

Greenings

Celebrating Conservation & People



Spring-Summer 2016
Volume 48

A Capital Idea

Making farmland conservation a priority

What is it about the farms of Tug Hill you most treasure? Is it the emerald green stretches of land, fields of sunflowers in the summer or acres of pumpkins in the fall? The cows, rumbling of tractors, and depending on the wind, the sweet smell of fresh hay? From fresh cheese and milk, to meat products and seasonal vegetables, the local farm economy continues to be an important part of our community.

Part of our work every year, is figuring out creative ways to help farmers and those that own farmland find a way to conserve their land and meet their own personal goals.

For many farm families, the need to transfer the land to their kids—or another young farmer—is an important part of their business plan.

Farmland conservation is a great way to do just that. If a farmer is able to sell the non-farm development rights to a conservation organization like Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust (who extinguishes them), then they have the financial resources to retire, or ensure that the non-farm kids in the family receive their share of their inheritance too, using the conservation payment.

In addition to our conservation partners, we also work with our

local legislators to help ensure that farmland conservation is included in the state's annual budget within the

Environmental Protection Fund.

This year, the effort paid off in a big way with the Governor proposing an increase in the state's farmland protection program, as well as a suggested allocation to match the money the Army has allocated for the Army Compatible Use Buffer (ACUB) program.

This means more farm families will be able to conserve their land—and while there is a backlog of folks wanting to do just that, it's a great step forward. Tug Hill farm families want to conserve their farms.

Thanks to you, and the growing team of conservation partners and the support of the Governor and our legislators, more farmers will be able to participate in the programs.



You are helping to make farmland conservation in Tug Hill possible for more farm families through your support—we couldn't do it without you.





Looking for fun family places to go? Want to come with us? Sign up for our e-Newsletter and check out our Facebook posts for updates on upcoming programs.

Experience Extinction

An emerging problem for conservation

Because so many of us live in, or visit, Tug Hill you might think that folks would be outside every day—hanging out with neighbors and tromping about in the woods and fields—just soaking it all up, right?

Well, not so fast. In our busy lives, and at times crazy weather, people often hunker down and the seasons drift by...and we risk disengaging with the land around us.

It turns out this could be a serious problem if left unchecked. New research published in the journal *Ecological Society of America* documented that while everyone needs to get outside, it's super important to connect kids to nature (and farms) if we want to inspire a lasting love of the out-of-doors.

Indeed, it often takes a mentoring adult and regular experiences of fun and emotional commitment to the land.

To address this challenge, we will continue to offer a wide variety of family-oriented outdoor programs. These programs are free thanks to the generosity of our members and supporters.

Together, we are providing a strong future for conservation because we know, just like you, that conservation is only as strong as the next generation's passion.



Heading outside for a dose of old fashioned vitamin N(ature) was just what the doctor ordered, if the large crowd that showed up for the snowshoe walk at Bob and Carol Kellers is any indication. The Kellers conserved their land a number of years ago with Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust.



©Tom Pfister.



Home is where the heart is

Family conserves land important to four generations

Standing in the woods on the ridge overlooking the woodlands with Fish Creek bubbling by below, one can hear the wind in the balsams and smell the damp moss clinging to the trees. These are moments of great joy for Al and Barb Weiman as they walk through their little slice of Tug Hill wilderness.

The land is part of Al and Barb's home away from home, a place that has long been part of their family, and now, will be protected for generations to come.

Al's dad, Arsa, grew up here on a farm that spanned 400 acres along the East Branch of Fish Creek in Constableville. Now 97 he still lives in the Village of Constableville just a few miles down the road.

Over time all of the original farm was sold off yet Al, who had moved to Pennsylvania in 1974 to start his career, never forgot about the family's land.

It's taken a while, but Al and Barb have purchased almost 700 acres of land in the area, including the family land. "Most of the property we now own was part of my grandfather's farm," reflects Al. "We come back to this place, any chance we get. That's why we built the cabin—so our family would have a place to come home to—a home that is now part of our grandchildren's lives as well." It's also why Al and Barb conserved their land.



"If this land was chopped up with development, Tug Hill would lose critical habitat and we would lose a big part of our family's history" – Al Weiman

While much of the farm has grown into lush woodlands, it's serving a different purpose than when Arsa and Al grew up here; it's providing important habitat for birds like the wood thrush, pileated woodpecker, and great horned owls.

The land is part of a critical habitat migration route for bobcats and bears, fulfilling a key role in conserving the wildlife corridor between Tug Hill and the Adirondacks, spanning wetlands, the East Branch of Fish Creek, and a variety of woodland habitats. "Over time, this land could get sold off into

small lots, destroying both its habitat and the ability to manage it as a productive woodland" explains Al. "We've seen that happen to areas in Pennsylvania, and we wanted to make sure that this part of Tug Hill didn't face that future."

Now Al and Barb's children and grandchildren look forward to coming up to see their great grandfather and to sleep in the tiny cabin "For us, it's nice to come home. Home is where the heart is, and our hearts are here, where my dad grew up...in the woods of Tug Hill."

