

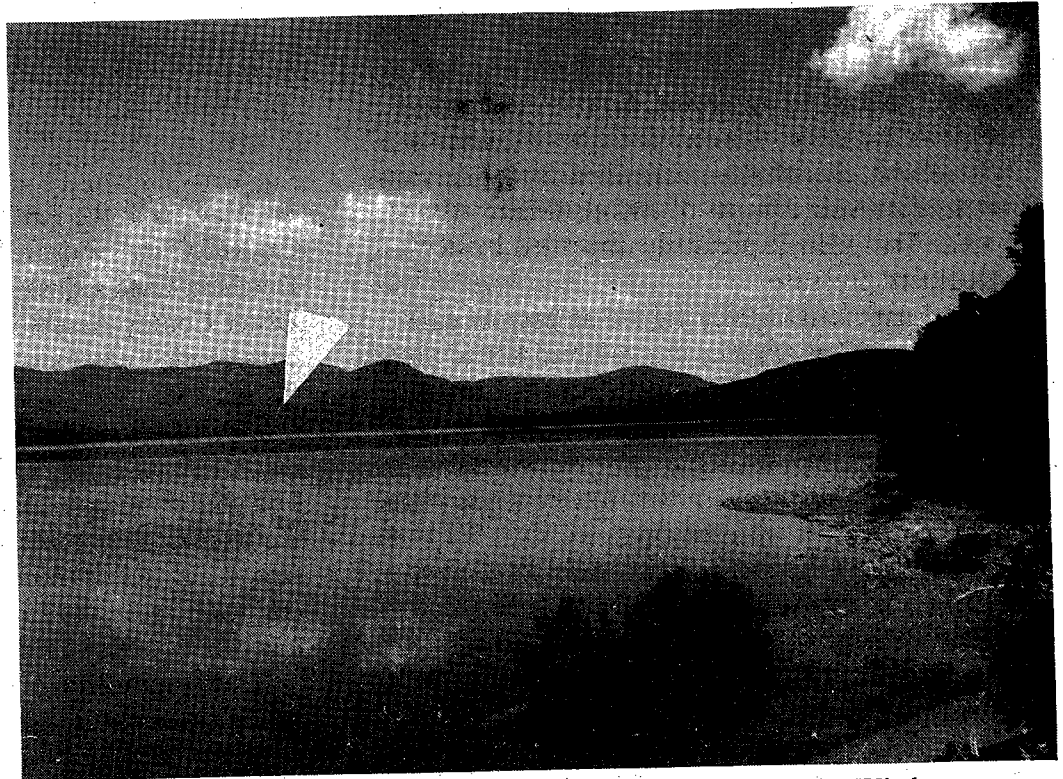


NEWS

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SUMMER
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INSIDE:

- **RELC Engaged for Conservation Planning**
- **First Wetland Protection in Marbletown**
- **Conservancy Gains Approval for New Office: Work Begins!**
- **Survey Shows Rapid Growth of Land Trust Movement**



The arrow marks the land protected in memory of Charles Wiedner

FIRST CONSERVATION EASEMENT IN OLIVE PROTECTS VIEW FROM ASHOKAN

by Bowen Northrup

The Conservancy has signed one of its largest conservation easements yet, a 254-acre mountainside property overlooking the Ashokan Reservoir. It is a pristine wooded site owned by Lois Wiedner Langthorn, a West Shokan resident all her life. "I love this place," Mrs. Langthorn says. "I feel as though it's part of me."

The property reflects that caring. Mrs. Langthorn and her husband Jack motor about the mountain on old logging roads in their battered 1943 Jeep, stashing fallen branches into tidy piles and keeping the paths open.

Mrs. Langthorn is dedicating the easement to her deceased first husband, Charles H. Wiedner, author of "Water For A City," a book about the Ashokan Reservoir. Mr. Wiedner was for many years a chicken farmer adjacent to where Mrs. Langthorn now lives.

The eventual heirs to the property are two nieces of Mrs. Langthorn, one of whom lives in Maine and the other in North Carolina. Both have voiced their approval of the easement banning all future development except for one possible house site that might be used by a close friend of Mrs. Langthorn.

She herself is "really pleased" to have executed the easement. "Now I can pat the trees and say, 'Don't worry, you're taken care of,'" she comments. "I'm sure this would make wonderful building lots. But it also makes wonderful woods."

