



THE LAND STEWARD

Newsletter of the Finger Lakes Land Trust

Vol. 19, No. 3

working to protect the natural integrity of the Finger Lakes Region

Summer 2007

Land Purchase Secures Mile-long Creek Corridor in Skaneateles Watershed

In April, the Land Trust acquired a nearly 30-acre parcel of forested land along Bear Swamp Creek near the south end of Skaneateles Lake. The new acquisition links the Land Trust's properties at Carpenter's Falls above and its Bahar Nature Preserve below, creating a mile-long unbroken corridor of protected terrain between the falls and the lake shore.

Coming two years after the Carpenter's Falls acquisition and eight years after the creation of Bahar, this new purchase adds significantly to the Land Trust's campaign to identify and conserve important watershed lands in the Skaneateles Highlands around the southern end of the lake.

The new tract swells the Land Trust's property in the Bear Swamp Creek corridor to about 90 acres. The creek is an important tributary to Skaneateles Lake, which supplies drinking water to many communities, including the city of Syracuse.

Purchased from Steven Nemecek of Niles, Cayuga County, the land has long been a priority for conservation because of its strategic position along the creek, both for watershed protection and scenic preservation. In its Open Space Plan, the

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BILL HECHT

A view of the forested corridor along Bear Swamp Creek extending from Carpenter's Falls down to the shoreline of Skaneateles Lake



ANDREW ZEPP

The Goetchius Wetland Preserve in Slaterville Springs, Tompkins County

New Acquisition Doubles Size of Goetchius Wetland Preserve

Caroline Swamp in Tompkins County is a watery island in a sea of hayfields and cow pastures, a mixture of forested wetland, emergent marsh and beaver ponds. Like all wetlands, the swamp improves water quality for the area by filtering out nutrients and organic matter, reduces flooding and stream-bank erosion, and provides essential habitat for a number of plant and animal species. On the eastern edge of this large mixed wetland complex is the Land Trust's Goetchius Wetland Preserve, which recently doubled in size — from 36 to 71 acres — with the Land Trust's purchase of adjacent property from Beverly Armitage.

Much of the valley bottom was once a large forested wetland. However, as European settlers moved into the area, they cleared the forest and drained what land they could. The earth is still rutted by almost-invisible drainage ditches, the only remaining evidence of the back-breaking labor performed by those first farmers. The ditches worked well enough for a while, at least in dry years. But because the land is very flat and the base of the valley soil contains a good deal of clay, there is no obvious distinction between where the swamp ends and agricultural land begins.

On the Armitage tract, the swamp is slowly reclaiming the five-acre abandoned hayfield adjacent to it. Wetland grasses have already made significant inroads, and the moss is thick underfoot. If left to its own devices, the tangle of alder and willow on its edges will even-

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PERSPECTIVES



Sometimes it all comes together. The Land Trust's recent acquisition of woodlands bordering Bear Swamp Creek from

landowner Steve Nemec represents the culmination of a decade of effort on the part of the Land Trust's volunteers and staff. Thanks to these efforts, a mile-long greenbelt now exists between Carpenter's Falls and the shoreline of Skaneateles Lake.

The greenbelt is the result of three different land transactions involving lengthy negotiations over complex property title and boundary issues, the forging of a partnership with the State's Department of Environmental Conservation and considerable fundraising and outreach to the local community.

Today, we can celebrate the fruits of these labors. Visitors can enjoy

Carpenter's Falls as well as the majestic woodlands along Bear Swamp Creek. Future generations will continue to enjoy the local tradition of a summer outing to the Falls and its downstream pools.

Completion of the Carpenter's Falls project required patience and perseverance. Further west, the Land Trust is facing a similar test with its efforts to conserve Grimes Glen, a scenic gorge near the south end of Canandaigua Lake.

Over the course of the past two years, the Land Trust has been working in partnership with Ontario County to secure this popular natural area and establish a new county park. Considerable effort has gone into raising funds, developing a conservation plan and also addressing a historic dumping issue associated with the site's parking lot.

Earlier this year, we believed that the dumping issue was sufficiently resolved

to allow for acquisition and conservation of the heart of the gorge. Unfortunately, a boundary dispute with an adjacent property owner has further delayed our efforts to secure this remarkable natural area.

As this issue of *The Land Steward* goes to press, the Land Trust continues to persevere in working with the landowners and public agencies involved to resolve any problems and to ensure the future protection of Grimes Glen.

While some of these projects may take a while, the lesson of Carpenter's Falls is clear: by establishing partnerships and by patiently overcoming obstacles, the Land Trust can eventually succeed in conserving those lands that make the Finger Lakes Region such a special place.

—Andy Zepp

Land Purchase Secures Mile-long Creek Corridor...

continued from cover

New York State DEC identifies Bear Swamp Creek as a key natural area to protect from development.

