

Spring 2010 Newsletter

2009 Annual Report

Hello. I'd like to introduce myself as the new President of the Rensselaer Land Trust. My family and I moved to the Capital Region 18 years ago. As Liz and I explored the various parts of the region, we were struck with the scenic countryside, open spaces, and extensive forests of Rensselaer County. We felt that Rensselaer County would be an excellent place to raise our two daughters, and so we found a home in Cropseyville, where we enjoy hiking, running, birding, tracking, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing right outside our front door.

In our first few years here, I attended some hikes led by the Rensselaer-Taconic Land Conservancy (RTLTC). When I learned that RTLTC was more than just an outing club, that it was a group of people dedicated to maintaining the character of Rensselaer County through the conservation

the privilege of serving as your President. I am looking forward to leading our Board and staff in building on our substantial accomplishments in land conservation.

I see many opportunities for us to make a difference to maintaining the character of the County through land conservation. In urban areas such as Troy and Rensselaer, and in heavily suburban towns such as East Greenbush and North Greenbush, land dedicated to natural ecology or to passive recreation is more and more at a premium. We will also stay active in the more rural towns in the central and western part of the County, where the expansive forests and wetlands keep our water clean and provide habitat for wide-ranging animals such as bobcat, bear, coyote, moose, and fisher.

***Taking care
of Rensselaer
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a responsibility
we all share.***

in common. We will also be working with the Friends of the Dyken Pond Center and with the Rensselaer Plateau Alliance this coming year on

establishing permanent conservation for properties on the Rensselaer Plateau.

This summer, the public boat launch will be completed by the NYS DEC on our Hoosic River property. For those who can't wait until then and

don't need a boat to fish, our Hoosic River property will offer public access to the Hoosic River starting with opening day of trout season on April 1.

A grant from the Land Trust Alliance has enabled us to engage the services of a professional non-profit consultant, who will guide the RLT Board in the development of a fundraising and communication plan.

Taking care of Rensselaer County's land, air, and water is a responsibility we all share. I thank you for your support as a member. If you would like to more directly participate in accomplishing our mission, I encourage you to volunteer for any activity, in the office or on the ground. We are also actively seeking to grow our Board of Directors, so please let us know of your interest or of someone you would like to nominate. I am eager to work with all of you to conserve more open spaces and natural areas and to continue to maintain the quality of life that we all value.

From the President

NICK CONRAD

of its lands, I felt that this was a group to which I could commit my time and energy, and I volunteered to serve on the Board and to lead hikes. Little did I know then that, 12 years later, RTLTC would have evolved from an all-volunteer group into the Rensselaer Land Trust, a nationally-accredited land trust with professional staff; and that, starting this year, I would have

Coming Up for RLT

We are excited about the coming year. We are currently working with some like-minded non-profit organizations on protecting their lands. For example, Boundless Woods is a group of homeowners in the vicinity of Bowman Pond in Taborton who share a love of the land around them. They have joined forces and pooled their resources to donate a conservation easement on 70 acres of land they own

Looking Back

CHRISTINE YOUNG AND NICK CONRAD



Board of Directors

Nick Conrad, President

Robert Ingalls, Vice President

Garrett Brown, Treasurer

Stacey Goldstein, Secretary

Carl Cipperly

Francille Egbert

James Garrahan

John Munn

William Niemi

W. Jeffrey Roche

Marcy Stengel

**Christine Young, Esq.,
Executive Director**

**Paul Schroeder,
Volunteer Coordinator**



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RLT went through a few transitions in 2009: We moved our office to River Street in the heart of downtown Troy, and we launched our new logo and website. Among our other accomplishments, we worked with two sets of landowners to place conservation easements on their properties (and we hope to complete those this year). Stewards conducted monitoring visits to all of our 11 easement properties and to the four properties we own. We sponsored six hikes, and we hosted a blueberry dessert social to honor our landowner partners who have donated easements to our land trust. Board members were guest speakers on two radio shows, and our Executive Director presented a session at a workshop for woodlot owners.



