



www.renstrust.org
518 659-5263

The Rensselaer Land Trust (RLT) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to the preservation of natural spaces throughout Rensselaer County, New York, especially land that protects sources of drinking water, provides natural habitat for wildlife and maintains the scenic rural character of the community. Founded in 1987, we have protected 771 acres, owning five properties with 211 acres and holding conservation easements on 12 properties with 560 acres. Your donations are our primary funding source.



PRINTED ON
RECYCLED PAPER

Rensselaer Land Trust
415 River Street
Troy NY 12180

Nonprofit Organization
US Postage Paid
Albany NY
Permit No 403

Reduce waste and bring on a new member – pass this newsletter along!

Calendar

Visit www.renstrust.org for updates.

Outing: Up and Down the Hollows

9:00 A.M., SATURDAY, OCT. 1, 2011, FREE

Hike the central portion of the Taconic Crest Trail, ascending via Mattison Hollow past waterfalls, and descending via Robinson Hollow. Strenuous seven-mile hike with steep uphill and downhill sections. Wear boots or sturdy shoes. Bring lunch, snacks and plenty of water. Prepare for cool and windy conditions. **Register: Nick Conrad 279-1963 or nbconrad@msn.com**

Outing: Historic Barns of Nipmoose

2:00 P.M., SUNDAY, OCT. 2, 2011, FREE

Three historic restored barns of Nipmoose Farm in Buskirk reflect the extraordinary craftsmanship of 18th and 19th century timber framers. Connie Kheel, restoration supervisor, guides the tour. Directions at www.nipmoosebarns.org/location. **Register: Francille Egbert 674-3214.**

Oktoberfest

4:00 TO 11:00 P.M., SATURDAY, OCT. 15, 2011, \$5 COVER

Music! Beer! Celebrate clean water for clean beer! Join us for the 4th Annual Oktoberfest Benefit for the Rensselaer Land Trust at Brown's Brewing Company's Revolution Hall, 417 River Street, Troy.

Annual Meeting

9:00 A.M. TO NOON, SATURDAY, DEC. 3, 2011, COST TBD

Breakfast buffet at Brown's Revolution Hall. **RSVP to Renstrust@renstrust.org**

Victorian Stroll Concert

2:00 TO 4:00 P.M., SUNDAY, DEC. 4, 2011, FREE

Fiddler George is a multi-instrumental virtuoso playing traditional and folk styles. He has mastered nearly 500 upbeat tunes from New England, Quebec, Cape Breton, Scotland, Ireland and Shetland. RLT office, 415 River Street, Troy.



For monthly e-news with updates, send e-mail address to trix@renstrust.org
Get updates and "Like" us on Facebook, www.facebook.com/RensselaerLandTrust



RLT News

FALL 2011

Shadbush Hill Preserved

By Trix Niernberger, Development & Communications Director

You can see it in the faces of Shirley and Gerald Dunn. It is in the warmth of their smiles and the earnest enthusiasm of their eyes. It is in the strength of their gait through the waist-high pastures despite the intense summer sun. It is reflected in their voices as they speak.

It is their love of the land. And a commitment to the future regardless of their 83 years.

Married in 1950, the Dunns bought 30 acres in the town of Schodack in 1967 and 1969. The land was a portion of a farm owned by the Sagendorf family. The Dunns anticipated a time when they would build a home to retire there, or sell it to cover the college tuition for four children. They did neither.

Over the years, the land has been used for recreation and pleasure. Hiking to the top of the hill, they enjoy the view of both the Catskills and Taconic range. In the spring, they delight in the beautiful shadbush that blooms on the

ridge. Summer visits bring delicious blackberries, which they picked during our August trip. And during winter months, their kids and youth groups would toboggan down the hill, skate on the pond and camp.

This year, the Dunns protected the land, called Shadbush Hill Preserve, in perpetuity by agreeing to a conservation easement with the Rensselaer Land Trust. The easement does not transfer ownership, but shields the land from development and keeps it agriculturally viable.

The Preserve contains old orchard trees, meadows, 18 birdhouses, woodlands, a pond, a wetland and the Balekill Stream, and is part of the watershed for the Muitzeskill Creek, which flows into the Hudson River.

In August, the property was filled with bees, birds, goldenrod, Queen Anne's lace, sedge, spreading dogbane, cattails, Joe-Pye weed, common milkweed and a hummingbird visiting spotted knapweed.

The Dunns have volunteered to talk with other families considering conservation easements and want owners to know that a variety of future uses of the land are permitted.

