



volume 22 | number 01 | spring/summer 2012

conservancy news



Spring is here! Just as the farmers are busy with lambing and calving and preparing their fields for a new season of crops, we too are busy with a new season of undertakings.

Our staff is working on several exciting opportunities that will expand our easement and public conservation area portfolios, and our community conservation work. We just had an extra special Memorial Day Weekend Barbecue to mark the culmination of our year-long celebration. Over 1,000 supporters of local conservation joined us at David Rockefeller's Clum and Patchen Farm in Livingston. And, as part of our silver anniversary celebration, we recently published *Columbia County Outdoors: A Guide to Recreational Areas in Columbia County, NY*, a first of its kind, comprehensive reference for outdoor recreation opportunities, authored by CLC Trustee Sheldon Evans.

2012 also marks the fifth and final year of our current strategic plan, so it's once again time for our board and staff to examine our mission, programs, and strategic initiatives and chart a course for the next five years. Be assured, we will be reaching out to the community for input and suggestions on how we can best serve the conservation needs of Columbia County.

More big news: We've recently experienced a significant organizational transition. Michael Polemis, the last of our still-active founding board members and our Board Chair for the past 16 years, stepped down at our annual meeting in February to take a well-

earned respite. Michael's commitment and contributions to CLC have been without parallel. For 25 years he has devoted enormous amounts of time and energy to our mission. His wisdom and common sense have guided us from our inception, through institutional infancy and adolescence, and well into maturity. He has been insistent throughout about two guiding principles: that CLC set its sights high, that we aim for nothing less than ensuring that the iconic landscapes, rich ecological resources and authentic rural character of this county are conserved for future generations; and that we ensure, as well, that the pleasures and treasures of our outdoor world are available to everyone. We will miss him greatly but we take comfort in knowing he is not far away and will find ways to remain involved with CLC.

The other side of the coin is that we're heading into the next quarter century with a new Board Chair, Debbie Lans. In three years as a CLC Trustee, Debbie has become deeply immersed in our work. She has earned the confidence and respect of the board and staff and demonstrated deep commitment to our mission. I look forward to working closely with her and I am confident that with her leadership we will continue to grow and prosper.

Onward and upward! There's so much left to do.



Peter Paden

The first 25 years of CLC's work have seen enormous achievements. Michael Polemis, our retiring Board Chair, Peter Paden, our Executive Director, and our talented and dedicated staff and board (past and present) have made CLC a force in the land trust world. Together, we have envisioned programs that have since been adopted by other land trusts and that give CLC a broad impact outside of, as well as within, the county.

Columbia County is rich with natural resources, breathtaking vistas, and a farming heritage. CLC must be in the forefront of efforts to ensure that we keep our 'riches' safe and allow our community to continue to produce and enjoy fresh foods as well as opportunities to work in and enjoy nature. We must also expand our educational and other programming that, in turn, fosters the agricultural, rural and outdoor activities, and values we share.



Deborah E. Lans

In the coming year, we will address our next strategic plan, and CLC will, with community and member input, identify the key strategies that will enhance our role as a steward of working lands and the landscape in the county and its 18 towns.

I look forward to getting to know you all better in my new role as Chair of CLC.

Deborah E. Lans, Chair

Deborah E. Lans became Chair of CLC's Board of Trustees at the annual meeting in February. Deb has served as Vice-Chair since 2011 and as a trustee since 2009. She is a long-time Columbia County resident, having bought her home in Spencertown in 1984. She has supported CLC's work since its early days and, with her dog, Mollie, loves to spend time at CLC's public conservation areas, especially the Ooms Conservation Area where "the hills, fields and views make my heart sing."

Deb is a lawyer who has divided her practice between complex commercial and marital litigation for more than 30 years. She was a founding partner of 90-lawyer Morrison Cohen LLP in 1984 and was the head of its Commercial Litigation Department for 15 years, until she left in 2000 to serve as the Executive Director of Mentoring USA, a non-profit organization founded by Matilda Raffa Cuomo to provide one-on-one mentoring to at-risk youth. In 2003 she co-founded the Cohen Lans LLP (now Cohen Clair Lans Greifer &

Thorpe LLP), an 18-lawyer boutique firm in New York City, where she served for eight years as Managing Partner and concentrates on the mediation, arbitration, trial and appellate litigation of sophisticated business and family matters.

Deb has served on or chaired a number of bar association committees that focus on, among other things, professional discipline, the appointment of judges and the administration of the courts. She also serves as Vice-Chair of Literacy, Inc., a grassroots New York City-based non-profit that supports early literacy efforts in underserved communities, and has served on various other education-related boards. She has authored numerous articles on legal and education topics. Profiles of Deb appear in Nancy Carson's *Believing in Ourselves: A Celebration of Women* (Ariel Books 2002), a book about 38 women who have distinguished themselves in a variety of fields and give back in ways that help to build a healthy world, *Who's Who in America* and *Who's Who in American Law*.



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Farm Finds a Permanent Home

Last summer, the Columbia Land Conservancy and Scenic Hudson partnered to purchase development rights on an 82-acre farm in the Town of Stuyvesant, guaranteeing that it will continue contributing to the community’s agriculture-based economy and rural charm. By protecting the farm, which contains 57 acres of USDA Prime Soils and Soils of Statewide Significance, the organizations have made it economically feasible for the land’s former leaseholder, Monkshood Nursery, to purchase the property.

A certified organic grower of herbs, greens and mixed vegetables, Monkshood Nursery plans to expand its greenhouses and increase the amount of land in cultivation. The farm currently sells at local and New York City greenmarkets and through a community supported agriculture (CSA) model, in which participants buy a share of the produce grown each year.

“I would like to thank everyone who has been involved with the Monkshood nursery, gardens and CSA project,” said David Rowley, co-owner of Monkshood Nursery. “Before, we were expecting to have to move to another location to meet the growing needs of our community and vendors. Now we have a firm footing on which to continue to build a site-specific farming operation and continue our growth in every aspect of our work. I want to especially thank the Columbia Land Conservancy, Scenic Hudson and the Hudson Valley Agribusiness Development Corporation for all their wonderful work, and to everyone that makes projects like this possible. Without them all, what would we be eating?”

In a related transaction, the owner of 84 adjacent agricultural acres donated a conservation easement to the CLC and entered into a long-term lease with Monkshood, increasing the permanently preserved land available

to the farm operation for its continued growth.

“We are pleased to have been able to help leverage the conservation of this valuable and productive farmland. We look forward to having our own land put back into productive agriculture and applaud the efforts of the



Columbia Land Conservancy and Scenic Hudson for their roles in helping farmers like David and Melinda Rowley achieve a more stable land base from which to grow on,” said Kieran Goodwin and Catherine Rocco, who

donated the 84-acre easement to CLC.

Protecting farmland is a high priority for both organizations. Collectively, they have conserved more than 18,000 agricultural acres in Columbia County. Scenic Hudson has protected 6,800 acres in Columbia County, including 4,950 acres on 26 farms. CLC holds conservation easements on 156 properties throughout the county, 21,979 acres in all, some 13,500 acres of which are farmland.

The transactions were handled for Scenic Hudson by Senior Land Project Manager Cari Watkins-Bates and for CLC by Conservation and Agricultural Programs Manager Marissa Codey. Funds for the transactions came from Scenic Hudson’s Lila Acheson and DeWitt Wallace Hudson Valley Land Preservation Endowment.