In addition, Audubon New York includes the site in its designated "Important Bird Areas" in the southern part of the Finger Lakes. Habitat for threatened songbirds — especially the cerulean warbler and the wood thrush — will be further protected by the new acquisition.

"We're grateful to Steve Nemec for working with us to protect this land, to

Land Trust volunteer Scott Winkelman for his tireless efforts on behalf of this project, and to all of our members and donors who made this acquisition possible," said Land Trust Executive Director Andy Zepp.

"This is a wonderful purchase," he added. "It ensures that future generations will be able to enjoy this spectacular natural area."

Located off Appletree Point Road in the town of Niles, Cayuga County, the Nemec property contains a mature forest

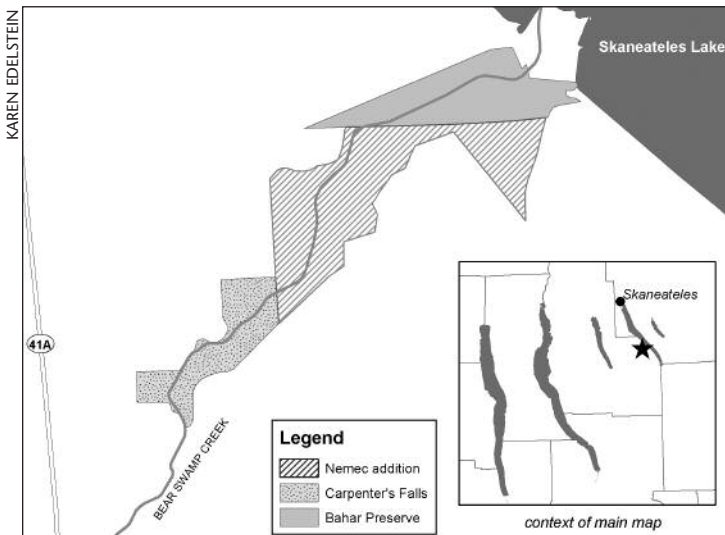
of oak, beech and hemlock sloping steeply down into the ravine carved by Bear Swamp Creek. The mile-long stretch of preserved land begins with popular Carpenter's Falls — at 90 feet, the highest falls in the Skaneateles watershed — but the Nemec property boasts several stunning falls of its own.

In the 1800s the "Jug Path" was established from New Hope Landing (at the lake shore end of the Bahar Nature Preserve) winding up beside Bear Swamp Creek all the way to a distillery near Carpenter's Falls. A portion of this old trail runs through the newly purchased property. In the coming months, work will begin to improve and restore this and other foot trails on the Nemec land and the adjacent parcel bordering Carpenter's Falls.

Funds for the Nemec purchase came from the Land Trust's Campaign for Carpenter's Falls and the Skaneateles Highlands. To date, the campaign has raised all but \$11,000 needed to reach its target of \$400,000 for a variety of conservation projects within the Skaneateles watershed. The campaign has also supported the acquisition of the main public access to Carpenter's Falls and an addition to the Land Trust's High Vista Nature Preserve on the east side of the lake.

The Land Trust intends ultimately to transfer the Carpenter's Falls access and a small portion of the Nemec tract to the protection of the state DEC, while incorporating most of the newly-acquired acreage into the Bahar Nature Preserve.

—Eben McLane



Estate Gift Spurs New Partnership With Town of Dryden

The Land Trust has many benefactors. Some have an active relationship with the organization, investing lots of time, energy and funds. Others somehow appreciate what we do from afar, and the only contact the Land Trust has is when they reach out from the blue to let us know they support our work.

Louise Parke-Dabes was one of the quiet ones. She had no membership record on file, no documentation of donations, no way for the Land Trust to know that she had left a generous gift of land in her will, until the notice came from the lawyers handling her estate.

They informed the Land Trust of the conservation vision that Ms. Parke-Dabes had for the 54 acres she left in the hamlet of Varna, Tompkins County.

“Louise was a wonderful woman who had a deep connection to the woods and wanted to see her land permanently protected,” said Mr. Lodinsky, her estate executor. It also fell to Mr. Lodinsky to work with staff to find a protection strategy for the property that fit the stated mission and objectives of the Land Trust.

Located along the east side of State Route 366, the Dabes woods are a mixed hardwood forest that makes up a portion of the Mount Pleasant view from State Route 13 near the Tompkins County airport. Although it bordered land protected through a conservation easement held by the Land Trust, careful evaluation of the Parke-Dabes site itself showed that the property was more suited to recreational parkland where recent logging had left a series of roads that could serve as a foundation for walking paths and hiking trails.

Working with the support and cooperation of the estate, the Land Trust approached the Town of Dryden with a proposal to donate the property to the town as a park or natural area, while placing deed restrictions on the property that would ensure the conservation vision of Louise Parke-Dabes. After a lengthy



ROCCI AGUIRRE

View from ridgeline atop the 54-acre Louise Park-Dabes Land Gift in the Village of Varna, Tompkins County

process, the town board approved the project and a memorandum of understanding was signed, formalizing the new partnership between the town and the Land Trust.

