

# Greenings

Celebrating Conservation & People



Fall-Winter 2016  
Volume 49



# Wildlife, Woodlands, Wonderful Farms and You

## Saving the Places We Love

Do you recall the soft calls of cows echoing over a misty field? The whisper of pines deep in the woods that softened your mood as the dry leaves crunch under your boots? Can you think back to a time when the ripples of a stream extended before you as you walked along the edge of the stream, fresh ice clinging to the banks like glass against the water?



© Judy Tuthill.

This year has been another strong year for conservation with over 1,500 acres of farmlands, woodlands, wetlands and streams protected in partnership with families across the region.

For many, these are the sounds and images of Tug Hill—a vast place of beauty that encompasses nature, farms and the communities so many of us love.

Growing community support is allowing more people in Tug Hill to conserve these woodlands, fields and streams. This year has been another strong year for conservation with over 1,500 acres of farmlands, woodlands, wetlands and streams protected in partnership with families across the region.

It's through your support, and a combination of partnerships and hard work, that we can respond to the needs of these landowners to protect the very essence of Tug Hill.

### Sometimes there's only one chance

This fall, and into the summer of next year, we are working with families

because conservation will play a critical role in transferring it to the next generation, ensuring the land isn't overly developed in the future if they need to sell, assisting with estate planning or income tax deductions, and providing income (for ACUB projects) to diversify the farm operation or reduce debt as needed.

Regardless of the family, however, the most common reason people conserve their land is peace of mind—knowing the land they love will be there far into the future never paved over, never lost to haphazard development.

Next year, as more people like you continue to support the Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust, conservation on Tug Hill will touch the lives of more people...for generations.



# Wildlife Sanctuary Provides Critical Habitat

## Zoo Teens Lead the Way

All over the country, including right here in Tug Hill, monarch butterflies have had it rough. As many as 11 million may have died this past spring due to freak weather and millions of others have perished due to loss of habitat both in this country and Mexico; extreme storms have battered them during their yearly migration.

Now considered an imperiled butterfly, the monarch is more than a beautiful flash of orange in the sky; it's an important pollinator. With its survival in question youth and adults alike are taking action and planting the monarch's main food source—milkweed—across the country.

Locally, the Thompson Park Zoo Teens are playing a part in this revival too. The teens are part of an enrichment program held every summer at the zoo to provide opportunities to explore animal and natural sciences.

This summer they took on the challenge of creating new habitat for the monarch at the Joseph A. Blake Wildlife Sanctuary located in Rutland, New York, leaving behind textbooks and memorization to get a taste of what science, land restoration, and wildlife habitat fieldwork might be like in college.

Their hard work will ensure a new patch of milkweed for next year's butterflies. For a butterfly that crosses hundreds of miles, and cycles through several generations before returning stateside, an extra patch of milkweed is more than a welcome treat—it can mean survival.

This collective effort, one patch at a time, across the country is starting to show hopeful results. For the first

time in a long time, monarch numbers are on the uptick instead of steadily decreasing according to the non-profit Monarch Watch.

Donated to the Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust by the North Country Bird Club a number of years ago, the Joseph Blake Wildlife Sanctuary has become a favorite place to hike, spend time with family and friends, learn about birds and wildlife. ...and now it provides critical habitat to vulnerable butterflies.











Summer intern Leif Lepkowski and volunteer extraordinaire Bob Keller.

## Flying with a Mission

**W**hen we conserve thousands of acres of farms and woodlands with the landowners of Tug Hill—sometimes over 1,500 acres a year—we make a pledge to be here in partnership with them, and subsequent landowners, forever.

It's a serious pledge, and one we don't take lightly. Every conservation agreement is unique. They are tailored to the natural features of the land and the goals of the landowner.

In accordance with national conservation standards, we meet with each landowner annually to ensure that vision is still intact and that they have the information they need to continue their conservation efforts.

### Mission that might be impossible

As you can imagine, covering thousands of acres on foot would be an almost impossible task given everything else we need to do—but thanks to an extraordinary volunteer, we are able to observe the conserved lands by air.

Bob Keller is a long-time member of LightHawk, an international program of accomplished pilots who donate their time and their planes to assist conservation organizations.

Bob and his wife Carol have lived in Tug Hill for 25 years to the point where he'll tell you that the woodlands and sounds of the ducks on his pond are what gets him up every morning.

That and flying. Bob loves to fly. And so every year—for the past 10 years—Bob combines his passion for the air and the land by taking the land trust staff to view the landscape from above.

These annual flights take extensive planning to ensure we can locate each

of the conserved properties from the air. Bob documents coordinates, juggles maps, ensures our staff avoid getting air-sick (as much as possible), and covers the costs of the gas and the plane ride.

But Bob remains undaunted. Year after year, Bob cheerfully takes on the task of Chief Conservation Pilot despite what can sometimes be a bumpy ride and a lot of work.

Our appreciation for Bob and what he offers local conservation spans thousands of acres, over years of amazing service. Please join us in thanking Bob for what may have been an initial fling but has become an annual ritual. Conservation in the Tug Hill wouldn't be the same without him.



### Volunteer your time and talent to bring smiles to people's faces.

You can help introduce local students to the wonders of nature by helping with an after-school community program or be an official Land Trust photographer during one of our hikes or paddles, and capture the magic of the moment.

**Like doing trail work?** Give the gift of well-maintained trails to fellow hikers at the Wildlife Sanctuary by adopting one of the trails. Please contact Community Programs Manager Lianna Lee at 315.779.2239 to learn more and join the team.