Bob Ingalls, right, leads 2009 wildflower hike at Geiser Preserve.

Thank you to our 2009 Volunteers!

Our events would not have been a success without our volunteers! We wish to personally thank all volunteers who have given countless hours of work to ensure the success of our organization. Special thanks for helping with specific events or activities deservedly go to the Brunswick Boy Scouts, Brunswick Cub Scouts, Chris Whelan, Gregg Stacy, Trout Unlimited, Paul Schroeder, George Wilson, Keith Goldstein, Marcy Stengel, Charis Kotfila, Jenny Hixon, Maila Niemi, Doree Cox, Kathy Munn, Elizabeth McLean, Marybeth Heimke, Marcia Hoppel, Russell Dunn, Sharon Bock and Jean Smith.

Second Annual Tomhannock Reservoir Clean-up

Over 100,000 people in Rensselaer and Albany Counties get their drinking water from the Tomhannock Reservoir. Our annual clean-up keeps garbage out of the Tomhannock, helps keep the water clean, and teaches the next generation about the importance of protecting our water. For Earth Day 2009, RLT President Bill Niemi organized Scout groups and other volunteers to pick up garbage along the Tomhannock. See the Outings Schedule in this newsletter for details about our Third Annual Tomhannock Reservoir Clean-up on April 24th.



Second Annual Oktoberfest

Our second annual Oktoberfest fundraising benefit was a huge success with over 2,000 attendees. Sponsored and hosted by Brown's Brewing Company, 100% of the event's proceeds went directly to RLT. The event featured music from the bands Flood Road Blue Grass Band, The Albany Pipes & Drums, and Celtic folk rockers Hair of the Dog.

Trail Vision Plan Press Event

Annual Meeting

Our annual breakfast buffet meeting was attended by sixty members at Brown's Brewing Company. Our featured speaker was Dr. Ward Stone, Wildlife Pathologist for the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. Dr. Stone spoke from the heart about the need to connect young people to nature, and for all of us to become involved locally in protecting our environment.

2009 Outings

Our 2009 outings started in April with a tour with Russell Dunn of the waterfalls along the Wynantskill that powered Troy's industrial heyday. Volunteer Doree Cox led a hike in early May on the new Escarpment Trail at the Capital District Wildlife Management Area. Hikers were treated to sign of moose and bear, indications of the important role the Rensselaer Plateau plays in providing forest habitat for wide-ranging animals.

Tray Biasioli, a bird biologist with NY State Parks, led an early-morning bird walk at the Dyken Pond Center. Highlights included black-throated blue warbler, and Tray found a blue-headed vireo nest with one egg. The bird trip was followed by a presentation at the Grafton Inn by Kim Corwin, co-editor of The Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in New York State.

At the end of May, RLT Board member and expert botanist Bob Ingalls led a wildflower hike at RLT's own Geiser Preserve in Taborton. In July, volunteer Sharon Bock and Nick Conrad led a hike to one of Rensselaer County's natural landmarks, the Snow Hole. Although there was no snow, it was cold enough in the Hole to feel like there should be.

Our schedule concluded in September at The Nature Conservancy's Barberville Falls Preserve. A hike under fall colors was followed by lunch at the spectacular 92-foot falls, where a baby milk snake also enjoyed the sun.

Christine Young, RLT Executive Director, Brian Zweig, Bill Niemi and former County Legislature Minority Leader Ginny O'Brien at the Trail Vision Press event.

Approximately fifty people attended the Trail Vision Press Event hosted by Brown's Brewing Company. The Trail Vision Plan is a county-wide study of potential public recreational trails for Rensselaer County. The Plan is based on an inventory of existing trails of all types and four public "visioning sessions" held throughout the County. It is hoped that the Plan will help guide private and public investment in developing trails and help coordinate planning initiatives. Copies of the plan are available on the RLT website at www.renstrust.org or you may call our office at 518-659-LAND(5263) for a copy of the printed report. The Plan was created in partnership with Rensselaer County Alliance for Trails, Rensselaer County, and RLT, with funding from Hudson Valley Greenway and with assistance from many individuals, including our own members Melissa Barry, Brian Zweig and John Munn.



