



WESTCHESTER LAND TRUST

Protecting Westchester's lands and communities...

WE'VE MOVED

Our new address is:

403 Harris Road

Bedford Hills NY

10507

We hope you'll

come visit!

Doing More for Westchester, and Doing it Better

Universities do it. Museums do it. Hospitals do it. And now land trusts do it – submit to a rigorous evaluation by a group of peers and experts, leading to

accreditation.

In September, Westchester Land Trust became one of the first land trusts in the United States to be accredited by the independent Land Trust Accreditation Commission.

Accreditation reassures our supporters that we are meeting the highest standards of performance and procedures - in other words, not only are we protecting important lands, we're doing it the right way and for the long term.

The land preservation professionals on the Accreditation Commission scrutinized our files, our records, our standards and our policies, and gave us their seal of approval: we follow sound practices in all facets of our operation.

Combine this with the fact that *Contribute* magazine has named us the top environmental and parks non-profit in the metropolitan New York area, and you can be confident, especially in difficult economic times, that when you donate to Westchester Land Trust, you are donating to an organization that is results-oriented, mission-driven and careful with its finances.

We're pushing our mission this fall by organizing a major conference designed, in part, to encourage more land preservation in central and southern Westchester. Those areas are a major focus of our Four Corners Initiative.

The conference is called "Protecting the Four Corners of Westchester: New Opportunities in Land Preservation," and will



Eight of our preserves have trails and are open to the public.

be held Friday, November 14, at the Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture in Pocantico Hills. There's more information on the back page and on our website (Westchesterlandtrust.org).

While we try to protect more land, we're also trying to get more people out onto land that's open to the public (most of our conservation easements do not provide public access, but we have eight preserves with trails that do).

Our staff and volunteers have been working on a Questing program that we're about to start at our Frederick P. Rose Preserve, in Waccabuc. You can read about it on page 4. ▲

"New Opportunities in Land Preservation" Conference - Nov. 14th. See page 8.

Photo, top, by William Kuebler



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Let's Focus on What Truly Matters



Land is part of our basic infrastructure. It feeds us, keeps our drinking water pure, and cleanses the air. It provides beauty and a respite from the workaday world.

There is of course no shortage of worries now about the economy. But it would be a mistake to let difficult economic times lead us to ignore our basic infrastructure.

Westchester Land Trust's plan during volatile times is to continue to consider the preservation of environmentally important lands to be part of the fabric of our community.

We are fortunate to be living in a place where these qualities remain intact. Indeed, it is one of the things that holds us together in Westchester County, along with good health care, responsive government, good schools, and a vibrant cultural life.

Westchester Land Trust is working on preservation projects in Bedford, North Salem, Pound Ridge, and Mamaroneck that could easily lead to 500 more acres protected by the end of the year, which would put us well above 6,000 acres in total land protected.

In addition to our record and our two decades of protecting land, we can offer our supporters a couple more reasons to have confidence in us.

Contribute magazine has named us the top environmental and parks non-profit in the metropolitan New York area.

And we were among the first 39 land trusts nationwide (out of almost 1,700) to be accredited by the independent Land Trust Accreditation Commission.

We are secure in the knowledge that our mission remains an important one. Our supporters can be confident that we're carrying out that mission in the most ethical, cost-effective and professional manner possible.

In the meantime, it's a beautiful autumn in a beautiful part of the world – get out on the trails and enjoy it.

Tom Andersen

Acting Executive Director

Westchester Land Trust



**Accredited by the
Land Trust Accreditation Commission**

WLT Earns Accreditation

Commission Affirms We Follow Sound Land Preservation Practices

We are extremely proud to announce that Westchester Land Trust is one of only 39 land trusts nationwide to be accredited by the independent Land Trust Accreditation Commission. There are almost 1,700 land trusts in the nation, so this accreditation puts us in a very exclusive group of highly effective land preservation organizations across the country.

For us it's great news and we want to share it because it means you can be even more confident we are meeting the highest standards of performance and procedures – in other words, not only are we protecting important lands, we're doing it the right way and for the long term.

