



NEWS
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FALL
1997

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Bowen Northrup's Estate Preserves an Historic Landmark

An Ulster County historic landmark known as Bogart's Glen has been added to the list of special places protected by the Rondout-Esopus Land Conservancy. In the woods above an old stone house, Dutch barn, and ruin of a cider mill is a forty foot waterfall at the head of a deep valley carved by the Kripplebush Kill. In his last will and testament, the late Bowen Northrup, vice-president of the RELC for seven years, requested that a conservation easement be placed on this 56.4 acre parcel that he had purchased from "Miss Elizabeth" Bogart in 1988.

(Continued on page 3)



Photos of Northrup easement by Robert Hansen-Sturm

Introducing Our New Executive Director



Renee Bouplon, Exec. Dir.

The Rondout Esopus Land Conservancy is pleased to announce the appointment of Renee Bouplon as its new executive director. Ms Bouplon, who grew up in Cambridge, NY, is a graduate of Hamilton College with departmental honors in geology. Recently she received her Masters of Studies in Environmental Law from Vermont Law School. There her coursework included land use planning, conservation land trusts, environmental law, water resources, watershed protection and environmental policy management.

Ms Bouplon, who interned at the Battenkill Conservancy and the Vermont Land Trust, will begin working for the RELC immediately. Her appointment marks a giant step forward for the RELC whose last executive director and one of its founders, Ira Stern, left early in 1993 to head the Dutchess Land Conservancy.

The hiring of Ms Bouplon was made possible by a grant from the Rural New York Grant Program, administered by the Land Trust Alliance of New York, with the support of the J.M. Kaplan Fund, The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, The Margaret L. Wendt Foundation, the Philip Morris Companies, Inc, and the Corning Incorporated Foundation.

E.B.

Open Letter From Renee Bouplon

Dear RELC Members:

I am absolutely delighted to be working for the Rondout Esopus Land Conservancy. After touring the region and visiting several protected lands of the conservancy, I certainly understand the strong sentiment to preserve this picturesque landscape. Not only are these conserved lands protected, but also the traditional land uses and the local heritage they represent will be protected for the benefit of future generations.

I was impressed by the accomplishments the Conservancy has achieved in such a short period of time. The number of conservation easements as well as the number of members the organization currently has suggest an active organization committed to preserving special open places. The conservancy is blessed to have such a dedicated board of directors and advisors, not to mention the many members, such as yourself, and volunteers that contribute to its success.

I am eager to further the conservancy's mission of preserving natural areas. As executive director of the Conservancy, my tasks will include acquiring more conservation easements, sustaining a solid membership, increasing public awareness of the organization and its mission, and gaining more financial support for its activities. Through local newspapers and upcoming RELC newsletters, you will be kept informed of our progress in land conservation projects and future RELC events.

I look forward to meeting you and encourage you to call me at 914 657-3310 and we will set up an appointment to meet. Thanks for your continued support!

Warmest Regards,

Renee J. Bouplon

Renee J. Bouplon

(Cont'd from page 1)

Located in Stone Ridge on Bogart's Lane between Mill Dam and Tongore Roads, it is a largely wooded parcel with views north over the Esopus floodplain to Lomontville and Marbletown.

The stone house, circa 1709, was home to generations of the Bogart family. In fact, well into the 1970s Miss Elizabeth and her brother John continued to maintain a long tradition of growing crops on the flats and grazing sheep on the once familiar hill just across the lane from the house and barn. The hill, a glacial landform shaped like a round loaf of bread at the terminus of the Esopus floodplain, was circled by sheep trails from the base to the summit.

Upon the sale of the estate, the Conservancy will receive a tax-deductible contribution. This sum will be used to monitor the property in perpetuity. It is hoped that the new owners will repair the Dutch barn and maintain the integrity of this remarkable complex of house, barn, and outbuildings that remind us of a slow paced, simpler time. F.S.

