



# conservation matters

## hunterdon land trust alliance

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### hunterdon land trust alliance plays pivotal role in the preservation of 290-acre tract in lebanon

The Hunterdon Land Trust Alliance (HLTA) celebrated another land preservation victory in August with the protection of a critical, 290-acre tract in Lebanon Township known as the “Crystal Springs” property. This property — which consists of fields, wetlands, ponds and woodlands — was preserved through a partnership with the HLTA, the state Green Acres Program, the New Jersey Water Supply Authority, the Hunterdon County Freeholders, Lebanon Township and the Washington Land Trust.

Bradley Campbell, commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, announced the completion of the project at a press conference on August 12; Margaret Waldock, HLTA executive director, and other government and non-profit organization representatives took part in the celebratory event.

“We’re thrilled to have helped facilitate the preservation of such a beautiful, ecologically rich piece of land,” Waldock says. “Not only is this property scenic, it also serves as valuable watershed land at the headwaters of the Spruce Run, an important source of drinking water for thousands of New Jersey residents. As importantly, it serves as a link to other preserved properties, helping establish another large contiguous area of protected wildlife habitat.”

The Crystal Springs property includes parcels in both Hunterdon and Morris counties, and is adjacent to more than 600 acres of preserved land. Combined, these properties form a contiguous, 900-acre greenway tying together Hunterdon’s Point Mountain Reservation, September Farms and Teetertown Ravine Nature Preserve. The Hunterdon County Parks Department will manage the land, which will be accessible to the public.

The HLTA partnered with five other organizations to bring the Crystal Springs project to fruition, and is working with many of these groups on open space initiatives in the Spruce Run watershed and other parts of the county.

“This success further demonstrates the important role land trusts, particularly the HLTA, can play in preserving New Jersey’s natural resources,” Waldock says. “We helped fund the project, through a \$330,000 Green Acres grant, and played a key role in managing the project from its inception, helping negotiate the agreement with the property owner and handling logistical aspects of the transaction, including the commissioning of surveys and appraisals. We also helped secure funding for the project.”

The preservation of this property would not have been possible without our partners and the generous support of HLTA members. 🌲



*Partners in Preservation: from left to right, Kyle Lyschak, Frank Scangarella, Pam Thier, Margaret Waldock, Eileen Swann, Kevin Richardson and Tim Morris.*

## president's message

Autumn, and all the changes it brings, is a perfect time to reflect on all the (positive!) changes that are taking place at the HLTA. As you read this issue of Conservation Matters you'll see an organization that is growing in exciting ways, an organization that is more focused, more influential and more successful than ever before.

We recently added two exceptional properties — a total of 350 acres — to our preserved list, the “Crystal Springs” property in Lebanon Township and the “My Ben” tract in Stockton, both of which have long been targets of development efforts. We also secured more than a million dollars in funding commitments from the State of New Jersey and other sources to support our work preserving natural areas and farmland throughout the county.

There is a growing interest in our preservation efforts as we continue to generate support from residents committed to maintaining the rural character and protecting the critical natural resources of Hunterdon County. The late Alyce Russo of Delaware Township was one such committed resident. Prior to her death in the early part of 2004, Alyce made a generous gift of \$300,000 to ensure that we could continue to preserve the beauty of the Lockatong Creek, a place that she loved. We are grateful to Alyce for her commitment to preservation.

We have been growing steadily over the year, adding new members interested in supporting our work. This summer we embarked on a new membership drive, and we're making good progress. However, to be truly successful we need your help. Please help us grow by encouraging your family and friends to become members of the HLTA, and help us preserve the natural areas and farmland that make Hunterdon County such a special place. 🌲

In friendship,

Deborah Woodard

## hlta helps preserve 63 acres in stockton

After more than 12 years of uncertainty, the fate of 63 acres of critical woodlands in Stockton Borough and Delaware Township has finally been decided;

fortunately, it was the right decision. On August 24 the state's Green Acres program and the Borough of Stockton acquired this tract, known as the “My Ben” property, for preservation.

