



Putnam County Land Trust News

Winter 2007

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Putnam County Land Trust

2007 PCLT Honorees

There are many Putnam residents who are worthy candidates for the Putnam County Land Trust's Annual Blue Heron award which aims to recognize and acknowledge those individuals who have made and/or continue to make contributions to environmental values here in Putnam County. This year we are pleased to announce that the award will be given to Cherie Ingraham and Rick Feuerman for their work in establishing and nurturing the Chuckie Goodnight Foundation for the Environment.

The Foundation is dedicated to environmental education focusing on youngsters. Using their background in the design field, Cherie has created the Chuckie Goodnight character as a spokesman for the environment. His job is to educate children about the importance of being kind and respectful and taking good care of our earth. She has written a book about the character Chuckie and his friends and has published a calendar and a journal as well. To fund the Foundation, childrens' sleepwear has been designed and marketed.

To quote from the Chuckie Goodnight Foundation website, "Children are our focus. They are our future generations. We must teach them social ethics and earth stewardship." Well said.

There are two ways that PCLT is supported. One is through the donation of money; the second is through the donation of time and talents. The Leadership in Giving Award, initiated in 2006 recognizes individuals who have led in giving to PCLT. Victor Grossman, a resident of Southeast and an attorney with a law office in Carmel has been designated the recipient of this year's Leadership in Giving Award. Dating back to the early nineties Victor has donated hundreds of hours of his time as counsel to the Putnam County Land Trust. His constant help and his advice have truly been an essential part of helping PCLT grow and thrive.

The awards will be presented at the Annual Benefit Dinner on April 28th. We hope to see you there. (Learn more about our Annual Dinner on Page 5 of this newsletter!)

New Rules Encourage Land Protection

Property owners who have protected their land are well-acquainted with the benefits of donating conservation easements. Easements help keep water quality pure. They keep wildlife habitats intact. They protect the character of our communities.

If you donate a conservation easement before the end of 2007, you might be eligible to take an ever bigger federal income tax deduction. And New York State has sweetened the pot by allowing easement donors past and present to get a credit of up to \$5,000 on their property taxes.

Those are the benefits to society. But there are also individual benefits. Protecting the environment through land preservation is important enough that the federal government lets you take an income tax deduction for it.

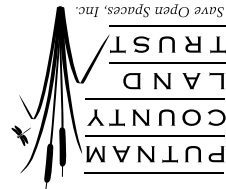
Land trusts expect these new rules to make a significant difference in our efforts to protect land. Landowners who in recent years have been weighing the benefits of conservation easements may well decide there is no time like the present and we think it will attract landowners who until now might not have been able to take advantage of the income tax benefits.

The IRS has allowed that for years, in fact. But now the rules have changed and the tax benefits are better.

See "Land Protection" on Page 7



Putnam County Land Trust
PO Box 36
Brewster, NY 10509



Yes! I'd Like to Join the Putnam County Land Trust

(Clip and Mail with check payable to: Putnam County Land Trust, PO Box 36, Brewster, NY 10509)

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Telephone (day): (____) _____ Telephone (eve): (____) _____
Email Address: _____
Membership Levels: Individual: \$15 _____ Family: \$25 _____
Contributing: \$50 _____ Sustaining: \$100 _____ Benefactors \$250 _____
Conservators: \$500 _____ Life Member: \$1000 _____
Areas of Interest: (Fundraising, Preserve Stewardship, Newsletter, Land Acquisition, Etc.)

As an individual or family member you will receive a year's subscription to our newsletter and calendar of events, as well as occasional discounts to Special Events. Higher levels have additional benefits.

Membership fees are tax deductible up to the limit allowed by law



PCLT volunteers working on a bridge at the Sterling Farm Preserve in Patterson (see "PCLT Stewards" on page 7)

Lindera Loop Trail

Inside 140 acres of Putnam County Land Trust's Peach Lake Natural Area off Cobb Road in Southeast, nestled under the tall canopy of deciduous forest and winding through the understory of native Lindera benzoin (Spicebush), are the beginnings of something new: the Lindera Loop Trail. The trail, a 700-by-5-foot path, will be Putnam County's first handicapped-accessible trail.