“Hudson Valley farms remain incredibly vulnerable to development pressures just as there is a growing need to secure a sustainable ‘foodshed’ for the Hudson Valley and New York City,” said Scenic Hudson President Ned Sullivan. “That’s why protecting them is a priority of Scenic Hudson’s Saving the Land That Matters Most campaign.”

“This project represents a complex series of collaborations, resulting in 166 acres of land that is now permanently available to a dynamic young farm family,” added CLC Executive Director Peter Paden.

Partnering to Protect 233 Acres in Stuyvesant

In another collaborative effort, the Columbia Land Conservancy and Scenic Hudson partnered with the owner of a third farm in the Town of Stuyvesant to permanently protect 233 high-quality agricultural acres. The landowner, who wishes to remain anonymous, generously donated a conservation easement that restricts development of the property, conserves its sensitive natural resources, and ensures that it will remain available for farming.

CLC Executive Director Peter Paden noted that “This transaction reflects a new level of partnership with our friends at Scenic Hudson, on which we plan to build in the months and years ahead. By pooling our skills and resources, we look forward to many more conservation achievements in the areas of the county along the Hudson River where we share mutual goals and aspirations.”

The conserved land includes more than 220 acres of USDA Prime Farmland and Soils of Statewide Significance—currently in use by local farmers who grow corn and

hay—as well as a circa-1760 farmhouse listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The property, historically known as the Johannis L. Van Alen Farm, is part of a “Neighborhood Conservation Block” that is comprised of ten other properties within two miles totaling 1,708 acres of land permanently protected with conservation easements. This includes an adjacent 440-acre farm previously protected by Scenic Hudson and the 166 acres protected in the Monkshood/Goodwin project described on page 4.



Helping Local Farms Flourish

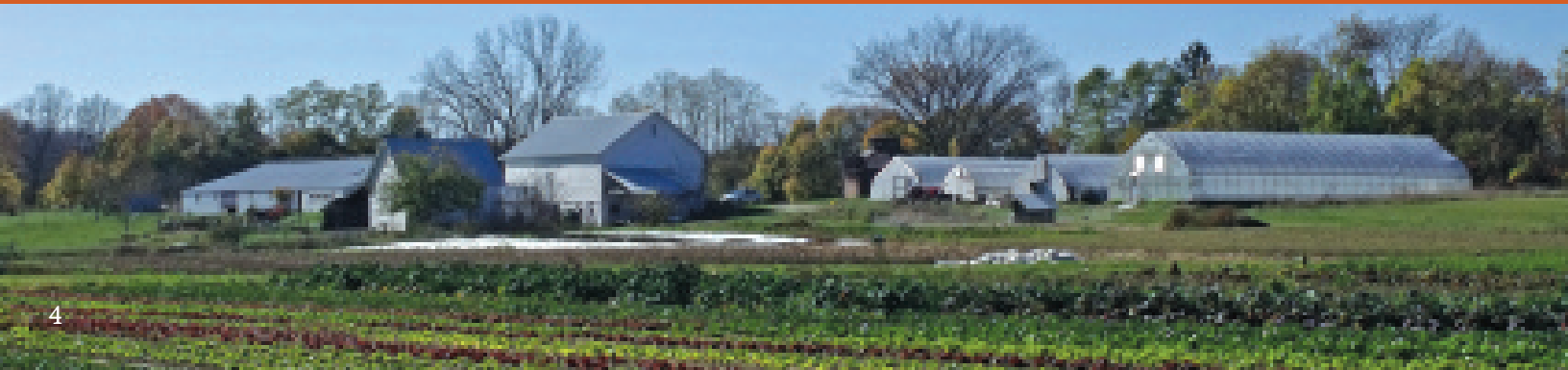
Every year, more farmers and landowners have collaborated to create new farming ventures. Many of these collaborations are the result of CLC’s Farmer Landowner Match Program which connects landowners looking to have their land farmed with farmers seeking land. To date, 18 farmers are now growing on 500 acres of previously fallow land as a result of matches made through CLC’s program.

CLC developed the Farmer Landowner Match Program to help address the challenge farmers are facing regarding access to land. At the heart of the program is a database that contains profiles of farmland that may be available for lease and profiles of farmers looking for land. When a possible match is identified, CLC staff work with the interested parties to help establish productive and long-term relationships.

As part of its Farmer Landowner Match Program, CLC has established a Farmer Volunteer program in which local farmers volunteer to serve as mentors to young farmers and offer advice to landowners on the agricultural viability and potential farm uses of their land.

“If you are a landowner, you should really consider leasing to a farmer,” says DeWayne Powell who leases 46 acres to Threshold Farms. “Aside from the tax benefits, it’s a terrific sense of accomplishment that you are doing something to preserve good farmland.”

Individuals interested in learning more about the Columbia Land Conservancy’s Farmer Landowner Match Program should visit the Conservancy’s website describing the program at <http://clctrust.org/match> or email Marissa Codey at marissa@clctrust.org for more information.



94 Acres Permanently Protected in Canaan

Byron and Ingrid Greenfield have permanently conserved 94 acres in Canaan. Working with the Columbia Land Conservancy, the Greenfields created a conservation easement that protects the most important natural characteristics of the property. CLC recognizes that for many rural landowners, it's important to retain the income-producing potential of farm and forest lands, so like all of CLC's easements, the Greenfields will be able to live on and enjoy their land. They can also practice agricultural and sustainable forestry activities.

In order to engage in commercial timber harvest landowners must work with a certified forester to prepare a harvest plan that employs Best Management Practices. These are designed to enhance productivity and economic viability and to mitigate potential adverse environmental impacts, such as erosion.

The Greenfield property is part of a "Neighborhood Conservation Block." Within three miles there are eleven other private properties permanently protected with conservation easements held by CLC. The 433-acre Hand Hollow Conservation Area, which is open for public recreation, is two and half miles away. Large blocks of conserved land help create diverse habitats, which in turn support the biodiversity of the region.



Gift of 54 Acres in New Lebanon Helps County-wide Conservation

54 acres in New Lebanon has been permanently protected with a conservation easement donated to CLC. The property was originally donated by Hiroshi Matsuzaki and Susan Goldberg as part of CLC's Tradeland Program. It has since been purchased from CLC by Doug and Judy Upton, who live adjacent to the land.



Tradelands are properties that are donated to the Conservancy, specifically for resale. All proceeds are applied to our conservation work throughout the county, thereby contributing to the protection of hundreds, and sometimes thousands, of acres of additional land. Donors benefit from the knowledge that their gift will leverage the protection of land that otherwise might not have been conserved.

"My wife and I wanted to add more land to our existing property," says Doug Upton, Jr. "This was a great opportunity to work with the Columbia Land Conservancy to accomplish our goals and preserve the astonishing natural beauty of this property forever."

The New Lebanon property is rich in biodiversity and includes important wildlife habitat such as vernal pools and seasonal water bodies that are critically important for amphibious species. There are also intermittent streams that eventually flow into the Shaker Swamp, an important 495-acre New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) designated Class 1 wetland system, the DEC's highest level of protection.