Executive Director's Report

CHRISTINE YOUNG, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The RLT is off to a great start in 2010 with two new Officers, a new Director, a Volunteer Coordinator and a new Volunteer Program, and funding to engage the services of a professional consultant to non-profit organizations.



President Nicholas Conrad

Nick Conrad's day job is managing and delivering information about rare plants and animals for the New York Natural Heritage Program. Nick has been on the RLT board for 12 years, Vice President for 6 years, Chair of the Outings Committee for 5 years, and has led many hikes and programs for RLT. He served on the Accreditation Committee that successfully resulted in RLT being one of the first land trusts in the nation to be awarded official accreditation. He also serves on the board of the Friends of the Dyken Pond Center. Nick and his wife Liz McLean live in Cropseyville.

Director Marcy Stengel

Marcy Stengel is a fundraising professional who has worked with various non-profit organizations to market events and initiatives and ensure their long-term success. Marcy began working with RLT in 2009 as a volunteer, and is thrilled to join the board. She is an avid hiker, kayaker and rower. Marcy lives in Troy, NY with her husband, who is a graphic designer, and their feisty rescue dog.



Vice President Robert Ingalls

Bob Ingalls teaches in the Computer Science Department at RPI. But his real love is field botany. For more than 20 years he has been exploring the woods of upstate New York looking for rare plants, mosses, and lichens. He has served on the board of the Rensselaer Land Trust for more than ten years, where he has been on our Outings Committee, and is currently the Chair of the Stewardship Committee. He has also been on the board of the New York Flora Association.



Volunteer Coordinator Paul Schroeder

Paul is a long time resident of West Sand Lake and has lived in Rensselaer County for over 25 years. Originally a research biologist, Paul later became a licensed real estate appraiser at which he practiced for 18 years specializing in complex appraisal work including conservation easements, the impact of contamination on property values, and the valuation of development rights. Paul's interests include hiking, kayaking, photography, cooking and travel. He has a wife, two grown sons, three dogs and a parrot.



Michael Thompson has stepped down from the Board

Michael played a critical role as the Board's Communication Officer in developing the newsletter, website and brochures, and writing press releases for local media about RLT events. Michael also contributed knowledge in the area of fundraising, and plans to continue aiding that committee on key projects. His announcement came after his engagement to his fiancée Caryn. We wish them both the best of luck as they spend this year building a new life together.



Stewardship at RLT's Geiser Preserve

Geiser Preserve is 95 acres of woods on Perigo Hill in Taborton. The Preserve contains a vernal pond, large boulders (glacial erratics), and patches of exposed bedrock. Signs of moose have been seen, and just last month a tracking workshop found tracks of bobcat and gray fox. A remnant of the old Eastern Turnpike, used in the early 19th century to travel between Albany and North Adams, goes through the Preserve. One of four properties owned by Rensselaer Land Trust, it was donated in 1989 by Ruth Geiser Nevis. Ruth was a school teacher in a one-room schoolhouse in Taborton, and enjoyed school picnics on the top of Perigo Hill. Her love of the site and her desire to prevent it from ever being destroyed led to her generous donation.

Fran Egbert, RLT Board member, and Kate Hubbs, volunteer, are the stewards for Geiser Preserve. They visit the Preserve often, keeping track of the condition of the land and keeping an eye out for any problems or disturbances. One visit each year

is the official annual monitoring. All RLT's owned properties and all its easement properties are likewise monitored annually, and current conditions and activities documented. Our ability to legally enforce the protection given to a property by a conservation easement depends on conducting annual monitoring.

