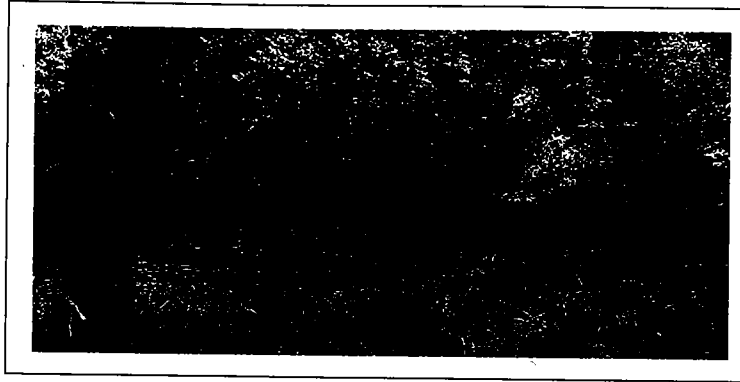
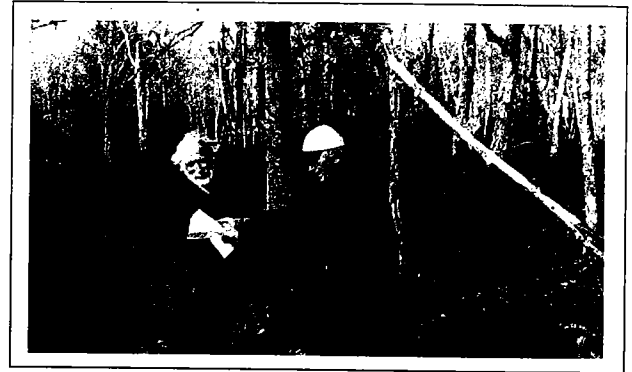
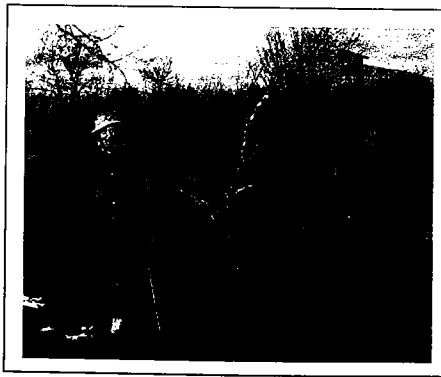




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Top left: Arthur Weyhe on his easement with wetlands and Catskill views behind him. Top right: Art Markle and Walter Levy monitoring the Hertz/Friedman easement in Accord. Above left: Jody Hoyt monitoring Morrill easement on the Rondout Creek. Above right: A special place for an Arthur Weyhe sculpture.

Successful easement stewardship starts before the parcel even goes under easement. It starts with the consideration of accepting the easement. Has the easement met our criteria for acceptance? Is this a property that we can work with the grantor to continue to protect over time? Is this easement worth defending? Is the property on the market, and if so, have we met the prospective buyer? Does this prospective buyer agree with our philosophy? Will he/she uphold the easement that they are inheriting but have not financially benefited from? All very important questions.

Assuming that these questions are asked and answered favorably, we can proceed with all the other aspects of exploring a conservation easement with the landowner. As we negotiate the easement we have to ask ourselves if we are striking a balance of allowable activities and restrictions. If we allow too much, are we giving away too much "open space value?" If we restrict too much, are we setting ourselves up for a violation?

Once a property is under easement we move to secure a baseline study of the property. The baseline survey will give the conservancy a reporting of the overall condition of the parcel in respect to flora, fauna, terrain, water courses, timber inventory and geography. Photographs add to this historical data so that we always have a reference of how the property looked when the easement was accepted. (Our grantors love to have a copy of our baseline surveys; it often tells them interesting things about their own property that they did not know.)

At least once a year we make a visit to the easement property. If the property can be seen from the road, we drive by the property in addition to the yearly visit. Before walking the property on our monitoring visit we contact the owner to let him/her know that we will be on their property and to invite them to walk with us. Notes are taken and records of the visit are kept, along with any photos of the visit, in the permanent file.

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