

Open Space News

Second Conservation Easement For Prospect Hill

A conservation easement on a 14-acre tract on Prospect Hill in Newburgh has been donated to the Land Trust by the landowner, Tom O'Herron. Several years ago Tom's brother Jim protected an adjacent 25-acre parcel of land with a conservation easement, also held by our Land Trust.

Tom and Jim both grew up on their family's beautiful uplands farm that boasts views of West Point to the east and the Shawangunk Mountains to the west. Its woodlands protect the headwaters of the Quassaick Creek and provide valuable habitat for wild turkeys, birds and other wildlife. The small dairy farm with its old stone walls eventually gave



View from protected O'Herron parcel looking east over Hudson Highlands.

way to an apple orchard, and when Tom and Jim's parents died, the land was divided up among the children.

"We wanted to protect this beautiful natural asset amidst the burgeoning growth in the area," said Tom. "Tom and I will own our separate properties; both will be preserved as open space."

Increasing Protection for Lands in the Wallkill Corridor

Future Link in the River Trailway

Ten acres of wildlife-rich floodplain habitat along the Wallkill River, with almost one-half mile of river frontage, will be protected forever thanks to the generosity of Dave Hawkins

of D.L. Hawkins & Associates Real Estate. Hawkins has donated a conservation easement on his Town of Hamptonburgh land to the Land Trust. "This river corridor is a major Orange County resource, and I am glad I am able to help protect it," said Hawkins. "I hope this will set a precedent for other landowners along the river who might also want to see it protected forever."



Realtor Dave Hawkins (l), Wallkill River Task Force coordinator Ann Botshon, and Land Trust Executive Director John Gebhards on site of newly protected Wallkill River corridor in Hamptonburgh. Hawkins donated a conservation easement on the land.

Expanding the Hamptonburgh Preserve

The Land Trust recently acquired 74 acres of land adjacent to its existing Hamptonburgh Preserve across Route 416, bringing the total preserve to 204 acres. This recent portion includes a mosaic of important habitats and agroecosystems: riverine forest with vernal pools, cropland, hedgerows and rolling meadows. The varied landscapes provide a rich visual experience to visitors to the preserve while providing a home for a wide range of plant and animal life.

"We're excited to be increasing access to the Wallkill River for the community," said Ann Botshon, coordinator of the Land Trust's Wallkill River Task Force. "This property provides another link in what we hope will eventually become a major river trailway for walking and hiking and for canoe and kayak access in the corridor—even creating a trail from wetland to river."

New Leadership for Land Trust

Orange County Land Trust founder and President Louis V. Mills has resigned the organization's presidency, but will continue his active involvement with the Land Trust as President Emeritus.



Orange County Land Trust President Emeritus Louis V. Mills

The change comes after a full decade of extraordinary leadership. Lou brought to the task of organization-building a wide knowledge of the county, both through his personal history (a lifelong resident, he is descended from a founding citizen of Orange County), his work in sales, and his prominent role in county politics (he was Orange County's first County Executive). Most important, he brought great vision to the land trust enterprise, gathering together those people in Orange County who cared about preserving Orange County open space and giving voice to the importance of land protection. Then he dug in for the

hard work of organization building, virtually assuring a strong, well-structured, and congenial organization for the 21st millennium. We're delighted he will continue to be involved.

Lou's successor as president is Washingtonville resident Doug McBride, a retired veterinarian. Doug brings great strengths to the job, including deep connections to the farming community through his veterinary work, great analytic skills and meticulous attention to detail, and deep and unequivocal commitment to land protection. "Lou is a tough act to follow," said Doug, "but this is a wonder-



New Land Trust President Doug McBride.

fully cooperative and engaged board, supported by a dedicated group of volunteers, and I'm sure I'll have lots of help."

Award from Hudson Valley Magazine: "Best Friend of Land Preservation"

The Orange County Land Trust has been named the "Best Friend of Land Preservation" in the Hudson Valley by *Hudson Valley Magazine*. The Land Trust was an Editors' Pick based on interviews with staff and board members and visits to several preserves and properties protected through conservation easements. The magazine, which covers ten counties between New York City and Albany, announced the award in its just-released November issue.

ECOLOGUE

Welcome to Board, Francis Wickham

Architect Francis Wickham started out with I.M. Pei and ended up on the Land Trust Board. Not so much of a leap as you might think. "I am interested in good design and open space," said Wickham. A graduate of Middletown High School and Carnegie-Mellon University, he started with I.M. Pei, then became a partner in Prentice and Chan, Ohlhausen for 35 years before going into private practice seven years ago. The flexibility of private practice has allowed Francis to spend more time in Orange County, where he has had a home for 40 years, and he has been an active volunteer with the Land Trust for some time.

