

# Greenings

Celebrating Conservation & People



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# Making Connections

## Regional partnership conserves critical lands

Sometimes it's just hard to fathom. With all the land around us, here in the Tug Hill and the Adirondacks, how is it that wildlife—like moose, bear, and other large mammals—could find themselves without the habitat they need?

It's true, there's a lot of land in our region but the challenge is there are great swaths that are unprotected running a risk of fragmentation from haphazard development, expanding road networks, and stressors caused by climate change resulting in a loss of critical habitat. Large mammals like moose, black bear and Canada lynx need large blocks of forest, together with forested corridors connecting these blocks, to move in search of suitable habitat to sustain them and their young into the future.

Maintaining these connections between large forested areas, like Tug Hill and the Adirondacks, is critical for many wildlife species that require large areas for survival.

To address this, while there is still time and before the animals become too stressed, a partnership called Staying

Connected, between local towns, conservation organizations, and state agencies has been working together to identify areas of the Black River Valley that seem optimum for wildlife movement between the two regions. Over the past several years, current knowledge of wildlife needs, computer modeling and on-the-ground data have been



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used to identify areas of special interest regarding wildlife movement.

Two priority areas have been identified through the work so far, one of which is the mostly forest and farm area in Northern Oneida County. Working with willing landowners, on a voluntary basis, you are helping us, as the local land trust, inform them of actions they can take to make their land more wildlife friendly and in some cases permanently protect these important lands before they are lost.

Thanks to your support, a number of families have protected their land while continuing to own it. They are helping ensure that there will be land and waterways available for large mammals, like the moose, to migrate. It's a strategic and proactive way to maintain and improve the landscape for wildlife before it's too late.

**Staying Connected THTLT Partners** Adirondack Chapter of the Wildlife Conservation Society, Adirondack Nature Conservancy/Adirondack Land Trust, NYS Department of Transportation, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, NYS Tug Hill Commission.



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## Providing more than hope

It's been a long time since John and Lorraine Bell have walked the back fields. Now in their 70's, they need to focus on their health, and running back and forth to the doctors, yet the farm is something that continues to give them joy and hope.

Located in St. Lawrence and Jefferson Counties, the farm has been part of their family and the community for three generations. Over the years John and Lorraine have shared their passion for farming with others by having 4H groups visit the farm and showing their cattle at the county fair. Their daughter Melody grew up on the farm, milking cows and haying the fields.

But even while she loved the farm, its future was uncertain. Now thanks to a partnership between the Army and the Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust, through a program called the Army Compatible Use Buffer program, the Bell's are going to conserve their land and transfer it to Melody and her son, Cody. The program pays farmers and landowners, like the Bells, to retire



their non-farm development rights. Funding also comes from the New York State Environmental Protection Fund.

It's a great solution for the Bells who wanted a way to pay for their health care costs as well as transfer the land to the next generation. They wanted to own the farm, and this makes it more affordable for Melody and Cody to purchase the land. And the Army doesn't have to worry about future development sprawling over the 345 acres of woodlands and fields, interrupting training happening on Ft. Drum.

Like other farms conserved with the land trust, farm families continue to own the land and can sell, lease or transfer the land as they wish. The land remains on the tax rolls and the conservation agreement remains in place, therefore providing a conservation legacy for the family.

"For our family, this made a whole lot of sense," reflected Melody, continuing "it gives my parents peace of mind and allows our family to continue our commitment to farming, into the future."

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# A Spoonful of Conservation

## Spoon Dairy helps out a local river

It's a little known gem of a river in northern New York, and those crystal clear waters in the spring are great for kayaking and canoeing. But what you might not know is that the Little River is getting another shot in the arm through the protection of a beautiful family dairy farm, way up in the headwaters of the river, in Amboy, Oswego County.

Rob Spoon and Alix Krueger have spent years working hard to improve the land on their farm, from planting cover crops to improving barnyard facilities to help ensure that the water run-off into the headwaters of Little River is as clean as possible.

Rob is the third generation of Spoon's to farm the property. Over the years he has enjoyed

sponsoring neighborhood children in 4H programs and lending cows to show at the fair. Rob and Alix have a strong appreciation of the value of getting children, no matter what age, excited about farming. The land has given so much to them and they want to give back.

"Rob's family has been here a long time, three generations actually, and we wanted to make sure that this farm no matter what happened to us,

remained the beautiful place it is today. A place where kids can visit, even when there aren't other farms left."

In addition to rolling fields, which glisten in the late afternoon sun with the golden glow of corn fields, the 450 acre farm is home to highly productive and healthy wetlands, providing important habitat for both migratory birds and year-round animals such as red fox and grouse.





Integrating the conservation of wildlife habitat, farmland and water conservation as part of maintaining the water quality of the Little River, is something that has been on Alix's and Rob's mind. To help with that they've been working with the County Soil and Water Conservation District to improve the design of their barnyard to manage manure and reduce run-off.

Conserving the farm and its woodlands and wetlands was another important part of protecting the headwaters of the Little River. "We had no idea, 20 years ago, that the wetlands on this farm would be as important as the farm itself" reflected Rob. "We just feel blessed that this farm, as well as the wetlands, will be protected forever."



Photographs courtesy of Alix Krueger.

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### Is conservation right for you?

Would you like to protect your land? Do you know someone who might be interested in protecting their farm, woodlands or wetlands? People protect their land for a variety of reasons. Many times it's a way to ensure that their love of the land will remain intact after they leave. For others, it's a way to honor their parents and grandparents. Sometimes it helps with estate planning or financial management plans.

