



# THE LAND STEWARD

Newsletter of the Finger Lakes Land Trust

Vol. 18, No. 1

working to protect the natural integrity of the Finger Lakes Region

Winter 2005-06

## Land Gift and Village Partnership Protect Full Mile of Fall Creek Frontage

Over the last 15 years, the Finger Lakes Land Trust has conserved over 8,000 acres of property — among them some of our area's most spectacular gorges, wetlands, forests and farmlands.

Now, the Land Trust has notched another 52 acres to add to the growing mix of protected land, as Freeville resident Millie Sherwood, a member of the local Genung family, donated a parcel of wooded land near the Village of Freeville along Fall Creek.

"It gives me great pleasure to make a gift to the Finger Lakes Land Trust of a parcel of land in the Village of Freeville which has been in my family for over a hundred years and, thus, to honor my father Albert Genung," said Sherwood.

Her grandfather, the village doctor for 50 years, had owned the land, and both he and her father had greatly enjoyed the property. "That land meant a great deal to them; I am happy to know it will stay forever the way it is," Sherwood added.

After acquiring the property from Sherwood as a gift, the Land Trust transferred ownership to the Village of Freeville. The arrangement establishes a conservation easement protected from future development, creates a local nature preserve in partnership



MARK WHITMORE

*Former Mill Pond along Fall Creek at the new Genung Nature Preserve in Freeville*

with Freeville, and permanently preserves a forested gateway into the village along Route 38.

Additionally, the newly named Genung Nature Preserve saves from development yet another mile of frontage along Fall Creek. The new addition builds on the Land Trust's other Fall Creek waterfront projects, including the Etna Preserve, the Cocca Tract and McIlroy Bird Sanctuary, further upstream from the new Genung Preserve.

continued on page 5



BILL DAVIS

*View of Honeoye Lake over the treetops at Harriet Hollister Spencer State Park*

## Forest Purchase Adds 61 Acres to Harriet Hollister Spencer State Park

Harriet Hollister Spencer State Recreation Area was already a lovely place, with thick, continuous forest — some of the finest in the state. It was named for Harriet Hollister Spencer, a prominent Rochester civic leader of the early 20th century who contributed greatly to the Rochester Museum and Science Center and to the Genesee Hospital School of Nursing.

This outstanding state recreation area, however, is now bigger and better. Recently, the Finger Lakes Land Trust helped facilitate the purchase, by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP), of 61 additional acres from Jean and Warren Doremus of Penfield. These additional acres, land that had been in Jean's family for 80 years, provide to the public another significant parcel of ecologically healthy forest for the area.

Spencer State Recreation Area is in the southwestern portion of Ontario County, just a few miles south of Honeoye Lake. Now at roughly 740 acres, it has enough area to provide hiking, cross-country skiing, biking trails, and deer hunting in season. The Doremus parcel borders the southwest portion of the recreation area, accessed from

continued on page 2



## PERSPECTIVES

New York State's Department of Agriculture and Markets recently released findings from a survey of rural landowners around the state. Notable among the survey's findings, reducing the burden of property taxes was given as the number one reason for sales of undeveloped land, ahead of a desire to generate income from the sale. The study also concluded that "the ongoing conversion of rural property from agricultural use to low-density residential use will continue in all regions of the state."

Taken together, these findings highlight one of the greatest threats to the rural landscape of our Finger Lakes region. Outside of the few areas that are currently experiencing significant growth through conversion of former agricultural land into housing lots (Canandaigua, Ithaca, and Skaneateles), the fragmentation of this landscape is increasingly driven not by the demand for land, but instead by the high cost of owning the land.

Retention of our country landscape — expanses of agricultural lands in particular — is promoted at every level of government, from local municipalities to county and state government. Governmental policies such as the Agricultural District Law and investment in the purchase of conservation easements are clear indications of this commitment. At the same time, however, these conservation efforts are now overshadowed by the effects of high property taxes frustrating many landowners' ability to hold on to large parcels of rural land — whether field or forest or both.

There is tremendous popular support to retain the character of our rural landscape. I am struck by this fact over and over. Daily, we at the Land Trust receive inquiries from landowners wanting to conserve their land as they have known it, in many cases for generations. More and more towns express their desire to keep rural areas rural through new comprehensive planning. Visitors to the region cite our scenic rural landscape as one of the main reasons they are

drawn here.

If we are to preserve our landscape, we must address the issues that make it difficult for people to keep their ownership of large parcels of land. While conservation easements can play an important role in retaining these lands, the property tax burden must also be addressed. Solving the problem will require thoughtful discussion among a diverse array of stakeholders. Conservationists, landowners, public officials, school board members and other interests must work together to address this issue in a way that is both fair and effective.

The only certainty is that a solution equitable for all will require considerable time and effort. Given these recent survey findings, it's clear that we had better get started right now.

 — Andy Zepp

A summary of the results of the rural landowner survey may be found at [www.agmkt.state.ny.us](http://www.agmkt.state.ny.us)

## Forest Purchase Adds 61 Acres to Harriet Hollister Spencer State Park

*continued from cover*

Canadice Hill Road, a few miles south of the village of Honeoye.

Because they were looking for options for the future of this particular piece of land, Jean and Warren had attended a Land Trust gathering at the home of supporters Al and Sybil Craig. There the Doremuses heard a presentation by Land Trust Executive Director Andrew Zepp about ways landowners can permanently protect ecologically significant lands.

