

## • FOUNDED IN 1987 •

Conserving Land • Protecting Resources

### 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.

The Rensselaer Land Trust is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Your donations are our primary funding source.

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Julie Moore, Fundraising & Comm. Associate  
Janie Sullivan, AmeriCorps VISTA Fellow

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## 2019 NEWS • 2018 ANNUAL REPORT

### From the Executive Director

Water quality, climate change, and getting people outdoors into nature are key themes in this annual report. In 2018 RLT kicked-off its multi-year collaboration with two land trust allies to buy land and easements to protect drinking water in the Tomhannock Reservoir; began implementing our county-wide conservation plan with its emphasis on land protection for climate resiliency; and continued our trail building in Troy and on the new Empire State Trail, among many other activities.

As always, none of this work can happen without the generous support of our members and friends and the assistance of our many conservation allies here in Rensselaer County and throughout the Capital Region.

We welcome you to join us at our next event and invite you to ask questions, make suggestions, and otherwise help us in protecting the special places we all care for so deeply.

With gratitude,  
John Winter

### From the Board President

The Rensselaer Land Trust accomplished a lot in 2018, as this Annual Report documents and highlights. Land conservation in the face of climate change is important work, and we provide a local opportunity for you to make a difference. We are so grateful for your support.

Thank you,  
Kristina Younger

### Welcome New Staff



RLT welcomed Janie Sullivan from the Siena College AmeriCorps VISTA Fellowship program. Janie is a recent college graduate from South Carolina and is helping us enhance our fundraising and communications. Two key projects include nature education to Troy young people (see below) and promoting RLT's conservation planned giving program. Janie will be with us through February 2020. Welcome Janie!



# Annual Meeting • November 17 • 4 p.m.

## BUSINESS MEETING

Board Member Election  
Conservation Planning for 2020  
Blue Bird Society Induction

## AWARD HONOREES



### *Volunteer of the Year Award*

Frank Sorrento,  
Kinderhook Creek  
Nature Preserve  
Volunteer



### *William Niemi Conservation Leadership Award*

Teri Ptacek,  
Executive Director of  
Agricultural  
Stewardship  
Association

## KEYNOTE SPEAKER



Dan Bogan is an Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies and Sciences at Siena College

**Lecture:** *Investigating Eastern Coyote (Canis latrans) Diet Ecology in Suburban Albany and Rural Rensselaer Landscapes*

**Tickets \$30/pp**

**Host Committee \$100/pp**

**Buffet dinner included.**

**Brown's Brewing Co.'s Revolution Hall**

**RSVP AT [WWW.RENSTRUST.ORG](http://WWW.RENSTRUST.ORG)**

## How to Help

### Join Our Major Event Planning Team

Would you enjoy planning an extravaganza all your friends will be talking about?! If so, we need you! We want to create a signature event to put RLT on the social calendar - one that's fun and memorable and that will raise critical funds for local land, water, and wildlife habitat conservation. Join our volunteer team to create an event. Contact John Winter ([jwinter@renstrust.org](mailto:jwinter@renstrust.org)) or Julie Moore ([julie@renstrust.org](mailto:julie@renstrust.org)) to join our efforts.

### Renew, Renew, Renew

Your annual membership is the lifeblood of RLT. All we do is because of you. Invite your family and friends to become members and ask them to invite their friends, too. Renewals start in early 2020; new members can join any time. Visit [www.renstrust.org](http://www.renstrust.org) to become a member.

### Join our Woodland Guardian Program

Head to our website and join our monthly giving program, it's secure and easy to make a long-term commitment to local land conservation. RLT benefits by receiving a steady source of revenue. Please consider making monthly donations that fit within your budget.

### Business Membership or Sponsorship

Invite your employer to become an RLT business member or sponsor. Not only will they be showing their support for land conservation, water quality protection, and biodiversity protection in the place they do business, they'll get great local publicity for their generosity. RLT has hundreds of members and donors and receives thousands of visits to the website each year. Make sure your employer gets noticed through RLT. Information for business supporters can be found at [www.renstrust.org](http://www.renstrust.org).

### State Employees Payroll Deductions

NYS employees can donate to RLT through the New York State Employees Federated Appeal (a.k.a. SEFA). To get started, visit [www.sefany.org](http://www.sefany.org), fill out the form, and give it to your SEFA Agency Coordinator. Invite your colleagues and friends to do the same.

