



The Land Steward

NEWSLETTER OF THE FINGER LAKES LAND TRUST

working to protect the natural integrity of the Finger Lakes region

Vol. 28, No. 3 • Summer 2016

Land Gift from Longtime Corning Leaders Results in New Conservation Area

Thanks to the generous donation of 195 acres from the retired chairman of Corning Incorporated, Jamie Houghton and his wife, Maisie, the Corning community is now home to a Land Trust conservation area.

The new preserve features mature hardwood forests, several miles of trails, and scenic meadows with sweeping views of the surrounding hills. Best of all, the land is located just a stone's throw from downtown Corning.

The property is located on Spencer Hill Road, between the city of Corning and Corning Community College. It protects portions of a wooded ridge line visible from the Corning Museum of Glass and many other locations throughout the Chemung River Valley. The property's varied habitats make it an excellent location for outdoor education and wildlife observation.

Much of the property is cloaked with towering oaks and hickories, interspersed with patches of birch, maple, and pine. While the south side features a gentle hillside meadow, the north side of the property drops precipitously through stands of hemlock.

"This is a priceless gift that will only become more valuable in the future," says Land Trust Executive Director Andrew Zepp. "It's a beautiful property that features some of the best of what our region has to offer. We're grateful to James and Maisie Houghton for their tremendous gift to the Land Trust and to the Corning community."

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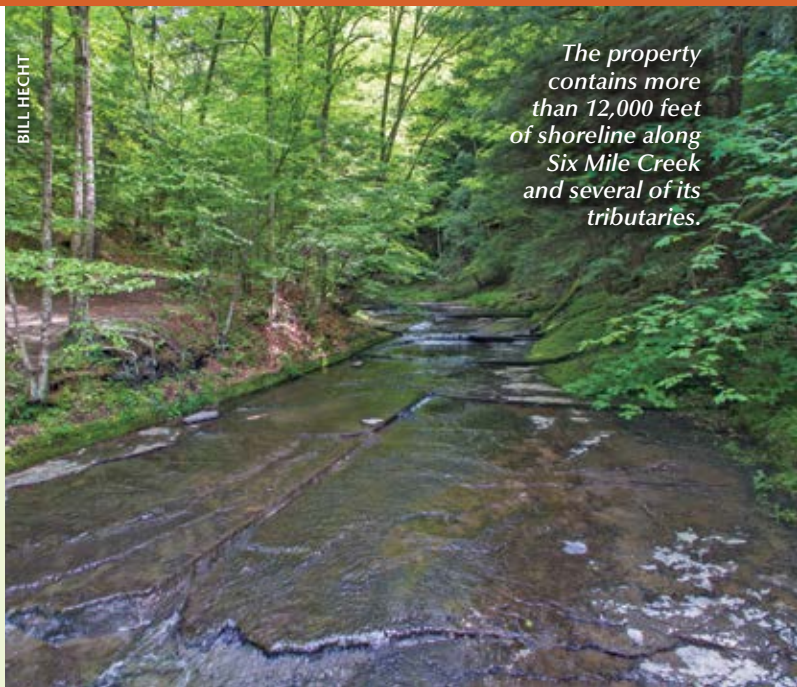
Partnership Protects Ithaca Drinking Water and Expands the Emerald Necklace

In partnership with Tompkins County and the City of Ithaca, the Land Trust recently acquired a scenic 126-acre property in the town of Dryden that protects a significant stretch of Six Mile Creek.

The property, located on Midline Road, possesses characteristics that meet a number of Land Trust priorities, including water quality protection, unique landscape features, and proximity to other conservation lands.

"This property has been on our radar for years," said Land Trust Executive Director Andrew Zepp. "This acquisition preserves a major water source, connects important adjacent

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The property contains more than 12,000 feet of shoreline along Six Mile Creek and several of its tributaries.

BILL HECHT

ANDY ZEPP

The Finger Lakes lost one of its champions recently when Dorothy Park passed away at the age of 103. Dorothy was a lifelong philanthropist who supported many causes in Ithaca and Tompkins County, including the Land Trust.

Dorothy and her daughter Adelaide Park Gomer were together recognized by the Land Trust as “Conservationists of the Year” in 2009. This award was given in recognition of their extraordinary commitment to supporting a variety of environmental conservation efforts—both through the Park Foundation and their own personal giving.

Dorothy’s legacy is easy for any Ithaca resident to see—her generous contributions made possible the development of Tompkins County’s current public library, the SPCA’s pet adoption center, the Land Trust’s Roy H. Park Preserve, and many other local institutions.

