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Conservation Matters

Hunterdon Land Trust Alliance

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Rob Eberhardt Signs On To Help With Land Preservation

Rob Eberhardt is our new part-time staff member who comes to us thanks to a cooperative "shared staffing" arrangement between HLTA, the Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space, and the New Jersey Conservation Foundation, which is funded by the Education Foundation of America. Rob grew up in Montclair in Essex County and became interested in natural history and conservation as an

undergraduate at Swarthmore College. He then completed a Master's in Forest Science at Harvard, where for his thesis he

studied the forests and land-use history of outer Cape Cod in Massachusetts. Since starting with us in February, Rob has been working on several of HLTA's ongoing acquisition projects and becoming more familiar with the landscapes of Hunterdon County. He particularly has been impressed by the Sourland Mountains, the streams and rock outcrops near the Devil's Tea Table, and the historic buildings and structures along the Wickecheoke Creek. He looks forward to meeting HLTA members and exploring more of the County as the weather gets warmer.



HLTA and Helen Ringus Preserve 90-acre West Amwell Farm

With the help of HLTA trustees Bill Rawlyk and Dave Pierce (see related interview on p. 2) landowner Helen Ringus recently

preserved her historic West Amwell farm. As part of the deal, Ms. Ringus preserved her own 80-acre property and a neighboring 10-acre woodland she purchased from Jeffrey

Robertson. The property, known as Diamond Creek Farm, dates from the 18th century. It is in the watershed of the Alexauken Creek between Ringoes and Lambertville, off of Route 179 on Gulick Road. Ms. Ringus will continue to own the farm, now

protected by a conservation easement, which HLTA will monitor in perpetuity. Ten acres will be set aside for residential use, a horse barn, and

outbuildings. Ms. Ringus plans to build a state-of-the-art horseback riding facility on the property and HLTA will work to eventually open up the land for public trail use. The open areas of the property are field and pasture, with stunning views across the Sourland Mountains. In the woodland areas, two intermittent headwater streams filled with moss-covered stones meander through northern red oak, shagbark hickory,

and tulip trees. Ms. Ringus notes that the fields and patches of woods are habitat for all sorts of wildlife, especially songbirds, turkeys, owls and hawks.

While the value of this project is obvious, it also represents an important milestone for HLTA as an organization. Although HLTA has

contributed a great deal of volunteer time and some funding to several other preservation projects, this is the group's first use of Green Acres matching funds. The Green Acres Program — which provides funds for open space preservation to non-profit

organizations — contributed half of the "certified fair market value" of the property to HLTA. Ms. Ringus also made a partial donation and West Amwell

Township contributed 20%. HLTA has applied to the Hunterdon County Open Space Trust Fund Program for additional funding to cover the remaining cost.

We are grateful to Helen Ringus for her commitment to preserving land that will remain undeveloped forever, and also to Bill Rawlyk and Dave Pierce for volunteering their time and effort to see this project through to completion. ●



Ringus Farm in West Amwell

Photo by Martin Rapp

"I believe in farms, I believe in open space. The only people who benefit from developments are developers. [When development happens] the whole town suffers."
Helen Ringus

President's Message The Importance of Stewardship

While it may not be as glamorous as the initial saving of land threatened by development, holding and caring for land that has been preserved is one of HLTA's most important roles. Now that we have management responsibility for several properties, I thought it might be a good idea to talk about what this means. The process of preserving land is exciting and rewarding, but along with the excitement and sense of accomplishment comes responsibility for long-term stewardship. This is a serious and important commitment, requiring considerable resources. Depending on the type of property or the terms of a particular conservation easement, HLTA may be responsible for a

variety of things such as trail development and upkeep, purchase and placement of signs that guide the public about when and where it can go, monitoring to ensure that the integrity of the property is protected, and resolution of any problems that do arise. This requires considerable staff and volunteer time. Expenses can include relatively small items like maps and photos, but funds must also be set aside to defend properties when violations occur. It can take an average of several thousand dollars per property in endowment funds upfront to generate enough income to cover future costs of enforcement. The conservation community is responsible for proper stewardship of the lands we preserve forever — that

is a very long time! The real measure of our success today will be the condition of the land generations from now. Please help us meet our ongoing commitment by supporting the land trust and spreading the word about the importance of stewardship.