### Bequests

Remember RLT in your will and life insurance policy. Join several RLT members who have provided a bequest to RLT as part of their estate planning. Talk to us about sample language for your will or for information on other estate planning tools such as charitable trusts and annuities. Learn more here: [www.renstrust.org/get-involved/legacy](http://www.renstrust.org/get-involved/legacy)

## 2019 NEWS

### A Long Queue of Land Protection Projects

RLT has no fewer than eight land protection projects in discussion with landowners. These include new properties for our land trust as well as expansions of existing RLT-conserved lands and are located in both urban and rural areas throughout the County. Protecting these diverse places will help us achieve our goal of protecting 10,000 acres of critical wildlife habitat and enhancing climate resiliency in Rensselaer County by 2030. We look forward to sharing news about these special places as they come to fruition. As always, we welcome your referrals to friends and neighbors who are interested in conserving their land.

### Land Trust Alliance Re-Accreditation

We submitted the application for our second re-accreditation with the Land Trust Alliance thereby renewing our commitment to follow the Standards and Practices that provide confidence to the landowners that trust us to steward their land in perpetuity. RLT was one of the first accredited land trusts in the country. The Alliance will inform us of their decision on re-accreditation in 2020.

### New Land Acquisition in Troy and Brunswick: Poesten Kill Bends

In 2019 we partnered with Rensselaer Plateau Alliance to purchase the 76-acre Poesten Kill Bends property in Troy and Brunswick. The parcel includes woodlands, wetlands, and a meadow habitat for pollinators. The property is excellent for walking and running, birding, and enjoying nature, and is much loved by the local community. With support from both land trusts, the property will be managed by a committee of volunteers who will take part in management decisions and help take care of the land. Protecting Poesten Kill Bends also furthers RLT's strategy for improving climate change resiliency in Rensselaer County. At a time when we are seeing more frequent and stronger storms, conserving forests like this one can help reduce flood damage by absorbing rain, holding stream banks in place, and storing carbon dioxide. More than 60 generous donors supported the acquisition for RLT. Phase 2 of the project, which involves creating a parking area and improving access to the site will continue through 2019. Additional financial support is needed for this work.



Poesten Kill Bends, Photo Credit Annie Jacobs

### Putting RLT's Conservation Plan to Work

A key goal of RLT's 2018-2030 county-wide land conservation plan is to assist municipalities in better understanding their land conservation opportunities. Over the past year, RLT has been working with the towns of East Greenbush and Poestenkill in preparing Natural Resource Inventories. These documents, which often include extensive mapping, describe the forests, wetlands, surface and ground waters, farmland, and cultural resources in a community and are used for land-use planning. RLT's work in municipal NRI preparation is supported by NYSDEC's Hudson River Estuary Program.

### Engaging the Next Generation of Conservationists

Troy After-School Nature Program – Janie Sullivan, our 2019 VISTA fellow, is leading an after-school environmental education for young people in Troy in partnership with the Boys and Girls Club. Activities include nature journaling, leaf rubbing, making recycled paper, and creating bird seed ornaments, among others. Bringing nature to young people may inspire them to protect it and one day become the next generation of conservationists.

# Key 2018 Projects

## Drinking Water Protection at the Tomhannock Reservoir

With our partners the Agricultural Stewardship Association and the Rensselaer Plateau Alliance we are reaching out to landholders in the Tomhannock watershed to purchase conservation easements and fee-simple title to key parcels that will help keep the water in the reservoir clean. We are also developing water quality management educational materials for landowners. In 2018 we identified several early candidates for land acquisition. The program, a first for Rensselaer County, is supported by NYSDEC and runs until 2021. We invite all our members and friends to spread the word about the program to landowners they know in the Tomhannock Reservoir area.

## Hudson River Fish Advisory Project: "Fish for Fun, Not for Food"

Since 2014 RLT has partnered with River Haggie Outdoors, a capital region environmental education provider, to reach out to fisherfolk who may intend to consume their catch from the Hudson River and its tributaries. While water quality in the Hudson River has generally improved in recent years, fish caught from the river remain unsafe to eat, especially for women of child-bearing age and children under 15 years of age. Others may eat only certain species and in very limited quantities. Our audience includes fishers from Rensselaer, Albany, Columbia and Greene counties. Outreach activities include tabling and educational events at the New York State Museum; schools districts; after-school programs; summer enrichment programs; libraries; and community events.

