

RENSSELAER LAND TRUST

Formerly the Rensselaer-Taconic Land Conservancy

Preserving the Land and Protecting the Natural Resources of Rensselaer County, NY



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

This is the time of year for celebrations, traditions, and family reunions. During this season we look back over the past year with thanksgiving and contemplate next year with anticipation. It is similar for our organization.

I look forward to getting together with old friends and perhaps meeting new people who share our love of life and nature. Though my mental list of those I wish were still here grows longer each year. I miss my parents, my brother and my sister. I miss my former partners in open space protection: Glen Martin, James Atkinson, Reg Soracco, Burt Miller, and others like Stan Bunce whose health has removed him from our circle but not from our thoughts. At this same time, I celebrate with friends who are with us now and who have taken up the cause where the above-mentioned have left off. Each member of our family lost seems to welcome a new member valuable to us and to our efforts.

In this Annual Report, you will learn of the many good things the Rensselaer Land Trust (RLT) has accomplished this year. We have looked at land parcels throughout Rensselaer County and have selected a few to pursue. While our discussions with landowners are confidential, I can tell you that they are beautiful pieces of property. We also expended a huge amount of time and effort for the accreditation process as one of three pilot land trusts in New York State. This is a new thing for all land trusts and we are a “guinea pig” for the Northeast Land Trust Alliance (LTA) Accreditation Commission in accrediting small land trusts.

As I write, we are preparing for a two-day visit from the Commission at which time they will visit properties, talk with landowners, look at our files, and meet with Board

members. They have published a “Standards and Practices” manual over 500 pages long and like students, we will be tested on it. We will report on the results in our newsletter as soon as we receive news to share.

We are also fortunate to have a very committed board with diverse talents that allows us the spectrum of activity that we engage in. However, we still need new board members to fill vacancies created by those who after many years have moved on, some to protect land in other ways, and some due to the fact that they need to slow down. I welcome our newest board member, Michael Thompson. Michael and another young board member, Melissa Barry, helped to put together this report.

We are striving to bring our organization to a new level of service. We are very fortunate to have two talented part-time staff, John Middlebrooks, our Executive Director, and Carol Trager, our Office Manager. We need more of their time plus a couple of new staff to operate effectively at the level we should for a growing land trust of our size. Therefore, the Board has decided to pursue a new position of Development Director.

We are thankful for the almost 300 members who share our love of Rensselaer County with dues accounting for \$15,000 each year! But we need a funding stream big enough to support our vision. New relationships need to be built with government entities, private companies, and individual supporters. We are searching the hills of Rensselaer County for more friends who will join us in preserving that same landscape.

-Bill Niemi

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

The pending change in the name of the Rensselaer-Taconic Land Conservancy to the Rensselaer Land Trust (RLT) is much more than a new name to call the same organization. It reflects a new organization forged from the old with a new vision and mission addressing the most pressing natural resource protection issue facing Rensselaer County—the protection and preservation of the County's watersheds.

Global climate change has resulted in many worldwide, national and regional impacts on our weather, our flora and fauna and how we go about our daily activities. We are all well aware by now of the importance of reducing our carbon emissions and our reliance on foreign oil, but the biggest impact to our well-being and that of many other countries is the lack of fresh water. The availability of fresh water will be the number one priority for countries around the globe in the next 20 to 30 years. We are beginning to see that effect here in the U.S. in the West and in the South as available water supplies for daily living, agriculture and industry become scarce or in some cases non-existent. One only has to read the paper or listen to the newscasts to see what is happening regarding water resources both in our country and others.

As the old adage of the "Green Generation" goes: "think globally – act locally." RLT has taken on the proactive mission of protecting the watersheds of Rensselaer County now rather than later when the opportunities are limited or lost. We have begun to look at all the watershed areas in the County and identify which are at risk due to pollution, over-development and neglect. It will encompass all the towns and political jurisdictions as well as the involvement of the County, the State and even the Federal Government in developing plans and actions necessary to insure their protection and the availability of fresh water for a growing population.

