

RENSSELAER
LAND
TRUST



RLT News

SPRING 2013 / ANNUAL REPORT 2012



John B. Staalesen Vandeheyden Preserve

RLT Receives New Preserve

In December 2012, the Rensselaer Land Trust received 54 acres of significant wetlands off of Lyons Lake Road in the Town of Nassau from the National Audubon Society. Part of Pine Swamp, an extensive marsh and swamp complex adjacent to Smith Pond, the property contains wildlife habitat and supports unusual plant species for Rensselaer County. The property will remain a nature preserve, with public access for environmental studies and natural history outings.

Pine Swamp is one of the ecologically exemplary wetlands in Rensselaer County, relatively intact and unpolluted with few invasive species. It is comprised of five different wetland types: predominantly deep emergent marsh and red maple-hardwood swamp, with shallow emergent marsh, shrub swamp, and sedge meadow. Virginia rail and red-headed woodpecker, uncommon birds, have been reported from Pine Swamp. Pine Swamp is one of the few sites in Rensselaer County where several plant species live, including poison

sumac, which is similar to the more familiar sumacs except it is found in swamps and upon touching can cause a skin reaction similar to poison ivy.

Wetlands are important habitats to protect not only for the wildlife and plants they support, but for the ecological services they perform. Wetlands filter pollutants, help control floodwaters, recharge groundwater, settle out sediments before they flow downstream, and recycle nutrients.

Many wetlands have been filled, ditched, degraded, or broken up over the years, so those that remain are especially valuable to our natural and human communities. RLT welcomes the opportunity to help protect a piece of one of Rensselaer County's highest-quality wetlands.

The National Audubon Society also contributed more than \$9,000 to RLT's stewardship and legal defense funds, so that RLT has the means to preserve and defend the ecological values of the property in the future.

Closing RLT's 25th anniversary year, the acquisition of Pine Swamp increased our permanently protected properties to 846 acres in Rensselaer County. Pine Swamp is our seventh preserve.



Pine Swamp Preserve

Planning for RLT's Future

The Rensselaer Land Trust is currently developing a new five-year strategic plan. Our last plan covered 2008 through 2012, so it's time to take stock and assess what we should be working on for the next five years. Strategic planning clarifies and guides the future direction of an organization for its members, board, staff, funders, and the community at large, so that we are all focusing our energies on the actions that are most critical to accomplishing our mission.

One of the first steps in the strategic planning process was to update our mission and vision statements — see our new statements in the box to the right. (Our mission has essentially remained the same; we feel we have improved how we state it.)

As part of our planning effort, we surveyed our members, partner organizations, and the general community. We received 77 responses. Respondents ranked protecting clean drinking water as their top priority for land conservation. They also encouraged us to consider working more with towns to support sustainable development, and to partner with community groups on developing more multi-use trails.

Invigorating and insightful discussion at a pair of Board of Directors' retreats resulted in identifying several strategic priorities for RLT to accomplish its mission. Regarding land conservation and stewardship, priorities will be:

- Conduct a strategic conservation plan for Rensselaer County, which will identify those lands and waters of most ecological, open space, and community significance.
- Improve stewardship of the lands held by RLT, including enhancing management plans for these properties.
- Develop a signature property for RLT.

Regarding our organizational strength, priorities will be to:

- Strengthen finances, including developing a long-term financial plan.
- Build the Board of Directors.
- Grow membership.

The RLT Board is now working on specific strategies and actions that will provide direction in implementing each of these priorities. The final strategic plan will position RLT to move forward in the next five years to increase its level and pace of land conservation in Rensselaer County.



Board members Carl Cipperly (left), Nick Conrad (right) at a recent strategic planning retreat.



RENSELAER
LAND
TRUST

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Rensselaer Land Trust is to conserve the open spaces, watersheds, and natural habitats of Rensselaer County, for the benefit of our communities and future generations.

VISION STATEMENT

We envision Rensselaer County having sufficient conserved land to maintain clean water, clean air, wildlife and plant habitats, local farms, working forests, and scenic beauty.

We envision the people of Rensselaer County being connected to nature; having access to outdoor places; understanding the benefits of land conservation; and enjoying the quality of life created by a balanced mix of urban, suburban, and rural communities.

We envision the Rensselaer Land Trust having sufficient staff, board of directors, members, volunteers, partnerships, and financial resources to accomplish our mission.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Nick Conrad, President
Sally Lawrence, Vice President
Garrett Brown, Treasurer
Stacy Goldstein, Secretary
Carl Cipperly
Bob Crowley
Joseph Durkin
Francille Egbert
Jennifer Hixon
Scott Morley
Jessica Stephenson Edmister
Allan Stern
Kristina Younger

STAFF

Christine Young, Esq., Executive Director
Julie T. Moore, Communications and Development Associate

VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

Paul Schroeder

RLT NEWS IS PUBLISHED TWICE A YEAR

Julie Moore, Editor
Brian Murray, Designer

Welcome RLT's New Board and Staff Members



Joe Durkin

In 1975 Joe graduated from SUNY Cortland and Albany Law School in 1982. From 1983 to 2005 he worked at NYS Dormitory Authority in the Counsel's Office followed by seven years as Director of Real Property Services.

