



WESTCHESTER LAND TRUST

Protecting Westchester's lands and communities...

Meet
Our New
Executive
Director

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Preserves, Trails & Farms Connect People to the Land

Connecting people with the land: You'll find that phrase on

our website and you'll find that it is the goal behind almost everything we do.

We're always looking to help create new parks and preserves, to create new hiking trails, and to help protect more of the farmland that provides good, local food.

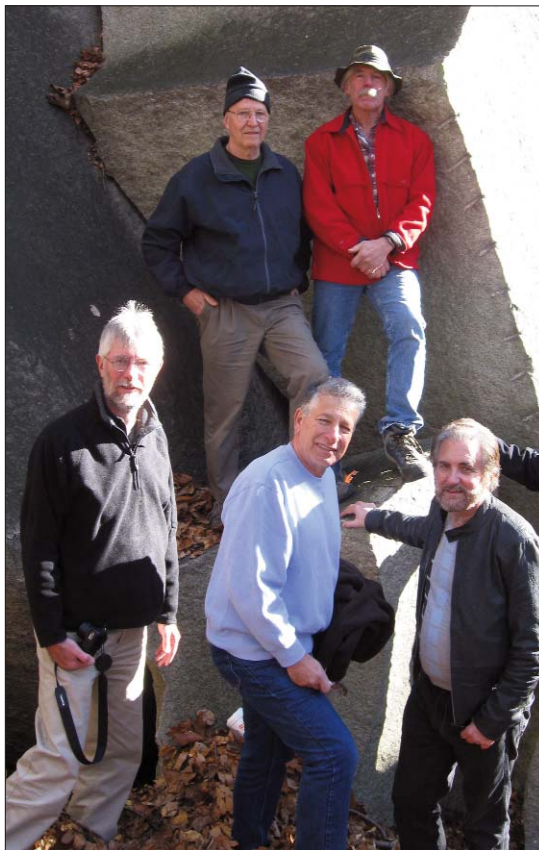
In recent months, Westchester Land Trust helped the Town of Yorktown complete the purchase of the 200-acre Granite Knolls property, which has its own trail system as well as links to a regional system.

We created a new mile-long loop trail at the Eastwoods Preserve, in Pound Ridge, and improved an outdoor classroom-nature trail at Wampus Elementary School in Armonk. We continued to match farmers who need land with landowners willing to open up their land to farmers.

And we arranged for 30 chefs to visit 10 local farms, to help more local food find its way onto more local tables.

The farm program is new and its potential is great, but creating public preserves and trails has been in our repertoire for years. We own nine preserves with trails and have helped 10 communities buy and protect 17 preserves now open to the public.

Yorktown bought Granite Knolls for \$2.7 million, using funds



Key players in the Yorktown acquisition from Westchester Land Trust, Yorktown Land Trust and the Town of Yorktown visited the old quarry site in early November.

approved by voters in two open space ballot propositions. Westchester Land Trust negotiated the purchase price (\$500,000 under appraised value) and helped rally public support for the acquisition.

It straddles Stoney Street in the northern part of the town and is the site of the old Mohegan Granite Quarry, dating back to the 1830s (one rock on the property was reputed to be the largest boulder in New York).

Its trails – which are expected to

be formally opened in 2011 – link to Sylvan Glen Park Preserve, the Yorktown/Taconic Trailway, and the Taconic Woods/Woodlands. There's even room on the property for much-needed athletic fields.

We think it will be a great place to connect people to the land. ▲

**SAVE THE DATE:
Feb. 5th
Opening of
PHOTO SHOW
page 8**

Photo, top, by William Kuebler; center by Jane Daniels



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Help Us Meet the Challenge of Saving Land



Fall has been marked by spectacular foliage and daily reminders of the beauty of Westchester County’s special topography, natural resources, and strategic location.

For me, it has been almost two months in the job of executive director working with a staff of professionals who are passionate about what they do. I have had days spent meeting supportive Board members who give of their time and financial resources, political leaders who are balancing complex priorities and choices, and residents who lead civic groups and care deeply about open space and their communities.

From all that I’ve heard and seen, it is clear to me that WLT is supported by a community, a staff, a board who care deeply about the preservation of open space and what that means for the future of our region. And, together we have work to do.

These challenging economic times call for creative solutions and combining resources with like-minded organizations to achieve our goals of saving open space. New ideas and approaches are often just different ways of looking at the same thing.

WLT has a reputation of working with other land use organizations. We intend to do even more with local groups, using our professional staff to hold seminars and train others to look for opportunities to create conservation easements and encourage municipalities to use their open space funding to purchase key parcels. Open space is a resource that can’t be replaced.