Her support enabled the Land Trust to make key additions to grow Ithaca’s Emerald Necklace, protect

a rare stretch of Cayuga Lake shoreline, and conserve wetlands and uplands bordering Fall Creek—the largest tributary to the lake.

I had the good fortune to get to know Dorothy, and I will always remember her fondness for animals and the natural world. I picture her enjoying the flock of wild turkeys that always seemed to be present at her home in Cayuga Heights.

While Dorothy will be greatly missed, her conservation legacy lives on—not just in the wonderful land that she helped protect—but also within her family who carry on her tradition of caring for the land and all the animals that depend on it.



Andrew Zepp, *Executive Director*
Finger Lakes Land Trust



The Land Trust’s Roy H. Park Preserve, protected through the generosity of Dorothy Park.

BILL HECHT

CONSERVATIONIST OF THE YEAR

Each spring, the Land Trust recognizes an individual with a special commitment to conservation at its annual meeting.



STAFF PHOTO

This year’s Conservationist of the Year award was presented to Mark Whitmore, a forest entomologist who works at Cornell University’s Department of Natural Resources. Mark is committed to addressing the impacts of non-native, invasive insects on the forests of New York State. He is specifically focused on the emerald ash borer and the hemlock woolly adelgid—conducting research, educating community organizations and agencies, and developing control methods.

As a resident of Ithaca and a passionate advocate for healthy forests in the Finger Lakes region, Mark has gone above and beyond the requirements of his job by volunteering for the Land Trust. He is currently a member of the Land Trust’s Preserve Management Committee, provides valuable guidance on control strategies for non-native invasive insects, leads informational hikes, and volunteers to monitor the Land Trust’s conservation easement properties.

Mark is tirelessly dedicated to making a long-lasting difference for healthy forests by lending his expertise to organizations all over the state. His work has resulted in direct actions which are helping to safeguard the ecology of our forests, including protecting the beautiful eastern hemlock stands found living in the gorges characteristic of the Finger Lakes region.

Two New Projects Will Expand Wildlife Habitat and Protect Owasco Lake

The Owasco Flats

Owasco Lake typifies the Finger Lakes in having, at its southern end, a broad, flat plain with a strong stream feeding a lake flowing outward to the north. This flood plain, left over from the last ice age, was once part of an ancient lakebed before waters eventually receded north with the glaciers.

Certain agricultural and other land use practices in the past have forced the natural, meandering flow of the Owasco Lake inlet into a straighter, faster course, resulting in many years of uncontrolled streamside erosion and more sediment deposited downstream into the lake.

In fact, this is still happening, to the alarm of many Owasco Lake residents. Another major source of lake pollution comes from the many farms and drainage ditches around Owasco Lake. Farm, residential, and road runoff mixes with the general downward flow of rain and snow runoff, depositing sediment and unwanted nutrients into the lake.

Today, the Owasco Flats floodplain comprises nearly 1,500 acres of swamp, emergent marsh, cropland, and unused fields, from the village of Moravia north to the southern end of Owasco Lake. Its most prominent feature is the Owasco Inlet, the chief source of water flowing into the lake.

The conservation value of the Owasco Flats seems pretty clear to Land Trust Executive Director Andrew Zepp: "The flats provide important habitat for fish and wildlife along the inlet. Just as important, the landscape of the flats plays a vital role in filtering water runoff to Owasco Lake."

An Owasco Flats property purchased by the Land Trust in 2008 has recently been donated to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). The 15-acre parcel includes 2,300 feet along the Owasco Inlet. The transfer of this property will enhance fishing, hunting, trapping, hiking, and other outdoor activities the DEC wants to encourage in its target areas.

The property has been ecologically modified since its initial acquisition. Before the Land Trust bought the property, soil erosion and streamside degradation contributed to the general problems of Owasco Lake pollution.

Since then, a Land Trust and U.S. Fish and Wildlife partnership has made

a difference through a streamside restoration project. Trees planted by this partnership have taken root and grown prodigiously, anchoring the fragile stream bank and dramatically reducing the soil and phosphorous runoff into the lake.

This is the third parcel acquired by DEC for the Owasco Flats Wildlife

by minimizing disturbance during construction but also by permanently protecting eagle habitat elsewhere.

In this case, elsewhere turns out to be the Owasco Flats, where an active Bald Eagle nest lies not far from the Owasco Inlet.

In the mitigation process, the Land Trust acquired the Owasco Flats



A view of land bordering State Route 38 and the Owasco Inlet, recently added to the Owasco Flats Wildlife Management Area

Management Area Project, which is one of the projects listed under the Finger Lakes Shorelines and Riparian Zones priority in the New York State Open Space Plan. The newly-donated property adjoins an existing DEC Fishing Access Site on the Owasco Inlet.