RLT will continue to address special projects protecting unique habitats, expanding and linking trail systems and encouraging access to the Hudson River. We are also committed to developing both public and academic-based environmental education programs highlighting our new mission. We will seek to be proactive in working with local municipal officials in developing sound comprehensive open space plans that address both smart growth initiatives as well as preserving a rapidly dwindling supply of open space and natural areas for all to enjoy. We will be looking to our members for advice and support and reaching out to others to join our efforts in achieving our mission.

RLT is committed to forging a professional, nationally recognized land trust with strong community support. This will require a staff of dedicated professionals well-versed in all the disciplines required of a modern land trust and the sustained effort and oversight of our Board

of Directors. The financial support of our membership along with an aggressive fund raising campaign for both our operational needs as well as our long-term protection goals will be crucial to this phase of our growth. You will be hearing more about this in the coming year and we hope that you will consider supporting our efforts generously.

I am very proud and most grateful to our present Board for the many hours of hard work they have put into this transformation. The Land Trust Alliance's Accreditation Program submission required a full review of every aspect of our organization, past and present. Developing a systematic and comprehensive approach to transitioning an all-volunteer organization to a professionally managed organization is not an easy task to say the least. I am proud of their willingness to apply for this program and become only one of 20 in the nation to be selected for the second round of LTA's Pilot Program for national accreditation.

This year we acquired a new easement which has been on the books for a number of years and made significant progress in completing the Hoosic River Access Project in the community of Eagle Bridge. We look forward to seeing this completed in 2008 and to hosting a dedication for the proposed small boat launch and fishing access on the Hoosic River. RLT is working in partnership with the NYS Attorney General's Office and the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation to complete this five-year effort.

Finally, I want to mention special efforts made by some of our Board members who have gone above and beyond the role of a typical member of a land trust. Dr. John Heimke applied for and was awarded a Rubin Foundation Grant enabling him to develop a lecture series at Russell Sage College focusing on the Tomhannock Watershed. Melissa Barry, one of our newest board members, applied for a Hudson River Greenway Conservancy Grant to institute a study for the development of a county-wide trail development plan involving the active participation of local trail groups, local governments and interested citizens. Garry Brown, owner of Brown's Brewing Company, created a new brew called "The Tomhannock Pilsner" and has dedicated a portion of his profits on this beer to go toward RLT's Watershed Protection Fund.

We look forward to the addition of a few special easement projects which have been in the planning stages. Hopefully, we are successful with our accreditation application. Thank you for your support of RTLTC and I look forward to your enthusiastic support for RLT!

-John R. Middlebrooks

2007 HIGHLIGHTS

ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL YEAR OF OUTINGS

In 2007, more than 200 people attended 10 outings offered by the Rensselaer Land Trust. We started the year with one of our traditional popular waterfall tours, led by RLT Director Bob Ingalls and noted waterfall expert Russell Dunn. Bob also led his annual spring wildflower walk, this year at the Rensselaer Tech Park.

Warren Broderick, volunteer and former RLT Director, sponsored three historical talks: David Larkin and Warren discussed the local legacies of the CCC and WPA, and Granville Hicks (co-sponsored by the Grafton Historical Society); Warren presented a comparison of today's forests at Grafton Lakes State Park with those described in colonial records (co-sponsored by Grafton Lakes State Park); and Verlyn Klinkenborg, noted author (*The Rural Life*) and columnist, gave a very engaging and entertaining talk on rural life in upstate New York.

Natural history was the focus of two outings: Frank Murphy of the Hudson-Mohawk Bird Club and RLT Director Doree Cox led a birding trip along the Taconic Crest Trail; we had close looks at Chestnut-sided Warbler, American Redstart, and Rufus-sided Towhee, and listened to a singing Mourning Warbler, an unusual bird for this area. Dr. Roland Kays of the NY State Museum led a mammal walk at the Dyken Pond Environmental Center. Lisa Hoyt, Director of the Dyken Pond Center, led a canoe and kayak paddle around Dyken Pond.