Joe's career at the Dormitory Authority taught him the importance of organizations, government and the private sector working together for the common good. He worked on bond issues, construction projects and real estate that provided facilities for SUNY, CUNY, Community Colleges, Office of Mental Health, Office for Persons with Developmental Disabilities, and not-for-profit colleges and hospitals. These transactions and projects resulted in increased access to education and health care for all.

With growing up on Long Island, Joe had experienced the benefits of small-scale urban living in communities, but along with the difficulties of life that revolved around traffic and long commutes. He moved to the Rensselaer County because of the blend of small-scale urban living with easy access to the Adirondack and Green Mountains, surrounding lakes, and rural countryside. Joe would like to work to preserve the balance between the urban and rural living he enjoys in Rensselaer County.



Scott M. Morley

Scott is an attorney with the Troy law firm of Martin, Shudt, Wallace, DiLorenzo & Johnson. Scott focuses his practice on corporations, vehicle and traffic, landlord/tenant, real estate and health care law.

He has served on a number of community boards, including serving as the President

of the Kiwanis Club of Troy, NY, the Executive Board of the Twin Rivers Council, and the Boy Scouts of America. Scott has always enjoyed the outdoors, and his participation in the Twin Rivers Council not only involved outdoor activities but also stewardship of Camp Rotary in Poestenkill. These connections with land attracted him to the Rensselaer Land Trust. He has also served as the Secretary of the Corporation for the Capital Region Medical Research Foundation, Inc. since its formation in 2006.

Scott is a graduate of Paul Smiths College, UAlbany, and Thomas Cooley Law School. From 1988-1994, he served with the United States Marine Corps. He lives in Colonie, NY with his wife and two sons.



Kristina Younger

Kristina Younger has been a long-time supporter of Rensselaer Land Trust, but it wasn't until her recent retirement from her position as Vice President of Business Development for the Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA) that she has had the time to be an active volunteer. Jumping in with both feet, she has been helping with grant writing and will chair the Fundraising and Development Committee in 2013. Growing up in the Berkshires, she has a BS from Cornell University, and Masters of City and Regional Planning from UC Berkeley. She enjoyed a 25-year career as a regional planner in San

Francisco and the Capital Region, including service as a Planning Board member in the Town of East Greenbush. With a recent "empty nest," she and her husband Mark moved to Grafton on Dyken Pond in the fall of 2012, where they wake up every morning saying "we live in paradise." Their three golden retrievers think so, too.



Julie Moore, New Staff Member at RLT

Julie joined RLT's staff in October 2012 as a part-time Communications and Development Associate. With over 10 years in the non-profit field, Julie's professional experiences include communications, graphic design, development, and public relations.

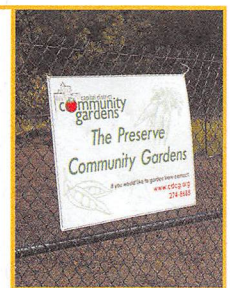
After receiving her BFA from Rochester Institute of Technology in 2000, Julie began her career supporting a regional arts organization located in the Adirondack Mountains. In 2005 she moved to Ithaca, NY where she held a position in communications with Cornell University and served as a volunteer docent for Cornell's Lab of Ornithology. Since relocating to the Capital Region, Julie has had the opportunity to work for Environmental Advocates of New York and Saratoga Springs Public Library.

Julie is also an artist who creates works inspired by nature in watercolors, graphite, and fiber. She enjoys exploring new hiking trails and birding spots with her husband and son.

Capital District Community Gardens

RLT partnered with Capital District Community Gardens in 2012 by granting them a community garden at our John B. Staalesen Vanderheyden Preserve. In support of the

garden and to improve the preserve's access, RLT improved the access road and put in a sharing parking area. The garden is expected to become operational in 2013.



Accomplishments

2012 marked Rensselaer Land Trust's 25th year. It was a very impressive year for us. We have you, our volunteers and members, to thank because without you we could not have accomplished nearly as much as we did this past year.

