



Walkkill Valley Land Trust

ESOPUS, GARDINER, LLOYD, MARLBOROUGH, NEW PALTZ, PLATTEKILL, ROSENDALE, SHAWANGUNK

FALL 2015 NEWSLETTER

Poet's Preserve

Barbara Petersen and Roger Roloff Donate a Conservation Easement

When Roger Roloff and Barbara Petersen approached the Walkkill Valley Land Trust, interested in putting a conservation easement on their property, it came as no surprise that they wanted to name it "Poet's Preserve."

Many know Roger Roloff's vocal background: he has been a singer since childhood and made his living as a baritone on the world's opera and concert stages. Roger still creates his own sonnets, ballads and blank verse, and has produced six books displaying his talents. It is said that Roger's work makes poetry accessible to all (even if you do not like poetry!). His sixth book will be published this fall: *Heartwood: New and Selected Poems*. A new poem from it, "Green Conservative," is included at the end of this article.

A former clarinet player and choral singer turned musicologist, Barbara enjoyed a long career in the classical music business, first in publishing and then at BMI, the performing rights organization. Her dissertation (later published as a book in both English and German versions) emphasizes the relationship between words and music in the songs and operas of Richard Strauss.

Both Roger and Barbara are avid homestead gardeners whose food gardens sustain them much of the year. They also work up their own firewood every year, using old hand tools, enjoy picking berries at home or in the wild, and continue identifying the diverse plants around them. They have led spring wildflower walks at the Mohonk Preserve for many years, educating community members and visitors on the biodiversity of the Shawangunks. They are even featured in the Mohonk Preserve Visitor Center's video, which greets people daily.

Their own property is also very special. Comprising two parcels, the nearly 12- acre land is in the Town and Village of New Paltz. It borders the northern edge of the Duzine School property, buffering it from the residential area along Hummel Road. The east end abuts Town property that will become part of the Mill Brook Preserve. The topography rises in a series of parallel low ridges and valleys. The ridges are steep in a few places, with exposed outcrops of the underlying Normanskill shale bedrock. The property's undulating topography provides several habitat types within its relatively small expanse.

Poet's Preserve
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Photos by Lynn Bowdery



Roger Roloff and Barbara Petersen at Poet's Preserve



Conglomerate boulders at Poet's Preserve.

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To enhance the quality of life in southern Ulster County by conserving lands of scenic, agricultural, ecological, recreational and cultural significance.

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A Message from the President

Dear friends and fellow WVLT members:

Hello! I hope this edition of our newsletter finds you well and you have enjoyed the summer months! As the new President of the WVLT Board, I wanted to take a minute to introduce myself and tell you a little bit about some of the areas I'm planning to focus on during my two year term.



I've lived in the Hudson Valley since 2000, when I moved here from Washington, DC to work at a local marketing agency. In 2002, I bought an old farm in Rosendale, where the 1760s Dutch Barn dominates the property. As an avid runner, climber, and general all-around outdoorsperson, one of the reasons I wanted to make my home in this region was the abundance of beautiful outdoor spaces – recreational destinations like Mohonk Preserve and Minnewaska State Park, as well as the bucolic farmland, woods, and other habitats that surround these properties. Those of us who live here are truly blessed!

I originally got involved with the Wallkill Valley Land Trust when we purchased, in partnership with Open Space Institute (OSI), the Trestle in Rosendale. The vision of a restored Trestle that would connect the existing Rail Trail to the south to the (then unopened) sections of rail bed that ran north to Kingston was music to this trail runner's ears! I joined the Trestle fundraising committee and was honored to become a member of the WVLT Board of Directors shortly thereafter. It gives me tremendous satisfaction to run or walk across the Trestle now (often with my eight-year-old daughter), and enjoy the fruits of our hard work!

So, I know what the WVLT can accomplish – and I am excited to help us continue our work in the region over the next two years. One of our key priorities is completing a mapping initiative that will plot our conservation priorities (sensitive habitats, viewsheds and watersheds, historic properties, and property adjacent to public recreation areas are some of our criteria) on a map of the regions we serve, so that we can be more proactive about identifying property we want to conserve. This will allow us to approach private landowners about the benefits of placing conservation easements on their properties, as well as to identify, with partners like Scenic Hudson and OSI, larger parcels we could help conserve for future generations – some of which we can even help open to the public as we've done with Joppenbergh Mountain and the Trestle.