“We’re grateful for the wonderful gift that Louise Park-Dabes has made to the community,” said Land Trust Executive Director Andrew Zepp. “By working together with the Town of Dryden, we’ll be able to achieve her vision for the land, while providing residents with accessible open space.”

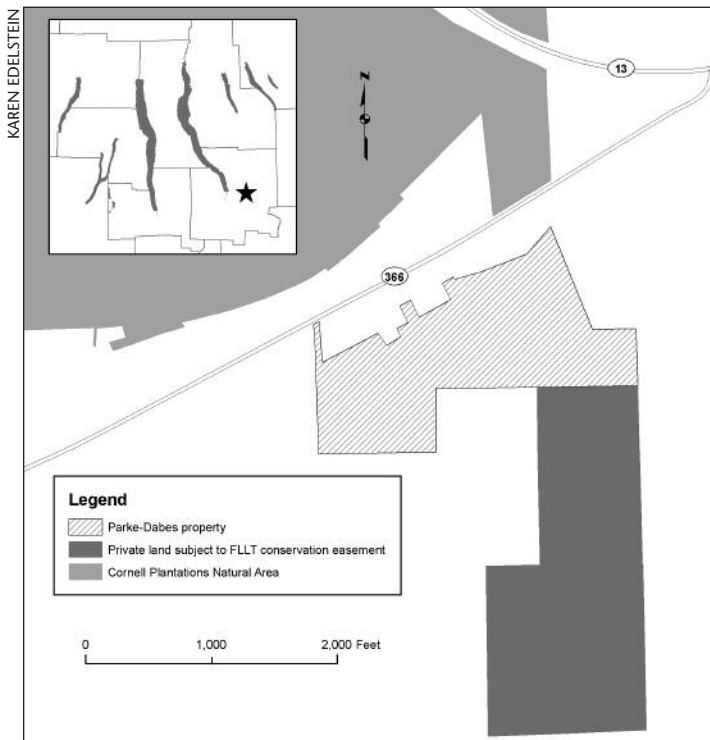
The property, to be known as the Parke-Dabes Natural Area, will be maintained primarily as an undeveloped natural forest for recreational and educational uses. “We’re really excited about the possibilities of this site for the town,” said Dryden Town Supervisor Steve Trumbull. “It’s a beautiful woodlot that has a lot of recreation and open space potential.”

A site management plan, to be developed by Dryden Environmental Planner Dan Kwasnowski during the next six months, will seek to address current and future plans for the property and will provide for public input. “We’ll need to provide a small parking area, and we’d like to put in some multi-use trails for hiking and biking,” said Trumbull.

In protecting the Varna woodlot, the Land Trust was also able to secure the assistance of the town in constructing a much needed parking lot at the Ellis Hollow Preserve, making for safer access to this popular preserve. Considering the many conservation benefits that would come from the new partnership with the Town of Dryden as a result of Louise Parke-Dabes’ gift, Mr. Lodinsky observed succinctly: “I think she would be very happy with how this all turned out.”

—Rocci Aguirre

Please contact Director of Development, Jan Hesbon, at the Land Trust’s Ithaca office if you are considering a gift of land or other assets through your will. Advance planning can help ensure that your goals are achieved and that the impact of your gift is fully realized.



PARTNER PROFILE

Upper Susquehanna Coalition and Land Trust Work Together for Watershed Protection

Working partnerships are key to successful conservation efforts. Such partnerships allow the collective resources of two or more organizations to be marshaled together, which in turn allows the effort of the whole to be greater than the sum of the parts. This image of partnership indeed describes the one between the Finger Lakes Land Trust and the Upper Susquehanna Coalition (USC).

Formed in 1992, the USC is a network of professional conservationists who have banded together to work toward protecting the headwaters of the Chesapeake Bay and the Susquehanna River. The watershed of these two crucial water bodies extends from south and east-central New York, through the central section of Pennsylvania, and then fans out to include a large portion of Maryland, the eastern section of West Virginia, and all of north-central Virginia. The portion for which the USC has responsibility covers parts of 15 counties in New York and 3 in Pennsylvania.

The membership of the USC is comprised of county-level Soil and Water Conservation Districts in New York, and Conservation Districts in Pennsylvania. The members meet regularly to plan projects that address the USC's primary goals: addressing watershed issues of local importance and working in partnership with conservation-minded organizations such as the Finger Lakes Land Trust.

According to Land Trust Executive Director Andrew Zepp, two particular projects that the Land Trust and USC have worked together on recently are the Armitage acquisition in Tompkins County and a project to create vernal pools on an easement property in the Town of Candor, Tioga County.

The former project (announced elsewhere in this issue) consists of a 35-acre addition to the Goetchius Wetland Preserve in the Town of Caroline. The acreage includes valuable mixed habitat (wetlands, forest, and upland fields). As part of the project, the USC will restore five previously drained acres of wetlands. Funding for the project came from the Millennium Pipeline Corporation, a third partner in the project.

