

Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy

ViewPoints

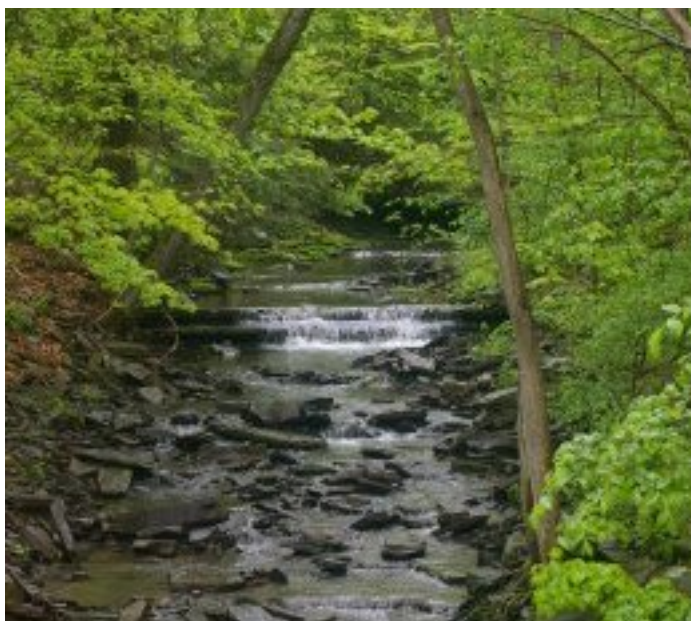
Volume 5, Number 3

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Saving Special Places

November Ribbon-Cutting Planned for Swift and Wolf Creek Falls Preserves

On Wednesday morning, November 21st, MHLC will host a ribbon-cutting to open new trails at the Swift Preserve in Delmar (the end of Evelyn Drive across from Bethlehem High School) and to officially open our Wolf Creek Falls Preserve on Bozenkill Road in the Town of Knox.



Wolf Creek Falls Preserve —Dan Driscoll

At the Swift Preserve, Chris and Jared Joyce will be honored for their trail building efforts (see related article in next column). We will also formally acknowledge the Friendship Singers for their generous financial contribution towards the kiosks recently installed at our Swift, Normans Kill, and Phillipinkill preserves in Bethlehem.

At Wolf Creek Falls we will open our newest preserve to the public. A new parking area, kiosk, and bridge to miles of trails make this preserve a beautiful retreat for local residents.

Watch our website, www.mohawkhudson.org, your email, and your local newspaper for specific timing of these events. —Helen Smith

With a Little Help From the Scouts

Our Tri-Village Greenway Committee, which has assumed stewardship responsibility for all of our Bethlehem preserves, has been hoping to get local scouting troops interested in preserve stewardship. On the 4th of July we received an email from Chris Joyce, a 17 year-old Life Scout from Troop 71 in Delmar saying that he would be “very interested” in doing his Eagle Scout project at one of our preserves.

Chris has been involved in scouting since the first grade. The Eagle Scout Award is the highest award in scouting; one of the requirements is the successful completion of a community service project.

David Barnet, a member of our Tri-Village Committee, worked with Chris and with our trails expert, Bob Smith, to lay out two sets of trails in our 20-acre Swift Wetland Preserve, directly across from Bethlehem High School. On August 11 & 12, Chris and a large crew of his friends, family, and fellow scouts, cleared and marked the trails. The project included the construction of several bridges. One trail links a series of numbered posts used by Bethlehem High School as part of a two-year science sequence. The second set of trails will be used for hiking and cross-country skiing.



Chris Joyce

Not to be outdone, Chris' cousin, Jared Joyce, a Life Scout from Troop 2 in Albany, contacted the Conservancy about a week later to ask if he could do a similar project for his Eagle Scout Project. Stewardship Chair, Dan Driscoll, worked with Jared, Bob Smith, and Long-Path trails expert Fred Schroeder to design a one-mile loop trail at our 30-acre Normans Kill Preserve (the western most of our three Normans Kill parcels). On September 22 & 23, Jared with friends, family, fellow scouts, and volunteers from the Elsmere Fire Department and the Town of Bethlehem, built and blazed the trail, including a very substantial bridge. The trail begins at the end of Normanskill Boulevard.

On Columbus Day, a group from the Knox Brownie Troop 758 gathered at the Conservancy's new Wolf Creek Falls

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Peggy Sherman

President's Message

Taking Action in Our Backyard

Thanks to many hard-working volunteers, there are new and improved trails to enjoy on Conservancy properties. In this warmer than usual fall, I've happily left my fleece jacket at home when I've gone out to explore one of them. But the satisfaction of a walk on a nice afternoon is accompanied by a pang of concern as I wonder what the temperatures will be like in a few years or a few decades.