HLTA is responsible for stewardship on the following properties that we worked to preserve:

The Dondero Farm
in West Amwell – **38 acres**

The Dvoor Farm
in Raritan Township – **42 acres**

The Nishasakwick Creek Preserve
in Frenchtown – **12 acres**

The Milltown Road Preserve
on the Lockatong Creek – **12 acres**

The Helen Ringus Farm
in West Amwell – **90 acres** ●

ALISON MITCHELL

Volunteer Profile BY SANDY MADON



David Pierce

David Pierce, an attorney practicing in Westfield, has lived in Hunterdon County for 16 years. In spite of a busy law practice,

he has been actively involved with HLTA since its inception. He contributed a great deal of time and expertise to the successful preservation of the Helen Ringus property, and has reviewed several other conservation agreements for HTLA.

What sparked your interest in land preservation?

I've always enjoyed the outdoors — I grew up in the city but always spent a lot of time in the woods.

Are you involved in open space issues apart from you work with the HLTA?

I serve as the attorney for the Kingwood Township Open Space and Agricultural Advisory Committees and drafted the township's open space plan. I have also represented the

Planning Board and Board of Adjustment for over 10 years. Over the years I have assisted the Kingwood Township Planning Board in undertaking a hydrological study and in raising the minimum lot size for land accessed by new roads from 2 to 4 acres. We eliminated cluster zoning that granted developers density bonuses for agreeing not to develop land that was probably not developable in that it was environmentally sensitive. We have also adopted an ordinance that limits development on steep slopes.

What have you been doing to assist HLTA?

At the start I was active on the Land Acquisition Committee. My busy law practice has kept me from attending meetings, but I helped HLTA structure, restructure and close the Ringus transaction in West Amwell. I have also been involved with landowners who wish to preserve their land and plan to meet with others to answer questions about tax issues.

From a legal perspective, are there any changes you would like to see that would improve land preservation in New Jersey?

Most of the attention in New Jersey is devoted to preserving farmland, which is fine; but the State should not make it too difficult for woodland owners to qualify for farmland assessment. It appears that the State would just as soon remove woodlands from the farmland assessment program. Granted, there is some abuse by unscrupulous landowners who do not abide by the established rules, but there are plenty of "farmers" who also do not do that which they are supposed to do to qualify for farmland assessment. A change in the State's attitude might help to lessen some of the increasing development pressure felt by woodland owners. The longer we can keep any landowner from succumbing to that pressure, the better chance we have to ultimately gather the resources to preserve their land. ●

HLTA Welcomes Two New Trustees

Kurt Steinert, who lives in Frenchtown with his wife, Christina Sacalis, is a fisherman, mountain biker, hiker and general outdoor enthusiast. He's helped organize HLTA's annual dinner auction, has written and edited HLTA materials, and is a member of the fundraising and outreach



committees. In his day job, Kurt is responsible for all media relations activities for one of Lucent Technologies' five primary business units. Before joining Lucent, Kurt spent ten years in the non-profit world, as associate director of the Media and Security Project (MSP) of the Fund for Peace. MSP organizes and conducts a series of high-profile briefings between members of the Washington press corps and senior government officials involved in defense, foreign policy and global environmental issues. Kurt was responsible for media relations, event planning, fundraising and project management.

Kurt graduated from Cook College, Rutgers University, where he studied journalism and environmental public policy. Among other affiliations, Kurt is a member of the

national Public Advisory Panel for the Chemical Manufacturers Association's Responsible Care program. Responsible Care is an Association initiative intended to promote improved environmental, health and safety practices among its member companies.

Deborah Woodard, a native of Monmouth County, New Jersey, organized the Harvest Dinner Auction and also last spring's fabulous Stonescaping Clinic. The successful auction, a new event at the autumn 2000 dinner, raised \$2,000 for HLTA. Deborah says "I grew up in



an area where riding my horse down the country roads with my friends was still possible. The Monmouth County that I left behind almost two years ago was barely recognizable as that same place. I'm involved with HLTA to do my part toward reversing the tide that's paving over our green spaces. I bring to the organization the desire and the willingness to coordinate activities to raise awareness of our goals and add to the coffers that fund the preservation of open space." ●

he received from the Community Foundation of NJ to HLTA. Wade spoke to landowners in July 2000 at our workshop on land preservation and financial planning.

Special thanks to The Bassett Foundation, which contributed \$2,000 and to Wade Martin, financial planner from Paine Webber, who turned over a \$2,000 award

Volunteers Welcome!

