



volume 22 | number 02 | winter 2012

conservancy news





Deborah E. Lans

For a birthday present many years ago my partner gave me a hot air balloon ride. One chilly dawn, we lifted off from a field across from Ichabod Crane High School and floated south toward Hudson, watching the mist rise out of the hills and the river, skimming over fields of corn and finally landing in an alfalfa field. The county we saw that morning, and the one I love just as much today, is a Grandma Moses scene – mostly unspoiled hills, dales, fields, woods, with homes and corn and horses and kids scattered throughout.

As 2012 comes to an end, we can be thankful that the scene is largely unchanged. And that is due at least in part to CLC's work to conserve our most beautiful natural spaces from development and to encourage development that is sensitive to our surroundings. In turn, CLC is grateful to our many supporters – volunteers, donors, conservation area users and fellow Wednesday Wanderers – who walk the walk with us. I, for one, make it a point to spend part of every holiday taking a hike in some treasured spot. This year, I'm planning a Christmas morning hike at the Ooms Conservation Area. I would love it if you can join me. I'll be in the parking lot at 10:00 AM with my dog, Mollie. I'll look for you there.



Peter Paden

This issue of the newsletter is once again chock full of stories and photographs telling of our wide-ranging work to ensure that the qualities that make Columbia County such an extraordinary place will endure. It is, as always, an impressive and inspiring list of projects and accomplishments. If you enjoy reading about them, and if you would like to see this work continue to maximum effect, we could use your help right now as we begin to make plans for the next chapter of our institutional life.

The achievements and programs described in these pages are not the result of spontaneous effort. They are the product of careful planning. Six years ago, the board and staff undertook a rigorous strategic planning process. Over more than a year of hard work, we re-stated our basic mission, articulated a vision for what we hope will be the long term impact of our labors, and laid out an ambitious, multi-faceted program to carry out our mission and bring our vision closer to reality. It was a highly successful planning endeavor, and has guided everything we've done in the intervening years.

It is time now to look ahead to the next five years. We are once again gearing up to take a sober look at ourselves – what we have been doing, how we have been doing it, what we could be doing better. To do this effectively, we need your help. We are committed to the idea that our work should reflect the values and aspirations of the community we serve. We need to hear what you think about us and about our work. We have created a web-based survey, accessible at: <https://www.clctrust.org/survey>. Please, take five or ten minutes to go on line and tell us your thoughts. I assure you that your input will be taken seriously as we chart our course for the period 2013-2018.

With your help, we will continue working to conserve the farmland, forests, wildlife habitat and rural character of this great place and strengthening connections between people and the land.



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Farmland Protection Efforts Move Forward

In June, CLC learned that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) awarded a \$2.56 million dollar Farm and Ranchland Protection Program (FRPP) grant to protect five agricultural properties in Columbia County and two in Dutchess County. This award is great news for local farmland protection and came about through a joint application submitted in partnership with Scenic Hudson and the Dutchess Land Conservancy (DLC).

The farms, three in Stuyvesant, one in Taghkanic, and one in Germantown, together with two additional farms in Dutchess County, add up to 1,250 acres of farmland that the three organizations are protecting as part of a collaborative effort to stabilize the base of agricultural land in the region.

The funding is part of a USDA program that is authorized by the Farm Bill. The FRPP provides matching funds to purchase development rights in order to keep productive farm and ranchland in agricultural use. The USDA provides up to 50 percent of the fair market value of the conservation easement. Scenic Hudson will provide a substantial portion of the balance.

"We are working to ensure that agriculture remains a dynamic part of Columbia County's landscape, identity and economy," says CLC Executive Director Peter Paden. "Scenic Hudson has been a great partner in this effort, and we are glad to work with them and with the Dutchess Land Conservancy to support working farms across the region. By pooling our skills and resources, we believe we can bring about many more conservation achievements."

For CLC, this means working with four of the Columbia County landowners to prepare and to hold four separate conservation easements that will permanently protect the unique agricultural resources found on each farm property. Lands under conservation easement remain privately owned. Landowners participate voluntarily and can continue to live on, farm and enjoy their property, which remains on the tax rolls. The program allows farmers to cash out a portion of the often high, but illiquid, value of their land holdings and plow it into their typically cash-starved business.

The largest of the Columbia County farm properties participating in the current grant is Triple Creek farm in Taghkanic, owned and operated by the Skoda family. This 487-acre dairy farm is currently run by Rick Skoda, whose father started the business. Rick is assisted by his sons, Josh and Ryan, who plan to take over the farm someday. The funds generated by the sale of development rights will provide a strong financial base for the Skoda's to continue to build their family business and pass it along to the next generation. The easement will ensure the conservation of the largest working farm in the Town of Taghkanic and, together with two neighboring protected properties, will create a conservation block of some 750 acres.



This farmland conservation initiative results from a growing collaboration between Scenic Hudson, CLC and DLC, and builds on numerous successful joint projects in recent years. In 2011 Scenic Hudson and CLC collaborated with four Stuyvesant landowners to permanently protect 399 acres and enabled one local farm to significantly expand its operation. The newly announced grants support the

Earlier this year, CLC brought Congressman Chris Gibson to the Triple Creek Farm. Gibson (R-NY) sits on the Agricultural Committee, and CLC used the opportunity to show Gibson first hand the importance of including the Farm and Ranchland Protection Program in the Farm Bill.

A new Farm Bill has yet to be adopted, placing this and other important conservation programs in jeopardy. If you would like to learn more about what you can do to help support federal and state conservation funding, visit our website, or contact Tom Crowell 518-392-5252 ext 209, or Tom@clctrust.org

Comprehensive Plans of all three Columbia County towns involved, which state the importance of farming and farmland to their communities.

In addition to the new federal grant, the conservation groups already have received two other grants. The grants provide \$78,000 for staff costs, with the monies coming from the New York State Conservation Partnership Program, funded through the state's Environmental Protection Fund and administered by the Land Trust Alliance.

