

Westchester Land Trust

Celebrating
30 YEARS
of CONSERVATION

*Fulfilling the
Promise of Forever*

Join us
DECEMBER 13TH
for

A Conversation on
Conservation
with Secretary Hillary
Rodham Clinton
and the Honorable
George Pataki

Ticket information page 9!

Fall Newsletter 2018 🍂 Annual Report

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FRONT AND BACK COVER PHOTOS

WLT conservation easement in Lewisboro. Protected forever since 2003, thanks to you!

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EARTHSHARE

Westchester Land Trust (WLT) is a member of EarthShare, a nationwide network of America's most respected environmental and conservation charities. To find out how you and your employer can support WLT through an EarthShare workplace giving campaign visit their website at earthsharenyc.org or contact, Michelle Pleim at Michelle@westchesterlandtrust.org or 914.234.6992 ext. 22

Combined Federal Campaign (CFC)
 Number: 77308



30 FOR 30

Throughout the year, Westchester Land Trust has been highlighting 30 of our visionary donors, landowners, volunteers and community partners who are passionate about protecting the air you breathe, the water you drink, and the land you love. We are thrilled to feature stories about ten of these influencers in this report and have highlighted their names in orange. They are **George Bianco, Susan Carpenter, Jerry Goldstein, Patti Howard, Louis McCagg, Carol and Frank Nickell, Sam Pryor, Renee Ring, Lisa and Mark Schwartz, Aimée Whitman** and the **Zofnass family**. We thank all our supporters who have devoted time, energy, and funds to WLT over the years. With your support, we are looking to the future with confidence and hope.

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Change and Progress



As I joined our land steward on a beautiful July day to monitor our oldest conservation easement, I couldn't help but laugh when a dozen wild turkeys poked their heads up from behind a stone wall and calmly watched us. The expansive meadow where they were grazing hasn't changed much since our founder, the late **Louis McCagg**, decided to protect it with a conservation easement three decades ago. But the organization that holds the easement - that's WLT - has seen amazing progress, thanks to your steadfast support. That got me thinking about the difference between "change" and "progress".

Louis' overarching vision was for Westchester Land Trust to be an organization that cared for the people by caring for the land, forever. But our communities continue to be under threat from the type of change that doesn't respect that credo. By 2050, the US population is expected to increase by 25%, and the amount of land converted to housing, shopping malls, roads and parking lots is projected to grow at an alarming rate. We are losing our farms, forests and wetlands. These are the places that keep you restored and fed, your drinking water pure and plentiful, and your communities healthy. In Louis' worldview this is certainly change, but it isn't progress.

When we are successful in our conservation efforts, you won't see much change on the land. In fact, our objective is to protect and restore the land's resilience to the type of change that can negatively impact a community's vitality. But to achieve this objective, and uphold Louis' vision, we had to grow as an organization. This year we celebrated the progress that your support has made possible since 1988. We grew to a professional staff of 10. We moved our headquarters to Sugar Hill Farm. We were one of the first land trusts in the nation to receive accreditation. We completed more than 200 easements. And, most notably, we have protected over 8,300 acres in 30 different communities!

We have progressed so we can protect our most treasured resources. This is the essence of what Westchester Land Trust does. So, for as long as forever, we will monitor Louis' land. We will walk the same paths that Louis once walked. We will gaze out at the farm fields that Louis so loved. And, when a flock of turkeys pop their heads up and catch us by surprise—we will smile in knowing they, too, will return year after year to a landscape unchanged. Now that is progress worth celebrating!

Thank you!

Lori Ensinger, *President*

STORY WALK

Earlier this year, WLT co-presented a story time nature walk at Pine Croft Meadow Preserve with our friends from Lewisboro Library. Since 2010, Pine Croft Meadow Preserve's unique features have encouraged visitors of all ages to reap the benefits of spending time in nature, such as better mental health, attention, and improved mood. We encourage you to visit this preserve, with its gently sloping and open meadow full of native grasses, wildflowers, rushes, sedges, and shrubs, and savor the natural beauty that makes our region a special place to live. Bring your children or grandchildren to a very special autumn story walk — see page 9 for more info!

