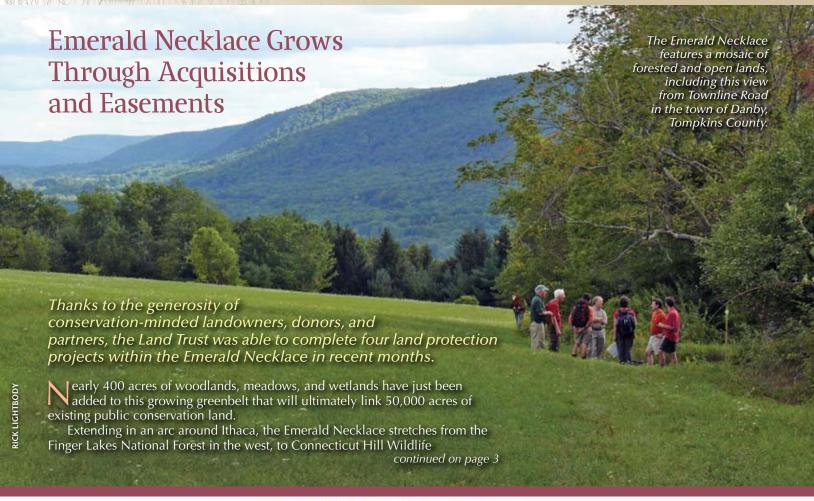
working to protect the natural integrity of the Finger Lakes region

Vol. 29, No. 4 • Autumn 2017





Horse Farm Adjacent to Finger Lakes National **Forest Conserved** Forever

Recently, the Land Trust added another gem to the Emerald Necklace by accepting the donation of a conservation easement on a 104-acre farm in the town of Hector, Schuyler County. The property is immediately adjacent to the Finger Lakes National Forest.

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PERSPECTIVES

As this issue of The Land Steward attests, the Emerald Necklace continues to grow. As it does, local residents and visitors alike are gaining more opportunities to get outdoors.

Pending additions to Danby State Forest will protect outdoor recreation along the Finger Lakes Trail. And an addition to the Land Trust's Charles Spencer Nature Preserve will provide public access to this beautiful property.

The Land Trust is working on similar efforts to link conservation lands near the southern ends of Canandaigua Lake, Seneca Lake, and Skaneateles Lake, as well as along the Chemung River. During the coming months, we'll be dedicating the new Houghton Land Preserve in Corning and seeking key additions to conservation lands near Canandaigua and Skaneateles.

With the fall season upon us, visit our new web site—gofingerlakes.org—to find the best opportunities to get out and enjoy this ever increasing network of conserved lands. Developed over the course of the past two years, this new online resource is designed

to help people of all ages and abilities get outdoors. Go Finger Lakes features more than 650 miles of trails, interactive maps, photo galleries, and scenic videos of the 12-county Finger Lakes region.

By increasing awareness about our wonderful parks and conservation areas, the Land Trust intends to make it easier for people to get outside. We hope to inspire a new generation of conservationists who will help ensure the future of our protected lands. Go Finger Lakes is just one way that we're trying to bring this about. We'll highlight other approaches in upcoming issues of *The Land Steward*.

Cuchew J.

Andrew Zepp, Executive Director, Finger Lakes Land Trust

Horse Farm Adjacent to Finger Lakes National Forest Conserved Forever continued from cover

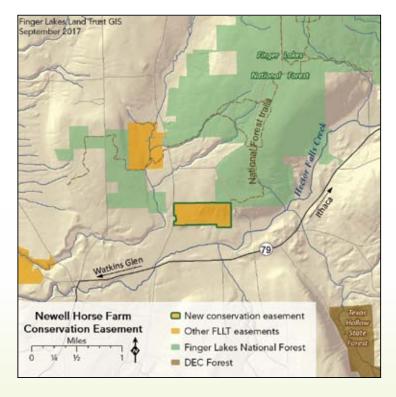
The conservation easement was donated by property owner Anastasia Newell, who owns and operates Newell Farm. The farm was acquired by Anastasia's grandparents in the 1950s, and she is the third generation in her family to own it. She currently operates an equestrian training and riding center on the property, with trails that connect to those in the neighboring national forest.