The impetus behind the project is the clear and simple conviction of two high school students, Krista Gabarro and Anna Eisenstein, that the wonders of nature should be available to everyone, even those who are physically challenged. The students approached the Land Trust with the idea and we loved it.

The path will feature an environmentally friendly surface (Item 4 choked with stonedust) that wheelchairs can roll over, and pull-offs or landings every 100 feet. Plans include a small cul-de-sac (the "Loop") with a native plant butterfly garden, a fern glen, a trail guide, observation areas, benches and appropriate signage.

If you'd like to help, write Anna Eisenstein at jae54321@bestweb.net or call Krista Gabarro: (845) 878-6904

This newsletter is published by Putnam County Land Trust: Save Open Space, Inc. PO Box 36, Brewster, NY 10509

Submissions for publication may be emailed to jeff@bongoboy.com

The newsletter is published 3 times annually, Winter, Spring/Summer and Fall and is provided free of charge to our members.

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From the President's Desk

By Judy Terlizzi



I am often asked, "What can I do to support the Putnam County Land Trust?" In an effort to answer that question I have written down several ways to be involved and to become even more involved. Here is the list I have come up with:

- Your membership donation is the first step. Two new categories, Benefactor and Conservator, were added in the membership notices sent out at the beginning of January, and both of these have been subscribed to. We are happy to announce a new Life Member as well.

If you wish to take your membership a step further, check to see if your company offers a Matching Grant program. This is a way to double the value of each membership.

- Participate in our programs. A Sunday morning, January hike to the Mt. Nimham fire tower was a great success! This invigorating, brisk walk was followed by a delicious repast at the home of Beth Herr and Ralph Szur. Additional interesting and informative programs are planned for the remainder of the winter and this coming spring. We look forward to seeing you at them.

- Support our Annual Benefit Dinner and Auction by attending this fun event, donating an item to the auction, taking out an ad in the Dinner Journal or by becoming a corporate sponsor.

- Think about becoming a volunteer. The land trust has many needs. What are your special talents and how can you apply them to benefit the land trust?

- Become a member of the Friends of the Trails program by making a donation to help support the cost of trail maintenance.

- Think about joining a land trust committee. We can help you find the committee that best fits your available time and interests.

- Finally, and this is the one that is most often overlooked, please think about making a gift to the Putnam County Land Trust in your will.

I look forward to seeing you at some of our exciting programs and events over the next few months! Check our www.pclt.net for the full calendar. In the meantime never hesitate to contact us at info@pclt.net or 845 228 4520.

Keep up-to-date with PCLT events at our website: <http://www.pclt.net>

Federal Tax Benefits for Land Donations

Landowners who help protect their communities' open space, drinking water supplies and wildlife habitats by voluntarily protecting their property may now be able to get the added benefit of larger federal and state tax breaks.

What are the basics of the new federal law?

Conservation easement donors can take a charitable tax deduction of up to 50 percent of their adjusted gross income. Before, the limit was 30 percent. Farmers who derive more than half their income from farming can deduct 100 percent of their adjusted gross income.

And landowners can spread out the deduction over 16 years. Previously it was six years.

What are the basics of the new state law?

Conservation easement donors can get a 25 percent annual "rebate" on their property taxes, up to a maximum of \$5,000 a year. The rebate applies to the property taxes you pay on your protected land, not including the taxes on your house or other improvements that might be on that protected land.

The "rebate" is a credit on state income taxes, which ensures that the burden of the reduced property taxes does not fall on the local municipality and school district.

What are financial benefits of conservation easements?

The value of any particular property and the landowner's specific tax picture will determine how the increased easement deduction would work, and landowners should consult with their own tax advisers before making decisions. While the new law increases the deductibility of conservation easements, it also seeks to prevent abuses of the tax code by tightening the rules for appraisals of all non-cash gifts to charity, including conservation easements.

Are the changes permanent?