Through our story walks we're able to promote literacy, while teaching children and their families about the natural world, helping to create a second generation of stakeholders and stewards.

Anna Lillian Moser, Children's Librarian at Lewisboro Library

30 Years of Westchester Land Trust

In 1988, a pioneering group of homeowners who wanted to protect our farms, air, water quality, wildlife habitat and local food supplies met in **Louis McCagg's** living room. They talked about balancing development with open space protection and together, created Westchester Land Trust. We've come a long way from our humble beginnings to preserving over 8,300 acres across Westchester and eastern Putnam Counties. We could not have accomplished this without your passion and commitment. Here's to the next 30 years of fulfilling the promise of forever, together!



As Westchester Land Trust grew, staff member **Susan Carpenter** authored over 170 conservation easements, and oversaw the preservation of 7,400 acres. Susan's commitment propelled us to our present position in the conservation community. We thank Susan (r) for her 21 years of dedicated service and in 2017, presented her with a WLT Lifetime Achievement Award. WLT Board Member Norma Silva and supporter **Aimée Whitman** (l) were also presented with Preservation Angel Awards.



Our flagship preserve, the Westchester Wilderness Walk / Zofnass Family Preserve opened to the public in 2001. This land boasts a 8-mile trail network on 150-acres, extensive wetland systems and majestic woodlands with rare wildlife, plants, dramatic rock formations and dozens of bird species. We thank **Paul Zofnass** and **Renee Ring** and their extended family for their dedication in creating this remarkable namesake preserve. We encourage you to visit it today!



The late **Sam Pryor** was a member of our Board of Directors for over twenty years, and Chairman for twelve of those years. He was the cornerstone of our organization and instrumental in conserving over 7,500 acres of land that is rich in natural resources. We miss Sam very much. This picture is how we like to remember Sam (l) smiling, with former WLT Board Member **Jerry Goldstein** (r)



In 2006, Sugar Hill Farm was purchased by our neighbors and long-time WLT supporters **Carol and Frank Nickell** and **Lisa and Mark Schwartz** and donated to WLT to house our headquarters for staff offices and community programs. The surrounding vegetable gardens provide fresh seasonal produce to local foodbanks through WLT's partnership with Feeding Westchester. Our outdoor classroom inspires hands-on sustainable agriculture lessons for hundreds of children each year.



In 2018, Gary Perusse (Yorktown) and Norma Silva (Yonkers) joined our Board of Directors and Brendon DeSimone (Greenwich, CT), Ellen Best (Pound Ridge), and Michael Surdej (Lewisboro) joined our Advisory Board. We are pleased to introduce our new WLT Leaders and look forward to their contributions. Pictured left to right: **Gary, Ellen, Mike, Norma, Brendon.**

A Banner Year for Conservation *Because of you, in the last year Westchester Land Trust has:*

Protected **586** additional acres of land

Spent **400+** hours monitoring our easements and preserves

Offered **48** free and open-to-the-public programs on our **750** acres of preserves

Harvested **6,248** pounds of fresh fruits and veggies at Sugar Hill Farm for our partner Feeding Westchester

Welcomed volunteers who have graciously donated over **1,200** hours to plant **625** trees, shrubs, herbs, and flowers on Westchester Land Trust preserves.

Thank you for your continued support!

Photo by Justin Goodhardt Photography. Justin will lead a WLT nighttime photo walk in November. Please see page 9 for more info!

H2H Hudson to Housatonic UPDATE

In 2014, WLT co-launched the Hudson to Housatonic Regional Conservation Partnership (H2H) a two-state conservation collaboration of over 50 New York and Connecticut organizations working together to protect land and wildlife habitat through community engagement, conservation and stewardship. H2H celebrated a milestone achievement this June when partners finalized the Strategic Conservation Map illustrating which land is of highest conservation value in the H2H landscape. This map will inform the partnership's prioritization of landowner engagement and land protection initiatives. WLT was recently awarded a \$5,000 grant from the Cornell Land Trust Bird Conservation Initiative, to fund trainings for H2H Partners around citizen science tools, best practices in meadow and early successional habitat, and chainsaw safety. We thank the Cornell Land Trust Bird Conservation Initiative, the Land Trust Alliance, and the Sarah K. de Coizart Article TENTH Perpetual Charitable Trust for generously supporting H2H.



