Railroad traverses the slopes on its ascent toward Newfield, Enfield and Trumansburg. Much of the route had already been graded when, sometime in 1872, the P&SB failed to meet its payroll. Construction workers laid down their tools right in the middle of a cut two miles south of West Danby. On this forested hillside, ill-suited for agriculture, the grade is preserved. Where it crosses intermittent streams and seeps, upslope water still trickles through 19th century stone culverts. Small vernal ponds dot the forest, providing breeding habitat for spotted and Jefferson's salamanders and wood frogs. Large winter flocks of Wild Turkeys roam the ridge for acorns, solitary Ruffed Grouse forage near evergreen cover, and Pileated Woodpeckers chisel their big oblong excavations in the sides

of tree trunks, hunting for wood-boring insects.

Westward over the ridge, protection will extend over a section of the narrow ravine of Beech Hill Brook. Constrained to a northward course by the intervening ridge, the brook drops stepwise over low cornices of West Falls sandstone, flows over beds of native rocks and glacial erratics tumbled between banks edged with lycopods, foamflower and hobblebush viburnum, then sluices down narrow channels between low fern-clad cliffs of shale overhung with hemlock and yellow birch. Scarce plants such as oak fern, long-beech fern, bristly clubmoss, moccasin flower, mountain azalea, paper birch, and cucumber magnolia are at home in this forested ravine.

In April the ethereal fluting of newly arrived hermit thrushes begins here, and the protracted tinkling chants of Winter Wrens lilt over the drumming of the grouse. In succeeding weeks, sixteen

species of wood warblers will return to favored breeding habitats along this brook. Louisiana Waterthrushes perch on limbs overhanging the glen and raise their clear ringing songs above the noise of the falls. Canada Warblers squabble over territories along the sides of the ravine. Hooded Warblers and Mourning Warblers sing from understory thickets, and Blackburnian Warblers forage in the hemlocks. A Scarlet Tanager may descend to bathe, a Worm-eating Warbler trill from the leaf-drifted slopes, or a Broad-winged Hawk cry overhead. At last, some warm night towards June, the Black-billed Cuckoo's call will echo in the quiet hollow.

Every year, the songbirds' return from distant lands affirms that protecting the natural heritage of our Finger Lakes Region is more than an insular preoccupation. Indeed, it is our most essential contribution to the global movement for preservation.

—Geo Kloppel



Photo by Harry Little

*Our new Beech Hill acquisition will help us protect this beaver swamp in the Lindsay-Parsons Biodiversity Preserve.*

## CHAPTER REPORTS

### Keuka Chapter

The previous newsletter incorrectly stated that Yates County's Farm Protection Plan had been written for the County's Agricultural District Review. Actually, development of the plan has not yet started, but work on it should begin soon, once some administrative issues are resolved. We hope the Land Trust's involvement in this process will encourage permanent protection methods for our farmland. Meanwhile, we are pursuing site visits on potential easement properties, and hope to resume our outreach activities in the spring.

—Debbie Koop, Chapter Chair

### Western Lakes Chapter

Welcome to the many new members in the Western Lakes Chapter area—and many thanks for helping us to push Land Trust membership higher than ever! We credit our sudden popularity to our recent newsmaking activities—the summer Talks n' Treks series, the new conservation easements in the Hemlock and Canadice watersheds, the newly acquired Wesley Hill Preserve—coupled with an increased concern among the public that suburban Rochester sprawl is eating away at our precious landscape.

Not only has our membership blossomed, but so have the number and scope of our activities. We invite all new Chapter members to dive right in and become involved.

Our Summer 2000 Talks n' Treks series, now being planned, will focus on the Canandaigua Lake watershed. (This year we'll co-sponsor the series with the Canandaigua Lake Watershed Task Force.) We have numerous tasks to accomplish at the Wesley Hill Preserve, many of which can be done before spring (construction of trail signs, parking signs, and an entrance kiosk) and all of which we hope to complete before the dedication in June. (The dedication, too, needs to be planned.) Finally, we have a number of land protection projects underway, including conservation easements on a farm in Bristol, a parcel above Canandaigua Lake, and a property in Wayland. And this is just the short list of current activities and projects!

We invite all Land Trust members in the Western Lakes area to come to our monthly meetings, second Wednesdays, at 7:00 (note the time change) at the old RG&E building, Clark Street, Canandaigua. Call Meg Ewing (716) 394-5436 or Sara Kersting (716) 367-2301 for details.