This land, which had been the target of a controversial proposal that would have allowed for 44 more homes in the borough, would not have been saved without the early and persistent efforts of the HLTA. The organization helped the borough secure funding through the state's Green Acres program and jump-

started the project by obtaining an appraisal that served as the basis for acquisition negotiations.

The 63-acre My Ben property is made up predominantly of woodlands, and includes the wellhead protection area for the borough, the critical groundwater recharge zone that protects the public water supply. The HLTA is thrilled to have played such a critical role in the preservation of this property and commends the borough of Stockton and Stockton Mayor Greg Rakin for making such a proactive effort to save this unique property.

By saving the My Ben land, Mayor Rakin and the HLTA helped maintain the small-town character of Stockton and protected the quality of drinking water for residents of the borough for generations to come. 🌲



*Stockton Mayor Greg Rakin announces the successful acquisition of the My Ben property.*

# HLTA receives \$300,000 gift from the late Alyce Russo of Delaware Township

Earlier this year the HLTA received a \$300,000 donation from the late Alyce Russo of Delaware Township. The generous gift by Ms. Russo, who passed away in February of this year, will help us expand and accelerate our efforts to acquire and facilitate the protection of farmland, woodlands and other open space in Hunterdon County.

Ms. Russo, a long-time Delaware Township resident, was a passionate supporter of land-preservation efforts in the county, particularly around the Lockatong Creek in Delaware Township, one of our key project areas.

The HLTA came to Ms. Russo's attention while she was attempting to stop a development project of a critical property along Route 29. Although efforts were unsuccessful, Ms. Russo never forgot the tenacity with which the HLTA fought the development. (We have since preserved several key properties along the Lockatong.)

"Ms. Russo's generous gift, along with the continued support of our

members and others committed to preserving Hunterdon's natural heritage, will allow us to move more quickly to preserve critical areas such as the Lockatong Creek corridor," says Margaret Waldock, executive director of the HLTA. "We're deeply grateful to Alyce for her generous expression of faith in our

goals and programs, and will do our best to honor her memory by saving as much as we can of what she held dear."

The gift will greatly enhance our efforts to preserve scenic natural areas in the county and help ensure that the organization is able to continue fighting long into the future. 🌲



*Shown above is the preserved section of the Lockatong Creek in Delaware Township near the home of the late Alyce Russo.*

## estate planning a great way to help save a piece of hunterdon for future generations

Want to create a lasting legacy? Why not help the HLTA preserve Hunterdon County for future generations by including us in your estate plans. Bequests through your will to organizations that are working for the causes you believe in are an ideal way to create a lasting legacy after your death. Bequests to the HLTA will help ensure that future generations will continue to enjoy the beauty and special character of Hunterdon County.

If you would like to learn more about how to include a bequest to the HLTA in your will, please feel free to contact us at [info@hlta.org](mailto:info@hlta.org) or 908-996-4421. We would be happy to direct you to the appropriate sources for additional information and/or refer you to qualified specialists who can work with you to explore your charitable giving and estate planning options. 🌲

# hlta awarded more than \$1,000,000 in state and private grants

In recent months the HLTA has been the recipient of a variety of state and private grants to support the group's land preservation programs, including grants from the Garden State Preservation Trust's "Green Acres" and "Farmland Preservation" programs, as well as targeted grants from the Delaware River Greenway Partnership and the Environmental Support Center. Collectively, these grants — totaling more than \$1,000,000 — highlight the increasingly critical and successful role the HLTA is playing in countywide open space and farmland protection efforts. "These grants will give us the resources we need to pursue a wide variety of land acquisition and preservation projects in Hunterdon County, particularly in the Highlands region, which has long been a focus of our efforts," says Margaret Waldock, executive director of the HLTA.

"We believe these grants represent a strong vote of confidence in our efforts to date to protect some of Hunterdon County's most sensitive and valuable landscapes."

## hlta approved for \$575,000 green acres matching grant

In August the HLTA received approval from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection and the Garden State Preservation Trust of \$575,000 in Green Acres matching grant funds. This grant is intended to support the organization's land preservation efforts in Hunterdon County, and includes \$175,000 in supplemental funding to assist with efforts to acquire open space in the Highlands region.