Support for agriculture is an important part of CLC's conservation strategy. Open, working farmland is a critical component of Columbia County's iconic landscapes. It provides important habitat and, when well managed, protects ecological values. A thriving local farm sector provides numerous additional community benefits. In addition to providing healthy food, family farms contribute to the area's rural character and economic opportunity. Columbia County farms provide \$66 million in annual revenue. In the 10 counties of the Hudson Valley, agriculture is an \$810-million industry. Farmland also helps keep local taxes in check by requiring fewer municipal services than farm owners pay in property taxes.

Despite these benefits, farms are at increasing risk. According to the 2007 Census of Agriculture, from 2002 to 2007, Columbia County lost over 13,000 acres of working farmland. As a reflection of this trend, the American Farmland Trust has identified the Hudson Valley among its listings of threatened agricultural areas in the country. Historically New York State loses 10 times more farmland to development than it protects each year.

Over the past 15 years, easement programs in the Hudson Valley have put \$95 million directly into the hands of farmers. This investment has helped allow agriculture to continue to thrive, advanced new opportunities for young farmers and allowed farmers to invest directly in their operations. At the same time, it has benefited communities. According to the American Farmland Trust, for every \$1 invested in conservation, \$4 is returned to the local economy as farmers invest in their operations.



Skoda's Triple Creek Farm in Taghkanic.

Improvements at Greenport

Visitors to the Greenport Conservation Area this fall will notice that we are constructing a new parking area and a new trail connecting it to the current entry point.

A major grant from the Hudson River Bank and Trust Foundation and additional funding from the Hudson River Improvement Fund contributed significantly to the cost of the project. The parking lot is located directly off Joslen Boulevard, just north of the current entrance at Daisy Hill Road.



The new parking area connects to the trail system with a stone-dust extension of the Access For All trail, ensuring a fully-accessible pathway to the kiosk and benches at the former trail head, which will remain the site of the primary information kiosk. The new parking area is also visible from the road, making it easier to ensure that all visitors have made it safely out before dark.

We anticipate the new lot will be open for use later this winter. The work is being done by Barry Couchman and Hemlock Hollow Farms.

New Trail Links Greenport to Harrier Hill



Thanks to the efforts of Scenic Hudson, numerous volunteers, Americorps, and our own CLC staff, there is a new two-mile trail linking the Greenport Conservation area to the Harrier Hill Park in Stockport.

Both properties are managed by CLC, and CLC will be managing the new trail. It winds through open fields, beautiful woods, steep ravines and stream beds as it traverses 325 acres of lands owned by New York State, Scenic Hudson and the Open Space Institute. Hiking through from the Greenport entrance to Harrier Hill is great way to spend an afternoon along the Hudson. The experience can be made a little easier if you leave a car at each end.



Slip Sliding Away

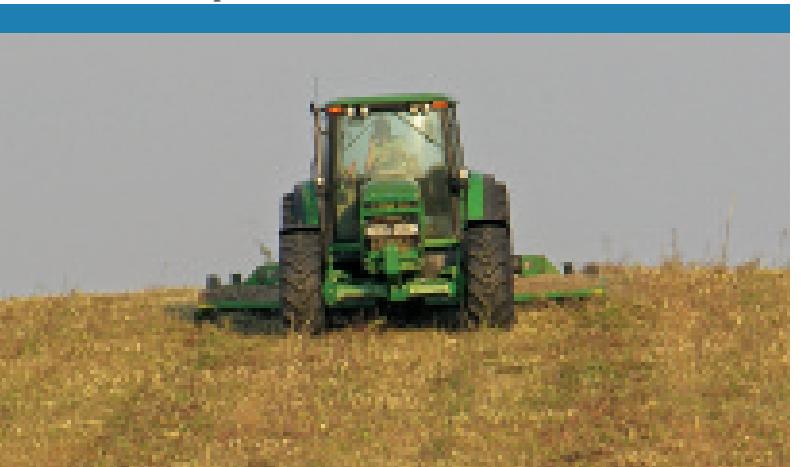
Visitors to the Greenport Conservation area who visit the popular overlook at the gazebo may have noticed that the river's edge seems a little closer than usual. That is because the clay soils of the bluff have given way, causing a small landslide and forcing us to remove the viewing area and interpretive signage at the end of the Access For All trail.

The same soil characteristics that made these bluffs attractive to brick makers in the late 19th and early 20th centuries also make them unstable today. Over time, the bluff should stabilize but not until the angle of the embankment is reduced. What does this mean for the gazebo? According to a geologist who examined the situation for CLC, the bluff will continue to recede, eventually putting the gazebo in jeopardy. However, the current gazebo will need to be replaced long before this happens. In the meantime, CLC is applying for a grant to re-route the trail away from the unstable area, and re-install the viewing area and interpretive signs a safe distance from the edge.



Seasonal Mowing Completed

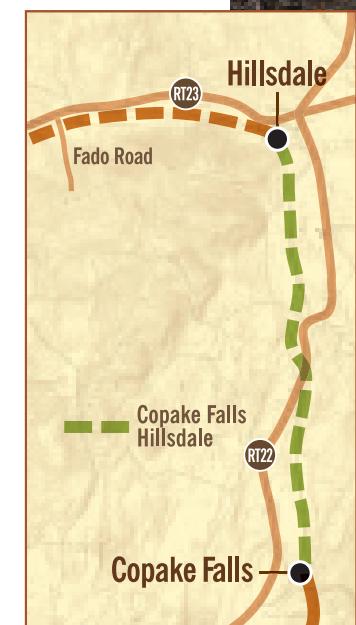
At the end of the summer, volunteers from Stone House Farm arrived with a bat-wing mower and cut the fields at the Greenport Conservation Area, while at Hand Hollow



Michael Benson of New Lebanon mowed the fields at the Hand Hollow Conservation Area. This is an important part of CLC's management strategy at our public conservation areas. Mowing, which we schedule in the autumn after fledgling season has run its course, maintains the fields as grassland habitat for nesting birds and keeps shrubs and other woody plants from taking over. Left uncut, before too many years the fields would revert to forest by the process of natural succession.



