

2006: Conservancy To Protect 350 Acres; 6 More Special Places

MHLC Acquires Important Wetlands and Other Properties

In September the Conservancy completed the acquisition of a portion of Black Creek Marsh in the Town of Guilderland. This parcel is contiguous with the protected Indian Ladder Farms Orchard, on which the MHLC and the Open Space Institute hold a conservation agreement. The wetland has frontage on Meadowdale Road, immediately adjacent to the DEC Black Creek Marsh Wildlife Management Area entrance kiosk.



Wooded Wetland on new Preserve in Knox -Dan Driscoll

An environmentally significant habitat with many resources, the property supports a significantly high biological diversity including many amphibian species. The National Audubon Society lists the area in its compilation of Important Bird Areas in New York State. The 2005 Draft New York Open Space Conservation Plan lists Black Creek Marsh as a priority for open space protection.

Now that the property is protected, MHLC will work with the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation; eventually the parcel will be transferred to the DEC for enlargement of the state owned, Black Creek Wildlife Management Area which NYS recently designated a Bird Conservation Area. The purchase of this wetland from

Peter Ten Eyck and Indian Ladder Farms was made possible through two Army Corps of Engineers In-lieu Wetland Mitigation Fees, paid by developers in Albany County. The Conservancy thanks Peter Ten Eyck, the Corps of Engineers, and the New York State DEC for their assistance with the acquisition.

The Conservancy also received a donation of 135 acres in the Town of Knox from Steve Brown, retired SUNY professor. This gorgeous parcel, which the Conservancy hopes to open for public hiking in the spring, contains streams and waterfalls, a wetland, and numerous, old stone walls. We are deeply appreciative of Steve's generous donation.

We also received an 18-acre parcel from Arne and Helen Loft that will enlarge our Winn Preserve. We thank them for their thoughtfulness in giving us this land. The original portion of this preserve was donated by Nancy and Hudson Winn (see article on page 2).

Finally, before the year is out, we expect to close on a 37 acre preserve in the Town of Bethlehem and on two conservation easements in the Town of Glenville. With the completion of these projects, the conservancy will have protected over 350 additional acres in 2006.

-Jill Knapp

Gala Champagne Brunch is Successful Fundraiser

It was a clear day and you COULD see forever--or at least to Massachusetts! Sunday, September 17, 2006 turned out to be the perfect day for our annual fundraiser. And the house and grounds of Marvin and Laura Bolotsky in Rensselaerville proved to be the perfect place for enjoying an early Fall afternoon. The breathtaking scenery from the Bolotsky's hilltop provided the perfect reminder of the Conservancy's goal of protecting working farms.

Over 120 guests drank champagne (and other beverages) and enjoyed the gourmet brunch from Elegant Touch

Caterers, with apple pie donated by Indian Ladder Farms, and the music of singer Jean Foster and Avery Tunngley on the keyboard.



Gala Hosts Laura and Marvin Bolotsky -John Sherman

The Silent Auction lured people to vie for items ranging from everyday necessities (dry cleaning), to enhancements for the home (paintings by a number of local artists) to outright indulgences (such as ski or beach vacations).



Guests gather for Brunch -John Sherman

Thanks to our generous donors, the following items are available for sale to the highest bidder (above the minimum bid listed). See our website for photos.

1. Antique (1800s) oak cradle from Maine: \$300.
2. Picnic and croquet for 6 at Hudson River Historic Home (2007 date to be determined): \$150.
3. Two month fitness membership at Curves for Women in Glenmont or West Sand Lake: \$25.
4. Punchbowl, recipes, and champagne: \$10.

Call 518-436-6346 or email mhlc@mohawkhudson.org with your bid by November 20.

The Gala is the major fundraising event for MHLC and we realized a significant increase from last year. That success will enable the Conservancy to expand its efforts to protect more special places..



Board President Dan Driscoll and Executive Director Jill Knapp -Don Porter

As the sun dipped into the west, guests made their way home full of good food with fond memories of a lovely afternoon with friends all dedicated to "Saving Special Places."

-Susan Filipp

Gracious Donor Recalls a "Happy Summer"

In 1959 Nancy Winn and her late husband, Hudson Winn, acquired the lands later donated to the Conservancy as the Hudson and Nancy Winn Preserve in the town of Knox. They were looking for quiet and solitude and began building a cabin on the property to use for occasional overnight visits.

Nancy remembers a "happy summer" building the cabin. After some difficulty backing the truck that brought the construction materials from New Hampshire into the building site, they built the wall sections together and then enlisted the help of neighbors to raise the walls.

The property is along the Helderberg Escarpment and is geologically significant. Historically the property included a portion of the old Albany-Schoharie trail over the Escarpment.

She is glad that the property is still used by horseback riders, hikers, and hunters, and that the cabin is occasionally a base for boy scouts camping overnight.

Nancy, now 90 years young, still teaches cello students in her lovely Beverwyck apartment, continuing a distinguished musical career that included 43 years as a cellist in the Albany Symphony Orchestra.

The Conservancy thanks Nancy for the countless hours of pleasure members and others have enjoyed over the years as the result of the generosity of the Winns.



The Cabin at the Winn Preserve –Dan Driscoll

See www.mohawkhudson.org for a map and directions to The Hudson and Nancy Winn Preserve.

Donors Keep the Momentum Going

Did you know that support from donors accounts for more than 75% of the Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy's annual budget? The land protection and public awareness activities described in this issue of *ViewPoints* are a direct result of the generosity of more than 400 individuals, families, businesses and organizations.

Our donors enable the Conservancy to save special places. In addition to paying annual dues each spring and participating in fundraisers such as our "country gala" every September, many donors include the Conservancy in their year-end giving. A growing number support us with annual gifts of \$1,000 or more.

Whether you can afford \$25 or \$2500, your contribution is very important to us. When you receive the Conservancy's year-end appeal, please respond generously. And if you are not yet a member, we invite you to clip and send in the coupon on the back of this newsletter, or visit www.mohawkhudson.org to join today!

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New State and Federal Tax Savings

Landowners who protect their property through agreements providing for conservation easements will enjoy new savings on their taxes, thanks to recent federal and state legislation.

A new federal law provides greater tax benefits to donors of conservation easements in 2006 and 2007. Now landowners will be able to deduct the value of the easement up to 50% of their adjusted gross incomes in any year, and qualifying farmers will be able to deduct up to 100%. In addition, the tax deduction may be carried forward for up to 15 years.

In addition, a new state law created a Conservation Easement Tax Credit to enable New York State landowners whose land is protected by a conservation easement to obtain an annual refund of up to 25% of the property taxes paid on that land, up to a maximum of \$5,000.

A conservation easement is a legal agreement between a landowner and the Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy, or a similar land trust or a government entity. It limits use of the land to protect its conservation value. At the same time, the landowner is free to use the land, to sell it, or to pass it on to children. The future owner of the land will also be bound by the terms of the easement, and it is the responsibility of the land trust to make sure that the terms of the easement are followed. Because of this perpetual responsibility, the Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy requires a contribution to its Stewardship Endowment when it enters into a new conservation easement.

Of course persons contemplating such an agreement should consult with their tax advisors.

See www.mohawkhudson.org for more on these laws.

Solve Your Programming Problem

Does your service club, social organization, religious group, retirement community, or even group of friends need a program for the coming year? We would welcome the chance to tell you about the Conservancy.

If you would like a free 20 to 30 minute presentation on who we are, what we do, and some of the beautiful places that we have helped to save, please contact us at 518-436-6346 or mhlc@nycap.rr.com, to schedule a program.