The state has committed additional funding to non-profit organizations

that are working to preserve open space in municipalities in the Highlands region, which are vital to protecting New Jersey's critical water resources. This supplemental funding will enable the HLTA to build on recent successes — such as the HLTA's recent acquisition of 290 acres of critical open space in Lebanon Township (see Crystal Springs story on page 1) — and accelerate our ongoing efforts to preserve open space and farmland in the Highlands region and other sensitive areas of the county. For instance, we are currently pursuing a variety of projects including the preservation of 200 acres of critical habitat and watershed lands in Bethlehem Township, and a 68-acre farm in Holland Township, projects that will benefit from this new funding award.

## state's farmland preservation program approves \$500,000 grant for the hlta

In July the Garden State Preservation Trust approved \$129.8 million in farmland preservation funding to help save farms in 18 counties. Among the recipients was the HLTA, which has been granted \$500,000 in the form of a matching grant to support our efforts to help Hunterdon County farmers preserve their properties. The funding will finance the purchase of conservation easements (or development rights) and in some cases support outright purchases of farmland from property owners.

The matching grant through the farmland preservation program will help cover land purchases as well as some related costs in a particularly sensitive section of Kingwood

Township, designated the Kingwood Project Area, which includes five farms all eligible for preservation under the grant.

## hlta receives grant from delaware river greenway partnership

The HLTA was awarded a grant by the Delaware River Greenway Partnership to assist with the acquisition and preservation of Skyhawk Island, a 6-acre scenic island located in the Delaware River in Kingwood Township. This grant is part of a broader program — supported by the U.S. National Park Service's Wild and Scenic Rivers program — to preserve the wild and natural character of the lower Delaware River.

The grant will cover the costs associated with preserving the island, including title work, survey, and environmental assessment. The owners are interested in donating the island in order to make it available for public recreational purposes.

By donating this island, the owners will actually facilitate the preservation of other properties in the region. The Green Acres grant program allows the HLTA to credit the value of the donated property towards the purchase of another property within the same watershed, further assisting our preservation efforts in the Alexauken and Lockatong Creek project areas.

## environmental support center funds hlta training

In June, the HLTA received a grant from the Environmental Support Center, a non-profit environmental education and training organization, *continued on page 6*

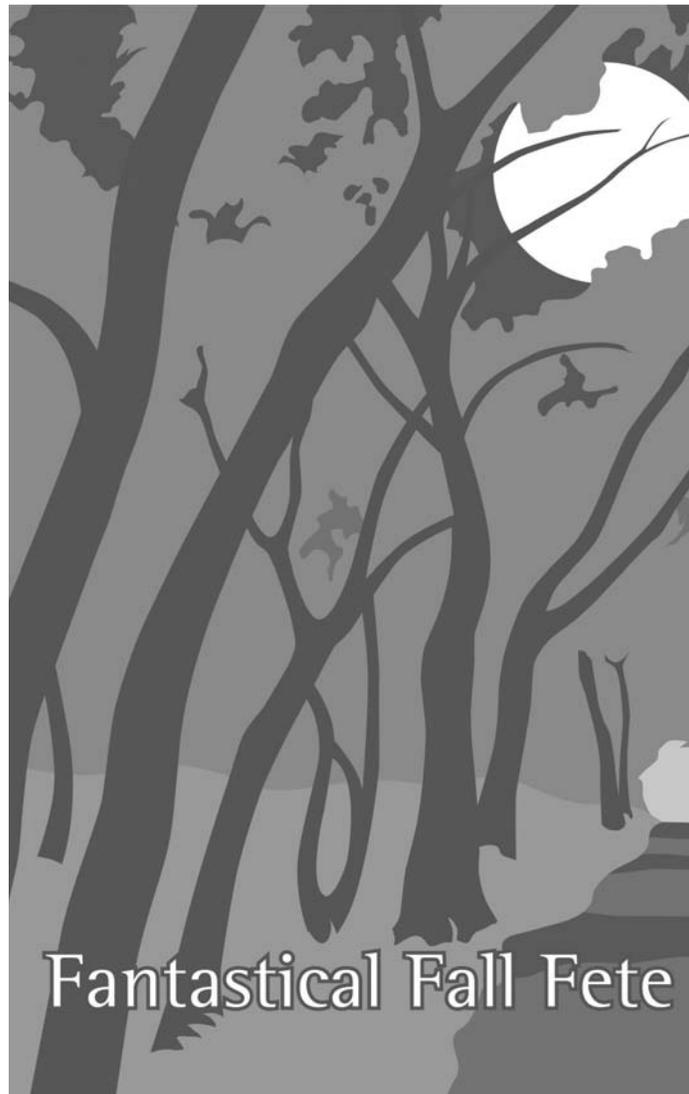
# fantastical fall fete to raise funds for land preservation