Other stewardship activities at Geiser Preserve in 2009 included a new official survey of the property boundaries. As a requirement for our national land trust accreditation, we needed to clarify the precise locations of the Preserve's boundaries. The new survey was partially funded by a grant from the Land Trust Alliance. Also last year, Fran and Kate contacted a neighboring landowner about his interest in protecting his land.

Our stewardship activities at Geiser Preserve maintain the special qualities of this wonderful place. While Geiser Preserve is currently open to the public (see map at our website), we plan on making visits easier in the future by marking a trail to the top of Perigo Hill.

Volunteer Opportunities

We invite and encourage you to express your love of the land by volunteering for RLT this year. Volunteer activities this spring include the Tomhannock Reservoir

Clean-Up on April 24th and the Hoosic River Tree Planting on May 8th. These and other opportunities will be posted on our website.

If you are interested in volunteering for a specific activity, have a skill to share, or just want to find out how you can help, the first step is to contact Paul Schroeder, our new Volunteer Coordinator, at 674-2480 or pschroeder1@nycap.rr.com. Under Paul's direction, we are developing a formal volunteer program. You are part of our organization and we are only as strong as our members.



"Why do I volunteer at RLT? I love Rensselaer County and consider it — all of its green spaces, lakes, woods, and hills — one of the region's greatest gems. When we moved here 25 years ago from Albany County we thought Rensselaer County was the best-kept secret in the Capital District. Since then, we've watched the population grow by leaps and bounds, and the number of sub-divisions and commercial areas soar. I want to use my skills to help protect as many of the rural and wilderness areas of the county as possible — for me, for my children, and for the unborn generations to come. This place is too gorgeous to lose." — Beth Schroeder

RENSSELAER LAND TRUST

Each year RLT sponsors a series of hikes and programs that give participants the opportunity to experience firsthand the natural beauty and history of Rensselaer County.

RLT programs range from indoor presentations to leisurely strolls to more strenuous hikes with a variety of terrain and difficulty levels. Please choose outings based on you and your party's physical ability and comfort. We make every effort to accurately describe the difficulty level of each outing, but it is still a subjective description. We recommend that you dress appropriately for all weather and trail conditions, and wear long pants and hiking boots or sturdy walking shoes. Always carry adequate water and food. If you have specific questions or concerns, please contact the listed trip leader or RLT.

Volunteers Welcome!

Do you know of a scenic or natural spot in Rensselaer County that would make a good location for a hike? Are you interested in helping to plan and lead a hike or other outing? RLT's Outings Committee welcomes all of your ideas for future hikes and outings, and we welcome volunteers to help us plan and lead them.

In addition to our own outings and events, other local environmental and recreational organizations offer many activities and programs that highlight the great outdoors of Rensselaer County, the Capital Region, and New York State. For links to the websites of these organizations, go to the RLT website, www.renstrust.org, and in the main menu click on "Web Resources."

Outings & Events

2010 CALENDAR



**SATURDAY,
MARCH 13
10:00am**

Searching for Moose at Capital District WMA

Sightings of moose on the Rensselaer Plateau have increased in recent years. Kate Hubbs of The Nature

Conservancy will lead a search for signs of moose at the Capital District Wildlife Management Area in Cherry Plain. If snow cover allows, we will snowshoe; bring your own snowshoes. If there is not enough snow, we will hike.

Meet at the kiosk just outside the entrance to Cherry Plain State Park. For directions, go to www.nysparks.state.ny.us/parks/173/getting-there.aspx.

Contact Kate Hubbs at 674-2069 or 690-7864 or khubbs@tnc.org for information on the meeting place.

APRIL OR MAY

Historic Charcoal Making Demonstration

Making charcoal was an important industry in Rensselaer County in the 19th Century, and charcoal is still used today in medicine, clothing and food preparation. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to watch the last coaler in Rensselaer County tend his charcoal pit. A successful burn is weather dependent, so check the RLT website at www.renstrust.org for time and date.