In a conversation afterwards, Zepp raised the notion of selling the land to the state, which has an interest in conserving land in this area. The state would then add the parcel to Spencer State Recreation Area. The Doremuses loved the idea, and it came to fruition in October of 2005. "Spencer State Park is a good example of what can be done when the state and the public get together," Warren said. "We decided that the best thing we could do was to sell our land to an entity that could keep it forever wild."

In this case, the Land Trust played "matchmaker" between the Doremuses and OPRHP. Zepp arranged a meeting at the Land Trust's office in Ithaca between the Doremuses and State Parks Natural Resource Planner Sue Poelvoorde, where they began the process of working out the details. "The Doremuses are very preservation-minded," Poelvoorde said, "and they wanted to add to the Harriet Hollister Spencer legacy."

This addition to the park secures mature woodlands that provide a home for a variety of wildlife species, including forest songbirds such as the wood thrush. The project is particularly significant in that it is located within one of the largest contiguous blocks of forest remaining within the Finger Lakes Region. This area is the focus of ongoing protection efforts of the Land Trust,

The Nature Conservancy, and New York State. To date, these efforts have secured more than 2,000 acres in this area that spans the hills and valleys at the south end of Honeoye Lake.

The Doremus acquisition contains a mixture of Appalachian oak-hickory forest, Appalachian oak-pine forest, and hemlock-northern hardwood forest, according to the New York Natural Heritage Program. The program also notes that the oak-hickory and oak-pine forests are of especially high quality relative to other such forests in the Finger Lakes area and in the rest of New York state. Also, there are some very large old growth trees on the land, according to Poelvoorde.

The property came to the Doremuses through Jean's grandfather, George Harris. Harris was a lawyer, and at some point in the 1920's (family records about the deal are spotty, Jean said) worked with a client who could not pay him in cash. Instead, the client gave Harris more than 82 acres of land — very good land, as it turns out, that now benefits the local community as much as it has benefited the animal and plant life for so long.

The Doremuses are happy to have both preserved the land for its own sake and to have made the land available to the public. At first, they thought they might just harvest the timber and donate the profit to preservation efforts. But the option to preserve the forested land itself fit more closely with Jean and Warren's values. Warren said, "Jean's relatives, especially her grandfather, would be extremely pleased with what's been done with the land."

— George Dillmann

# PRESERVE PROFILE

## Keeping Time in the Martin Nature Preserve

An 1890 photograph taken in a remote Schuyler County valley near Cayuta Lake shows a farm house and barn complex that we might all recognize as typical of rural farms we drive by every day. A modest apple orchard and some shade trees surround the house, which is set back from a narrow lane lined with sugar maples. Across the lane, several barns stand starkly outlined in a landscape cleared for farming — a few rail fences and upturned pine stumps marking pasture boundaries. On the twenty-or-so acres seen in the photograph, there is no forest.

Welcome to the Land Trust's Martin Nature Preserve in the Schuyler County town of Catharine. It is now a forest preserve. What a difference a century makes.

The 110-acre Martin Nature Preserve came to the Land Trust in 1993, a donation from Gene and Joan Lane. The Lanes named the property after two of their grandchildren; another of their generous donations, the Parker Nature Preserve, is named after two other grandchildren. The Martin Preserve, like its cousin, evokes stories of past ownership and land use, and of its human and natural history.

Several enormous maples at the preserve's grassy parking area on Charles Road indicate an old house site: the one in the 1890 photograph. The trees, now perhaps 150 years old, would have provided comforting shade to the unknown family in summer and maybe a pint or two of maple syrup in spring. A rectangular rise in the ground nearby suggests the outline

of an old cellar hole, now filled in with earth. Now forest surrounds.

James Appleton grew up in that now-forgotten house much later, in the 1950s. His family rented the house from an uncle. One of his chores was to tend his uncle's Christmas tree farm, he told the Land Trust. Remnants of the tree farm survive throughout the preserve, but the spruces and firs are now old and overgrown, and provides value mainly for wildlife.

Catlin Mill Creek runs through the middle of this valley preserve, providing great pleasure to hikers, with its rich flood plains and occasional cattail marshes complementing the upland forest terrain that dominates the landscape. The creek was named after Phineas Catlin, an enterprising early settler who harnessed its waters to run several saw mills and a grist mill in the valley during the 1800s. Near the intersection of Charles Road and Steam Mill Road, a stone's throw from the preserve's parking area, the creek feeds a small pond, now overgrown with reeds and marsh grasses.

It was here that James Appleton, with friends, siblings and cousins, swam and fished on hot summer days. It was here, too, that his 18-month-old little sister, Carol Marie, accidentally drowned in 1954.

The creek flows past the rubble of Catlin's mills and past vanished homesteads as though they never existed.

Two hiking trails lead away from the parking area, one to the north, the other to the south across Charles Road. Both provide lovely and peaceful walks through a variety of different woodland habitats. The Scotch pines

and dense spruces to the north provide habitat for black-capped chickadees and golden-crowned kinglets. Starting out, the



*This extraordinary old white oak was already fully mature in the late 1800's.*

BETSY DARLINGTON

trees are on the young side, but as one travels farther north and leaves the former tree farms, the forest ages, its lofty canopy a challenge to any seedling hoping to take firm root. This is scarlet tanager and great horned owl territory.