In honor of the bicentennial of the Town of Brunswick, Warren and RLT director Sharon Zankel led a hike to the top of Bald Mountain (Mt. Rafinesque), a local landmark with a remarkable history. Our annual outing in conjunction with the Hudson River Valley Ramble was again jointly sponsored by the Hoosic River Watershed Association; this year we hiked along a riverside section of a former railroad that is being purchased by the Village of Hoosick Falls for conversion to a trail.

The RLT Outings Committee is looking forward to its 2008 schedule. We welcome your suggestions for hikes and outings; please feel free to pass them on to Nick Conrad at 279-1963, or at rtlc@rtlc.org. We also welcome volunteers to help plan or lead outings. See you next year!

-Nick Conrad, Outings Committee Chair



Author Verlyn Klinkenborg



Waterfall tour

2007 HIGHLIGHTS

ADVANCING WATER RESOURCE PROTECTION PROJECTS

The RLT advanced its mission to protect water resources this year with the following two projects:

Hoosick River Project

The RLT will be acquiring 32+ acres of land along the Hoosick River in fee from two owners. We are working in partnership with DEC and the Attorney General's office to develop the project. The RLT will transfer an 66' wide **fishing access** easement to DEC along approximately 3/4 mile of shoreline on the Hoosick River. We will also transfer 1+ acre of land to DEC for a public area and **small boat launch site** on the Hoosick River.

Funding for the Hoosick River project is the result a NYS pollution mitigation settlement with the Oak-Mitsui Corp. involving a pollution event on the Hoosick River. RLT's goals in this project are as follows:

- Create a public fishing and small-boat access site on the Hoosick River in the vicinity of Eagle Bridge
- Support the continued agricultural use of the property
- Encourage complementary economic initiatives in the community of Eagle Bridge similar to those found on the Battenkill, Esopus and Delaware River Corridors
- Protect the quality and use of the Hoosick River

Capital District Farms

Capital District Farms, owned by **Paul Schmidt** on Rt. 351 in Brunswick, has signed an agreement to sell land and thereby extend wetlands on the property in order to add approximately 9 acres to an existing wetland. This property acts as a buffer between the farm operation and the Poestenkill. Duck ponds and wetland vegetation will be planted using funds from the US Army Corp of Engineers. The conservation easement will be held by RLT.

LAND TRUST ACCREDITATION APPLICATION UNDER REVIEW

The **Land Trust Alliance (LTA)** has begun a program of voluntary accreditation of land trusts. The RLT Board of Directors voted last spring to pursue this option. Accreditation would certify RLT's commitment to follow accepted standards and practices in all of its operations and transactions.

Upon notification of selection to participate in LTA's nationwide pilot program, RLT immediately formed a committee to commence work on the task of shoring up our procedures, practices and policies to ensure compliance with LTA's standards. With the expert assistance of Katrina Shindledecker, the committee conducted intensive reviews of all aspects of our organization's operations and developed new or revised policies as necessary. Katrina currently serves as the Director of Land Preservation for the Hudson Highlands Land Trust and brings to RLT a background including considerable environmental science and policy studies and awards. The process required about 500 person-hours, 85% of which was volunteered by RLT board members over the summer months to permit submission of our primary application in mid-August.

The second phase of the process occurred in late September when LTA asked for detailed data related to four of our protected properties. These analyses were sent to LTA in early October.

We now await the third and final phase of this arduous process, a site visit by an LTA team of three to personally inspect our office files and visit several of our protected properties. The LTA's decision on accreditation will be announced in 2008.



TOMHANNOCK PILSNER BENEFITS RLT

This year, **Garry Brown**, President of Brown's Brewing Company (and RLT board member) developed a creative funding stream for the RLT. Brown's Brewing has arranged for a share of the profits generated by the sale of its **Tomhannock Pilsner** to flow to the RLT's Tomhannock Watershed Protection Fund. The inspiration for the fundraiser was fifteen years in the making. According to Garry Brown, "we've used the water from the Tomhannock Reservoir for our handcrafted ales and lagers for the past 15 years and it's wonderfully suited to brewing a Pilsner style beer. We have often bragged about the high quality water and now we can help to protect it as well."