Protecting Wildlife Habitat

Meanwhile, to the west, at the south end of Seneca Lake, a new project has come up with reverberations on the Owasco Flats.

The Villages of Montour Falls and Watkins Glen are constructing a new waste water treatment plant next to Queen Catherine Marsh. This new construction may disturb an existing Bald Eagle nest.

So, what to do about that? The DEC has ideas and rules about this kind of situation: the Villages are required to mitigate the impact on the eagle nest

property on behalf of Montour Falls and Watkins Glen and will convey the parcel to the DEC in the future.

The 33-acre property off Rockefeller Road north of Moravia includes 1,700 feet of frontage along the Inlet, with great potential for stream bank and other landscape restoration, such as the Land Trust has done in the past with the DEC and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

—Eben McLane

The Land Trust gratefully acknowledges Attorney Scott Forsyth of the law firm Forsyth & Forsyth in Rochester for providing pro bono legal services in support of the recent land purchase.

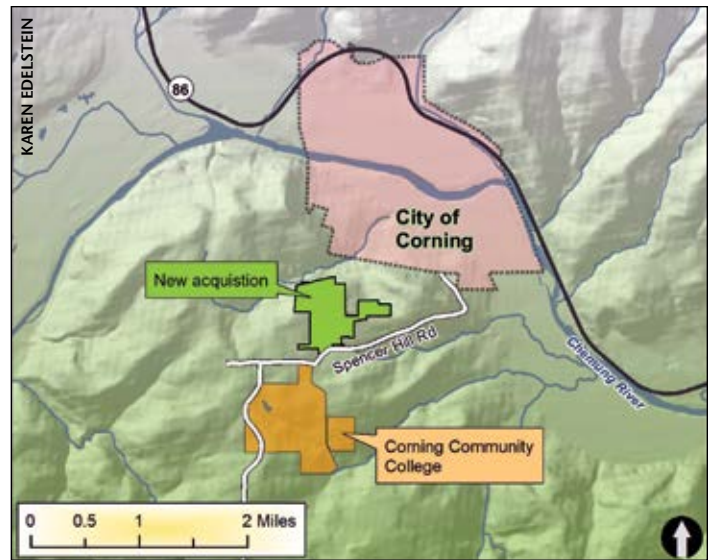


Land Gift from Longtime Corning Leaders Results in New Conservation Area *continued from cover*

During the coming year, the Land Trust will complete a natural resource inventory of the property and develop a management plan to guide future use of the land. The plan will ensure the integrity of the Houghton family land and create public access to the trail system on Spencer Hill Road. It is anticipated that the new conservation area will be formally open to the public in 2017.

The Land Trust will reach out to other landowners in the area in an effort to protect additional parcels in the future. Staff will also explore the possibility of creating a hiking trail that would directly link the site to Corning's sidewalk network. A public workshop will be held in Corning during the fall to share additional information about the project and gather input.

The Houghtons' land gift is the Land Trust's third protection project near the Chemung River. In the town of Big Flats, the Land Trust's Plymouth Woods and Steege Hill Nature Preserves span nearly 900 acres of forest on the south side of the river.



Land Trust Completes Fifth Acquisition at Bare Hill

With support from private individuals, a grant from the Canandaigua Lake Watershed Association, and an allocation from its "Forever Fund," the Land Trust recently completed its fifth acquisition at Bare Hill—the iconic promontory overlooking Canandaigua's eastern shore.

This most recent purchase protects 16.6 acres of steeply sloping hardwood forest that extends from East Lake Road to near the crest of Bare Hill. Oak, hickory, and red maple dominate the forest with scattered red cedars near the summit. The property stretches for 500 feet along East Lake Road and also borders land already secured by the Land Trust.

Though it is now entirely forested, this property shows evidence of vineyard rows and pasture fences—indicating its past agricultural history. Bare Hill is well known in the region for its scenic views as well as its place in Seneca lore. Legend

has it that a mighty serpent encircled an Indian village that once stood there—swallowing residents until it was slain by a brave young boy. In its death throes, the snake cleared the land and swept the hill bare.

The Land Trust moved quickly to secure a purchase contract on this property when it was listed for sale by a realtor this spring. The organization was able to make this commitment by drawing from its "Forever Fund"—a dedicated account created for time sensitive purchases. Funds are utilized when needed and then replenished—in this case, when the land is ultimately sold to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

The "Forever Fund" was created when the late Al Craig of Canadice, Ontario County left a generous bequest from his estate. The fund has grown over the years and has supported a number of protection projects including Conklin Gully near Canandaigua Lake and additions to public conservation lands near Connecticut Hill Wildlife Management Area and Sugar Hill State Forest.