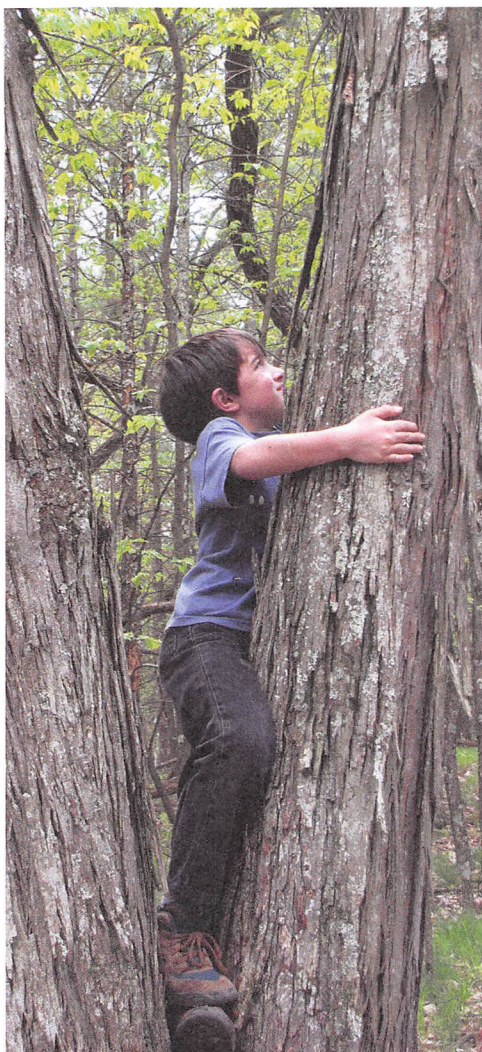
WORKDAYS

Doree Cox Memorial
Road Clean-up

Historic Cemetery
Restoration (2)

Tree Planting at Hoosic River

Tomhannock Clean-up



OUTREACH AND EDUCATIONAL WORK

1,272 Participants

Nature poetry contest

Hydroelectric Power
plant walk and talk

What's in our Creek Day?

Mushroom identification
Series (5)

History talk on the Hudson River

Fish seining events (2)

Wetland ecology hike

Wildflower Hike

Home energy workshop

Historic Snow Hole hike

Oktoberfest Benefit event

Horseman Land
Conservation Workshop

Victorian Stroll and George
Wilson Concert

RLT Educational Public
Lectures (5)

Hoosic Rive Paddle

Tibitts Forest hike

Plateau Traverse hike

Taconic Crest hike

Developed interactive protected
property webpage and
watershed map on RLT website

LAND PROTECTION/ STEWARDSHIP

Added New Preserve:
Pine Swamp

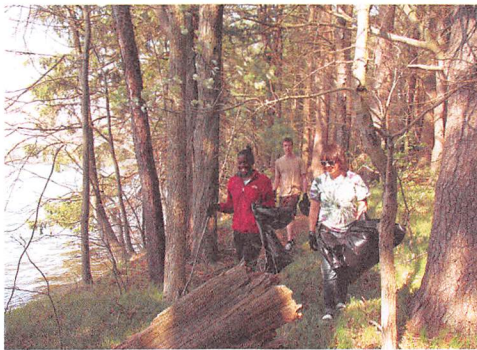
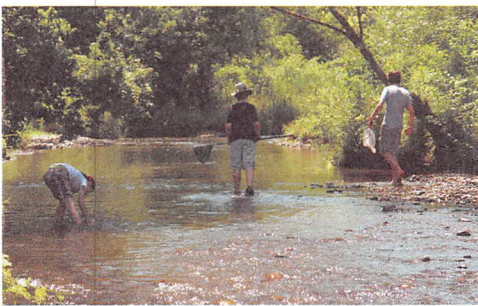
Partnered with Capital
District Community Gardens

Partnered with Forest
Legacy Program to protect
over 2,500 acres of the
Plateau's forested land.

Acquisitions Committee
property inspections (5)

Improved parking and
partially constructed
kiosks at Ingalls and
Staalesen Preserves

Monitored all properties (18)



MEDIA

Featured 47 times
in the media

Highlighted on LTA's
website under community
conservation

Staalesen Preserve
featured by LTA at the
National Land Trust Rally

Board President, interviewed
by Brian Nearing on
WVCR (88.3 FM).

