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***INSIDE:***

- **Land Trust Trend**
- **RELC Member Spotlight**
- **Benefit Planned for June 13**
- **Income Tax Benefits**
- **RELC seeks new Executive Director**



*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

*(Continued on page 6)*