—Meg Ewing, Chapter Chair

### Wish List

Lopping shears, hedge clippers, pruners. Light-weight card table and/or light-weight portable folding table. Any of the following topographic maps: Bristol Springs, Campbell, Corning, Middlesex, Naples, Prattsburg, Pulteney. Photos/slides of Finger Lakes landscapes (esp. Land Trust nature preserves).

## Outreach Committee Report

The Land Trust's Outreach Committee needs graphic artists, writers, public speakers, and researchers for several exciting projects of great importance. After seven years of hard work, our brochures and other literature are getting a little shopworn -- we need talented writers who can update the content, and designers who can make them look fresh. We also need to design and complete a slide and text presentation on the natural history of the Finger Lakes, the challenges our region faces, and the Land Trust's contribution to our quality of life.

Speaking engagements are one of the most effective ways to find new friends for the Land Trust, and we would like to do more of them. Interested? Contact the Land Trust office at (607) 275-9487 and leave a message for Brad Edmondson, Chair of the Outreach Committee.

—Brad Edmondson, Chair

## Book Review: *Lasting Impressions*

by Author Karen Edelstein

Over 300 million years ago, a shallow tropical sea covered central New York. Hundreds of species of trilobites, clams, brachiopods, crinoids, cephalopods, giant fish, and other ancient creatures disappeared once the seas receded. Dinosaurs followed them, though their footprints are known in only one location in the state, in Nyack.

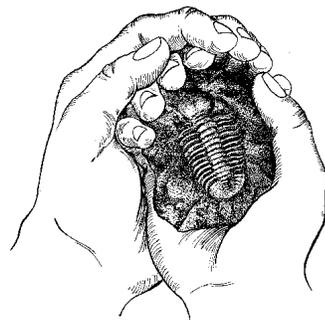
*Lasting Impressions* is an entertaining field guide to these ancient chapters in the history of the Earth. This 115-page book contains natural history accounts of the once-common animals that even casual explorers now find as fossils throughout the northeast and other parts of the country.

Sixteen hands-on activities demonstrate the adaptations that suited these organisms to their environment. Activities include a simulation of fossil formation and a technique for discovering whether the dinosaur that made fossil footprints near Nyack was walking or running. Amply illustrated with both humorous and scientific drawings of common fossils of the area, *Lasting Impressions* will be enjoyed by fossil enthusiasts, young and old.

Author Karen Edelstein is a Land Trust member, naturalist, and environmental educator. *Lasting Impressions* was produced in cooperation with the Paleontological Research Institution in Ithaca.

Karen's first book was *Pond and Stream Safari: a guide to the ecology of aquatic invertebrates* (1993). You can purchase copies of *Lasting Impressions* and *Pond and Stream Safari* through any county Cornell Cooperative Extension office. *Lasting Impressions* is also available through the Paleontological Research Institution (607-273-6623). You may order on-line through amazon.com or barnesandnoble.com.

—Mary Woodsen



# OPEN DOORWAYS

by Mary Stebbins

Variations on poems originally published  
in Seasons, Spring 98.

## At the Cusp

*In a world glazed with pewter-light,  
where every branch and twig is dipped  
in glass, deer the color of twilight  
explode from shattered thickets  
with staccato flags and are gone.  
Pussy willows, swollen by snow  
are camouflaged by a pussy-willow sky.  
Flocks of robins huddle in storm bent cedar;  
a woodcock tweeters from a sumac varnished  
with ice.  
In freezing rain, in snow  
the texture of sugar,  
I dance and dance,  
gathering into my body a profusion of spring  
woven within this winter storm.*



Photo by Harry Iffell



Photo by Harry Iffell

## The Midwifery of Rain

*I give you these words as a door  
to the forest, a door, opening  
in this rain-filled night with its wet  
ink sky full of goose-song,  
the squishing slurping sounds  
of the season's first worms  
coming up for air, and, at the edges  
of consciousness, the faint whisper  
of new leaves bursting from their bud-scales  
into a freshly born, still dripping season.*

## BUSINESS MEMBER PROFILE

### Terrapin Outfitters

For the past two years, Land Trust members that live near the southern end of Seneca Lake have had an advantage over the rest of us. They do not have to travel as far to take advantage of the member benefits provided by Terrapin Outfitters. It's worth the trip from anywhere in the Finger Lakes Region, though, and this year they are expanding the benefits that they provide to us.

