



MOHAWK HUDSON
LAND CONSERVANCY

Saving Special Places

Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy

ViewPoints

Volume 6, Number 2

July 2008

Volunteers Help Maintain Special Places

Ed & Marie Miles have always appreciated open space, and over their lifetimes have sadly watched it disappear.



Ed and Marie Miles

New houses have replaced empty lots. Farms and woods have become housing developments and shopping centers. Instead of just complaining, they have been quietly working with MHLC to care for preserved land.

For years, they have supported national and international conservation organizations with small contributions, but the Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy appeared to be leading in the preservation of open space right here at home. Newspaper articles about hikes and newly-preserved land introduced them; actually going on Conservancy-sponsored hikes sold them. Since their retirement in 2003, they have helped build several kiosks (despite Marie's lack of hammer and nails experience!) and maintain trails. Ed's significant geology expertise greatly helped MHLC decide trail locations at the Normans Kill Preserve where major landslides occurred in 2000. They have recently helped re-route trails at the Normans Kill Preserve and install a log walkway over the wet lands at the Phillipin Kill Preserve.

Marie and Ed have lived in their Delmar home for 40 years. They saw a benefit that others saw as a negative; the D & H tracks were only five houses away, and their backyard ended at the edge of wilderness. Their backyard initiated

(Continued on page 3)

“Letterboxing” — the Newest Family Fun Activity at MHLC Preserves

Two of MHLC's preserves in Delmar, the Normans Kill and Phillipin Kill, are now being used as sites for letterboxing, a wonderful way to get families out of doors and into the region's natural areas. Letterboxing is an intriguing mix of treasure hunting, art, navigation, and exploring interesting, scenic, and sometimes remote places. It takes the ancient custom of placing a rock on a cairn upon reaching the summit of a mountain to an art form. It started when a gentleman simply left his calling card in a bottle by a remote pool on the moors of Dartmoor in England. Participants find hidden letterboxes by following clues and deciphering codes. Their prize: a rubber stamp in the box that is usually unique and hand carved. The finders then stamp their personal journals with the found stamp and use their own stamp, called a “signature stamp,” in the logbook in the letterbox.



Michael, Peter, Abigail, Daniel, and Samuel take a rest from letterboxing at the Phillipin Kill.

Barbara Bemis and her family designed the clues and hid letterboxes in MHLC's Normans Kill East and West and Phillipin Kill preserves. Barb designed a new series of letterboxes, “Love Your Planet,” especially for these preserves. She hopes to add more letterboxes to other MHLC preserves soon. “Love Your Planet” letterboxes have names like Pedal Power and Plant a Tree. All the clues have a mathematical bent to them as Barb is a devoted math

(Continued on page 3)

ViewPoints is published 3 times each year by the Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy, PO Box 567 Slingerlands, NY 12159. Phone 518 436-6346 or visit www.mohawkhudson.org ViewPoints is also available at www.mohawkhudson.org/pubs.htm. ViewPoints is edited by Rodger Fink (rfink@nycap.rr.com).



Jill Knapp

Executive Director's Message

As I write this in June, flood waters cover much of Iowa. My first reaction is thank goodness I don't live there any more – four years of violent thunderstorms and tornado warnings was enough for me! But then I start thinking about how it all relates to land use and planning. It was in Iowa that I first got involved with farmland and open space protection when I realized how many thousands of acres of productive soils were being turned into housing developments and shopping malls in the Des Moines area.

There is no doubt that this year's storms in the mid west are unusual, but as deep prairie soils have been replaced by thousands of acres of pavement, houses sprout where corn fields and native grasses once grew, and urban areas expand on flood plains, runoff has been accelerated. It is because of impervious surfaces such as pavement and rooftops that a typical city block generates more than 5 times the runoff of a similar sized woodland area.

Fields and forests, wetlands and floodplains do more than provide scenic views, produce local food, or provide recreational activities. They are part of the "infrastructure" that helps reduce storm water runoff, increases groundwater infiltration, and helps protect water quality. Given the tremendous cost of the flood damage, protecting natural areas provides both an environmental and economic benefit to our local communities. Your continued support is essential to help MHLC increase its land protection efforts and assure that this natural storm water management "infra structure" continues to enhance our local communities.

Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy Receives Grants

The Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy has received two grants totaling \$20,000 through the New York State Conservation Partnership Program (NYSCPP), a pioneering public-private partnership managed by the Land Trust Alliance and overseen by DEC. The awards were announced April 16th by Department of Environmental Conservation Commissioner Pete Grannis and leaders of the Land Trust Alliance.

