

# Open Space News

## ***New Conservation Easements Protect Farmland, Wildlife Habitat***

### ***Crawford Easement Protects 147 acres***

Late this winter the Land Trust acquired a conservation easement on 147 acres of valuable farmland as well as open fields, woods, wetlands and stream corridors in the Town of Crawford. Landowner Ramon Rueda, who is enthusiastic about the possibilities of alternative agriculture, is planning to raise alpacas on the property. The town's master plan encourages specialty crops and livestock.

The Tamira Amelia farm, as it is called, has been divided into three areas for the purpose of defining the land's uses. The farmstead area will contain houses, fences, barns and other structures and improvements; the farm area is intended primarily for the production of crops, livestock and forestry; and the resource protection area, containing the most environmentally sensitive lands, such as wetlands and the Dwaarkill, benefits from a "limited use" restriction. The landowner has provided funding for a stewardship endowment for the property. A generous donor provided additional funds to facilitate acquisition of this easement.

As Land Trust President Doug McBride has noted, "The Land Trust has identified areas of Crawford and Montgomery that are still engaged in active agriculture and are deserving of protection. Tamira Amelia is a good example of the kind of innovative farm operation that should be viable in the future."



*At the Tamira Amelia Farm in the Town of Crawford, Ramon Rueda and his son Ian raise alpacas; the valuable wetland and stream habitat will be kept unspoiled.*



*Bill Steidle on his Christmas tree farm in the Town of New Windsor.*

### ***Tree Farm Protected in New Windsor***

This spring the Orange County Land Trust protected 20 acres of farmland on scenic Jackson Avenue in the Town of New Windsor.

The property, known as Pine View, is a working Christmas tree farm that has been in William Steidle's family for three generations. Land Trust executive director John Gebhards notes the agricultural and historic value of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century homestead and the unusually wide variety of wildlife habitat: the stream, open fields, woodlands and wetlands are home to ducks, muskrats, mink and owls.

The land is protected by a conservation easement, which landowners Bill and Margaret Steidle donated to the Land Trust. The Land Trust's costs for acquiring this easement were met by funds provided by Orange County for open space protection.

## County's Official Open Space Plan Debuts

Board members and staff of the Land Trust have been collaborating with the County's Planning Department on a new county Open Space Plan. Now the plan is ready for public comment, with hard copy available from the Planning Dept., and posted at [www.orangecountygov.com/planning](http://www.orangecountygov.com/planning). Public hearings are scheduled for Monday, April 26, 7 p.m., and Wednesday, April 28, 4:30 p.m. Written comments will also be accepted.

The plan will likely be approved by the Rules Committee on May 19, with legislative review and approval likely at the June 3 meeting.

The county administration is expected to propose a dedicated open space fund of \$2 million this year, to be generated by a bond issue. An additional \$1.5 million, dedicated to water protection (such as protection of land draining into reservoirs) could come from existing funding collected several years ago to support the Water Authority. The funding would be used to offer matching funds to municipalities and non-governmental groups working to purchase land or easements from willing sellers.

In addition, 3,500 acres of county

lands obtained by the county for the abandoned water loop project may be permanently protected.

Please support the county's efforts to protect open space by sending your comments to the legislature at 255 Main St., Goshen, NY 10924.

### Conservation Tax Strategies for Landowners And Estate Planners

Join us on May 4 (evening) and May 5 (morning) for an interesting program with Stephen J. Small, the leading U.S. authority on private land protection and income and estate tax strategies for landowners. The author of three books on preserving family lands, Steve advises landowners and conservation professionals on aspects of federal income and estate tax planning that will help preserve their land.

The May 4 presentation, primarily for landowners, focuses on preserving family lands. The May 5 workshop, designed for tax and estate planning professionals, will provide information on helping clients minimize estate taxes while keeping cherished lands in the family. The seminar, "The Financial

Benefits of Land Conservation," will be held at the PPL Wallenpaupack Environmental Learning Center, on Rte. 6, just east of Hawley, Pennsylvania. For more information and to register contact the Land Trust at 845-343-0840, email: [oclt@warwick.net](mailto:oclt@warwick.net).

### Double Your Money for Land Protection During The Spring Birdathon

Your donation will be doubled during our Spring Birdathon, thanks to the generosity of Verizon Communications. For the second year, Verizon employ-



ees have volunteered to help with the Land Trust fundraising efforts, so every dollar you donate during our 2004 Birdathon will mean two dollars for land protection!

To help protect open space in Orange County, mail your check marked "for the birds" today. Donations must be received by May 15 to qualify.

## ECOLOGUE

### Welcome back, Ann

We welcome Ann Botshon's return to the Land Trust board. For the last three years she served as coordinator of the Wallkill River Task Force, which is a formal project of the Land Trust.

### OCLT hosts roundtable

Representatives from land trusts throughout southeastern New York attended a roundtable hosted by the Orange County Land Trust on April 23. Martus Granirer of the West Branch Conservation Associa-

tion explained how property tax law can hamper landowners donating conservation easements. A roundtable discussion followed. The roundtable was one of several events sponsored this spring by the Land Trust Alliance Northeast Program.

### We are saddened by these recent losses.

A leader in the community and wife of Board Member Jacques Levine, **Florence Levine** was always there with a warm smile and a tasty hors d'oeuvre to support our Land Trust events. The Land Trust Board

joins many in the community in mourning her passing.

