



**NEWS**  
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**SPRING &  
SUMMER**  
**1999**

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*The Fourth Binnewater Lake as viewed from  
Binnewater Road, Rosendale*

## **WILLIAMS LAKE PRESERVED**

Imagine a spectacular land parcel comprised of hemlock and hardwood forests, two lakes, caves, and endangered species. This parcel is the latest conservation easement property granted to RELC. Anita Peck, owner of the Williams Lake Resort, ensured the family land would remain pristine by donating a 422-acre easement on her 700-acre resort located on Binnewater Road in the Town of Rosendale.

The Resort, bought in 1929 by Anita's grandfather, Gustav Williams, has had a long and lively history. The forests were once home to the Esopus Indians. A band of dolomitic limestone traverses the property and once catered to the booming cement business. Currently the caves and mines left behind harbor six bat species including the federally endangered Indiana Bat. When Ms. Peck discovered the significance of her mines as the bat's winter hibernation site she decided to protect the bats as well as preserve her property.

Ms. Peck sold a 10-acre parcel in the easement to The Nature Conservancy (TNC) for the protection of the bats. The Nature Conservancy, whose mission is to preserve biological diversity, will eventually turn the parcel over to the New York State Department of Conservation (DEC) which will be responsible for the protection of this endangered species. Also, the easement donated to the RELC will serve as a buffer to help protect this most critical bat habitat.

The protected property will be known as the "Preserve Area for the Walter Williams Commemorative Conservation Easement" in memory of Anita Peck's father who rebuilt and expanded the business after a fire in 1953. The area is comprised of the Fourth Binnewater Lake, a deep natural lake with an undisturbed shoreline, and the Third Binnewater Lake, a remote water body providing wildlife habitat. The property is covered in a hemlock-northern hardwood forest which will remain mostly undisturbed to protect wildlife habitat and the natural beauty of the land. Numerous wetlands are

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## NATIONAL LAND TRUST CENSUS DATA RELEASED

"The 1990's has been a decade of destiny for the country's land trusts," observed Jean Hocker, President of the Land Trust Alliance, at a National Press Club briefing on the National Land Trust Census. Hocker continued, "the popularity of land trusts has skyrocketed over the past decade for two reasons: first, people realize that open land is a finite resource that, once lost, can never be regained; second, people have discovered that through land trusts, they can make a direct, lasting difference in the community they live in and the world they will leave to their children and grandchildren."

The Census identifies 1,211 nonprofit land trusts throughout the United States, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Eighty of these organizations operate in New York State. These include 68 local and regional groups located in New York State, such as the Rondout-Esopus Land Conservancy, eight groups located in adjacent states and working in New York, and four national nonprofits with programs in New York. This is a significant increase over the 48 land trusts listed in New York in 1988.

Local and regional land trusts across the country have protected approximately 4.6 million acres of land. This is a 130% increase over the 2 million acres protected nationally by the end of 1988.

In New York state, land trusts have privately protected 212,719 acres of land. Some of this land is held by land trusts as permanent preserves, the balance is protected with over 620 conservation easements. In addition, land trusts have assisted with the protection of more than 100,000 additional acres now held by municipalities or by the state.

Of the 68 local and regional land trusts in New York, just under one half have at least one full- or part-time staff member like the RELC with one part-time Executive Director. Together local and regional land trusts have a cumulative membership of over 33,600 individuals. The maximum annual operating budget is \$1.2 million, and the minimum, \$200, with an average annual budget of \$154,342.

Data for the National Land Trust Census were gathered over the 12-month period in 1997-1998 by surveying nearly 1,700 organizations. LTA received more than 775 responses to the written survey with a follow-up telephone call. The operations of the land trusts that did not respond to written or telephone inquiries were verified by other methods.

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There are 80 Land trusts working in New York State:  
68 local and regional land trusts,  
8 land trusts in adjacent states working in NY, and  
4 national organizations with NY programs.