Anastasia expects the farm to eventually transfer out of her family's ownership, and she wants to keep the landscape intact for future farmers. She also wants to protect the land from residential subdivisions and intensive farming practices that would diminish its scenic

and wildlife habitat values. "I wanted to give something back to the land that gave me and my family so many happy memories and experiences," she said.

The conservation easement will limit development on the property, prevent the farm from ever being subdivided, and establish parameters for sustainable forest management.

The eastern half of the southward sloping property is largely forested. Stands of black locust, which sprang up in areas that were once used for agriculture, give way to a mix



of hemlock, oak, cherry, maple, and white pine. The remainder of the property consists primarily of pastures and hay fields with remarkable views of the distant hills.

In addition to its adjacency to New York's only national forest, the property is within a designated New York State Audubon Important Bird Area. It is also another key piece of connective tissue within the Emerald Necklace.

The Newell conservation easement is the Land Trust's fifth project in the area around the Finger Lakes National Forest. In 2015, the Land Trust accepted a conservation easement on 116 acres that are within a half-mile of Newell Farm.

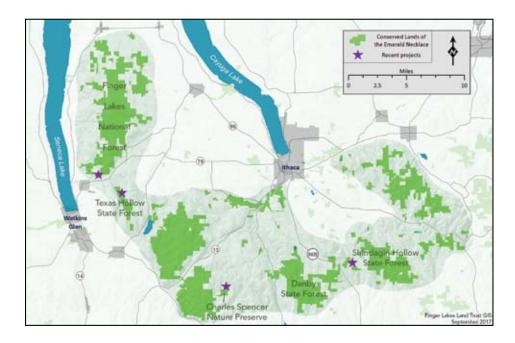
The Land Trust also acquired two forested parcels on behalf of the U.S. Forest Service and holds another conservation easement on 70 acres bordered on two sides by national forest land.

—Jeff Tonole

The Land Trust gratefully acknowledges Attorney Dan Hoffman of Ithaca, NY for providing pro bono legal services in support of this project.







Management Area in the south, and to Hammond Hill State Forest in the east. The necklace features 78 miles of the Finger Lakes Trail, two Audubondesignated Important Bird Areas, and several dozen Tompkins Countydesignated Unique Natural Areas. The Emerald Necklace is also recognized as a priority project in New York State's Open Space Plan.

For a decade now, the Land Trust has been working with partners to fill gaps in the necklace while also buffering existing conservation lands. These latest projects reflect the diverse partnerships that have made this effort successful thus far. As you will read in this newsletter, the generous donation of a conservation easement will buffer the state's only national

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Charles Spencer Nature Preserve Grows with Land Purchase

The Land Trust acquired 158 forested acres in southern Tompkins County, within its Emerald Necklace focus area. The property is adjacent to the Land Trust's existing 200-acre Charles Spencer Nature Preserve and is located in close proximity to Cornell University's Arnot Forest. The Land Trust pursued protection of the land in order to secure valuable wildlife habitat and also enhance public access to its existing preserve.

A pproximately 70 acres of the property will be added to the Charles Spencer Nature Preserve, while 88 acres will be sold subject to a permanent conservation easement limiting development to a single home. The easement will allow sustainable harvest of timber from the land but will prohibit subdivision.

The property features a mature forest composed of oak, maple, ash, and beech, with scattered pines. It also includes headwaters of a tributary to Cayuta Creek and the Susquehanna River. The land is located on Jackson Hollow and Scherer Roads in the town of Newfield.

