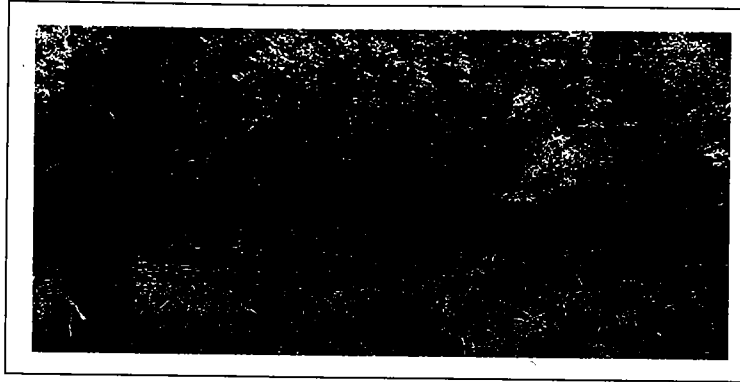
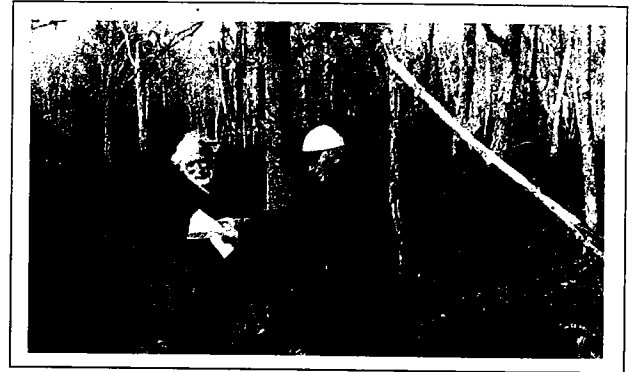




RELC News 2005



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.

Continues on next page



Laura Travers and Arthur Weyhe walk his easement in Hurley/Marbletown.



And above all, good stewardship hinges on an open relationship with the landowner. We keep in touch with the landowner to keep in touch with the land. Is the property on the market? Has the property been sold? Is the landowner considering exercising an option in their easement? We need to know these things to protect the easement effectively. As properties change hands, the monitoring of the easement becomes increasingly important.

If you would like to volunteer to monitor an easement, call us at 845-687-7553.



One of the hallmarks of land trusts is our non-adversarial nature. We don't march on city hall or cry out that the environmental sky is falling. Instead, land trusts quietly help landowners protect the resources and character of their land, retaining a sense of place that is fast disappearing in a homogenizing world.

Our low-keyed methods have worked, and account for the unprecedented growth of the land trust movement. But in the face of a growing anti-conservation movement, quiet competence is no longer enough. We also need to be vocal advocates for the land we save.

For while land trusts have been saving land, other forces have been seeds of doubt among the very people who should be our allies. This movement is a well organized and well financed effort to convince people that the government and environmentalists are conspiring to take away their land, their jobs and their property rights. They turn partnerships into conspiracies and polarize communities. Many of these people are well-meaning people who have been convinced that their rights and their livelihoods are in jeopardy.

What they fail to understand is that land trusts do not oppose development, but offer alternatives to thoughtless, unplanned development in inappropriate places. We can only offer choices; we can-

not force anybody to do anything. Even more fundamentally, the protesters do not admit that landowners have just as much right to protect their land as to develop it; they will not see that choosing to develop "locks in" the fate of that land in a way that protecting it never will.

Land trusts can use their voice to restore balance to this debate. Land trusts understand the needs and problems of private landowners and know that many landowners are more concerned about their right to conserve their property for future generations than their right to eke out every penny of its value today. Land trusts respect private property rights, but understand these rights cannot ignore the public good. Land trusts are expert in use of the carrots that encourage voluntary land conservation, but understand the need for the sticks that prevent environmental damage.

Quietly doing land transactions is no longer enough. Land trusts need to shift resources into telling people why we save land, why it is important not only biologically and aesthetically, but economically and socially. Land Trusts need to continue to be sure private property rights are protected. But we need to be equally, vocally confident about defending the public good. Land trusts will continue to succeed because of our non-adversarial nature. But our unique nature brings unique responsibilities.

