



View of Esopus Gorge as seen from the Dunbar Easement

NEWS
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SPRING
1996

INSIDE:

- Gifts from IBM
- Walks Calendar
- *A Sense of Place*
- Three New Directors
- Land Trust Alliance Conference
- Wanted — Volunteers

THE DUNBAR EASEMENT

A veritable Shangri-La in Lomontville is the location of a significant easement now being completed by the Conservancy. Marjorie and Jim Dunbar's 75 acres contains serene meadows, dramatic rock faces and escarpments, seasonal waterfalls up to 80 feet high and towering conifers.

All of this, located on the lower Esopus, is smack in the middle of the Esopus Gorge, a priority area for preservation efforts by the Conservancy. Nature marked this area for special beauty and distinction 350 or 400 million years ago, in the Middle Devonian Period, when oceanic upheavals and subsequent erosion left the Catskill Delta marked by dramatic gorges and perspectives.

A special viewing of the Dunbar Easement is set for Saturday, June 15; details on page 5.

The lower Esopus makes a graceful horseshoe turn at the Dunbar property, framing it and affording exquisite views. *(cont'd)*



*The Dunbar Picnic Grove
 "...of murmuring pines and hemlock"*

Dunbar Easement (cont'd)

Jim came here in 1947, after his family had bought the property, and Marjorie joined him in 1954. Their effort since has been to manage the property for maximum beauty and benefit.

“Biodiversity,” says Jim. That has meant the planting of various tree varieties and some farming enterprises—corn, hay, even beans one year (“Not very successfully,” says Jim). Fifty-six of the property’s acres are woodland, and for 10 years a state-supervised forest management program has been in force.

It has been a long time, but they still get excited when the spring runoff generates 80-foot waterfalls over the sheer rock face across the broad meadow in front of their house. And, says Marjorie, “We’ve enjoyed the wildlife here.”

That includes Great Blue and Green Herons, osprey, great



Jim & Marjorie Dunbar

horned owls, beaver, turkeys, coyotes, muskrat, mink and, of course, deer—all too many deer. Marjorie laments their depredations of the laurel, pink lady slippers and hepatica, among other plants.

Marjorie and Jim are looking to the long term in doing their easement. “We hope the property will remain in the hands of a family member who will love it as much as we do,” says Marjorie. But they want protection in perpetuity. “The shoreline and the creek shouldn’t be spoiled by development or devastation of the forest,” says Jim.

RELC directors voted at their April meeting to accept the Dunbar easement, subject to negotiation of final details on the location of two additional house sites that would be allowed under the agreement.

There already are two other easements on the Esopus Gorge, and the Dunbars would like to see more of them in their neighborhood and around Ulster County.

“The day of easements seems to have arrived,” says Marjorie, who served three terms on the Marbletown Town Board. B.N.



The Dunbar Meadow with Jim’s stand of native black walnut trees in the background.

A Sense of Place

A recent recipient of a Masters Degree in Landscape Architecture, Board Member Fred Steuding has studied how residential development on steep slopes interferes with people's experience of historic landscapes, that have been valued for their scenic quality and the meanings they have held. The following are excerpted from Fred's master's thesis, Woodstock's Overlook Mountain: Preserving the American Heritage.



Landscapes that have been the setting of significant events in the life of a community are visible reminders of the past and become, as Donald Meinig writes, "... part of the shared set of ideas and memories and feelings which bind a people together." Folklorists like Richard Dorson refer to this experience as a "folkloric sense of place" linking residents of a region to traditional themes and values. Although this regional folkloric sense of place is expressed in different ways, how it's expressed says something about a people's relationships with the environments in which they live and work.

For example, cultural geographers explore the human *experience of place* by focusing often on a particular region's intellectual culture to better understand the impact landscape has on creative expression. Based on this approach, the Catskills have become a landscape rich in meaning and have influenced our regional folklore, art, literature, and lifestyles for generations.

As a matter of fact, The Catskills have become integrated into the fiber of our daily lives. Author Kent Ryden maintains that there are "four categories or layers of meaning which overlie the facts of the physical world."

*The first layer: personal memory and a *sense of place*.* To talk about how experiences have influenced us, we must talk about where they occurred. Edward Relph explains that the particularly moving experiences we've had in a place can be a source of both individual and cultural identity and security. And Ryden further adds that it's these personal memories of a place that can also help us understand the complexities of our lives and provide us with an imaginative refuge from change and flux.