We grieve the loss of **Terry Plummer**, a steward for our Hunter Farm Preserve. As an adjacent landowner with a love of the out-of-doors, Terry was an ideal steward. We will miss his knowledge and care of the land.

An extraordinarily talented nature photographer, **Steve Valk** was generous in donating his work to the Land Trust for publications and for our new website. His life ended as he was planning a major photographic work showcasing the beauty of Orange County's open spaces.

## ***Luminaries and Leaders Support Benefit Dinner at Historic Arden House***

Honorary Chair Gov. George E. Pataki, Benefit Chair James H. Ottaway, Jr., and the illustrious community leaders on our Benefit Committee invite you to a festive benefit dinner at Arden House on Saturday, June 5. This exciting event will honor Jan and Sandra van Heerden and Ann Botshon for their leadership in land preservation, and will also raise funds to support the Land Trust's work to protect open space in our county.

It promises to be an exciting evening. We're returning to the much-admired Arden House for a second year. Our featured speaker is Constantine Sidamon-Eristoff, chairman of the board of Audubon New

York, former EPA regional administrator, and attorney specializing in environmental and land-use law. Mr. Sidamon-Eristoff and his wife Anne were recently honored by the National Audubon Society for their exceptional leadership in conservation.

Last year's dinner at Arden House was so popular we had to turn people away. Don't be disappointed this year—call today for information and reservations! 845-343-0840.



## ***Local Groups Join Open Space Alliance***

The Orange County Open Space Alliance (OCOSA), dedicated to protecting open space in the county through networking and information sharing, has recently welcomed grassroots community groups in Greenville, Chester, Goshen and Montgomery. Several Alliance members have provided input to Goshen's Citizens for

Open Space campaign, which is working to get the open space bond issue on the ballot for a re-vote this fall.

OCOSA invites attendance by any group seeking preservation of farmland or open space in the county. Please call the OCOSA voice mail at 845-986-1762.

If you would like to be on the OCOSA email alert, please contact the Land Trust and provide us with your email address.

## ***Country Auction to Benefit Land Trust***

Antiques, quilts, fine collectibles, and even a "pile of poop" for some lucky gardener!

Come to our live auction on Saturday, July 17, at 4:30 p.m., at the Neversink Museum in Cuddebackville (previews Friday, July 16, noon to 4, and Saturday, July 17, at noon.) We've got lots of exciting items for your shopping pleasure! Bring the whole family for an afternoon in the country. Enjoy a canal-boat ride on a restored section of the historic D&H Canal, enjoy lunch at the refreshment stand, visit the museum and bid on a wide variety of items being auctioned by Vinnie Bambina of the Old Red Barn Auction in Cuddebackville.

We are still looking for those special items for the auction, proceeds of which will directly support our land preservation work in Orange County. If you have an antique, collectible or object of interest to donate, please call our office at 845-343-0840.

*Mt. Eve in the Town of Warwick. The Land Trust currently holds two conservation easements, totaling 145 acres, on Mt. Eve. Recently the Land Trust sponsored a neighborhood gathering at the home of Howard and Elmire Conklin to discuss protecting more of the mountain.*



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*"Best friend of land preservation in the  
Hudson Valley" –Hudson Valley Magazine.*

## **Luminaries and leaders support benefit dinner at historic Arden House –details inside!**

## **Come join us for some terrific walks, paddles and events!**

*Walks are free, open to the  
public. Steady rain cancels.  
Call 343-0840 weekdays.*

Sat., May 22, 7 a.m. **It's All  
About Birds.** Join the miracle of  
the migrating birds, with focus  
on behavior, color and song.  
Hamptonburgh Preserve.  
Leader John Yrizarry.

Sun., June 27, 1 p.m. **Celebrate  
Orange County Day at  
Moonbeams.** Plants, early  
butterflies, breeding birds.  
Moonbeams Preserve. Leader:  
Tom Alford.

Sun., July 18, 9:30 a.m. till 4  
p.m. **Butterflies Galore** (sunny  
day only). Join the experts in a  
survey of butterflies on our  
preserves. Bring lunch and  
plenty to drink. Call for meeting  
place. Leader: John Yrizarry.

Sun., Aug. 15, 1 p.m. **Summer  
Wildflowers and Pond Life.**  
Flowers of the field—goldenrod,  
thistles, Queen Anne's Lace—and  
life in the Hunter Farm pond.  
Hunter Farm Preserve. Leaders:  
Tom Alford and Kelly Dobbins.

Sat., Sept. 18. **Hudson River  
Ramble: Canoe the Walkkill  
River.** Bring your canoe or  
reserve a place in ours. Bring  
lunch, plenty to drink. Reserva-  
tions. Leader: Jim Ullrich.

Sat., Oct. 2. **Hudson Highlands  
Museum Festival.** Stop by our  
booth, as we join the Museum  
folks to celebrate fall.

Sun., Oct. 17, 1 p.m. **Autumn  
Leaves.** Take a brisk sunny-  
autumn-day walk at Moon-  
beams Preserve. Leader:  
Monty Vacura.

### **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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### **STAFF**

John Gebhards, *Executive Director*  
Linda Gette, *Development Director*

**Open Space News is published by the Orange County Land Trust**