Four years ago Hal and Kirsten Burrell moved to Schuyler County. They both have family in the area and as Hal puts it, "It's a great area of the world; it's where we want to raise children." Kirsten had previously worked for an outfitter in the Pittsburgh area and believed that the natural beauty of the Finger Lakes made it an obvious area in which to start such an enterprise. In addition to sharing responsibilities for the business, since last October Hal and Kirsten have been happily sharing the care and joy of their new daughter, Mallory.

Terrapin Outfitters opened in Watkins Glen in the spring of 1996, initially offering canoe and kayak rentals and tours. They have since expanded to include canoe and kayak sales as well as mountain bike tours, rentals, and sales. In addition to moving into a new retail location on North Franklin Street last May, they still maintain their waterfront rental center at the Village Marina on Seneca Lake.

Since the beginning, Terrapin's signature tour has been the nature tour they offer through Queen Catharine Marsh. Their guides describe the marsh ecosystem, history, geology, fish, turtles, plants and variety of birds (over 70 species have been sighted there). The Catharine Marsh Tours run early on weekend mornings during the summer, but Terrapin is also happy to make custom arrangements for groups of four or more.

In addition to the discounts they provide to Land Trust members on tours and bike, canoe, kayak and tent rentals, this year Hal is offering 10% off on the purchase of new and used bikes and accessories. Available exclusively to Land Trust members, this benefit will allow members to more than recoup their annual membership with a single purchase.



Photo by Allen Quirk

## Business Members of the Finger Lakes Land Trust

Thanks to all these Finger Lakes businesses for their support through our Business Membership Program. If your organization would like to support the mission of the Finger Lakes Land Trust, please call (607) 275-9487 to join as a Business Member or to contribute a Membership Benefit.

- Angelheart Designs (Spencer)
- Banfield & Associates, Inc. (Ithaca)
- Catharpin Farm & Earthsong Gardens CSA (Lansing)
- Cayuga Landscape Co. (Ithaca)
- Clarity Connect (Ithaca)
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- Computing Center (Ithaca)
- Finger Lakes School of Massage (Ithaca)
- Fontana Shoes (Ithaca)
- GreenStar Cooperative Market (Ithaca)
- Handwork (Ithaca)
- Healing Hands of Ithaca (Ithaca)
- HSBC Bank (Regional)
- Ithaca Cayuga Optical Service (Ithaca)
- Stephen Lodenheim, D.D.S. (Syracuse)
- Savings Bank of the Finger Lakes (Geneva)

—Allen Quirk

### In Memoriam

*We are deeply grateful for the donations given to the Land Trust in memory of:*

**George Gibian**, from Elizabeth and Arthur Goldsmith  
Jeffery Rusten and Caroline Ware  
Brett De Bary and Victor Nee  
Maria Nowakowska Stycos

**Lorna C. Cornell**, from Candace E. Cornell

**William B. VanOrman**, from Elizabeth Johns

### Land For Sale

**HEMLOCK LAKE:** conservation-minded buyer wanted. 40+ acres, spectacular views overlooking Hemlock Lake, abundant wildlife; adjoins 100 acres that will be protected by conservation easement. Terms available. Call (716) 346-0582.

**BARN/HOUSE AND 16 ACRES**, with conservation easement, on German Cross Rd., near Six-Mile Creek, in Dryden. Call (505) 743-0074.

**ABUTTING FINGER LAKES NATIONAL FOREST:** 40-acre parcel on Chicken Coop Hill Rd., with conservation easement. 15-acre woodlot, sweeping views, gently sloping fields. Trumansburg School District. Call (607) 387-8080.

### Volunteer Opportunities

Avolunteer to do—or help with—our newsletter layout. Volunteers to help with office tasks. Avolunteer with professional design skills to help us create new displays. Avolunteer with writing skills to update our brochures. Please call (607) 275-9487 for more information.

## A CLOSER LOOK

PHOTO BY MAURIE PHEASANT



### The Marsh Wren

The little Marsh Wren (*Cistothorus palustris*), active, vocal, and industrious enough to raise two broods per season, is a conspicuous summer resident of the larger Finger Lakes cattail marshes. Early in May, when forests of green blades rise from the drowned lands, males arrive to stake out their small territories on the colonial breeding grounds. Each male will spend his first days constructing a number of dummy nests and making display-flights above them to deliver his pithy, gurgling, rattling song, which speaks of shadeless marshes, bright drying sun on the reeds, dark water below. When the female arrives, she selects one of the numerous nests already constructed, or else builds one herself, and lines it with fine grasses and rootlets. Especially rich territories may attract more than one female.