THE FALLS

... a
 forty
 foot
 water
 fall
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 head
 of
 a deep
 valley
 carved
 by the
 Kripplebush
 Kill



To honor Bowen Northrup's memory, a memorial fund has been established at the Conservancy.

To those of us who knew Bowen well he was both a kind and gentle man. Shaped by experiences as wide ranging as Princeton, the U.S. Marine Corps and a career at the Wall Street Journal, Bowen always took pains to go out of *his* way to avoid giving hurt to others. His companion, Bonnie Cooper, relates how Bowen for several years after he had bought the old stone house (pictured above) lived in only half of it so that "Miss Elizabeth" Bogart might live out her days in the rest of the house. On the Board of the Conservancy his presence is very much missed.

Those here listed have made contributions in his memory:

- | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| Elinor Boice | Sarah & Henry Hansen | Virginia Schoonmaker |
| Helen Chase | Melanie E. Johnston | Carol S. Schwabacher |
| Diane D. Cooper | Marjorie & DeWitt Hasbrouck | Ira Stern |
| Ellen Graham | Julia & Donald Moffitt | Fred Steuding |
| | Jack & Alice Schoonmaker | Margaret Warren |

A LIVE HAND ON THE FUTURE - A landowner's thoughts

Recorded by Marjorie Dunbar at Horseshoe Farm in Lomontville on October 25, 1997

Speaking as a landowner who has recently donated a conservation easement to the Rondout Esopus Land Conservancy, I wish to share some thoughts with those of you who may be perhaps considering such a step yourselves. This I am sure you realize by now is not to be taken lightly. There are many factors which enter in to this decision. For one thing there are legal and financial considerations which need to be addressed by consulting with an attorney and likely also a tax consultant or an estate planner. I am not qualified to discuss these at any great length although my husband and I did avail ourselves of the best possible advice in this connection.

Rather I would prefer to address questions of a more philosophical nature, about which I have thought a great deal. Our first concern was: to whom would we entrust the partial control of our property, which we so much treasure and have so much enjoyed for the past 45 years. It is not large, only about 75 acres, therefore of no interest to an organization like the Nature Conservancy, which has grander ideas. Yet it has unique features, some of them connected with its natural beauty, some with its biological riches, and others which may not be appreciated by a casual observer. So when our local conservancy was founded, it seemed it might be a solution for our dilemma. Still we wrestled with the thought that we were doing this, as the law says, "in perpetuity". Although many people find the idea of doing anything in perpetuity very daunting, upon consideration we decided no one has a better right than we ourselves. We owned the land, didn't we? Or did we? There arose then the questions: Did we truly own the land? What did land ownership mean to us?

In recorded time ownership of land has meant different things to different peoples. For some, it was a source of power; for others it was the source of wealth; and for others still it was a question of sustenance and survival. The American Indians did not feel that they owned the land; they felt instead that it was up to them to tread lightly upon it during their lifetimes. And this was a severe handicap for them when they were dealing with the American settlers on this continent who wanted to own the land and reap its material benefits.

Be that as it may, according to our current laws and customs we do own this piece of property. We have tried to use it kindly, and not abuse it. We have tried to practice good stewardship so that its amenities will be

preserved for those who will follow us on it. Judging from the way the face of Ulster County has changed in the past 30 years, I wouldn't even venture to predict how much pressure will be exerted upon the land in our area to yield to development. It may well be that even in as few as 20 years open space will be more highly prized than it is now. So, since we do not consider this land to be a commodity that we wish to sell or dispose of in any way, we decided that the best thing that we could do would be to preserve it as open space. Therefore, the conservation easement.

