



ViewPoints

Vol. 2, No. 2

June 2005

Our New Name and Logo

Those who attended our recent annual meeting know that we are now the Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy. This is more than a cosmetic change. Our name now reflects our growing efforts in the Mohawk Valley and our roots in the Capital District at the confluence of the rivers.

As we reported in April, the Conservancy has been involved beyond the boundaries of Albany County for some time. The Schoharie Creek Preserve in Montgomery County was acquired in 1998. MHLC's new Mohawk Valley Committee is working now with a number of landowners to protect other properties west of Albany County, including a preserve in Amsterdam and easements in Cranes Hollow and Wolf Hollow.



Looking South across the Mohawk River from Route 5 in the Town of Mohawk, Montgomery County.

Looking west we saw scenic vistas, farmland, and wildlife habitat, a rich variety of land in the Mohawk watershed. While other land trusts operate in the Catskills and further west in the Mohawk Valley, important resources remained unprotected. The MHLC Board thought it wise to move quickly.

Birders Welcome Spring

Fifteen avid birders and supporters of the Land Conservancy joined expert birders Frank Murphy and Ginny Carter at Helene Goldberger's and Paul Baitsholts' Lower Farm in Berne late last month. Among the group were other seasoned birders and a few people - young and old - who were first trying out their eyes and ears in this wonderful nature activity. In addition to some really great bird finds, such as the Yellow-Bellied Sapsucker and the Yellow-Rumped Warbler, the group was treated to some lovely wildflower sightings, such as the Purple Trillium and Spring Beauty. In addition, Ryan Cole, one of the younger members of our troupe spied a Wood Turtle!!

But for many of the adults, the most rewarding part of the day was the participation of two teenagers, Ryan and Sam Dudley, Jr, who enthusiastically searched with the group. The migrant warblers are a sure sign of spring and these two young men are a sure sign that love of nature and open spaces is here to stay. We saw 33 bird species:

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------|
| Canada Goose | Turkey Vulture |
| Ruffed Grouse | Killdeer |
| Mourning Dove | Belted Kingfisher |
| Yellow-bellied Sapsucker | Hairy Woodpecker |
| Northern Flicker | Tree Swallow; |
| Ruby-crowned Kinglet | Gray Catbird |
| American Robin | Purple Finch |
| Black-capped Chickadee | Blue Jay |
| White-breasted Nuthatch | Blue-headed Vireo |
| American Crow | Yellow Warbler |
| Yellow-rumped Warbler | Song Sparrow |
| Black-throated Green Warbler | Louisiana Waterthrush |
| Dark-eyed Junco | Northern Cardinal |
| Rose-breasted Grosbeak | Red-winged Blackbird |
| Common Grackle | Brown-headed Cowbird |
| Baltimore Oriole | American Goldfinch |
| | White-throated Sparrow |

Thanks to Frank Murphy and Ginny Carter for their enthusiasm and dedication in leading these bird trips for the Conservancy for the last few years.

MHLC Receives Staffing Grant

We can now announce that we will receive a staffing grant from the Land Trust Alliance (LTA). The grant is funded by the New York State Conservation Partnership Program. The \$38,000 grant, together with donations from our members, will enable us to hire our first full-time Executive Director as well as a part-time administrative assistant. The ED will be responsible for program management and development, outreach, fundraising and coordination of board activities, committees, and volunteers. Your Land Conservancy will be a professionally staffed organization within a few months.

The grant was announced at a press conference on May 12; at the same time DEC and LTA also announced grants to our sister land trusts – Saratoga PLAN and Rensselaer Taconic Land Conservancy.



At the DEC / LTA Press Conference:

From L to R: Lynnette Stark, DEC Deputy Commissioner; Dan Driscoll, President of MHLC; Alane Ball Chinian, Executive Director of Saratoga PLAN; and Bill Niemi, President of Rensselaer Taconic Land Conservancy

As our stewardship responsibilities increase (we now have thirteen preserves and one easement) and we expand our area of activity westward, our need for staff is critical. But we must continue to increase annual income substantially over the next several years if that staff is to be permanent. More members are the key. If you are not yet a member, please join. If you are already a member, please invite a friend to join.

Pine Hollow Arboretum

On Sunday, June 5 our Tri-Village Greenway Committee hosted a guided tour of the Pine Hollow Arboretum in Slingerlands. The Arboretum, one stop on the proposed Greenway, is a 40-year labor of love by MHLC founding board member Dr. John Abbuhl. The 20-acre Arboretum will eventually be operated as a private, not-for-profit corporation; the Conservancy will hold an easement to

protect the property. More than 20 people participated in the tour, and several of those joined the Greenway Committee. More volunteers are needed.



Dr. John Abbuhl at Pine Hollow Arboretum

Dynamics of a Waking World

A group of twelve intrepid explorers braved the drizzle on April 23 to find out if the rule of thumb -- that spring is delayed one day for each 400 feet in altitude -- is really true. The Friends of Thacher Park and the Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy held a joint nature walk at two locations to compare spring wildflowers and other signs of spring.