Although it is clear from the 1890 photograph that few trees were left standing after the initial clear-cutting for pasture, the preserve does have a few very old and impressive white oaks. The largest of these can be found directly south of the pond, standing at the edge of Catlin Mill Creek's narrow flood plain. This massive "grandmother" oak, with broad spreading branches and a trunk with a diameter at breast height of about five and a half feet, is no less than 300 years old, and probably nearer to 350. It was fully mature when the 1890 photo was taken, and probably too extraordinary, even then, to cut down.

Reforestation has been happening throughout the preserve since 1890. Hemlock and white pine grow throughout the land much as they might have before settlement, before they were recognized as a cash crop. Pine saplings now spring up wherever there is a gap in the canopy created by wind-fallen trees. Other major sapling colonies include sugar maple,

continued on page 9



*Catlin Mill Creek runs through the middle of the preserve's valley, providing ideal habitat for the brilliant red Bee-balm Monarda didyma.*

BETSY DARLINGTON

## Managing Sediment in Six-Mile Creek

Six-Mile Creek in southeastern Tompkins County is typical of many of the creeks that flow into Cayuga Lake as part of the Cayuga Lake watershed ecosystem. The headwaters of Six-Mile Creek lie in the hills between the Town of Caroline and the Town of Dryden; the creek runs a lovely course through woods, farms and villages, entering the City of Ithaca and joining Cayuga Inlet just south of Cayuga Lake. Although the last reaches of Six-Mile Creek run through the most urban landscape in the Cayuga Lake watershed, much of its course lies under dense, deciduous woods.

Last November, a group of scientists, engineers and citizen volunteers met in Brooktondale, Tompkins County, to discuss two years of intensive study and management of the creek. Controlling sediment emerged as the principal theme of the symposium.

One of the most important issues in the Cayuga Lake watershed, as in several other Finger Lakes watersheds, is managing the plume of sediment that muddies Cayuga's waters, especially after heavy rains and spring snow melt. Undisturbed wetlands at the south end of Cayuga Lake once filtered the water flowing through the inlet, reducing the sediment plume. Those wetlands lay where the City of Ithaca stands today. Six-Mile Creek is important as a major contributor to the sediment load entering the lake from the



MARIE READ

*Although the last reaches of Six-Mile Creek run through the most urban landscape in the Cayuga Lake Watershed, much of its course lies under dense deciduous woods*

side, buffers of vegetated land to prevent the banks of the stream from eroding.

But most of the Six-Mile Creek watershed is heavily forested; very little of it is farmed, and the study of sediment and other pollutants in Six-Mile Creek revealed that land away from the stream contributes very little. Thus, for this watershed, we conclude that only a small fraction of the sediment load comes from human activities away from the creek. Poor land-use practices seem not to be the key for this watershed, contrary to the preconceptions of many of the symposium participants.

What's the culprit then? Blame the glacier that passed this way a few thousand years ago; it molded our local landscape, and never bothered with environmental impact statements. Our streams are relatively young in geological time, dating from the retreat of the glacier. As the streams age toward some equilibrium state, they carve at their beds and their banks, contributing to the sediment load. What we see in Six-Mile Creek is largely a natural process, as what the glacier left behind is moved downstream.

Nonetheless, streamside landowners are unwilling to have their yards reduced by occasional floods, and Ithaca hopes to prevent sediment from getting into its water supply. A partnership of federal, state, county, town and city agencies and citizen volunteers has just completed a project to address the problem of stream-bank erosion near the headwaters of Six-Mile Creek. They built meanders into the stream and created pools to slow the water and stabilize the banks, saving the neighbors' backyards and keeping sediment out of the stream. Farther down the creek, the City of Ithaca, using largely volunteer labor, is overseeing tree plantings where vegetation had been removed. Six-Mile Creek will be continuously monitored so that the effects of these modifications can be assessed.

If one of the lessons from the Six-Mile Creek project is that the creek's sediment load is largely of "natural" origin, does that mean that land-use practices are unimportant in this subwatershed and others in the Cayuga Basin and elsewhere in the Finger Lakes? Certainly not! As development along Six-Mile Creek's banks proceeds, new sources of non-point pollution can arise.



BETSY DARLINGTON

*The Land Trust has used conservation easements to secure 13 parcels (such as the one pictured above) in the Six-Mile Creek Watershed, the source of Ithaca's drinking water*

south. What's more, Ithaca gets its water from the creek, and sediment removal is the most expensive part of treating the drinking water.

Sediment usually enters the stream as the soil in the watershed erodes and washes off the land. Managing erosion usually depends on maintaining good land-use practices throughout the watershed. In agricultural districts like the Finger Lakes, good soil conservation not only keeps the soil and its nutrients out of the creeks, but improves farm productivity. It's also important to keep livestock out of the stream and to maintain riparian, or stream-

# Land Gift and Village Partnership Protect Full Mile of Fall Creek Frontage

*continued from cover*

Protecting land along creeks and rivers is important because developed streamside areas can disproportionately degrade water quality. Fertilizers and other contaminants run off from lawns and pollute the water. Also, floodplain areas and wetlands (which exist on this land) hold water in place and help prevent downstream flooding.