The accreditation process was arduous, but we pursued it because we thought it important to demonstrate our commitment to permanent land protection. We've preserved 5,700 acres and our goal is to reach 10,000 by 2012. If we want you and other Westchester residents to continue to work with us on land protection projects, and to support us financially, we need to show you we're serious about employing the best practices and methods.

And that's what the accreditation means. The land preservation professionals on the Accreditation Commission scrutinized our files, our records, our standards and our policies, and gave us their seal of approval: we follow sound practices in all facets of our operation.

Five WLT staff members traveled to the national Land Trust Alliance conference in Pittsburgh in September to receive our accreditation award at a ceremony in front of



Westchester Land Trust's Damon Oscarson, Bobbe Stultz, Tom Andersen, Eileen Hochberg and Keeva Young-Wright participated in a ceremony at a recent conference in Pittsburgh at which it was announced that WLT was among the first accredited land trusts in the country.



Land Preservation Director Susan Carpenter and Land Steward Bill Kuebler review a preservation project.



1,100 people from land trusts around the country. It made us proud to be there. Our commitment – to the land trust community and to you, our supporters – is that we'll continue to work hard and work right to protect more land in Westchester County. ▲

What does accreditation mean to you?

Accreditation provides assurance to the public that Westchester Land Trust:

- is protecting environmentally important lands
- is well-established to protect those lands for the long term
- is operating ethically
- is operating legally
- is protecting land in a technically sound manner

New Projects

Questing for Remnants of a Bygone Farm at the Rose Preserve

Our land is your land, and we want you to get out onto it. In fact, we'd be happier if more people visited our preserves than already do.

To help, we're improving our preserve entrances with kiosks and better signs, and sending our preserve steward, Bill Kuebler, out onto the trails more often, to keep them clear and passable.

But we also want to give our outdoor-loving supporters something more, and so we've developed a Quest for the Frederick P. Rose Preserve in Lewisboro.

Questing is a sort of combination treasure hunt-education game that lets you learn about the natural and human history of a community or place while wandering about the countryside.

We've chosen a tract of land that used to be a farm and is now a nature preserve – the 110-acre Frederick P. Rose Preserve, on Route 121 in Lewisboro.

Anybody can play. At the preserve, you can pick up a guide to the Quest (you can also find one at Westchesterlandtrust.org). It will lead you to 15 places worth knowing about – old farm roads and foundations, stone walls, fences, the remains of a chestnut tree killed by the blight.

At each stop there will be a box with a letter of the alphabet. Jot the letter down on your guide.

Here, for example, is the description of one of the stops on the Quest:



Land Steward Bill Kuebler prepares the Quest at the Rose Preserve.

“Look on the left for the tree that has a VERY large base and three smaller shoots (called “leaders”) growing out of it. This is evidence of logging. When the tree is cut down and the base remains, the tree sprouts two or three new shoots. The base of this tree is probably 200 years old and was here when the land was a farm.

“When you find this tree, write down the letter you see there in the box below corresponding to #11.”

When you complete the Quest, the letters will spell a sentence that sums up all the information from each stop.

The whole thing shouldn't take more than an hour. It's purpose is to get you to look at elements of the landscape that you might otherwise overlook, and to see how they cohere to tell a story, in this case about the history of the land.

Questing is big in Vermont, New

Hampshire and Massachusetts, and grew out of a 150-year-old tradition in England called “letterboxing.”

A group in New England developed a model template for this program in the mid-1990's in an effort to foster a sense of place, strengthen relationships between schools and the natural/cultural heritage of their communities and to build bridges across generations and between newcomers and old timers.

We developed the Rose Preserve Quest in partnership with the Lewisboro Land Trust (Westchester Land Trust's local chapter) and with Beth Herr, the conservation program administrator for the Westchester County Department of Parks, Recreation and Conservation.

Our plan is to prepare different Quests for some of the seven other preserves we own that are open to the public. ▲

New Preserves

Our 8th Public Preserve is Ready for Hikers

It had been a long time since Eugene and Josephine Danner had visited the land they owned on the border of Yorktown and Putnam Valley.

They bought it 44 years ago, intending to perhaps build a second home there for their family. But as the years moved on and their children became adults, visits to the 28 acres became less and less frequent.

And so late last year the Danners decided to donate the property to Westchester Land Trust.