Executive Director
interviewed by Troy Record



A TRIBUTE TO DOREE COX

We are missing Doree Cox this winter. We miss seeing her (in her eighties) cross country skiing across the Rensselaer Plateau where her family farm has been for more than a century. She had a lifelong love of the outdoors and adventure, taking a three-month bicycle tour of war-torn Europe in 1950, camping through Europe with her daughters in 1962, profiled by Smithsonian Magazine for camping in Lovell's Island in the Boston Harbor at 77, and camping in the Virgin Islands a month before she died. She was fearless in many ways, exploring old roads through the wilds of Rensselaer County, tracking a moose on snowshoes, and introducing herself to anyone in hopes of interesting them in local land preservation. Over her long tenure on the Board of the Rensselaer Land Trust, she brought us many new board members and friends. Wonderful in-depth historic hikes were her special expertise. She often worked with Warren Broderick. They mapped the old Albany Road and filled that hike with history. Hikers ended their weekend with a packet of original historical research and a new appreciation for the history of Rensselaer County and the nature of old roads. A hike or ski with Doree was full of new names, old stories of pioneers freezing to death, old foundations from the times of mills and water power, strange rock formations, and old roads that now would demand new hikes in a never ending excitement about discovering Rensselaer County. Doree Cox joined the Board of the Rensselaer-Taconic Land Conservancy soon after it began in 1987. She was always an active part of the outings committee and willing to lend her hand wherever it was needed. She also helped to connect RLT to the Taconic Hiking Club, the Berlin Historical Society, and many individuals who had the expertise to present programs for a variety of interests. She had a special hope to preserve the Rensselaer Plateau and was very supportive of the formation of the Rensselaer Plateau Alliance from an RLT committee. Doree died in March 2012 at her family farmhouse on the Rensselaer Plateau. We miss her.

Outings, Programs & Events

Vernal Pool Hike at Geiser Preserve

SATURDAY, APRIL 13 • 9:00 A.M.

RLT's Geiser Preserve is a beautiful wooded 95 acres on Perigo Hill on the Rensselaer Plateau. Among the rocky knolls and hemlock-maple-beech woods are vernal pools, which fill with snowmelt and rainwater in the spring, attracting breeding spring peepers, wood frogs, and spotted salamanders. On this trip we hope to see or hear these symbols of spring, or their eggs. The hike will be about three miles roundtrip.

Charge: \$5, RLT members free. Registration contact: Francille Egbert, (518) 674-3214, fran.egbert@gmail.com



Ten Edible Mushrooms

TUESDAY, APRIL 16 • 7:00-8:00 PM • THE SAGE COLLEGES: COWEE IV CONFERENCE ROOM, TROY

Sue Van Hook begins our mycology series this year with an evening lecture, "Ten Easy Non-Gilled Edible Fungi." Sue will teach how to find and identify 10 species of locally available edible fungi. Sue will present three field trips during the coming season that will help you solidify your new skills in mushroom identification. Join us for the upcoming field trips. Bring notebook and pen.

Charge: \$10/person, \$15/couple. Kids free. Registration contact: Marcy Steinberg, (518) 674-2171, marcygs@aol.com. For more information, visit www.suevanhook.com.

Tomhannock Reservoir Clean-up: Volunteer Day

SATURDAY, APRIL 20 • 9:00 AM-NOON

Join RLT for their 6th annual Tomhannock Reservoir shore clean-up, which provides drinking water to 125,000 Rensselaer County residents. Enjoy the pleasure of caring for the earth with others of like mind. Meet at NYS DEC public access parking lot on NYS Route 7 in Raymertown, just before the causeway. Groups will collect trash along the shore. Garbage bags will be provided. Bring gloves. We will work regardless of weather, so dress appropriately.

Registration contact Paul Schroeder at (518) 674-2480, pschroeder@nycap.rr.com. Sponsored by RLT and City of Troy.

Foray for Spring Edibles Along the Plateau

SUNDAY, APRIL 28 • 1:30-3:30 PM

Sue Van Hook, local mycologist, will lead us into the woods to see what is up in the spring. We can expect spring oyster mushrooms and if we are lucky some delicious morels. Those who take the April 16 workshop on Edible Mushrooms will have a chance to develop their field skills in mushroom identification. Bring a basket or bag with stiff sides, a field knife or trowel, and a hand lens if you have one.

Tentatively scheduled at the Capital District Wildlife Management Area. Confirm location for car pool at registration.

Charge \$10/person, \$15/couple. Kids free. Registration contact: Marcy Steinberg, (518) 674-2171, marcygs@aol.com

Wildflower Walk and Caving at Bentleys Cave

SATURDAY, MAY 11 • 10:00 AM-1:00 PM

On this hike we will discover wildflowers and you will have an opportunity to explore a cave if you wish, so come for one or for both! Bentleys Cavern is the largest cave in Rensselaer County, and its entrance is located in the woods full of spring wildflowers. We will hike uphill about a mile, looking at the spring-time flora along the way. At the cave, those who wish may enter; those who remain outside will have plenty of wildflowers to explore. The cave has a dry narrow front section. For those adventurous enough to continue on, we will crawl through a small stream, so plan on getting wet. There are a couple of areas in the cave that are very tight, but we will only do those parts if the group as a whole will comfortably fit. Like all caves, this is a unique and fragile environment. We will take only pictures and memories, and leave only footprints. Registration is limited for those entering the cave. Co-sponsored by the Northeastern Cave Conservancy.