PROGRAMS FOR ALL AGES

WLT programs encourage people of all ages to connect with nature and each other! Throughout the year, we offer a variety of walks, hikes, tree planting opportunities, Sugar Hill Farm volunteer days and more! See page 9 for a list of upcoming WLT sponsored events. Contact Betty Sue Hanson at betty.sue@westchesterlandtrust.org if you have any questions and hope you see you soon!

Thank You to our Donors & Volunteers

The Westchester Land Trust of today wouldn't be the thriving conservation organization it is without the generous contributions of our donors and volunteers. We thank you for your commitment to protecting clean air and water, locally grown food, scenic beauty and a place for people and wildlife to thrive. To see a complete list of individuals, businesses and organizations that made gifts or pledges to WLT from January 1, 2017 to January 31, 2018, please visit westchesterlandtrust.org.

Support, Revenue & Expenses

Year Ending December 31, 2017

SUPPORT AND REVENUE

Individual Donations	\$521,224
Foundation Donations	\$301,854
Corporate & Government Donations	\$47,065
Special Events, net of expenses	\$218,792
Endowment Donations	\$43,200
Endowment Investment Income, net	\$654,191
Miscellaneous	\$30,692
Total Support and Revenue	\$1,817,288

EXPENSES

Program Services	\$883,371
Fundraising	\$137,295
Management and Administration	\$160,270
Total Expenses	\$1,180,936

Change in Net Assets	\$636,352
Net Assets, beginning of year	\$19,901,020
Net Assets, end of year	\$20,537,372

Net Assets include land held for conservation, Sugar Hill Farm assets, endowment funds, and other Board designated & restricted funds. Please visit our website or contact us for a copy of our audited financial statements for the year ended December 31, 2017.

Please visit our website or contact us for a copy of our audited financial statements for the year ended December 31, 2017.

\$50,000+
Anonymous
The PCLB Foundation
Christine and Bruce Churchill
Lori Ensinger and William Kuebler
Land Trust Alliance Northeast Program
National Fish & Wildlife Foundation

\$25,000-\$49,999
Anonymous
Sarah K. de Coizart Article TENTH Perpetual Charitable Trust Grant
The Jerome Levy Foundation
Adrienne and Ron Morgan
Kathy and Benjamin Needell
NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets
The Selz Family Foundation
Wallace Genetic Foundation
Renee Ring and Paul Zofnass

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Jen Schwartz / Louis & Anne Abrons Family Foundation / Vicki and Fred Feiner
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Teatown Lake Reservation
Whole Foods Market

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Joan and Steven Malsin
Cindy and Donald Marcotte

Thank You for Making our 30th Anniversary Annual Benefit a Success!



ANNUAL BENEFIT

More than 300 Westchester Land Trust supporters gathered on Saturday, June 2, 2018, at the Rockefeller Estate in Pocantico Hills to celebrate WLT's 30th anniversary and to honor the conservation legacy of David Rockefeller. We are grateful for your continued partnership and dedication to protecting land where it matters most, right here at home. Special thanks to 30th Anniversary Annual Benefit lead sponsor Houlihan Lawrence for demonstrating their commitment to our community and local conservation. Pictured left to right: WLT Chairman of the Board Bruce B. Churchill; Carolyn Murphy; WLT President Lori Ensinger; NYS Senator Terrence Murphy



We thank **Patti Howard** (left), chair of WLT's 30th Anniversary Annual Benefit volunteer committee, for her invaluable expertise, dedication and hard work. Pictured left to right: Patti Howard, Alan Howard, WLT Board Member Jen Schwartz, WLT Advisory Board Co-Chair Jonathan L. Wiesner.



We are so thankful to our 30th Anniversary Annual Benefit lead sponsor Houlihan Lawrence for their dedication to protecting our most precious natural resources.

