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Conservation Matters

Hunterdon Land Trust Alliance

Vol. 5, No. 2

Fall 2001

Please Join Us For the Fifth Annual Fall Harvest Dinner – November 7

Trustees John Mathieu and Deborah Woodard are hard at work planning this year's Harvest Dinner and Silent Auction, to be held on Wednesday, November 7, 6:30 – 9:30 p.m., at a new location: The Inn at Lambertville Station.

As regular attendees of the dinner know, area gourmet chefs have always donated to the delectable five-course dinner. Among this year's participating chefs are Ricky Franco of Atrio Restaurant in Stockton, Lola Wyckoff of the Rosemont Café, Patrick Givens of Church Street Bistro, and Joe and Sandy Clyde of The Sergeantsville Inn. The Baker in Milford, and Alba and Unionville Vineyards are also contributing. This year we have a special donation for the silent auction – a sculpture by world-renowned artist Toshiko Takaazu, who lives in Quakertown. Ms. Takaazu's work is represented in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the American Craft Museum, and the Art Institute of Chicago, among many others. Also at the auction you can expect to bid on many exciting items donated by area business people, artists, and craftspeople, and by trustees and friends of HLTA.

This annual dinner is an important fundraiser for HLTA, and an opportunity to spend time with friends and neighbors who support land preservation in our community. Tickets are \$75. For information, call the HLTA office at 908-996-4421.

HLTA's New Effort in the Highlands

BY ROB EBERHARDT

HHLTA has expanded its land preservation work to include the Highlands area of northern Hunterdon County. The Highlands is a mountainous region, often described as the "Reading Prong" of the New England Uplands, which runs from southwestern Connecticut, through New York and northwestern New Jersey, and across the Delaware River into southeastern Pennsylvania. Expanses of forests, wetlands, agricultural valleys, and small villages represent a strikingly beautiful rural landscape just miles away from the cities of New York and Philadelphia. The region is the focus of a multi-state alliance of organizations and individuals – the Highlands Coalition – which is dedicated to its preservation, and it has drawn the interest of the U.S. Forest Service, which is conducting a study.

Millions of people throughout New York and New Jersey depend on clean, plentiful drinking water provided by Highlands reservoirs and rivers, and countless others enjoy hiking, fishing, and other recreational opportunities available in the region. Many families have farmed the area for generations, and newcomers enjoy the opportunity

to live "out in the country" while working in nearby urban areas and surrounding suburbs. Unfortunately continued development threatens to destroy the natural resources and rural character that make the Highlands so special, and government initiatives, non-profit organizations, and local citizens are working hard to protect the Highlands with appropriate land-use regulation and land acquisition.

With matching grant funding from the Green Acres Program, HLTA has focused its efforts on acquiring lands on the Musconetcong Ridge in Bethlehem and Lebanon Townships, an area that supports some of the largest tracts of intact

forest in the County. We hope that by working with Green Acres, Hunterdon County, municipalities, and landowners we can help to develop a contiguous band of preserved land that protects the Musconetcong Ridge forever. We also look forward to expanding our acquisition work to include other areas in the Highlands of Hunterdon County. Please contact us if you would like to help preserve our part of the Highlands! ●



Fall on Point Mountain. The Highlands, home to black bear, bobcat, eagles, and native trout, provide essential habitat for migratory songbirds.

Photo by Wilma Frey,
NJ Conservation Foundation

President's Message

Dear Friends of the Land Trust, We send this newsletter to you in a time of uncertainty and much reflection. I think the context for everyone's work, whatever it may be, has changed since the terrorist attacks of September 11th. Certainly, our hearts go out to those who have been affected in a close personal way by these recent events. I'm sure that many people, like me, find themselves reassessing what's important in their lives, and how what we do, or do not do, helps or hinders efforts towards peaceful relations among the human race and meeting the needs of all people. For me, one question among many has been – where does land conservation fit into that effort? In watching and listening to people respond to this crisis, among so many sad images that continue to revolve in my mind, is the image of the many people in New York City who headed to Central Park, and many other smaller parks and community gardens in the City, in the hours immediately following the attacks. The fact that in a time of great anxiety and sadness, that one of the things that people needed and sought was some contact not just with other people but with green space and nature, reaffirms for me the importance that saving land can have for everyone. ●

ALISON MITCHELL

Volunteer Profile BY SANDY MADON

Ruth Gang, one of the founding members of the Hunterdon Land Trust Alliance, has lived in Delaware Township since 1984. She shares her home with her husband, Lloyd, a retired attorney, and her two German Shorthaired Pointers. Ruth grew up in South Orange and graduated from Wellesley College. After marrying Lloyd they moved to Montclair,



Lloyd and Ruth Gang

where she became active in community service. She joined the League of Women Voters and later volunteered for the Whole Theater Company in Montclair, doing fundraising. Her son, Steve, owns his own management consultant firm in Salem, Massachusetts. She has two daughters; Meredith is a sculptor in New York City and Laura is co-director of Parents United for Child Care, which is attempting to find meaningful after-school care for the children of Boston. Ruth and Lloyd have seven grandchildren.

Ruth was formerly the secretary of HLTA and now is working on fundraising and membership development. She believes that “it is important for people who live in this magnificent place to keep it that way.” Ruth’s cheerful smile and hard work are appreciated!

How did your interest in land preservation develop?

Through my interest in Lloyd’s work with the New Jersey Conservation Foundation. Lloyd is a board member and past president of NJCF. He also serves as an HLTA advisory trustee. I have always loved the outdoors and attended Girl Scout camp for seven years.