We have joined the Bedford 2020 Climate Control Action initiative on the Land and Water Use Task Force and the Food and Agriculture Task Force. We have met with the county executive and county Planning Department to offer our help when municipal funding is not available and form strategic partnerships and to be working in all parts of the county.

We are working to create training and informational materials for easement holders as a second generation becomes part of the legacy for preservation of open space. And we continue to look for new initiatives to connect people to their most important resource – land and open space.

In two months of watching the fall season unfold, walking through preserves as the ground prepares for winter, I have heard a call to action. There is work to be done; important work for all of us. Join me in the challenge.

~ Candace Schafer



**Accredited by the Independent
Land Trust Accreditation Commission**

Volunteers Improve Preserves In Pound Ridge, Yorktown, Armonk

Westchester Land Trust's Helping Hands corporate volunteer program completed three great projects recently, in Yorktown, Pound Ridge and Armonk – projects that resulted in better nature preserves and made use of dozens of great volunteers.

The program was designed to harness the generosity of local businesses and their employees. Businesses send us a team of workers for a day, and we put them to work building trails and doing other tasks that improve local preserves, both ours and others'.

Swiss Re, based in Armonk, has participated twice. In June, two dozen Swiss Re employees created a new trail at our 15-acre Hemlock Brook Preserve, in Yorktown. In October, a Swiss Re crew did the same thing at the 48-acre Eastwoods Preserve, which we helped the Town of Pound Ridge buy in 2007.

We acquired Hemlock Brook from The Nature Conservancy in 2004 but the preserve was rarely used because it had no trail. Likewise, after we negotiated the deal for the Eastwoods Preserve and contributed \$600,000 to its \$2.9 million price (with the Town of Pound Ridge contributing the rest from its open space fund), few people ever visited it because it had no trail.

On both projects we had help from the Yorktown Land Trust and the Pound Ridge Land Conservancy. We divided the Swiss Re folks into work groups, led by a WLT staffer, armed them with rakes and clippers, and carefully created new hiking trails.

In Armonk, Kerri Kazak of the North Castle Land Trust helped organize 14 employees of the C. W. Brown construction company, who helped improve a nature trail and outdoor classroom at Wampus Elementary School. They also



The Swiss Re and C. W. Brown crews made big improvements at two preserves and a local school.



erected a kiosk and a dozen sign posts for the outdoor classrooms's "storybook trail" and cleared and widened a trail from the middle school to the town park. ▲

For more information on the Helping Hands program, please contact Bobbe Stultz at 914.241.6346 x22 or Bobbe@westchesterlandtrust.org

Brownies in the Woods

We were happy to lead a dozen Brownies from Bedford Troop 2308, and their parents, on a tour of Westchester



Wilderness Walk in Pound Ridge this fall. They received a terrific introduction to this great preserve from David Emerson, our director of stewardship. Thanks for coming out, girls!

Land Preservation

Innovative Solutions Help Local Farms

The paradox of farming in New York is that the industry contributes an enormous amount to the state's economy – \$4.5 billion a year – and yet each year the state loses about 120 farms to development.

Through Westchester Land Trust's Local Land/Local Food Farmers Network, inaugurated in December 2009, we are trying to do our small part by

searching for innovative ways to help keep local farms sustainable and in business.

Knowing that there were farmers who needed land and landowners with room for farmers, we started a program to match farmers with landowners. We've made seven matches so far.

We started monthly Farmers Network



Kitchawan Farm in Yorktown was a participant in our chefs tour.

meetings in the winter, so people could share ideas and advice. Almost 100 people have participated.

We helped organize two events for local chefs to meet local farmers – a “speed-meeting” that brought farmers and chefs together for quick business discussions, and a farm tour that saw 30 chefs

Match Making

Westchester Land Trust helped put farmers on seven local properties:

- I & Me Farm – Mount Kisco & Bedford
- JD Farms/Lou D'Alessandro, Mount Kisco
- Diggers East/Doug Decandia – North Salem & Southeast
- Mobius Fields/Deb Taft – Waccabuc
- Louisa Purcell – Waccabuc

For more information on the Farmers Network, please contact Eileen Hochberg at 914.241.6346 x12 or Eileen@westchesterlandtrust.org

Watershed Land Preserved in Katonah

Thirteen acres of watershed land in Katonah have been preserved forever thanks to a partnership of 29 neighbors, the Town of Bedford, the New York City Department of Environmental Protection, and Westchester Land Trust.

The land, which is on Ridge Road, consists of an intact woodland that is contiguous with DEP land that runs down to the Muscoot Reservoir. The acquisition, which had been in the works since 2007, was completed in June 2010. The land is now owned by the DEP and

will be managed as water supply protection land.