Gerald said, "Where initially we contemplated restrictions consistent with preservation of habitat for wildlife, as discussions progressed, we recognized that the land once had been an active farm and that many agricultural uses would be consistent with the key preservation goals we had in mind."

Shirley beamed as she concluded that it will always be "a very beautiful tract of land."



Leaving My Legacy

by Francille Egbert, Fundraising Chair and Retiring Hospice Nurse

What keeps us from getting close to nature? Sometimes, I suspect it is acknowledging the whole spectrum of life. From the messy but wondrous start to the sad and often grief-filled end. How do we enjoy this incredible world and acknowledge our short voyage here?

This dilemma has prevented many of us from future planning. Sure the vacation next year is easy enough, but what about the bucket list, the will and the legacy we want to leave to our family and community?

It took me years to get a will written. But, once complete, it was easier to talk with my children about my wishes and easier still to ensure that my support for the Rensselaer Land Trust will continue.

I know from work with the Land Trust that when we say land protection in perpetuity, we mean long after I am gone there will be open space, special wildlife habitat and hiking trails for my children that I helped to create and protect. What better legacy to leave? None.

Now it is done, maybe the woods do seem more exciting because I will be part of them forever.

If you are interested in planning a legacy and learning how to maximize your charitable and financial planning goals during your life and after, please call our office and speak with Christine Young.



Mark Wright makes his way on the Hoosic River during our annual Paddle in July, which began at RLT's property in Eagle Bridge.

From the President

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Nick Conrad, President
William Niemi, Vice President
Garrett Brown, Treasurer
Stacey Goldstein, Secretary
Carl Cipperly
Francille Egbert
Jennifer Hixon
Sally Lawrence
W. Jeffrey Roche
Marcy Stengel
Allan Stern

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Christine Young, Esq.

DEVELOPMENT & COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR
Trix Niernberger

VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR
Paul Schroeder

VOLUNTEER EVENTS COORDINATOR
Jessica Stephenson

RLT NEWS IS PUBLISHED TWICE A YEAR.

Trix Niernberger, Editor
Brian Murray, Designer
Special thanks to Nate Simms for fall photographs on cover and pages 2-3.

Join us on Facebook at
www.facebook.com/RensselaerLandTrust

If you are not receiving our monthly E-News, send your e-mail address to
trix@renstrust.org



www.renstrust.org
www.facebook.com/RensselaerLandTrust
518.659.5263

Rensselaer Land Trust has two guiding principles when we undertake land conservation projects. First, we work as a partner with willing landowners to assist them in fulfilling their vision of what they want for their land in the future. Our easement on Shirley and Gerald Dunn's Shadbush Hill is a prime example; see Trix's article in this newsletter.

Second, we conserve land that has a public benefit for the community. Christine's column details many of these benefits. I'd like to expand on one in particular, outdoor recreation.

Studies have shown that spending time outdoors in a natural setting promotes both physical and mental health. Unfortunately, other studies have shown that fewer and fewer Americans, especially children, are going outside in natural settings on a regular basis.

RLT is making a commitment to find and complete more projects that result in places open to the public that welcome everyone to enjoy hiking, fishing, kayaking, canoeing, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, trail running and other outdoor activities.

Currently, our property in Eagle Bridge offers a convenient spot to begin a paddle down the Hoosic, which in turn can lead to some wonderful birding. Participants on our July paddle were treated to osprey and a green heron.

At our Robert Ingalls Preserve in Stephentown, we are planning public hiking trails along a trout stream.



Nick Conrad

On three of our conservation easement properties, the landowner maintains trails as part of the public trail network of the Dyken Pond Center. And RLT outings provide everyone a chance to experience first-hand the great places in Rensselaer County.

We're exploring a rail-to-trail project in Stephentown, where the former rail bed along the Route 22 corridor would be transformed into a public recreation trail for biking, hiking and running, spring through fall, and snowmobiling in the winter.

We are working on a project that would result in opening to the public a beautiful property on the Rensselaer Plateau where visitors can see a spruce-fir swamp, a pond and a fen, an uncommon type of wetland habitat.

A future goal is to conduct more educational activities on our lands, so residents can know who the players are on nature's local stage, what their roles are, and how they connect with one another.

Projects involving trails and other opportunities for getting out and enjoying nature are exciting. Working with the support of local communities and willing landowners, RLT aims to increase the number of places in all parts of Rensselaer County where you can go for outdoor recreation.