Cheers to Garry for devising a creative way to share his passion with ours. Other private sponsorships and funding partnerships are needed by RLT. If you have an idea, please contact Roger Armstrong, chairman of RLT's fundraising committee at (518) 273-9363 or rogarm@nycap.rr.com.



RLT SPONSORS A COUNTYWIDE TRAIL VISION PLAN

Earlier this year, RLT received a \$9,500 grant from the **Hudson River Valley Greenway** to begin developing a *Rensselaer County Trail Vision Plan*. The project will inventory existing and planned trails and identify desired future trail linkages. Through this process, we hope to find creative ways to connect together the county's existing destinations such as hamlets, villages, historic sites and parks.

To implement this plan, we have formed a committee of trail enthusiasts in the county representing major interests including hikers, equestrians, bikers and snowmobilers. This fall, we sent a letter to all of the chief elected officials Rensselaer County asking for their assistance in identifying existing and planned trails. The committee is now following up with each community individually. We plan to conduct public meetings next year throughout Rensselaer County.

This project has already brought many people with similar interests together. We hope that these relationships will continue to expand and build momentum for an interconnected regional trail system in Rensselaer County.

If you want to get involved, contact Melissa Barry at melbary_1@yahoo.com or (518) 339-8367.



2007 HIGHLIGHTS

THE TOMHANNOCK WATERSHED LECTURE SERIES

In addition to educational materials such as the watershed model and class modules, the Rubin grant also funded a **series of public lectures** on various topics related to watershed and wetland protection as well as the history of the Tomhannock Reservoir. This series was designed for an adult public audience and Russell Sage College students. The lecture series consisted of five evening programs scheduled from January through April 2007 and had ten invited speakers (see below). RLT was encouraged that a presentation by John Middlebrooks on the benefits of conservation easements drew an enthusiastic audience.

2007 Watershed Lecture Series Speakers:

Watershed Systematics, **Roger Armstrong**, Professor Emeritus, Russell Sage College.

Historical and Contemporary Water Supply Systems in Troy, **Robert Moore** and **Neil Bonesteel** from the John F. Buckley Water Treatment Facility in Troy.

Benefits and Practices of Easements and PDR's to Protect Watersheds, **John Middlebrooks**, Executive Director, RLT.

BioFilm Relationships in Northern Wetlands, **David Domozych**, Biology Professor, Skidmore College.

Panel Discussion with:

- **Christine Delorier**, Project Manager for Rensselaer County, US Army Corps of Engineers
- **Jim Unser**, U.S.D.A. Natural Resources Conservation Service, Soil Conservationist
- **Katrina Shindledecker**, Partnerships for Regional Invasive Species Management (PRISM)
- **Carl Cipperly**, local agricultural businessman
- **John Middlebrooks**, Executive Director, RLT
- **John Heimke**, moderator

MAKE VOLUNTEERING FOR RLT YOUR NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION

Volunteers continue to be essential to the perseverance and growth of our organization. RLT has established a number of committees to oversee the many tasks associated with the accomplishment of our mission, and several of these require additional volunteer participation:

The **Acquisitions Committee** evaluates properties under consideration for conservation easements in accordance with a rating protocol. Interested volunteers will be provided training and handbooks. Contact Bill Niemi, Committee Chairman, at (518) 279-1234.

The **Stewardship Committee** is responsible for the annual monitoring of RLT properties and easements and must be accomplished in accordance with procedures outlined by the Land Trust Alliance. Knowledge of GPS technology may be helpful and attention to detail in recording data is essential. Volunteers will be provided stewardship training. Contact Bill Niemi, Committee Chairman, at (518) 279-1234.

The **Fundraising Committee** has the ambitious task of raising monies to support RLT operations including personnel and the expenses associated with our programs and initiatives. This committee seeks volunteers who are willing to identify and build relationships with prospective financial supporters as well as develop income-producing strategies. Contact Roger Armstrong, Committee Chairman, at (518) 273-9363.