Grassland habitats are becoming increasingly scarce due to the combined effects of suburbanization and changing patterns of agriculture. The fields at

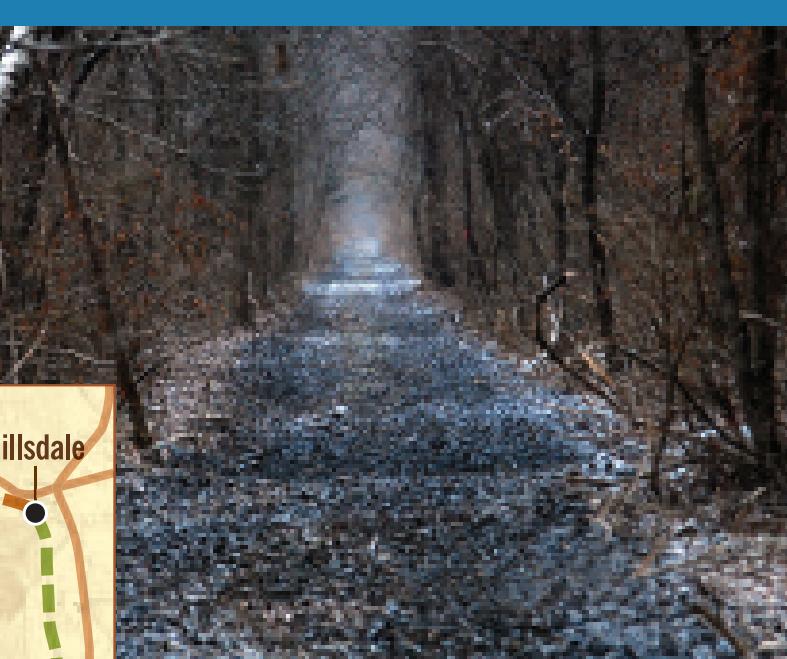


Rail Trail Update

Over the past 18 months CLC has been working with a coalition of groups to extend the Harlem Valley Rail Trail north from Copake Falls to Hillsdale. These efforts have led to a plan that will open five miles of trail to the public sometime in 2013. This will be the first new section of trail to open in Columbia County since 1997.

The work was funded by a planning grant from the New York State Office of Parks Recreation and Historic Preservation through the state's Environmental Protection Fund. The grant enabled CLC to contract with Mark Morris Associates of Wassaic, NY to develop design and construction drawings for the new section. The firm analyzed existing conditions along the former rail bed, road crossings, and environmental concerns and developed specific plans to construct the new trail segment. Detailed drawings have been prepared for construction of a paved multi-use trail from North Mountain Road in Copake through to the center of Hillsdale, including a proposal to tunnel under Route 22. New Lebanon-based Clark Engineering provided additional expertise.

While this design work was in progress, the group, including representatives of NYS Parks, the Harlem Valley Rail Trail Association and the newly formed Copake Hillsdale Rail Trail Alliance, developed a plan to informally open portions of the trail to the public for hiking and other



recreation prior to the commencement of construction. Ed Herrington, Inc. is providing access in Hillsdale adjacent to their down-town store for the section of trail that runs south to Black Grocery Road. Across Route 22, the trail will resume at Orphan Farm Road, continuing south to the center of Copake Falls, where it will connect with the existing section of paved trail. Visit www.clctrust.org/railtrail for updates on the trail.

Community Assistance for Planning

This is the third of a three-part series looking at the history of CLC's major programs. The first part of the series gave an overview of our public conservation areas, the second examined how conservation easements are used by individual landowners to conserve privately held land. In this issue we examine how CLC's Community Assistance Program is providing resources to local municipalities concerned with conservation.

Columbia County is a place defined by villages and hamlets nestled in amongst rolling farm fields and forested hillsides. This pattern of development has created one of the most bucolic landscapes in the Hudson Valley. However, it's a pattern that is easily broken. In New York State regulations guiding development and land use fall largely to local municipalities, which, more often than not, lack the resources to establish and administer strong land use regulator regimes.



Recognizing that voluntary conservation is only a small factor in how the county's rich natural resources are allocated, CLC's Board of Trustees committed to creating a program to assist local communities in developing good land use policies and practices.

CLC's Community Assistance Program (CAP) was launched as a direct result of our last strategic plan in 2008. It serves as a planning resource for Columbia County communities. Our staff provides assistance and resources to help local municipalities realize their own vision for conservation and appropriate development. CLC also brings a regional perspective to land use issues, and often facilitates communication with other levels of government, state regulatory authorities, and funding sources.

The CAP is run by Ellen Jouret-Epstein, a licensed landscape architect with a solid resume of private sector planning experience. Over the past four years, Ellen has created a program that reflects the needs expressed by citizens who are serving on planning and zoning boards, conservation commissions, and trail and open space committees around the county.

"With our backgrounds, we've been able to provide information requested by our Zoning Revisions Committee and Town Supervisor on technical topics such as stream buffers, vernal pool protection, and biodiversity assessment."

Conservation Advisory Councils in many towns throughout the county. Conservation Advisory Councils (CACs) are advisory bodies that town boards may establish and appoint under New York State Municipal Law to advise on the development, management and protection of natural resources. They can provide information, tools and guidance to town agencies, especially planning boards. CACs can also conduct natural resource inventories and provide a more detailed analysis of planning issues and environmental impacts for reviews under the State Environmental Quality Review Act.

"With our backgrounds, we've been able to provide information requested by our Zoning Revisions Committee and Town Supervisor on technical topics such as stream buffers, vernal pool protection, and biodiversity assessment." Jamie Purinton, Chair of Ancram's CAC.