Call Doree Cox at 658-2643 for more information.

**SATURDAY, APRIL 24
9:00am to 12:00pm**

Earth Day Tomhannock Reservoir Clean-up

In observance of Earth Day, join us for the third annual clean-up of the Tomhannock Reservoir, source of drinking water for many Rensselaer County residents. Meet at the NYS DEC public access parking lot along NYS Route 7 in Raymertown, just before the causeway. Groups will collect trash along a half-mile stretch of the shore. Garbage bags will be provided; bring gloves. We will work

regardless of weather, so dress appropriately.

Sponsored by RLT, the City of Troy, and Stewart's. To register, contact Paul Schroeder, Volunteer Coordinator, at 674-2480 or pschroeder1@nycap.rr.com.

**SATURDAY, MAY 8
1:00 to 4:00pm**

Volunteer Day: Tree Planting at Hoosic River Boat Launch

Join us for a tree-planting party! NYS DEC is providing 200 seedlings to be planted at the public boat launch they're constructing at RLT's newest property on the Hoosic River. Bring gloves, a shovel, a bucket, a snack and a drink. We will work regardless of weather, so dress appropriately.

The launch is approximately 1 mile west of Eagle Bridge on the north side of Route 67, at the DEC sign. To register, contact Paul Schroeder, Volunteer Coordinator, at 674-2480 or pschroeder1@nycap.rr.com.



**SUNDAY, MAY 16
10:00am**

Stewart Preserve

The Stewart Preserve is 123 acres of peaceful woods near Crooked Lake in Sand Lake. George Wilson, volunteer steward for The Nature Conservancy, will guide us through the Stewart Preserve's hardwood and hemlock forests to see old foundations, stone walls, spring wildflowers and ferns, and to hear thrushes, warblers, vireos, and other birds. A short walk off the preserve will lead to a lovely wetland. This hike is about 2 miles and easy, with some steep, rough and/or wet spots.

Contact George at geofiddle@gmail.com for meeting place and more information.

SATURDAY, MAY 22
9:00am

Spring Wildflowers at Bear's Den Preserve

This spring wildflower hike will be at RLT's own Bear's Den Preserve on Butternut Hill near Cherry Plain. In addition to Bear's Den, a natural shallow cave, a wide variety of wildflowers can be found in the Preserve's rich woods. The hike is about 2 miles, with some short steep slopes. Bear's Den Preserve is not open to the public except during guided hikes such as this.

This outing is limited to 15 people, by reservation only. Contact Kate Hubbs at 674-2069 or 690-7864 or khubbs@tnc.org to reserve a spot.

Do you enjoy trails? Here are two ways to help keep them in good shape.

June 5 is National Trails Day. Gather with other trail enthusiasts at the Dyken Pond Center from 9 to noon for a trail work day. For free lunch, register in advance by June 3 at 658-2055. More about Dyken Pond Center's events is at www.dykenpond.org.

The Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) hosts a shoreline/trail clean-up at Schodack Island State Park, June 12, 10 to 4. To volunteer contact Arthur Fontijn, fontia@verizon.net, 477-7992.

SATURDAY, JUNE 12
10:00am to 12:00pm

Hudson River Walk and Talk

The Hudson River has played a pivotal role in the history, geography, and ecology of Rensselaer County. We will walk along the shore of the Hudson River near Troy with Shirley Hartman of the Beacon Institute for Rivers and Estuaries. She will discuss the Hudson's human history, flora and fauna, and the Institute's current programs to monitor and restore the river and shore.

To register and for more information, contact Bob Ingalls at 272-2978 or robert.ingalls@gmail.com. For more information about the Beacon Institute, visit www.thebeaconinstitute.org.