Aside from the benefits of maintaining water quality, the easement provides long-lasting habitat for beavers, migratory birds and a variety of other wildlife.

“Through Millie Sherwood’s extraordinary gift, we have been able to conserve over a mile of frontage on Fall Creek, while at the same time creating a wonderful recreational and educational resource for all village residents,” said Lotte Carpenter, Mayor of Freeville.

Along with her gift of the nature preserve, Millie also donated a 1.3-acre house lot which will be sold. The proceeds will go to the Land Trust Stewardship Fund for ongoing site monitoring, a proposed loop trail, signs, foot-bridges and onsite parking.

The Village and the Land Trust will jointly oversee the land’s stewardship. Once the trail has been built, Freeville residents will have easy access to the peace of hiking, dog walking and wildlife watching.

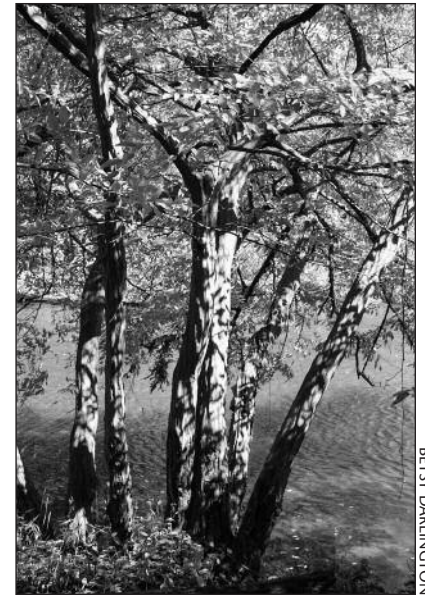
This project is part of an ongoing effort by the Land Trust to preserve natural areas that front waterways, including Fall Creek.

“The Land Trust intends to expand its outreach to landowners and local governments to continue to protect the waterfront through both acquisitions and easements,” said Andy Zepp, director of the Land Trust.



BETSY DARLINGTON

*Land donor Millie Sherwood at her home in Freeville*



BETSY DARLINGTON

*Along with the benefits of maintaining water quality, the Sherwood easement will provide long-lasting habitat for beavers, migratory birds and a variety of other wildlife*

— Krishna Ramanujan

*The Land Trust gratefully acknowledges Attorney Elizabeth Bixler and the law firm of Bixler & Stumbar for their pro bono services in this multifaceted transaction.*

## LEGISLATIVE NEWS – WINTER 2005-06

### IN ALBANY

New York State voters have been busy recently with three municipalities and one county putting bond acts on their ballots in November for the purpose of buying or otherwise protecting open space, farmland, and parks. Putnam County’s bond act also included measures to maintain, improve or protect water quality in rivers, streams and lakes. Unfortunately, that act failed, but those proposed in the three towns did pass, to the tune of more than \$5 million dollars in all. In the case of Yorktown, Westchester County, the town had planned ahead and secured the funding to pay for their bond by instituting a \$30 parcel tax back in 2000. Fortunately, this ballot trend is also happening nationwide with 64 ballot measures in 17 states. Forty-six of them passed, making available nearly \$564 million for use in land protection.

*For more details go to [www.land-vote.org](http://www.land-vote.org) Access the LandVote Database to see the results.*

### IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

There are two issues regarding the long-running effort by the Land Trust Alliance (LTA) and other conservation organizations to have Congress increase tax incentives for donors of conservation easements. First, an end-of-the-year session bill regarding charitable giving — which is really about tax incentives — was introduced in both the Senate and the House of Representatives. Included in this bill is language regarding conservation easements and reduction of capital gains taxes when landowners sell their land to conservation organizations. This language is in the CARE Act of 2005 (S.1780). The house version (H.R.3908) does not include the same provisions as the Senate’s, but would allow non-profits to issue tax-exempt bonds to acquire working forest-lands for conservation. In the event that both versions are passed in their respective chambers, there would be a “reconciliation” committee to work out the differences. One has to commend those Congresspeople who have stuck with this issue. It has been milling around the capitol for several years at

this point, and it’s not one of the glamour issues that makes it into the media. Still, the legislation is important for land protection.

The second issue concerning incentives for land donation is an accreditation program that will soon be available to all land trusts in the US. The notion of accrediting land conservation groups became necessary when Congress got wind of some individuals and groups abusing the practice of donating land and getting tax write-offs. Congressional hearings resulted, and many lawmakers were ready to “throw the baby out with the bath water,” allowing NO deductions, exemptions, or incentives. Conservation groups agreed that they had to deal with this threatening situation, and the Land Trust Alliance is now designing a voluntary accreditation program for land trusts. The program will certify that accredited groups follow lawful and ethical practices in accepting donations of conservation easements and managing their activities.