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Loretta Miraglia
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Katherine Moreau
Sherry Wolf and Nick Moy
Helen Munoz
Grainne McGuinne and Stephen Murray
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Leslie and John Needham
Hannah and Frank Neubauer
John Nolon
Michael Oberg
Wanda Cope Orton
Kate and Mike Paletta
Evelyn Paltrow
Marlene Paltrow
Stephanie and Hervey Parke
Julie Bacon and Luther Peacock
Isobel Perry

Cathy and Gary Perusse
Susan Porcino
Pound Ridge Veterinary Center
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Linda Puner
Dana Ramos
Lynn Saldenberg and Arthur Rauch
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Joan and Kevin Reilly
Judy Richter
Diana Richter
Lee and Ken Roberts
George Roberts
Barbara and Rick Romeo
Benjamin Romney
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Michele and Marc Rudolph
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Barbara and Alan Wolfert
Paula Wolff on behalf of The Commercial Club of Chicago
John Zline
Mr. Darien Jay Zoppo
† Deceased

GIFTS RECEIVED IN HONOR OF:

Neil Barron
Susan Carpenter
Bruce and Christine Churchill
Walter and Ursula Cliff
Doug DeCandia
Peter DiCorpo
Lori Ensinger
Susan Henry
Capt. Eric L. Jones
Doug and Alice Kraus
Betsy and Lowell Lifschultz
Sam Pryor
Norma Silva
Kara Whelan
Aimée Whitman
WLT Staff
Paul Zofnass

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John L. Behler
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Mark Lewis Feiner
Capt. Eric L. Jones
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Wendy Bartley
Meghan Bazaar
Michaela Beitzel
Amy Benerofe
Susan Berenzweig
Ellen Best
Janice Best
Alan Bietsch
Boyscout Troop 2, Mamaroneck Village

Andrew Delligatti
Delta Sigma Theta-Pi
Lambda Chapter
Marcela Denzer
Jeff DeToro
Ginnette Diaz
Kyoko Donaldson
Misti Duvall
Juliet Faust
Vicki Feiner
Terry Feldman
Sarah Fey
Margaret Fitzgerald
Melissa Fleming
Feeding Westchester Staff
Victoria Foulke
Elyne Germaise
Ann Marie Gilligan

Susan Janot
Carl Jean
Annie Johansmeyer
John Jay High School Students
Patricia Johnson
Lizzy Kaplan
Rod Kast
The Käufer Family
David Kaufman
Marjorie Kaufman
Alan Keeley
Bill Kuebler
Carolyn Kiernan
Charlie Kilman
Saeko Komatsu
Alexandra Kotur
Kate Lanfer

The Morales Family
Morgan Stanley Employees
Scott Mori
Samantha Mortlock
Joyce Morrone
Kim Moskowitz
Charles Mullin
Payson Murray
Brendan Murphy
MVP Healthcare Employees
Seth Nalven
Claudia Neary
Kathy Needell
Chikako Nemoto
New York Power Authority Employees
Joanne Nielsen
Kyle Nisonger
Jim Nordgren
President's Junior Leadership Council of Northern Westchester Hospital
NUK Employees
Samantha O'Brien
PACE University Students
David Pakman
Maryanne Palumbo
Ben Paseltiner
Marc Paseltiner
Cari Pattison
Anna Petit Lee
Marina Pia DeLuca
Alison Posa
Amanda Posa
Jaime Posa
Alex Rabinowitz
Ionel Raducanu
Ramapo College Students
The Ramos Family
Ellen Reimer
REI Yonkers Employees
Emma Risley
Rippowam Cisca
Riverkeeper Volunteers
Joseph Rodriguez
Amanda Sackey
Jennifer Santillan
Gary Sapolin

Eliza Schwartz
Hadley Scully
The Sherrid Family
Caroline Sears
Philip Sears
Matt Sesti
Steve Shapiro
Sheldrake Environmental Center
Carol Sheridan
Jes Siart
Norma Silva Guzman
Maria Simonetti
Derek Smith
Quint Smith
Benjamin Smotrich
Something Good in the World
The Spaeth-Gilbert Family
Noelle Spizziro
Allison Stabile
Candice Stafford
Suzanne Steers
STEM Alliance of Larchmont-Mamaroneck
Dana Stetson
Glenn Sungela
Mike Surdej
Swiss Re Employees
Allison Tamburelli
Tinkergarten Families
Verizon Employees
Nancy Wagner
Ben Weinstein
Margaret Whelan
Declan Whelan
Nonie Whelan
Aimée Whitman
Cutler Whitman
Whole Foods Market Employees
Shari Winard
Tina Winchester
Frazer Winsted
Daniel Wolff
John Zeiger
Vic Ziminsky