The property is largely made up of contiguous forest lands and is part of the fifth largest unfragmented forest in New York State, an area known as the Rensselaer Plateau. Why are forests so very important? They provide water quality protection, carbon sequestration, and wildlife habitat. Protecting forests also provides human health benefits as trees sequester pollutants that contribute to asthma, lung cancer, and cardiovascular disease.

Conservation Easement on 297 Acres Reduces Development Impact

Christopher Jones of Catskill View Farm, LLC recently donated the majority of the development rights on his 297-acre property in Claverack to CLC.

Prior to the easement, the property was divided into thirteen tax parcels, each of which could have been sold with a house site. Catskill View Farm worked with CLC to reduce the development density of the property and reconfigure it into a maximum of six parcels, each of which contains a reserved house site that is located to minimize its impact on the sensitive natural resources that surround it.

The easement protects a large portion of the Shad Swamp; a NYS DEC designated wetland, as well as an adjacent NYS DEC designated wetland system that is fed by water from the Catskill View Farm property. Wetlands are a vital organ in the natural system of our environment. They act as a filter and protect against flood damage by soaking up and holding excess water. Wetlands are also critical for maintaining

wildlife habitat because many species are specially adapted to living in, or near, a wetland.

Historically, the property, which contains 151 acres of "prime soils" and "soils of statewide importance" as determined by the USDA, was in agricultural production. It is currently hayed. It is also part of a "Neighborhood Conservation Block," as it is located within two miles of six properties protected with easements held by CLC, totaling 1,170 acres.

Conservation of this property helps meet several of the goals identified in the Town of Claverack's 2008 Comprehensive Plan. That Plan advocates for maintaining woodlands, clear air, and clean water;

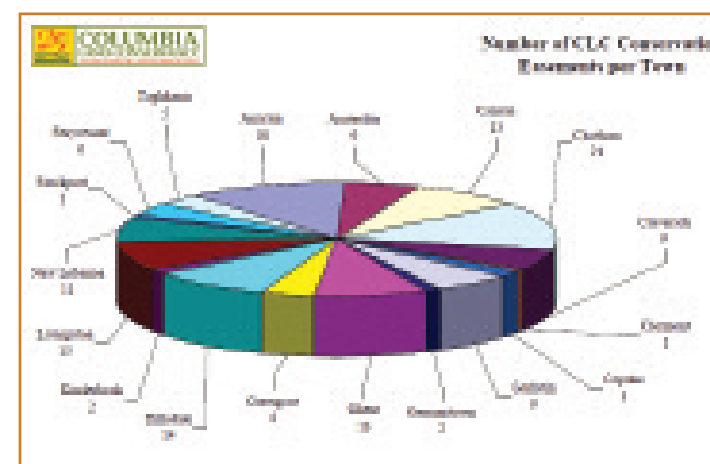
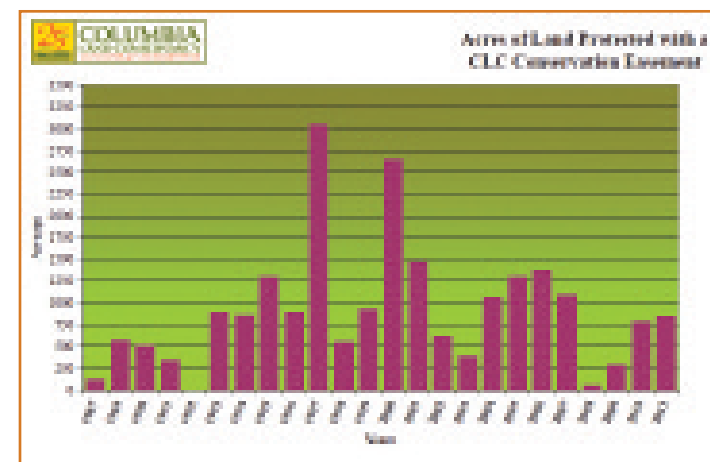
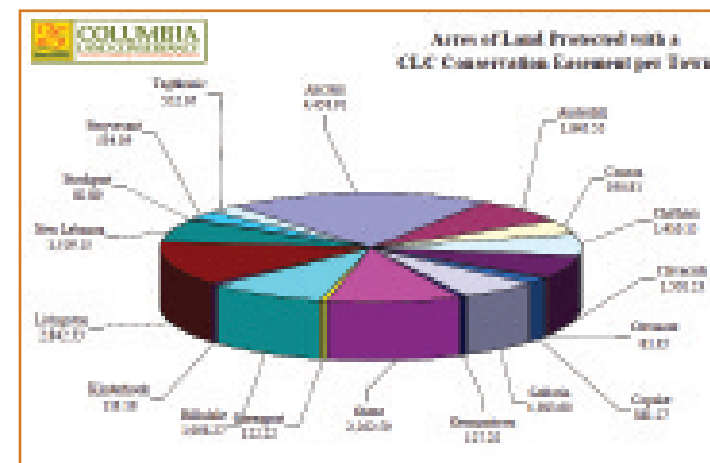
preserving important scenic views, open spaces, natural resources, and the overall environmental quality of the Town; and protecting historic sites.

The easement protects a large portion of the Shad Swamp; a NYS DEC designated wetland.

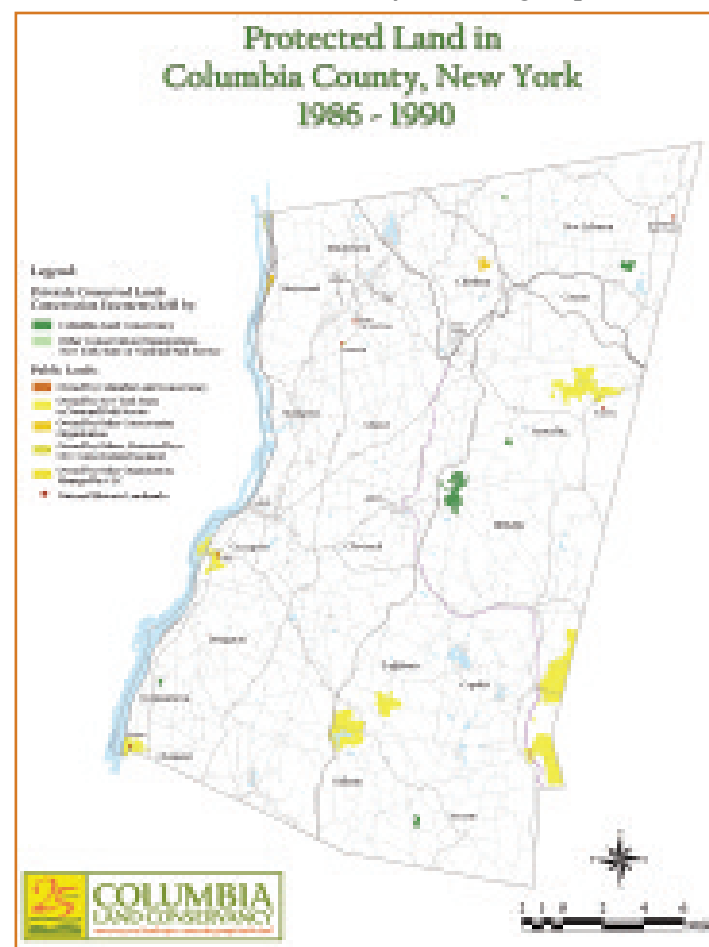


Conservation Easements, a Powerful Tool to Protect Important Lands

This is the second 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, <http://clctrust.org/2011/06/newsletter-summer-2011/>. In the next issue we will conclude the series with an examination our more recent programmatic undertakings that came out of our 2008 strategic plan.