This latest addition to the Emerald Necklace was purchased from Howard Ott, who generously agreed to sell the land for less than its appraised fair market value. The acquisition was supported by grant funding from the U.S. Forest Service, Tompkins County's Capital Reserve Fund for Natural, Scenic, and Recreational Resource Protection, and land protection funds donated by members of the Land Trust.

"We greatly appreciate the support of Tompkins County and all of our

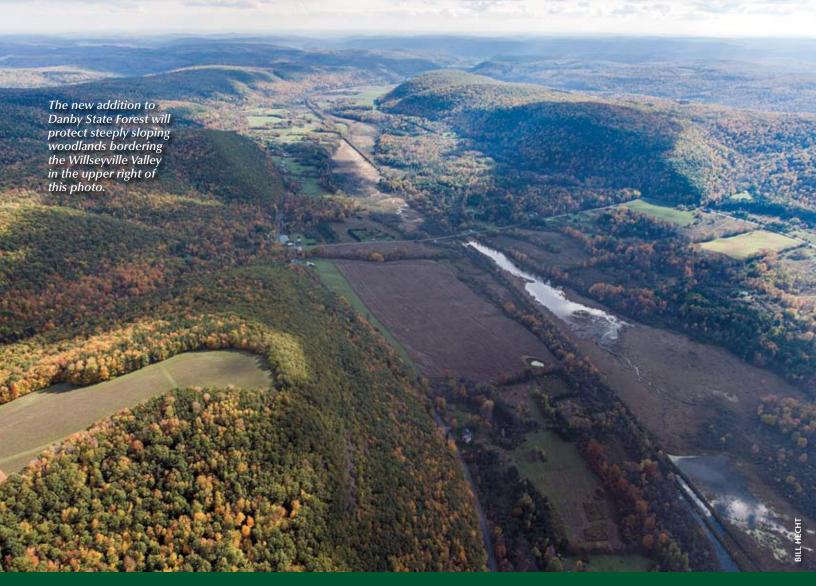


members who are helping to make the Emerald Necklace a reality," says Land Trust Executive Director Andrew Zepp. "We're grateful to Mr. Ott for helping to make this project possible."

During the coming year, the Land Trust will finalize a management plan for the portion of the property it's adding to the preserve. Plans will be developed to create hiking trails, along with a modest parking area. The organization will launch a fundraising campaign to cover these costs and also to raise funds for the long term stewardship of the site.

The Land Trust has protected more than 2,000 acres of land in this area since the organization worked with partners to launch the Emerald Necklace project ten years ago.

The Land Trust gratefully acknowledges Attorney Megan Collins of the law firm Sayles and Evans in Elmira, NY for providing pro bono legal services in support of this project.



Partnership Expands State Forest in Tompkins County

In the eastern portion of the Emerald Necklace are Danby and Shindagin Hollow state forests which, collectively, span over 12,600 acres with more than 40 miles of trails. The ultimate goal of the Emerald Necklace project is to link and expand public lands, creating new recreational opportunities, safeguarding drinking water, and protecting habitat for fish and wildlife.

The Land Trust recently acquired 50 wooded acres in the town of Caroline. This property borders a 144-acre parcel purchased by the Land Trust in April. Both parcels neighbor each other on Eastman Hill and link Danby State Forest to Coddington Road in the Willseyville Valley.

The purchase was made possible by a loan from the Finger Lakes Trail Conference's Sidote Stewardship Fund. When state funding is available, the Land Trust will convey the property to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) as an addition to the adjacent Danby State Forest.

The acquisition will allow the NYSDEC to consolidate state land boundaries and enhance access to the state forest through frontage on Coddington Road. It will also serve as a safety net for the Finger Lakes Trail, should the current trail route in the area become compromised in the future.

In addition to its importance for recreation, the property is located in a habitat linkage protection priority area identified by both the Tompkins County 2007 Countywide Conservation Plan and the New York State Strategic Forest Management Plan. The White Church-Willseyville Swamp is an identified Tompkins County Unique Natural

Area and serves as the headwaters to Catatonk Creek, a classified trout stream. This unique area is immediately downslope of forested, steep, erodible hillsides on the property.