Community history is the term Ryden uses to explain the *second layer*: a "deeply known and felt awareness of the things that happened . . . within the bounds of a region." This awareness creates shared meanings within a community and shapes our feelings about where we live and our attitudes about issues related to that place.

The landscape to which we're daily exposed, the physical face of geography, is the *third layer*. Concrete and accessible to the senses, this becomes an integral part of our lives as we absorb both its beautiful and comforting qualities. However, these positive



Board Member Fred Steuding

experiences are often combined with the disconcerting realization of how uncontrolled and insensitive development can alter and/or eliminate these special places.

Our sense of emotional attachment to a place, the *fourth layer*, is an outgrowth of our relationship to the other layers. Geographer Yi-Fu Tuan refers to it as topophilia—"the affective bond between people and a place or setting." Ryden states that the emotions residents attach to a place are feelings that are based on knowledge of that place's history and identity, and that this knowledge influences their "contemplation of their physical surroundings."

Each of these layers of meaning contributes to our overall sense of either the place from which we have come or the place to which we have become accustomed. Together, all of these layers can shape who we are as unique individuals and collectively contribute to who we are as communities committed to protecting our landscapes. F.S.

NEW CONSERVANCY DIRECTORS

REL C happily announces the election of three new directors whose widely varying skills and experience will bring new dimensions to the Conservancy.

Reggie Smith of Accord is a World War Two Marine veteran who trained and worked as a pharmacist, then got a masters in library science, then combined the two talents to become librarian for major pharmaceutical companies and for the New Jersey University of Medicine and Dentistry in Newark. Now retired, he has been working as a volunteer and board member for Gods Love We Deliver, a New York City group that delivers meals to homebound AIDS patients. Reggie's motive in working for REL C is his desire to preserve "the overwhelming beauty of this area."

Rita Shaheen of Kerhonkson is a professional planner and consultant in land planning and design with a master's degree in landscape architecture from SUNY in Syracuse. She has served on the Rochester Environmental Commission in Accord,

helped in securing grants for the local "Rail Trail" program and has done projects for Scenic Hudson and other regional agencies. She is interested in developing environmental education programs in our area, particularly for childrens' groups. Rita also has a certificate of Fine Arts from the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia.

Many members will be familiar with Mary Mendola as a recent Democratic candidate for supervisor of Rochester. She lost the election, but now we can benefit from her energy. Mary used to be a vice president at the Television Bureau of Advertising in New York City. Previously she had been a sales promotion consultant and speech writer. She has been teaching advertising and communications at the Fashion Institute of Technology and she serves as an adjunct professor at Ulster County Community College.

We welcome Reggie, Rita, and Mary to our board.

B. N.



LAND TRUST ALLIANCE OF NEW YORK

DIRECTORS ATTEND LTA/NY CONFERENCE

On June 9 & 10, REL C Conservancy Directors will be attending The Land Trust Alliance of New York's Fourth Annual State-wide Conference in New York's beautiful Thousand Islands.

This conference will bring the state's volunteer land trusts, staffed land trusts, and conservation professionals together to exchange expertise in a series of lectures workshops, and sightseeing tours.

With the current number of land trusts at 1,095 in the United States, the movement has experienced significant

growth in recent years and holds over 4 million acres. This is particularly true in New York, where 65 land conservancies hold conservation easements on over 125,000 acres, most of which remain in private hands.

In its four years, LTA-NY has established itself as a source of technical assistance, lobbyist, and regranter of funds under the Rural New York Grant Program. From this grant program, the REL C has received two grants, each for \$3,000, in 1993 and again in 1995.

E.B.