Conservation easements have come to be considered one of the primary tools for landowners who wish to permanently protect their land for conservation purposes. In the Hudson Valley alone, some 80,000 acres have been placed under conservation easement, ensuring their natural resources will remain intact for future generations. Yet with all this activity, you might be surprised to know that conservation easements had only been a legal option in



New York State for three years when the Columbia Land Conservancy was founded in 1986.

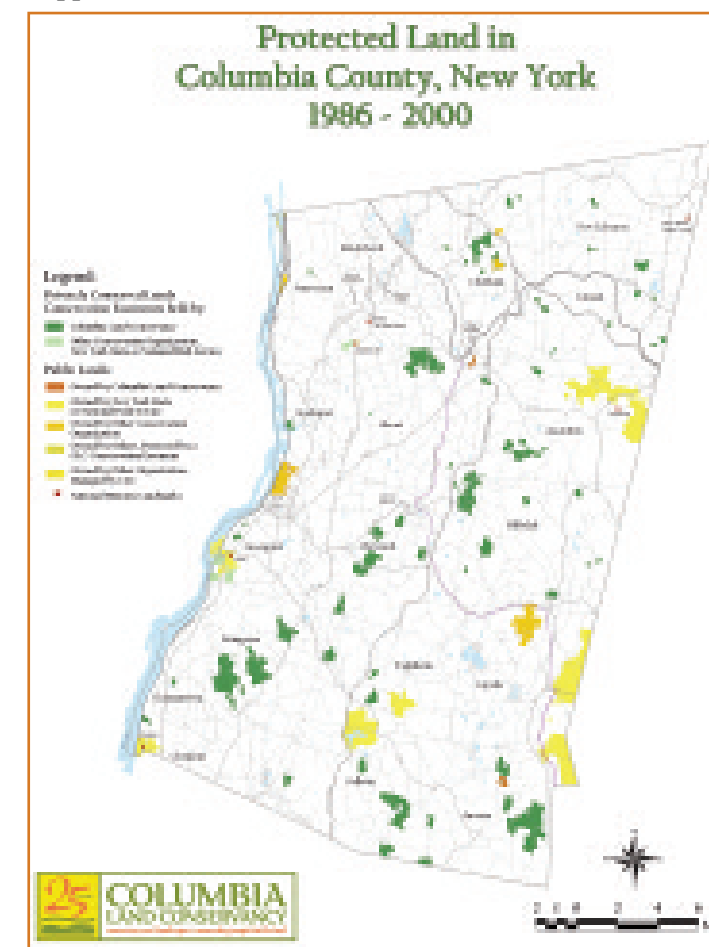
Land conservation has a long history in the United States, from the creation of the first national parks, to extensive federal land holdings throughout the west. Legal agreements called “easements” were first used for conservation purposes along the Blue Ridge Parkway, and by park designers like Fredrick Law Olmstead, who saw the potential to protect scenic views around parks in urbanized areas like Boston, Chicago and New York.

The first private conservation organization was The Trustees of Reservations established in Massachusetts in 1891 to guarantee that there would be land accessible to the public throughout the State.

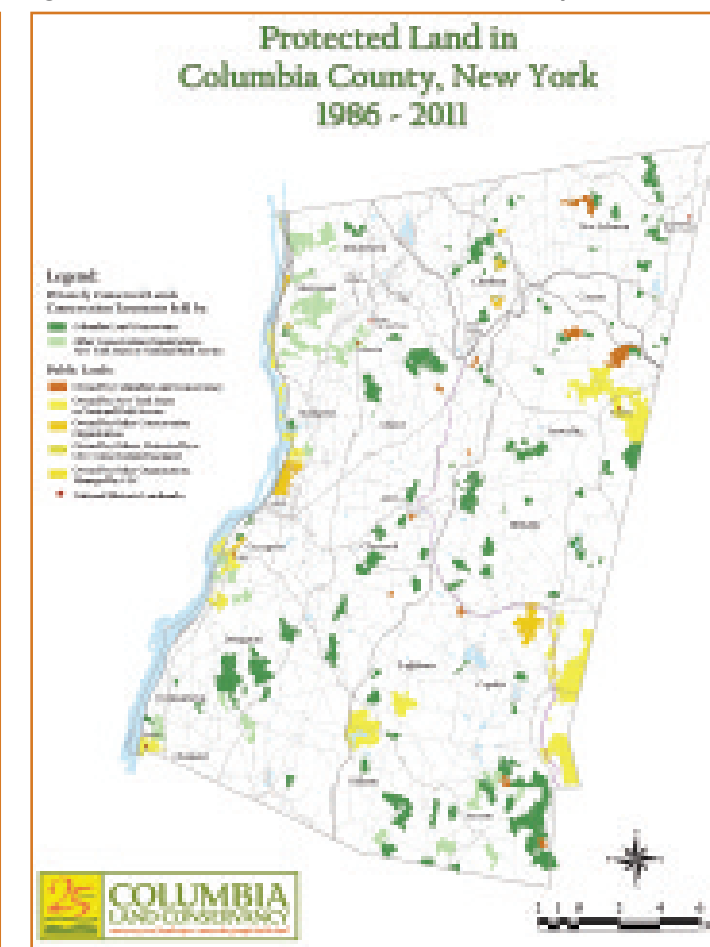
However, conservation easements held by non-government organizations on private land were not a legal option until relatively recently. In 1981, the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws completed the Uniform Conservation Easement Act, which established a new legal concept of what we now call a “conservation easement” and provided a framework to enable states to adopt the necessary legislation. For New Yorkers, that happened in 1983.

and horse farms. We have easements protecting large blocks of forest land along the Taconic Ridge, and easements protecting the scenic shorelines of the Hudson River. Each property is unique, and each easement is custom written to protect the specific resources found on the property.

Despite this track record of success, many people still have questions about what it means to “put your land in conservation” or donate a conservation easement. In general, a conservation easement is a voluntary legal agreement that ensures the permanent protection of a property’s natural characteristics, while allowing landowners to continue to live on, utilize, and enjoy their land. When a landowner agrees to donate a conservation easement, they are voluntar-



Within months of CLC's founding in 1986, two landowners donated conservation easements. Since then, CLC has partnered with 160 families to protect 22,000 acres of land. There is conserved property in every Columbia County town, ranging in size from 3 acres to 1,200 acres. The majority of these easements have been donated by the landowners though in some cases, CLC has been able to raise the funds necessary to purchase the development rights on working farms in exchange for a conservation easement. Today, our easements include multiple CSA farms; large commercial dairy farms that produce sheep, goat, and cow milk and cheeses; grass-fed beef operations;



ily limiting the future use of their property to those that are compatible with the conservation goals of the easement. Typically, this means that the property can not be used for commercial or industrial purposes, and the amount of residential development potential is dramatically reduced.

Contrary to a broadly held misconception, the landowner does not have to allow public access, and the vast majority of our conservation easements do not. Another misconception relates to the property tax impact: Property protected by a conservation easement stays on the local tax rolls; typically at the same assessment rate as before the easement was

established. Town assessors have broad discretion as to how to treat land encumbered by a conservation easement. However, since land in New York State is taxed based on its current use, placing a property under conservation easement usually doesn't change the tax assessment.