## Playing Outdoors

Through our partnership with Rensselaer Plateau Alliance we offered an exciting and enjoyable collection of hikes and walks, including winter snowshoe hikes and the new Rensselaer Naturalist Series. As always, we hope to bring families and especially young people back outdoors – and away from their bluescreens for a few hours. Visit our website ([www.renstrust.org](http://www.renstrust.org)) and the RLT Facebook page for news and schedules about upcoming hikes and events. We hope to see you out on the trail!

## Trailblazing!

RLT is partnering with several allies in expanding the trail system in Rensselaer County. Work continues on our Albany-Hudson Electric Trailhead project in Schodack, near Nassau Lake. The Hudson River Greenway is providing funding to RLT to own and operate a trailhead along the 35-mile AHET walking trail that will extend from the border with Columbia County to the City of Rensselaer and is part of the larger 750 mile New York Empire Trail. RLT bought several parcels in late 2018 to serve as the site for the trailhead and is expecting to complete construction by 2020. In Troy, RLT is partnering with the City and an array of trail champions to enhance the Narrows Cascades & Heritage Trail in South Troy. RLT's Staalesen Preserve is a key component of the trail system in this part of Troy. Also in Troy, RLT is working with businesses in the Rensselaer Technology Park to improve the walking trail system there.

## Planning for the Future

RLT received a grant from the NYS Conservation Partnership Program grant to work with a fundraising consultant to help us design and implement our development activities for the next several years. We welcome your suggestions and referrals to potential new fundraising prospects. We received a second grant from the Conservation Partnership Program for our Trail Crew. These generous and hardworking volunteers maintain and improve our preserves and with our stewards serve as RLT's eyes and ears out on the land. These planning and training efforts build upon a strategic plan and calendar that the Board and Staff prepared this year. To keep RLT current and energized with the latest in land conservation and development approaches, we have implemented a strategic planning update process. Work will begin in late 2019 on a new plan for the early to mid-2020s.



# 2018 Annual Report

## FINANCIAL DATA

### INCOME

Member Contributions	\$64,785
Water Quality Improvement Grant	\$375,000
WQIP Note: <i>Advance payment for program expenditures</i>	
Other Contributions (gifts & grants)	\$112,333
Contributed Conserved Land Value	\$77,700
Land Stewardship Donation	\$8,400
Interest Income	\$175
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$638,393</b>

### EXPENSE

Payroll Expense	\$62,067
Payroll Taxes	\$5,542
Prof Services/Grant Implementation	\$109,655
Supplies and Equipment	\$13,043
Conference & Meetings	\$230
Insurance	\$3,943
Membership Dues	\$1,200
Mileage Reimbursement	\$304
Internet Transaction Fees	\$840
Postage & Delivery	\$1,359
Printing & Publications	\$1,242
Rent & Utilities	\$4,035
Telecommunications	\$730
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$204,189</b>

## GIFTS

### GRANTS

Greenway Heritage Conservancy HRV, INC.  
Health Research Inc. – Hudson River Estuary Program  
Land Trust Alliance  
MetLife Foundation  
Volunteer Project Fund  
RBC Foundation–USA  
State of New York

### CORPORATE PARTNERS

Amazon Smiles  
Hannaford Community Cash–CLYNK

### SPONSORSHIPS

Brookfield Renewables  
Browns Brewing Company  
Honest Weight Food Coop  
United Group of Companies  
United Way of the Greater Capital Region, Inc.

### CORPORATE MATCHING GIFTS

GE Foundation Matching  
Gift Program

### TRIBUTE GIFTS

*In Memory of Robert Ingalls*  
Ephraim and Elana Glinert

*In Memory of Glen Martin*  
Anthony Garner

### Business Members

Marinstein & Marinstein Esqs., PLLC  
Planning4Places, LLC

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Fred Alm and Sharon Bedford  
Dave Aikens  
Peter Armstrong  
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Bella Napoli  
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Mike Boucher  
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