The new state law is permanent, and applies to new easements and to landowners who have already donated easements.

The new federal law will expire in 2007. Potential donors who want to obtain maximum deductions should plan to complete their easements before the end of 2007.

PCLT Stewards

This past fall has been a busy one for PCLT Stewards. Of particular note was the construction of a 16 foot long bridge on the Sterling portion of the Laurel Ledges Preserve in Patterson. The construction of this bridge will allow access to the preserve from Couch Rd. and open up a new trailhead. Seven volunteers met on November 19th to construct the bridge across a small wetland. Volunteers included Ed McDowell, Jim Cook, Bob Lund, Dod Charoudi, Michael Alberghini, Brian Alberghini, and Dan Dolink.

Also the kiosk at the Peach Lake Preserve was repaired. Last summer several large trees came down in a wind storm, one of them landed on the kiosk. A work crew of five volunteers was assembled and the trees cut up and the brush hauled off.

In keeping with Land Trust Alliance standards PCLT Stewards are also beginning to assemble documentation on all our preserves. This documentation will include a photographic record of property borders, aerial photos of the property, trail maps, and environmental studies of every preserve. The baseline documents of each preserve will allow us to monitor changes in our properties and plan on how better to utilize them. Our preserve stewards are also reporting quarterly on the condition of the preserves. This report will allow us to schedule work projects on the preserves to address items such as downed trees, blocked trails, and the introduction of invasive species.



Conservation Easements

Conservation easements are often ideal ways to protect environmentally important lands, such as watersheds and plant and wildlife habitats. A conservation easement is essentially a legally enforceable promise to preserve some portion of the open space on your property permanently.

Conservation easements respect private property rights while providing the public benefit of protecting natural resources. Easement donors continue to own and enjoy their land, and to control access to it; conservation easements can provide for public access, but only at the landowner's discretion.

Conservation easements are donated to qualified not-for-profit organizations, such as Putnam County Land Trust, which must guarantee that the terms of the easement and the environmental characteristics it encompasses are protected forever.

Visit our website at www.pclt.net

"Land Protection" from Page 1

The basics are these: The new federal law significantly increases the size of the charitable tax deduction that conservation easement donors may be eligible for, to 50 percent from 30 percent of adjusted gross income. And it allows easement donors to spread the deduction out over 16 years, up from six.

The new state law gives conservation easement donors, new and old, the chance to get a rebate on their property taxes, in the form of a state income tax credit on any unimproved part of their land that is protected by easement.

Upcoming PCLT Events

Sunday Feb 11th 2:00 pm

Coyotes! With Dan Bogan of Cornell U and the NYSDEC. Dan will describe the 3 year radio tracking study of coyote behavior. Co sponsored with FrOGS at the Lawlor Building on Rte. 311 and Rte.164 in Patterson

Night of the Salamanders

The springtime mating season begins early and wet for our local amphibians: yellow spotted salamanders migrate to vernal pools, sometimes in great numbers, on the first extended nighttime rain after the Eastern Phoebes returns. Call 228-5635 to join the call list and for directions if you would like to join other intrepid naturalists to witness this marvel of spring

Sunday March 18th 2:00pm

Stone Wall Ecology or "Who Lives Here?" Dr. Mitch Wagoner of Southern Connecticut State University will take us on a tour of stone walls and point out the animals who make them their home. Meet at the Sterling Farm Preserve on Couch Road in Patterson.

Sunday April 22nd 1:00 pm

Amphibians for Kids led by Beth Herr. This program Will take place at the Clough Preserve on Farm to Market Road in Patterson. Children must be accompanied by Parents. Come and learn about these fascinating creatures.

Saturday April 28th 5:30pm

Putnam County Land Trust's Annual Benefit Dinner Starr Ridge Banquet and Conference Center

Wednesday May 2nd 7:30 pm

Full Flower Moon Hike at spring twilight in the Great Swamp. Meet at Green Chimneys Pavillion on Doansburg Road in Patterson. Hike led by naturalist Beth Herr.