SATURDAY, JULY 10
9:30am

Bentleys Cavern

This outing is for anyone who likes caves, and for anyone who just wants a place to cool off from the July sun. Bentleys Cavern in Berlin was donated to the Northeastern Cave Conservancy (NCC) in 2009. Chuck Porter of NCC will lead us on a half-mile hike uphill to the unique landforms near the entrance of the cave. Those who wish may enter the cave. The first canyon in the cave

requires a short drop to enter, and is 30 feet high in places. Exploring inner rooms will require a brief crawl on hands and knees through water. Bring a flashlight or LED headlamp, (bicycle) helmet and light jacket if you plan to enter the cave, along with a change of clothes.

Register in advance by contacting Nick Conrad at 279-1963 or nbconrad@msn.com. For more information about NCC, visit www.necaveconservancy.org.

Grand Opening of Hoosic River Public Boat Launch

Watch our website, www.renstrust.org, for details about our celebration this summer of the completion of the new public boat launch being built by NYS DEC on the RLT's Hoosic River property near Eagle Bridge. Exact date will depend on the construction schedule.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 28
10:00am

Picnic Down by the Old Mill Stream

Stroll down an old road less than a mile to picnic at an old dam site. For those interested in a longer hike, we can cross the brook and hike a few miles back through a forest and bog. This new trail was created by NYS DEC at its Capital District Wildlife Management Area, in Cherry Plain.

Meet at the entrance to Cherry Plain State Park. (For directions, go to <http://nysparks.state.ny.us/parks/173/getting-there.aspx>.) For further information, call Francille Egbert at 674-3214 or Doree Cox at 658-2643.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 26
1:00pm

Find a Historic Cemetery in Stephentown

Spend a Sunday afternoon strolling in the cemetery of the oldest church in Stephentown. The church is no longer at this site, but the cemetery remains, containing the grave of a Revolutionary War soldier and many colorful epitaphs. Although grave stone rubbing is no longer allowed, the Stephentown Historical Society will show rubbings from the past. Bill Niemi will then lead a short walk to Randall Brook and an extensive wetland. The owner of this property has protected it for future generations through a donated conservation easement to RLT.

For information and directions, call Doree Cox at 658-2643 or Francille Egbert at 674-3214.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 2
9:00am

Taconic Crest Trail to Berlin Mountain

Join RLT and the Mohawk-Hudson Chapter of the Appalachian Mountain Club on a hike to the roof of the County! Berlin Mountain, at 2798 feet, is the highest point in Rensselaer County, and its open summit provides wonderful views of the Taconics and of Mt. Greylock and the Berkshires. We'll start at Petersburg Pass on NYS Route 2, and on our way we'll cross Berlin Pass, where the Albany Road ran in the 1700s.

This will be a moderately strenuous hike, about 5 miles with some short steep uphill and downhill sections. Wear boots or sturdy shoes. Bring lunch, snacks and plenty of water, and be prepared for cool and windy conditions.

Register in advance by contacting Nick Conrad at 279-1963 or nbconrad@msn.com. More AMC Chapter hikes are listed at www.amcmohawkhudson.org.



SATURDAY, OCTOBER 23
1:00pm

Hoosick Dairy Farm Tour

Join the Agricultural Stewardship Association (ASA) and RLT for a tour of the 100-cow Hoosick Farm dairy operation, run by the McMahon family. This stunning 716-acre farm straddles the Vermont border at the foot of the Taconics. The farm is located along the Hoosick River, and Skiparee Mountain rises in its northeast corner, hence the name Hoosick. This is a wonderful opportunity to see the inner workings of a small, family-owned dairy farm in an absolutely beautiful landscape.

Contact Francille Egbert 674-3214 for directions. ASA is assisting the McMahon family in conserving the farm. For more information about ASA, visit www.agstewardship.org.

RLT Hoosic River Property Opens for Public Fishing!

April 1st is not just opening day of trout fishing season in New York—it's the opening of the Hoosic River public fishing access site, on Rensselaer Land Trust property approximately 1 mile west of Eagle Bridge on Route 67. Look for the public fishing access sign on the north side of Route 67. You can expect to find trout in the river in the spring and bass in the summer. On May 8th, we will be planting several hundred trees and if you are interested in participating in our planting, please contact Paul Schroeder at 674-2480 or pschroeder1@nycap.rr.com.