The project in Candor is one of many instances in which the USC has built or plans to build vernal pools, which are sunken areas that fill with water on a seasonal basis. These pools are extremely important for supporting certain invertebrate species



(l to r) Land Trust Executive Director Andy Zepp and Preserve Management Committee Member Peter Marks discuss wetland restoration issues with Upper Susquehanna Watershed Coordinator Jim Curatolo and Watershed Biologist Jeremy Waddell at the Goetchius Wetland Preserve in Tompkins Co.

that do poorly in other habitats, and they are an ideal means by which to capture runoff before it reaches streams. Most effective, according to Jim Curatolo, USC's Watershed Coordinator, is to build complexes of vernal pools — perhaps five to ten of them — in one area, so that it isn't necessary to count so heavily on a single pool being productive. Thus far, Curatolo reported, the USC has observed a high success rate with the pools they've constructed.

Can you guess who might like vernal pools more than invertebrates do? "Pools are a good outreach tool; kids love them!" said Curatolo. "When kids see salamander eggs in a pool, you don't need to worry about it being drained (by the landowner)." Adult appreciation of vernal pools is critical for support of these pools as well, and the USC's experience so far is that, as Curatolo claimed, "If people enjoy vernal pools, they'll protect them on their own."

With the USC and Land Trust teaming up on projects like wetland restoration and vernal pool building, more good things are bound to happen in the Chesapeake/Susquehanna watershed for salamanders, wetlands, and people.

—George Dillmann

Town Supervisor Leads the Way ... Dick Calabrese, Conservationist of the Year



Andy Zepp with Dick, Alec, and Janet Calabrese

Dick Calabrese, a lifelong Ontario County resident and local government leader, is the Land Trust's 2007 Conservationist of the Year. Calabrese has been recognized for his key role in the recent protection of 96 acres of wooded hillside overlooking Canandaigua Lake. Located on the eastern side of the lake in the Town of Gorham, this beautiful property features substantial woodlands and wildlife habitat, recreational trails and seasonal views of Canandaigua Lake.

"This project would not have happened without Dick Calabrese," Land

Trust President Jim Kersting said. "From building support within Gorham, to negotiating agreements with the State and landowner, Dick's leadership was essential."

Betsy Landre, Senior Field Representative at the Land Trust, calls Calabrese a terrific partner. When we work on projects, he focuses on possibilities rather than obstacles," she said. According to Landre, Calabrese has a great vision, but is also practical in shepherding projects through. He has been able to build support for land conservation in his town, which put up a significant amount of money for the Gorham project. His leadership made it possible, Landre concluded.

Calabrese and the board had already designed an open-space plan for their town, one of the first communities to do so in the Finger Lakes region, due to the rising pressure of development along the shores of Canandaigua Lake.

"Local government has an important responsibility to act to conserve environmental resources and to make communities better places for its citizens," Calabrese

said. He credited town board member Allyson Adam-Andersen as a critical partner in the success of the Gorham project.

Calabrese has lived in Gorham his entire life and has served as Town Supervisor for the past ten years. He became involved in local government because he believes local government is the way to improve the quality of life of local citizens, and he wanted to play a part.

Asked what in his childhood or young adulthood influenced his interest in conservation, he replied: "Nothing whatsoever! But public opinion has. We had a lot of support for the open space plan, about 75 to 80 percent. We had done a good survey whose results were overwhelmingly pointed in that direction."

Calabrese is looking forward to future partnerships with the Land Trust. "We'll have more projects, you can be sure. I understand that we can't save all the scenic places, but we need to save some of it for future generations to enjoy."

—Margot Brinn

A Passion For the Land ... Scott Winkelman, Volunteer of the Year

The Finger Lakes Land Trust has chosen Skaneateles native Scott Winkelman as this year's Volunteer of the Year for his tireless work in helping to conserve key lands within the Skaneateles Lake watershed.

Winkelman has been an active member of the Land Trust for almost two decades and served on its Board of Directors for many years. He was the driving force behind last year's protection of Bear Swamp Creek at Carpenter's Falls, ten miles from the town where he was born and raised and currently lives.

This year he helped secure an adjacent downstream portion of the creek, connecting Carpenter's Falls with the Land Trust's Bahar Nature Preserve on the lake shore. All told, Winkelman's recent work has conserved a mile-long corridor along a stream crucial to Skaneateles waters.

"Skaneateles is very much a community," Winkelman said. "And I've got a lot of connections with people — lifelong acquaintances. They really appreciate the lakes and the landscape. Carpenter Falls is a sacred place for many people. I told them about the Land Trust's plan, and they really

liked what we were doing."