If you would like to explore whether a conservation easement is right for you and your family feel free to give Dick Johnston a call at 315-779-8240. All conversations are confidential to provide your family the privacy it needs to make a decision that is right for you.



# You're shaping the future

With more kids than ever spending time behind computer screens and electronic devices, conservation faces an uphill battle. Research, like that from Cornell University, tells us that the majority of people who have a love for the out-of-doors, and a strong conservation ethic, developed it when they were young.

For many, it involved regular, fun, experiences on a farm, or in nature. Richard Louv, author of *Last Child in the Woods*, documented that for others it was under the guidance of a mentoring adult, often not a parent, who opened up a child's imagination and built fond and cherished memories of doing something outside.

Rural kids. Suburban kids. Urban kids. Perhaps somewhat counter intuitive, kids from all walks of life are frequently less tuned-in, and less-comfortable with, hanging out in the woods or helping to feed a calf.

Your support, however, is working to change that. As a land trust that pledges to honor the protection of

conservation into the future, in perpetuity, we realize that the future of conservation rests on future generations. The children of today become the leaders and voters of tomorrow and it is they who will determine how important conservation is in their future community's lives.

The free programs range from stories and crafts at the Flower Memorial Library in Watertown, the Carthage Free Library and the Lowville Free Library, programs with homeschoolers to explore the woods, and our partnership with the New York State Zoo in Watertown which features animals that are native to New York State. These experiences are working to



**Learning to love nature** and create fun things like bubble makers from recycled materials.

bring the joy and wonder of the out-of-doors to families and friends, all year round.

Spending time in nature is known to improve people's health. It's also just what the doctor ordered when it comes to ensuring a lasting conservation ethic and our pledge of conserving land forever.





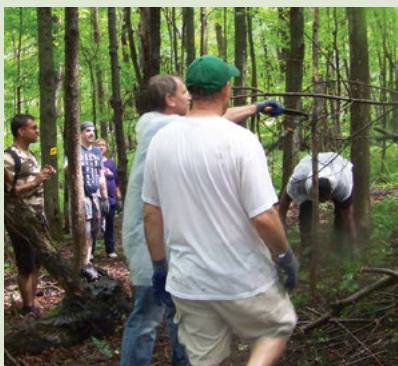
# It was a pretty wild day...

Here's an idea. Invite a lot of people from all over the world, to come out and clean up and repair trails in the woods in the pouring rain. Better yet, promise them that they'll have a great time and it will be good for business moral and community spirit. Sound crazy?

Well George Piper didn't think so. George is the Global Operations Manager of ServiceMax, an international company with US headquarters in California with 12 employees who live in the Watertown area.

The company partners with Proctor and Gamble, Luminex, Tyco, and now...Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust. But while the other partnerships involve providing business planning and technological innovations, this partnership is even more powerful: friendships, muddy smiles, and enhancing a local community treasure.

"I wanted to find a place that was special to the community and needed some tender loving care, that we, as a team, could do in a day—and the Joseph A. Blake Wildlife Sanctuary was the perfect place," explained George. George explained, "because our teams are dispersed globally, whenever we come together, we always find a way to give back, no matter where the location. This occurs several times a year across multiple departments." This time, the Sanctuary was lucky enough to be selected.



**Snippets of conversation** like "that was great" in German, or "my shoes are soaking wet" in French ricocheted back and forth.



**A special thanks to the 28 ServiceMax employees from all over the world, who braved the rain and experienced the Sanctuary as a place that so many know it already is: a really special place, where the wonder of the woods and wildlife come to life.**

**If you know a local company who would like to build team spirit through a community volunteer day, give us a call. We'd love to partner with you. It's a great way to show you care.**



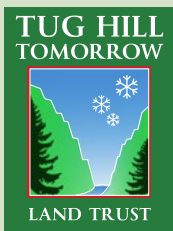
## Your gift can change lives, and provide you with regular income at the same time

Would you like to help protect Tug Hill's farms, forests and wildlife and receive an income stream at the same time?

Of all the gifts that pay you back, the charitable gift annuity is the simplest, most affordable, and most popular. Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust has partnered with the Community Foundation of Herkimer and Oneida Counties, Inc. to offer this opportunity for you.

By making a charitable gift annuity, you can ensure you have reliable annual income as well as help protect the special places of Tug Hill—it is a gift that benefits you and Tug Hill. If you have questions, please contact Bob Quinn, Board Chair of the land trust at 315-646-2404. Bob will be happy sit down with you to explain the program and the benefits to you.





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## We're here for you...

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**Fawn Heins**  
*Program & Outreach Coordinator*

Front cover Bobcat kitten photograph courtesy  
of Larry Master.

## You're invited to join us.

### NOVEMBER 14<sup>TH</sup>

**10AM-2PM : Inman Gulf Hike, Barnes Corners**

Join us as we hike along the 300 foot high gorge  
rim trail, with specular views along the way.

### JANUARY 30<sup>TH</sup>

**10AM-2PM : Mile Creek Snowshoe, Boonville**

### FEBRUARY 14<sup>TH</sup>

**1PM-4PM : Weiman Snowshoe, West Turin**

For additional information and to RSVP,  
check out our website or our Facebook page.  
Feel free to call us at (315)779-2239 or  
email [tughilloutreach@nynymail.com](mailto:tughilloutreach@nynymail.com).



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