Every land trust must confront misinformation with informed, compelling reason. We must reinforce, by word as well as deed, the importance of saving special open space.

We work every day to accomplish this.

(Excerpts taken from the Land Trust Alliance Exchange - Winter 1994)



Below is the resignation letter of Laura Travers. She has been a "steady state" force and channeler of growth of the Rondout Esopus Land Conservancy for more years than most of us can recall. Her talents and dedication as a board member and President will be missed.

Consider Voting In Ulster County...

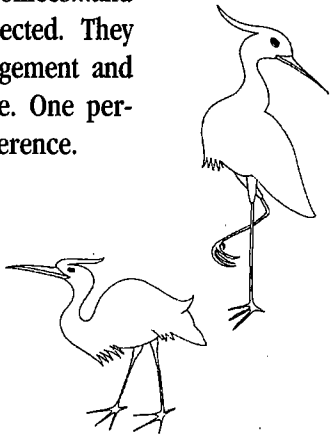
Do you live here part time and vote somewhere else? Or maybe you don't vote at all?

Consider voting here.

Maybe your vote among hundreds or thousands would go farther here than amongst tens of thousands or millions there.

Some communities and individuals are really trying to consider how open space impacts your quality of life here in Ulster County and they are looking at their open space policies. Individuals are standing up and running for town offices...and they are getting elected. They need your encouragement and your thoughtful vote. One person can make a difference.

Please vote.



To all our supporters, members and friends,

It is with regret and excitement that I submit my resignation as a member of RELC's Board of Directors effective February 1, 2005. Regret that I will not be working on protecting open space in Ulster County which I have really loved doing and excitement that I will be starting a new career. My eight years with RELC has been extremely rewarding and I have enjoyed working with many of you personally.

I am leaving the Conservancy to hopefully expand Beehive Builders, Inc. into the Catskills. Beehive Builders specializes in building homes with the alternative building material, rastra. Presently two homes are being built in Milford, PA. There will be considerable time spent on my own education of rastra, research into a potential market here and then the approach to builders to this new technology.

I hope all of you reading this will continue to support RELC in any way that is appropriate for you. Only with your support can the Conservancy continue to be a viable force to protect open space in Ulster County.

Sincerely,
Laura Travers

RELC Fundraiser continued...

to help instill in them the value of wildlife.

It is never too early to teach children to respect and to protect the environment. Jack was helped out by his grandson Jared (9) and his granddaughter Giavanna (6).

Our silent auction was a great collection of items and we want to thank all our friends who supported us. A special "thank you" to Ethan Campbell who was a wonderful music accompaniment to our silent auction.

Our supporters help us in many ways; they offer legal advice, monitor properties, make donations to our fundraisers and support us financially. Thank you all for your generous support!

John and Kristy Adams
Bob Anderberg
Nancy April & Doug McGilvray
Marion Becker
Alan & Ruth Bendelius
Barry Benepe
Rev. Harold Benson & Jim Dinsmore
Sally Berger
Jane & John Bierhorst
Linda Bloom
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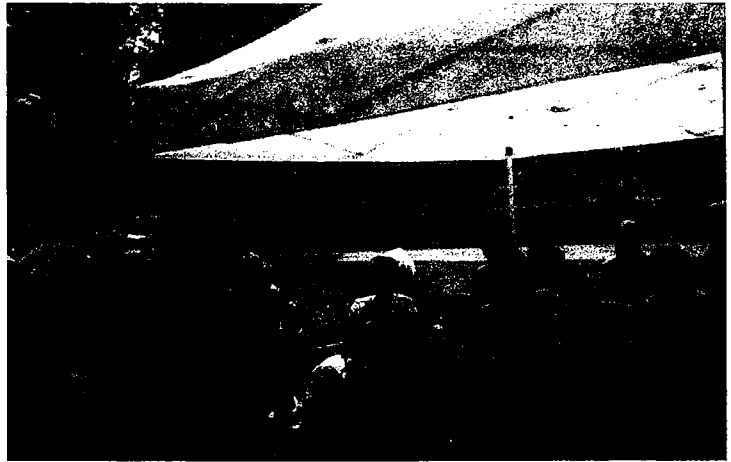
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Philip & Mary Weinberg
Arthur Weyhe
Zali Win