Thank You, Guy and David!

Orange County Land Trust has been fortunate in the generous support we have received from our many donors this year. Two unusually generous donors in particular, though, deserve special recognition: Guy Tudor and David Haldeman.

Guy Tudor is a world-renowned illustrator of South American bird field guides, one of New York City's most respected field naturalists, and a MacArthur award recipient. Guy's donation of \$10,000 to the Land Trust honors his friendship with John & Mary Yrizarry, who long ago introduced him to Orange County's great biodiversity, which he continues to investigate with them many times during the year.

David Haldeman has also made an extremely generous donation. When he met with us, he explained that he wanted to make a donation in honor of his late father, who had been a farmer in Pennsylvania. David's dad had his own farm under a conservation

easement in Pennsylvania, and the Haldemans felt that preserving land was something he would have enthusiastically affirmed. David had been watching our Land Trust for many years and felt we were the most effective land preservation organization in the area. David has also offered to help as a Land Trust volunteer.

Tenth-year Gala a Resounding Success

The Land Trust's Tenth Anniversary dinner celebration and silent auction were a great success, with tickets selling out well in advance of the big night. Though the weather outside was frightful, the Arden House was delightful. As one guest put it, "The elegance of these surroundings makes one quite forget the weather!"

Much enthusiastic bidding on exciting silent auction items (such as Giants tickets and private tours of Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge and Sterling Forest) was accompanied by delicious hors d'oeuvres. At dinner, Lou Mills was honored for ten years of service to open space preservation in Orange County, with the keynote speech delivered by James H. Ottaway, Jr.

Wallkill River News: Land Trust Designates River As a Priority Protection Area

The Orange County Land Trust has named the Wallkill River a Priority Protection Area. Working through its Wallkill River Task Force, the Land Trust is participating in several ongoing projects; two, described below, are designed to help protect the Wallkill River, and one is to help increase public access.

Bank seeding project

We approved a grant, administered by the Orange County Soil and Water Conservation District, that helped fund a bank seeding project. Ditch banks in Black Dirt farms are commonly kept bare. In this project ditch banks in some farms were heavily seeded to grow dense mats of fescue grass to help minimize erosion and prevent soil from washing into the Wallkill during heavy rains. This experimental project has been judged a great success, with many more farmers interested in signing up for future plantings.

Sediment Loading Study

In partnership with the Orange County Soil and Water Conservation District,

and funded with a grant from NYS DEC, the Land Trust's Wallkill River Task Force has launched a study that will measure the amounts of sediment in the Wallkill River and some of its tributaries during storm events.

Measurements will take place at these locations: Oil City Rd. bridge (Wallkill River); Newport Bridge Rd. bridge (Pochuck Creek); Jessup Switch Rd. bridge (Quaker Creek); Gardnerville Rd. bridge (Rutgers Creek); Orange County Golf Course Bridge (Wallkill River).

Residents in these areas have volunteered to spearhead the sampling work; but additional volunteers are needed to help us create a team for each site. Please let us know if you're interested in working on this unusual project. Call Kris Breitenfeld at the Soil and Water office: 343-1873.

Montgomery Cartop Access

We've provided a grant to the Village of Montgomery to help develop a cartop access point for canoes and kayaks. Construction is under way, with completion expected by year's end.

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 work in Orange County!

\$1,000+ Land Conservator

\$500-999 Land Protector

\$250-499 Land Champion

\$100-249 Land Steward

Under \$100 Friend

Names of all contributors of \$100 or more will be listed in our 2003 Annual Report. Please indicate how you would like your name to appear.

Please keep my gifts anonymous

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone _____ email _____

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 protect my 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.

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Join the Orange County Land Trust For a Holiday Celebration!



This is the one event of the holiday season that you really don't want to miss! Join us for an informal open house gathering Friday, December 12, from 2 to 5 at the Land Trust office (First Presbyterian Church, downtown

Middletown) to sample our Board Members' homemade hors d'oeuvres. And, of course, get to know other volunteers and supporters of open space in Orange County!

ORANGE COUNTY LAND TRUST

The mission of the Orange County Land Trust is to preserve the fields, forests, wetlands, ridgelines, and river corridors in and around Orange County, through voluntary land conservation.

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