WALKS CALENDAR

JUNE 15

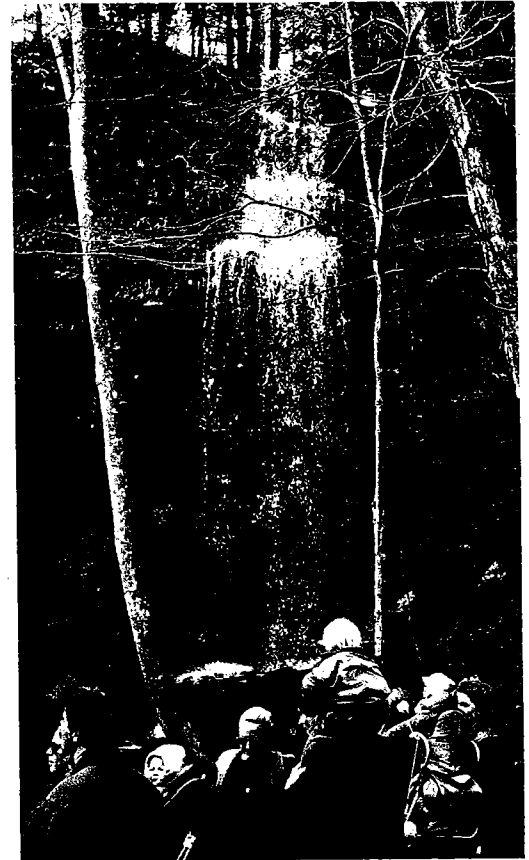
Horseshoe Farm Walk, 1 pm The Dunbar Conservation Easement.

The section of the Esopus below the Ashokan Reservoir is a spectacular wildlife habitat and an important ongoing project of the RELC. Come hike with Jim Dunbar through pine groves and meadows, along the Esopus' rushing waters and swimming holes. Meet at 1 PM at the Lomontville Firehouse.
Raindate — June 22.

SEPTEMBER 28

Cathedral Gorge Hike, 9 am

Explore Ashokan's Cathedral Gorge and its natural and cultural history with Andy Angstrom. This moderately challenging hike will survey the wild and beautiful lands of this pending easement. Winchells Falls, the 1880 Covered Bridge, the pulp mill ruins, an abandoned bluestone quarry, the Esopus Creek, rare ferns and the Cathedral Falls will be highlighted. Meet at the Pewter Shop of Ashokan Field Campus, Beaverkill Road, Town of Olive, NY.
Raindate — October 5.



*Hiking along the spectacular Cathedral Gorge
November, 1995*



*Volunteers taking measurements on the
Ashokan Campus: Monitoring Chair Raecine
Shurter (middle) with Barbara Dibeler (L) and
Lee Hackeling*

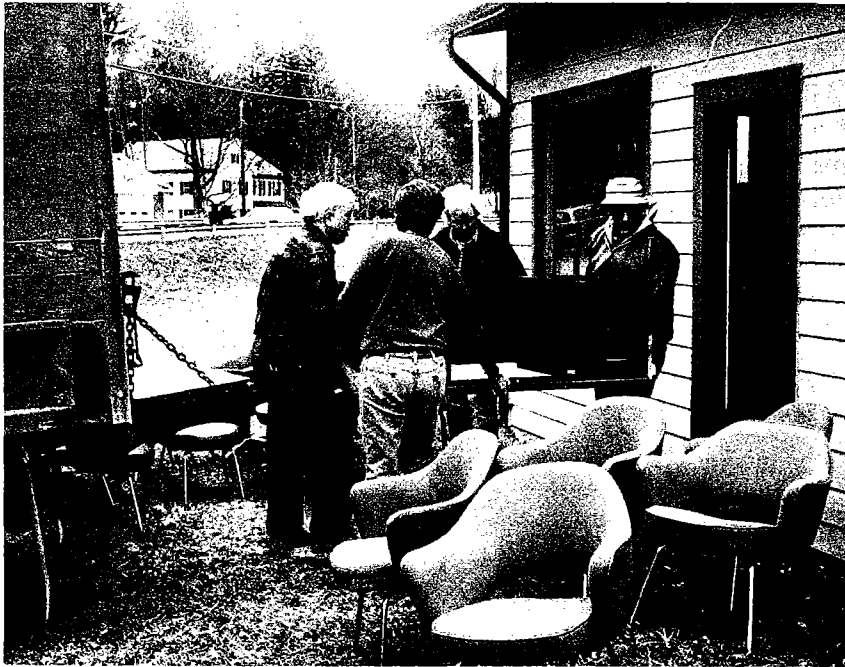
WANTED: VOLUNTEERS

In response to member requests for a more active role in RELC operations, Board Members are currently detailing the responsibilities of their respective committees and will soon begin actively recruiting volunteers. Additionally, a membership mailing currently being designed will enable you to select specific areas in which you can periodically donate some of your time or occasionally contribute your particular skills.

M.M.