There are, however, potentially significant income tax incentives for donating a conservation easement. Both federal and state tax laws are based on the premise that the protection of private land provides benefits to the public through the conservation of natural resources. Indeed, Congress concluded that conservation provides such inherent value to society, that it provided substantial tax benefits to people who donate conservation easements that meet a statutory "public benefits test". These benefits include protecting open space – including farmland and forest lands that further local, state, or federal conservation policies—enhancing the scenic enjoyment of the general public, and protecting natural habitat for fish, wildlife and plants. In most cases, the development restrictions imposed by a conservation easement will reduce the appraised value of the land. Federal law treats the diminished value as though it were a charitable contribution, and in recent years has included particularly favorable deductibility rules. In New York, there is also an on-going property tax credit available to owners of lands subject to conservation easements.

CLC staff evaluates every potential easement donation against the applicable federal requirements. As a result, we have protected thousands of acres of some of the highest quality farmland and wildlife habitat in Hudson Valley, helping to protect the scenic qualities and rural character that makes Columbia County such a wonderful place to live and work.

According to figures informally compiled by the New York office of the Land Trust Alliance, CLC has conserved more than 25% of all privately owned, conserved land in the Hudson Valley. If you are interested in exploring conservation options for your property, contact Tony Colyer-Pendas, Director of Conservation Programs at 518-392-5252, ext 201.

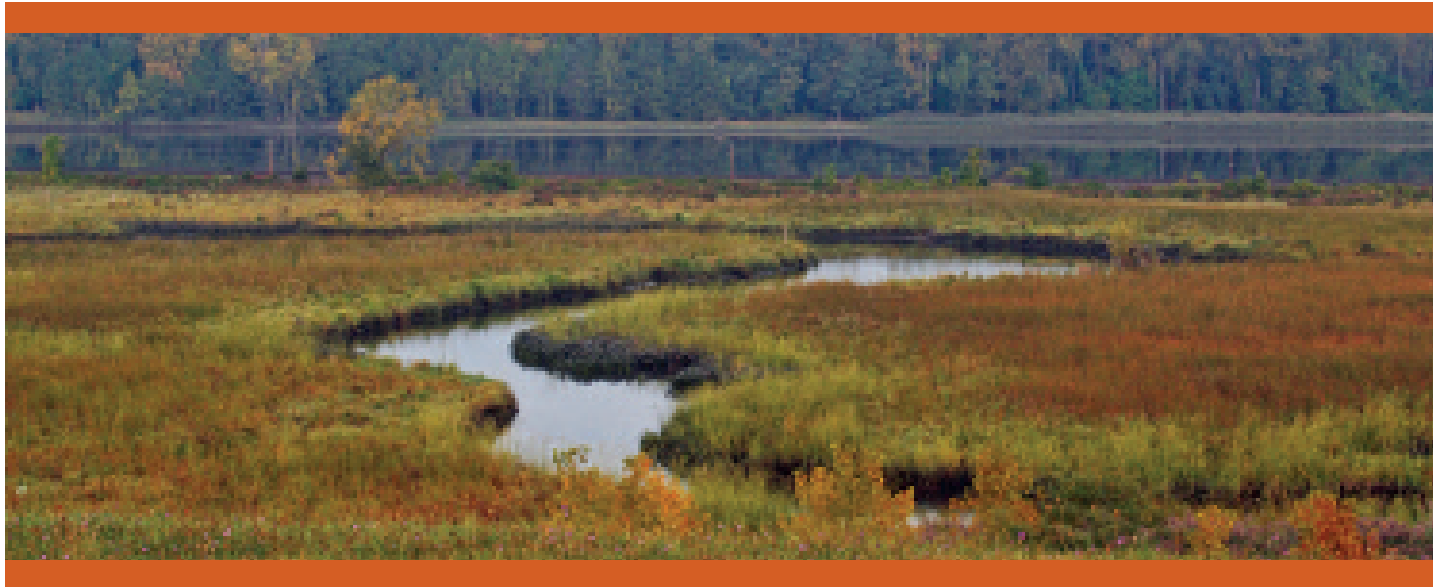


A Transformational Plan for Hudson’s Waterfront

CLC has published a proposal to transform the site of the former City of Hudson landfill and surrounding open space into a public recreation and natural area within walking distance of downtown Hudson. The plan envisions a trail network that would link the City with an expansive tract of open space and natural habitat, stretching from Charles Williams Park, through the 714-acre Greenport Conservation Area and northward on to Harrier Hill Park. As part of the CLC plan, interpretive programs would educate visitors about the varied ecosystems and history of the area, and the site would be a permanent outdoor classroom and natural laboratory.

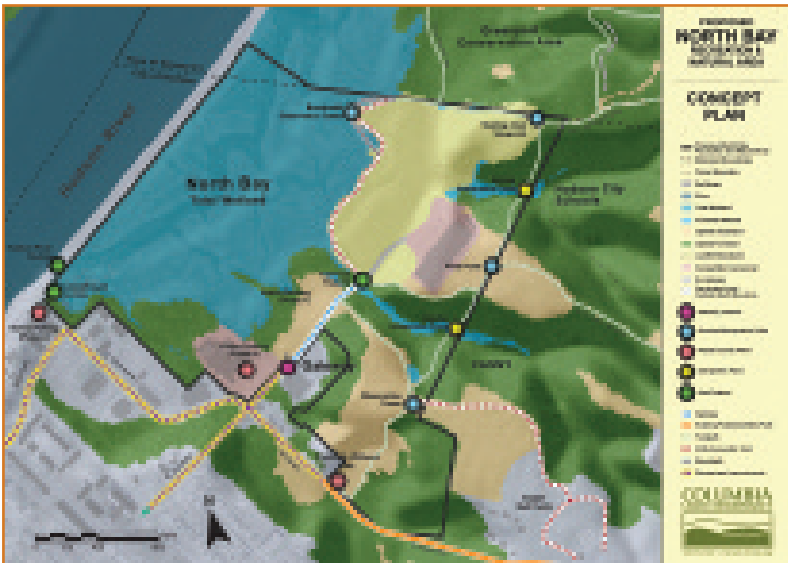
“This proposal describes a way to convert a former landfill into badly needed grassland bird habitat along the Hudson River flyway and to conserve and enhance the adjoining

The study was funded by a grant from the Hudson River Foundation’s Catskill-Olana Viewshed Mitigation Fund. Ownership of the property is divided primarily among the



wetland and forest ecosystems,” commented Peter Paden, CLC’s Executive Director. “It would also create a significant recreational and educational resource, provide access to beautiful views of the bay, river and mountains, and complete a pedestrian connection from the heart of Hudson to the Greenport Conservation Area and beyond.”

The CLC plan is based upon an analysis of engineering records relating to the capped landfill and a detailed natural resource inventory of the study area conducted by Applied Ecological Services Inc. The plan, which lays out a program to implement the project in three phases over a nine-year period, was principally authored by Ellen Jouret-Epstein, CLC’s Community Projects Manager. It reflects work conducted by CLC with the support of the City and County.



County, the City and the City’s Industrial Development Agency. There is, in addition, the privately owned Hudson Fabrics Building property, currently being acquired by Premier Brands.

