



Walkkill Valley Land Trust

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

SPRING 2015 NEWSLETTER

Houses on the Land: The Fruits of Marlborough... From the Highlands to the Hudson

Our 5th annual historic house tour on May 30th was a huge success! Organized with the help of many of the town's residents and over twenty committee members working together more than eight months, we had more than 300 participants and over 100 volunteers on the day of the tour.

The Town of Marlborough was celebrated in all its glory, a region defined by sweeping vistas of the majestic Hudson River and fertile orchard-crowned hills rising up to its west, which retain today some of the most pastoral agrarian landscapes and scenic panoramas in Ulster County.

Winding through the hamlets of Lattingtown, Milton and Marlboro, each with its own distinctive character, this year's tour focused on the diverse forces that shaped the region's rich and enduring cultural history, architectural traditions and agricultural heritage. The town's rural roots were highlighted alongside its riverside communities and local industries from its earliest families and their role in the Revolution to generations of farmers and fruit-growers, as well as the Hudson River's role in their prosperity. Once a

rural haven for artists and writers, the town is today enjoying a resurgence in fruit-growing, spurred by the farm-to-table movement, and is also home to some important vineyards and wineries, including Benmarl and Stoutridge, which contributed their wines to the final reception at Judy and Steve Clarke's stunning homestead site, Prospect Hill Orchards.

Featured were eight of the town's finest private homes and farm complexes, all of which are connected to the region's important early settlers. Most have never before been open to the public. Among the 18th-century houses were a frame dwelling believed to be the earliest in the region as well as a rare example of the gerkin-head roof-type, belonging to Marie and George Rusk; and a charming, lovingly-restored rural homestead of the same period, home to Tina McKenna and Noble Shropshire.

Several grand 19th-century river houses perched high above the Hudson, and their rural cousins in orchard country

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From Left to Right: View of Apple Orchards at Prospect Hill Orchard/Clarke Homestead; Wygant-Baker House in Marlboro; Enjoying the Reception at the Clarke's



OUR MISSION:

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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Lynn Bowdery,
Land Steward

President's Message

My two-year term as President of the Walkkill Valley Land Trust ends June 30th. I will be stepping down to happily return to other worthwhile pursuits. This is a good time to reflect on the Land Trust's recent accomplishments and future challenges. Our most visible achievement has been doubling of the Walkkill Valley Rail Trail and opening of the Rosendale Trestle. Completion of the Walkkill Valley Rail Trail from Gardiner to Kingston is a major success that makes us the keystone section in the rail trail system eventually linking the Walkway-Over-the-Hudson to the Catskills.

During the last two years we have strived to become a more effective organization and laid the ground work for accreditation. We developed our first specific goals and selection criteria for proactively acquiring new lands and easements. After an extended period of working on the Rail Trail, we've resolved to return to focusing on pursuing easements to conserve threatened lands such as irreplaceable farms. The management advances and policies we've adopted made it possible for us to apply in April for national accreditation by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission.

Seeking accreditation demonstrates that we use the best practices to protect and steward lands. This assures our donors that we operate with high standards of accountability and also means we are more eligible for grants. LTA accreditation is the "Good House Keeping Seal of Approval" that informed donors look for.

WVLT's mission is to conserve treasured lands in perpetuity. The major challenge with our expanding lands and stewardship responsibilities is to raise the funding necessary to be truly sustainable. To do that we have planned a "Combined Sustainability Campaign" soliciting the funds required to meet our current and future needs. I hope you will give generously so that we can reach our goals for continuing to enhance the quality of life in beautiful Southern Ulster County.

With Best Wishes,



*Chris Bernabo
President*



Huguenot Street Writing Program Inspires Students

This summer the Hudson Valley Writing Project at SUNY New Paltz (HVWP), the Wallkill Valley Land Trust, and the Huguenot Historical Society will collaborate for a second year on an innovative summer program for young adults called “Exploring Nature and History on Huguenot Street.”

In this unique, one-week enrichment program, students between the ages of 12-16 will explore the New Paltz historic site and adjoining lands. Young writers will find inspiration for their writing and creativity through small, guided tours of the colonial stone houses, hikes in the Nyquist-Harcourt Wildlife Sanctuary, and visits to Huguenot Street Farm. The program aims to give students a rich sense of the early history of the New Paltz community and an appreciation for the land and wildlife of the Wallkill

River Valley.

Two HVWP instructors, Laura Ifill, a creative writing teacher at New York Harbor School in Brooklyn, and Dennis Maher, an eighth-grade English teacher at Newburgh’s South Middle School, will lead the program. With encouragement and support from their mentors, students will write daily, revise their work, and share their writing in an anthology and at a celebratory reading.

A parent of a student in last year’s program praised the work, “It was fun for my daughter to visit the local places, learn some history about them, and then be able to write her own creative short story.” Maher believes that “these experiences not only create a lifetime of memories, but they help students develop a better understanding of what it means to learn beyond the classroom walls.”

“Exploring Nature and History on Huguenot Street” will take place on August 3-7, 2015 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The tuition is \$295 and scholarships are available. Registration and additional information available at www.newpaltz.edu/hvwp/summercamps/, or by contacting Diane Rawson, HVWP Coordinating Director of Youth Programs: (845) 943-8437.



THANK YOU

Committee Members, House Tour Homeowners,
Volunteers, Supporters, Tour-Goers
and of course our MEMBERS!

Because of you, we are able to help protect this special place!

Also, Thank You to Our Business Sponsor!



Conservation Easement Stewardship: Meet Lynn Bowdery!