In May they joined us there for an informal ceremony marking the official opening of the Danner Family Preserve. Everyone, of course, wanted to know why the Danners made the donation. Eugene Danner's answer was simple.

"It gives me pleasure to have this land be a nature preserve," he said. The Danner Family Preserve is the eighth Westchester Land Trust preserve to be opened to the public and it came at a perfect time.

One of our goals is to increase the number of visitors to our preserves, because it makes our land protection work more tangible and because, like Eugene Danner, it's our pleasure to allow hikers, horseback riders, birders



and others to enjoy our preserves.

And another goal is to continue to expand the geographic reach of our preservation work. Westchester Land Trust has protected 5,700 acres in 25 communities, and we're gearing up to work in even more places.

Leaders of the Yorktown Land Trust and Putnam County Land Trust joined us at the Danner preserve opening. The preserve spans the border of Yorktown and Putnam Valley, and both land trusts hold conservation easements on the part of the land in their county.

Yorktown Councilman Nicholas Bianco and Putnam Valley Councilwoman Wendy Wechsel joined us as well.

The morning weather was change-

Eight of the 28 properties that Westchester Land Trust owns have trails and are open to the public. For more information, including directions and trail maps, click on the Visit a Preserve link on our homepage, Westchesterlandtrust.org.

The eight preserves with trails are:

- Westchester Wilderness Walk – 150 acres, Pound Ridge
- Pine Croft Meadow – 9 acres, Waccabuc
- Tom Burke Preserve – 7.5 acres, Bedford Hills
- Danner Family Preserve – 28 acres, Yorktown
- Frederick P. Rose Preserve – 105 acres, Cross River
- Guard Hill Preserve – 62 acres, Bedford
- Hunter Brook Preserve – 45 acres, Yorktown
- Old Church Lane Preserve – 31 acres, South Salem/Vista

Josephine Danner (white jacket) and Eugene Danner (behind her) joined us for the opening of our new preserve.

warm sunshine the next. The group strolled along the wide trails, under flowering dogwood, while common yellowthroats and cardinals sang.

More than half the preserve consists of old field habitat, thick with grey dogwood other successional shrubs. The remainder is forest that covers a ridge with a view to the south.

The Danner preserve is probably the only one of the 27 properties Westchester Land Trust owns that contains no wetlands. Because of that, and because it also has few steep slopes, the potential for development was high.

For more information, including directions and a map, visit Westchesterlandtrust.org and click on the Visit a Preserve link in the left hand column. ▲

Gala Celebration

More than 400 people crowded under the tents on the lawn at Whelpley Farm in Bedford Hills in June for our 2008 gala.

Susan Henry, a charter member of



Susan Henry, the honoree at our annual gala, with her husband, Jim, and son, Stephen.

Westchester Land Trust's Board of Directors, received our annual Preservation ANGEL award for her lifelong dedication to land protection.

The event raised \$500,000 to support land preservation in Westchester County. ▲



Give at the Office

Westchester Land Trust is a member of Earth Share, a nationwide federation of the country's most respected environmental and conservation charities. To find out more about how you and your workplace can support us through an Earth Share charitable giving campaign, please call WLT's Development Director, Keeva Young-Wright at 914 241 6346 x28. You can also visit Earth Share's web site at: www.earthshare.org.

There's No Place Like Home

The staff of Westchester Land Trust moved into its fantastic new headquarters on Harris Road in Bedford Hills in early September, leaving behind our home of four years in the Bedford Hills hamlet (which we moved into after more years than anyone can remember on Main Street, Bedford Hills).

Called Sugar Hill Farm, the new office at 403 Harris Road gives us ample space to work more efficiently.

How badly did we need more space? In our four years at 11 Babbitt Road, the staff grew from 6 to 12, and during the last 18 months there two staff members were working in the conference room. They more than anyone are thrilled with the new digs.

We acquired Sugar Hill Farm thanks to the generosity of Mark and Lisa Schwartz and Frank and Carol Nickell, who bought the property in 2006 with the intention of donating it to us.

Originally 21 acres, they gave us four acres and the 6,000-square-foot-house, and subdivided off roughly equal parcels for themselves, with a promise to protect the land by donating conservation easements to us.