With the exception of a single lakefront parcel that will be retained as a nature preserve, all lands acquired by the Land Trust at Bare Hill will ultimately be conveyed to New York State as additions to the adjacent Bare Hill State Unique Area. The Land Trust hopes to work with the state, and other partners, to construct a "shoreline to summit" hiking trail on land that is already under conservation ownership.

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

Canandaigua Lake Watershed Association President Tom Zimmerman and President-Elect Wade Sarkis presenting a donation to Land Trust Executive Director Andy Zepp and Land Protection Specialist Elizabeth Newbold toward the purchase of the parcel.



LINDSAY MCMILLAN

Spring Bird Quest Highlights

Every year, in contemplating where to hold our group walks for the Finger Lakes Land Trust Spring Bird Quest (SBQ) over Memorial Day weekend, I try to balance several factors—representation of varied habitats, accessibility for the most birders, quality of viewing, and of course diversity of birds. For each of the past few years, Land Trust staff and I decided on a safe lineup of familiar birding hotspots—the McIlroy Bird Sanctuary in Summerhill, Lindsay-Parsons Biodiversity Preserve in West Danby, the Goetchius Wetland Preserve in Caroline, and the Roy H. Park Preserve in Dryden. And every single one of these walks has been well-attended and fun.

This year, we decided to take a little risk and choose lesser-known sites farther from Ithaca, perhaps with slightly lower prospects of bird diversity, in order to spotlight the Land Trust's newest acquisitions and maybe attract some new attendees closer to their own neighborhoods. And so, our 2016 SBQ destinations included the Hinchcliff Family Preserve (206 acres, acquired in 2013) and the High Vista Nature Preserve, near neighbors on the eastern slope of Skaneateles Lake; the Logan Hill Nature Preserve in Candor (285 acres, acquired in February 2015); and the VanRiper Conservation Area in Romulus (68 acres, acquired in February 2011).

Despite heat worthy of midsummer, the birding met or exceeded my expectations at all four preserves. We watched a Veery at High Vista uttering a harsh parrot-like "craaahk" that was new to me and even seems absent from the scientific literature. At Logan Hill, we heard at least ten warbler species, including four or five individual Prairie Warblers. We had a long, close view of a pair of Red-bellied Woodpeckers feeding nestlings in a tree cavity at VanRiper. And we found and photographed a true rarity, one of the top few surprises in 11 years of the SBQ—a very late migrant Lincoln's Sparrow at Hinchcliff.

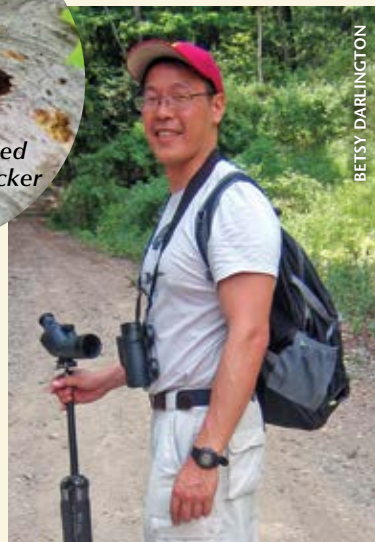
Another highlight was the abundant butterflies, especially on Monday at VanRiper. Here we saw several Eastern Tiger Swallowtail butterflies sipping mineral-rich water from the sand and gravel on the shore of Cayuga Lake, all lit up in the sun. Completely heedless of our presence, they gave us 20+ minutes of dazzlingly intimate views, fluttering and feeding within touching distance, as if some benevolent lake deity had cast a charm over the place and all of us. We could even see the butterflies excreting dewy droplets, presumably purified of salts, from the tips of their abdomens.

We had fine turnouts—about 50 participants in all, both familiar faces and first-timers. It was our special honor to be joined by several people from families whose generosity, vision, and collaboration with the Land Trust played a direct role in permanently protecting these lands and opening them to all of us—Robin and John Hinchcliff, Betsy and Jean Darlington (Logan Hill), and Barry VanRiper. Also, in the end, I expect that this year's SBQ will raise at least \$2000 for the Land Trust.

Many thanks to all for a marvelous weekend! —Mark Chao



Spring Bird Quest trip leader Mark Chao at the Logan Hill Nature Preserve



BETSY DARLINGTON

Partnership Protects Ithaca Drinking Water *continued from cover*

conservation land, and protects a remarkable ecological area."

The property protects more than 12,000 feet bordering Six Mile Creek and several of its tributaries. As the primary source of drinking water for the City of Ithaca, Six Mile Creek is an important watershed for the area. Because of this, the city contributed \$25,000 to the purchase through a program devoted to funding the proactive protection of the city's watershed through conservation easements and direct purchases.