Rensselaer Land Trust purchased the property from two local farmers in 2008 and donated a public access fishing conservation easement to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). DEC has since constructed a public access gravel road and parking for 8-10 cars without trailers, and they have riprapped 300 feet of shoreline to secure it from erosion. A car top boat slide will be constructed in late spring or early summer after the spring water levels recede. Once the boat launch is completed, we are planning on holding a grand opening celebration, including a canoe and kayak paddle.



Fundraising Update

FRANCILLE EGBERT, FUNDRAISING CHAIRPERSON

A New Year, and our Fundraising Committee is starting the year with two new members and some ambitious goals. Marcy Stengel, who has already helped us develop mailings, brings her professional experience in fundraising to both to the Rensselaer Land Trust Board and our committee. Beth Schroeder, moved by Ward Stone's talk at our annual meeting, also joins us with a wealth of professional fundraising experience.

We will be working hard this year to add 100 new members. We will be at the farmer's markets, festivals, Earth Day and other events to introduce ourselves to Rensselaer County citizens and to share our goals. New volunteers can help share our conservation message as we provide training through our new volunteer coordinator Peter Schroeder and Board Members. We are also working with Linda London, through a LTA grant, to explore both grant opportunities and corporate sponsorships.

Everyone needs a way of giving which meets their personal needs. Just as the Land Trust has made a long term commitment to the land we steward, some of our members have planned for the future by including the Land Trust in their wills. Whether large or small, bequests demonstrate commitment to the environment and to the future of RLT.



Francille Egbert cross-country skiing on the Rensselaer Plateau.

Rensselaer Plateau Alliance

What environmental groups are working alongside Rensselaer Land Trust? In a series of articles in our newsletter, we will highlight some of our partners. At the Rensselaer Land Trust we will be collaborating with these organizations in working toward a healthy environment in Rensselaer County.

In this issue we feature the Rensselaer Plateau Alliance (RPA). The RPA began in May 2006 as an ad-hoc committee of parties interested in the conservation of the Rensselaer Plateau. As more organizations and individuals joined, the Rensselaer Plateau Alliance changed from a committee of RLT to an independent not-for-profit corporation. The RPA now includes a coalition of local landowners, environmental advocates, and outdoor recreational enthusiasts.

RPA's mission is to promote and facilitate the protection of the Rensselaer Plateau's undeveloped and unfragmented forests, which cover more than one-quarter of the County. These forests possess many significant natural features, and provide natural habitats for plants and animals, forest products, recreation, clean water and clean air. "We envision a protected corridor of forest

consisting of protected land, working forests and good private stewardship that extends from the Pittstown and Tibbits State Forests in the north to the southernmost part of the Plateau in Stephentown," says Jim Bonesteel, RPA President. "We also share the vision of a multi-use trail from Grafton Lakes State Park to Cherry Plain State Park as described in RLT's Trail Vision Plan."

Spreading the Word

The RPA has been working hard to spread the word about the Rensselaer Plateau. More and more residents are becoming aware that this ecological treasure is the fifth largest forested area in the New York State, and home to many large mammals such as moose and bear. The Rensselaer Plateau has been a focus area of RLT, is included in New York State's Open Space Plan, and is designated an Important Bird Area by Audubon New York.

The RPA is also working with local communities to develop a regional conservation plan. The goal of the plan is to care for the resources of the Plateau by providing a framework that can be adopted by municipalities and key landholders

and used as a planning tool. The organization will also continue to sponsor educational events, lectures and workshops for landowners and the public. It will be partnering with RLT on a number of these events. To find out more about the Rensselaer Plateau Alliance, visit www.rensse-laerplateau.org.



RLT member John Scarano biking on the Rensselaer Plateau.