Carpenter Falls has been a target acquisition since Scott began volunteering with the Land Trust in 1989. Winkelman was determined that the goal be met. "I told the board that I was so sure that we could come up with the money that I'd guarantee the funds myself," he said. "This was even before we knew exactly how much was needed. My wife wasn't very happy with my offer, as we don't have that kind of money. She said that if I didn't collect enough money, she would make a contribution by doing a publicity stunt, sending me over the falls in a barrel."

Luckily, her suggestion wasn't necessary. Winkelman, a golf course supervisor during golf season, did a lot of networking and fund raising in the winter. "Everybody is realizing that we have to start conserving these lands or they'll all become suburban lawns," Winkelman said. "One of my sales pitches is 'this'll be another asset for our beautiful community.'"

Scott Winkelman has always been an outdoors person and an athlete. His father was an avid hunter, and Winkelman



Scott Winkelman with his wife Mary Ellen, mother Carolyn and sister Cristy"

believes he inherited his father's love of the outdoors despite the fact his father died when Winkelman was nine.

"Scott's passion for conservation is clear," Land Trust Executive Director Andrew Zepp said. "His enthusiasm has not only led to the protection of Carpenter's Falls but also inspired others to get involved and, because of this, we're now working on a number of other conservation projects within the Skaneateles Lake Watershed."

—Margot Brinn

Scenes

from our Around
Our Region...

*“These trails take me worlds away from myself.
Quiet solitude does wonders for the spirit.”*

– Comments from the Visitors Log
at The Wesley Hill Nature Preserve

ANDY ZEPP



One of several stunning falls (at high flow) on the recently purchased Nemec property (see article on page 1)

BETSY DARLINGTON



Newfield/Enfield Cub Scouts with leader Kathy Millier and parents on a nature walk at Lindsay-Parsons Biodiversity Preserve

BETSY DARLINGTON



Participants during the recent inaugural Spring Bird Quest at Lindsay-Parsons Biodiversity Preserve



BETSY DARLINGTON

The Lower Preserve in the Town of Enfield, Tompkins County, provides prime habitat for a variety of amphibians and bird species



BETSY DARLINGTON

Cornell's herpetology club, conducting an inventory at the Martin Preserve in the Town of Catharine, Schuyler County



BETSY DARLINGTON

Above: Finger Lakes Tourism Alliance President Michael Rusinko (left) presenting check representing the proceeds from the Alliance's annual silent auction to Land Trust Executive Director Andy Zepp (right). The Land Trust greatly appreciates their generous support.

Left: 4th graders from Ithaca's Belle Sherman School who honored Land Trust Director of Preserve Stewardship Betsy Darlington (who moonlights as their Volunteer Nature Teacher) by making a generous donation to the Land Trust from monies raised during bake sales



BETSY DARLINGTON

(right to left) Land Trust Advisory Council Member Jim Byrnes with his wife Terry join Land Trust Director of Development Jan Hesbon and his wife Jo Becker at the recent Carpenter's Falls reception at the Sherwood Inn in Skaneateles





The Land Trust's new Director of Development Jan Hesbon

Land Trust Hires Director of Development

The Finger Lakes Land Trust is delighted to announce the hiring of Jan Hesbon as its new Director of Development. Jan will help the Land Trust step up its efforts to protect the vanishing, unspoiled landscapes across our region. A seasoned veteran in the development field, Jan has worked in fundraising for nearly 30 years, and more than half that time with environmental conservation organizations such as The Natural Resources Defense Council, The Nature Conservancy and the National Audubon Society.

Protecting land has always been high on Jan's conservation priorities. Having grown up in the Finger Lakes just a few miles north of Seneca Lake in Ontario County, Jan is excited to be returning home. He will be closer to his family and to the lakes and hills where he hiked and canoed as a child. "I am excited to be part of the process of protecting important landscapes in the Finger Lakes that have been so much a part of my life."

Jan and his wife, Jo Becker, will make Ithaca their home.

Emerald Necklace to Benefit from Conservation Catalyst Grant

To support the Land Trust's launch of the Emerald Necklace Greenbelt project, the New York State Conservation Partnership Program (NYSCPP) has awarded the Land Trust a grant of \$25,000. The grant will support conservation planning within the project area, as well as outreach to landowners and local officials.

The NYSCPP is a pioneering public-private partnership between the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and the Land Trust Alliance. The program this year provided 37 grants totaling more than \$400,000 to 30 different non-profit land trusts.

The grant program is now in its fourth year, and its value was recently recognized by a doubling of its funding level to \$1 million in the current state budget. "Land trusts are an invaluable partner to state and local governments in the implementation of smart growth principles," said DEC Commissioner Pete Grannis in explaining the increase.

"The Land Trust has received several NYSCPP grants," said Executive Director Andy Zepp. "The program has provided key grants that have enabled us to increase our capacity for conservation while leveraging additional resources. The support provided by this program has really made a difference."