A variety of resources and assistance

The CAP program offers assistance with comprehensive plans and farmland and open space protection plans, promotion of good development models through code reviews and updates, planning board support for conservation development, site design reviews, technical assistance for recreation and conservation-oriented site design, land use education and events, grant writing and GIS mapping in support of planning and open space projects, and assistance with consultant Requests-for-Proposals (RFP's). CLC's website also serves as a resource library of model codes, topical articles and other resource documents.

One of the most exciting developments in local planning has been the re-constitution of the

CLC has held three roundtables for CAC members and for people interested in how to form one in their town.

CLC also works with communities in a variety of other ways. CLC provides support for open space and trail projects to many Columbia County municipalities. Our services include assistance with planning, grant proposals and grant management, mapping, public presentations, and outreach to enlist support from local, county and state government. For example, CLC provides technical support to the Kinderhook-Stuyvesant-Stockport Intermunicipal Trail. A project that will eventually span the northwest quadrant of the county. The first section of that trail opened in October, joining four centuries of Dutch farming by linking the Luykas Van Alen house with the Martin Van Buren National Historic Site, by way of present day Roxbury Farm. We continue to play a major role in the ongoing effort to extend the Harlem Valley Rail Trail (see page 7).

CLC's staff also provides planning, mapping, and fund-raising assistance for municipal open space projects. For example, we created a Concept Master Plan for redevelopment of the North Bay landfill in Hudson as a recreation



and natural area within walking distance of downtown Hudson, the Greenport Conservation Area and other park and recreation resources. CLC can also provide fee-based services for large projects. We are currently working with Keep Conservation Foundation in Germantown to help them upgrade their 143-acre preserve. CLC worked with the foundation to install signage and a kiosk. CLC also facilitated the design and printing of a trail map and brochure.

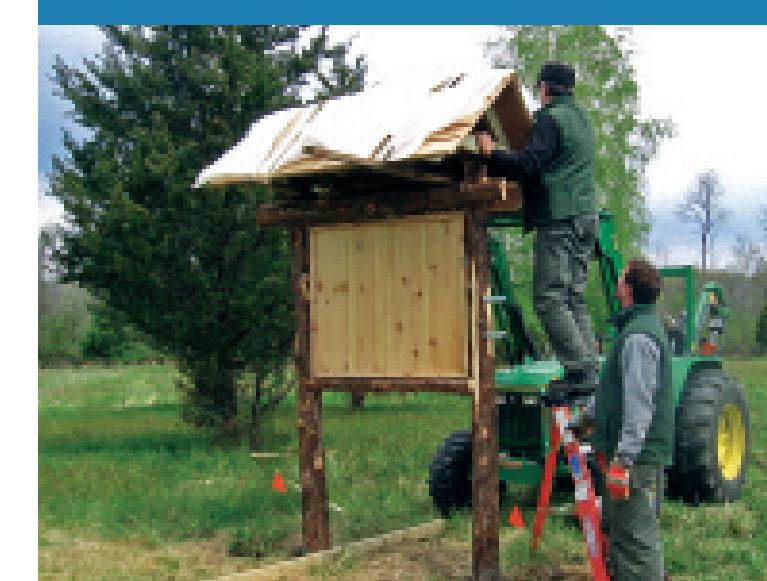
help in completing the forms.

These training workshops qualify for the annual board training requirement planning and zoning board members must meet. CLC works with a diverse range of partners including the Columbia and Greene County Departments of Economic Development and Tourism and Planning; the Columbia County Planning Board; the County Environmental Management Council; New York State Department of Environmental Conservation; the Hudson River Estuary Program; Hudsonia LTD; New York Rural Water Association; and many others to help build local capacity in land use decision making.

TRAIL GUIDE AND MAP

Keep Conservation Foundation Preserve
GERMANTOWN NEW YORK

www.keepconservatio...g



For more information or to be placed on our e-list for events, workshops, and community planning news, contact Ellen Jouret-Epstein, Community Projects Manager, at 518.392.5252, ext 208 or ellen@clctrust.org.

Why protect Columbia County?

Every day CLC is working to protect the working farms and forests of Columbia County, some of the best in the Hudson River Valley. While many people appreciate the productivity of agricultural land and woodlots, what they may not know is that these same lands often serve an important ecological role for the wide variety of plants and animals found in Columbia County.

Over the past several years, CLC has been exploring the connection between farm and forestland protection and the associated benefits to the regions' wildlife with Conrad and Claudia Vispo of the Farmscape Ecology Program at the Hawthorne Valley Farm. Each season Conrad and Claudia lead ecology walks, often on CLC protected lands, examining the rich natural world we live in.

Protecting farms protects important habitat

Open hayfields, for example, provide habitat for a wide variety of grassland and shrubland species such as the grasshopper sparrow, loggerhead shrike, bobolink, meadowlark, and vesper sparrow. Many of these species are in decline and are listed as "species of special concern". This is due primarily to the loss of grasslands and farmland. As prairie habitat has steadily diminished across the western part of the country, the grassland habitat provided by farmland in the east has begun to play an increasingly important role in the conservation of these species.

Columbia County is rich in bio-diversity

The County's rich biological heritage is also due in part to the fact that Columbia County is located in a "transition zone", meaning that it provides habitat for both southern species preferring warmer climates and northern species preferring cooler climates. In the County's woodlands you can find species such as Balsam and Poplar typical of northern forests as well as more southern tree species such as flowering dogwood and black walnut.

Changes in elevation and topography throughout the county add to its natural diversity, with the steep slopes of Harvey Mountain rising to over 2,000 feet in elevation and the relatively flat fields of Livingston at elevations closer to sea level.

