

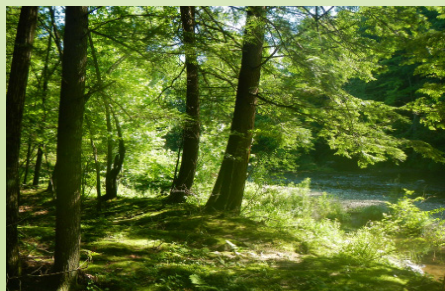


Conserving open spaces, watersheds and natural habitats of Rensselaer County, for the benefit of our communities and future generations.

RENSSELAER LAND TRUST PROTECTS 121 ACRES

In December, 2014, Rensselaer Land Trust protected 121 more acres. Bob and Jennifer Newton of East Nassau donated 17.2 acres of their land to our Kinderhook Creek Nature Preserve, increasing the size of the preserve by one-third. We also partnered with Jack Alexander and Lyn Howard to place our 14th conservation easement on their 104.57 acres at the Sluyter Preserve in Poestenkill.

Donation from Newtons Expands Kinderhook Creek Nature Preserve



Bob and Jennifer Newton moved to East Nassau over 35 years ago and fell in love with the natural beauty of the area. When they found out about the land donated to Rensselaer Land Trust by David and Lucy Gaskell and by Kenneth York to create the Kinderhook Creek Nature Preserve, they were inspired to donate some of their land for the Preserve as well.

Continued on page 2.

Sluyter Preserve Easement Fulfills Couple's Vision

When you own land that you love, you look out for it and take care of it. But what happens when you are no longer around? Will future owners steward and treasure your land as you do? How can you make sure your land is protected for future generations? Jack Alexander and Lyn Howard's love for their land inspired them to partner with Rensselaer Land Trust to protect their 104.57 acres in Poestenkill, New York. *Continued on page 2.*





Newton Donation cont.

The Newtons donated 17.2 acres, bordering the Tsatsawassa Creek and adding over 1,281 feet of shoreline along the Kinderhook Creek, a renowned trout stream. The Kinderhook Creek Preserve contains several distinct ecosystems including a cliff habitat, hemlock-hardwood swamp, riverside sand and gravel bar, and six forest types. The preserve is open to the public for hiking, snowshoeing, cross-country

skiing, fishing, and nature viewing. We installed a parking lot on Martha Hicks Road and a sign will be up in the spring.

The Land Trust thanks Bob and Jennifer Newton for this generous addition to our Kinderhook Creek Nature Preserve. The property is beautiful and it complements and expands on the previous land donations by David and Lucy Gaskell and Kenneth York. The support from the Village and Town has been wonderful and we are pleased to offer this preserve to the public for everyone's enjoyment.

Sluyter Preserve Easement cont.

This land conservation project didn't start with Jack and Lyn. The vision for protecting this beautiful property began ten years ago with Eva and Hugh Gemmil, the previous owners of the property, and the completion of this conservation easement celebrates their love of the land also.

Jack and Lyn donated a conservation easement on their land to Rensselaer Land Trust. When a conservation easement is placed on a property, the owners retain ownership, but agree to give up their rights ever to develop the land. All future landowners are also bound by the easement. Rensselaer Land Trust accepts the responsibility to visit the property annually to ensure that the current landowner is abiding by the terms of the easement.



The Sluyter Preserve Conservation Easement fits with the Land Trust's mission. The land is a mix of undeveloped woods, extensive wetlands, and streams. Newfoundland Creek, a native trout-spawning stream, and associated wetlands are protected by this easement, thereby helping to maintain water quality in the Poesten Kill watershed. The woods are full and tall, with a diversity of trees. The property has varied topography with hills and hollows and a network of trails maintained for horse and carriage driving. This easement permanently protects the woods, wetlands and streams from development while supporting sustainable

forestry, wildlife habitat and corridors, and the property's scenic values. The Sluyter Preserve Easement is located on the escarpment of the Rensselaer Plateau, an area of extensive forests and wildlife habitat that has been designated a federal Forest Legacy area and a regional priority in the New York State Open Space Plan.

The Land Trust thanks Jack and Lyn for their generous donation of this conservation easement, and for the opportunity to help them realize their vision for the land they love.

INAUGURAL BLUE BIRD SOCIETY INDUCTION CEREMONY



At our Annual Meeting in December we honored 155 members who have supported Rensselaer Land Trust for 10 years or more and made contributions of ANY denomination (including volunteer/in-kind).

FAREWELL TO BOARD MEMBERS

Rensselaer Land Trust is thankful for the years of commitment and support from board members Francille Egbert, Garry Brown, and Jenny Hixon.



WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Would you like to play a bigger part in the important work we do? We are looking for volunteers to help us out with a variety of activities:

- Building and installing kiosks and signs
- Building and maintaining trails
- Clean-up days
- Invasive plants control
- Being a steward for one of our preserves—involves regular visits
- Being a monitor for one of our easement properties—involves an annual visit to the property
- Visiting potential conservation properties
- Photography of our outings and events, and of our properties
- Help put on events and fundraisers
- Plan and lead hikes and programs
- Help with our newsletter mailings

If you're interested, please contact Christine at 518-659-5263 or christine@renstrust.org.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Nick Conrad, President
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STAFF

Christine Young, Esq., Executive Director (christine@renstrust.org)
Julie Moore, Admin. & Communications Assistant (julie@renstrust.org)

Earth Day at Taborton Zion Church of Christ

Sunday, April 19 • 10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

Join us for a celebration of Earth Day and become a member of Rensselaer Land Trust's SPLASH TEAM. People of all ages will build a miniature watershed of their own, and predict how the water will flow. They will test their theory by making a "rainstorm" to watch where the water flows, where it floods, and where it stays dry. Have fun in the Bucket Brigade, a fun competition done outdoors where you will be challenged to think about how much water you use every day. Participants can enter the Water Drop Race, and test your casting skills in the Fish Olympics. Fun for the whole family! Enjoy the beautiful setting on the Rensselaer Plateau on Little Bowman Lake. 741 Taborton Rd., Sand Lake, NY 12153.

Tomhannock Reservoir Cleanup: Volunteer Day

Saturday, April 25 • 9:00 a.m.–noon

Our 8th annual cleanup of the shores of the Tomhannock Reservoir needs you. The Tomhannock Reservoir provides drinking water to all of Troy and many surrounding communities. With water an ever more precious resource, Rensselaer Land Trust takes a special interest in Rensselaer County water supplies. Meet at NYS DEC public access parking lot on NYS Route 7 just before the causeway over the reservoir. Bring gloves; garbage bags will be provided. We work regardless of weather. Great family volunteer activity. Registration contact: Paul Schroeder (518) 674-2480 or pschroeder1@nycap.rr.com

Seine Net Fishing at Papscanee Island Preserve

Saturday, May 2 • 1:00–3:00 p.m.

Let's see what we can catch in our giant net! Seine net fishing is always a surprise– you never know what may be wriggling in the net when we haul it in. Striped bass? White perch? Eels? Herring? Can't tell a sunfish from pickerel? No worries! We'll teach you! Members of the Home Waters Chapter of Trout Unlimited will be on hand to demonstrate fly-casting tips, tricks and techniques. Bring your own fly-fishing gear for some one-on-one expert advice. Bring your chest waders or rubber boots if you would like to help haul in some lunkers. After this outing you will see the Hudson River in a new way. Directions can be found at www.renstrust.org under the outings tab. To register contact Julie Moore 607-220-8580 or julie@renstrust.org

Hiking the Continental Divide Trail:

One Woman's Journey

Sunday, May 3 • 2:00 p.m., East Greenbush Library

Be inspired. Local hiker and author, Jennifer Hanson, will share the tale of her 2,400-mile six-month back-packing trip from Mexico to Canada along the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (CDT). Using excerpts from her book Hiking the Continental Divide Trail: One Woman's Journey and a slide show of dozens of photographs, Jennifer will share the challenges and thrills of long-distance hiking. The journey included trekking through arid ranchland, desert forests and Indian reservations in New Mexico; the Bob Marshall Wilderness Area and Glacier National Park in Montana; the remote and rugged Bitterroot Range of Idaho/Montana; the Wind River Range and Teton National Forest in Wyoming and hundreds of miles snowshoeing through the Rocky Mountains of Colorado. Jennifer's book and presentation will also discuss the planning and preparation required for such an endeavor including: map lists, detailed itinerary with re-supply points, equipment and food lists, and a suggested preparation time-line. No charge.

Staalesen Clean Up and Invasive Plant Removal Day

Saturday, May 9 • 10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m.

We will clean up the shores of the Wynants Kill and remove invasive plants as part of our efforts to restore natural streamside habitat at our John B. Staalesen Vanderheyden Nature Preserve in Troy. You will have a chance to learn which plants are invasive and how to get rid of them. This volunteer day will be part of Riverkeeper Sweep 2015, when 2,000 volunteers in communities from Manhattan to the Adirondacks clean up the Hudson River and its tributaries. Registration contact: Bob Crowley crowleyrh@aol.com or (518)283-7364. Co-sponsored by NYSDEC Hudson River Estuary Program's Trees for Tribes and Riverkeeper.



Canoe the Creek at Schodack Island State Park

Saturday, May 16 • 2:30 –5:00 p.m.