# Tales of Triumph, Friendship and Survival

## The Hearts & Souls of Tug Hill

Loretta Lepkowski is a warm, energetic, person who can coax a story out of just about anyone. She's also the artist behind the "Venerable Folks of Tug Hill" portrait series profiling some of the most extraordinary people of the region in a multi-media history project. She's teamed up with Camilla Ammirati, who works for Traditional Arts of Upstate New York (TAUNY), and together they have recorded video and audio interviews of these venerable folks to support the portraits.

These venerable folk are the hearts and souls of our communities, and inspire young and old alike. Their stories of farm life, epic snowstorms, and what life was like almost 100 years ago give us a glimpse into the people who helped define Tug Hill and what it is today.

In this age of fast-paced rapid change, it's important to take a step back and reflect on the rich heritage of Tug Hill before it's gone in what seems like just a blink of an eye.

This exhibit is a collaborative project between the Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust, the Tug Hill Commission, and Traditional Arts of Upstate New York (TAUNY) and will debut on October 20<sup>th</sup> at our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration. This project creatively captures the history, culture, and vitality of Tug Hill, a key part of our land trust's mission.

Thanks to the generous support of contributors and the talent of Lepkowski and Ammirati, the history of Tug Hill will be brought to life through their stories for years to come.

*Ben Coe, above, one of 20 people who are featured in the exhibition.  
Below, Stanley and Benny Szalach recall a time in their lives at their homestead.*



Join us for the premiere of the "Venerable Folks of Tug Hill" during our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration

Thursday, October 20<sup>th</sup>  
6–9 p.m.

Kallet Theater in Pulaski, NY

Contact Lianna Lee at 315-779-2239  
or [tughilloutreach@nynymail.com](mailto:tughilloutreach@nynymail.com)  
to purchase your tickets.

### **Please join us in thanking the following contributors to this project:**

St. Lawrence Arts Council, NYS Council on the Arts, NYS Tug Hill Commission, Iroquois Gas Community Grant Program, John Ben Snow Foundation, Inc., and the Northern New York Community Foundation.

A portion of this work was made possible through two Public Arts Fellowship Grants which in turn was made possible in part by the St. Lawrence County Arts Council funds from the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.







## Want to be a Conservation Hero?

**D**o you want to make a big impact, a little bit at a time? While we are sure you are a hero in your community and in your family in little and big ways, here's another way to be a hero, one that can last a lifetime.

You can join a growing group of Conservation Heroes to make sure that conservation work can happen day-in, day-out, protecting more farms, wetlands, streams and woodlands than ever before.

As a Conservation Hero you'll also be connecting kids to nature at the Wildlife Sanctuary, and throughout Tug Hill by spreading your passion for Tug Hill's lands and waters throughout the year.

**This holiday season a monthly gift can make all the difference.**

Monthly giving is a safe, easy, way to have big impact year-round; every gift matters be it \$5 or \$50/month. You can join through our website or contact Lianna Lee at [tughilloutreach@nnyemail.com](mailto:tughilloutreach@nnyemail.com) or call her at 315-779-2239. It's monthly donors, people like you, who are making conservation happen every day.

**"It's important to us to support conservation in the area we call 'home'. By contributing a little bit each month we can provide a greater level of support in a way that is hardly noticeable to us, but makes a big difference to the land trust."**

— Dave Zembiec, Adams

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## Let your passion be your legacy

**T**he soft touch of a butterfly, the gentle nudge of a calf, or the smile on a child's face after seeing their first owl; fleeting moments that we remember for a lifetime.

You can help make sure farms and woodlands are conserved, wildlife thrive, and the young people of Tug Hill get out from behind their computers to experience nature in a way that creates a life-long bond. When you leave a gift through your will to the Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust your passion lives on.

Join a growing number of people who are ensuring the future of Tug Hill. If you are interested in exploring other planned giving options, including a gift that will generate income during your lifetime, give Linda Garrett a call or email her at [thtomorr@northnet.org](mailto:thtomorr@northnet.org). Your gift will conserve farms and forests and change the lives of many for generations to come.





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## We're here for you...

Want to find out about new projects, family-friendly programs and hikes, conservation tips, and community events?



Sign up for our electronic updates and Facebook.

**TugHillTomorrowLandTrust.org**

facebook.com/Tug-Hill-Tomorrow-Land-Trust

We don't share our mailing lists,  
so your privacy is protected.



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**A very special thanks** to cover photographer Pamela Underhill Karaz. To see more spectacular images visit facebook.com/pkaraz.

**Greenings** : Fall • Winter 2016

## You're invited...

**OCTOBER 20<sup>TH</sup> • 6PM-9PM**

### 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration – Kallet Theater, Pulaski

A wonderful evening to celebrate 25 years of local conservation. The night will include a buffet dinner, the premiere of the *Venerable Folks of Tug Hill*, silent auction and awards.

**DECEMBER 10<sup>TH</sup> • 1PM-3PM**

### Warm up for the Holidays –

#### Joseph Blake Wildlife Sanctuary, Rutland

Grab your snowshoes (if the snow obliges) for a short (1/2 hour or so) trek in the woods followed by hot cider. It's a great way to spend some time with your friends and family as the hectic holidays approach.

For more information on  
our events or programs  
please check out our website  
at [TugHillTomorrowLandTrust.org](http://TugHillTomorrowLandTrust.org)  
or call the office at (315) 779-2239.



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## Celebrate the beauty of Tug Hill's wildlife, farms, and rolling lands year round with the 2017 Tug Hill Calendar.

A warm thank you to the immense talent and generosity of local photographers for making this calendar possible. This is the perfect gift to give your friends and family this holiday season! Check out the images on our website.

Many thanks to our 2017 Calendar sponsors including Bob & Carol Keller; Donald Musnicki, Portfolio Manager-RBC Wealth Management; Coughlin Printing Group; Hrabchak, Gebo & Langone, P.C.; Crossroads Inn & Cabins; and Christmas and Associates, Inc.