The Land Trust gratefully acknowledges Attorney Richard Ruswick, of Counsel to Levene, Gouldin and Thompson, LLP in Ithaca, for providing pro bono legal services in support of this project, as well as the recent acquisition of an adjacent parcel that was featured in the last issue of The Land Steward

Network of Conserved Lands in the Southern Tier Grows with New Conservation Easement

A block of conserved lands east of the city of Elmira recently expanded with the addition of an 83-acre conservation easement donated by Tim and Paddy Welles.

The Welles property is a couple of miles up the road from Quarry Farm, where the Land Trust holds several easements protecting 240 acres. Conservation of the Welles property will secure frontage on Crane Road from unplanned development and help secure the bucolic nature of the area near Quarry Farm—the national historic site where Samuel Clemens (aka Mark Twain) wrote some of his most well-known stories.

Located in the town of Horseheads on a hilltop nearly 800 feet above the Chemung River Valley, the Welles property includes steep slopes that drop into a small hemlock and hardwood swamp forest. In this forest, a small stream originates and feeds into Latta Brook in the Chemung River basin of the Chesapeake Bay watershed. The Welles property is almost entirely composed of soils classified as highly erodible. By maintaining most of the property in a forested condition, the Welles conservation easement helps to protect the water quality in the Chesapeake Bay, the largest estuary in the United States and one of the most productive water bodies in the world.

Protection of the Welles property will also secure habitat for wide-ranging mammals, including black bear that wander through the area feasting on ants and grubs they find in rotting logs and under rocks in the forest.

Tim Welles, a retired Vice-President of Manufacturing and Engineering with Corning Inc., and Paddy, a retired Marriage and Family therapist and past faculty member for Elmira College, enjoy living on their wooded property where they spend time in the woods hiking, biking, cross-country skiing, or harvesting firewood dependent upon nature's whims. "Conservation easements are a great idea," Tim said. "I hope more people take this step to protect our environment."

The Land Trust gratefully acknowledges Attorney Dan Hoffman of Ithaca, NY for providing pro bono legal services in support of this project.



Land Trust Receives State Funding to Protect Water Quality in the Southern Tier

The Land Trust was awarded \$124,212 in grant funding from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's Chesapeake Bay Watershed Program. The program funds projects that safeguard water quality through the protection of permanent streamside buffers.

In many areas, streams lack adequate buffers from adjacent crop lands and pastures, resulting in erosion and runoff of nutrient-laden soil, exacerbated by the increasing scale of agriculture and increasing intensity of the region's rain storms. These buffers are strips of trees, shrubs, or grasses that create streamside habitat and reduce the amount of nitrogen, phosphorous, and sediments entering the water.

The Land Trust plans to use grant funding to protect 18,000 feet of streamside buffer on three different properties in Chemung and Steuben counties. Using a mix of direct acquisition and conservation easements, the projects will permanently protect more than 65 acres of riparian buffer habitat on three properties totaling more than 500 acres.

Grant funding is provided by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to help the Chesapeake Bay watershed address water quality problems caused by excess nutrients and sediment. Because nutrients and sediment in the bay come from all over the watershed, six states and Washington, D.C. are working together in an effort to protect water quality. New York's portion of the watershed is comprised of the Susquehanna River and Chemung River watersheds.

Protecting our region's clear waters is central to the mission of the Land Trust. In 2016, the Land Trust published Lakes, Farms, & Forests Forever—a report highlighting ten priority conservation strategies to protect the region's lakes and curtail the sprawling rural development threatening our best farmland, scenic vistas, water quality and recreational resources. To read the report and learn more, visit fllt.org/top10.











Member Information Sessions Planned

Learn about the Finger Lakes Land Trust's conservation plans for 2018.