{ annual hlta benefit to be bigger  
and better than ever }

The HLTA is planning an expanded program for our annual Fall benefit. This year's event, the "Fantastical Fall Fete," will take place on November 13, 2004 from 7 to 10:30 p.m. at the Rago Arts and Auction Center in Lambertville. The evening will feature wine and beer, hors d'oeuvres, a catered dinner, entertainment, and a charity auction (both live and silent) featuring artwork, crafts, trips, goods and services from local businesses, and one-of-a-kind events.

The evening will be both entertaining and educational, with music and theatrical performances, as well as exhibits and slideshows. The auction will feature art and crafts from prominent local artists and artisans, and food, goods and services contributed by local businesses. It will be substantially larger than previous years; we expect about 300 HLTA supporters to attend.

"We expect this Fall's benefit to be bigger and better than ever, a celebration as much as a fundraiser," says Risa Sackman, a member of the board of trustees who is chairing the event. "By moving to the Rago Arts and Auction Center, we're able to accommodate many more people than was



possible in previous years. We're also incorporating some exciting new elements to the program that are sure to make it an even more entertaining evening. This is definitely an event that should not be missed."

For the first time, the HLTA will distribute a resource book at the event, which will include the history of the organization, information about successful land preservation projects, a large advertising/ sponsorship section, and an index of all businesses and individuals that helped support the event through advertisements and donations.

We are encouraging all of our members to attend, and to invite your friends and family. The cost is only \$75

per person, and all proceeds will benefit the HLTA.

Make reservations today via email at [info@hlta.org](mailto:info@hlta.org), or by phone at 908-996-4421. Payment can be made by check or Visa/Mastercard, and must be received in advance to guarantee admission.

We hope to see you on November 13! 🌲

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to subsidize the cost of participation in a fundraising seminar and ongoing development consultations by the Institute for Conservation Leadership.

The program is designed to help non-profit conservation organizations enhance fundraising strategies and diversify their funding base. 🌲

## hlta welcomes new administrator



This past June, Adam Blackburn joined the HLTA as our new administrator. Adam, born and raised in the Philadelphia area and now a Frenchtown resident, is an Amherst graduate and in the past worked as a legal assistant in a law firm. When he is not working for the HLTA, Adam works as a recording engineer and consultant in the music industry.

For the past several months Adam has been helping us manage the office, organize our membership and volunteers, re-vamp our database and support a number of our programs from outreach and education to PR. Perhaps as importantly, Adam has brought some much needed technical knowledge to the HLTA, and has been helping update and manage our office equipment and systems.

We'd like to welcome Adam to the HLTA Family! 🌲

## want to learn more about local preservation efforts?

Come join us for one of our Hunterdon County Green Table Seminars. The Green Table seminar series was initiated by the HLTA and the South Branch Watershed Association as an opportunity for citizens, municipal officials and non-profit organizations to learn more about land preservation efforts in Hunterdon County and to network with others involved in those efforts.