— Merry Jo Bauer

# Scenes' from Around Our Region...

BETSY DARLINGTON



Cornell Freshman demonstrating a bounding mink at Susan Morse's tracking workshop, held recently at the Lindsay-Parsons Biodiversity Preserve

*“There is nothing in the world more beautiful than the forest clothed to its very hollows in snow. It is the still ecstasy of nature, wherein every spray, every blade of grass,*

MARK WHITMORE



Early winter morning in Grimes Glen

BETSY DARLINGTON



Fall hikers enjoying the year-end nature walk at Steege Hill Nature Preserve

*every spire of reed,  
every intricacy of  
twig, is clad with  
radiance.”*

— Fiona Macleod (1855-1905)

BETSY DARLINGTON



Stewardship volunteers and Preserve Management Committee members assessing the results of recent field management efforts at the Lindsay-Parsons Biodiversity Preserve

BOB CORNEAU



Winter landscape at Steege Hill

BETSY DARLINGTON



Member and volunteer Bill Hecht (foreground) with Stewardship Ecologist Mark Whitmore at the Salmon Creek Bird Sanctuary, completing work on the new fence that surrounds the graves of two Revolutionary War veterans. Post holes for the fence were dug by Cornell fraternity members of Psi Upsilon.

BETSY DARLINGTON



A placid autumn afternoon atop Steege Hill for the year-end nature walk

# BUSINESS PARTNER PROFILE

## Land Trust Has an Old Friend in Boyce Thompson Institute

Over the past sixteen years, the Land Trust and the Boyce Thompson Institute for Plant Research (BTI) at Cornell have forged a lasting connection. Carl Leopold, the Land Trust's founding president, is an emeritus scientist at BTI and continues to encourage the bond. Numerous other BTI scientists, staff members, and students have supported the Land Trust either financially or through in-kind donations of their time and energy.



Last spring, for example, BTI not only lent financial support to the Talks and Treks series but also provided a little muscle-power when staff members trekked out to the Lindsay-Parsons Biodiversity Preserve to help remove non-native invasive species. Here at the Land Trust, we are grateful to BTI on many levels.

As president David Stern sees it, the Institute really has three missions: research, education, and the environment. The research mission dominates, but the educational and the environmental missions are important to the life of the Institute.

The Boyce Thompson Institute's work is plant research. Shawna Williams, Public Affairs Officer for BTI, says that the mission of the Institute is research for fundamental knowledge of plants that will lead to applied benefits for people, whether they be farmers, horticulturists, or just plain people. Potential applications of BTI research include improved crop yield, decreased fertilizer and pesticide use, and inexpensive plant-made vaccines.

In working to achieve its education mission, BTI has hired an outreach coordinator. The coordinator organizes and engages elementary, middle, and high school students—trying to get them interested in science and in the work that BTI does. In addition, BTI has an informative and easy to use web site ([www.bti.cornell.edu](http://www.bti.cornell.edu)) that introduces their work in an attractive and clear manner.

The third mission, the environment, is, of course, the beginning of the relationship between BTI and the Land Trust. The Institute has recently strengthened its commitment both to the environment and to the local community.

Institute President David Stern says that the environmental

part of the mission is really twofold. The first component addresses the impact of BTI research on the environment. For example, some of the research happening at BTI may lead to farmers using less fertilizer or fewer pesticides while still maintaining crop yield. The impact of these advances, however, may not be evident for years, as research and monitoring of ongoing projects continues.

The second component is more immediately obvious to staff, students, and even the general public. The work at the Biodiversity Preserve was part of activities surrounding "Earth Week," started at the Institute by Stern. That week, BTI staff also participated in a clean up of Six-Mile Creek in conjunction with the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network. BTI's environmental commitment certainly doesn't end with Earth Week. The Institute uses biodegradable cups, plates, and cutlery at its events; the coffee in the communal machines is Fair Trade; all copier and printer paper has 30% recycled content.

"It's part of our mission, our duty, to increase public awareness of plant research and also to be good stewards of our environment," says Stern.

Thank you, BTI, not only for supporting the Land Trust, but also for your commitment to environmental stewardship and community involvement.

— Emily Eisman



TIMI DEVERENNE

*BTI staff members volunteering in efforts to remove non-native invasive plants last spring at the Lindsay-Parsons Biodiversity Preserve*



MARK WHITMORE

*The last of four deer enclosures recently built at the Wesley Hill Nature Preserve.*

## Work at Wesley Hill

Preserve Steward and Land Trust member Mike Cartwright, with member Fred Remus and Board Member Bob Growe, in front of the last of four deer enclosures constructed at the Wesley Hill Nature Preserve on November 12th. Member Melissa Cohen also participated in this first phase of what will likely be a long-term study of the impact of deer browsing on the regeneration of sensitive tree species in the Wesley Hill Preserve. Land Trust Stewardship Ecologist, Mark Whitmore, was responsible for facilitating the project.

The enclosures measure six feet square and five feet tall. The vegetation within the enclosures and immediately surrounding them will be inventoried over time to accurately document the impact of deer browsing and help determine a method by which trees can be regenerated in this forest. The Land Trust is hoping that schools in the area will use this as an ongoing science project.



## Keeping Time in the Martin Preserve Nature Preserve

*continued from page 3*

white and red oak, hemlock and beech.

In the southeast section of the preserve, sugar maple seedlings literally carpet the forest floor beneath mature trees. They are the product of a recent “mast” season, a season of such abundant seed production that predators — rodents, deer, turkeys, etc. — can’t come near to consuming them all. Virtually all seed-bearing trees, including the preserve’s abundant oaks, have developed mast years as a survival strategy over time.

Few of these maple seedlings will survive, however. Simple factors of available light and nutrients (and maybe some dumb luck) will determine which make it to adulthood and which do not.