Taking action to protect farm and forest land

As we look at the County not only from a scenic or working lands perspective, but also from an ecological perspective, the importance of protecting our farmland and forests as well as its wetlands and streams becomes more pronounced. By establishing "neighborhood conservation blocks" though protecting adjoining properties, not only will the agricultural landscape be stabilized, but wildlife corridors will also be conserved.

Unfortunately, we are racing against time in our efforts to protect the County's important land resources. Columbia County is facing development pressure from both the north and the south. As more people recognize the importance of farming to the local economy and quality of life, communities throughout the Hudson Valley are seeking to balance growth with open space protection. With our members support, the Columbia Land Conservancy can help ensure the rural characteristics of the county will endure.

Make the Connection!

The Columbia Land Conservancy is all about making connections. We are building and strengthening connections between people and the land – between landowners and the land they have come to love, between citizens and their neighbors who share a commitment to a special place, between people of all ages and the wonders of the natural world, between farmers and land that can be farmed. And we devote a lot of time and energy to building and strengthening connections between CLC and the community, to ensure that people understand who we are and what we are trying to accomplish and to ensure that we understand the conservation values and priorities of the people who live here and are focused on those objectives.

Connecting is a two-way street, and we need you to connect with us. We need you to give us feedback on the work we do, we need you to volunteer to help us do the work, and we need your financial support.

Don't forget to include The Columbia Land Conservancy in your year end giving plans!

We are fundamentally dependent upon individuals who care about Columbia County for our general operating funds. With your help, we have established one of the most substantial and successful local land trusts in the state, and perhaps in the nation. But there is much more to do. Conservation opportunities in Columbia County are truly abundant, and we don't have forever to get it done.

Now is the time. The vast majority of our membership support comes in over an eight-to-ten week period at the end of every year.

Please consider a generous contribution to our annual fund drive today. If all of us who care about this wonderful place remain connected, CLC can and will continue to set the gold standard for genuine community-based conservation. We cannot hope to succeed in our work without you.



Educational Programs Foster Appreciation for Columbia County's Rural Landscapes

Children. Adults. Pre-schoolers. 4-H groups and scouts. Landowners. Farmers. Parents. Canoeists. Bird watchers. These are among the many people of Columbia County who have responded with enthusiasm to the Columbia Land Conservancy's education and outdoor programs.

This year CLC held over 200 free educational and recreational programs throughout Columbia County and neighboring counties, attended by 3,761 children and adults. These free programs offer participants the opportunity to connect with nature, explore the rural landscapes around



them, and learn about land stewardship, forestry, and agriculture. Evening and weekend programs enable children and adults to participate in a variety of fun and educational outdoor activities.

In addition, we partner with a variety of educational organizations to offer customized programs that enhance environmental learning and science curricula. The diversity of our

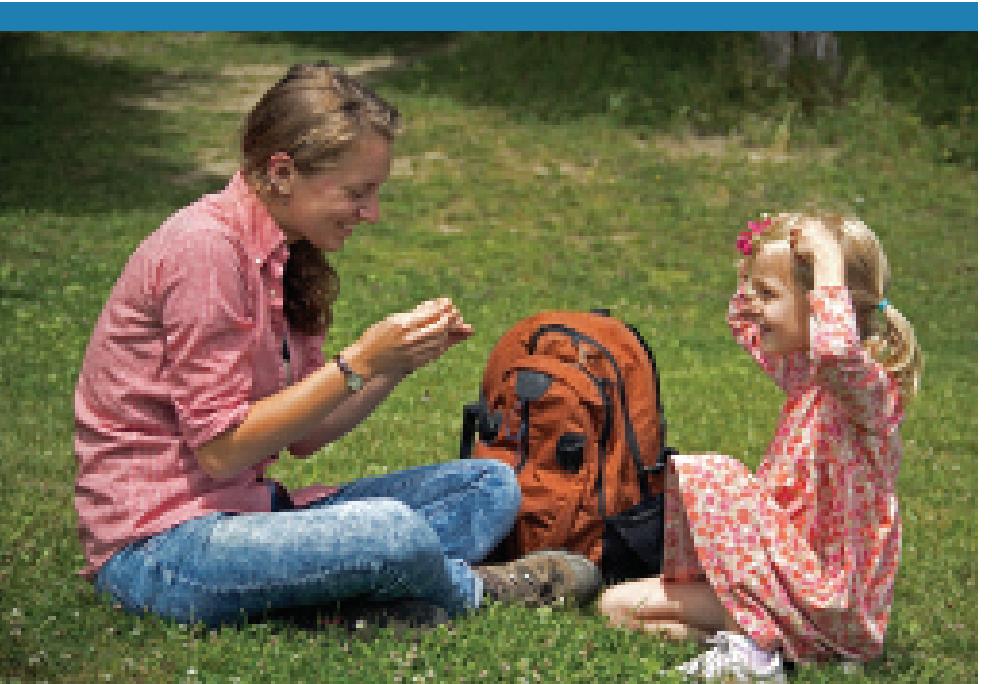
programs grows each year as we work with local public schools, libraries, scouts, 4-H, and the county Head Start Program, all of whom regularly take advantage of our educational programs.

Support for CLC's education and recreation programs is generously provided by the T. Backer Fund, the Mellam Family Foundation, and CLC members and supporters.



Summer Questing

This summer, CLC was fortunate to have a summer intern to assist us with our programming. Kailey Schillinger-Brokaw, a graduate of Chatham High School, is currently a senior at the University of Vermont majoring in Environmental Studies.



CLC provided programs for the summer day camp program at Crellin Park in Chatham, the OK Kids Club summer program in Kinderhook, the Claverack Playground Summer Program, Camp Palatine in Germantown, Roeliff-Jansen Summer Program, Oakdale Summer Camp in Hudson, and Chatham Kids Club Summer Program. In all, 294 kids from K-5th grade took part in one of these summer programs.

Our thanks and well wishes to Kailey as she finishes her degree and prepares for a career in conservation. If you would be interested in sponsoring a summer intern for 2013, please contact Tom Crowell at 518-392-5252 ext 209 or tom@clctrust.org.