The Town, the DEP and Westchester Land Trust bought the land for \$660,000 from the Estate of Gwynne O'Donnell. The 29 neighbors on Ridge Road, Quicks Lane and elsewhere contributed the \$153,000 that was the Land Trust's share. The Town's share was \$340,000, and the DEP's share was \$167,000 plus closing costs.

The Town's share came from its open space fund, which voters approved 10 years ago. It is the fourth parcel acquired using Town open space money.

visit 10 local farms.

The tour was held on October 18. Chefs visited Kitchawan Farm, Amawalk Farm and Hemlock Hill Farm, in Yorktown; Stuart's Fruit Farm, in Somers; Daisy Hill Farm, I & Me Farm, Amba Farms, and JD Farm, all in Bedford; Snow Hill Farm in North Salem; and Ryder Farm, in Brewster.

The chefs represented more than 20 restaurants and caterers, as well as Northern Westchester Hospital.

They made deals, discussed growing preferences, and got to know each other and the reality of each others' businesses.

We're also continuing to protect farm-



land through conservation easements – two dozen of our 180 easements allow agriculture.

Our Local Land/Local Food Farmers Network provides us with a new framework for protecting land that is both beautiful and valuable, and which provides local residents with local food. ▲



Mimi Edelman's I & Me Farm, as well as Stuart's Farm, were on the tour.

Our Obligation: To Preserve Land Forever

Westchester Land Trust's mission is to work in partnership with private land owners and governments to protect environmentally important lands in perpetuity. We have helped preserve 6,800 acres, more than 2,000 of which are open to the public for hiking and passive recreation.

The main vehicle for protecting land is the conservation easement – a binding agreement made pursuant to New York State law, between a land owner and Westchester Land Trust, in which the land owner agrees to give up its right to develop the land and WLT agrees to ensure that the land remains undeveloped and is used for the purposes specified in the easement.

When the Town of Lewisboro bought the Leon Levy Preserve for \$8.3 million in 2005, it did so with \$5.5 million from Westchester Land Trust. In exchange, WLT received a conservation easement that protects all 370 acres. The easement was approved by the town board and signed by the Town Supervisor in 2005.

The easement provides that the property will be "held in perpetuity in an undeveloped state" and used solely for specified "passive recreational activities" by the public. The easement guarantees the public the right to enter the preserve (all of it, not just selected parts of it). Uses inconsistent with those purposes are prohibited.

Recently, the Town entered into a lease with the Wolf Conservation Center to allow the center to build a fenced-in area for some of its wolves on eight acres of the preserve. This would entail, among other things, constructing fences, grading and excavating land to create a wolf habitat, cutting down trees to make space for the fencing and to prevent falling trees from breaching the



Chairman George Bianco

enclosures, installing bleachers, and excluding the public from the eight acres.

These uses are all expressly prohibited by the terms of the conservation easement.

Westchester Land Trust has commenced a legal action against the town and the Wolf Conservation Center to enforce the easement. Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom, LLP, are acting pro bono as our counsel in this action. We would have preferred to avoid legal action, but because the town insisted on proceeding with the Wolf Center lease, it left us with no choice.

WLT is legally obligated to uphold the conservation easement. Our commitment to doing so is an important reason donors agree to contribute land (or the funds to acquire land) for use by the public.

If we failed to uphold easements, donors would lose confidence in our ability to preserve land, and might refrain from making significant land grants, with the result that many important properties could be lost to the public.

~ George Bianco

Annie Novak to speak in Bronxville

Farmer-activist Annie Novak, founder of Growing Chefs and the Eagle Street Rooftop Farm in Brooklyn, will give our “Food, Land, Sustainability” lecture at



Sarah Lawrence College, Bronxville, on Thursday, January 20, 2011.

A Sarah Lawrence graduate, she founded Growing Chefs in 2005 as a way to connect people to food. Growing Chefs offers educational programming in farming, gardening and cooking with simple recipes using seasonal ingredients.

Eagle Street Rooftop Farm is a 6,000 square foot green roof organic vegetable farm located atop a Brooklyn. Eagle Street supplies a community supported agriculture program, an onsite farm market, and area restaurants.

Last year’s “Food, Land, Sustainability” talk at Sarah Lawrence was given by Josh Viertel, executive director of Slow Food USA.

Annie’s talk will start at 7 p.m. in Sarah Lawrence’s

Heimbold Visual Arts Center. The co-sponsor is Sarah Lawrence College. The talk is free and the public is welcome.

WLT Speaks

Westchester Land Trust staff has been busy speaking to local groups, at conferences, and on panels about various preservation issues:

Executive Director Candace Schafer and Deputy Executive Director Tom Andersen spoke at a public forum on the future of the Ridgeway Country Club, in White Plains.

Tom spoke at the Mount Kisco Rotary and the Learning in Retirement group in New Rochelle, and was a speaker at a roundtable discussion on preserve management at the Land Trust Alliance’s Rally.