The fall of 2005 was reportedly a mast year for many species of oak in our area. So watch the ground where you walk, for the newest forest growth in the Martin Nature, Preserve over the next years.

Directions to Martin Preserve: *From Ithaca, go west on Route 79 to Mecklenburg, then south on Route 228. After the curve to the right (west), go north on Steam Mill Road to Charles Road. Turn left on Charles Road and park on the grass, on the right. Preserve is on both sides of Charles and Steam Mill Roads.*

— Eben McLane

## Managing Sediment...

*continued from page 4*

Run-off from paved areas can carry sediment and other pollutants to the creek through storm sewers, and removing fallen trees and other natural litter from the creek can also speed up the water’s flow and add to its erosive power.

Can we take the lessons from Six-Mile Creek to other Cayuga subwatersheds? Yes, to some extent, but there are differences among subwatersheds as well as similarities. Salmon Creek, one of the largest subwatersheds in the Cayuga Lake watershed ecosystem, flows largely through heavily farmed land, especially in its northern reaches in Cayuga County. So, land-use practices — especially farming practices — are likely to be extremely important in keeping sediment and other pollutants out of Salmon Creek and out of the lake.

The Finger Lakes all share many qualities. Our lakes are long and narrow, lie in relatively deep basins carved by glaciers in similar rock, and are dammed at one or both ends by glacial moraines. They also all drain eventually into Lake Ontario, so they are all part of the same large watershed, just as Six-Mile Creek is part of the Cayuga Lake watershed. The study and management implemented at Six-Mile Creek, therefore, might serve as a model not only for other Cayuga Lake tributaries, but for Finger Lakes streams in general. Ecosystems scientists would call such subwatersheds “replicates.” Because of the geological similarity of the Finger Lakes, stream sediment loads are a common issue, to one degree or another, for all the watershed tributaries. Monitoring the changes we have made in the Six-Mile Creek watershed may well help us better understand how our stream management techniques can be applied elsewhere.

Controlling the flow of sediment in streams and lakes, like all problems in environmental management, requires that we understand how ecosystems work, as well as how our management — or lack of it — affects them. We can often transfer understanding of one watershed or stream in the Finger Lakes to others, but we must carefully monitor changes that occur from our interventions, and we must be aware of the differences among watersheds, as well as their similarities. We can be sure that protecting and restoring Finger Lakes watersheds will require working both with nature and with people.

—Tom Vawter, Chair, Cayuga Lake Watershed Intermunicipal Organization Technical Advisory Committee

*We are deeply grateful for donations in memory of:*

**Charles W. Babcock**

FROM

**Tom Babcock**

...

**David Hamlin, Jr.**

FROM

**Bonnie Hamlin & Hugh Hamlin**

...

**Daniel Hegarty**

FROM

**David S. & Linda M. Marsh**

...

**Jonathan Thompson**

FROM

**Robert & Genevieve Thompson**

...

**Dora Worbs**

FROM

**Molly & Barry Adams**

*Our sincere thanks for a gift in honor of the Bar Mitzvah of:*

**Joshua Rothenberg**

FROM

**Judith Rothenberg  
Antal Spector-Zabasky**

*Our sincere thanks for a gift in honor of the wedding of:*

**Michael Pallischeck & Patricia**

**Hogenmiller**

FROM

**Pam & Bob DiPaola**

**Paul & Jo Wilson**

*Our sincere thanks for a gift in honor of the 40th wedding anniversary of:*

**Rita & Joe Calvo**

FROM

**Mickey Goldstein**

*Our deepest appreciation for Christmas gifts to:*

**Betsy Darlington**

FROM

**Dick Darlington  
Jean Darlington and Ed Marchena  
Lois Darlington**

...

**Jean Maleski**

FROM

**Steve and Kathy Trechter**

...

**Kevin Brew**

FROM

**Mr. & Mrs. Arthur Troast**

*Our sincere thanks for gifts in honor of:*

**Cornell’s Community & Rural**

**Development Institute**

FROM

**Rod Howe**

...

**Bill Marx**

FROM

**Ed Marx**

...

**Peter & Betty Stahlbrodt**

FROM

**Mike Stahlbrodt**

# VOLUNTEER PROFILE

## Good for the Spirit: Gary Mallow and the Martin Preserve

“Working on trails and in the preserves is good for the spirit,” says Gary Mallow, steward of the Martin Preserve in Schuyler County. “Tom Reimers roped me into volunteering for the Martin Preserve,” he says, referring to the Land Trust’s Vice-president for Land

---

*“When Gary took over stewardship of the Martin Preserve the trail system was almost non-existent. Gary quickly cleared trails and paint-blazed them so they would be easy to follow.”*

---

Conservation. “I say that tongue-in-cheek. I like the work; it’s satisfying; it connects me to people with similar values. Stewards work alone for the most part, but they are not alone in the work.”

“When Gary took over stewardship of the Martin Preserve,” says Reimers, “the trail system was almost non-existent. Gary quickly cleared trails and paint-blazed them so they would be easy to follow.”

Gary calls his stewardship “small — something I can do without quitting my job or moving.... I can make a contribution to my community and to the next generation by simply going out in the woods with a lopper, by nailing up preserve signs, or by cleaning up trash left behind.”