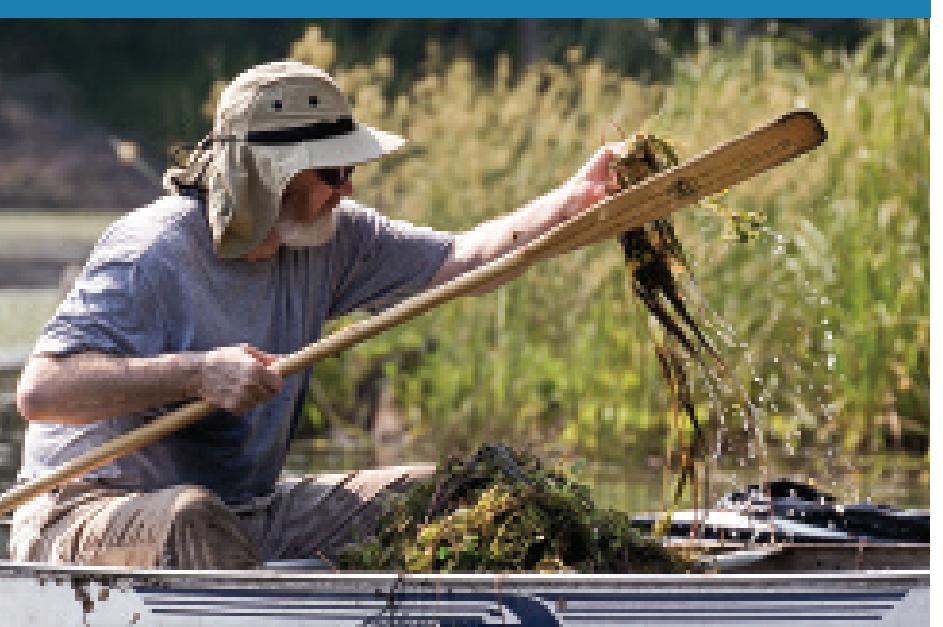
Volunteers Make All the Difference

Volunteers play a vital role in supporting the essential work of conserving farmland, forests, wildlife habitat and the rural character of Columbia County. CLC regularly holds events that help strengthen the connection between people and the land. These events include a wide variety of outdoor activities, workshops, education programs, and recreational opportunities.



Join our team

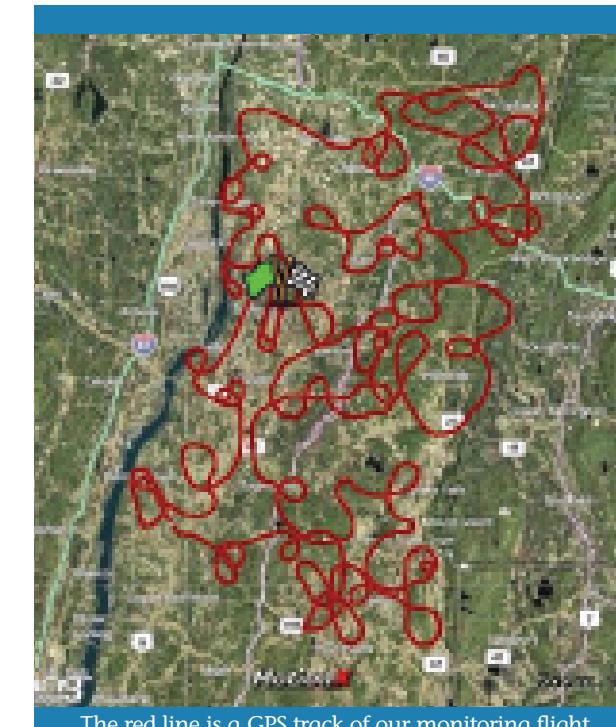
Whether you like to be in the field, the office or out in the community representing CLC, there's a place for you among our volunteers. Maybe you'd like to see the smile on a child's face as a butterfly alights on his head or see her fascination as she views creatures found in a stream. There's a constant need for a CLC spokesperson at local open houses, fairs, festivals, and other community events throughout the county.



If you like to spend time outdoors, you can become a Public Conservation Area monitor at one of our ten public conservation areas. Like the hustle and bustle of Main Street in Chatham? Come staff the front desk at the office and assist with general administrative tasks. Contact Marcia Cary at 518-392-5252 ext 202 or marcia@clctrust.org to find out more about how you can help.

The View from Above

Once a year, CLC staff monitors all of the lands on which we hold conservation easements from the sky. Bob Keller, a dedicated volunteer with LightHawk, an environmental non-profit that champions environmental protection through the unique perspective of flight, took CLC's Conservation Easement Stewardship Manager, Heidi Bock on a flight around the County to monitor the status of our conservation easements.



The red line is a GPS track of our monitoring flight.

Every conservation easement is unique, taking into account the needs and wishes of the landowner and the conservation values of the land. Once the easement is finalized, CLC makes a commitment to ensure that the terms are upheld. We are bound to do this by state and federal law and Land Trust Alliance Standards and Practices.

Aerial flights are the most efficient way for us to regularly monitor all of the properties on which we hold conservation easements. (We also visit every conserved property on the ground, every other year.) We did our 2012 monitoring flyover on November 5th. Staff logged 479 miles in the air that day, observing conditions on all 160 easement properties. We look for new structures and disturbances to the land, including tree removal and new bodies of water and hope that all activities observed are in compliance with the easement terms. Happily, we confirmed once again that our easement landowners continue an excellent record of good stewardship of their land.

CLC Welcomes New Faces to Its Board



Chris Cashen

Three new trustees were elected to the CLC Board this summer. Chris Cashen of Claverack, Tony Jones of Ghent, and Bruce Pinkernell of Chatham. Each brings a unique set of talents to the volunteer board that governs CLC and a shared commitment to the local environment.