Executive Director Andy Zepp and Director of Land Protection Zack Odell will provide a brief overview of the non-profit organization and discuss upcoming conservation projects, including efforts to protect water quality. There will be light refreshments and plenty of time for questions.

Thursday, November 9 7:00 pm-8:00 pm

The Skaneateles Historical Society's Museum at the Creamery 28 Hannum St. Skaneateles, NY 13152

Tuesday, November 14 7:00 pm-8:00 pm

Wood Library Mary Parmele Hamlin Meeting Room 134 N Main St. Canandaigua, NY 14424

Emerald Necklace Grows Through Acquisitions and Easements

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forest while a bargain sale will provide a significant addition to an existing Land Trust preserve. Additionally, partnerships with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and the Finger Lakes Trail Conference resulted in key additions to two of our state forests.

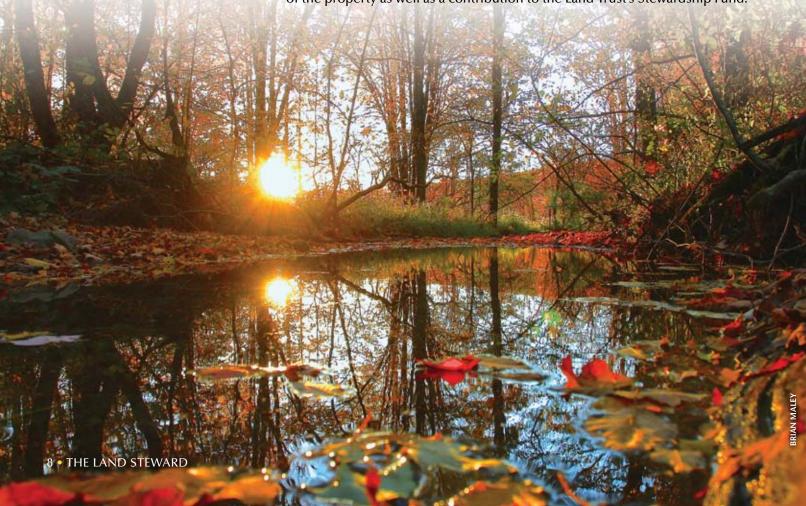
For additional information on the Emerald Necklace and the Land Trust's conservation efforts, visit fllt.org/emeraldnecklace.

Over \$300,000 Raised to Protect Six Mile Creek

The Land Trust acted quickly in 2016 to buy land that protects 12,000 feet of shoreline along Six Mile Creek and its tributaries upstream of Ithaca.

The 126-acre property, named the Peter M. Rinaldo Preserve, is accessed through our popular Roy H. Park Preserve in Tompkins County. It joins a growing complex of conservation lands that also includes a Cornell Botanic Gardens Natural Area and two state forests.

Our sincere thanks to the generous support of Dorothy Rinaldo, Tompkins County, the City of Ithaca, and the many generous supporters who stretched to meet the \$300,000 project goal. Funds raised for the project covered acquisition of the property as well as a contribution to the Land Trust's Stewardship Fund.

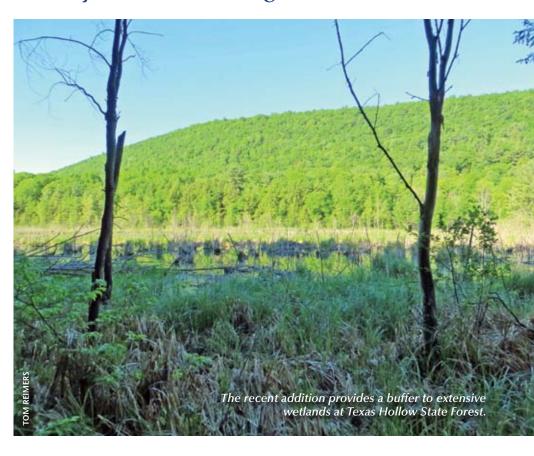


Land Purchase Protects Key Stretch of Finger Lakes Trail

The New York State Department of Conservation recently purchased over 50 wooded acres adjacent to Texas Hollow State Forest in Schuyler County. Acquisition of the property permanently protects 675 feet of the Finger Lakes Trail which runs through the property.