Mrs. Langthorn's property, on the west side of the reservoir off Route 28A, is notable for its piney woods and sun-dappled meadows and for an abundance of seasonal streams and springs that criss-cross the mountain

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ASHOKAN VIEW (from page 1)

side and run into the reservoir. So this easement is good news for the consumers of Ashokan water and for those who cherish the uncluttered mountain views from the reservoir dam road, and elsewhere around the area. That view is seriously imperiled by new development pressure.

Mrs. Langthorn initially signed an escrow easement with the Conservancy that allowed her to protect her land in the event of her death. An escrow easement is a signed conservation easement held by the Conservancy but not recorded until certain conditions arise. The conservation easement has now been finalized by recording it with the County Clerk.

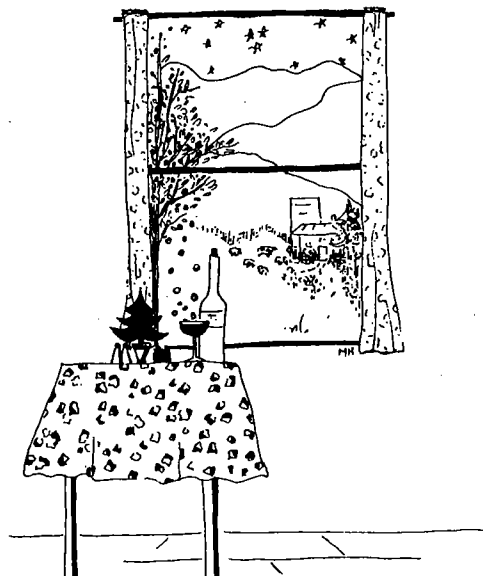
This is the Conservancy's first easement in Olive and its first in the Ashokan vicinity. It is hoped that others in the area will follow.

MANHATTAN GATHERING

On June 3rd, RELC took the show on the road and held a benefit dinner at the Cafe Luxembourg in Manhattan. Over 65 people came out to support the Conservancy and take advantage of being able to meet like-minded people who also spend time in this area.

The Cafe Luxembourg provided a wonderful setting for the exceptional dinner. Donn Palladino, co-owner of the Cafe and an Accord resident, was very generous in making the restaurant available for our use. We look forward to making this an annual event.

The evening included a toast to the now-clean waters of the Rondout and Esopus (which come out of the taps in Manhattan) and a gift of Shawangunk hemlock saplings to all the dinner guests. Thank you for the support!



CONFERENCE ON PROPERTY TAXES BRINGS ASSESSORS AND EXPERTS TOGETHER

On May 10 at the Radisson Hotel in Poughkeepsie, the RELC co-sponsored a conference with the Dutchess Land Conservancy and the Dutchess and Ulster County Assessors' Associations on the affect of conservation easements on property assessments and the tax base.

One of the most common questions asked by land-owners about conservation easements has been: "Will I be able to get my property taxes lowered if I donate a conservation easement?" We thought it was important to get conservation planners, attorneys, appraisers, town assessors and other town and state officials together in one room to discuss this issue.

The program gave an overview of what a conservation easement is, how the restrictions of the easement may affect the value of property, and the overall effects on the town tax base conservation easements could have in the long term.

Attorney Bill Ginsberg, a nationally recognized expert in conservation easements (and a Boiceville resident), started the program with an explanation of conservation easements and made a case for the significant reduction in value that would occur under a restrictive conservation easement. Peter Hubbell, an appraiser with the firm of L.T. Bookhout, Inc., reviewed how to determine any loss in value associated with restricting the future use of property. Scott Chase, the Town Supervisor of Pine Plains in Dutchess County, described his belief (backed up by many recent studies) that the more development that occurs in a town together with the associated loss of open space, the higher the taxes will be to service that development. Put simply, if assessors took into account the restrictions of conservation easements and lowered assessments accordingly, the municipality would benefit by not having to service new development at a loss for the municipality. Conservation easements, he said, could keep taxes lower in a town that encourages conservation by accurately determining any loss in value that is attributable to the gift of a conservation easement.

It was generally agreed that conservation easements must be considered by assessors when determining value. It was also agreed that each individual property and the restrictions in each conservation easement are unique.