Chris Cashen grew up on the 200 acre farm in Claverack that he and his wife Katie Smith now operate as The Farm at Miller's Crossing, where they grow organic vegetables, grassfed beef, organic bedding plants and vegetable starts, and maple syrup. While Chris and Katie's children are the 4th generation to live on the farm, he is the first generation to make his living off of the land, which is protected by an easement held by CLC.

Chris returned to the land after attending college in Vermont, where he studied Political Science and Philosophy. During much of the year Chris can be found at various farmers markets around the region, or out in the fields tending to the dozens of crops they grow. In the winter, you will more than likely find Chris on the slopes coaching alpine skiers at Catamount. Chris is also a member of St. Peter's Presbyterian Church in Spencertown, coaches soccer in the Taconic Hills Youth league, and helps manage the family horse/pony herd.

Tony Jones has always preferred to be outdoors and has tramped the countryside on three continents and in most of the U.S. states. He arrived in Columbia County in 1977. Most of his professional life has been in the publishing world, starting with Harper's Magazine in NYC and continuing as co-owner, with his wife, the late Vicki Simons, of The Independent Newspaper and its companion publications, where he served as publisher and editorial writer.

Over the years he has been affiliated with the major business and economic development organizations in the county, including the Columbia Chamber of Commerce, the Columbia Economic Development Corporation, and the Columbia County Agricultural Society, which presents the annual Victoria A. Simons Locavore Award in recognition of Vicki's commitment to local food and vibrant, variegated local farming. Tony serves on the board of the Hudson River Bank & Trust Foundation and of First Niagara Bank.

Bruce Pinkernell and his wife, Maureen, first visited Columbia County about 20 years ago. Both were practicing medicine in New York City and Maureen would go up to Cooperstown several times a year to do surgery at Bassett Hospital, stopping at an inn in Hillsdale as a brief respite on their way back. After two years of looking for a home in the Hudson Valley, they settled in the Village of Chatham, where Bruce has lived full time since retiring as a cardiologist in 2006. Maureen is a GYN oncologist at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in Manhattan.

Bruce explains that he joined the board because, "Our love for and appreciation of this region has grown and we wish to have a role in maintaining the character and beauty of the county."



Tony Jones



Bruce Pinkernell

Leave a Lasting Gift to Conservation:

Planned giving enhances local land conservation efforts

Would you like to help protect farmland and promote local agriculture? Do you want to ensure that children in Columbia County will always have a chance to explore and learn about nature?

Are you interested in protecting critical wildlife and bird habitats? Do you want to establish new public conservation areas for the people of Columbia County and thus ensure that generations to come will enjoy our rural landscapes?

We need your help. Your gift can make a huge difference in our efforts to help the people of Columbia County protect the lands we all treasure. The following is an example of language that can be used when preparing your Will:

"I give to the Columbia Land Conservancy, Inc., a New York nonprofit corporation, having its principal offices at 49 Main Street, P.O. Box 299, Chatham, NY 12037, the sum of \$____ (or alternately, ____% of my estate) for its general purposes (or for a specific project that you have discussed with a CLC staff person)."

You can also donate land to the Conservancy in your Will to establish public conservation areas or as a tradeland to broaden our conservation efforts in Columbia County. Please call Peter Paden at the Columbia Land Conservancy (518-392-5252 ext 213; peter@clctrust.org) if you would like to find out about additional planned giving opportunities.

CLC would like to recognize dedicated supporters who have chosen to leave a legacy for the future of Columbia County by welcoming them to the Jonathan Schor Society. Schor Society members enjoy a unique relationship with the organization and are invited to attend special events and programs that provide an opportunity to become more intimately engaged in our work.

Ms. Betty A. Engstrom

Mr. Sheldon Evans and Ms. Martha McMaster

Mr. Robert Funk and Ms. Louise Simmons

Ms. Rene Gibson

Ms. Judy Grunberg

Mr. Gordon Harris

Mr. Robert Herron

Mr. Lowell Johnston and Ms. Frances R. Olivier

Mr. Peter Jung

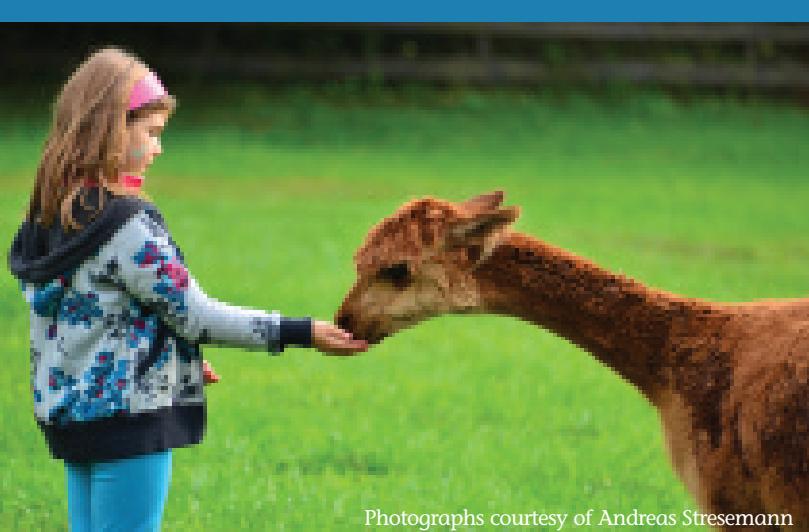
Ms. Kitty Osterhoudt

Dr. and Mrs. Richard Trachtman

If you have made provision for CLC in your estate plans and would like to be counted as a member of the Schor Society, be in touch with Tom Crowell or Peter Paden at the CLC office.



Farm Tours Raise Awareness



Photographs courtesy of Andreas Stresemann

On two weekends in September farmers opened their fields and barns to the public to help increase awareness and appreciation for the diversity of agriculture in Columbia County. Eight farms in Ancram and seven in Chatham took part in the tour, sponsored by CLC, the Chatham Agricultural Partnership and the Ancram Agricultural and Farmland Protection Planning Committee. The tour was underwritten with support from Columbia County Tourism.