A GIFT FROM BIG BLUE

In the first week of April over the Shawangunks came a load of the finest quality office furniture from IBM, Fishkill.



Furniture Movers (L to R): Jack Schoonmaker, Michael Smith, Elinor Boice and Fred Wustrau.

The gift was arranged for by Kim Squillace, RELC member & IBM employee, and Jeff Sovick, IBM Donations' Coordinator, delivered to our HQ in Alligerville by Fred Wustrau of Accord, also formerly of IBM and now honorary member of the Conservancy, and unloaded with the help of Jack Schoonmaker, first President of the Conservancy and Michael Smith, an employee of Schoonmaker's Saunderskill Farms.

The Board, now conducting its business in splendor, is seated in bright blue upholstered chairs, along teak-topped tables. Their feet rest on a Chinese oriental rug, the gift of former director Ann Crawford of Boiceville and her husband Vance.

We are truly grateful.

E.B.

WISHES GRANTED

The Conservancy wishes to thank:

Irwin Rosenthal of Ellenville Lumber for his generous gift of a 5 drawer steel file and a brand new ceiling fan.

Scott Feeney of Olivebridge for giving the better part of his weekend to cutting and installing baseboard & molding in the HQ.

Mrs William Suepfle of Atwood for the beautiful hemlock flooring now installed in our office space.

Dave Norbeck and Jim Peters for their gift of a computer for use in our Easement Monitoring Program.



WISH LIST

Our newly refurbished headquarters is in need of a few items. If you would like to donate something to the conservancy, please call us at 657-3310.

- Ceiling lights
- Exterior light for over front door
- Large waste paper basket
- Small waste paper baskets
- Vacuum cleaner
- Broom & dust pan
- 4 small baseboard electric heaters

Thank You!

These generous individuals have made contributions to the Rondout-Esopus Land Conservancy:

Anne Altshuler
 Sita Anderson & Jody Hoyt
 Andy & Cathy Angstrom
 Anthony Batelle
 Birdwatchers' Country Store
 Elinor Boice
 Francis & Imogene Brewster
 Stacy Brink
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 Doris & John Wilkie

More Thank You's

Mrs Gladys Bormann has given a gift
 in memory of her parents, Mr & Mrs A. E.
 Bedigian.

Mildred & Louis Resnick have made a
 very generous gift to the Conservancy.

Such gifts and tributes enable us to
 carry on our work of preserving the Rondout
 and Esopus Valleys special open places.



*Working with landowners to preserve
special open places*



Rondout-Esopus Land Conservancy, Inc.
P.O. Box 345
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914-657-3310

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The Rondout-Esopus Land Conservancy depends upon your support to keep our open country land productive and beautiful.

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor | \$1000 | <input type="checkbox"/> Member | \$35 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patron | \$500 | <input type="checkbox"/> Senior | \$20 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor | \$250 | <input type="checkbox"/> Student | \$20 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Supporter | \$100 | <input type="checkbox"/> Other | \$ _____ |

- Enclosed is my employer's matching gift form
- Enclosed is \$6 for **Conservation Options: A Landowners Guide** -- A 64 page booklet of clear, concise explanations of the conservation techniques available to landowners.

Please mail your tax-deductible contribution to: **Rondout-Esopus Land Conservancy**
PO Box 345
High Falls, NY 12440

Please contact me regarding preservation of land in my area.

Name _____
Address _____

Please send a copy of this newsletter to:

