

OPEN SPACE NEWS

ORANGE COUNTY LAND TRUST



WORKING CATTLE AND HAY FARM PRESERVED

Another beautiful piece of farmland and important ecological habitat has been protected in the Town of Warwick. Working in partnership, the Town of Warwick, Scenic Hudson and Orange County Land Trust purchased the conservation easement from Will Brown and Barbara Felton early this year. The 293-acre farm, located in the Amity Wetlands region, is an active beef cattle and hay operation.

The conservation easement was crafted to ensure protection and compatibility of both the agricultural viability and the significant natural resources, including extensive frontage along Pochuck Creek, 100 and 50-year floodplain, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation-designated wetlands and federally-designated wetlands. The property is not only home to cattle and the Brown and Felton family but to a variety of birds such as the Tufted Titmouse, Eastern Bluebird, Red-tailed Hawk, and Black-capped Chickadee, as well as white-tailed deer.

The Orange County Land Trust retains third-party enforcement rights on this conservation easement, held by Scenic Hudson and the Town of Warwick. This project is the Land Trust's 21st conservation easement project with a private landowner, bringing the total acres of land preserved to nearly 3,000.

NEWBURGH FREE ACADEMY TO SHARE SNAKE HILL STEWARDSHIP

Giving new meaning to the term "outdoor classroom," students from the Newburgh Free Academy will take to the woods at Snake Hill Preserve in a pilot stewardship initiative.

Phase one of this initiative for Orange County Land Trust is to expose NFA students to local environmental career opportunities. Phase two includes Orange County Master Gardeners from Cornell Cooperative Extension providing workshops on invasive plant species identification, teaching students how to recognize and control the Preserve's invasive plants.

Orange County Land Trust's staff and volunteers will work with government students on other aspects of land conservation practices. NFA's construction career academy and engineering students will work with green design by building kiosks and benches under retired architect and Board member Francis Wickham's direction.

"Involving students in stewardship is a way to encourage community participation," said Jim Delaune, OCLT's Executive Director. "When we suggested to NFA that the various academies take part in hands-on conservation management, they loved the idea."



Cattle at Brown-Felton Farm

NFA's Gary Vanvoorhis, in his role as Director of Community Education, stresses jobs and service opportunities as a way to reinforce what students learn in the classroom. "Nothing makes me happier than to have our students engaged in community experiences," he said. "It's invaluable when kids have the chance to try out the work they plan to make a career of. And working with the Land Trust gives interested government seniors a great way to meet their commitment to ten hours of community service."

The Snake Hill Preserve, owned by Scenic Hudson since 2004 and co-managed by the Land Trust, is close to the school. The Preserve reaches an elevation of 700 feet at its highest point and offers majestic views of the Hudson River. The plants and woodlands provide unique habitats for a rich variety of birds and other wildlife, including open and talus slope communities.



A LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

It is hard to believe I have been with the Land Trust for four months now. The end of the year was a little hectic in learning about the organization and preparing for a closing of a rather complex easement in Warwick. The Brown/Felton easement finally closed on January 23rd. Our staff, especially Carissa Haberland, worked diligently to make this happen.

At the suggestion of Dr. John D'Ambrosia, President of the Orange County Chamber of Commerce, I have set upon a course of action to elevate the Land Trust's visibility and credibility. I have met with all of our representatives in the House and Assembly in order to introduce the Orange County Land Trust. I must say, Orange County is blessed with truly visionary representation in Albany. What I learned at these meetings was that the Land Trust is a respected organization with a reputation of "doing the right thing". I am hoping that in the future our position in the political landscape is one of working with all parties to achieve a balance of smart growth, land conservation, and the creation of employment opportunities in the region.