The idea of developing the site’s potential as a community resource is not new but the site’s history of mixed uses, multiple owners, and the regulatory status of the closed municipal landfill require extra planning. The CLC proposal describes a vision and a means of actualizing this potential. The next step is to seek consensus among the owners and within the community on a way to begin to implement this vision.

The plan and its supporting appendices can be found in the Community Assistance section of CLC’s website, www.clctrust.org.

Volunteers Create a Much Needed Trail

A new trail at Ooms Conservation Area at Sutherland Pond is nearly complete after an Earth Day Trail Day on Sunday April 22nd. About 30 Valatie Boy Scouts, volunteers, and staff came out to complete the work that had been started by the Scouts earlier in the month. Nick Gabriel, a senior at Ichabod Crane High School, did a lot of the planning and organization of the project, which will serve to fulfill the community service requirement in his quest to attain the rank of Eagle Scout.

The project entailed clearing a new section of trail, about 1/4 mile in length, through thick vegetation, along Rock City Road. The new trail allows visitors to traverse the entire property without having to walk on the road to return to the parking lot. Three stream bridges were also built by the scouts before the end of May. Nick commented that as he has worked on the trail, he received many wonderful comments from people already using the roughed-out trail on how much they appreciate this improvement to the site.



Materials for the bridges and other supplies were purchased thanks to a generous donation from Anne and David Griffin, who are neighbors to the property.

“If you have not been to Ooms lately, I really encourage you to go and walk the new trail. It opens up new views and access to the pond” said Marcia Cary, CLC’s Volunteer Coordinator. “Collaborating with the Scouts has been a very positive experience and one that we will continue to cultivate with the Valatie troop and others.”

Kiosk Built by Volunteer

The Siegel-Kline Kill Conservation Area in Ghent finally has a kiosk, thanks to John Hoags of East Chatham. John, a professional carpenter employed as shop foreman for Bill Stratton Construction, donated his time and skills to construct a three-sided kiosk for the site. A frequent user of CLC’s conservation areas, John contacted staff to volunteer with construction projects. The kiosk will display a trail map, brochures, and information about the property, enhancing visitors’ experience of the site. Thank you, John!



Get Outdoors This Summer with CLC

In honor of its 25th Anniversary, the Columbia Land Conservancy has released three books aimed at getting people outdoors to experience the spectacular beauty Columbia County has to offer.

Columbia County Outdoors is the first comprehensive guide to outdoor recreation in Columbia County. The 120-page guidebook, authored by CLC trustee Sheldon Evans, with assistance from Rebecca Stowe and CLC staff, includes sections on boat-

– by foot, bicycle, skis or snowshoes, kayak or canoe.”

Publication of *Columbia County Outdoors* was made possible in part by a grant from Furthermore, a program of the J.M. Kaplan Fund. The book retails for \$23.75, including tax.

CLC has also reissued and updated Sheldon Evans’ earlier, popular book, *Walks by Protected Land*. The updated walk guide includes 20 walks along land permanently protected by conservation easements in Columbia County. The walks range from 3.8 to 7 miles. Each entry includes a description of the walk, detailed

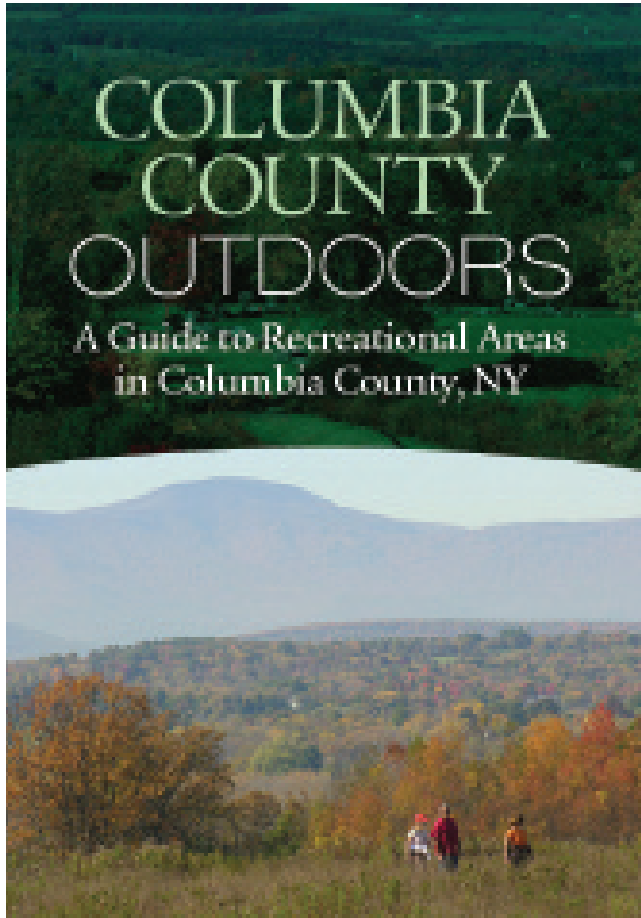
directions with mile markers, and a topographic map. The book sells for \$14, including tax.

“Anyone who loves the outdoors will love *Columbia County Outdoors*”

The third title is a re-release of the popular *Nature Quest*. Readers use clues in the *Nature Quest* “passport” to find treasure boxes hidden at nine CLC Public Conservation Areas. These clues lead explorers through

amazing wildlife habitats and across interesting historical and natural features. At the end of each quest there is a waterproof box that contains a special stamp, inepad, and logbook. Successful “questers” use the stamp to mark their passport, then sign or stamp the logbook in the box. The passport contains clues for all nine Nature Quests and can be purchased for \$5, tax included.

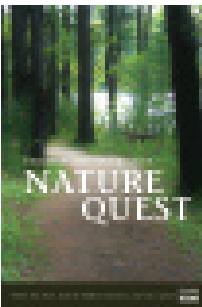
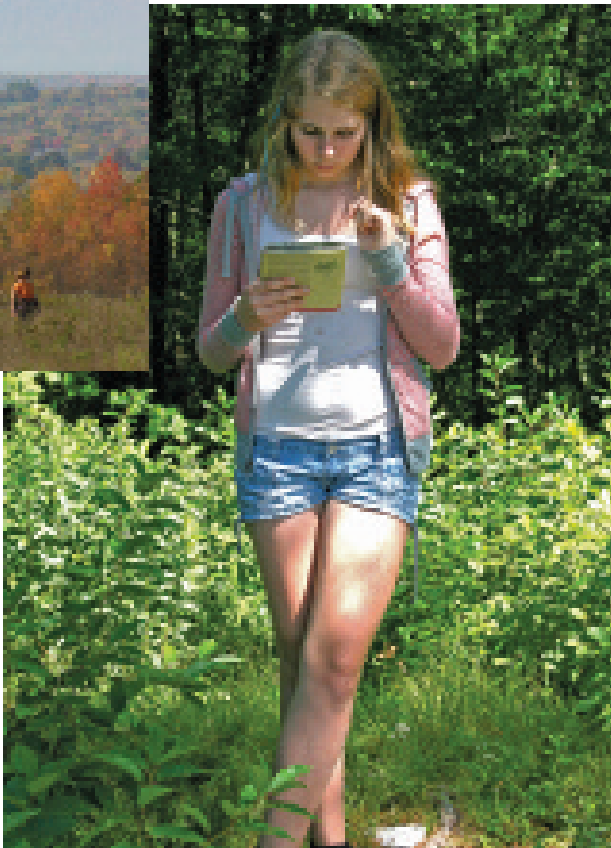
These books are available at the CLC store at 49 Main Street in Chatham, NY as well as local bookstores. All proceeds from these book sales support CLC’s mission to work with the community to conserve the farmland, forests, wildlife habitat, and rural character of Columbia County, strengthening connections between people and the land. For more information visit our website, www.clctrust.org.



ing, cycling, fishing, winter sports, and hiking in the county. It provides descriptive highlights of 45 locations, includes a detailed map, address, parking, and rules for each property.