Wrens are troglodytes, "hole-enterers" in the original sense of the Greek. They nest in cavities of various sorts, to which they owe their family name Troglodytidae. The Marsh Wren has

adapted to a habitat--broad marshes with dense vegetation that emerges annually from the water--in which suitable cavities are nonexistent. The resourceful Marsh Wren simply builds a cavity from scratch. Its nest is a large, domed structure woven of soaked cattail leaves and similar material, lashed to the surrounding vegetation a foot or more above the water, and provided with a cave-like entrance in one side that leads down a short tunnel to a central chamber insulated with cattail down.

This is an admirable anticipation of domestic architecture by a tiny bird. We too once built snug shelters in swamp and forest, before awakening to the manifest destiny of commerce and civilization. The 19th century push westward rolled over many a primeval marsh, and a great labor of filling and draining commenced. Today in the Finger Lakes and elsewhere, homes, schools, office buildings, industrial plants and shopping malls stand where Marsh Wrens formerly sang. Thanks to the creation of public wetland

reserves, the species is in no imminent danger, but local losses are real, and for the most part irreparable.

In 1911 Arthur Allen described the rich wildlife of the cattail marshes at the head of Cayuga Lake, which included American and Least Bitterns, soras, Virginia Rails and Marsh Wrens. Those marshes and others have since been obliterated, and the landscape diminished thereby. To see once-native marsh birds, residents of this part of the Finger Lakes must go elsewhere, to the Montezuma, Horseheads, or Queen Catharine marshes, or to marshes in the valleys of Waneta, Keuka, Canandaigua or Skaneateles Lakes.

The entire Finger Lakes Region has been profoundly transformed during the last 200 years. What will it look like in another 200 years? Which parts of the landscape will we sacrifice, and which will we preserve inviolate? That will be the measure of our environmental ethic in the eyes of those who come after us.

—Geo Kloppel

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## Finger Lakes Land Trust

202 E. Court Street  
Ithaca, New York 14850



## SPRING 2000 CALENDAR:

**April 2, Sun., 2 PM: BIRDS, BIRDS, BIRDS!** (and other April Foolers), at the Etna Nature Preserve, led by expert birder and preserve steward, Chris Tessaglia-Hymes. From Route 13 NE of Ithaca, take Route 366 north, just beyond the NYSEG plant. Preserve is on both sides of the road, before the first intersection. Park opposite the cemetery.

**May 7, Sun., 12:30 PM: LUNCHEON AND ANNUAL MEETING** at The Lodge at Bristol Harbour, Canandaigua Lake. Send in your reservation form! Please see insert.

**May 13, Sat., 2 PM: WILD, WONDERFUL WILDFLOWERS WALK** at the Thurber Nature Preserve in McLean. Led by plant ecologists David (Nakita) Werier and Robert Wesley. Co-sponsored with the Finger Lakes Native Plant Society. From Ithaca, take Route 366 north, just beyond the NYSEG plant. Continue straight through Etna and Freeville to McLean. Turn left, soon after the Fire Station, on Stevens Rd., then left again on Cemetery Lane. Park at side of road on either side of bridge over Fall Creek, and walk up the lane that's on the left, right after the bridge.

**May 14, Sun., 1 PM: MOTHERS' DAY NATURE WALK** at the Wesley Hill Preserve, above Honeoye Lake. Led by Bob Guthrie. From Canandaigua, go west on route 5/20, then left (south) onto Route 20A, to Honeoye (note that 20A makes a turn to the right (west). Just before the Village of Honeoye, go south on E. Lake Rd., and soon take a left, following signs to the Cumming Nature Center. (This road will become Gulick Rd.) Turn right on Wesley Hill Rd. (if you reach the Cumming N.C., you've gone too far). Watch for the preserve parking area, on your right. For further info., call (716) 394-5436.

**June 10, Sat., 8 AM: SEEING CERULEANS** at the Salmon Creek Bird Sanctuary, led by ornithologist Ken Rosenberg. We will also be on the look-out for any breeding bird activity, for the new *Atlas of Breeding Birds in NY* Project. Meet at the intersection of Brooks Hill Rd. and Salmon Creek Rd., in Lansing (north of Ludlowville).