Bring a flashlight or LED headlamp, (bicycle) helmet and light jacket if you plan to enter the cave, along with a change of clothes. Charge: \$5, RLT members free. Registration contact: Julie Moore, (607) 220-8580, julie@renstrust.org

Volunteer Work Day at New Staalesen Preserve

SATURDAY, MAY 18 • NOON-4:00 PM

Come help make our first urban preserve into a natural area to be enjoyed by the whole community. RLT is working in collaboration with Capital District Community Gardens to hold a volunteer stream and preserve clean-up day at the John B. Staalesen Vanderheyden Preserve in Troy. This workday is supported in part through funding from the National Audubon Society's "Together Green Fellowship Program." Volunteers are needed to plant trees, donated by NYSDEC, along the Wynantskill to help stabilize the riverbank; move mulch and prepare the grounds around the new community garden for future border planting; clean up trash; and put up signs. Bring work gloves and water.

Contact Bob Crowley at crowleyrh@aol.com or 518-283-7364 for more information.

Nature Walk at Staalesen Preserve in Troy

SATURDAY, JUNE 1 • 10:00 AM-NOON

Although RLT's John B. Staalesen Vanderheyden Preserve is within the city limits of Troy, it is home to a wide variety of plants and animals. Join us for an easy walk through the woods and fields, and along the wetlands and stream. You will learn about some of the flowers, trees, and wildlife living "in your own backyard."

No charge. No registration needed. Meet at the preserve entrance, located at the end of Wynantskill Way in Vanderheyden neighborhood in Troy, off of Campbell Avenue just west of Spring Street. For information: Nick Conrad, (518) 279-1963, nbconrad@msn.com.



Watch for more information on these events later in the year:

6th Annual Oktoberfest Benefit Event • Rensselaer Land Trust Annual Meeting • Concert with fiddler George Wilson

Dragonfly Identification Workshop

SATURDAY, JUNE 8 • 9:00 AM-4:00 PM

Dragonflies and damselflies are some of nature's most fascinating, beautiful, and speedy creatures. Erin White, Zoologist with the New York Natural Heritage Program, will lead this workshop at the Dyken Pond Environmental Education Center in Grafton. The morning will be an indoor session on how to identify dragonflies and damselflies using shape, color, and body structures (and microscopes). In the afternoon, we will venture out with nets and guides to see who is flying over the wetlands and ponds. Bring a lunch and water, footwear you do not mind getting wet for the wetland, binoculars, and a hand lens if you have one. Registration is limited to 12. Charge \$5, RLT members free. Registration contact: Nick Conrad, (518) 279-1963, nbconrad@msn.com.

Grow a Shiitake Log

SATURDAY, JUNE 15 • 10:00 AM-NOON

This is a hands-on workshop to inoculate your own shiitake log and perhaps a past-time as a backyard mushroom grower. Registration includes supplies including a log and mushroom plugs. Bring your enthusiasm and go home a grower. Workshop will take place at Pineridge Cross Country Ski Center, Poestenkill.

Cost: \$35/person, \$50/family. Registration limited, contact: Marcy Steinberg, (518) 674-2171, marcygs@aol.com.

Annual Hoosic River Paddle

SATURDAY, JULY 13 • 9:00 AM

Canoeists and kayakers please join us for a leisurely paddle through the calming waterways of the Hoosic River. We will launch at the NYSDEC public boat launch on RLT property at Eagle Bridge and take out downstream just before the Johnsonville Dam. We have seen eagles, great blue herons, and green herons along this stretch of coves and marshy backwaters. Provide your own boat and PFD. Bring snacks and water. You need to be in good physical condition to negotiate about ¼ mile of dense water chestnut growth at the take-out. Hoosic River boat launch is approximately one mile west of Eagle Bridge on the north side of Route 67, at the DEC sign.

Charge: \$5, RLT members free. Registration contact: Paul Schroeder, (518) 674-2480, pschroeder@nycap.rr.com



by Eddie Wren

Ecology Hike at RLT's Mud Lake Preserve

SATURDAY, AUGUST 10 • 10:00 AM

RLT's Mud Lake Preserve in Sand Lake contains a classic kettlehole bog with a floating bog mat, surrounded by a spruce-tamarack swamp. Dr. David Hunt will explain the ecology of bogs, fens, and swamps. We will see unusual plants living here, including insect-eating pitcher plants and sundews, and wild cranberries. Dragonflies are abundant. You will help take a pH sample and measure peat depth. Participate in a "peat passing ceremony." The walk will be short but wet and adventurous. Wear footwear you can get very wet.

Charge \$5, RLT members free. Registration contact: Nick Conrad, (518) 279-1963, nbconrad@msn.com.

Height of the Season Foray

SUNDAY, AUGUST 25 • 9:30 AM-NOON

With mycologist Sue Van Hook, we will revisit the plateau taking an easy walk into the woods to identify many local mushrooms. Bring a basket or bag with stiff sides, a field knife or trowel (with luck you can bring home some dinner). Confirm location for car pool at registration.