What other activities and organizations are you involved in?

I’m a trustee of Hunterdon Youth Services, which provides shelter to youths who are unable to stay at home. I am also a board member of the Delaware River Mill Society, which is restoring and maintaining the Prallsville Mills in Stockton.

You’ve been with the HLTA since its inception. What moments or events stand out in your mind?

The first big meeting in 1996 when the HLTA officially became incorporated. It was a great day! We finally did it! I also have fond memories of some of the Fall Harvest Dinners at the Yellow Brick Toad. I found the Land Trust Rally in Burlington, Vermont, to be exciting, with people from all over the country sharing the same ideas. Our cooperative work with the New Jersey Conservation Foundation has been great.

I also enjoy working with the many dedicated people who volunteer for HLTA. It’s exciting the way people inspire each other with great ideas. This is a most vibrant organization! I feel a sense of pride in what we are doing. It’s a long road, but I am pleased with what we’ve done so far. ●

HLTA Welcomes Jim Amon to Board of Trustees

BY KURT STEINERT



HHLTA's newest Trustee, Jim Amon, is no stranger to preserving open space. A longtime central New Jersey resident (he and his wife Kathleen recently moved to Lambertville from Hopewell) Jim has been the Executive Director of the Delaware and Raritan Canal Commission for 26 years.

During that time Jim has developed and administered a regulatory

program to protect the Canal Park from the harmful impact of new development. He also developed and directed the implementation of an acquisition program that has more than doubled the size of the park.

Jim has also worked extensively to guide non-governmental agencies toward taking actions that will benefit the Canal Park. To that end he (with others) founded the Delaware & Raritan Greenway, and the Delaware River Greenway Partnership (where he is currently serving as president).

Jim has been very active over the years with several open space advocacy groups, serving as either an advisor or a board member of: Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space, Lawrence Township Conservation

Foundation, Friends of Princeton Open Space, Trenton Open Space Advisory Committee, and Delaware River Mill Society (President for three years, during which time he raised \$275,000 in grants to restore the Prallsville Mills).

Jim is looking forward to bringing his extensive experience to bear on addressing the challenge of preserving open space on a countywide basis.

"Hunterdon is full of beautiful landscapes that have not yet been spoiled with suburban development, and working with HLTA gives me an opportunity to do something that I think is really important," says Amon. "I think that at this time in New Jersey the most important thing that can be done for posterity is to save land." ●

Summer Nature Walk

On a warm and pleasant summer afternoon in August, forty people came together to learn about our natural landscape from expert naturalists and biologists. Trustee Denise Royle, a former science teacher who is a PhD candidate and landscape ecologist, organized the two-mile walk. Denise was joined by Leslie Sauer, landscape architect, author of *The Once and Future Forest* and HLTA advisory trustee, Bill Rawlyk, HLTA trustee and stream ecology expert and Dr. Lisa Windham, ecologist and wetlands scientist. The walk took place at Leslie's family's large farm near Sergeantsville in Delaware Township. Those attending the walk looked closely at woodlands and meadows and learned about some of the problems invasive plants are causing in our natural environment. Leslie explained that Japanese stilt grass steals moisture and light from spring wildflowers, and

honeysuckle, which makes a blanket that suppresses tree regeneration, has altered the course of forest succession by preventing thousands of trees from growing.

Walkers also heard from Denise Royle about research underway to control the woolly adelgid, a tiny insect that preys on hemlock trees, and Bill Rawlyk explained that the Wickecheoke Creek, while impacted by development and agriculture in its upstream reaches, is relatively healthy downstream, with the forest canopy helping it to recover. Turning over rocks in the stream, Bill showed hikers examples of small aquatic insects that do not tolerate pollution and are a sign of good water quality.



Noted landscape architect Leslie Sauer (center) reflects on the health of our local ecosystem

Several young small mouth bass were seen flitting about in the shadows of the slowly moving stream.

Roger Harris, trustee and former HLTA president, and his wife Friederike hosted the hikers under a spreading maple tree for rest and refreshments before everyone headed home. ●

Hunterdon Land Trust Alliance

To Preserve and Protect the Rural Landscape of Hunterdon County

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Sergeantsville, NJ 08557

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Editor

Mimi Upmeyer

Wish List

Volunteers to help with large mailings, monitoring HLTA properties and helping with events.

Slide Show Available

If you know of a civic or community group that would like to schedule a slide presentation about land preservation and HLTA's role, please call the office at 908-996-4421.

Web Site

There's a new "protected lands" feature on the HLTA website. Check it out at www.hlta.org.

To Reach HLTA

Web: www.hlta.org

Email: hlta@earthlink.net

Phone: 908-996-4421

Fax: 908-996-2552

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 143,
Sergeantsville, NJ 08557

Location: 3037 Route 29,
Frenchtown, NJ

Martin Rapp Donates Signs

HHLTA trustee Martin Rapp, who lives in Lambertville and works for the NJ Natural Lands Trust, has donated 100 signs to HLTA. We will use these signs to mark our preserved properties. Thanks to Martin for his generous gift and to HLTA trustee and artist Alix Bacon who helped design the signs. ●



Volunteer Reception – November 15th

A reception for new volunteers will be held at the HLTA office on Thursday, November 15th from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Our office is located on Route 29 just south of Frenchtown. If you have been thinking about donating some time to HLTA and would like to learn more, please consider attending this meeting. Volunteer trustees will be on hand to answer questions and explain what they do for HLTA. We'd welcome your involvement! Let us know if you can attend by calling 908-996-4421.



Hunterdon Land Trust Alliance

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