"...it's providing important habitat for birds like the wood thrush, pileated woodpecker, and great horned owls."

The Hearts and Souls of Tug Hill

Amazing people. That's how so many describe them. People like Terry Cataldo who has lived here all her life, remembering riding to school in a wooden school bus sleigh as a young girl. Or Warren Mathis, who has spent his life in the Tug Hill woods working and playing. For many of us, the people are as much a part of what we treasure about living here in Tug Hill as the lands that surround us. It's what has made the Tug Hill Region a place we call home.

This year, in partnership with Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust, the Tug Hill Commission, and Traditional Arts of Upstate New York (TAUNY), artist Loretta Lepkowski is creating a series of portraits and TAUNY is creating related video stories to capture the lives and stories of long-time residents who share the rich cultural and historical heritage of the Tug Hill.

The entirety of this multi-media exhibit will be on display in venues throughout Tug Hill later this year.

We will keep you updated on where you can see the exhibit via our monthly e-Newsletter.

Gathered at Constable Camp, (below) Frank and Doc Russell, Janet Thompson, Linda Garrett, Loretta Lepkowski, and John Constable. **Pastel portrait of Leona Cheresnoski** (left).



Thank you! Your ongoing support is vital, whether it's volunteering at one of the educational or community programs, donating to special projects and ongoing protection efforts, or protecting your land...it's all because of a growing level of community support that great things are happening this year. Together, we are ensuring the farms and woodlands, wetlands and streams, that are so important to Tug Hill are both protected and celebrated for generations to come.

When kids love birds, conservation gets stronger

Have you ever wondered how to make science come alive, or spark the creative dreams and artistic nature in kids? Birds are a great way to do that.

Thanks to your support, 34 school classrooms and 14 homeschool families are teaming up with the Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust for the Tug Hill Spring Bird Quest. During May, children ranging in age from 5 to 13, will learn to identify birds, understand their habitats and habits, and how birds are an important part of our community and landscape. As one first grader said, "I like birds because they don't bite."



Birds, and the love of birds, is a gift that can last a lifetime. For many of these kids it's also a great way to bring their classroom to life.

Remembering a love they shared

A gift for future generations

Stanley Nemier and his wife Kathleen spent years walking a very special piece of land together. Located not far from where he grew up in the town of Boylston, every Mother's Day they would wander through the woods looking for wildflowers and sharing their love of that land.

Stanley conserved this special place in honor of his wife a number of years ago and then went one step farther by leaving a bequest to Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust. We are honored that he saw the Land Trust as an organization to help him share the love he and his wife had for the land, with future generations.

By leaving a gift in his will to inspire conservation into the future, Stanley is ensuring that others will be able to conserve their family farm or the lands they love—just like he did—or have a chance as kids to explore the woodlands, ponds and meadows in the spring. We won't forget Stanley and Kathleen; they continue to inspire us.

You too can make a difference

If you'd like to learn how you can inspire the love of the land, and protect the special places of Tug Hill after your lifetime with a planned gift, please call Linda Garrett at (315) 779-8240. All conversations are confidential.





1 Thompson Park
PO Box 6063
Watertown, NY 13601
315.779.8240

Non-Profit Org.
Watertown, NY
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 32

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.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Robert Quinn, Sackets Harbor
Chair

Robert Keller, Jr., Boonville
Vice Chair

Natalie Bogdanowicz, Montague
Treasurer

Cary Fassler, Amboy
Secretary

Robert McNamara, Cleveland
Immediate Past Chair

George Bibbins, Jr., Rodman, *Director-at-Large*

Richard Hill, Utica

Carol Hutchinson, West Monroe

Christopher Kelly, Holland Patent

Dave Kohr, Pulaski

Alix Krueger, Amboy

Paul Miller, Blossvale, *Director-at-Large*

Peggy O'Shea, Barneveld

Janet Thompson, Constableville

Dave Zembiec, Adams

STAFF

Linda M. Garrett
Executive Director

Richard Johnston
Land Protection Manager

Lianna Lee
*Communication & Community
Programs Manager*

Karen Watson
Office Manager

Front cover photograph courtesy of Pamela Underhill Karaz.

You're invited...

MAY 7TH • 10am-2pm

Bird and Wildflower Discovery Walk – Cleveland

Trilliums, violets and a heron rookery await you on this springtime adventure. Bring lunch, comfortable shoes and binoculars. Local bird and plant experts will be our guides. Perfect walk for teens and adults.

JUNE 18TH • 8AM-10AM

Find the Really Cool Birds – Camden, Forest Park

Join birding expert, Bob McNamara, on this family-friendly walk. Bob will show us how to identify birds by their calls too. We could see some great birds.

JULY 16TH • 10AM-2PM

Opening Hike of Tug Hill Traverse Trail – West Turin

AUGUST 20TH • 10AM-2PM

Westdale Paddle – West Branch of Fish Creek Paddle

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