Acquired with assistance from the Land Trust's landowner outreach program, the site will be added to the state's holdings at Texas Hollow and managed as a public conservation area. The property is a mix of upland hardwood including red, black, and white oak, as well as eastern hemlock, red maple, and white ash. It also contains a small wetland.

Funding for the acquisition came through the state's Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) in coordination with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. The EPF is a source of funding for projects that protect the environment and enhance communities. It also supports the stewardship of millions of acres of public lands, including state parks, throughout New York.



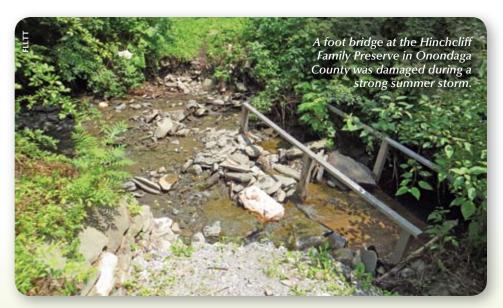
The New Norm?

Torrential rains and damaging windstorms have caused a number of problems throughout the Finger Lakes region this year, and the Land Trust's nature preserves are no exception.

As these issues arise, our stewardship staff works quickly to address weather-related damage and keep our trails open for exploring.

At our High Vista Nature Preserve in Cortland County, a microburst storm uprooted dozens of trees and snapped others, tossing debris across the trails. The trail has since been cleared and re-routed, and can be visited anytime.

Flash-flooding around the southern end of Skaneateles Lake wreaked havoc at the Hinchcliff Family Preserve in Onondaga County. Two footbridges that crossed a stream along the trail were completely washed out and knocked from their abutments—one bridge has yet to be located and may still be floating somewhere in Skaneateles Lake! As an alternative stream crossing, the Land Trust recently installed stone steps which will be more resilient.



At both the Bishop Nature Preserve in Seneca County and the Roy H. Park Preserve in Tompkins County, heavy rains eroded and washed away portions of the stone paths at each site. Recently, nature preserve manager Jason Gorman, along with the help of three interns, spread and compacted nearly a ton of gravel onto the path at the Park Preserve to make it passable again.

As these intense weather events become more frequent, the Land Trust is faced with the challenge of designing infrastructure to withstand them, as well as maintaining what is already there. To support our stewardship work, please contact Kelly Makosch, Director of Development and Communications, at (607) 275-9487 or kellymakosch@fllt.org.

Our appreciation for gifts in honor of:

Jen Bokaer-Smith's Birthday FROM

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Betsy Darlington FROM

The Musicians of the Cayuga Chamber Orchestra Eunice Combs Jean Darlington and Eduardo Marchena Amy Dobbertin FROM Patricia Smith

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Christopher Guerrieri and Sara Hirsch FROM Kevin Caputo

> Dawn Seymour's Birthday FROM Julie Odenbach

New Ithaca Bakery Bread Cards Available

ITHACA BAKERY is generously offering bread cards to all current Land Trust members again this year. The bread card entitles members to one FREE loaf of bread per month with a \$5 minimum purchase at the 400 N. Meadow Street location only. Please visit the Land Trust's main office at 202 E. Court Street in Ithaca if you would like to pick up your bread card.

Our deepest gratitude for thoughtful gifts in memory of:

Ralph Angell FROM Jean Angell

Matthew Dennis Galvin FROM

Cynthia Adler Anna Giambrone Mary Gronski Colleen Gyr Kathy Swimelar The Reilly Family: Ellen,

Mick, Rick, and Ann

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Create your legacy by investing in the Land Trust through a gift from your estate. Discover how you can conserve the places you call home, maximize your philanthropic giving, and meet your financial goals.