Another priority is working more closely with other land trusts in the region and the Land Trust Alliance to pursue larger projects in partnership with the County and State and other non-governmental organizations. Land conservation is one part of helping address big public policy issues – including climate change, keeping our air and water clean, and even promoting public health through connecting people (especially our youth) to the land and all of the benefits it offers.

I hope that you'll continue to help support our work, and I welcome your feedback and involvement in what we are doing. Drop me a line with your thoughts or join us at one of our events and say hello in person. It's your support that allows us to continue our work and we'd like to hear from you.

Thanks and I hope to see you soon,

Hensley Evans

Walks and Talks Update

The Walkkill Valley Land Trust resumed its Walks and Talks series this spring and summer for members and non-members. The series includes guided tours of lands protected by WVLT, both privately owned and some that are open to the public.

April 2015 was the start of our Walk and Talk series, with science teacher and naturalist John Garesché leading a detailed tour of the frog population at the Nyquist-Harcourt Sanctuary, one of our conservation easements. Participants ranging in age from 86 to 5 years old searched for Spring Peepers, Wood Frogs and American Toads. They were more easily heard, than seen, but we did find a few Spring Peepers. A few who stayed till the very end also enjoyed a close encounter with a Barred Owl!

In May, 2015, we had our annual Eastern Box Turtle Walk and Talk at the Smith Property. We always have a great turnout for this event, and we always find turtles. This year we were able to identify some “repeaters” fairly quickly, such as female Box Turtle “Caroline” (number 6 out of the 86 individual turtles that have been identified in the past ten years on the property). Participants also had a treat when we came across juvenile Woodcocks in the grass, whose new feathers made them look like plush stuffed animals!



Visitors to the Smith Property in May 2015 for Turtle Day.

A second frog walk took place in early June at the Woodland Pond conservation easement and participants spotted even more species including Green Frogs and Bull Frogs. The large group enjoyed the chorus of frogs even as a light rain came and went, and a few turtles were found before we called it a night!

Also in June 2015, Christine Guarino, a Pine Bush High School biology teacher and WVLT member, led a bird watching Walk and Talk in Rosendale on the Walkkill Valley Rail Trail. The clear, cool skies led to the discovery of several different bird species. Bats were

spotted flying in and out of the shallow caves below Joppenbergh Mountain, a welcomed surprise to all!



Birders: Chrissy Guarino, Ed and Carol Moran.

Finally, in August 2015 Tom Rankin from the Mid-Hudson Astronomical was successful in leading a stargazing walk onto the Osborne Farm in Gardiner. Because of the clear conditions, low level of light pollution, and New Moon, they were able to see over 15 shooting stars during the Perseid Meteor Shower, also Saturn’s rings and the Milky Way among other things.

Please contact us if you are interested in leading a Walk and Talk, as we love to provide opportunities to share with others the amazing things happening on the lands we are protecting.



View of the the Milky Way during stargazing Walk and Talk on the Osborne Farm, Aug. 13, 2015

Photo courtesy of John Fischer:
www.NoRoadUnturned.com

**Thank you to all of our 2015 members (through August 31).
Because of you, we are able to help protect this special place!**

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Poet's Preserve
from page 1...

Five different wetland areas have been delineated in the low and poorly drained areas, mostly underlain by Madalin Silt Loam, a hydric soil. The land is part of the watershed of the Mill Brook, also known as Tributary 13 of the Wallkill River, so it protects the water quality of the watershed. A group of large Shawangunk conglomerate boulders was thoughtfully placed on the property by the last glacier, creating a lovely spot from which to enjoy the forest and a nearby small seasonal stream. The higher areas support a second-growth forest of mixed deciduous tree species, with a scattering of pines and hemlocks. It is likely that farming activities here were limited to pasturage and were abandoned earlier than the higher eastern end, where apple orchards were in evidence into the 20th century and the early succession Eastern Red Cedars still make up a dense stand. The outcrops and sides of the shale ridges provide habitat for lime-loving plants, such as Ebony Spleenwort (*Asplenium platyneuron*), Dutchman's Breeches (*Dicentra cucullaria*) and Spotted Wintergreen (*Chimaphila maculata*). Roger and Barbara keep a growing list of plants they observe year-round, which WVLT is including in the baseline condition report. Each season brings new discoveries and old delights, whether a large expanse of Jewelweed, a hilltop of Canada Mayflower, or a single blooming Wood Anemone.