Saturday & Sunday May 19th & 20th

Putnam County Land Trust guided Canoe Trips of the Great Swamp Call for reservations 228 4520. (See page 3.)

Sunday June 9th 1:00pm

Butterflies of Summer Presented by Bill Wallace at Cranberry Wildlife Management Area on Stagecoach Road in Patterson. Bring binoculars



Mt Taurus viewed from Storm King Mountain

© 2005 JmG

News and Notes:

• New Volunteer Co-ordinator

Recognizing the importance of volunteers to Putnam County Land Trust and the need to have someone devote their volunteer time solely to this program, we asked for a Volunteer Coordinator. We are pleased that Deb Keiser of Brewster (Southeast) has recently accepted that role. Deb is a public information specialist for SWBOCES, where she manages public relations for several Westchester County school districts. She has lived in the area for more than 10 years and is pleased to be involved with the Land Trust. As Volunteer Coordinator, Deb will be making calls to all our volunteers to introduce herself and to clarify the role each volunteer wishes to play. You can reach Deb at 279-1379.

• Old Newsletters?

We are seeking copies of old PCLT newsletters (prior to 1991). Please contact Robert Lund at (845) 279 3122 if you have any that we could make copies of and then return to you.

• Future Gifts

Are you interested in exploring ways to make a future gift to Putnam County Land Trust. Please call us so that may provide you with additional information on how you can remember PCLT in your will or living trust. Call (845) 228-4520

• Corrections

In the last issue of the Putnam County Land Trust newsletter, we incorrectly stated that Anna Eisenberg and Krista Garbarro were students at Brewster High School. We wish to apologize as they are students at Carmel High School.

The 10 Top Reasons To Come To Our Benefit Dinner

10. Have an uplifting and fun evening with warm, friendly and wonderful people.
9. You will have fun and create fond memories.
8. Enjoy master auctioneers Ivan and Laura Cohen as they "sell" our terrific live auction items.
7. Discover unusual items in our eclectic silent auction.
6. Because the dinner is more heartwarming than hugging a tree.
5. Hear about Putnam County Land Trust's latest plans and projects.
4. It's better than a picnic--there are no ants.
3. You will enjoy a sumptuously wonderful buffet dinner in an elegant setting.
2. Join us in honoring Victor Grossman, Cherie Ingraham and Rick Feuerman.
1. To support Putnam County Land Trust's primary fundraiser.

Join us for our Great Swamp Canoe Trip!

Join Putnam County Land Trust as we meander through thousands of years of natural history on our annual Great Swamp Canoe Trip. This year's trips are scheduled for Saturday, May 19th and Sunday, May 20th. Reservations are a must! Our expanded trips will go for a full two hours with an extra 15 minutes allowed for preparation. Trips leave the Green Chimneys Beach on both days as follows:



What it Costs:

Members: \$15.00 adults, \$10.00 children (6 -12)

Non Members: \$20.00 adults, \$12.00 children (6 -12)



Times:

9:00 am to 11:00 am

12:00 pm to 2:00 pm

2:30 pm to 4:30 pm

PCLT provides canoes, paddles and personal flotation devices. Wear clothing and footwear that you won't mind getting wet. No paddling experience is necessary. Our expert guides give instruction before each trip. If you would feel more comfortable with paddlers, we can provide them.



Gather a group of friends or plan a family reunion with the canoe trip as a part of it. Each trip can accommodate up to 25 people with 2, 3 and sometimes 4 (two adults, 2 children) in a canoe. You will be amazed at what you will see and experience. Once you round the bend toward the lake you will feel as if you are in a different part of the country. Naturalists will explain how one of the largest wetlands in New York State functions and will point out the plants, animals and birds that make the Great Swamp home or a rest stop during migration.

Call Judy Terlizzi at (845) 228-4520 for reservations.

Great Swamp photos by Jim Cook

Naturally Noted

By Beth Herr

For many years naturalists have watched for and noted the seasonal happenings around them, coming to learn that the parade of nature is predictable. Recent warming trends are skewing the order. It will be interesting to see if the following predictions, except for the stars and the moon, hold true to past recordings.