We're going to the islands! All you need to bring is a smile and your sense of adventure, and meet us at the launch site! We will explore Schodack Creek and discover a large, undeveloped floodplain, wetland ecosystem that is rare on the Hudson River. Paddle with the River Haggie and staff naturalist from Hudson River National Estuarine Research Reserve and learn about tidal marsh ecology, Hudson River research, and challenges facing estuarine habitats. Fran Martino, our leader knows the fish, the river and the river's history. Canoes, paddles, personal flotation devices will be provided by Hudson River National Estuarine Research Reserve. Registration is limited, to register, contact Fran Martino riverhaggie@peoplepc.com or (518) 828-1330.

First Annual Invasive Plant Control Day on the Hoosic River

Saturday, May 16 • 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.

The water chestnuts have invaded the boat launch on the Hoosic River just above the Johnsonville Dam! Join us to learn more about this plant with naturalist Jenny Brinker and then be part of what will be a multi-year control effort. Lunch and snacks will be provided. If you have a row-boat, kayak, or canoe, please bring them. A limited supply of waders will also be available. You don't need to commit to the full day - even showing up for an hour or two will be helpful in meeting our goal of clearing a path. To register, contact Kristina Younger at key12061@gmail.com or 518-527-6577. Co-sponsored by Brookfield Renewables and the Hoosic River Watershed Association. Rain date 17th.

Hoosic River Paddle

Saturday, May 23 • 9:00 a.m.

Enjoy our annual 8-mile flat water paddle down the Hoosic River, watch for great blue heron, maybe an eagle, and drift under the only covered bridge in Rensselaer County. We will travel from Rensselaer Land Trust's boat launch in Eagle Bridge to the Johnsonville Dam. Provide your own boat and personal flotation device. Bring snacks and water. You need to be in good physical condition to negotiate through the 1/4-mile dense invasive water chestnut growth at the take out (see above outing). Rensselaer Land Trust's boat launch is approximately one mile west of Eagle Bridge on the north side of Rt. 67, at the DEC sign. Charge \$5, Rensselaer Land Trust members free. You must preregister with Paul Schroeder (518) 674-2480 or pschroeder1@nycap.rr.com.



Wildflower Walk with Tom Philips at Kinderhook Preserve

Sunday, May 31 • 1:00–3:00 p.m.

See and learn to identify many Rensselaer County wildflowers. This will be an easy hike on our new preserve and with bonus time on the Kinderhook Creek—plus a great opportunity for photographing wildflowers. Tom Phillips, well-versed botanist, will help you identify plants and you might learn a couple of bird calls. Charge \$5, Rensselaer Land Trust members free. To register, contact Francille Egbert 674-3214 or fran.egbert@gmail.com.

Learn Basic Mushroom Identification with Mycologist, Sue Van Hook

Thursday, June 4 • 7:00–8:30 p.m.

Spend 1½ hours with mycologist Sue Van Hook learning the basics of mushroom identification. You will have a new appreciation for the beauty and diversity of local mushrooms. Registration fee is \$10/person. Location: Shea Hall at Sage College Troy. To register, contact Marcy Steinberg 674-2171 or marcygs@aol.com

Burden Pond Exploration

Saturday, June 6 • TBA

Explore Burden Pond Environmental Park and the seldom-visited Wynants Kill gorge upstream. As you hear the amazing history of industrial Troy, we will see waterfalls and remnants of the old water system, part of the water power engine which made Troy one of the wealthiest cities in America. This will be a two-mile hike with a few damp areas. Wear shoes you do not mind getting wet and get a chance to explore the "backwater" of Troy. To register, contact Francille Egbert fran.egbert@gmail.com or (518) 674-3214. Charge \$5, Rensselaer Land Trust members free.

Learning the Bird Calls of the Northeast Forest

Saturday, June 13 • 8:00–10:00 a.m.

Take an early morning walk with Mary Batcheller, local birding expert, on the Rensselaer Plateau Alliance's new Community Forest in Poestenkill and learn to identify both the calls and the sight of our common forest birds. No birding experience is necessary. This knowledge will make every walk in the woods richer. We will meet early to experience the most birds. Dress for the weather and bring binoculars and a bird field guide, if available. Cosponsored by Rensselaer Plateau Alliance and the Rensselaer Land Trust. Rain date June 14. Limited to 20 people. Registration/weather contact: Francille Egbert fran.egbert@gmail.com or (518) 674-3214.

Mushrooms Under the Microscope

Monday, June 15 • 6:00–9:00 p.m.