Name _____
Address _____

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Photography by Rudy Klaiss

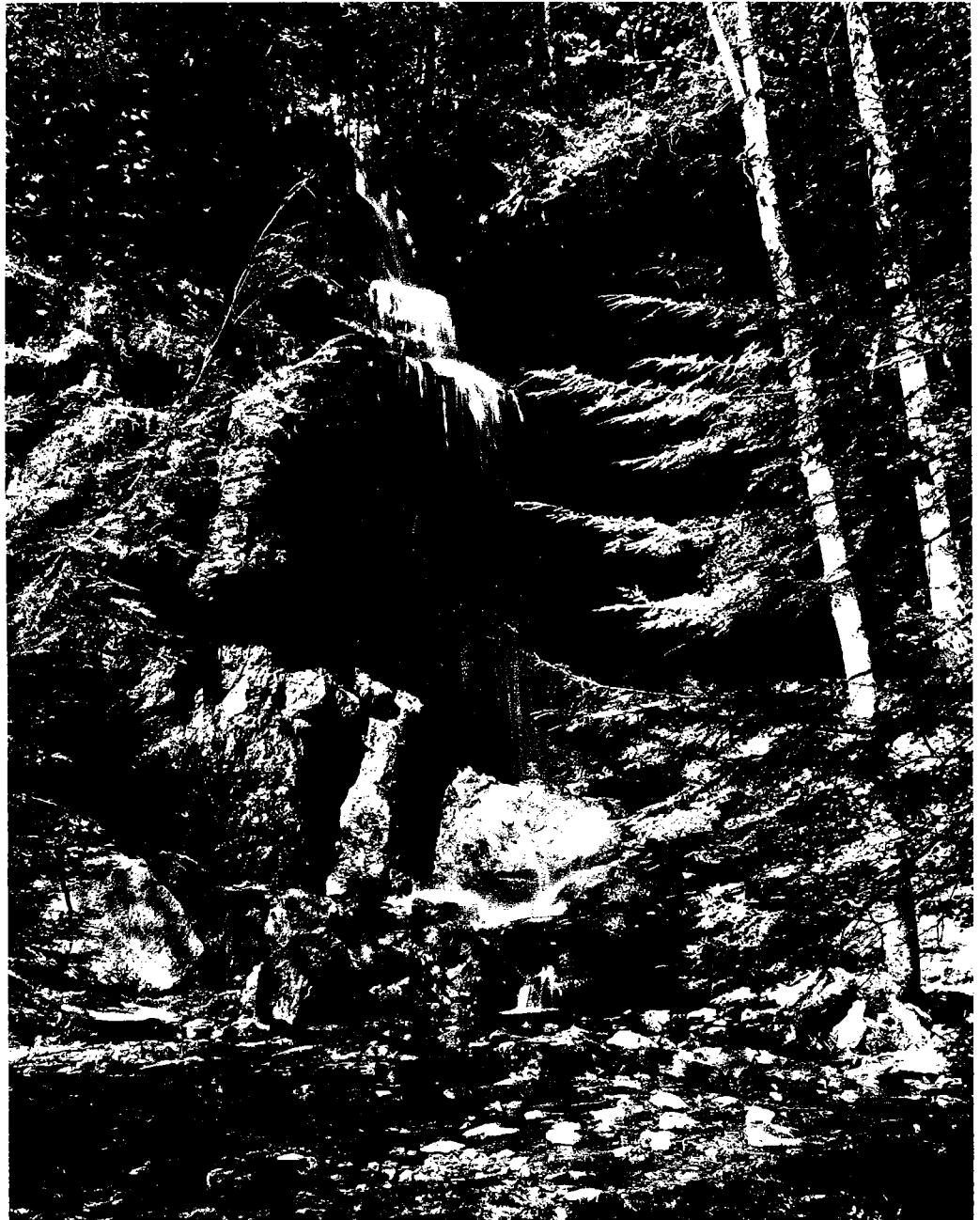
Drawings by Melanie Hall



NEWS
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WINTER
1996-97

INSIDE:

- **SUNY - Ashokan Easement**
- **The Gorge's Geology**
- **Alf Evers Honored at Garden Party**
- **HQ Septic Tank Completed**
- **New Directors Elected**



Cathedral Falls

photo by Robert Hansen-Sturm

SUNY College Auxiliary Services Grants Riparian Easement Along the Esopus Gorge

With the recent recording of the deed in the county clerk's office, the SUNY College Auxiliary Services conservation easement has been finalized. Another 66 acres of land along the Esopus Gorge will now be preserved by the Conservancy. Unlike previous easements granted to the Conservancy by private citizens, this particular easement is unique: it is two not-for-profit organizations, College Auxiliary Services and RELC, entering into a conservation agreement together.

According to Andrew Angstrom, Director of Ashokan Field Campus, College

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

Auxiliary Services granted this easement on the Ashokan property to the Conservancy to set an example for the rest of the community. "As a not-for-profit corporation, we're sending a message to other property owners by entering willingly into a legal agreement promising never to develop this section of land. Other people own land that is ecologically as valuable as ours, and we want them to know that they too can follow our example by making an equally important decision to preserve their land."

