

# Open Space News

## New Land Trust Preserve Borders County Park

Some years ago a family of industrious and ambitious beavers built a dam on a parcel of land just off Rte 416 in the Town of Hamptonburgh. The large wetland and drowned woodland they created soon became home for a heron rookery, wood ducks, black ducks, mallards, gallinules, Canada geese, swallows, and bluebirds—as well as the only known pair of red-headed woodpeckers in the county.

This productive young wetland was permanently protected this past spring, when the Orange County Land Trust acquired 130 acres. The newly acquired tract, now called the Hamptonburgh

Preserve, stretches north from the intersection of Route 207



and County Route 416. Hill-Hold Museum, part of Orange County's Thomas Bull Park, borders it on the north.

"This preserve will enhance Hill-Hold and adjoining park lands by ensuring there will be no intensive development up close to the park," said Graham Skea, Orange County Commissioner of Parks, Recreation and Conservation.

"This wetland is a very special part of Hamptonburgh," said Land Trust President Louis V. Mills, "and we're delighted we're able to preserve it and open it to the public." Purchase of the wetland was made possible with funds from the Land Trust's Wallkill River Valley Fund.

The Land Trust will develop a management plan for the wetland. Explained Land Trust Stewardship Committee Chair Deanna Prisco, "Much of the land is under water, but we hope to be able to open a trail for the public along the wetland's edge. It may also make a good site for environmental studies by local school groups."



*Above left: Surveying the rich wetlands at the new Hamptonburgh Preserve this summer: (l to r) O.C. Parks Commissioner Graham Skea, Land Trust Executive Director John Gebhards, Land Trust President Louis V. Mills, and Hamptonburgh Supervisor Robert Jankowski.*

*Above: The grand opening for the new Preserve and celebratory bird walk led by Land Trust volunteer ornithologist John Tramontano were held Sept. 21 as part of the Hamptonburgh Country Festival. Attendees included (l to r) John Tramontano; Land Trust VP Doug McBride, who officiated at the ribbon-cutting; Tom Long, whose property borders the Preserve; Land Trust biologist Tom Alford; and Dave Monroe, also a Preserve neighbor.*

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*At the Town of Montgomery's River Front Park, Montgomery Supervisor Al Valk describes work done in the town to provide public access to the Wallkill River. Municipal officials from both Orange and Ulster attended the September excursion and workshop.*

## **Wallkill River Task Force Gives Tour and Seminar For River Towns**

On September 17 the Wallkill River Task Force, together with the Town of Montgomery, held an excursion-workshop for municipal leaders from towns along the Wallkill River. Participants enjoyed a bus trip with narration by Al Valk, Montgomery supervisor, showing the town's ground-breaking work on river-corridor protection and public access.

Later, speakers from the Greenway Conservancy, the Greenway Communi-

ties Council, DEC's Biodiversity Outreach office, and the Metropolitan Conservation Alliance explained what tools and funding were available to help towns focus on the river as a public amenity and a major wildlife resource. The event was made possible with a grant from the Hudson River Estuary Program.

The Wallkill River Task Force is a formal project of the Orange County Land Trust.

## **Land Trust Offers a River Ramble**

*The sun was bright and warm for the Orange County Land Trust's Hudson River Ramble along the Wallkill River at Thomas Bull Memorial Park on September 21. Wallkill River Task Force Volunteer Patricia Henighan and AmeriCorps member Kelly Dobbins led about twenty enthusiastic ramblers along the Wallkill, which is a major Hudson tributary. During her tenure with the Land Trust Kelly has organized river walks at the Wallkill River National Wildlife Refuge and a number of Wallkill canoe excursions.*



## **ECOLOGUE**

### **Welcome New Board Members!**

We welcome four terrific new members to the Orange County Land Trust Board of Directors: Bruce Lott, a senior loan officer with Walden Federal Savings; Andrew Mills, a psychologist with Occupations, Inc. in Middletown; Steve Neuhaus, deputy village manager of Walden who also serves on the board of Stewart Airport; and Marshall Swartwood, founder and officer of an investment firm.

### **Welcome Linda!**

We are delighted to have Linda Gette on board as Staff Assistant. Linda is working on increasing community involvement and building support for the Land Trust.

### **Thanks to Volunteers...**

- Kelly Dobbins and the AmeriCorps volunteers who picked up trash and posted signs at Moonbeams;
- Mike Gilman, Joan James, and John Tramontano plus board members Doug McBride, Andy Mills, and Herb Stein for their cleanup of the Hamptonburgh preserve;
- Marlena Lange, instrumental in readying our booth for the Hamptonburgh Country Festival, with board members (and family) Doug McBride, Mary Yrizarry, Deanna Prisco, Art Lain and spouse Phyllis Lain, Elmire Conklin, and John Baranowski and his son Nick;
- Marion McDermott for helping to keep our computers up and running.