I have also met with the following: John Checklick - President of The United Way; Maureen Halahan - President of the Orange County Partnership; Jonathan Drapkin - President of Pattern For Progress; Jean Rowe - Executive Director of the Hudson Valley Builders Association; David Church - Commissioner of the Orange County Planning Department; Wayne Decker - Orange County Legislator; Sr. Ann Sakac - President of Mt. St. Mary; Jim Smith of Advanced Testing; Paul Taxter - NYS Economic Development; Dave MacFarland - President of Riverside Bank and a member of the Orange County IDA; Dr. William Richards - President of Orange County Community College; Nancy Proyect - President of the Orange County Citizen Foundation; William Schuster - Executive Director of the Black Rock Consortium; Glenn Hoagland - Executive Director of the Mohonk Preserve; and of course Dr. John. Once again, the folks that know the Land Trust respect our work. The few individuals that were not aware of the Land Trust are now supportive of our mission.

Our emerging collaborations with other land conservation organizations, political representatives, and the business community strengthen the Land Trust. Such collaborations enable us to create partnerships, leveraging our staff and resources to save more land.

Next on my agenda is to continue to grow the organization, standardize our operation, increase revenues, and align ourselves with our strategic partners to continue protecting that which makes Orange County a great place to live and do business in.

Thank you to the Board, Staff and Volunteers who have made this time of transition for me an enjoyable and rewarding experience.

WELCOME WAGON - WE'VE BEEN BUSY!

Mark Taylor, Esq., of the law firm of Rider, Weiner & Frankel, P.C. who specializes in municipal law, and Lester Lain, a retired farmer from Minisink, have joined the Land Trust's Board of Directors. Both Mark and Lester are long time Orange County residents who are eager to help us in advancing our mission and endeavors. We look forward to having them "on-board" as we work to secure the Land Trust's financial future.

We are also pleased to announce that David L. Rider, Esq., of the law firm Rider, Weiner and Frankel, P.C. and Brian Varley, CPA have agreed to serve on our Advisory Council. Their advice in their fields of expertise will be of great benefit to the Land Trust in the months ahead.

Joining the staff of the Land Trust is Karin Roux as the Wallkill River Watershed Steward. Karin has her Master of Science from George Mason University. She was a Smithsonian Fellow and spent time as a Wildlife Intern in South Africa with the Mqubu Ntombela Foundation. She will continue to work part-time as an Adjunct Instructor in OCCC's Biology Department. At the Land Trust, Karin will be working to increase public awareness of Wallkill River issues and coordinating efforts with schools and municipalities to improve the River's habitat quality and increase public access opportunities in a non-invasive manner.



HIKE DELIVERS SURPRISES

You never know what you'll find on a hike with Dr. Jennifer Merriam, Assistant Professor of Biology at SUNY Orange. During the *Winter Storage in Woods and Fields* hike with Dr. Merriam in November, Cub Scout Pack 62 of Goshen was surprised when they came upon the bones of a small animal and were especially impressed with finding a leg bone. Other discoveries that delighted the boys were tadpoles and salamanders. Teresa Grasso, den leader for the boys, wrote, "Thank you for the opportunity to hike with an expert. The Boys really enjoyed it." Dr. Merriam offers a variety of hikes throughout the year. Check our website at www.oclt.org for a full listing of scheduled events for 2007.

BECOME A STEWARD OF THE HUDSON RIVER OTTER

Report your sightings now!

Your input is very valuable to the Department of Environmental Conservation's efforts to learn more about the distribution of river otters in the Hudson River Watershed. To report a sighting, simply call or email and provide



the date, location, your contact information and what you saw. Call (518)773-7318 or email: hrotter@gw.dec.state.ny.us.

OCLT STAFF

- James H. Delaune.....Executive Director
- Carissa D. Haberland.....Acquisition & Stewardship Director
- Maureen Gambardella.....Program Coordinator
- Karin Esme-Roux.....Wallkill River Watershed Steward
- Sarah Hutton.....Administrative Assistant
- Debbie Martucci.....Bookkeeping Consultant

Don't miss out...
Hang me
on your fridge!

Walkabouts & Talkabouts

2007 PUBLIC PROGRAM CALENDAR

Our field trips are a great way to get out and enjoy the beauty of our county, meet new and interesting people and learn about natural history with experts in an unstructured environment. Our field trips are free, family-friendly and, as always, they are open to the public.