Since education is the primary focus of the Ashokan Field Campus, preserving the educational value of the eco-systems present in the Gorge is yet another reason for the College Auxiliary Service's decision. Angstrom believes that the children who experience the Gorge will develop a sense of stewardship and, of course, becoming voters and leaders, will make important decisions towards conserving the land. Angstrom, referring to the teachers who explore the Gorge, reflected: "Reaching one teacher is equivalent to reaching a multitude of students. Capturing educators' interest with the beauty of the Gorge and teaching them about its scientific and aesthetic value helps to preserve that value for generations."

The aesthetic value of the Gorge is tantamount to its scientific and ecological value. Angstrom feels that Thoreau's concept of the "wildness" and its importance were an integral part of the College Auxiliary Services' decision. As one member of the CAS Board of Directors commented: "Many people believe that wildness shaped our American character and that wildness can continue to do that as long as we preserve places like the Esopus Gorge. Without having to put a scientific or dollar value on it, places like the Gorge must be preserved so that we can experience the aesthetic and spiritual aspects of the wildness for years to come. The Gorge is only a small part of the earth's wildness. Perhaps Thoreau had a handle on a much bigger picture when he said: *In wildness is the preservation of the world.*"

M.M.

Geologically-Speaking

- by Andrew Angstrom

The Esopus Creek forms a spectacular eight-mile-long Gorge, one the most spectacular parts of which is called Cathedral Gorge. Scientists tell us that the sheer rock walls represent an exciting period of the Earth's history called the middle Devonian. The Devonian happened about 405 million years ago and lasted 50 to 60 million years (give or take a few million). It was the time when the land was first being invaded by vascular plants and vertebrate animals.

The eighty-foot-high rock walls at the Ashokan Campus portion of the Gorge expose evidence of a fascinating story. The intermittent layers of lithified clay, silt, sand and mud are those of a vast delta which had

been built out into a warm shallow tropical sea. Sediments from the erosion of a huge land mass were carried by a mighty river system westward, eventually filling in the sea and building the layers which would become the Catskills.

The relatively recent (since the Ice Age) erosion of these sedimentary rocks by the Esopus has allowed us to "read" this fascinating story. It is as though someone took a giant saw and cut a cross-section so that today's visitor would be able to easily discover preserved ripple marks, raindrop impressions, mud cracks and even fossil root and stem impressions, some as big as the trees of today. If he is really lucky he

(Continued on page 3)

From the standpoint of natural heritage this is one of the richest stretches of the entire Gorge.

*Jack Bierhorst
Ashokan Catskills*

Geologically-Speaking

(Continued from page 2)

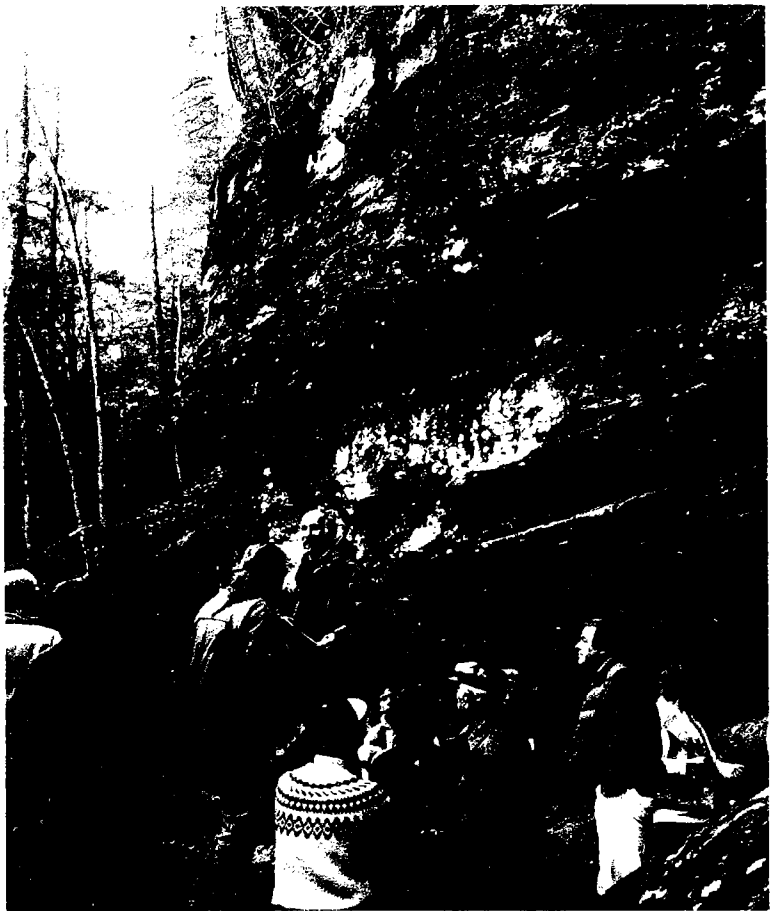
might even find the impression of *Archanodon*, a fresh water clam. These discoveries tell us of a flood plain environment of long ago.