During the course of discussions on this subject with friends and family members it was pointed out a number of times that we have no right to lay a dead hand on the future. My response to this is: when has this not been done? If you scrutinize the development of the human race, you will realize that human beings have been doing this since the beginning of recorded history. For instance, didn't the early Cretans & Greeks change the face of their land by denuding the hillsides and permitting erosion to wash away the soil, which wasn't very plentiful anyhow? And didn't the Romans change the ecology of the eastern coast of the Adriatic by denuding the hillsides of timber to build their triremes, leaving the coast of Bosnia Herzegovina so sterile it has a hard time today supporting goats? Didn't the hunger that the British Empire felt for timber and other resources dominate their wish to settle this continent? Didn't they act to denude our forests of the great trees that provided masts for their warships? And didn't the first settlers who came, hungry for land and freedom, change the face of our continent by exploiting the resources that they could find there? Are we not continuing this policy by exploiting our underground resources: oil, minerals, not to speak of the aquifers which are being depleted by over-irrigation.

Is it not time for us, as a people, to acknowledge this self-serving destruction & somehow to reverse it, or at least to temper its effects? That is to say — to lay a live hand on the future. In our very small way, my husband and I have taken action to do so by preserving a bit of open space "in perpetuity".

(The dictionary defines "mortgage" as "placing a dead hand on the future.")

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CONSERVATION OPTIONS

Excerpted from the Real Estate Section of the New York Times 10/19/97
 "Keeping Vacation Homes in the Family"

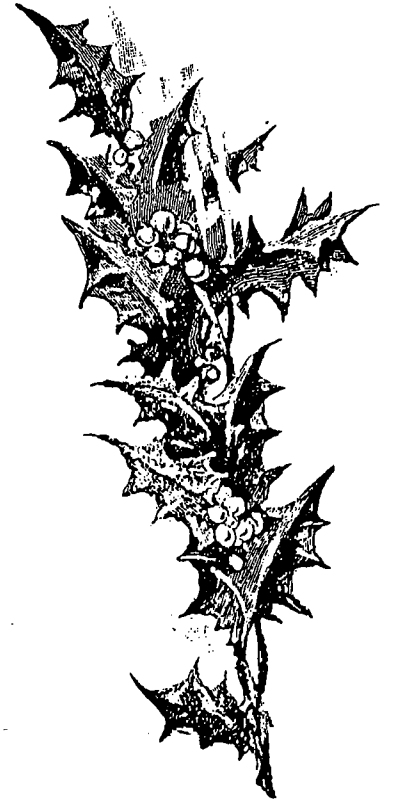
Another strategy to help families hold on to vacation properties is to sell or donate the development rights to a conservation group or land bank. As far as the Internal Revenue Service is concerned, if an owner relinquishes the right to develop or otherwise commercially exploit wild land, its value, and therefore the owner's tax bill, is reduced.

Conservation easements — selling or donating development rights — have been most often used in the Northeast by families that have long owned property in the Adirondacks and on the Maine coast, where values are still relatively modest, said Thomas Duffus, conservation director for the Adirondack chapter of the Nature Conservancy.

For instance, one 81-

year-old mother of five sons who has a vacation property on Upper St. Regis Lake gave her 30 acres as a conservation easement — giving up development rights but retaining the property for herself and her family — rather than donating the property to the New York State park system. "My sons said no way, it's too unique," said the woman, who would speak only on condition of not being identified. "They want to keep it in the family."

None of her children could afford to inherit it, but with the easement, "it won't be subdivided," she said. "I can protect the shoreline, and it's there for any of the children who want it." The easement decreases the property's value for tax purposes, so heirs will have a lower tax burden.



Available from the RELC (see tear-off on last page)

Conservation Options - A Landowner's Guide, a 64 page publication of the Land Trust Alliance, discusses in detail the advantages to landowners of entering into agreements with conservation organizations such as RELC. The rights retained by the landowners as well as those rights that might be given up are considered.

Recent federal gift and estate tax legislation exempts the first \$600,000 of an individual's estate, with incremental exemptions to one million dollars by the year 2006. Since this tax is based on the fair market value of the property, heirs to the property could be saddled with a considerable tax burden. An easement or gift can reduce the development potential, thus reducing the taxes owed. To discuss a planned gift, call the RELC at (914) 657-3310.