The **Communications Committee** is newly formed to create a new image for the organization. It will coordinate the production of RLT's publications including the newsletter and all publicity materials. This committee welcomes volunteers with writing skills or experience in communicating with the media. Volunteers to help with occasional bulk mailings are also needed. Contact Michael Thompson, Committee Chairman, at (518) 270-9667 or mthompson96@nycap.rr.com.

The **Rensselaer Plateau Alliance** is an affiliate of the RLT and is a coalition of volunteers representing many groups striving to conserve a wildlife corridor on the Plateau stretching from the Grafton State Park to the Cherry Plain State Park. It presently seeks volunteers who have a general interest in the area for recreational purposes or who may wish to assist in developing an educational program to be presented for local government officials. Contact Fran Egbert, Committee Chairwoman, at francillee@juno.com.

BRINGING WATERSHED EDUCATION TO RENSSELAER COUNTY'S YOUTH

The **Louis & Hortense Rubin Community Fellows Program** ("Rubin grant") provided support for the Tomhannock Watershed Education Project, organized by RLT board member **John Heimke, Ph.D.** (Rubin Fellow) with assistance from RLT board member **Roger Armstrong**.

This project was introduced by RLT in recognition of the centennial of opening of the Tomhannock Reservoir and aims to promote its history, development, operation and, above all, an appreciation for the protection of its watershed.

Throughout the duration of this project, new and cooperative bridges of working relationships were established with various levels of government, public interest groups, professional organizations, farmers and land owners within the watershed area, students of all ages and interested members of the Rensselaer County community.

We acquired the EnviroScape watershed-teaching model early in the summer and initiated a campaign for its use as an interactive teaching device to support interest in our watershed education endeavors. The large colorful model immediately captured the interest of children and parents wherever we did a public presentation.

Colored dyes were used in the demonstration to simulate fertilizer, animal waste, road salt, petroleum grime and toxins to demonstrate non-point and point sources of run-off pollution. Students used their imaginations in designing and employing riparian and contouring methodologies to curtail run-off pollution. The colored dyes and the employment of water spray bottles to mimic rain served not only to evaluate their corrective

measures, but provided a contagious atmosphere of enthusiastic participation. The model proved to be a wonderful communication vehicle for meeting parents and teachers who requested our watershed program and helped promote it.

Eighty informational letters were mailed out to local earth science and biology teachers in the area offering our watershed presentation programs for their students. During the year there were some nineteen watershed programs presented using the EnviroScape Model system to school age children. These program presentations were very popular with the children and received laudatory praise from parents and teachers.

Troy High School biology teacher Becky Kaiser requested our assistance to develop a Living Environment laboratory component centered on the Tomhannock Reservoir. With our help she was awarded a sabbatical leave and we will continue to provide assistance to her as she develops an innovative curriculum that satisfies four state-mandated laboratory activities.

Throughout the duration of the Tomhannock Watershed Education Project public awareness was elevated for the employment of conservation methods that can be practiced by every land or home owner and community citizen of every age. The program presentations allowed us to engage directly with the community and to discuss the positive means of preserving the resources that we value. We were often inspired and encouraged by the passion with which people spoke of the environmental quality that we enjoy here in Rensselaer County.

WATERSHED EDUCATION PROGRAM PRESENTATIONS

Sept. 3: 187th Schaghticoke County Fair; **September 15:** Brunswick Fall Festival; **Sept. 16:** Crailo Harvest Faire; **Sept. 23:** Troy Farmer's Market; **Sept. 29:** Hudson River Watershed Alliance. An Upper Hudson Forum, Tools for Sustainable Watershed Management. Heffner Alumni House, RPI, sponsored by the Hudson River Sloop Clearwater; **Oct. 5 and 6:** Dyken Pond Environmental Education Center, The program was presented to two separate seventh grade classes from Bethlehem Middle School; **Oct. 21:** Schodack Island State Park Fall Festival, Schodack Landing; **Nov. 4:** The Children's Museum of Science & Technology (CMOST), RPI Technology Park; **Nov. 7:** Kinderhook Middle School, 7th grade science class; **Dec. 27:** The Children's Museum of Science & Technology (CMOST) "Its Our Watershed" children's program; **Jan. 12:** Castleton Middle School, 7th grade Connections Class; **Jan. 17:** Castleton Middle School 7th grade Connections Class; **Jan 27:** Grafton State Park Winter Festival; **May 23:** Berlin Middle School, 7th grade science class; **July 10:** Babcock Lake Association