Charge \$10/person, \$15/couple. Kids free. Registration contact: Marcy Steinberg, (518) 674-2171 marcygs@aol.com

Rensselaer Plateau Traverse

ALL DAY SATURDAY AND SUNDAY • WEEKEND IN SEPT. TBA

Every year the hale and hearty try this 27 to 34 mile hike over 2 days (you can do just one day). Make this your year. The hike takes a slightly different route each year exploring the treasures of the Rensselaer Plateau. See the wild side of Rensselaer County. The hike will take place over two days, with the option of an overnight at Pineridge Cross Country Ski Center. This is a strenuous two days. Watch for dates and registration on RLT's website or Facebook page. Sponsored by the Rensselaer Plateau Alliance, Friends of Dyken Pond Center, and RLT.

Cemetery Restoration Volunteer Work Day

SATURDAY LATE SEPTEMBER, DATE TBA

Immerse your hands in history as we restore a 200 year old local cemetery on RLT's Randall Brook easement in Stephentown. Expert restorer will be at the site to guide us in cleaning, repairing, and resetting gravestones. Previously we have sighted a moose during our work. You will have time to walk down to Randall Brook, a lovely beaver habitat.

Contact Francille Egbert for detailed directions at (518) 674-3214 or fran.egbert@gmail.com

A Decisive Day in the History of Our Country

SATURDAY, SEPT. 28 • 9:00 AM-3:00 PM (HALF-DAY TOUR OPTIONAL)

Join us for a day of history in beautiful northeastern Rensselaer and southeastern Washington Counties, (as well as a visit to Bennington, VT) as we trace the decisive actions and battles that contributed to the British surrender at Saratoga in October of 1777 and help ensure the founding of our country. Meet at Ft. Edward in the morning to follow the Hessians Baum and Breyman's march to Hoosick and join in the discussion of the First Battle of Bennington. Enjoy a picnic lunch and then continue to the Bennington Battlefield to conclude our day discussing the Second Battle and viewing the majestic monument that commemorates this turning point in the Revolutionary War. Those that chose a shorter day may meet us in Hoosick for a picnic and the afternoon tour. More details will be on the RLT's website soon.

Registration contact: Christine Young (518) 859-4363, or christine@renstrust.org

Hike Up and Down the Hollows to the Taconic Crest Trail: Part 3

SATURDAY, OCT. 5 • 9:00 AM

We will hike a portion of the central Taconic Crest Trail, going steeply up Southeast Hollow in Berlin, along the narrow Taconic Crest, and descending via Mattison Hollow and its scenic waterfalls. Refreshments will be waiting for us at the end. This will be a strenuous seven to eight mile hike with long steep uphill and downhill sections. Wear boots or sturdy shoes. Bring lunch, snacks, and plenty of water. Prepare for cool and windy conditions.

No charge. Registration contact: Nick Conrad, (518) 279-1963, nbconrad@msn.com



Volunteer Profile: Steve Longtin

Steve is a life-long resident of the Capital District and has been appreciating the rural life in Rensselaer County since 1986. Steve first became acquainted with Rensselaer Land Trust in 2010 through his work with the Department of Environmental Conservation as one of the civil engineers that oversaw the installation of the boat launch at RLT's Hoosic River property.

After becoming familiar with RLT's work Steve wanted to get more involved and volunteered to be a Land Steward. He currently monitors RLT's Bear's Den Preserve in Stephentown.

So what are the responsibilities of a Land Steward? In an interview with Steve, he explained that he monitors Bear's Den Preserve once a year, spending a half-day

walking the property line and inspecting the property to make sure the land is in good condition and there are no problems.

Regarding Bear's Den, Steve said, "There is no evidence of hunting or ATV use, the preserve is land-locked. You need to park in a neighboring driveway, and climb a good size hill before you can even reach the property line." The location helps protect the flora and fauna. The people who donated the property shared with Steve that they have spotted what appeared to be a wolf, and there is clear evidence of bear, deer, and other wildlife. One of the things Steve finds most interesting about Bear's Den Preserve is the history behind the land and its cave. It has been documented that the early white settlers during the 1700s used the cave as a hideout from the Native Americans.

Steve is also a member of RLT's Acquisitions Committee. When a landowner is

interested in conserving their land, Steve and other committee members visit the property to identify its conservation values and listen to the landowner talk about his/her vision for the future of the property. The committee then recommends to the RLT Board whether the property meets RLT's criteria for land protection.

Steve plays a critical role in ensuring that RLT responsibly stewards its properties and makes informed decisions about land protection projects. He enjoys his volunteer opportunities with RLT, saying "It's a nice thing to do for the land trust, it does not require a lot of time, and I get out and see new parts of the county—it's a win-win for everyone!"