Ancient river courses can be recognized by current marks. Cross-bedded sandstones are evidence of sand bars building back and forth across river channels as they made their way to the western sea. If level bedded, these same hard and durable sandstones could be quarried and did make this area famous as the producer of Bluestone in the last century.

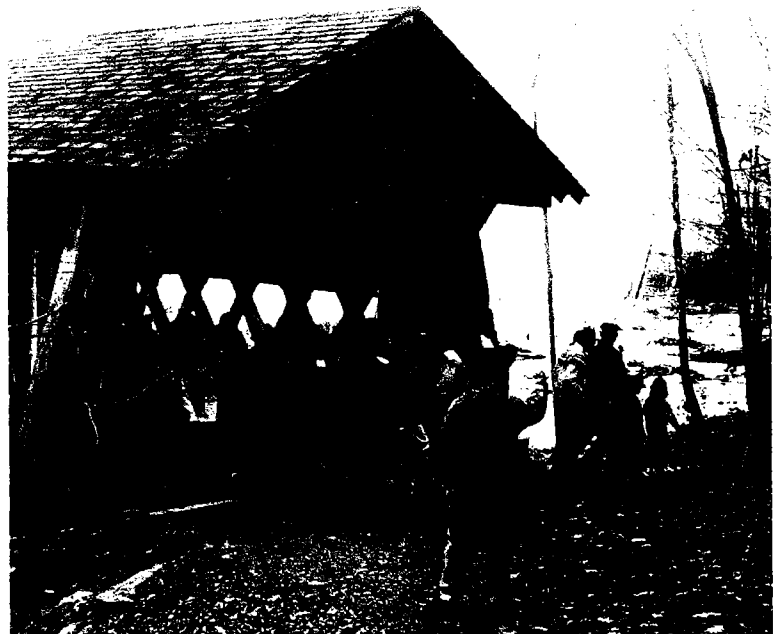
At the close of the Pleistocene (the Ice Age), water from melting glacial ice in the Catskills became impounded in the Ashokan basin, trapped by rotting ice and glacial debris which clogged this extremity of the Hudson Valley. Seeking the way of least resistance, the then mighty Esopus cut our Cathedral Gorge. At Winchells Falls there are huge potholes ground into the bedrock, attesting to the erosive force of the primeval Esopus.

Relatively undisturbed for thousands of years, the Esopus Gorge is a very special natural laboratory. The vertical walls allow rare species of plant to survive undisturbed. We call this a "hanging garden." There are plants such as Maidenhair Spleenwort and Purple Cliffbrake which grow in profusion only in this restricted habitat. Others such as Ground Hemlock, our native yew, and several rare herbs are protected there from over-browsing by deer. Likewise, rare animal life associated with these plants can endure.

In 1913 the Esopus was further tamed by the building of the Ashokan Dam and its resulting reservoir. So at least for a while (geologically speaking) the pathway into the Gorge is user-friendly. Ashokan Field Campus is dedicated to environmental education. Now with its protection guaranteed by the conservation easement granted to the Rondout Esopus Land Conservancy, the Cathedral Gorge will remain a natural treasure long into the future.



Andy Angstrom, speaking geologically, during an RELC field trip



The Covered Bridge on the Ashokan campus

Second Rondout - Esopus GARDEN August

The Conservancy wishes to thank these individuals and businesses who helped make our Garden Party a success:

Bill Robinson (wildlife talk)
Sheryl Samuels & Don Haynie (music)
Mark DeMello (photos)
Ginny Luppino (flowers)
Hilton Purvis (food prep)
Bruce Trowbridge (delivered bluestone)
Jack Schoonmaker (mowed grounds)

Northern Spy
Cohen's Bakery
Adam's Fairacre Farms
Woodstock Brewing Company
Deising's Bakery
Wallkill View Farms
Davenport Farms
Stone Ridge Liquors
The Bakery
Peter's Market