It's a great place to work. We invite you to stop by for a look around. ▲



For Westchester Land Trust's Events & Updates, please go to our website: www.westchesterlandtrust.org

Ramble

Jessica Zofnass, right, tells hikers about Westchester Wilderness Walk, in Pound Ridge, at the annual Hudson Valley Ramble on September 21. Dozens of hikers visited the 150-acre preserve that day as part of two entire weekends of hikes throughout the region.





Leon Levy Walk & Lecture Planned

Westchester Land Trust is planning a special weekend of outdoor fun and intellectual stimulation during the winter doldrums to honor the primary benefactor of the Leon Levy Preserve in Lewisboro.

On the weekend of February 28 and March 1, we will be holding the first annual Leon Levy Winter Walk and Symposium.

The walk will serve as a way to remember the late Mr. Levy and is intended to recall the winter walks held on the property to rally public support for preservation before it was purchased.

Photo Show Opening November 7th

Join us at Westchester Land Trust's seventh annual photo show, featuring the best work of dozens of photographers from around the county.

Although we've usually held the show in January or February, this year it will run from November 7 through 13, noon til 4, at the Bedford Historical Hall, in Bedford Village.

An opening reception is scheduled for Friday, Nov. 7, from 6 to 8 p.m. The whole thing is free and the public is welcome.

This year's theme is Rhythms of Nature. Photographer Christian Harder, a Waccabuc resident who took the photos for our 2006 annual report, will serve as judge and will award a best in show. Jurors are Gina Federico of Pound Ridge, Alex Felsenstein of Goldens Bridge, and Ron Mineo of Katonah.

All of the photos on exhibit will be available for sale, with proceeds to benefit Westchester Land Trust's preservation work.



Event co-chair Evelyn Tapani-Rosenthal helps catalog entries.

The Bedford Historical Society is a co-sponsor of the show. The exhibition's co-chairs are Bobbe Stultz, the Land Trust's director of art and special events and Evelyn Tapani-Rosenthal, of Katonah. ▲

**Go
Green.
Give
Online!**

Save some time, and help us save time and money, while reducing our carbon footprint by making your gifts to WLT online. It's quick, it's easy and it's secure! Make your gift today at:

www.westchesterlandtrust.org/donate

New Opportunities in Land Preservation

Commissioner Carol Ash of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation will be the lead speaker at Westchester Land Trust's open space preservation conference in November.

The conference is intended to help communities in southern and central Westchester increase the amount of environmentally important lands they protect while also helping north county communities continue their successes.

Called "Preserving the Four Corners of Westchester: New Opportunities in Land Protection," the conference will be held on Friday, November 14, from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., at the Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture in Pocantico Hills.

It is sponsored by the Westchester Community Foundation. The cost is \$50 per person, and you can register at our website: Westchesterlandtrust.org/conference.

Ms. Ash, who is also the former executive director of the Palisades Interstate Parks Commission, will discuss New York State's plans and priorities for land preservation.

ShaKing Alston, vice president of the Brooklyn-Queens Land Trust, and former executive director of the New York City Environmental Justice Alliance, will discuss creating parks in urban areas.

The remainder of the program includes discussions of how communities can work to make sure their remaining large parcels are protected; how to identify and protect small parcels that might

seem insignificant but which are crucial to community character and preservation; how planning boards can be a significant creator of protected land; and how individual landowners can play an important role in private land protection.



Our open space conference will run from 9 am to 3:30 pm at the Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture in Pocantico Hills.

Participants include Willie Janeway, regional director of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation; Westchester County Planning Commissioner Jerry Mulligan; Caroline Niemczyk, vice chair of the Open Space Institute; New Rochelle Mayor Noam Bramson; Cortlandt Town Supervisor Linda Puglisi; Rye Mayor Steve Otis; New Rochelle community advocate Michael Yellin; Cortlandt Planning Board member Susan Todd; Mark Eickelbeck, executive vice president of AVR Developers; and the staff of Westchester Land Trust. ▲

**To register for the conference, go to
Westchesterlandtrust.org/conference
The \$50 fee includes lunch**



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BEDFORD HILLS NY 10507



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