This three-hour lab class is for intermediate foragers who already have attended several of Sue Van Hook's talks and walks sponsored by Rensselaer Land Trust. Class limited to 10 people. Please bring fungi to add to those provided. Sue will teach participants how to use the microscope and then guide the class through sectioning a cap, preparing a slide and looking for the different features, such as spores, basidia, gill trama, cystidia, pellicle, etc. You got it—more vocabulary and a whole new world to discover! Registration fee \$30/person. At Russell Sage. To register, contact Marcy Steinberg (518) 674-2171 or marcygs@aol.com.

Canoe the Creek at Schodack Island State Park

Saturday, June 27 • 1:00 –5:00 p.m.

We're going to the islands! See outing description under May 16's description. Registration is limited, to register, contact riverhaggie@peoplepc.com or (518) 828-1330.



Mushroom Walk at Rensselaer Plateau Community Forest

Saturday, August 29 • 10:00 a.m.–noon

Sue Van Hook, local mycologist, will lead us into the woods to see what is up in late summer. It is highly recommended that participants have attended the June Learn Basic Mushroom Identification. Participants 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. Registration fee \$10/person. Kids free. Directions to meeting location will be sent two weeks prior to the walk for registered participants. To register, contact Marcy Steinberg at 674-2172 or marcygs@aol.com

6th Annual Rensselaer Plateau Traverse

Saturday and Sunday September 26 and 27

Our 6th annual hike with Rensselaer Plateau Alliance will hike 27-34 miles across the Rensselaer Plateau over 2 days. Hike through the new Community Forest and enjoy the company of hardy hikers who want to stretch their endurance. Optional overnight at Pine Ridge Cross Country Ski Center. This is a strenuous hike with some bushwhacking. Watch for further information on our website www.renstrust.org under outings tab. Sponsored by Rensselaer Plateau Alliance, Rensselaer Land Trust, and Dyken Pond Environmental Center.

Taconic Crest Hike– Southern Rensselaer County

Saturday, October 3 • 9:00 a.m.

We will hike the southern portion of the Taconic Crest Trail in Rensselaer County and view the fall foliage. The hike will go steeply up from Hancock, MA, along a remote stretch of the narrow Taconic Crest, and descending via Robinson Hollow in North Stephentown. This will be a moderately strenuous hike of about eight miles 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. To register, contact Nick Conrad at (518) 279-1963 or nbconrad@msn.com. Charge \$5, Rensselaer Land Trust members free.

Wreath Making at Pineridge Cross Country Ski Center

Saturday, November 21 • 11:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.

Learn to make a delicious smelling balsam wreath to last the entire season with a variety of fresh greens. Enjoy good company and lunch. Learn about local trees and celebrate local forests. Supplies and lunch included in \$20 fee. You will also be supporting Rensselaer Land Trust and the Rensselaer Plateau Alliance which are conserving your local forests. To register contact Francille Egbert (518) 674-3214 or fran.egbert@gmail.com

Rensselaer Land Trust's Annual Meeting

Sunday, November 15 • 2:00–5:00 p.m.

Beverages, desserts, and hot h'orderves at Brown's Revolution Hall. Fee: \$15/per person. Keynote speaker to be announced.

Victorian Stroll Concert with George Wilson and Rensselaer Land Trust's Open House

Sunday, December 6 • 2:00–4:00 p.m.

George Wilson, local renowned fiddler, multi-instrumental virtuoso, and singer will perform a variety of traditional and folk styles to be enjoyed by all. He has mastered nearly 500 upbeat tunes from New England, Quebec, Cape Breton, Scotland, Ireland, and Shetland. Concert will take place at Rensselaer Land Trust's office, 415 River Street, Troy. Free.

Snowshoe to Geiser Preserve for Animal Tracking

January, Saturday 16, 2016 • 10:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.

See who is living in our Geiser Preserve. Winter gives us a special opportunity to see the signs of unseen animals in the snow. We will hike in on an old logging road in the heart of the Rensselaer Plateau. Then follow the one-mile trail up Perigo Hill with intermittent views of the Catskills and Taconics, this will be about a five-mile snowshoe hike. Bring snowshoes, snack and dress warmly. Leader Nick Conrad can also help you identify the illusive trees of winter. To register contact Nick Conrad at (518) 279-1963 or nbconrad@msn.com. Charge \$5, Rensselaer Land Trust members free.

**Check our website for up-to-date details on our programs.
WWW.RENSTRUST.ORG**



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www.renstrust.org

E-MAIL

renstrust@renstrust.org

PHONE

(518) 659-LAND (5263)

The Rensselaer Land Trust (RLT) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Founded in 1987, we have protected 1,138.44 acres, owning eight preserves with 347.64 acres and holding conservation easements on 14 properties with 790.8 acres. Your donations are our primary funding source.

Rensselaer Land Trust
415 River Street
Troy, NY 12180



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CHECK OUT OUR NEW LOOK!

Our 2014 Annual Report will be
published this coming fall.