MHLC received a \$16,000 Conservation Transaction Grant to help create public access at a new preserve in the Town of Amsterdam in Montgomery County. Ellie Peters is donating the 43-acre parcel to the Conservancy so that it can be preserved as a natural area for wildlife habitat and public recreation. The grant will help the Conservancy develop trails and a boardwalk through the wetland. In addition, MHLC received a Conservation Capacity and Excellence Grant which is designed to strengthen the impact and effectiveness of land trusts. The \$4,000 grant will be used to help improve awareness of the Conservancy's work in Montgomery County, and to communicate the value of protecting important natural resources and the opportunities to do so to local communities and landowners.

We are also pleased to have received a \$10,000 grant from the Bender Family Foundation. This grant will be used to develop a marketing strategy to increase and retain members in our organization, a goal of our strategic plan. We thank the Benders for their generous support of our efforts!

Consider including the Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy in your will or trust

You can provide now for a future gift to the Conservancy by including a bequest provision in your will or revocable trust.

Bequests have several advantages:

Your assets remain in your control during your lifetime.

You can modify your bequest if your circumstances change.

There is no upper limit on the estate tax deductions that can be taken for charitable bequests.

You know that your gift will benefit the conservancy tomorrow just as you intend it to today.

Bequests should be designated to the Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy, PO Box 567, Slingerlands, NY 12159

Board of Directors

Margaret Sherman
President

Jeff Jones
Vice President

Erick McCandless
Secretary

Jeff Leon
Treasurer

Dave Barnett

Dan Driscoll

Tom Evans

Susan Filipp

Rodger Fink

Christine Galvin

Michael Huxley

Ted Putney

Judy Thomson

Stephen Young

Staff

Jill Knapp
Executive Director

Helen Smith
Program Assistant

The Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy is partially funded by the New York State Conservation Partnership Program administered by the Land Trust Alliance with support from the State of New York.

We Need to Hear From You

Have you ever passed by the location of a field, forest or farm you once loved only to see it covered with buildings and parking lots? Have you ever wondered what happened to the wildlife displaced by that development? At the Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy, these concerns are on our minds every day. That's why we're working hard to save special places that showcase natural features right in our own backyards.

We couldn't do it without you, our members, particularly in these challenging economic times. By renewing your membership or increasing your membership level, you're part of our team that is conserving beautiful landscapes in our historic Mohawk and Hudson Valleys.

We've found that communication is "key" to our successes. But communication goes both ways, so now we'd like to hear from you. We've launched a questionnaire on our website so you can share your ideas and opinions. Please help us help you by filling it out as soon as you can. [Your participation really matters.](#) Go to www.mohawkhudson.org and follow the instructions. Or, if you prefer, call 518 436-6346 and we'll send you a paper copy.

Thank you for all of your support. And special thanks to the Bender Family Foundation which has generously donated a \$10,000 grant to assist us in developing ways to effectively market and communicate our mission to new audiences willing to join our team. If you're interested in volunteering to help expand our membership, please give Jill Knapp a call at 436-6346. We'd love to hear from you.

Christine Galvin, Development Co-Chair

(Continued from page 1)

Miles

their love affair with birds, and the tracks provided hiking opportunities and baskets of berries. Although the trails are now overgrown and littered with fallen trees, they are encouraged by the progress being made to develop the right of way as a rail trail.

Ed worked as an engineering geologist with the New York State Departments of Transportation and Environmental Conservation. Marie was a business teacher and secretary. For many years, jobs and 3 children steered their volunteer time to scouts, religious education, baseball, and fife and drum. "When we both retired in 2003," Marie said, "We now had more time for volunteering (less money, of course), so while we didn't have the millions to donate, we could offer time." Ed currently volunteers at NYSDEC, especially during the "Earth Week" programs at Five Rivers for area school children. Marie volunteers much time to two professional associations and St. Peter's Hospital.

Marie and Ed are impressed with the staff and volunteers that make the acquisition and use of special places possible. We thank all our volunteers for their contributions. If you are interested in volunteering please contact us at 518-436-6346 or mhlc@nycap.rr.com.

Judy Thomson

(Continued from page 1)

teacher. Her clues are very kid-friendly and appropriate for all age levels. As Barb says, "Many letterboxers have expressed interest in the Love Your Planet Series. They are excited to find out about new local preserves to explore. Our adventures in your preserves have been exciting both for the letterboxing and the nature. We even saw an owl!"



Hidden Letterbox

Letterboxers are people who care deeply about our planet and love to explore new areas. They are committed to learning about the areas they explore and keeping them in pristine condition. In fact, letterboxers pride themselves on leaving an area better than they found it, whether it's picking up garbage or cleaning debris from a trail they walked.