Spring Bird Quest Inspires Thoughts of Conservation



Mark Chao (far right) and other participants racked up 118 bird species at the Land Trust's inaugural Spring Bird Quest

There was no sleet, as there was during last year's inaugural Finger Lakes Land Trust Spring Bird Quest. This year's Quest, held over Memorial Day weekend, was full of sunshine and calm winds — ideal conditions for finding birds. Participants spotted 118 species and raised pledges totaling more than \$5,000 for the Land Trust. Congratulations and thanks to all participants and donors!

We extend special gratitude to Wild Birds Unlimited, which donated wonderful prizes and a generous cash gift. We also thank Gimme! Coffee, Shortstop Deli and Bill Cooke Imports for their support of the event.

I myself finished with 103 species, including all 23 warbler species expected in our area. Of course, most of the fun wasn't in racking up numbers, but in simply enjoying and sharing the wonder of birds: a Gray-cheeked Thrush, a furtive and locally rare species passing through en route to breeding grounds in the Arctic, perching twelve feet away... a Black-and-white Warbler carrying food and offering close views for more than 18 field-trip participants... a pair of Louisiana

Waterthrushes along a lovely wooded stream... a Sharp-shinned Hawk plunging to the ground and flying off with prey about half the hawk's size. I could go on and on.

For me, the defining moment of the weekend was an encounter with a Cerulean Warbler at the Ellis Hollow Nature Preserve. Found on Monday morning — the last day of the Quest — by Laura Stenzler and Susan Earle, this bird was still singing in the canopy when I visited in the afternoon. Indeed sky-blue, this species is quite rare in New York. Throughout its range, startling recent population declines have made it a species of very high conservation concern.

Certainly, the rarity and near-total unexpectedness of this bird made it a real prize for the weekend. But as the bird sang and sang, I reminded myself not to take this warbler's breeding prospects for granted. There well might not be a female nearby to come in response to his urgent, ceaseless singing. More than a number added to a list, more than a wonderful show for us human watchers, this bird's lonely song is a message that we have much more work to do in understanding and protecting birds and their habitats.

That message is what the Spring Bird Quest is all about. It is the reason I have come to care deeply about the Land Trust's work. As I listened to that Cerulean Warbler, I marveled that this is the fourth Land Trust site at which I've found this imperiled species trying to breed in summer. Their presence gives compelling testimony to the vital role that the Land Trust plays in conserving habitat for the birds we love.

—Mark Chao

Emerald Necklace Hike and Lecture Series Planned

From the sweeping vistas of the Hector Backbone to rugged Lick Brook Gorge and the wilds of Shindagin Hollow, the Emerald Necklace encompasses a remarkable diversity of landscapes.

To provide a better understanding of these natural areas and their resources, as well as the challenges facing their long-term conservation, the Land Trust, in partnership with the Cayuga Trails Club and the Finger Lakes Trail Conference, is inviting the public to participate in a weeklong hike and associated trailside lecture series.

Executive Director Andy Zepp will lead an intrepid band that will traverse the 78 miles of the Finger Lakes Trail that link Finger Lakes National Forest to Hammond Hill State Forest. Participants are welcome to hike for all six days of the event or for just a single day. For those that register at least one week in advance, the Land Trust will assist with the coordination of transportation between the hike's beginning and end points. The planned itinerary for the hike is highlighted below.

If you're less inclined toward a rigorous hike, the Land Trust will also offer a concurrent brown bag lecture series. From its tremendous diversity of plants and animals to its rich human history, the Emerald Necklace has plenty to offer. Come hear local experts share their knowledge about this remarkable area.

A final schedule with detailed directions will be made available on the Land Trust's web site (www.flit.org) no later than August 1st. Participants are asked to register for both the hike and lecture series at least one week in advance.

LECTURE SERIES: *All lectures are at noon except for the dedication of the Cayuga Inlet Conservation Area, that is scheduled for 2:00 pm*

Monday, September 10th
A. Carl Leopold, Plant Scientist and Founding President, Finger Lakes Land Trust. "An Ethical Relationship with the Land: Perspectives from the Emerald Necklace", Texas Hollow Road, Texas Hollow State Forest.

Tuesday, September 11th
John Fitzpatrick, Director, Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, "Birds of the Emerald Necklace" Connecticut Hill Road, Connecticut Hill State Wildlife Management Area

Wednesday, September 12th
2:00 pm dedication of the Land Trust's Cayuga Inlet Conservation Area – 115 acres of forests and streamside meadows located adjacent to Robert Treman State

Park. The dedication will take place on land adjacent to the Land Trust's Sweedler Preserve at Lick Brook, on Townline Road in Ithaca.

Thursday, September 13th
LouAnn Wurst, Associate Professor and Co-Chair, Department of Anthropology, SUNY Brockport, "Farming the Emerald Necklace: Life and Labor on New York's Uplands" Curtis Road, Danby State Forest.