Land Trusts have privately protected\* 212,719 acres in NY:  
106,949 acres protected by local and regional land trusts,  
105,770 acres protected by national organizations

\*lands held in fee or under a conservation easement

### Accomplishments of Local and Regional Land Trusts

	Number of Land Trusts		Total Acres Protected		Total Acres Protected in NY		
	National	New York	National	New York	Fee**	Easement	Other*
1988	743	48	2,000,000	55,226	15,995	17,524	21,707
1998	1,211	68	4,600,000	145,463	43,882	63,067	38,514

\*transfers to public agencies, management agreements, etc.

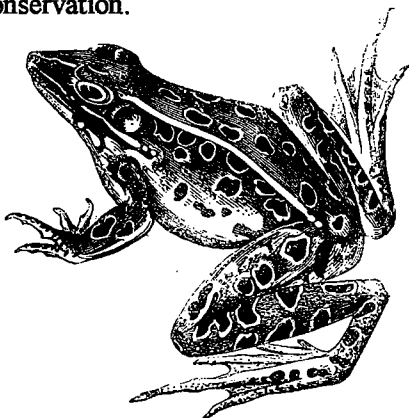
\*\*lands owned by organization

## MEMBER PROFILE

In this issue we would like to profile Oscar Christensen for his generous donation of an ecologically sensitive forested ravine which is the gateway to the Pacama Vly wetlands that is located on the boundary of the townships of Marletown & Olive.

Oscar Christensen grew up on a farm and attended a one room schoolhouse in the town of Olive, the hamlet of Krumville. His quiet country life ended, however, when his father, an engineer who had supervised the construction of the 19-mile long reservoir tunnel between Gilboa and Allaban, moved the family to Brooklyn to begin work on the 8th Ave. Subway. By the late 1920's, Oscar was a Kingston High School student. Moving back to NYC he enrolled in Pratt Institute to study structural design. After serving in the US Army in WWII Oscar married and returned to the Catskills. He and Edna bought a 150 year old farmhouse in the hamlet of Lyonsville. His work as a construction supervisor for Harris Structural Steel as well as Carl Koch Co of NYC, required him to spend work weeks away from home. One local job that allowed a daily commute was the construction of the Kingston-Rhinecliff Bridge. From 1947 to the late 1970's Oscar and Edna were leaders of the Lyonsville Dutch Reformed Church, helping with dinners, bazaars, and community gatherings. Oscar has also volunteered his skills to refurbish the Ulster Performing Arts Center in Kingston and repair the bellfry at the Lyonsville Church. Music as always been a part of Oscar's life and at age 89, he is enrolled in an Applied Music class at UCCC.

The Conservancy thanks Oscar for being a longtime member and supporter of local land conservation.



## ARTS AND CRAFTS FOR LAND

Again, we are planning to have a fundraiser at Williams Lake Resort in Rosendale on **Sunday, June 13th**. Williams Lake has generously donated the Lakeview Room for our event. This year the event will be centered around arts and crafts that are easy to learn (but can take a lifetime to master, if you choose), relatively inexpensive to produce, and fun to do. We will be offering morning and afternoon classes. To date the following classes are available:

- 1) **Basketmaking and traditional rug hooking** taught by Laura Travers.
- 2) **Faux finishes and stenciling** taught by Wanda Nicholson, professional decorative painter specializing in faux finishes.
- 3) **Weed walk** focusing on ID of local plants with medicinal and culinary uses. Plus tincture making and possible wild salad, taught by Dina Falconi local herbalist and author of "Earthly Bodies & Heavenly Hair, Ceres Press, 1998.
- 4) **Blue Birds: House Building and Habitat** taught by Rich Parisi
- 5) **Crocheting** taught by Louise Cacchio
- 6) **Quilting** taught by Dawn Markle, member of the Wiltwyck Quilters Guild.

I'm working on acquiring: Calligraphy, Vegetarian Cooking, and Papermaking.

All classes will be approximately 3 hours which will give the student enough time to complete a project to take home. Parents are encouraged to bring a child (9+ years) with them. Cost is \$35.00 per person, or \$60.00 for parent and child. Cost of all materials included. Please call to reserve your space as there will only be 8-10 spaces available per class. If you know of an art or craft you or someone you know could teach, please call me. For more information, latest update on classes and to make your reservation call: Laura Travers at 657-8303

Please support your local land conservancy. Your time and ideas are a valuable resource that can help us continue our work.