A member of the Ithaca community for 24 years, Gary is a bread baker at the Ithaca Wegmans and lives in Newfield, a 20-minute drive from the preserve and a far cry from the heavily populated neighborhood of Buffalo where he grew up. “The houses were so close,” he says, “you could hear your neighbors’ conversations.” As a kid he grew to cherish the occasions he had as a boy scout to camp out in the country.

He’s still a Buffalo Bills fan, but those camp-outs gave Gary an abiding taste for the countryside. He made a cross-country bicycle ride in 1978 and worked on a volunteer project for the American Hiking Society in southwest Oregon, working entirely with what he calls “muscle-powered tools” to clear trail in the Gearhart



*Land Trust volunteer Gary Mallow*

Wilderness. “The year before,” he muses, “I saw the desert east of San Diego for the first time — incredibly dramatic and beautiful.”

His stewardship of the Martin Preserve affords drama and beauty, too: he has thrilled to the call of a red-tailed hawk and been awed by the power of Catlin Mill Creek during spring flood. Fall, however, is when Gary must check to see that the boundaries of the preserve are clearly posted.

“Last fall,” he says, “I hiked all four borders of the preserve, nailing up new signs alerting visitors and hikers of the boundaries between the nature preserve

and the surrounding private property. The idea is to prevent trespassing and to maintain good relations with our neighbors.

“I walked the two town roads that bisect the Martin Preserve, making sure the signage there is heavy and frequent. I picked up trash, making roadside piles for later pickup with my car. It was a nice day, my dog Sandy needed the exercise, so I hiked the two short trails, pruning branches and moving dead-fall, leaving the trails unobstructed for hikers. Finally, I checked with a helpful neighbor who lives up the road and has kept an eye on the preserve for years. He told me deer hunters had purchased property adjoining the preserve for a hunting lodge. We deconstructed a deer stand that a hunter had built within the preserve and left the parts (still usable) on the property boundary so the hunter could use it again — somewhere else.”

Land Trust Director of Preserve Stewardship Betsy Darlington says, “Gary tackles whatever needs tackling on the Martin Preserve and other preserves, using a chainsaw to cut up trees fallen over the trails and painting blazes so visitors won’t get lost. He rerouted both trails at the Martin Preserve, a big improvement.”

Gary Mallow is one more addition to that exceptional group of volunteers with which the Land Trust is so extraordinarily blessed.

—Caissa Willmer

## Board Developments

Congratulations and welcome to incoming Board Members Barbara Hamlin and Stephanie Sechler. A fundraising professional for over 20 years, Ms. Hamlin runs a fundraising consulting business in Canandaigua, where she also resides. No stranger to us here at the Land Trust, Barbara has served on the organization’s Advisory Council since 2003. Stephanie Sechler is Associate University Counsel for Cornell University, where she has worked since 2001, principally on environmental, real estate, and regulatory matters. She received her law degree from Cornell Law School in 2000 and also received a Ph.D. in history from the University of Wisconsin in 1997. Stephanie lives in downtown Ithaca and enjoys hiking and exploring the area’s trails and backroads. Our new Board Members bring with them a great deal of expertise in two important and very different fields. Please join us in welcoming them aboard.

# A CLOSER LOOK

## Our Rarely Seen Neighbor, the Flying Squirrel

Here in the Finger Lakes region we all know the delightful gray squirrel — delightful at least to all but those without squirrel-proof bird feeders. But many of us are unaware of another ubiquitous arboreal neighbor, the shy and nocturnal flying squirrel. More common than you might think, this species can beat the baffles on those bird-feeders with greater agility than their persistent cousins. Whereas a gray squirrel can jump up to eight feet from a tree to a bird feeder, the flying squirrel can glide more than seven times that distance without difficulty.

They are well designed for flight. Loose folds of skin between their front and hind legs act like a parasail for those long glides from tree to bird feeder or, more commonly, from tree to tree. They cannot gain altitude, as winged birds do. But they can glide for up to 60 feet and come to a gentle landing, using the flaps for steering and their specially flattened tail for a brake and stabilizer.

Few people who have seen a flying squirrel close up would deny that it is one of cutest animals around. It is considerably smaller than even a red squirrel and scarcely bigger than a chipmunk; it has very soft and rich fur — brown above, white below — and large, dark eyes specially adapted for night vision.

Our forests host both the northern and southern flying squirrel species. They can be distinguished only by blowing on that soft white belly fur. If the fur is dark close to the skin, it's the northern squirrel. Because they are nocturnal and difficult to find, it seems unlikely that most of us will be able to make a positive identification. But where the southern and northern flying squirrels share a woods, the northern species tends to stay in conifers and the southern in hardwoods. According to Dr. Paul Curtis, Associate Professor of Natural Resources at Cornell, the southern squirrel has extended its range 150 miles north in the last few years, a possible indicator of growing climate change.

Flying squirrels eat a typical squirrely diet of nuts, berries and insects. If you find an empty nutshell with a single hole, it was eaten by a flying squirrel; it is the only animal that gets nut meat in that way. Flying squirrels store their food in trees — not in the ground, as do gray squirrels — and so do not serve the trees by planting their seeds.