Friday, September 14th
Peter Marks, Cornell University professor of Ecology & Evolutionary Biology, "Plant Communities of the Emerald Necklace" Braley Hill Road, Shindagin Hollow State Forest

Hike #	Date	Meeting Point and Time*	Begin	End	Total Miles
1	9/10/07	Schuyler Co. Rd. 6, 8:00 AM	Satterly Hill Rd., Finger Lakes Nat'l Forest	Schuyler County Rd. 6, Cayuta Lake Outlet	13.4
2	9/11/07	Trumbull Corners Road South, 8:00 AM	Schuyler Co. Rd. 6, Cayuta Lake Outlet	Trumbull Corners Rd., Newfield	13.4
3	9/12/07	Bruce Hill Road, Danby 8:00 AM	Trumbull Corners Road, Newfield	Bruce Hill Road, Danby	13.2
4	9/13/07	Durfee Hill Road (south), Caroline, 8:00 AM	Bruce Hill Rd, Danby	Durfee Hill Rd (south) Caroline	11.6
5	9/14/07	Old 76 Road, Caroline, 8:00 AM	Durfee Hill Road (south), Caroline	Old 76 Road, Caroline	12.3
6	9/15/07	Star Stanton Road, Dryden, 8:00 AM	Old 76 Road, Caroline	East side of Hammond Hill (Star Stanton Rd, Dryden)	13.5

*NOTE: Shuttle from meeting point parking areas will leave at 8:00 AM sharp every day. If you are planning on hiking, please be on time or we will leave without you.

Ithaca's State Theatre Partners with Land Trust for an Evening with Nanci Griffith

Dan Smalls, the new executive director of Ithaca's State Theatre, has a history with the Land Trust. In 1990, Smalls produced a sold-out concert to benefit the Land Trust that included such favorites as the Spin Doctors and Blues Traveler.

Nearly 17 years later, history is repeating itself. Well, almost, anyway.

When renowned singer-songwriter Nanci Griffith comes to Ithaca in September, the Land Trust will be front and center. Dan Smalls and the State Theatre have offered the Land Trust an opportunity to promote the Land Trust's work by listing the Land Trust on the promotional poster for the concert, by giving

the Land Trust a table at the event to distribute information, and by providing the opportunity for the Land Trust to come on stage before the concert to talk about the work we do.

Griffith is a powerful songwriter whose hallmark country-folk sound has been enchanting listeners for nearly three decades. Her career has included the Grammy® Award-winning Other Voices, Other Rooms and most recently the torch songs of Ruby's Torch.

We encourage you, our members, donors and supporters, to show your appreciation to the State Theatre by attending this concert as well as others this season. Through this display of gen-

erosity, the State Theatre is helping the Land Trust reach hundreds, if not thousands, of potential supporters. We want to extend our heartfelt appreciation to them for their support of the Land Trust.

An Evening with Nanci Griffith sponsored by August Moon Spa and part of the Maxie's Supper Club Fall Folk Series will take place on September 11, 2007 at 7:30 PM at the State Theatre in downtown Ithaca. All seats are \$29.50. Single tickets go on sale August 6, but you can buy season subscription tickets starting July 9. To reserve tickets or for more information on the State Theatre's upcoming shows visit www.stateofithaca.com

New Acquisition Doubles Size of Goetchius Wetland Preserve

continued from cover

tually creep across the field. It is, in other words, a wetland waiting to happen.

The challenge of turning this soggy hayfield back into a forested wetland has been taken up by the Upper Susquehanna Coalition. Funding for the project is being provided by The Millennium Pipeline Company.

“Every wetland project is unique. It’s like an art,” said Jim Curatolo, watershed coordinator for the Coalition. In order for a forested wetland to flourish, he said, the soil has to be wet enough throughout most of the year to support an overstory of wetland trees, but not so wet that the trees are flooded out.

A stand of red maples has already been planted on the slightly higher ground above the planned wetland site, in order to

recreate the natural transition from wetland to upland. Starting this fall, the field will be rototilled and the earth regraded into subtle “steps” so that water runs through it very slowly. Next, the land will be reshaped to mimic the so-called “pit-and-mound” topography that is characteristic of old-growth forests. In ancient forests, trees that fall due to natural causes create pits where their roots pull out of the earth, and mounds where those roots decay; the pits fill with water every spring, forming vernal pools that provide vital habitat for such creatures as wood frogs and spotted salamanders.

Trees that are abundant in the nearby swamp (especially red maple and green ash) will be planted in the newly wet soil. Once the trees are large enough, they will

shade out the ground and enrich the soil through leaf litter so that understory plants from the swamp can establish themselves. A shallow pond will be dug nearby to make sure that the trees have enough water for the first few critical years.

How long will this new wetland last? “We’ll plant it, build it, replant it, and monitor it for ten years,” Curatolo said. “It should last forever.”

—*Jacqueline Stuhmiller*

For more information about the Upper Susquehanna Coalition, visit www.u-s-c.org. For more information about the Millennium Pipeline Project, visit www.millenniumpipeline.com.