To find the clues to the letterboxes at the Normans Kill and Phillipin Kill, visit our website at www.mohawkhudson.org and click on Links to get to the letterboxing link. Search for letterboxing in Albany, NY and scroll down to find the Love Your Planet series letterboxes. Directions to the preserves and clues to the letterboxes are just a click away!

Save the Date! Our Eighth Annual Country Gala

The Mabee Farm Historic Site on the banks of the Mohawk River on Sunday, September 21 from 1:00 to 4:00 pm is the place to be.

Our biggest fundraiser of the year will include a lovely lunch provided by Elegant Touch caterers. A wonderful silent auction will feature popular weekend getaway spots, valuable gift certificates, estate jewelry—and more. Guests will also have the opportunity to explore the oldest house in the Mohawk Valley, a Dutch barn, slave quarters, and four separate gardens.

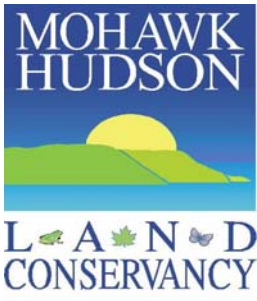
Our Biggest Fund-Raiser

This promises to be a great event! Invitations, graced by the charming artwork of MHLHC member Melissa Palmer, will be sent in early August. If you have questions now, have some friends who need invitations, or wish to contribute an item to the Silent Auction, please give the office a call. We'll see you in September!

Susan Filipp,
Membership Committee Co-Chair

Tuesday Trail Treks

As a follow up to our successful spring Wednesday outings, we are offering Tuesday Trail Treks this fall. (See a list of trips on page 4.) Meet at Slingerlands Community Church, 1499 New Scotland Ave. at 10:00 a.m. to car pool, or at the trail head at 10:45, except where indicated. A small donation to carpool drivers is suggested. Bring your lunch for hikes lasting after noon. For directions to the preserves and description of trails, please see our web site: <http://www.mohawkhudson.org> or call. To register, please call the MHLHC office at 436-6346.



Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy
P.O. Box 567
Slingerlands, NY 12159
www.mohawkhudson.org
(518) 436-6346

Saving Special Places

Not For Profit
US Postage
PAID
Slingerlands, NY
PERMIT # 10

Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy Hikes Fall 2008

Tuesday Trail Treks:

1. **September 9: 10 am - 12:00 noon** Normans Kill Parcels East & West, Bethlehem. Meet at 10:00 a.m. to car pool or 10:20 at Bagdon Environmental parking lot.
2. **September 16: 10 am - 3:00 pm** Wolf Creek Falls, Town of Knox.
3. **September 23: 10 am - 3:00 pm** Winn Preserve, Town of Knox.
4. **October 21: 10 am - 3:00 pm** Holt Preserve, Town of New Scotland.
5. **October 28: 10 am - 3:00 pm** Schoharie Creek, Montgomery County.
6. **November 4: 10 am - 3:00 pm** Bennett Hill, Town of New Scotland.
7. **November 11: 10 am - 12:00 noon** Phillipin Kill and Swift Preserves, Bethlehem. Meet at 10:00 a.m. to car pool or 10:20 at Mansions apartment parking lot.

Weekend Wanderings:

Friday, September 5: 5:30 pm Hudson River Shoreline, Glenmont. Steve Young, botanist, will help us explore a diversity of habitats along the Hudson River. Directions: From I-787 and the Thruway Exit 23 go south on 9W 1 mile and take a left on Corning Hill Road. Go to the end at Rte. 144. Go south on Rte. 144 about 4 miles and take a left onto Barents Winne Road. Go down to a fork and go left (do not go to Henry Hudson Park). Go 0.7 miles to the last house on the road, after it turns to a dirt road.

September/October Weekend (Date to be Determined) The Northeast Cave Conservancy will lead an outing to the Onesquethaw Cave in Clarksville. They will also make a presentation during a week night before the outing about the cave and spelunking in general. Dates will be sent to those on our email list. If you are interested, please contact the MHLC office at 436-6346. The Onesquethaw Cave is a MHLC preserve that is operated by the Northeast Cave Conservancy.

Sunday, November 2: 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm Schoharie Creek, Montgomery County. Beautiful waterfalls, interesting rock formations and views of the Schoharie Creek. No developed trails and parts of the hike are fairly steep. Bring a snack. Meet at Slingerlands Community Church, 1499 New Scotland Ave. at 12:00 to car pool, or at Schoharie Creek Preserve at 1:00 pm.

For directions, please see our web site: <http://www.mohawkhudson.org>