Chris Howard of Boiceville for his wall display of Dunbar & Ashokan Easements

Jim Mays of Samsonville for wiring our office space

Jack Skerrit of Lomontville for last minute work on thresholds

Bruce Trowbridge of Vly for trucking blue stone for the front walk, built by Director Fred Steuding

WISHING FOR A WELL

The only thing that stands between the Conservancy and occupying our Alligerville Headquarters is a well, which is estimated at \$6,000. One of our directors has contributed \$600 toward the project. If anyone else has a generous impulse and would like his or her contribution to be used for this purpose, please call us at (914) 657 3310.



Annual
Land Conservancy
PARTY
1996



Alf Evers is congratulated upon receiving a Certificate of Appreciation by Winthrop Aldrich, New York State Deputy Commissioner for Historic Preservation

"It has been said that when love and skill work together, expect a masterpiece."

"But I look at Alf Evers and I see another kind of masterpiece," said Aldrich, "not just in his wonderful words, but in the extreme humane vision Alf has projected to all who know him. A vision that it is not enough just to know our history, but to know and understand our history, environment and each other — and a sense we're not going to be here much longer, if we don't work together to preserve the land and environment here around us."

Excerpted from Commissioner Aldrich's speech on this occasion

In the "Postscript" appended to the revised edition of his great book, *The Catskills*, Alf notes the special "vulnerability" of the Catskills and the present "state of urgency" which demands that we successfully balance economic development with the preservation of natural resources and the environment. Such is the challenge Alf offers us.

Excerpted from Bob Steuding's introduction of Alf Evers.

BOARD MEMBER PROFILE: The Headquarters Gets a New Septic System



Rodney Sage, installing the septic system with help from Jeremiah Adams

Some 5 years ago, Rodney Sage a native of Samsonville, agreed to serve on our newly formed Board of Advisors. We were looking for people of talent and generous hearts.

One of the first things Rodney did was give us a dazzling oil burning candelabra, which he manufactures together with thousands of other "candles" at his Samsonville business, Catskill Crystal. When we held our next silent auction, we lit it and one of our members glowed when he won it.

Rodney has a commitment to this place and to the kind of public service that grows community. And like many another local "lad", he's a sort of factotem. So when the Conservancy needed to have a septic field dug, Rodney volunteered. Using his own backhoe and appropriate skills, he managed it within a couple of days, drawing upon the funds provided by the Nichols Foundation to pay only for the materials needed. And he mowed and tidied up the field while he was about it.

Then he said he'd a toilet we could have if we wanted it. And when we got the well in, he'd be glad to help us get the water into the building so we could flush that toilet.

How do you thank a man like that? Except perhaps to say "He's the kind of man this country produces" when we're lucky.

E. B.

New Directors Join Conservancy Board

Alicia Collins Smith, of W Hurley, and Laura Travers, of the Town of Olive, will join the Conservancy to serve two year terms beginning in March 1997.

Alicia brings to the Conservancy an avid interest in environmental issues and practical skills in bookkeeping and computer systems. She has recently graduated from Bard College with a BA in Environmental Studies and is currently employed at Williams Lumber in Rhinebeck where she helps manage the financial aspect of the business. Alicia looks forward to combining her skills

and interests by working with the Conservancy.

Laura is a resident of West Shokan and works as an administrator at the New York City Department of Environmental Protection office at the Ashokan Reservoir. Having recently purchased a property adjacent to land protected by a RELC conservation easement, Laura understands the importance of sustaining the RELC's work. Laura's organizational skills and enthusiasm for the Conservancy's mission should be an effective contribution to our efforts.

Thank You!

These generous individuals have made contributions to the Rondout-Esopus Land Conservancy:

Anne Altshuler
Sita Anderson & Lindsay Hoyt
Catherine & Andy Angstrom
Marion Becker
Gregory Belcamino & Judith Welcom
Eleanor Bell
Barry Benepe
Bill Benson & Jim Dinsmore
Peter Bienstock
Jane & Jack Bierhorst
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Patricia Bartleson, in recognition of Virginia Schoonmaker's many years of public service
Mrs Gladys R Bormann in memory of her parents, Mr & Mrs A E Bedigian

Working with landowners to preserve special open places



Rondout-Esopus Land Conservancy, Inc.
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