Tompkins County also allocated \$25,000 from its Capital Reserve Fund for Natural, Scenic, and Recreational Resource Protection to support the project. The property contains two Tompkins County Unique Natural Areas (UNAs)—the Dryden-Slaterville Fir Tree Swamp and a portion of the Slaterville Wildflower Preserve.

According to Todd Bittner, the director of natural areas for Cornell Plantations, the two UNAs feature some unique and vulnerable plant communities. Within the Slaterville Wildflower Preserve, Six Mile Creek is lined with seepage walls that provide a cool and moist microclimate for plant species such as painted trillium, stiff club moss, and Canada yew. The creek itself is home to brook and brown trout.

The fir swamp includes a rich fen and hemlock-hardwood peat bog, where upwelling cold water flows through glacial deposits to provide very specific habitat requirements for a number of uncommon plants.

The Land Trust purchased the property from Ted and Marilyn Petkov, who have lived on the property for the last 20 years. "The Petkovs have taken terrific care of the land," said Zepp. "Now we have an opportunity to preserve this wonderful and scenic property for future generations."

The property features a varied landscape of gorges, meadows, hardwood and coniferous forests, and wetlands. One of the highlights is a confluence pool where Six Mile Creek and one of its tributaries come together. Although the land has been privately owned, this pool has been a scenic vista point for hikers, and the Petkovs have historically permitted public access to the property for recreational purposes.

The Land Trust's acquisition of the property will allow for continued public access. In fact, the trail leading to the confluence pool begins at the Land Trust's Roy H. Park Preserve.

The property's location within a complex of other conserved lands is one of the key reasons why it was identified as a priority for conservation. The property is directly adjacent to Hammond Hill State Forest, and other protected lands nearby include Yellow Barn State Forest, Cornell Plantations' Old 600 Natural Area, and the Park Preserve.

The property's connection with other conservation land provides a protected corridor for animals. "In terms of wildlife, river otters, fishers, bobcats and bears have all been seen in this area," Zepp

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SCENES

from Around Our Region...



An aerial view of a beaver pond at the Lindsay-Parsons Biodiversity Preserve in the town of West Danby, Tompkins County



ROB HOWARD

NY State Department of Environmental Conservation Commissioner Basil Seggos and Land Trust President Holly Gregg enjoyed a hike at the Land Trust's Hinchcliff Family Preserve in April.



CAROL KLEPACK

Land Trust members Tom Babcock, Betsy Darlington, Tom Cole, Ed Epstein and Nature Preserve Manager Jason Gorman taking a break from trail building at the Logan Hill Nature Preserve in the town of Candor, Tioga County.



A view from the Wesley Hill Nature Preserve in Richmond, Ontario County

KELLY MAKOSCH



The Owaco Inlet and Flats

BILL HECHT

BILL HECHT

Two Grants Connect The Community With Nature

The Finger Lakes Land Trust received two grants totaling \$60,000 from the New York State Conservation Partnership Program for projects in Onondaga and Seneca Counties that enhance public access to nature.

A \$30,000 grant was awarded to help the Land Trust forever protect 38 acres on Otisco Lake and create a public conservation area for hiking, bird watching, and fishing. The forested property features 1,300 feet of undeveloped shoreline, a 40' waterfall, and prime habitat for Bald Eagles and water birds. Conservation of this special property protects the lake's water quality and will provide rare public access to the lake's wild shore.

The Land Trust was also awarded \$30,000 to convert the grassy path through its Bishop Nature Preserve to a crushed stone surface perfect for visitors of all ages and abilities. The stone path will create a family and bike-friendly gateway to the Cayuga-Seneca Canal Trail—a 5-mile, multi-purpose, recreational trail that connects the preserve to the city of Geneva. The grant also supports parking and site interpretation improvements to encourage greater public access to both the preserve and the rail trail.

"We're grateful for the support of the New York State Conservation Partnership Program," said Land Trust Executive Director Andrew Zepp. "These two grants will help us enhance public access to our region's scenic natural areas."

A total of \$1.8 million in Conservation Partnership Program grants were awarded to 55 nonprofit land trusts across New York. The program is funded through the state's Environmental Protection Fund and administered by the Land Trust Alliance, in coordination with the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation.

The Bishop Preserve in Seneca County will receive a new crushed stone path.



38 acres on Otisco Lake featuring 1,300 feet of undeveloped shoreline will become a public conservation area.



Ithaca Adds to Growing Network of Conserved Lands on West Hill

IN May, the Town of Ithaca purchased over 50 wooded acres on Ithaca's West Hill. Acquired with assistance from the Land Trust, the site will be managed as a public conservation area for hiking, birding and quiet recreation.