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ELLIS HOLLOW NATURE
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Please pardon the mess while we
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A CLOSER LOOK

The Coyote Settles Into Its New Home

The coyote (*Canis latrans*) — the largest, most widespread, and most abundant predator in New York State — was unknown in this area just a hundred years ago. The coyote is native to the open, arid landscapes of the western half of North America, yet thanks to a fortuitous combination of human activity and coyote biology, the animal is now found in almost every corner of the continent except the extreme northeast. In many places, like upstate New York, it has become the top predator in the food chain.

Human disturbance is devastating to many species, though not all. Like the raccoon and white-tailed deer, the coyote has managed not only to tolerate man-made environmental changes but to exploit them. Logging and intensive agriculture in New York destroyed the habitats of many forest species but also created the kinds of open landscapes that the coyote prefers. Both cougars and wolves prey on coyotes, and where the ranges of wolves and coyotes overlap, wolves quickly reduce coyote populations through predation and competition. When the wolf and cougar were extirpated in New York near the turn of the twentieth century, the way was opened for the coyote to move in.

There are several aspects of coyote biology that allow the animals to coexist successfully with humans, just as certain aspects of wolf biology made it impossible for wolves to survive here. Coyotes, unlike wolves, are density-dependent breeders: if the local coyote population is small, litters will be larger, and vice-versa. Furthermore, while wolves will not tolerate the presence of humans, coyotes are remarkably adaptable, though so secretive that people rarely suspect they are there. They can hunt alone, in pairs, or in packs, during the day or at night. They are omnivorous, opportunistic feeders and can make a meal out of just about anything: berries, insects, rodents, birds, deer, carrion, garbage, pet food and even small pets.

For reasons that are still not completely clear, northeastern coyotes are generally larger than their cousins in other parts of the country; in fact, the largest northeastern coyotes are the size of small timber wolves. Some have suggested that this phenomenon may be due to Bergmann's rule: within a species, body mass increases in higher latitudes because larger animals lose less heat per unit of mass. Perhaps, also, food is more abundant and easier

to obtain in the east than it is in the west. However, these explanations can be no more than part of the answer, since coyotes in the Adirondacks and Maine are genetically different from western coyotes.

Theoretically, coyotes can hybridize with dogs and wolves, but in fact such hybridization only occurs when animals are separated from their own species. There has been much speculation that New York coyotes are actually “coy-dogs,” but this doesn't seem to be the case. Although coyotes might have mated with dogs as they first moved east into new territory, such hybridization must be extremely rare today, if it occurs at all.

The more likely possibility is that northeastern coyotes are actually “coy-wolves” because of interbreeding with wolves in southern Canada. Although the two species are normally mortal enemies, young solitary wolves that wander into relatively wolf-free areas sometimes mate with coyotes.

It is too early to say for sure exactly what ecological effects coyotes will have on their new territory. They have reduced the red fox population in New York; with fewer foxes, the populations of other animals, such as rodents and ground-nesting birds, may increase. Jacqueline Frair, Assistant Professor of Wildlife Ecology at SUNY-ESF, is studying coyotes in the Southern Tier in order to determine whether or not they are indeed filling the ecological niche once occupied by wolves. If so, coyote predation may help alleviate some of the problems caused by deer overpopulation: over-browsing, for example, can prevent forests from regenerating and greatly reduce the abundance of native forest-floor plants.

Scavenging animals, such as martens, foxes, and ravens, may also benefit from deer carcasses left by coyotes. Ravens rely on the presence of large predators because their beaks are too weak to rip open the hides of animals that have died of natural causes; these scavenging birds disappeared from New York after wolves and cougars were extirpated, but have returned with the arrival of coyotes.

Only time will tell whether the coyote will become an unexpected, and unorthodox, means of restoring the ecology of our region.

—Jacqueline Stuhmiller



Unknown in this area just a hundred years ago, coyotes are now found in almost every corner of the continent

MARIE READ

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Saturday, August 25, 10:00 AM, "Tracks and Signs at the Steege Hill Preserve" (Chemung County) Join tracker and naturalist Linda Spielman to discover what and who has been visiting this preserve.

Saturday, August 25, 10:00 AM, "Woods Walk: How Forest Management and Conservation Easements Go Hand-in-Hand" (Livingston County) Co-sponsored by the New York Forest Owner's Association. Tour the Krebs family property that is subject to a conservation easement. Forester Billy Morris will guide us as we learn about different forest management practices. Betsy Landre of the Land Trust will talk about conservation easements.

Saturday, September 29, 10:00 AM, "Fabulous Fungus at the Ellis Hollow Nature Preserve" (Tompkins County) Mycologist Kathie Hodge will once again lead us through this preserve to learn about mushroom identification and much more. Bring a hand lens and field guide if you have them. Group size limited to 20, please call 607-275-9487 to register.

Visit www.fllt.org for more information and directions to each of these locations.

September 10 thru September 15: Hike the Emerald Necklace (see page 9 for details)

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