The Green Table is held bi-monthly on every third Thursday from 8 to 10 a.m. and is hosted by the Hunterdon County Park system at their Echo Hill Environmental Center. Past discussion topics have included river-friendly land management practices, transfer of development rights programs, and the use of conservation easements to preserve private land. If you would like to be placed on the mailing list to receive announcements for upcoming meetings, please call the South Branch Watershed Association at 908-782-0422. 🌲

## hlta hooks new members and donations at shad fest

Each year in May thousands of people descend on Lambertville for the annual Shad Fest, a weekend-long celebration of one of the Delaware River's most celebrated residents. The HLTA hosted an information table at this year's event, and despite the rain on Sunday afternoon that brought the celebration to an early close, our participation in the Shad Fest was a smashing success.

In addition to landing quite a few new members the event served as a great opportunity to raise our profile and discuss our mission with people from all over the county and the region. We also came away from the event with several leads on possible preservation projects in the area. Not such a bad way to spend a rainy weekend! 🌲

## bristol-myers squibb donates office furniture to hlta

Earlier this summer we were the recipient of a generous donation of a conference table and chairs from Bristol-Myers Squibb. The table and chairs, which now grace the conference room of our Frenchtown headquarters, are a wonderful and much needed addition to our office. We'd like to thank Bristol-Myers Squibb for this valuable contribution, and offer a special thanks to Toni Gentry, who helped coordinate this gift on behalf of her company. If your business has office furniture or other items you'd like to donate, contact the HLTA at 908-996-4421. 🌲

you helped preserve this view

Your membership support and contributions helped the HLTA preserve the 290-acre Crystal Springs property in Lebanon Township. Since 1996, the HLTA has been working on your behalf to preserve and protect the rural character and natural resources of Hunterdon County, saving properties from the Highlands region in the north of the county to the Alexauken Creek watershed in the south.



Please consider passing this newsletter on to a friend who may become a member and help support land preservation efforts in Hunterdon County.

Membership benefits include:

- ★ The HLTA's biannual newsletter, Conservation Matters
  - ★ Invitations to member events
  - ★ An HLTA window sticker
  - ★ The satisfaction of helping preserve Hunterdon County's rural character and precious natural resources.
- Help spread the word about the good work of the HLTA! 



## become a member!



**hunterdon land trust alliance**  
.....  
to preserve and protect the rural  
character of hunterdon county

name \_\_\_\_\_

address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

municipality \_\_\_\_\_

phone \_\_\_\_\_

fax \_\_\_\_\_

email \_\_\_\_\_

- \$5,000+ benefactor
- \$1,000 conservationist
- \$500 steward
- \$250 protector
- \$100 supporter
- \$50 contributor
- \$35 friend
- other

make checks payable to:  
hunterdon land trust alliance  
3037 route 29  
frenchtown, nj 08825

please check this box if you would like to learn about volunteer opportunities with the HLTA. whether you are a beginner, an expert, or somewhere in between, the HLTA could use your help.

## **hunterdon land trust alliance**

to preserve and protect the rural character of hunterdon county

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phone: 908-996-4421  
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address: 3037 route 29  
frenchtown, nj 08825

# hlta remembers founding board member ruth gang

This past March, the HLTA lost one of its founding board members and a compassionate protector of Hunterdon County's rural landscapes and natural areas. Ruth Gang, who helped establish the HLTA in the mid '90s, passed away on Sunday, March 7, 2004. Ruth had lived in Delaware Township since 1984 with her husband, Lloyd, a retired attorney who was also active in the conservation movement. Ruth's love of Hunterdon County — and the natural riches it offers — is what inspired her to commit her time and boundless energy to the work of the HLTA. "It's important for people who live in this magnificent place to keep it that way," Ruth said.

Ruth certainly took her own advice. She played a key role in the formation of the HLTA, and was present for the organization's birth — the day the HLTA was officially incorporated in 1996. For several years Ruth served as secretary of the HLTA, and later offered her efforts and expertise to fundraising and membership development. In addition to her work with us, Ruth also served as a trustee of Hunterdon Youth Services, which provides shelter to youths who are unable to stay at home, and as a board member of the Delaware River Mill Society, which is restoring and maintaining the Prallsville Mills in Stockton.

Ruth's optimism, cheerfulness and devotion to improving the world around her will remain a lasting inspiration to us all. She will be deeply missed. 🌲



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