The property is located within the town-designated Culver Creek Ravine and Woods Unique Natural Area. Featuring frontage on Bostwick Road, it is bordered to the north by the 11.2-acre Gerda Knegtman's Glen Preserve and by Dress Woods, 11.6-acres of conserved land which were also acquired with help from the Land Trust. This newest Town acquisition is also proximate to Coy Glen, a Cornell Plantations Natural Area. Although dominated by oak-hickory forest, butternut and hackberry are also found along a ravine on the property.

"The town is very excited to add this gorgeous wooded property to our existing preserves in the Coy Glen area of West Hill," said Town of Ithaca Supervisor Bill Goodman. "We are grateful to the Meigs family for working with the town to help protect this important piece of the Cayuga Lake watershed."

Regarding his interest in selling the property, landowner Jonathan Meigs initially contacted the Land Trust, who referred him to the Town of Ithaca. Acknowledging the property's conservation value, the town sought the Land Trust's help in negotiating a purchase option. The option was assigned to the town who then bought the land.

Following the adoption of the Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan in 1997, the Town of Ithaca has made an annual commitment to funding conservation. This funding was used to purchase the Meigs property and has also been used over the years for a variety of park and open space projects, including trail construction, park development (ball fields, play structures, etc.), agricultural land protection and, in recent years, for purchasing land intended for enjoyment of nature.

ROB HOWARD

Our deepest gratitude for thoughtful gifts in memory of...

Our appreciation for gifts in honor of...

Sam Argetsinger
FROM
Elizabeth Derry

Christian M. Duttweiler
FROM
Denise Gelberg

James and Patricia Feuss
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Lisa Ballard

Margaret Kelly Giblin
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Betsy and Dick Darlington
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Bob Corneau
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Robin and Luke Lorenzo
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Peter Merrill

Kelly Makosch
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Bill and Suzanne Jablonski

The Marriage of Kathleen Quinn and Joseph Matus
FROM
David and Linda Marsh

Molly McLeod
FROM
Jeff Katris

Lindsay Ruth
FROM
Jeremy Weaver

Harway Knox Wilson
FROM
Richard and Petra Hepburn

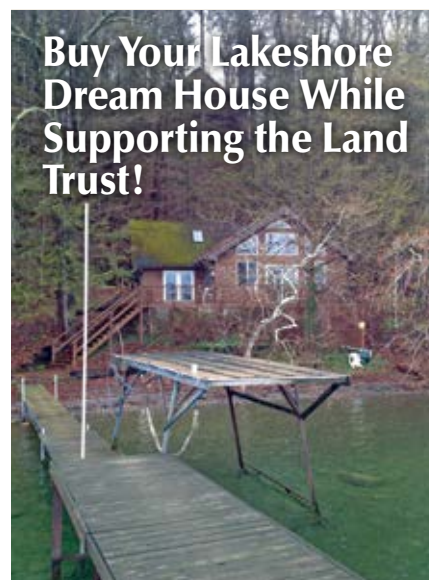
Partnership Protects Ithaca Drinking Water *continued from page 5*

said. "These are wide-ranging animals that require a large, intact landscape."

In addition, all of this connected land is part of the Emerald Necklace, a 50,000-acre greenbelt that extends in an arc around Ithaca. One of the Land Trust's long-term objectives is to complete the Necklace.

"The property warrants conservation on its own merits," said Bittner. "But when considered with the adjacent conservation land, the protection of the Petkov property not only provides another stunning jewel in the Emerald Necklace, but also strengthens the natural integrity and resiliency of the entire region." —Jeff Tonole

The Land Trust gratefully acknowledges Attorney Peter Miller in Ithaca for providing pro bono legal services in support of this project.



Buy Your Lakeshore Dream House While Supporting the Land Trust!

The Land Trust seeks a buyer for a beautiful log home and lakeside cottage situated on a wooded 4-acre lot on the western shore of Cayuga Lake in Seneca County. This truly unique property features 350 feet of shoreline and two docks! The home features four bedrooms, three full baths, wrap around decks, and a hot tub, while the lakeside cottage features a fireplace and cathedral ceilings.

The property is listed for sale for \$689,000. Proceeds will be used

to support the Land Trust's land protection and stewardship programs. The Land Trust is grateful to the anonymous donors who contributed this special property.

For additional information, contact Mel Russo at Senecayuga Properties by calling 315-568-9404 or visit www.senecayuga.com.