The farms offered a wide variety of activities, from meeting the animals, to pony rides, tastings, milking demonstration and even a whiskey tasting.

This year's participants included: The Amazing Real Live Food Company, Herondale Farm, Cricket Hill Farm, Hillrock Farm Distillery, Brook Crest Farm, Ronnybrook Farm Dairy, Tollgate Farm, Sol Flower Farm, The Horse Institute, Kinderhook Farm, Little Brook Farm, Chatham Alpacas, A. Ooms and Sons, Spruce Ridge Farm, Full Field Farm, and the Old Chatham Sheepherding Company.



The tours offered incredibly scenic views of rolling farmland and the Taconic Mountains and could be done either by car or bike. Many of the farms are located on land that is permanently protected with a conservation easement held by CLC.



Stresemann



Think Snow!

Looking for a fun way to get outside this winter? Sign up for Columbia Land Conservancy's (CLC) 'Spur-of-the-moment' Snowshoe treks. This winter, CLC will be hosting snowshoe walks throughout Columbia County at our Public Conservation Areas. These walks are scheduled on the spur of the moment, based on the weather conditions.

Snowshoeing is one of the fastest growing outdoor winter sports in the nation. It's a great way to get good exercise while exploring CLC's beautiful Public Conservation Areas. Since snow dampens sound, animals and birds are often visible. Additionally, tracks in the snow tell us what animals can be found living in the area.

Snowshoeing is easy to learn. Anyone who knows how to walk will quickly adapt to snowshoes. CLC has a limited number of snowshoes to lend to participants, and beginners are always welcome.

Due to the unpredictable snowfall in Columbia County, CLC has created snowshoe hikes that are arranged when there is adequate snow, clear roads, and good weather conditions. We've set up an email notification system to alert people when treks have been scheduled. To register for the email list, contact CLC's Jenny Brinker at 518.392.5252, ext. 210 or jenny@clctrust.org.



Green Gifts at CLC

You can support CLC's conservation work in many ways. Consider making a purchase this holiday season at the CLC store. The store offers a range of unique items, especially selected to help people appreciate working lands, scenic lands, and wildlife habitats. Offerings include CLC logo items, binoculars, field guides, locally made jewelry and crafts, ecologically sustainable coffee, and note cards featuring local sites. You can also purchase conservation certificates in honor of that special person on your holiday list. A fifty dollar contribution ensures sixteen feet of trail are available for public use; \$75 provides two Columbia County children with a hands-on environmental education experience; \$150 permanently protects a half-acre of land.

CLC is also offering an opportunity to help address climate change in partnership with the Adirondack Council. You can permanently retire carbon dioxide emissions credits from the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) program. Twenty-five dollars retires 3 tons, while one-hundred twenty-five dollars retires 21 tons, the average person's CO₂ emissions for a year. These purchases include a Carbon-Zero Certificate with an embossed gold seal, suitable for framing.

The store is open Monday – Thursday 9:00am – 5:00pm, Friday 9:00am – 4:00pm, and Saturday 11:00am – 4:00pm, with extended Friday hours through the holidays.

COLUMBIA LAND CONSERVANCY

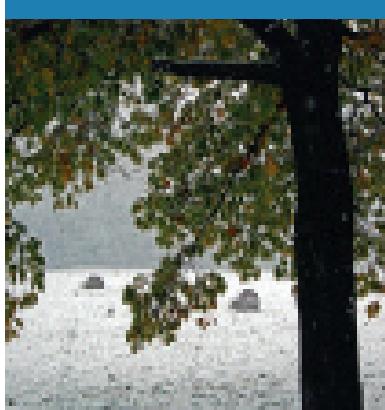


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In This Issue:



On the Cover:

With winter's approach, the landscape changes before our eyes. We hope you will consider making a charitable contribution towards CLC's ongoing efforts to help conserve Columbia County's great rural qualities and foster connections between people and the land.

- 4 Working Farm Land:** CLC is working to protect 4 farms under a \$2.56 million Federal Farm and Ranch Land Protection Grant.
- 6 Public Lands:** Learn about a new trail linking Harriet Hill Park to the Greenport Conservation Area and an extension to the Harlem Valley Rail Trail.
- 8 Community Assistance:** The final installment of a 3-part series on CLC's programmatic initiatives explores how CLC supports local communities on conservation issues.
- 10 Conservation Opportunities:** Do you care about Columbia County? Becoming a CLC member is one way to help ensure the rural character of the county will endure.
- 12 Environmental Education:** Take a peek at the many ways people are connecting to the land through CLC's educational programs.
- 14 Volunteers:** Every year dozens of individuals volunteer their time to help CLC make Columbia County a better place.
- 16 Organizational News:** Chris Cashen, Tony Jones, and Bruce Pinkernell all joined CLC's Board this summer.
- 19 Programs and Support:** From green gift ideas at our Main Street Chatham store front to snow shoeing, we have what you are looking for this winter.

Mission Statement

The Columbia Land Conservancy works with the community to conserve the farmland, forests, wildlife habitat and rural character of Columbia County, strengthening connections between people and the land.

Vision Statement

The Columbia Land Conservancy will be a dynamic force in supporting and sustaining a strong and vibrant rural community, where agriculture plays a central role in the economy, where development respects historic traditions and natural resources, and where there are accessible open spaces and abundant, healthy natural lands and wildlife habitats.

Create a Conservation Legacy

Have you named CLC in your estate plan? If so, please tell us so we can include you in our the Jonathan Schor Society. Contact Peter Paden at 518-392-5252 ext. 213 or peterpaden@clctrust.org to let us know your intentions or for information on how to achieve your estate planning goals while leaving a conservation legacy for future generations.