2007 FINANCIAL STATEMENT

With winter approaching and Thanksgiving past, it's natural to reflect on the events of the past year and plan for the future. The board's hard work in previous years bore fruit as our assets grew and our income rose sharply this past year, due primarily to an environmental damages settlement that funded a donation of farmland along the Hoosic River and endowment we received for accepting an easement on wetlands. These transactions strengthened our balance sheet and income statement for 2007.

However, the numbers mask a significant

problem. While our

restricted funds and land assets grow through donations, the table above illustrates our ability to fund general operations has not kept pace. Our general operating fund, which includes payroll expenses, has diminished primarily due to the addition of new staff. Despite our new requirement that all properties be endowed by a stewardship fund to provide for continued maintenance and monitoring, these sources will provide for only a very small portion of general operating expenses.

In the coming year, our primary need is to build a new base of support to fund general operations and hire the people that do the real work. Additional staff will be necessary to monitor easements, manage the easement process for a growing list of properties we're being asked to protect, and to help secure funding to meet growth. We envision an ongoing need to annually fund a payroll of \$200,000 for three or four staff positions.

You, our members, have always come through for us and we ask for your continued support. Please give what you can. Thank you for your support.

-John Munn, Treasurer

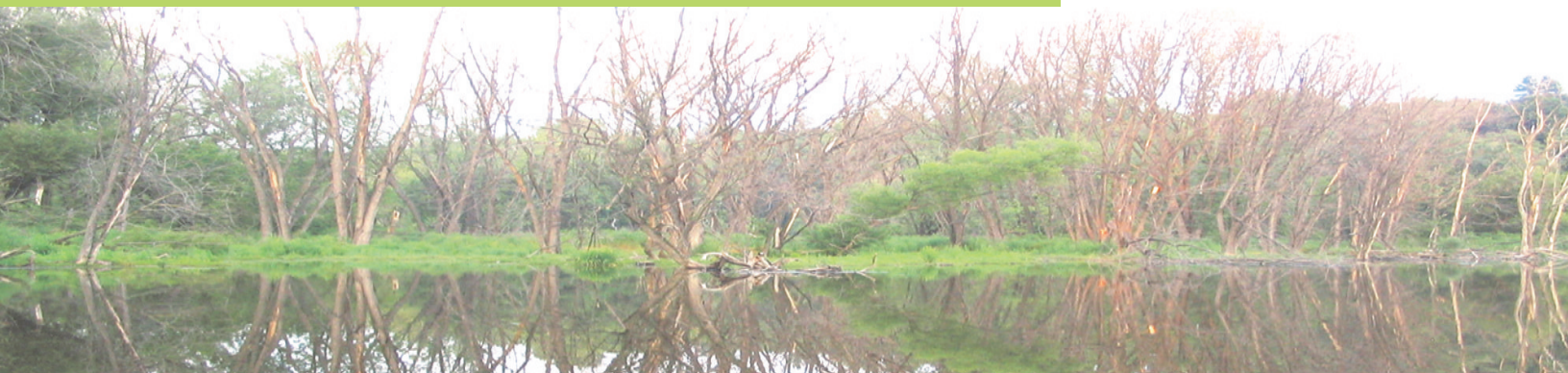
A copy of our latest annual IRS 990 is available on our web site, www.rtlc.org.