Everyone who helps with Conservancy work is a volunteer. We give our time all year long to work with landowners to acquire new easements and manage and monitor our existing easements. We answer inquiries, walk land, pay bills, attend board meetings, organize the newsletter, produce a yearly fundraiser, and meet with like minded organizations and agencies to foster our mission..

Please donate generously.

Jan Leas
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Our Apologies. We sincerely regret any errors or omissions in recognizing our supporters. If you see an incorrect spelling or a missing name, please call us at 845-687-7553



Left: Teal Harrison-Hertz isn't sure he wants to pet Jack's Giant Monitor Lizard. Jared and Giavanna Knox help prepare for the next creature. Above: Crocodile, anyone?

Searching For Property Corners

In this hundred-acre wood cut with erratic lines from a larger claim "as the needle pointed in 1899" we discover scant hints of what was meant back then. These woods are not the same. The blazed hickory has disappeared with the pine

and hemlock. Every witness tree has fallen. Only rocks and walls of stone are left to follow, and even these monuments seem out of place by deed. Only when the "stone marked CC" is found where, thrown down by frost or gravity, it has lain silent

since, do we make some sense. We pace to a pile of stones half hidden by moss and leaves, tumbled by time, then turn 20 degrees and, pacing still, follow rocks placed, it seems, in a line to where we must cross a stream and find another stone marked with two C's.

In time each corner's found again in this hundred-acre wood cut long, long ago in erratic lines from some larger, longer claim.

Matthew J. Spireng, First published in *Blue Unicorn*

Board Members Needed

Now, more than ever, we need you to step forward and offer to serve on our Board of Directors. The only requirements for a board member are to be open and thoughtful, to believe in our mission and to be able to attend one Board meeting a month. (Generally our Board meetings end in November and resume in March or April.) We all do what we can at our own pace according to our work and family obligations.

Please think about this and act now. Board members periodically rotate off the Board and must be replaced. The future existence of the Conservancy depends on your participation. Thank you.

For more information and to be a guest at one of our meetings, call Jody at (845) 657-6369.

RELC Fundraiser

On May 15, 2004 RELC held their yearly fundraiser at the newly painted and repaired Headquarters in Alligerville. Featured was "Wildman" Jack DiMuccio with a selection of reptiles and small mammals. Jack, a biologist by profession, has been working with and lecturing on wildlife for over 30 years. Jack's program included live reptiles such as snakes, lizards, a crocodile and turtles along with a presentation on NY State small mammals and the relationship they have to their environment. The presentation was lively and he offered "hands on" audience participation. Jack especially enjoyed working with the young people in the audience

Continued on insert



Rondout-Esopus Land Conservancy, Inc.
 PO Box 345
 High Falls, NY 12440
 845-687-7553

*Working with landowners to
 preserve special open places*

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- Lindsay Hoyt, Jr. President, Boiceville
 - Jac Conway, Treasurer, Olive
 - Jan Leas, Secretary, Stone Ridge
 - John Adams, Wawarsing
 - Walter Levy, Accord
 - Arthur Markle, High Falls
 - Laura Travers, W. Shokan
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The Rondout-Esopus Land Conservancy depends upon your support to keep our open country land productive and beautiful.

- Benefactor \$1000
- Patron \$500
- Sponsor \$250
- Supporter \$100
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Enclosed is my employer's matching gift form
 For my donation of \$100 or more please send me a RELC Tote bag.

Please make your check payable to RELC,
 and mail your tax-deductible contribution to:

Jac Conway, Rondout-Esopus Land Conservancy, 51 Tongorekill Rd.,
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Please contact me regarding preservation of land in my area:

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