RLT can't accomplish all it does without the time and efforts of generous volunteers like Steve. Thank-you to Steve and all our volunteers!

Interactive Watershed Map of Rensselaer County Now on RLT Website

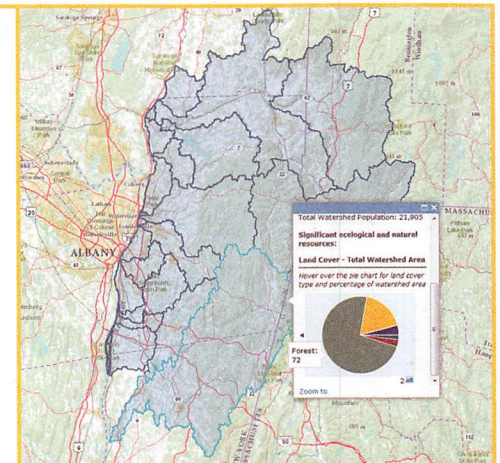
Do you know where your water comes from? Do you know where it goes after you've used it?

Water is one of the most precious natural resources protected by the Rensselaer Land Trust's land conservation work. To help Rensselaer County residents become more aware of their water resources, RLT has created an online map of the County's watersheds at <http://www.renstrust.org/renselaer-county-watersheds>. Clicking anywhere on the map opens a window with the name, population, acreage, land use, and significant features of the watershed at that location. The map also displays municipal water districts with the number of residents served and the water source. This new map expands RLT's

current watershed awareness activities, such as its annual shoreline clean-up of the Tomhannock Reservoir, water source for more than 100,000 people.

This project is funded by a \$5,000 grant from the Royal Bank of Canada's Blue Water Project™, a wide-ranging, multi-year program to help foster sustainable water stewardship around the world.

RLT envisions the interactive map as a way to help anyone with internet access learn more about their local natural resources and the services a healthy environment provides. In the future, the website will also include steps residents can take in their daily lives to conserve water and keep it clean. As youth are more and more disconnected from



the natural world, the map can be used by school classes as a teaching tool.

Our thanks go to Jim Watkinson, of RBC Wealth Management's Albany office, and to Rick Lederer-Barnes, our mapping consultant. Find out more about the Blue Water Project™ at www.rbc.com/bluewater.

2013: A Good Year to Donate a Conservation Easement

The recent fiscal cliff legislation has made it potentially more beneficial to donate a conservation easement in 2013 by reinstating the enhanced conservation easement income tax deduction that had expired on December 31, 2011. What does this mean for you if you are considering donating a conservation easement? And what exactly is a conservation easement anyway? Could a conservation easement be right for you?

A conservation easement is a flexible custom legal agreement between you, the landowner, and a land trust or a government agency. The easement permanently limits uses of the land to protect its conservation values. Each agreement is different because different properties and their conservation values differ. For instance, you might give up the right ever to build houses or mine gravel on your land, but retain the right to grow crops or harvest timber. Or you might give up the development rights on a portion of your property, keeping that part forever wild, but retain the right to build an additional house on another portion.

Why donate? The main reason is that you treasure your land and value its special

beauty and character, and want to preserve those forever. Donated conservation easements can also make economic sense, as you may be able to deduct the value of your development rights from your income tax for many years. You remain the owner and in control over your property. RLT holds the development rights and works as your partner to defend your vision for your land. The conservation easement runs with the land and future landowners will be legally bound by the agreement as well. RLT monitors lands under conservation easement to make sure the custom terms of the easement continue to be honored even if the land changes hands. A voluntary conservation easement with RLT provides you, the landowner, with a nongovernmental way to conserve natural areas and traditional ways of life that are important to you and your community while possibly providing you with significant federal tax benefits.

With the return of the enhanced conservation easement incentive, the federal income tax deduction for a donated easement increases from 30% of the donor's adjusted gross income in any year to 50%, and for some qualifying farmers and ranchers the deduction can reach up to

100% of their income for that year. The enhanced conservation easement incentive also extends the carry-over term from 6 years to 16 years. This means that if the value of your conservation easement, as determined by a qualified conservation easement appraiser, exceeds the amount you can deduct against your income this year, you can carry over that additional value for a deduction against your future income for the next 15 years or until it runs out. That could mean serious Federal income tax benefits for you until 2029!

Who is a qualified farmer or rancher? You must receive at least 50% of your income from the "trade or business of farming."