Bobbe Stultz, below, WLT’s director of art and events, and Suzanne Mancuso, a special programs associate, led a workshop at the LTA Rally on our Helping Hands corporate volunteer program.

Eileen Hochberg, our director of conservation outreach, spoke on two panels: on conservation opportunities for farmers, at Hilltop Hanover



Farm in Yorktown; and on sustainability, at the Chappaqua Library.

Development Director Keeva Young-Wright spoke about fundraising and the development of non-profit boards, at Pace University. Gaylord Holmes, a land preservation associate, spoke about funding long-term land stewardship at the Hudson Valley–Catskill Land Trust Working Group, in Kingston.

Energy Plus and WLT Team Up

Westchester Land Trust has teamed up with Energy Plus to offer a unique program

that includes cash back benefits, monthly sales tax savings, plus the ability to support 100% generated wind power. When you choose Energy Plus as your electricity supplier, you’ll be reducing the amount of electricity generated from the combustion of fossil fuels.

By selecting Energy Plus, you will be supporting 100 percent pure wind power produced in the United States and completely free of emissions. Westchester Land Trust supporters can earn 2 percent cash back on the supply portion of their annual electricity bill, while another 0.5 percent will be automatically donated to Westchester Land Trust.

In addition, when you sign

Stephen Beckwith and David Grech join WLT’s board of directors

Westchester Land Trust welcomes two new members to its Board of Directors -- Steve Beckwith of Waccabuc and David Grech of Pleasantville.

Steve, top right, has been a WLT supporter for many years. He and his wife, Patricia, are participants in our Farmers Match program, having leased a section of their land to a local farmer.

A graduate of Princeton and of the Harvard Business School, he spent many years at Scudder Stevens & Clark, including tenures as chief operating officer and chief financial officer. Steve is on the board of the Regional Plan Association and serves on the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s major gifts committee.

David Grech is a graduate of Cornell and has law degrees from Georgetown and New York University. He is a principal in the tax services division of Ernst & Young.

David lives in Pleasantville with his wife, Judith Mossa-Grech, and their two children.

As we welcome them to the board we bid a reluctant farewell to two board members, Linda Viertel of Tarrytown and Katherine Carsky of Bronxville. Both served on our board with distinction and we send them our gratitude.



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Proud to be a corporate sponsor of WLT



A Big Favor

Many thanks to the generous folks at FaVoRs (Family Volunteer and Recreation



Sundays), who donated 350 bulbs and a truckload of compost for the grounds of our Sugar Hill Farm offices, in Bedford Hills. The FaVoRs folks worked with our director of stewardship, David Emerson, to get the bulbs planted in early November.

The once bare shelves in the library at Sugar Hill Farm are gradually filling with donated books.

Got Books?

WLT stewardship director David Emerson has con-

tributed a collection of 130 titles on a variety of natural history and land conservation topics: "The books are actually more accessible to me and others here at work than they were packed in boxes in my basement."

These books join others on the shelves donated by other staff and members of the Board. But there's room for more. We invite you to bring in surplus books you may have on natural history, local geography, resource management, and any other topic that falls within the mission and areas of interest to WLT.

Have a book on Long Island Sound? We'll take it. The writings of Washington Irving, Henry David Thoreau, or Walt Whitman? We'll take them. Identifying snakes? We'll take it. Just send an email to david@westchesterlandtrust.org if you have any books you'd like to donate. ▲



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 x18. You can also visit Earth Share's web site at: www.earthshare.org.



go to: www.westchesterlandtrust.org/give

Or clip this form and send to Westchester Land Trust, 403 Harris Road, Bedford Hills NY 10507.

I want to make a tax-deductible donation to Westchester Land Trust:

\$2,500 \$1,000 \$500 \$250 \$100 \$50 or \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

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WESTCHESTER LAND TRUST
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www.westchesterlandtrust.org



This newsletter is printed on
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*Urban Farmer Annie Novak speaks on
Food, Land, Sustainability*

January 20, 2011

at Sarah Lawrence College, Bronxville

SEE PAGE 7 OR EMAIL TOM@WESTCHESTERLANDTRUST.ORG FOR MORE INFORMATION



*Westchester Land Trust is proud to present our
10th Annual Photo Show*

“Heaven on Earth”

~ A celebration of Westchester’s wonderful places

“HEAVEN ON EARTH” ~ WLT’S TENTH ANNUAL PHOTO SHOW ~ FEB. 5 - 13

February 5 - 13 at Arts Westchester Gallery, White Plains

Accepting entries until December 23rd.

For more information, please contact Bobbe Stultz

at bobbe@westchesterlandtrust.org or

914.241.6346 x22