### **Congrats**

Congratulations to our Land Trust President Louis V. Mills on publication of his treatise, *The March of the New Windsor Militia to the Defense of Fort Montgomery, October 6, 1777*, available at the Land Trust office. The work has been published in conjunction with the 225<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the historic battle at Ft. Montgomery.

### **Copier please!**

Copier badly needed--ours is on its last spindly legs. A donation would be much appreciated.

## Land Trust Keeps Sterling Forest State Park Growing

Sterling Forest State Park grew by another 144 acres in June, as the Orange County Land Trust transferred land to New York State. The Land Trust had acquired the land several years ago from Arrow Park Resort, which is located in the towns of Monroe and Tuxedo. "The Land Trust is delighted to be able to help to enhance this wonderful wild area in our county," said Land Trust Executive Director John Gebhards.

The park was established in 1998. Since then several additional acquired parcels (including a major acquisition this spring purchased by settlement money from an environmental lawsuit) have brought the park to about 18,000 acres.



Fishing deck at the new Ramapo River access site in the Town of Tuxedo. State Parks Commissioner Castro (center) led the formal opening ceremonies.

## State Parks Commissioner Opens New Ramapo River Access Site

On May 17 the Land Trust celebrated the formal opening of a newly enhanced Ramapo River access site in the Town of Tuxedo on County Route 106 (just off Route 17).

A joint effort of the Palisades Interstate Park Commission and the Orange County Land Trust resulted in creation of a boat launch, handi-capped-access fishing deck, and sanitary facilities on this beautiful river

that originates in our Highlands and runs south into New Jersey. Funding for the access site came from the Land Trust's Ramapo River Fund.

New York State Parks Commissioner Bernadette Castro presided at the formal opening and later that day attended the Land Trust's annual dinner, accepting an award for Gov. Pataki in recognition of his support for open space in Orange County.

### Save the date!

SATURDAY EVENING  
JUNE 7, 2003

Tenth anniversary benefit dinner of the Orange County Land Trust. At the magnificent Arden House, overlooking the tens of thousands of protected Highlands acres.

### Support the Orange County Land Trust--Please make a Financial Donation Today!

Yes, I want to help the Orange County Land Trust protect locally important meadows, forests, farmlands and places for public enjoyment and recreation.

Here is my check for \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Also enclosed is my company's matching gift form

Every dollar goes directly to land preservation in Orange County!

**\$1,000+ Land Conservator**

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Names of all contributors of \$100 or more will be listed in our 2002 Annual Report. Please indicate at right how you would like your name to appear.

Please keep my gifts anonymous

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I would like to include the Land Trust in my will. Please call me.

I would like to volunteer at the Land Trust.

I would like to learn more about how to donate land.

The Orange County Land Trust is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt public charity; all donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. A copy of the Orange County Land Trust annual report may be obtained by calling or writing to John Gebhards, Executive Director, Orange County Land Trust, PO Box 2442, Middletown, NY 10940; (845) 343-0840, or by writing to the NYS office of the Attorney General, Charities Bureau, 120 Broadway, New York, NY 10271.

**ORANGE COUNTY  
LAND TRUST**  
PO Box 2442  
Middletown NY 10940  
PHONE: (845) 343-0840  
email: oclt@warwick.net

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## ***Totem Pole of Healing for Victims of 9/11 Unveiled At Arrow Park***

A very special ceremony took place at Arrow Park bordering Sterling Forest State Park in Monroe on September 7, as Lummi Indians from Washington state



unveiled a 14-foot hand-carved healing totem pole dedicated to those who lost family members at the World Trade Center. In keeping with their tradition of inclusion, the Lummi dedicated this pole to all victims of conflicts throughout the world. Participants included children from war-torn Northern Ireland and Sierra Leone, many of whom have attended grief counseling workshops at Arrow Park during past summers.

Because of the Land Trust's work to preserve Sterling Forest, Executive Director John Gebhards was invited to speak at the ceremony. "The struggle for preservation of open land has brought us together with the Lummi nation," he said. "The Land Trust is also working with the Sterling Forest Partnership to add more land to Sterling Forest State Park and is working to protect other Highlands tracts."

**ORANGE COUNTY LAND TRUST**  
**Dedicated to preserving the fields, forests, wetlands, ridgelines, and river corridors in and around Orange County, through voluntary land conservation.**

### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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#### **STAFF**

John Gebhards <i>Executive Director</i>	Kelly Dobbins <i>AmeriCorps Member</i>
Linda Gette <i>Staff Assistant</i>	Ann Botshon <i>Wallkill River Task Force Coordinator</i>