On the 'top' side, at the Emma Thacher Nature Center, we found hepatica, spring beauty, wild ginger, blue cohosh, red trillium, and squirrel corn in bloom. We also found a single eager violet. We found lots of trout lily leaves, but no flowers.

After lunch we went down to the Land Conservancy's Phillipinkill Preserve in Delmar. There were spring beauty and trout lily flowers everywhere. We saw an occasional red trillium and a nice clump of mayapple with buds, but few other wildflowers. The group decided that this was more because of a difference in habitat than a difference in altitude. Nevertheless, it did seem as though spring was more advanced down below. Many of the trees were beginning to leaf out, and red maple flowers had already fallen to the ground.

The group decided that we should definitely try this experiment again next year, but that we should visit a preserve with a habitat more similar to the 'up' habitat at Thacher. And we'll order up a day with no rain. Then we'll really be able to test the hypothesis that spring at the Thacher level is three days behind Spring 1,200 feet down at the base of the Helderberg Escarpment.

Sigrin T. Newell

MHLC Annual Meeting

The Conservancy held its Annual Meeting on May 21st at the Stockade Inn in Schenectady. The location, a block from the Mohawk River in a historic section of the Mohawk Valley, seemed most fitting, given the announcement of our expanded vision and name change at a press conference prior to the meeting. The luncheon meeting concluded with an interesting talk by Fred Miller, Executive Director of the Mohawk Valley Heritage Corridor Commission. Approximately 30 members attended. Assemblyman James Tedisco, Republican from Schenectady, joined us for lunch.

President Dan Driscoll gave a brief overview of the growth and strengthening of the Conservancy during the past year. He cited the completion of an ambitious Strategic Plan and the numerous implementation steps taken since, including, most recently, the decision to choose a name that reflects our expanded mission.



Keynote Speaker Fred Miller

Before lunch, Dan made the official name change announcement, unveiling the new banner. Jeff Leon,

co-chair of our new Mohawk Valley Committee, spoke briefly about opportunities in the Mohawk Valley, and Ellie Peters, a landowner in Amsterdam, Montgomery County, spoke about why she intends to donate a 43-acre wetland to the Conservancy next year.



Jeff Leon and Ellie Peters at the Annual Meeting

After lunch Fred Miller discussed the mission and recent accomplishments of the Mohawk Valley Heritage Corridor Commission. They have been successful in a number of regional initiatives highlighting the natural, cultural and historic treasures of the Mohawk Valley. Fred concluded his remarks with an invitation to the Conservancy to collaborate with the Commission, particularly since our missions are so aligned.

Most of the attendees had seen the very nice feature article about the Conservancy in the previous weekend's Schenectady Gazette and felt a justifiable pride in the organization.

Jeff Leon

Coming Events

**Saturday, July 23rd at 2:00 PM,
An afternoon walk through the Winn preserve with
moss specialist Jean Kekes**

We'll go hunting for two-dozen or so of the more than one hundred bryophytes at Winn Preserve. Identification will be made with an eye to helping you to know these when you find them again. Bring hand lenses if you have them. Handouts for each moss will be available. Directions to the preserve are at www.mohawkhudson.org/Winn.htm.

**Sunday, September 18,
A Country Gala, Our Annual Fundraiser**
Save the date.

**Saturday, October 1st at 10 AM,
The Schoharie Creek Preserve**

John McKeeby of Burtonsville, founder of the Schoharie River Center Environmental Study Teams for local youth and a local history buff, will guide our walk. Directions are at www.mohawkhudson.org/Schoharie.htm

Volunteers Needed

Each of our committees welcomes volunteers. Get your hands dirty by helping with stewardship. If you have great people-skills, membership and fundraising will vie for your assistance. If writing is your special gift, the public information committee needs your help. Whether you can spare an hour or a day, leave a message at 436-346 or send an email to mhlc@mohawkhudson.org.



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

PRESORTED
 FIRST CLASS MAIL
 U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
 ALBANY, NY
 PERMIT # ____

2005 Board of Directors

Paul Baitsholts
 John Dearstyne (Treasurer)
 Susan Filipp
 Erick McCandless
 Anne Reynolds

Joe Castiglione
 Dan Driscoll (President)
 Jeff Jones (Vice-president)
 Lois Porter
 Margaret Sherman (Secretary)

Tammy Cousins
 Tom Evans
 Mark King
 Ted Putney
 Mike Sterthous

Won't you please join us?

Your Support is crucial to our efforts to preserve the Capital Region's natural & scenic resources: scenic vistas, farmland, open space, and wildlife.

- Friend \$1,000
- Patron \$500
- Sustaining..... \$250
- Supporting..... \$100
- Contributing \$50
- Family \$35
- Individual \$25
- Student/Limited Income..... \$15

Protecting the unique natural character of the Greater Capital Region:

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

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____ State: ___ Zip: _____
 Phone: _____ Fax: _____
 Email: _____

- Please send me more information about land conservation options available.
- I would like to host a Friend-raiser Gathering.
- I would like to be a Conservancy volunteer.
- The above membership is a gift from _____

All contributions to the MHLC, Inc. are tax deductible to the extent allowable by law.