L. T.

**Our Executive Director Accepts Position at Columbia Land Conservancy**

Congratulations to Renee Bouplon on her new full time position as Project Manager. Renee has done an outstanding job for the RELC and will be greatly missed. This leaves the RELC with an opening for a part-time position. Anyone interested in applying for this position should send a resume, with cover letter to:

Search Committee,  
REL C  
PO Box 345  
High Falls, NY  
12440

## NEW BOARD DIRECTORS AND ADVISORS

The RELC is pleased to announce its newest Board Director, Arthur Markle of High Falls. Also, we welcome new Board Advisor Gregory Belcamino, Esq. of Stone Ridge. Former Board Directors, Elinor Boice and Andrew Angstrom, have continued their interest in RELC by assuming positions as Board Advisors. Thank you all for your dedication and support to land conservation.

**We need more workers!** Positions are open for Board Members and Advisors. Specific responsibilities include: Newsletter coordinator, Recording secretary for board minutes, Grant writer, Headquarters maintenance, Ground maintenance, and Membership assistance. If you are interested in becoming more involved with RELC's projects please contact Raecine Shurter at 657-6423.

## MEMBERSHIP APPRECIATION DAY

On October 25th, members of RELC were treated to a guided tour of our NYS Ashokan Field Campus Easement. Andy Angstrom, RELC Board Advisor and Director of the Field Campus, provided information on the history, geology, flora and fauna, and land use of the Field Campus. Participants enjoyed a beautiful day for the nature walk. Refreshments were prepared by RELC Board Directors. Another walk on a RELC easement property will be planned.



## INCOME TAXES AND CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

Conservation easements are remarkable vehicles for achieving an array of benefits both individually and for the community. Conservation easements safeguard the natural, undeveloped beauty of our rural countryside and, at the same time, they may create tax savings as well. For landowners who care about preserving the unique natural landscape we enjoy in Ulster County, the tax savings may seem like an unnecessary bonus. However, the tax savings, which can range from the relatively insignificant to the compelling, are an integral part of most conservation easements.

*Conservation easements safeguard the natural, undeveloped beauty of our rural countryside and, at the same time, they may create tax savings as well.*

Conservation easements are agreements made by landowners conveying some of their rights, such as subdivision and development, to their land. The conveyance is done by deed, and it transfers the rights to a qualified conservation organization like the Rondout-Esopus Land Conservancy (RELC). A landowner limits some of the rights to their property, and subsequently all future owners of their property, by donating a conservation easement to RELC. The difference in the fair market appraisal value of their property without a conservation easement and with the conservation easement is considered the value of the conservation easement that is a charitable tax deduction donated to RELC for public benefit.

Conveying a property's rights to the RELC provides the same income tax benefit as writing out contribution check. The charitable contribution itself is effective the date that the easement is recorded, and all the normal income tax charitable elements apply. For example, if an easement is valued at \$36,000, the landowner will receive an income tax charitable deduction of \$36,000. For those taxpayers whose charitable deductions of land or other property that has appreciated in value exceed 30% of their adjusted gross income, the actual charitable deduction in the first year is limited to the 30% amount for that property. However, any excess charitable deduction can be carried over for up to five future years.

The above information is presented as a guide to tax planning. RELC highly recommends that property owners consult a tax specialist before making a commitment.

### Example of Income Tax Benefit

A.	Value of Easement	Example
	1. Fair market value of property with no conservation easement	\$100,000
	2. Fair market value of property with conservation easement	\$ 64,000
	3. Fair market value of conservation easement	\$ 36,000
B.	Income Tax Benefit	
	1. Income tax charitable deduction when conservation easement donated to RELC	\$36,000
	2. Landowner has an annual adjusted gross income of \$60,000 and can deduct up to 30% of income each year for a total of six years, or until the value of the gift has been used up. (30% x 60,000 = \$18,000)	\$18,000 yr 1
	3. Landowner can deduct another 30% of income for year 2 before the gift is used up.	\$18,000 yr 2