The Wallkill Valley Land Trust monitors all of our conservation easements each year here in southern Ulster County. We visit the thirty-three properties we hold land preservation agreements on to ensure the conservation values remain protected. It is interesting to observe what is happening on these lands, as some remain in their natural state while others are very active in agricultural use. The individual who carries out the annual easement monitoring and who creates baseline condition documentation reports for the past 11 years and counting is Lynn Bowdery.

In 2004, Lynn received training in baseline documentation from Open Space Institute's Land Steward. Since that time, she has attended a wide range of easement and baseline oriented trainings at Land Trust Alliance (LTA) conferences and webinars on monitoring and baselines. She has also participated in the Hudsonia Biodiversity Training Program.

Deeply interested in the natural world, Lynn's bedside reading is often field guides and other writings about birds, trees, insects, natural history and environmental issues. She participated in the NYS DEC Winter Waterfowl Count for the last 11 years and the Audubon Christmas Bird Count for over 20 years. She has coordinated the Mohonk Preserve

Daniel Smiley Research Center's annual Breeding Bird Census for over 20 years.

Lynn was a member of the original Board of the Wallkill Valley Rail Trail Association which maintains the rail trail's 22 miles from the southern border of Gardiner to the City of Kingston, and has served as its Treasurer twice and President once. Now she is on the Board of the John Burroughs Natural History Society. She edits their newsletter, "The Chirp" and leads walks to identify local flora and fauna. She has been on the New Paltz Planning Board as a regular member for 5 years and as an alternate for another five years, and is also a member of the New Paltz Clean Water and Open Space Protection Commission.

A little known fact: Lynn holds a classics baccalaureate in Latin with a Greek minor from Barnard College. Her prior career work includes ten years at the Library of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), Institute for Space Studies in New York City! In her free time, Lynn leads Walks and Talks for the Land Trust, sharing with others her extensive knowledge! Lynn lives with her husband Allan in New Paltz. Allan is the president of the Hudson River Maritime Museum and former WVLT board member. Allan and Lynn became grandparents for the first time this year. When Lynn is not out monitoring easements or exploring habitats, she is tending her garden (or visiting her granddaughter!)

WVLT is very grateful for her dedication, her attention to detail, and her passion for land conservation. If you would like to learn more about conservation easements, or if you would like to donate to our Conservation Defense and Stewardship Fund that supports protecting these important areas, forever, please email Christie@WallkillValleyLT.org.

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One of the historic sites from the tour: The Quimby Barns

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exhibited a range of vernacular styles, including Greek Revival and Italianate to the Picturesque Movement of the Victorian era, inspired by A.J. Davis and Andrew Jackson Downing. Among the river houses, which reflect the prominence and prosperity of their original merchant-owners, were those belonging to Glenn Clarke, a Hallock descendant who opened many of the doors to these stunning homes; Claudette Hennessey, whose house is on the National Register of Historic Places; Rosemarie and Bonnie Lyons' beautiful estate, replete with fascinating barns; and Jay Key and Annie Kunjappy's Gothic Revival concoction.

Their mid-19th-century country counterparts, which show similar tendencies on a simpler scale, included Anne Quimby and Robert Cotton's charming home in the colonial revival taste and Howard and Marie Baker's picturesque Italianate aerie. Historic sites, all three on the National Register, included Gomez Mill House, a fascinating house museum with a complex early history; Christ Episcopal Church, a Gothic Revival beauty by Richard Upjohn; and the 1883 Milton-on-Hudson Train Station on Dock Road, the registration site and a wonderful example of Marlborough's dedication to preserving an iconic symbol of the town's agricultural and industrial history.

Meet Lynn from page 4...

A Note From Our Land Steward:

I am so fortunate to have stumbled into my work as Land Steward at WVLT. It brings together so many of my interests and evoked talents I never knew I had. I really enjoy putting together the baseline documentation for a new conservation easement. I get to meet the wonderful people who care enough about their land and its the future to donate an easement. I get to walk the land and learn its features and history, take photographs, do research for detailed information, write a narrative description and photo captions, and organize all this information to make it accessible and intelligible not only now, but well in the future.

Each baseline is not only a documentation of a conservation easement, but a celebration of it. Working with Mohonk's Dan Smiley Research Center has given me a great appreciation for the wider value of this kind of landscape documentation. In the future, the photographs could be useful for understanding what has changed over time, particularly with climate change. Using my location information, researchers will be able to stand where I stood and see what I saw. What will they see 100, 200 years from now?

The required annual monitoring visits to WVLT's 33 conservation easement properties gives me an occasion to renew my acquaintance with the landowners and their property. It is a pleasure to walk these beautiful private lands, knowing that they will be preserved from development, farmlands preserved to provide food and other agricultural products, woodlands and wetlands left alone to provide habitats and movement corridors for plants and animals, the clean air and water of healthy natural systems protected, and the beauty and solace of nature preserved, whatever else might happen around them.

I have found relatively few violations of our easements restrictions, and most of those are caused by adjacent landowners-- things like dumping and trespass with motorized vehicles.

I am thankful for the opportunity to work with the great staff, board and supporters of WVLT to make a positive difference in our region and world.



Wallkill Valley
LAND TRUST

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Not a member yet?

If you are concerned about the steady loss of our wildlife habitats, scenic vistas, and farmlands, now is the time to act. Through membership in the Land Trust, you will stand with others in the Wallkill Valley and beyond who have chosen to preserve our natural resources for future generations.

Benefits of membership include:

- Invitation to our member-only programs and events
- “Walk and Talk” outings
- Updates on conservation projects
- Opportunities to volunteer
- Knowing that you are active in helping the Land Trust fulfill its mission of preserving the natural beauty of Southern Ulster County

We exist because of our dedicated and generous supporters. We feel it is important that your generosity be recognized by the distinction of membership. Please add your support to the preservation of land in this community by joining the Wallkill Valley Land Trust today.