Al Gore has helped us to envision the serious consequences of global warming. *An Inconvenient Truth* turned the somewhat abstract into a compelling picture of glaciers melting and sea levels rising. Earlier this month, we learned that Al Gore and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change would share the Nobel Peace Prize. The IPCC is a voluntary network of thousands of scientists and experts around the globe who have collaborated to produce three major assessments of the best scientific, technical, and socio-economic information about climate change since 1990. A fourth is due this month.

If you are reading this column, you are probably already responding to global climate change by recycling, using compact fluorescents, buying local produce, checking out the environmental record of political candidates, and possibly eyeing a hybrid car. Add the Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy to your personal action list! The IPCC includes land use policy as one of the many policies needed to mitigate climate change. Right in our backyard, the MHLC preserves and conservation agreements protect forests that remove carbon dioxide from the environment. By protecting farmland, the Conservancy supports the production of food that can be delivered to you without long-distance trucking or air transport. And our trails provide recreational opportunities that don't rely on fossil fuels!

Please watch for our year end appeal and give generously, or go online and make a year end donation at www.mohawkhudson.org. And I hope you will get out to enjoy our new trails!



A bridge-building project nears completion at the Swift Preserve

Development

In a land conservancy, “development” often refers to what happens to unprotected land. But there are other kinds of development: of our membership, our financial resources, and our leadership, in order to accomplish our basic mission of “saving special places.” Thus “development” shows up in the names of two important Board committees: the Membership/Development Committee, and the Board Development Committee.

The Membership/Development Committee is responsible for building and cultivating a broad base of support that will expand the Conservancy’s resources for protecting land. We need to find new members and retain current ones. We do this by participating in local events like the Albany History Fair, by hosting events at preserves, and by making presentations to local groups. In addition, current members host gatherings and invite their friends and neighbors to learn more about the Conservancy. The Board Development Committee is responsible for sustaining and building the Board of Directors. We strive to get a Board that includes directors who have the wide variety of skills and backgrounds needed to accomplish our tasks.

The Conservancy was able to achieve impressive results during its first thirteen years relying on “free” volunteer time and skills. But it soon became apparent that volunteer capacity would not be sufficient to implement our strategic plan. The true costs of protecting land in perpetuity include far more than just the costs associated with establishing ownership of a preserve, finalizing a conservation agreement with a landowner, or maintaining our office and staff. While our current staff has greatly increased our capacity, we need more staff. Our workload has increased as more landowners learn about the opportunity MHLC provides them to protect their land from development.

Our greatest source of new members is the good will and enthusiasm of the members we have. Pass this *View-Points* on to someone you know who agrees that special places need to be saved, and encourage him or her to join! We are fortunate to have many generous supporters, but we always need new members to support and ensure our future growth and success.
—Judy Thomson

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

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Preserve. While they didn’t build a bridge, they did a beautiful job cleaning-up the trails.

We send a big thank-you to all of our scouting friends.
—Dan Driscoll



Jared Joyce, his dad, Daniel, and friends lay out a trail at MHLC’s Normans Kill Preserve.

Gala is a Great Success

Our annual Gala is an important event to MHLC. It’s a chance for members to make new acquaintances, renew old ones, share experiences, and, importantly, make a major contribution to the Conservancy’s financial success. This year’s Gala, held on the grounds of the historic Pruy House in Latham, enjoyed wonderful weather and a beautiful setting. Record contributions and earnings from our silent auction made this Gala one of our most successful. Thank-you to all who contributed their time, energy, and money.



Guests arriving for the MHLC Gala on the beautiful grounds of the Pruy House



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Mark Your Calendar

Nov. 20, 7:00 p.m.: Unitarian-Universalist Society, 405 Washington Ave, Albany;
As part of the Society's Lecture Series: "Your Future Looks Green - Respect for the Interdependent Web of All Existence," MHLC Executive Director, Jill Knapp, will speak on, "**The Benefits of Open Space Protection: It's More Than a Pretty View.**"

Dec. 12, 7:00 p.m.: Cornell Cooperative Extension Albany County, Voorheesville;
MHLC will host a workshop on **Transfer of Development Rights**. Gary Kleppel, Professor of Biological Sciences and Director of the Biodiversity, Conservation and Policy Program, at the University at Albany, will present the program.

Jan. 13, 1:00 p.m.: Schoharie Crossing Historic Site;
Jill Knapp will give a presentation on the Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy.

On-going, MHLC's Tri-Village Committee;
Join us for information and volunteer opportunities in the Delmar, Slingerlands, Elsmere area. Call 436-6346 for information and meeting dates.