But these squirrels do perform a great service for our forests. They consume a subterranean fungus which happens to be important in growing healthy trees. According to David Odell, Regional Wildlife Manager of the New York State DEC, flying squirrels play a big role in dispersing the spores of the fungi through their droppings, thus spreading the benefit of the fungi throughout the forest.

Flying squirrels usually sleep in tree cavities lined with shredded bark, moss and leaves. In the summer, the females sleep with their young, while males live a mostly solitary existence. In



*Northern Flying Squirrel* *Glaucomys sabrinus*

winter they seek the warmth of other squirrels and will clump together with five or more. Dr. Curtis, checking on his gray squirrel boxes, was surprised when a dozen (uninvited) flying squirrels jumped out at him.

During gestation the mother squirrel will seek her own nesting site in another tree, or birdhouse, attic or even chimney. She gives birth to one to three hairless blind babies. She is a careful mother. If a baby falls, a few squeaks will bring mom gliding to the rescue. At ten weeks the young begin their test flights.

Flying squirrels have many enemies. Virtually all forest-dwelling predators present a danger. A nesting pair of owls can eat several hundred flying squirrels in a year. Free-roaming cats, especially those allowed to roam at night, are a serious enemy, as well.

A flying squirrel in the wild has a life span of only four or five years, but it doubles or triples in captivity. The increased longevity is only partly due to protection from its predators. Because the squirrels are nocturnal, they do not manufacture sufficient vitamin D from sunlight. This, coupled with their light bone structure necessary for flight, renders them vulnerable to rickets, a serious, even fatal, weakening of bone tissue.

Some mild night this winter in either rural or urban woods, you may see some creature gliding silently from tree to tree, or some morning you'll wake up to look at your just-filled-but-now-empty bird feeder, and you'll know it's our ubiquitous, invisible neighbor.

—Margot Brinn

### WANTED

STURDY DIGGING SHOVELS and WOODEN OFFICE  
DESK WITH DRAWERS (approx. dim.: 30h, 30d,  
55-60 long), both in good condition.

### FOR SALE

1.3-acre unimproved residential lot at the junction of Route 38 and West Dryden Road in the Village of Freeville; adjoins the newly established Genung Nature Preserve. This lot was given to the Land Trust in conjunction with Millie Sherwood's gift of land (see Page 1).

Please call the Land Trust office at 607-275-9487 for more information.

## Finger Lakes Land Trust

### Officers:

Jim Kersting, *President*  
Brad Edmondson, *Vice President*  
Ann Weiland, *Secretary*  
Nancy Robbins, *Treasurer*  
Tom Reimers, *VP Land Conservation*  
Albert Joerger, *VP for Development*

### Board Members:

Katherine Borgella	Don Raines
Jim Fralick	Don Rakow
Nick Gavrielides	John Rogers
Bob Growe	Stephanie Sechler
Barbara Hamlin	Scott Winkelman

### Advisory Council:

James Byrnes	Ted Hullar
Thomas Eisner	Suzanne Lee
John Fitzpatrick	Robert Mrazek
Howard Hartnett	David Zorn

### Staff:

Andrew Zepp, *Executive Director*  
Raul Aguirre, *Land Protection Specialist*  
Abbey Chernela, *Office Manager*  
Betsy Darlington, *Director of Preserve Stewardship*  
Karen Edelstein, *CE Stewardship Coordinator, and GIS Specialist*  
Emily Eisman, *Outreach and Membership Coordinator*  
Betsy Landre, *Senior Field Representative*  
Mark Whitmore, *Stewardship Ecologist*

### Newsletter Editors:

Eben McLane  
Krishna Ramanujan

### Newsletter Layout:

West Hill Graphics, Inc.

### Advisors:

*Legal Counsel:* Elizabeth Bixler; Susan Brock; Dan Hoffman; Randy Marcus, Miller Mayer, LLP; Peter Miller; Richard Ruswick  
*Forestry Consultant:* Michael DeMunn  
*Founding President:* A. Carl Leopold

### Western Lakes Chapter:

Jim Kersting, *Chair* 585-367-2301

### Eastern Lakes Chapter:

Kris Scholl, *Chair* 315-497-3066

### Keuka Chapter:

Debbie Koop, *Contact* 315-595-2523

## Finger Lakes Land Trust

202 E. Court Street  
Ithaca, New York 14850  
Ph: 607-275-9487 • Fax: 607-275-0037  
email: [info@fllt.org](mailto:info@fllt.org) • [www.fllt.org](http://www.fllt.org)

### Western Lakes Office

120 North Main Street, Suite 40  
Canandaigua, NY 14424  
Ph: 585-394-4189

## Finger Lakes Land Trust

202 E. Court Street  
Ithaca, New York 14850



## WINTER 2005-06 CALENDAR

**Sunday, February 26th, 12 noon – 2:00 pm:** Winter Wander at the Wesley Hill Nature Preserve. Join Land Trust President Jim Kersting and others for a cross country ski/snowshoe/hike at the Wesley Hill Nature Preserve. From Honeoye, take Rt. 20A east to East Lake Road. Follow E. Lake Road south for a short distance to Pinewood Hill Road. Follow Pinewood Hill Rd., then Gulick Rd. south toward Cumming Nature Center for about 4 miles, to Wesley Rd. Turn right on Wesley Rd and go to preserve entrance. See [www.fllt.org](http://www.fllt.org) or call 585-367-2301 for more information.

*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.