“With this book you can discover many remote places with public access that you have never heard of,” says Sheldon Evans.

“Anyone who loves the outdoors will love *Columbia County Outdoors*,” says CLC Executive Director Peter Paden. “This book provides a guide to countless hours of enjoyable, healthy recreation for families and individuals



Give Green

This year we’ve introduced innovative ways to make a contribution to CLC in someone’s name and let them know – with a personalized certificate featuring artwork by local artist Roberta Wilson – that important conservation work is happening in their honor. We call this program “Give Green Get Green”. You can support CLC’s conservation work in any of these ways: \$50 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.

As carbon emissions continue to rise, 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, the nation’s first multi-state effort to make measurable reductions in carbon emissions. Twenty-five dollars retires 3 tons, while one-hundred twenty-five dollars retires 21 tons, the average person’s CO2 emissions for a year. Retiring these credits prevents power plants in the northeast from acquiring these credits which would allow them to be used in the future. These purchases include a Carbon-Zero Certificate with an embossed gold seal, suitable for framing.

You can purchase Give Green Get Green certificates online at clctrust.org/green or at the CLC Store at 49 Main Street in

Chatham. The recently remodeled and expanded store offers a range of unique items, especially selected to help people appreciate working lands, scenic lands, and wildlife habitats.

Offerings include binoculars, field guides, locally made jewelry and crafts, ecologically sustainable coffee, and note cards featuring local sites.

“We carry items that reflect our mission - to connect people to the land,” says Susan Van Tassel, Accounting and Office Coordinator.

“We’ve got wonderful seasonal and nature-related products, many of which are locally made. All of the proceeds support CLC’s

programs and conservation efforts, and CLC members receive a 10% discount.”

The store is open Monday – Thursday 9:00am – 5:00pm, Friday 9:00am – 4:00pm, and Saturday 10:00am – 3:00pm, with extended Friday hours through the summer.

Give Green Get Green

Visit CLC's new Store



49 MAIN STREET, CHATHAM 518 392 5252 www.clctrust.org
Open: Monday-Friday-9am-5pm – Saturday-10am-4pm





Dedicated Volunteer Joins Board

The Columbia Land Conservancy welcomes Hilary Dunne Ferrone to its board of trustees. Ferrone co-chaired CLC's 25th Anniversary Committee, a group of volunteers that guided CLC's milestone celebration with a set of 25th themed goals. These included working to increase conserved land holdings to 25,000 acres, initiate 25 miles of new trails, add 2,500 acres to the public conservation areas, offer 25 new educational programs, and increase by 25% the number of people who support CLC's vision of a vibrant agricultural economy and a healthy, accessible environment.

"Hilary's hard work has enabled us to expand our programs so we can conserve more land and create more educational and recreational opportunities for area residents," says CLC Chair, Deborah Lans. "We're lucky to have her on the board."

Ferrone has extensive experience with preservation, development, and architecture. She has a Masters Degree in Architectural Conservation from Columbia University. She has worked as a grant writer for The Olana Partnership and the Shaker Museum & Library, and founded a nonprofit, The Mostar Fund, which supports reconstruction initiatives in Mostar, Bosnia. Currently she serves on the board of Habitat for Humanity of Columbia County and is co-chair of Berkshire Country Day School's annual fund. She previously co-chaired the Austerlitz

Zoning Commission, which developed the town's first zoning code. Ferrone will also bring her enthusiasm for outdoor recreation to the board. She is an avid runner, participating in marathons and triathlons.



Hilary Dunne Ferrone

"The Columbia Land Conservancy is an exemplary nonprofit in our region," said Ferrone. "The programs it provides to families, schools, and the entire community, and the advocacy it undertakes for farmers and the environment make it an important part of the high quality of life here in Columbia County. I look forward to being part of CLC."

The CLC Board oversees the direction of the organization, provides guidance on major decisions, and establishes organizational policy. The board also leads the fundraising efforts and ensures that there is a sustainable fiscal plan.

A Heart-felt Farewell to Two Friends

After a combined 33 years on CLC's Board of Trustees, Michael Polemis and Judy Grunberg are stepping down. Everyone in the CLC family extends their most profound thanks to these two inspirational leaders for their outstanding service to the organization.

Michael was a founding board member, one of original trustees on the day CLC was created – over twenty-five years ago. He served as Board Chair since 1996. Michael built on the organization's strength as it grew to a staff of 15 with an annual budget of \$1.5 million. During Michael's tenure as Board Chair, CLC has greatly expanded its focus which, in addition to holding conservation easements on privately owned land, now includes owning and managing Public

Conservation Areas, a vital education program, support for working farms, and assistance for local governments and organizations in land use planning.

Judy, who actively supported the organization in many ways long before joining the board in 2003, brought vital energy to CLC. She tirelessly networked and promoted CLC's projects in an effort to conserve our rural landscapes and connect people to the land and played a key role on various Board committees and in several significant conservation initiatives.

"Michael and Judy have dedicated themselves to achieving CLC's goals," says CLC Executive Director Peter Paden, "and all the people of Columbia County have benefited

enormously from their efforts. Thanks to them we have more wildlife habitat, more places to connect with the natural world, and more working farms."



Judy Grunberg

"I have enormously enjoyed my tenure on the CLC Board," says Judy. "I especially appreciate that throughout the organization there is passion for the mission and a sense of common goals. Additionally, it is one of the rare Boards, in my experience, where the work load is shared among most of the members. I am honored to have been a part of the CLC family and don't expect to ever lose my interest in or support of our issues. Much as I know the Board will miss Michael, our extremely long-termed Chair, Deb is a heaven-sent replacement and I know she will do a masterful job as well."

Michael and Judy's terms as Trustees officially ended at CLC's February annual meeting, at which the organizational goals and budget for 2012 were set. Deborah Lans was elected to succeed Michael as Chair, after serving as Vice Chair for two years. Trustees Sheldon Evans (Ghent), Melanie Brandston (Claverack) and Leah Wilcox (Ancram) were elected Vice Presidents. Gale Bury, (Stuyvesant) was re-elected as Secretary and Mark Levy (Hillsdale) as Treasurer. CLC has added five new trustees since January 2011.