Are you passionate about preserving the beauty and character of Hunterdon County, but don't think you have anything to contribute? Think again. HLTA is an organization made up of volunteers, folks who — like you — care about the future of our county. And like you, many of our most active volunteers were once new to HLTA. As we've grown, we've not only preserved more land, but also begun holding an increasing number of events and special programs. We're always looking for more people who want to be involved — people with interest and enthusiasm (the most important traits), as well as those with other special skills. For instance, we have received wonderful professional help with real estate closings from trustees and attorneys Fred Allen and Dave Pierce. We would love to be able to turn to others with legal, and real estate expertise. If you are organized and like to plan activities, our committee needs help with organizing events, including the annual dinner and auction, or events like our "Grow Native" workshop or the stonescaping clinic held last year. If you have an idea that would help us achieve visibility or raise funds, we'd love to hear from you. If you like to be outdoors and see the beautiful parts of Hunterdon County, we are setting up a stewardship program that will monitor preserved land and we would welcome your involvement. ●

A special coffee hour will be held to introduce potential new volunteers to HLTA and its Trustees and staff on Wednesday, May 23rd at 10:00 a.m. We hope to see you there. Call the HLTA office at 908-996-4421 to let us know you're coming or for more information.

Thanks to those who contributed to HLTA between January 1, 2000 and February 28, 2001.

Alison Accurso and Nancy Cunningham	Peter and Susan Eddy*	James and Connie Hughes	Alison Mitchell	Peter Smith
Bruce and Parry Adam	Don Einhorn	Joseph Hulseman and Frances Spann	Bob and Veronica Mitchell	Elizabeth Snead
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Ken Cook	George Hecht	Marguerite Martin	Leslie Jones Sauer	Lawrence and Andrea Wissner
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* Charter Members donated \$500 or more to HLTA.



HLTA President Alison Mitchell receives a check from Jay Mickle of the Covered Bridge Trail Association, and Ted and Kim Gubernard, Hunter Pace event co-chairpersons.

Covered Bridge Trail Association Raises Money for Good Causes

On Sunday 9/17/00 the Covered Bridge Trail Association held its 3rd annual Hunter Pace event. Approximately 130 riders rode a 9-mile course around Rosemont in

Delaware Township trying to match a predetermined but undisclosed ideal time. Funds raised from the event were donated to several charities, with HLTA receiving \$1000, the Stockton Rescue Squad, \$1000, and the Educational Services Commission Therapeutic Riding Program, three \$325 scholarships for summer camp for handicapped riders. ●

Educational Slide Presentation Available

HLTA has prepared a slide show suitable for presentations to community, civic and other groups. It emphasizes the importance of preserving land in Hunterdon County and explains HLTA's role. Trustees Denise Royle and Kurt Steinert helped to prepare the slides and script. The project was funded by a grant from the New Jersey Conservation Foundation. If you know of a group that would like to schedule this illustrated presentation (it comes with a speaker from HLTA), please let us know. ●

“YOU MUST BE THE CHANGE YOU WISH TO SEE IN THE WORLD.” MAHATMA GANDHI



Hunterdon Land Trust Alliance

To Preserve and Protect the Rural Landscape of Hunterdon County

Membership Tear-off form

Name _____

Address _____

Municipality _____

Phone _____

Fax _____

Email _____

- \$25-49 Contributor
- \$50-99 Supporter
- \$100+ Steward
- \$500+ Charter Member

Make checks payable to:

Hunterdon Land Trust Alliance
PO Box 143
Sergeantsville, NJ 08557

- Please check this box if you would like to learn about volunteer opportunities on our land acquisition, fundraising or public outreach committees. Whether you are a beginner, an expert, or somewhere in between, HLTA could use your help.

Hunterdon Land Trust Alliance

To Preserve and Protect the Rural Landscape of Hunterdon County

P.O. Box 143
Sergeantsville, NJ 08557

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Citizen Advocacy

From time to time the national Land Trust Alliance asks us to communicate with our elected officials on issues important to the land preservation community. If you are willing to write letters or make calls and would like to be on an e-mail alert list, you can sign on at LTA's web site (www.lta.org).

Wish List

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

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

Grow Native

On March 9th Judy Glattstein, a garden consultant, author and teacher at the New York Botanical Garden, gave an illustrated talk on growing native plants to a full house at Rutgers University's Snyder Research and Extension Farm in Pittstown. Judy, a resident of Creek Road in Alexandria Township, generously volunteered her time and expertise to benefit HLTA. Trustee Joyce Koch of Bethlehem Township organized the event, which provided a variety of useful and interesting tips for local gardeners, accompanied by stunning slides depicting how native plants can add interest and color to home gardens. The event was organized in order to foster awareness of the beauty and value of the local



Joyce Koch and Judy Glattstein with wildflower prints from Bowmans Hill Wildflower Preserve

flora, and raise funds for HLTA. HLTA would also like to offer a special thanks to Bowman's Hill Wildflower Preserve of New Hope, PA, which contributed four lovely signed wildflower prints as door prizes. ●



Hunterdon Land Trust Alliance

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