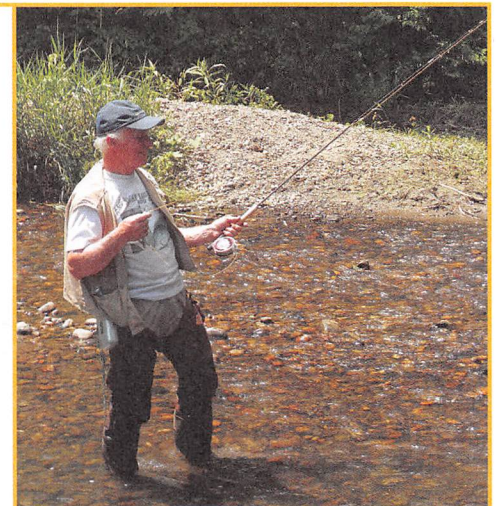
The enhanced incentive also applies to gifts of a remainder interest, in which you donate the land to RLT but retain the right to live on and use the land for as long as you live and after you die, the property passes directly to RLT.

Does it matter to you what happens to your land when you no longer own it? If so, a conservation easement with RLT might be right for you. Call Christine Young, RLT's Executive Director at 518-659-5263 to find out more.

Bill Niemi Leaves the RLT Board After 25 Years of Service

Bill Niemi joined the Board of Directors in 1987—RLT's first year. He has been an instrumental force behind our success. Bill was RLT President from 2005 through 2010, and has served as Vice President and on just about every committee. Under Bill's guidance and term as President, RLT brought GPS into our monitoring process; hired our first Executive Director; achieved

national accreditation; and acquired the Hoosic River Property in Eagle Bridge—a very complicated transaction that involved a private landowner, DEC's Fish & Wildlife, the New York Attorney General's Office, New York's Farmland Protection Office, and the USDA. Bill organized and worked on all of our Tomhannock Cleanups, coordinating the events with the City of Troy. Bill also developed the Hike for Open Space along the Taconic Crest Trail in the 1990's as a fundraising event. We thank Bill for the tremendous amount of work he has done for RLT and we will miss him.



Financial Data

Gifts

Income

Member Contributions	\$ 46,239
Outings and Workshops	\$ 607
Corporate & Foundation Grants	\$ 60,300
Stewardship Endowments	\$ 10,250
Fundraising Event Revenues	\$ 4,307
Interest Income	\$ 105
Donated Services	\$ 5,693
Total Income	\$ 127,501

Expenses

Fundraising Expenses	\$ 785
Outings Expense	\$ 477
Marketing	\$ 55
Conferences & Meetings	\$ 1,262
Insurance	\$ 759
Membership Dues	\$ 1,870
Mileage Reimbursement	\$ 1,176
Printing, Postage, & Office	\$ 5,835
Payroll	\$ 55,819
Professional Fees	\$ 9,897
Property Taxes	\$ 6,251
Rent & Utilities	\$ 3,995
Property Maintenance	\$ 6,884
Telecommunications	\$ 507
Donated Services	\$ 5,693
Total Expense	\$ 101,271
Net Operating Balance	\$ 26,230

Bequest Society

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GE Foundation
Greenbush Garden Club
Home Depot
Boght & Oakwood Veterinary
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PHONE

(518) 659-LAND (5263)

The Rensselaer Land Trust (RLT) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Founded in 1987, we have protected 846 acres, owning seven preserves with 289 acres and holding conservation easements on 12 properties with 557 acres. Your donations are our primary funding sources.



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UPCOMING OUTINGS & EVENTS

Vernal Pool Hike at Geiser Preserve

Saturday, April 13 • 9:00 a.m.

Ten Edible Mushrooms

Tuesday, April 16 • 7:00-8:00 p.m. • The Sage Colleges: Cowee IV Conference Room, Troy

Tomhannock Reservoir Clean-up:

Volunteer Day

Saturday, April 20 • 9:00 a.m.–Noon

Foray for Spring Edibles Along the Plateau

Sunday, April 28 • 1:30-3:30 p.m.

Wildflower Walk and Caving at

Bentleys Cave

Saturday, May 11 • 10:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.

Volunteer Work Day at new

Staalesen Preserve

Saturday, May 18 • Noon-4:00 p.m.

Nature Walk at Staalesen Preserve in Troy

Saturday, June 1 • 10:00 a.m.–Noon

Dragonfly Identification Workshop

Saturday, June 8 • 9:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

Grow a Shiitake Log

Saturday, June 15 • 10:00 a.m.–Noon

Annual Hoosick River Paddle

Saturday, July 13 • 9:00 a.m.

Ecology Hike at RLT's Mud Lake Preserve

Saturday, August 10 • 10:00 a.m.

Height of the Season Foray

Sunday, August 25 • 9:30 a.m.–Noon

Rensselaer Plateau Traverse

All Day Saturday and Sunday
Weekend in September TBA

Cemetery Restoration Volunteer Work Day

Saturday late September, date TBA

A Decisive Day in the History of Our Country

Saturday, September 28 • 9:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.

Hike Up and Down the Hollows to the Taconic Crest Trail – Part 3

Saturday, October 5 • 9:00 a.m.