"Volunteering at WLT made me see my community in a whole new way." **Christos Markakis**

Holly Brown
Emma Buck
Jack Buck
Robert Buck
Judi Butler-Levy
Gianna Caiola
Allison Capozza
Cathy Carter
Emily Chingay
Mickie Chow
Heather Clay
Frelinghuysen
Liza Clymer
Debby Cohen
Mary Cox
Sarah Colley
Judy Collins Turi
Steve Conaway
Joyce Corrigan
Catherine Coult
Megan Cowan
Mary Cox
Beth Crowell
Wendy Cushman
Austin Cutler
Corissa Damato
Laura Danner
Doug DeCandia

Terry Gilmore
Jaclene Ginnell
Girl Scout Troop 2308
Lana Grauer
Greenburgh Police
Summer Youth Camp
Marisa Grittini
Caroline Grubb
John Hancock Employees
Randy Locke
Laura Harris
Ben Harvey
Beth Harvey
Judi Hausman
Yoko Hayata
Jennifer Heintzman
Lisa Hennessy
Don Heppner
Catherine Hiller
Jack Horvath
Samuel Hovanec
Wendy Hsu
Hudson River Sweep Volunteers
Kate Hutchinson
Ben Indictor
Kristen Ippolito
Nami Ito

Heather Langham
Kevin LeBlanc
Kelli LaTorre
Sarah Leavy
Walter Lehneis
Barry Leibowitz
Mitchell Lew
Velma Lewis
Lions Club of Lewisboro
Patrick Locke
Michelle Lowry
Heather & John Magnan
Mamaroneck Avenue School PTA & Families
Alisa Mannis
Melissa Marcogliese
The Marinelli Family
Christos Markakis
Anezia Marques
Stuart Marwell
Tao Marwell
Vicki Marwell
Janice McCarthy
Courtney McGinnis
Christine McKenney
The McPhearson Family
Nicole Mercede
Mary Mora

Heather Langham
Kevin LeBlanc
Kelli LaTorre
Sarah Leavy
Walter Lehneis
Barry Leibowitz
Mitchell Lew
Velma Lewis
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Tao Marwell
Vicki Marwell
Janice McCarthy
Courtney McGinnis
Christine McKenney
The McPhearson Family
Nicole Mercede
Mary Mora

We apologize for any oversight. If you do not see your name please contact Michelle Pleim—Michelle@westchesterlandtrust.org.

YOUR COMMITMENT MEANS THE LAND TO US.

I would like to contribute:

- \$1,000 \$100 Surprise Us!
 \$500 \$50 \$.....
 \$250 30

- My gift is in honor/memory of
- I have enclosed/will send a matching gift form from my employer.
- I have remembered the Westchester Land Trust in my will.
- I would like to make a
 Monthly Quarterly Bi-annual pledge of
- I wish my gift to remain anonymous.

Name

Address

City State Zip

Phone

Email

Entering my email indicates my consent to receive occasional enews from Westchester Land Trust. We never share this information.

Enclosed is my check payable to Westchester Land Trust.
Please mail to: 403 Harris Road, Bedford Hills, NY 10507

For other ways to give, including by credit card, visit westchesterlandtrust.org
WLT is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. Your contribution is tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR OUR UPCOMING EVENTS!

CONSERVATION IN AN ERA OF PARTISANSHIP

A Conversation on Conservation with Secretary Hillary Rodham Clinton and the Honorable George Pataki
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 13TH AT 6:30 PM

CARAMOOR CENTER FOR MUSIC AND THE ARTS

There will be a limited number of tickets available for this event. To buy tickets and to find out additional information, please visit www.westchesterlandtrust.org or contact Michelle Pleim at 914.234.6992 ext. 22 or michelle@westchesterlandtrust.org

SUNSET YOGA with Roseanne Carlo Stone of Gypsy Tribe Westchester

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 14 | TIME: 6:30 – 8:00PM | SUGAR HILL FARM