R. S.

Rural Delivery

I was visiting a farm in northern Vermont, and the crusty old farmer had just shown me about his grove of maples. We came out on a small meadow with a spectacular view of the mountains and valleys. What a beautiful place for a house!" I exclaimed.

The farmer quickly responded, "Tain't a bad spot for a meadow."

Contributed to Readers Digest 7/85 by Bob Mundstock

Contributed to RELC 7/95 by Louise Schryver, W. Shokan

New Directors - With Kingston Roots - Join Board

Ellianne Rider Odom of Samsonville and Alex Embree of Marbletown have joined the Conservancy Board to serve two year terms beginning in August and October 1997 respectively.

Forested Ravine Needs an Owner.

The RELC announces that it will transfer the title to a 15 acre forested ravine — as a gift, for the proverbial \$1 — to any conservation-minded supporter who agrees to pay the costs of completing the transfer.

Situated in one of the most secluded parts of the Marbletown-Rochester-Olive area, the tract adjoins a state-significant habitat known for rare plant and animal species, includes an unspoiled brook, and touches the New York State Forest Preserve at one corner.

Suggested uses: recreation and nature study. Annual taxes: about \$170. No road frontage.

If you or someone you know would like to acquire this open, beautiful, environmentally sensitive parcel, please get in touch with us. We'd be happy to give you further details.

J.B.

Ellianne Odom, the Conservancy's new treasurer, has spent her adult life and raised her four children in areas as diverse as Kingston, California, and Holland.

Now that her engineer husband Paul has retired (except for the countless hours of computer work he volunteers to do for the Conservancy), the Odoms, together with her mother, sister, dogs, cats & geese, reside on a 60 acre property on the side of Mombaccus Mt., the site of her father's original cabin. Her interests range from quilting & gardening to auditing courses at UCC.

Asked why she is glad to be on the RELC Board, she says, "We love this area and would like to see its beauty preserved."

Alex Embree was born in Kingston into a family with long roots in Marbletown, Hurley, Rochester, and Olive.

No stranger to public service, Alex has served on numerous boards, including the Ulster County Agricultural Commission, the Consistory of the First Dutch Church of Kingston, the Rondout National Bank, United Bank of New York, Fleet Bank, and is presently Commissioner of the North Marbletown Fire District.

Recently retired from his family's business at the Albany Avenue Garage, Alex will be lending the RELC his business savvy and his interest in preserving the special character of this region so long cherished by his family.



RONDOUT ESOPUS LAND CONSERVANCY BENEFIT WILL CELEBRATE SUCCESSFUL LAND PROTECTION

Look ahead on your calendar and plan to attend the Rondout Esopus Land Conservancy's Benefit Buffet Luncheon and Auction June 16, 1998 beginning at 1:00 pm. The event will be held at Williams Lake Resort nestled among 600 acres of woodland and overlooking a 40 acre lake in Rosendale, N.Y.

Jack Bierhorst, a local author, naturalist, and conservationist, will present slides and comment on some of the unique features of the Conservancy's easements. Jack has done extensive ecological and botanical field work in the Catskills and is the author of The Ashokan Catskills: A Natural History.

Along with a wonderfully varied lunch served in the Lakeview Room, we hope to offer up for auction (both silent and active) many unusual and valuable items that will encourage you to support the RELC and walk away with a bargain too!

If you or anyone you know can donate an item with a suggested value of \$50 or more (a piece of antique furniture, tax preparation or financial planning services, driveway plowing, jewelry, a dinner gift certificate, a case of wine, a hand-crafted item) to be auctioned off, please call Laura Travers at (914) 657-8303 after business hours ASAP so that your gift or service (tax-deductible to the full extent of the law) can be mentioned in our invitation and publicity. Also needed are volunteers to work publicizing the event and/or be on hand to help the day of the event.

Please call!

L.T.