Hike Schunнемunk Mountain

Saturday, April 14, 10AM

Meet at hikers' parking area on Clove Road just south of Hil-Mar Lodge, Salisbury Mills, NY. Easy to moderate hike led by OCLT President Doug McBride, Joan James, and Bambi Barth. Wear boots; bring lunch and plenty to drink.

Slippery, Slidy Salamander Hunt

Saturday, April 21 10AM

Fuller Mountain Preserve in Warwick
Meet at southwest corner of Shop Rite Shopping Center parking lot on Rt. 94 south of Warwick. John Yrizarry will identify and talk about the habits and habitats of these hard-to-find creatures. Wear your mud boots!

Stroller Hikes with Tykes

Friday, April 27 10:30AM

Hunter Farm Preserve
Stroller friendly walk where children lead the discovery experience, guided by Naturalist Guide Laurel Dodge.

Welcome Spring

Saturday April 28, 1PM Rain Date Sunday April 29th

Moonbeams Preserve on Prosperous Valley Road in the Town of Wallkill. SUNY Biology Professor Tom Alford will identify spring wildflowers and many other signs of spring.

Hike Fuller Mountain Preserve

Saturday May 12, 9AM (Rain or Shine)

Meet at southwest corner of Shop Rite Shopping Center parking lot on Route 94 south of Warwick. Andy Mills has been working to create the trail in this OCLT preserve and will lead a walk through some of the loveliest unspoiled woodland in the County. Wear boots and bring plenty of water and food.

Welcome the Birds Back at Moonbeams

Sunday May 20, 8AM

Prosperous Valley Road in the Town of Wallkill
SUNY Orange Biology Professor Joseph Zurovchak is an avid birder and will help you find and identify these returning jewels of the air to their summer nesting places. Bring binoculars and bug repellent.

Stroller Hikes with Tykes

Friday May 25 10:30AM

Moonbeams Preserve on Prosperous Valley Road in the Town of Wallkill. Stroller friendly walk where children lead the discovery experience, guided by Naturalist Guide Laurel Dodge.

For more information on these programs call

845-343-0840 on weekdays, 9:00am to 5:00pm.

Check the Calendar page on our website for special programs and events added throughout the year.

Spring Wildflower Walk

at Fuller Mountain Preserve

Saturday May 26, 10AM Rain Date Sunday May 27th

Meet at southwest corner of Shop Rite Shopping Center parking lot on Route 94 south of Warwick. SUNY Orange Biology Professor Tom Alford knows his flowers and will show you some beauties as he regales you with interesting facts about them. Wear hiking shoes and bring bug repellent.

Celebrate Orange County Day

at Hunter Farm Preserve

Sunday June 10th, 2007 10AM

Explore the pond and stream edges for frogs, tadpoles, and dragonflies. Leader: SUNY Orange Professor Jennifer Merriam.

Butterflies for Beginners

Saturday July 14, 10 AM

Hunter Farm Preserve
Butterfly enthusiast John Yrizarry will help to identify the butterflies and the flowers that attract them as well as any other critter you may find in the field. Wear long pants and bug spray. Bring close focus binoculars if you have them.

Canoe the Wallkill – Part of Hudson River Ramble

Saturday September 15th, 2007 10AM

Meet at the Wallkill River at Stony Ford Rd. in Goshen. Bring your own canoe or sign up for a seat in one of ours. Jim Ullrich will lead you along this beautiful Hudson River tributary that winds throughout Orange County. Reservations required.

Hike Snake Hill – Part of Hudson River Ramble

Saturday September 15th, 2007 10AM

Meet in the parking lot off San Giacomo Dr. off Union Ave. in New Windsor. See the Hudson River from an eagle's point of view while you climb the erratics (huge boulders) with leader Tim Murphy. Wear long pants and hiking boots. Bring water

Discover Nature in Autumn Colors

Saturday September 29, 1PM

Moonbeams Preserve on Prosperous Valley Road in the Town of Wallkill. SUNY Orange Biology Professor Tom Alford will have you and your kids finding natural treasures in the autumn landscape through interactive games and a treasure hunt.