A CLOSER LOOK

Ixodes scapularis: Nasty Little Things

The black-legged or deer tick (Ixodes scapularis) is a tiny arachnid with an ancient, if dubious, heritage: its ancestors were already sucking the blood of, and transmitting pathogens to, dinosaurs in the Cretaceous Period. Although it is best known for carrying Lyme disease, it is also a vector for several other viral, bacterial, and parasitic illnesses.

For such a primitive animal, the black-legged tick has a very complex life cycle. After the egg hatches in spring, the larva attaches to its first host, a bird or small mammal and very often a white-footed mouse, which appears to be the main reservoir for Lyme disease. Unlike other animals, such as opossums, mice do not effectively remove ticks by grooming; furthermore, since their reproductive strategy is to breed early and die young, their immune systems have not evolved to be particularly robust and they cannot rid themselves of the Lyme pathogens. After three to five days of feeding, the larva drops to the ground, where it overwinters. The next spring, it molts into a nymph and attaches to a second host, which may be a wild or domesticated mammal or a human being. It is at this stage that it is most dangerous because not only is it likely to be infected with pathogens, but it is also tiny enough to escape all but the most careful inspection. The blood-engorged nymph then drops to the forest floor and molts once again. In autumn, the adult feeds on a third and final host, usually a white-tailed deer. The fully fed female drops to the ground a final time, overwinters, and lays eggs the next spring.

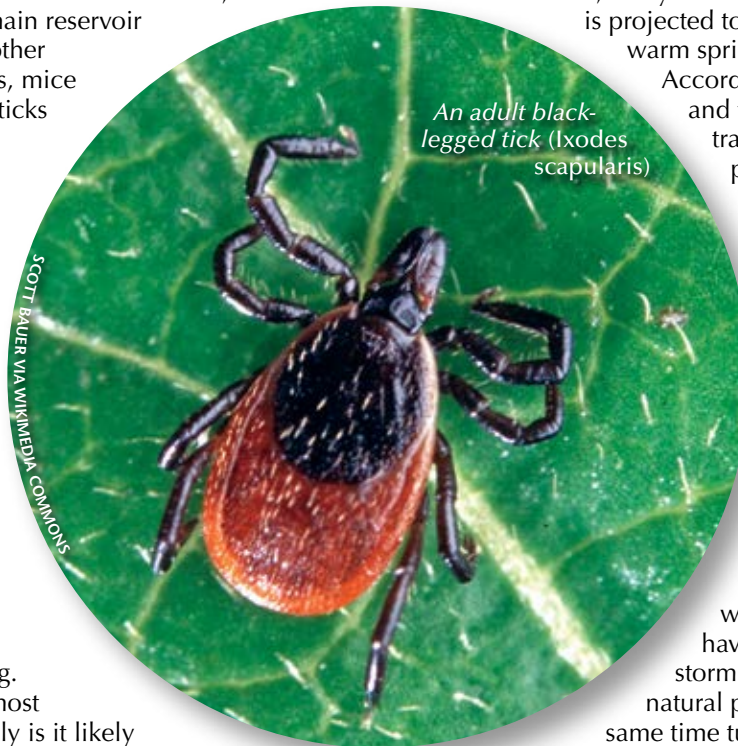
The tick seems to be moving into new areas and its population seems to be increasing, though the reasons for these changes are complex and poorly understood. Upstate New York is becoming ideal tick habitat as farmlands revert back to forest and new subdivisions carve into the countryside. A more fragmented landscape has fewer small predators and more mice. In addition, small mammals such as skunks and raccoons, along with white-tailed deer, are attracted to so-called edge habitats, places where forests intersect with meadows, fields, or lawns.

The arachnid favors moist, shady areas, dries out easily, and becomes inactive when the temperature drops below freezing (though it is unaffected by subzero

temperatures, thanks to antifreeze-like proteins). As our region becomes warmer and wetter, both the tick and its preferred hosts will thrive. Both mice and deer feed on acorns; this year's acorn crop, like last year's, is projected to be large, thanks to a warm spring and abundant rainfall. Accordingly, the tick population, and the rate of Lyme disease transmission, are also projected to be large.

Scientists have observed that white-footed mouse populations go through huge boom-and-bust cycles, but the number of ticks, and the incidence of Lyme disease, only seems to increase. Evidence is mounting that the answer to this puzzle may lie in the skyrocketing population of white-tailed deer. Humans have created a perfect storm by eradicating the deer's natural predators while at the same time turning the landscape into a smorgasbord of orchards, gardens, and crops. Deer are in far higher concentrations than they were before European settlement: in rural areas, there are between thirty and sixty deer per square mile, and several years ago in Cayuga Heights there were 125 per square mile. Such overpopulation is an immediate threat not only to human health but to forest health. In some areas, the deer have eaten all of the saplings as well as the shrubs in which songbirds nest; they remove all the tasty native forbs and leave the unpalatable exotics. A healthy forest can support perhaps twenty deer per square mile; tick populations and their associated diseases do not drop dramatically until the population is under ten deer per square mile. At this point, an aggressive deer management program seems to be the only solution. Repellants and fences only redirect the deer elsewhere and neither sterilization programs nor recreational hunting, as it is currently managed, can make a dent in the numbers of deer and the disease-laden ticks that suck their blood.