HUDSON RIVER VALLEY RAMBLE

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 30TH | 10AM - NOON
WESTCHESTER WILDERNESS WALK/ZOFNASS FAMILY PRESERVE, POUND RIDGE

FLORISTIC CHANGES IN THE NORTHEAST:

What Really Matters Lecture by Robert Naczi of NYBG
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 4TH | 6:30 – 8:30PM
HILLTOP HANOVER FARM, YORKTOWN HEIGHTS

CONSERVATION HAPPY HOUR

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 18TH | 6PM | FONTINA RESTAURANT IN ARMONK

HEROES OF HORTICULTURE: Americans Who Transformed the Landscape

Lecture by Barbara Paul Robinson
Thursday, October 25th | 7 – 9PM
Auditorium, Westchester Community College, Valhalla

AUTUMN STORY WALK FOR CHILDREN WITH LEWISBORO LIBRARY

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 27TH | 11AM - NOON
PINE CROFT MEADOW PRESERVE, WACCABUC
HALLOWEEN COSTUMES ARE ENCOURAGED!

SEEING IN THE DARK: Nighttime Nature Photography with Photographer Justin Goodhart

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 15TH (RAIN DATE IS NOVEMBER 16TH) | 6-8PM
FREDERICK P. ROSE PRESERVE AND ROCK SHELTER PRESERVE, LEWISBORO

DAY AFTER THANKSGIVING HIKE! EAT TURKEY? TIME TO HIKE TURKEY!

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 23RD | 10AM - NOON
TURKEY MOUNTAIN TRAILHEAD, YORKTOWN

SUGAR HILL FARM VOLUNTEER SESSIONS

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25 AND OCTOBER 9 | 10AM – 2PM | SUGAR HILL FARM

BIONUTRIENT FOOD ASSOCIATION MEETINGS

OCTOBER 16, NOVEMBER 14 AND DECEMBER 13 | 5:30 – 7:30 PM
SUGAR HILL FARM

For more info, visit westchesterlandtrust.org/calendar/ or contact Betty Sue at 914.234.6992 ext. 21 or bettsue@westchesterlandtrust.org.



BIRCH HILL: 273 ACRE CONSERVATION EASEMENT

What do you get when you combine a landowner's passion for their land with a feeling of responsibility to future generations? You get an amazing partnership with people who have a deep desire to protect our vanishing open spaces forever. These were the common themes underlying two spectacular properties that WLT was privileged to preserve this summer.



DOMINICAN SISTERS OF HOPE: 34 ACRE CONSERVATION EASEMENT

The Dominican Sisters have committed their lives to community organizing, social work, education, environmental advocacy, and retreat ministry. Because of you, their land, which brings hope and inspiration to so many, will be protected forever. *Image provided by Dominican Sisters of Hope*

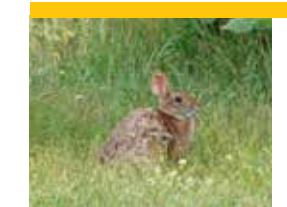
A Tale of Two Easements

It was a blistering hot day in July of 2015, when Benny Caiola first welcomed us to his land in Patterson. As we rounded the last sharp corner of his driveway, we caught our first glimpse of Benny – sitting in a rocker on his front porch with a wide smile and an enthusiastic wave. Benny had our afternoon tour planned. The first stop was his kitchen for a few ice-cold glasses of water. We spent the rest of the afternoon outside under the hazy, hot sun. With Benny as our guide we crisscrossed the trails he had designed and still maintains. His love of the land radiated with each new detail he showed us about the property. Benny zipped us up to a high scenic overlook to point out a large shrubby area where he'd been working with the State to manage habitat for threatened New England cottontail rabbits. Next, we came to a clearing in his woods that allowed us to see into the adjacent State preserve known as Cranberry Mountain. Soon after, we found ourselves beneath a canopy of towering oaks, maples, hickory, and beech trees as Benny rattled off the wildlife he commonly sees – red fox, coyote, bobcat, and black bear – to name a few. Delighted with what we experienced in just a few short hours, we thanked him for giving us such a thorough and beautifully narrated tour. Benny, we thought as we pulled away, is our favorite type of landowner – one who truly LOVES their land.