Category	Balance, 11/25/2006	Balance, 11/25/2007	% Change
Cash for Operations & Salaries	\$32,136	\$22,529	-30
Restricted Funds	\$59,795	\$80,456	+35
Land & Easements	\$30,362	\$123,600	+307

Consolidated Balance Sheet November 25, 2007			
Assets		Liabilities	\$5,644.01
Cash	\$110,807.67	Equity, 12/31/2007	\$146,498.76
Equipment	\$1,746.93	Net Income	\$83,457.21
Property & Easements	\$123,045.38	Equity, 11/25/2007	\$229,955.97
Total Assets	<u>\$235,599.98</u>	Total Liabilities & Equity	<u>\$235,599.98</u>

Consolidated Income Statement January 1, 2007 to November 25, 2007		
Income	Unrestricted Cash	\$20,973.93
	Restricted Cash	\$15,000.00
	Property	\$91,262.50
	Non-Cash Goods/Services	\$1,514.37
Total Income		\$128,750.80
Expenses	Cash	\$45,328.38
	Depreciation	\$105.14
Total Expenses		\$45,433.52
Net Income		\$83,317.28

ON THE HORIZON FOR 2008



MAJOR FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN AND DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

Raising monies to meet the needs of an office payroll as well as the accelerating requests of County landowners to donate land or easements has become RLT's number one priority for 2008. In recent discussions of plans for 2008, the hiring of a staff for fund development was central.

In preparation for a major fundraising campaign beginning right after the holidays, we have been doing a detailed profile of our donors. Over the past 3 years, we have received gifts from about 300 households either as memberships, as funds toward our 2005 Matching Grant, or as outright gifts. Since 2005, twenty-two supporters have each contributed over \$500 to RLT, and nearly 100 supporters have given \$100 or more.

LAND CONSERVATION

In 2008, we will continue to work proactively to accomplish our mission of preserving the land and protecting the natural resources of Rensselaer County. The RLT Acquisitions Committee has already laid the groundwork for several potential conservation projects for 2008, including lands adjacent to Dyken Pond, lands in the Hudson River watershed in Schodack, and lands in the Black River watershed of Stephentown. All of these projects would protect significant water resources in Rensselaer County.

DEDICATED LAND STEWARD POSITION

Stewardship of our conservation properties—both fee lands and easements — is one of our primary charges. As we take on more projects, the work that is needed to ensure proper stewardship continues to grow. Each property must be monitored annually to ensure that its conservation values are being maintained in the long-term. We have developed an agreement with the Hudson Highland Land Trust to assist us with monitoring in the short-term. In the long-term, we plan to hire a Land Steward who can assist with monitoring and stewardship of existing properties as well as the cultivation of new conservation projects.

WATERSHED PROTECTION

Protecting watersheds in the county is central to our mission. We will continue to advance this mission by protecting priority lands such as those that contain high-quality wetlands and through educational initiatives. In 2008, we plan to conduct a strategic assessment of the wetlands and water resources of the county to help guide future land conservation decisions.



THANKS TO OUR DONORS

OUR MAJOR DONORS: 2005-2007

David and Kathleen Aikens
David and Michele Aikens
Architecture Plus
Roger and Judy Armstrong
Warren F. Broderick
Garrett and Kelly Brown
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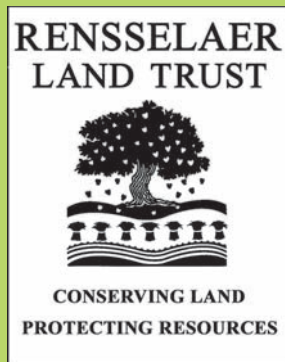
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We have made every effort to ensure that this list is as accurate as possible. If we have made a mistake or omission, please let us know. Also let us know in writing if you do not wish to have your name included in future lists, or if you prefer to be listed as "Anonymous".

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The Rensselaer Land Trust (RLT) is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization with the mission of preserving the land and protecting the natural resources of Rensselaer County. The organization was founded in 1987 and incorporated in 1988. The RLT is managed by an all-volunteer board of directors. Its primary funding stream is memberships and donations. The organization uses strategies such as conservation easements, stewardship, and public education to achieve its mission. The organization has permanently protected over 550 acres of open space through conservation easements and title acquisition.



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