Help ensure the future of the Rensselaer Land Trust and the lands we protect with a gift that fulfills your personal tax and giving objectives! Contact our Executive Director Christine Young, Esq. for information on:

- Income tax benefits of gifts of real estate
- How traditional IRA rollover into a Roth can offset income tax
- The language that is acceptable in making a bequest
- Types of in-kind gifts that can have an impact
- How to make monthly pledge payments
- How to honor the memory of a loved one with a gift
- How to make a gift of appreciated stock and get more income for life
- How to give assets to my family and income from those assets to RLT

RLT WISH LIST

- Padded stacking chairs (12)
- Horizontal file cabinet

RLT ITEMS FOR SALE

- Air conditioner (used only a few hours): \$200
- Sickle bar mower: \$300
- File cabinets (2): \$30 each
- Table top copier : \$30
- Small wooden cabinet (approx. 2x3 feet): \$20

Financial Data

JANUARY – DECEMBER 2009

Gifts

2009

INCOME	Corporate & Foundation Grants		39,848.11
	Fundraising Event Revenues		
	Related Sales Revenue	Merchandise Sales	733.00
	Special Events	Ticket Sales	200.00
		Special Events (Other)	465.81
	Other Sales	Nonprogram Sales	9,915.97
	Total Fundraising Revenues		11,314.78
	In-Kind Contributions		966.00
	Interest Income		65.55
EXPENSES	Member Contributions	Capital Campaign	8,661.00
		Cash Contributions (Other)	18,252.20
	Total Member Contributions		26,913.20
	TOTAL INCOME		79,107.64
	Fundraising Event Costs	Equipment Rental	1,805.00
		Fundraising expense	193.00
		Merchandise Costs	690.12
		Fundraising Event Costs (Other)	4,997.26
	Total		7,685.38
	Conferences & Meetings		1,730.40
	Depreciation Expense		37.17
	Insurance		3,200.55
	Membership Dues		1,936.00
	Mileage Reimbursement		162.84
	Office Expenses	Bank Service Charges	311.00
		Postage & Delivery	1,136.37
		Printing & Publications	8,759.40
		Office Expense (Other)	103.78
	Total Office Expenses		10,310.55
	Payroll Salaries	Officer & Director Salaries	27,500.04
	Payroll Taxes	NYS Disability	-13.00
		Social Security & Medicare	2,103.75
		Unemployment Tax	476.01
		Workers' Comp Insurance	237.29
		Payroll Taxes (Other)	0.00
	Total Payroll Taxes		2,804.05
	Professional Fees		9,529.00
	Property Taxes		194.32
	Rent & Utilities		3,612.03
	Repair & Maintenance		89.95
	Telecommunications		850.89
	TOTAL EXPENSES		69,643.17
	NET INCOME		9,464.47

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Rensselaer Land Trust
415 River Street
Troy NY 12180

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www.renstrust.org
518 659-5263

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 600 acres of open space through conservation easements and title acquisition.



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Join the Rensselaer Land Trust!

The support of our members allowed us to steward 600 acres of protected land in 2009, with the goal of protecting 1,200 acres by 2012. Next year, we will expand our programs and add two new easements — more than 100 acres of protected land.

Your support of Rensselaer Land Trust localizes your impact in a world of environmental concerns. The forests and wetlands we protect help filter rainwater and clean the air we breathe, and provide habitat for wildlife and unique plants.

We look forward to receiving your membership renewal and connecting you with local environmental issues throughout the year. As a member, you will receive our biannual newsletter, e-mail updates, and invitations to all of our outings and upcoming events.

Join or renew your membership on our website at www.renstrust.org or using the enclosed envelope. Together we will have a lasting, positive impact on our environment here in Rensselaer County.

Inside this issue:

2-3 2009 Highlights

5 Get Involved

6-7 2010 Outing Schedule

8 Open for Fishing

9 Partners in Conservation

10-11 2009 Annual Report

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