Signs of Winter Storage

Sunday November 4th 2007 10AM

Families welcome.

Moonbeams Preserve on Prosperous Valley Road in the Town of Wallkill. SUNY Orange Biology Professor Dr. Jennifer Merriam will lead you through the preserve to find what animals are storing for winter.

www.OCLt.org

Earth Day Special

RECYCLING...IT MATTERS

Recycling one aluminum beverage can saves enough energy to run a 100-watt bulb for 20 hours, a computer for three hours, or a TV for two hours.

Recycling one glass bottle saves enough energy to power a 100 watt-light bulb for four hours or a television for three hours.

If everyone in the U.S. recycled just 1/10th of their newsprint, we would save the estimated equivalent of about 25 million trees a year.

Recycling...

- Reduces the need for new landfills
- Prevents emissions of many air and water pollutants
- Saves energy
- Supplies valuable raw materials to industry
- Creates jobs
- Reduces greenhouse gas emissions
- Stimulates the development of greener technologies
- Conserves resources for our children's future

Excerpt from the White House Task Force on Recycling



LAND TRUST EARTH DAY EFFORTS

Orange County Land Trust is making the move toward a more environmentally friendly newsletter. *Open Space News* will now be printed on post-consumer recycled paper with vegetable-based inks.

We are also moving toward using an electronic filing system. We have submitted an application for the 2007 NYS Conservation Partnership Program's Conservation Capacity and Excellence Grant, administered by LTA. If awarded, the Land Trust will be able to update our recordkeeping and filing systems, establish policies that will enable us to become compliant with the LTA Standards and Practices, and facilitate our application for accreditation within a five to seven year period. In addition, the award of this Grant would strengthen the Land Trust's ability to effectively steward, manage and defend our existing conservation easements and preserves.

SLIPPERY, SLIDY SALAMANDER HUNT

Don't miss the newest addition to our events calendar - the Slippery, Slidy Salamander Hunt. Come stomp around in the mud and watch the salamanders make an appearance. Learn about salamander habits and their habitat. Be sure to wear your rubber boots and old clothes as this could be a messy event. Something for the kid in all of us. Saturday, April 21 10AM at Fuller Mountain Preserve in Warwick



IN THE WORKS FOR 2007

Carissa Haberland, Acquisition and Stewardship Director, has been busy working with landowners to prepare applications to the Orange County Open Space Fund. The Land Trust worked with four land owners to submit the applications which are in the process of being reviewed. The applications would add over 400 acres of protected lands in four different towns across the county. These projects include our first urban open space project, the expansion of an existing preserve, a 200+ acre family farm in Waywayanda and an organic farm in Greenville. If awarded, these properties would increase the total acreage preserved by the Land Trust to over 3,300. It is with the generous support of Orange County residents and government officials that the Open Space Fund is available to conserve Orange County's character.

4TH ANNUAL BIRD-A-THON



It's that time of year again - the 4th annual OCLT Bird-a-thon. As in the past, the Land Trust is reaching out to those donors who have been excited about supporting our work, especially with the prospect of matching grants.

This year, unfortunately, we do not have a sponsor for the match but we will still hold the bird-a-thon on May 12th. As we go to press, we are working on a partnership with a local bird club as well as a local children's agency. If anyone is interested in helping to sponsor our fund-raiser by offering a matching grant, please call our office at 845-343-0840.

Look for our bright green mailer announcing all the details, including when our volunteers will be calling. And remember, it's for the birds - and for all who enjoy healthy habitat in Orange County.



NEW IRA TAX PROVISION

Tucked away in the huge Pension Protection Act of 2006 signed into law on August 17, 2006 that gave you expanded tax incentives for conservation easement donations is a rare tax break when you invest in the land trust community's good work.