Jonathan Schor Society Member and Volunteer Profile

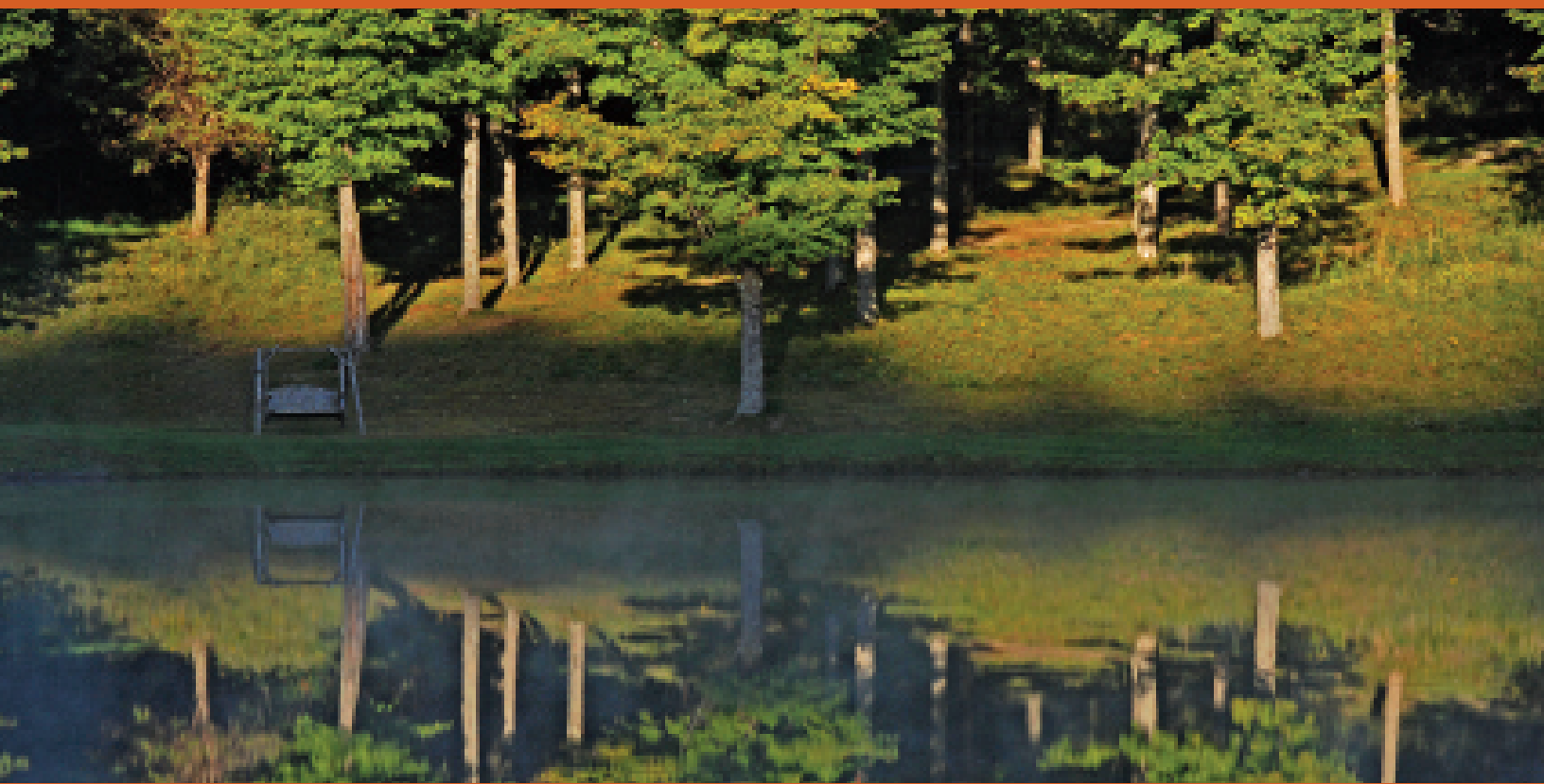
Jonathan Schor was a long time trustee and devoted CLC supporter. He was passionately committed to our conservation mission. Jon made several generous gifts to CLC in his lifetime, and when he passed away in 2004 he made a substantial bequest, which included the Schor Conservation Area. The people of Columbia County will forever benefit from Jon's deep and abiding love of the land, nature, and community work.

CLC would like to recognize other 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. In this edition, we are pleased to share the following, from a dedicated volunteer and Schor Society Member, Kitty Osterhoudt, of Claverack.

my work schedule interferes.

The importance of preserving our land and wilderness can't be overstated, as we witness all around us land development for mall-sprawl and a myriad of building which serves minimal use for most of us, and displaces much of our wildlife.

In this age of technology and the resultant 'nature-deficit' which many of our children suffer from, I feel it is of vital importance to the health and well-being of our society to



"I started enjoying the beauty, solitude and tranquility of the public conservation areas (mostly at Greenport) several years ago, and have been addicted to its unparalleled peacefulness ever since. Having always loved the outdoors, I'm especially lured there by the diversity of the land...deep forests, meadows, and the scenic river and mountains, which add a perfect backdrop. I've lived in the northwest and southwest, which are magnificent areas, but the Hudson Valley is one of the most beautiful. How lucky we are to have these nature conservancies so nearby!

My 'volunteering' consists of picking up litter, and reporting anything that may need repair on the trails. Of course I'd like to be able to participate more, but at the moment,

continue to promote the outdoor activities and programs offered by land conservancies everywhere. Join me if you can in choosing our local conservancy as a beneficiary of your estate, to ensure the continued ability of the organization to pursue acquisition of open space!" - Kitty Osterhoudt

If you have already made a provision for CLC in your estate plan, thank you, and please let us know so that we may acknowledge your gift and include you as a member of the Jonathan Schor Society. However you choose to give to CLC, we are grateful for your investment in Columbia County's future. Your planning today helps ensure that its special qualities will be protected for future generations. Your gift will truly be a lasting legacy.

Reflections from Outgoing Board Chair, Michael Polemis

CLC has just celebrated its 25th anniversary, a significant institutional milestone. We have good reason to boast a bit about our accomplishments over the past 25 years: almost 22,000 acres under easement; ten Public Conservation Areas, serving as a de facto county park system; and more than 2,000 children participating annually in our education programs, to name just a few.

This year also marks my 25th year on CLC's Board and my 15th as Board Chair. The time seemed right for me to step down. I am thrilled that Debbie Lans has taken over as Board Chair. She will bring fresh ideas, energy, and insights to the Conservancy. Debbie will also have the two greatest assets that I had during my tenure – a dedicated and generous Board and the most professional, dynamic staff in the Land Trust business.

One of the bedrock principles of land conservation is the notion of perpetuity. Land conserved by easement is land conserved forever. At CLC, we take that notion seriously, and we have every intention of remaining an important presence in this county – forever.

As a friend is fond of saying, "forever is a long time." When CLC celebrates its 50th anniversary, and then its 100th, it will matter little who the individuals were

who were involved at its beginning. What will matter will be the ongoing impact of CLC on the daily lives of people in Columbia County. That impact will be measured in the tranquility of watching the sun set at Greenport, the awesome power of the cascade at High Falls, and the sound of children shrieking with delight as they chase frogs at Ooms Pond. It will be measured by the fact that Columbia County retains the scenic working landscapes and genuinely rural character that make it such a special place.

In the meantime, it can be measured by all of us if we stop and try to imagine for a moment what Columbia County would be like without the Columbia Land Conservancy.

One of the bedrock principles of land conservation is the notion of perpetuity.





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In This Issue:



On the Cover:

This spring a volunteer effort created a new trail, allowing visitors to the Ooms Conservation Area at Sutherland Pond to walk all the way around the pond, without having to use Rock City Road. This new trail was part of our 25th Anniversary efforts to help make new connections to the land.

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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.