That first outing led to many conversations and several more visits. We learned that Benny had acquired the 300-acre property – known as Birch Hill - a few years earlier to escape the stresses of daily life, and to practice sustainable forestry and habitat

management. And for WLT, Benny's land is a high priority for protection because it is nestled in an ecologically valuable 2,000-acre conservation corridor.

As a landowner of a property he knew was environmentally significant, Benny saw an opportunity to learn, engender a stewardship ethic in his children, and give back to future generations by protecting critical natural resources. But the prospect of placing a permanent conservation easement on the property was initially daunting. The property is very large, and Benny's management goals were varied and complex, including working forestland and the New England cottontail habitat restoration program. Would Benny still be able to manage the land in this way? Could he be assured that future landowners would respect the land the same way he does, without being too rigid? It was a delicate balance, but after months of dedication and teamwork, we were all thrilled to consummate a 273-acre easement in June that will ensure Benny's long-term goals for his land will be honored for generations to come.



Parts of Birch Hill are actively managed for New England cottontail habitat. The New England cottontail has been threatened by an 85% habitat loss over the past century, and today remains in only five small areas in New England and eastern New York.

A bit farther south in the Village of Ossining, a 61-acre property known as the Mariandale Center has served for generations as guardian of a remarkable stretch of the Hudson River, and home to a retreat center and the congregational offices of the Dominican Sisters of Hope.

The Sisters had first reached out to us not long after the 2012 completion of another WLT conservation easement that preserved the nearby Maryknoll Sisters' campus. Our first visit will forever be etched in our minds. Imagine walking through sunlit meadow grass waving in synchrony with the breeze...then a short walk to enjoy the sounds of a spirited brook tumbling through a rocky ravine...and finally emerging from the trees to find yourself perched on an overlook with the Hudson River sparkling like a million diamonds before you.

The serenity and spirituality of this place was matched only by the reverence with which the Sisters spoke about preserving it. Each time we visited, we came away inspired by their selflessness. After all, the Sisters planned to donate the development rights to priceless Hudson River real estate. It quickly became clear to us that the Sisters' decision was framed in the context of their mission in service to the community, and in fact, the planet. But it was clear too that the decision-making process would be difficult because the Sisters were also pursuing a major modernization and redevelopment of the built areas of the campus. Would this be possible, they wondered, with a

34-acre conservation easement in place? If they didn't pursue the easement now, would they lose the momentum of several years of hard work? We guided them through many iterations of the project before settling on one that protected the greatest amount of sensitive land, while still leaving enough flexibility to accomplish the congregation's holistic goals for the property.

This summer, the Sisters finalized the conservation easement to WLT that permanently preserves the undeveloped 34 acres of the campus and safeguards significant ecological resources, including the Hudson River itself. Together with the neighboring 30-acre Crawbuckie Nature Preserve owned by the Village of Ossining, nearly 1 mile of uninterrupted Hudson River shoreline now is protected in perpetuity. We feel blessed to have played a part in preserving this land's legacy of tranquility and reflection for generations to come.

WHAT ABOUT YOUR LAND?
Just like Aldo Leopold's "Land Ethic", at the core of both Benny Caiola's and the Dominican Sisters of Hope's decision to conserve their land is the belief that we must care about all people, the natural world and strive to deepen the relationship between the two. Together, we can create a land ethic that can inspire and empower future leaders for generations to come.

Contact John Baker at John@westchesterlandtrust.org to learn more about how YOU can protect your land forever and strengthen the future of local land conservation.



Westchester Land Trust
403 Harris Road
Bedford Hills, New York 10507



914.234.6992
westchesterlandtrust.org



The first 30 years have been great, and now we want to give you a glimpse of **what's coming** around the bend. Among the many projects we have teed up, we are working to protect **300 more acres** at Cranberry Mountain in Patterson, **working farms** from 10 to 200 acres, **33 acres** adjacent to Leon Levy Preserve in Lewisboro, a **salt marsh** ecosystem on Long Island Sound in Mamaroneck, extensive **forestland** at the gateway to the Hudson Highlands in Cortlandt, and **green spaces** in our largest cities.

Thank you for supporting the critical work of conservation. Imagine what we can achieve together for our local region in **the next 30 years!**