To learn more, please call Kelly Makosch at the Land Trust office at (607) 275-9487.



A CLOSER LOOK

Behold the Wild Parsnip

The vegetable parsnip (*Pastinaca sativa*), native to Eurasia, has been cultivated since at least the days of the Romans. The parsnip came to North America on the ships that carried European colonists here and, like the colonists

themselves, it quickly became naturalized in its new environment. This former food crop is now a noxious weed that fills roadsides, abandoned fields, railroad embankments, and fencerows from sea to shining sea.

The botanical family to which the wild parsnip belongs, Apiaceae, contains some of the most poisonous plants in the world; one of them, the poison hemlock (also invasive in New York state), was used to execute Socrates. Wild parsnip roots are edible, but the fruit, stems, and foliage contain high concentrations of toxic chemicals called furanocoumarins. These toxins, which are

designed to protect the plant from herbivory, are activated by UV radiation. Even casual contact with a wild parsnip plant, even on a cloudy day, can cause burning and redness of the skin, frighteningly large blisters that may take several days to appear, and darkened scars that sometimes remain for months or years. If rubbed in the eyes, blindness can occur.

Not all animals seem to be as bothered by these toxins as humans are, however. Deer nibble on the leaves of the wild parsnip, birds and small mammals eat the seeds, and cabbage loopers and the larvae of black swallowtail butterflies (also known as parsnip swallowtails) grow fat on the foliage. But one animal in particular feeds exclusively on the wild parsnip and related species: the parsnip webworm, an insect native to the plant's original range and accidentally introduced into North America in the mid-19th century.

The webworm has gut enzymes that detoxify furanocoumarins, and it also seems to be able to use the carotenoids in the plant material that it ingests to protect itself from UV rays. However, this detoxification process

uses valuable resources: the more resources that the worm expends on neutralizing toxins, the fewer it has for everything else. The plant, in its turn, has to confront a similar catch-22: furanocoumarins take a great deal of energy to produce, energy that could otherwise be put into growth and reproduction. In order to try to swing the calculus in its favor, the parsnip is parsimonious with its poison: it deposits the most furanocoumarins in the parts most vulnerable to herbivory (above the ground) and fewer in the roots. When the plant detects a caterpillar chewing on a leaf, it

quickly increases the concentration of furanocoumarins in that particular leaf. The plant has another trick for protecting its precious seeds: it produces a large number of "decoy" fruits that contain far fewer toxins but no seeds and fewer nutrients. The webworm, for its part, tastes the plant before taking a bite, looking for the bits with the fewest poisons.

The wild parsnip has become firmly rooted in many areas and climate change may be contributing to its spread. But there's a silver lining, and a bit of historical irony, to the story: by some accounts, this rogue root vegetable is tastier than its domesticated cousin. Although it has forked rather than cylindrical roots and is a bit tougher and drier, it is also sweeter and more aromatic. Now that old-fashioned vegetables are hip again and foraging for wild foods is popular, the wild parsnip is going through a bit of a culinary renaissance.

—Jacqueline Stuhmiller



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HOUGHTON LAND PRESERVE DEDICATION, Wednesday, October 18, 11:00 am,

Corning, NY. Join us to celebrate the opening of the Houghton Land Preserve in Corning from 11:00 am-1:00 pm. Donated by longtime Corning community leaders, Jamie and Maisie Houghton, the 195-acre preserve features forests and meadows on Spencer Hill Road. Call the Land Trust for directions and parking instructions at (607) 275-9487.

MEMBER INFORMATION SESSIONS:

Thursday, November 9 7:00 pm–8:00 pmThe Skaneateles Historical Society's Museum at the Creamery 28 Hannum St., Skaneateles, NY 13152 See page 8 for details.

Tuesday, November 14 7:00 pm–8:00 pmWood Library
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