—Jacqueline Stuhmiller



An adult black-legged tick (*Ixodes scapularis*)

SCOTT BAUER VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Talks & Treks

Summer and
Early Fall 2016

Events are free and open to the public. Visit our web site at www.fllt.org for directions and preserve maps.

Moth Night – Lighting for Lepidoptera!

Saturday, August 6, 8:30pm, Roy H. Park Preserve – north entrance, town of Dryden

Bring a lawn chair, a head lamp, warm clothes, and a camera. Several lights will be set up for moth and other insect observation and we will discuss the identification and natural history of the species that come in. Leading this event will be Jason Dombroskie, Manager of the Cornell University Insect Collection and Coordinator of the Insect Diagnostic Lab. He has 25 years of experience mothing and has many years of experience leading interpretive talks and walks on natural history. *RAIN DATE: Sunday, August 7 at 8:30pm*

Creek Walk for Kids and Families!

Saturday, August 20, 10:00am, Ellis Hollow Nature Preserve, town of Dryden

Join Sarah Fiorello, Interpretation Coordinator for Cornell Plantations, for an exploration of what lives under the rocks and in the streambed of the Ellis Hollow Preserve. We'll learn a little about stream health and see what else we can find on the preserve. Be sure to wear shoes you don't mind getting wet. Children must be accompanied by a responsible adult. Don't forget water and snacks!

What Lives in Grimes Glen?

Cosponsored by the Canandaigua Lake Watershed Association

Saturday, August 27, 9:45am, Grimes Glen County Park, village of Naples

Environmental Educators Edith Davey and Steve Lewandowski will lead a workshop focused on macroinvertebrates – creatures without backbones but visible to the naked eye. The presence or absence of certain indicator species of aquatic life is a definite marker of a stream's health. Great for kids and adults alike. Be sure to wear shoes you don't mind getting wet.

Fall Fungi Walk with Steve Gabriel

Cosponsored by Wellspring Forest Farm & School

Saturday, September 24, 10:00am, Stevenson Forest Preserve, town of Enfield

Steve Gabriel, agroforester, ecologist, and co-owner of Wellspring Forest Farm & School, will lead a walk that will focus on proper fungi identification, the role of fungi in the ecosystem, and tips for ethical harvesting. Join us for an exploration of the curious fungi kingdom that sprouts around us in the fall.

15th Anniversary Hike at Steege Hill Nature Preserve, town of Big Flats

Saturday, October 1, 10:00am

2016 marks the 15th anniversary of the Steege Hill Nature Preserve, the Land Trust's largest conservation area. Join us for a celebratory hike led by Nature Preserve Manager Jason Gorman and Volunteer Steward Bob Corneau. Steege Hill offers a safe refuge at this time of year, as no hunting is allowed here. We'll set out among the fall foliage in search of the birds, plants and other animals that inhabit this diverse 793-acre preserve. *Please call (607) 275-9487 or email info@fllt.org to register.*

Tree Identification Walk with Akiva Silver

Saturday, October 15, 2:00pm, Sweedler Preserve at Lick Brook, town of Ithaca

Join Akiva Silver, naturalist, landscaper, and outdoor educator for a walk that will focus on identification, natural history, wildlife value, the role of invasive plants, as well as survival uses of trees and shrubs. The walk will last two hours or more so please come prepared with appropriate clothing and footwear for the weather and terrain.

Except in the event of extreme weather, walks go rain, sun or snow. Please check our Facebook page or our web site for updates at www.fllt.org/events.

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Summer 2016 Calendar



Mist along Canandaigua Lake

NIGEL KENT

Camino de Cayuga

Sunday, August 21, 11:00am, Toro Run Winery, 3050 Swick Road, Ovid, NY

Come enjoy wine and food tastings and gorgeous views of Cayuga Lake while hiking to the Land Trust's VanRiper Preserve! A barbecue and music will follow at 1:00pm. Tickets are required and are available for \$10 in advance or \$15 the day of the event. All ticket sales benefit the Land Trust! Reserve yours by calling or visiting Toro Run Winery. For more information, visit www.fllt.org/events.

Please see page 11 for our schedule of 2016 Summer and Fall Talks & Treks.

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