If you or someone you know is 70½ years of age or older, the new law permits you to make direct contributions from your individual retirement account to a charitable organization of your choice – up to \$100,000 in 2007. This charitable contribution can satisfy your IRA's required yearly minimum distribution and will be excluded from your federal taxable income!

There is one essential detail: your plan administrator must issue the check directly to the charity. Because your contribution is not taxable income, you cannot claim an additional charitable tax deduction. However, examples show that gifting funds directly from your IRA is one of the most beneficial means of charitable giving. Consult your plan administrator and/or your tax advisor for more information about this provision. You can also find more information at www.lta.org/publicpolicy/factsheet_tax_planning.htm. We hope you will take advantage of this special opportunity by make a donation to the Land Trust. Your gift will greatly impact the protection of natural places we need and love.



Special thanks to volunteer Kyle Gambardella for his help with the application! (seen here at the future location of the wildlife viewing platform)

HUDSON RIVER VALLEY GREENWAY GRANT AWARD

On March 14, 2007, Orange County Land Trust was awarded a \$5000 matching grant from the Hudson River Valley Greenway. This grant will allow for much needed public access improvements to the Hamptonburgh Preserve, which includes over one mile of the former Onatario and Western Rail Road.

The improvements include creating a walking trail to the Wallkill River, improvements to the parking areas, construction of a wildlife viewing platform, as well as creating trail markers and maps.

The Hamptonburgh Preserve is located at the intersection of Routes 207 and 416 in the Town of Hamptonburgh. The eastern portion of the Preserve consists almost entirely of State and Federal designated wetland and is seasonally home to a multitude of water fowl.

Look for the improvements to begin in the fall, when volunteer help will be needed for trail work. Upon completion, the Land Trust will apply for official Greenway Trail designation and offer the Preserve to local schools as an outdoor classroom.



ALL NEW! OCLT MERCHANDISE

The Land Trust is now selling books written by local authors such as Keith Stewart, Ann Priest, Patricia Edwards Clyne and Ann Botshon on our website. Take a look at the **all new** merchandise page by logging onto <http://www.oclt.org/merch.htm> and buy a book or two.

In addition to books, the Land Trust has a new line of clothing and accessories on <http://www.cafepress.com/oclt> for purchase. T-shirts, magnets, hats and lots more items to choose from. Show your support for conserving open space in Orange County by wearing our logo proudly. All proceeds from sales go to the Land Trust!



OWL PROWL'S A HOOT

Orange County Land Trust volunteer, David Diaz, led a group of 25 inquisitive adults and children on an owl prowl. Mr. Diaz began the hike by giving facts about owls the group might encounter as well as those that might be found during the winter in New York.

The group took a journey around the Lower Bashakill Preserve with Mr. Diaz, who is an avid birder, calling to owls known to be located on the Preserve. By the end of the hike, the group was able to say they heard a real live screech owl call back!

Although the night was cold, all who journeyed out had a wonderful time learning more about owls and listening to their calls. Great fun was had by all.

WISH LIST SPRING 2007

Orange County Land Trust is in need of the following items:

- Mapping grade Trimble GPS - \$6000
- Photocopier that sorts and staples - \$1000
- Computers with Windows XP - \$500-1000
- Computer desks
- Reams of copier paper \$35-50

If you would like to donate any of these items, please call our office: (845) 343-0840 or email us at info@oclt.org

ORANGE COUNTY LAND TRUST

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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.

**Save the Date to Celebrate...
our 15th year of Service on June 8th, 2007**



Orange County Land Trust will host their 15th Annual Benefit Dinner on Friday, June 8th, 2007 from 6pm to 10pm at the Inn at Central Valley, in Central Valley, NY.

The cost of the dinner will be \$100 per person. Sponsorship packages are available upon request. If you would like more information about the dinner please call our office at 845-343-0840 or email info@oclt.org.

Coming soon...OCLT's 2nd Annual Farm Tour, Summer 2007



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