Notes from the Executive Director

I am often asked what the Rensselaer Land Trust does and how we benefit the community. On the back of our business cards, we printed a shortened version of our mission, which helps explain what we do but it only scratches the surface and is difficult to measure or assign a value.

Rensselaer Land Trust is the only not-for-profit land trust dedicated to the preservation of natural spaces throughout Rensselaer County, especially land that protects sources of drinking water, areas that serve as natural habitat for wildlife and land that maintains the scenic character of the community.

So what exactly do we accomplish for you and your neighbors? We are saving for future generations. We provide open space for the public and recreational access to waterways and wilderness areas that otherwise would not be available. We preserve wildlife habitats so that future generations will see bears, moose, fishers, bobcats, gray foxes, eagles and other native animals in their natural habitat.

We keep working land active by protecting farms and forests. We preserve and protect our watersheds so that you don't have to purchase clean water or expensive water treatment systems. We provide recreational opportunities like boating, fishing, hiking, snowshoeing and nature viewing, which connect people to the natural world leading to a love of the outdoors and fostering conservation in succeeding generations.

Our work provides ecological benefits like clean air and water, wildlife diversity, flood protection and temperature moderation. And there are also economic benefits from maintaining the beauty and natural diversity of Rensselaer County and keeping it a desirable place to live, work and visit.

That is not all that we offer the community. Our programs include educational solar house visits and wildflower hikes, guided historic tours and cemetery restoration work, printed educational materials and public speaking engagements, outdoor recreational opportunities and environmental clean-up. Our committees are involved with trails, community outreach, outings and stewardship of the land. We provide ways for people to connect to the environment and enjoy a sense of community.



Christine Young

How do you measure the joy of seeing an eagle soar overhead? Watching a sunset over a working farm? Catching a native brook trout in a pristine creek? Getting a natural high from being in a forest? Smelling native wildflowers in a field? Picking your own berries at a local farm?

Difficult, isn't it? And yet, if we do not preserve these treasures, they will not be here for our children and grandchildren. Perhaps the best answer to the question of what we do would be to say that we protect treasures for future generations to enjoy.

Thank you, because we are doing all of this with you. Without you and your continuing support, we wouldn't be able to save what is important to all of us.

Clearing the Ingalls Preserve

By Sally Lawrence, Board Member

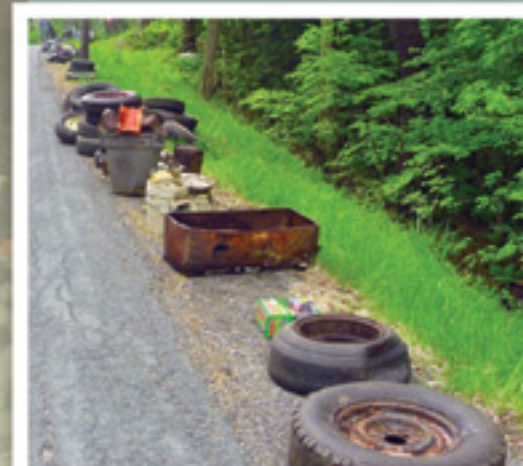
On May 21, a cloudy but rainless day, 21 volunteers and members began removing the trash accumulated from decades of illegal dumping at our newly acquired Ingalls Preserve.

Bedecked in mosquito netting and long sleeves, tireless workers pulled three dump truck loads of debris from the steep ravines. Rotten and soggy mattresses, tons of tires, remains of old refrigerators, loads of batteries, baby carriages, bed frames, all kinds of other household items and just plain junk, much of it heavy, filthy and smelly. What good fun!

With high spirits, good humor and comradeship, even as the black flies, mosquitoes and deer flies attacked uncovered skin, the intrepid laborers winched large heavy items with rope and muscle, as others formed human chains passing smaller objects while struggling to keep firm footing on the tilted terrain.

Five hours later, with breaks only for brownies, everything was loaded onto the truck for the final run to the dump, use of which was generously arranged by Larry Eckhardt, Stephentown Town Supervisor.

Unhappily, no antiques that could enrich RLT coffers were found. But the steep slopes and Black Brook's stream banks at the Ingalls Preserve are now clean of rubble and ready for the many trail trekkers who will soon enjoy the beauty and cool of our latest land acquisition.



Wish List

- Ergonomic keyboard
- New computer
- Low cabinet for storage
- Office supplies
- Oktoberfest decorations
- Projector screen
- Dorm refrigerator
- Victorian Stroll holiday decorations