As in most of the region, White-Tailed Deer have browsed extensively here, creating a very open understory, and the few shrubs are largely Multiflora Rose and invasive honeysuckle. Nevertheless, the property provides good habitat for many plant and animal species and, as part of a larger undeveloped area (part of which is planned to become the Mill Brook Preserve, or is protected by the conservation easement on the Woodland Pond property that are also held by WVLT), will continue to provide a habitat reserve and movement corridor even as other parts of the Town are more densely developed. Roger and Barbara stress the importance of this area as a wildlife sanctuary for the local wild turkeys, deer, Red-Shouldered Hawks, and other resident species.

The conservation easement, which WVLT expects to sign with Roger and Barbara before the end of 2015, protects the land forever. Although it is not open to the

public, the easement allows for foot trails but prohibits structures or development. The land is currently private, but it could be public in the future. Whether private or public, Poet's Preserve's environmental, open space, scenic, habitat, biodiversity watershed, historical and archaeological values will remain intact in perpetuity!

Green Conservative

--for Doris Alberg--



*The thought of lawyers working for my plants,
not rare but common, always tickles me—
though it's high time to make good on the chance
an easement grants to be more neighborly.
Don't get me wrong: I'm no trendy tree-hugger.
I heat with dead hardwood, cut fallen cedar
for posts, and swing a bat called Louisville Slugger.
But I'd like being good land's closest reader
before I set foot on an unspoiled part.
For instance there's a slope I thought I knew
till one raw April day a small upstart
named windflower trembled near my passing shoe
and marked a patch of others blossoming.
Then there's the strip of spotted wintergreen
that peeked from shalebank snow when groundhog spring,
six cold weeks off, slept under icebound sheen.
Still resting, too, were ashes, elms, and oaks:
tall, largely silent partners of long standing
whose rustling crowns are some of woods' best strokes
of magic as the growing season's landing.
That's when I breathe these trees' breath—their exhaust,
in fact—and they breathe mine, a natural trade
that serves both sides, maintained at no great cost:
letting them be, thanking them for their shade.
That darkness brought down cedars, but it left
woodbine, hornbeams near where those windflowers thrive,
and spleenwort lodged in many a rocky cleft.
Why meddle with this gift? I'd sooner strive
to keep it whole and only use dead bits:
never green neighbors like this Christmas fern,
whose frond I know, yet not why here it fits.
The woods, I'm sure, will stand by while I learn.*

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Doris Alberg, the dedicatee and a longtime friend of
Barbara and Roger's, is president of the Rhode Island
Tree Council.



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Wallkill Valley Land Trust to Honor Tom Nyquist at Brykill Farm

The Wallkill Valley Land Trust's 11th Annual Conservation Award Ceremony on October 4th, 2015 at Brykill Farm will celebrate Tom Nyquist for his work in southern Ulster County.

Tom has been an advocate and supporter of the Wallkill Valley Rail Trail since it first came to be. He was the Mayor of the Village of New Paltz when they purchased their section of the Rail Trail from the Wallkill Valley Land Trust (WVLT), which holds and monitors the conservation easement on the linear park. Tom has remained active with the Wallkill Valley Rail Trail Association (our sister-not-for-profit) from its start, helping to make sure the Rail Trail is enjoyed by all who visit.



Tom Nyquist also is currently Chair of the Board of the Thomas and Corinne Nyquist Foundation. In July of 2011 the family foundation purchased the now Nyquist-Harcourt Wildlife Sanctuary, a 56-acre public park, which also has a conservation easement on it held and monitored by WVLT. The Foundation maintains the Sanctuary making it accessible to visitors to enjoy the many trees, shrubs, grasses, wildflowers, ponds, insects, mammals, reptiles, and birds both native and migratory.

The Wallkill Valley Land Trust is delighted to join with community members, friends, and neighbors to celebrate all Tom has done and continues to do for conservation in this region!

If you would like to make a donation to honor Tom Nyquist or purchase tickets to this event, please visit our website: www.WallkillValleyLT.org.