February

- The Full Hunger Moon shines on the 2nd, and on the 10th, Saturn is visible almost all night near Mercury and Venus.
- Red-winged blackbird males return around the 15th.
- Deer concentrate on south facing slopes.
- Listen for fox yelping, and watch for skunk tracks in the snow, it's mating season!
- Maple sap flows when nights are below freezing, and days are above 40 degrees.
- Skunk cabbage blooms, its flowers give off heat to melt the snow so that carrion flies on which it depends for pollination, can find the smelly, flesh colored spathes.

March

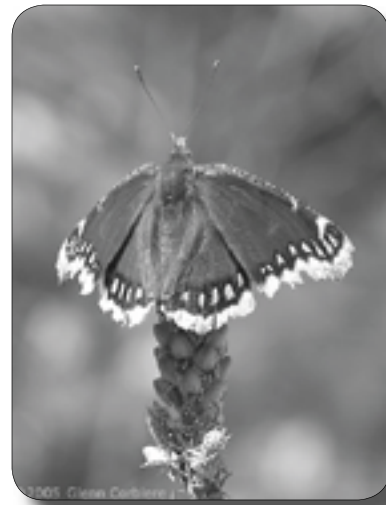
- The Sap Moon is full on the 3rd. Watch for maple sap icicles on freezing days.
- Hawks, ducks, and geese move northward while song sparrows and fox sparrows move through.
- Pussy willows and the first hardy flowers appear; hillsides turn pink with the swelling of the red maple buds. Catkins on alder and hazelnut lengthen, with pollen visible on windy days.
- Watch for Mourning Cloak butterflies on warmer afternoons, maple sap icicles on freezing days.
- Great blue herons arrive at their nesting colonies in the Great Swamp
- Spring arrives on the 21st!
- Salamanders migrate and mate on warm rainy nights.
- Babies are born: skunk, woodchuck and wood frog tadpoles.

April

- The Flower Moon is full on the 2nd.
- Enjoy the sunny faces of Coltsfoot along roadways, deep red spathes of skunk cabbage flowers in the wetlands, and the notice the color differences in male and female maple tree flowers and pussy willow branches.
- Spring peepers call on warm evenings, wood frogs "quack" in vernal pools, robins "cherio" in greening woods.
- Tree swallows, chipping sparrow, and kinglets arrive, fox sparrows pass through the region, palm and pine warblers signal the beginning of song bird migration.
- By the end of the month butterflies are out: look for Spring Azures, Mourning Cloaks, and Compton's Tortoise Shell flit through the forest.
- Garter Snakes emerge.

Mourning Cloak butterflies over winter under the bark of trees or other protected spots and are the first to fly in warm spring days, sometimes feeding on maple sap. Its habitat includes woodlands, swamps and stream sides.

*Photo by Glenn Corbiere
Copyright © 2005*



Skunk cabbage can flower when snow still blankets the ground because it is one of the few plants capable of generating intense heat. Its flowers can maintain temperatures as much as 86 degrees, usually much higher than the surrounding air, a feat accomplished

by metabolic rates that are among the highest in the plant kingdom. The heat helps launch the plants insect attracting odors, in this case attracting carrion flies with smell and the red meat color of the hood covering the flower. The term "thermogenic" is the term applied to plants that can generate their own heat.

Photo by Jeff Green Copyright © 2006

Putnam County Land Trust's Annual Benefit Dinner and Auction

Saturday, April 28, 2007 - 5:30 PM

Starr Ridge Banquet and Conference Center - 38 Starr Ridge Road, Brewster, NY

Join in the celebration as the Land Trust marks another year of preserving open space and protecting sensitive habitats in Putnam County. There will be displays and presentations about Land Trust properties and Putnam County's many scenic areas. Recognitions and awards will be presented to those in the environmental community

Our past auction donations have included: Golf outings, accommodations at a private villa in Kauai, Hawaii, wine baskets from around the world, gift certificates, unique jewelry, many one of a kind items and much, much more.

Don't miss this special occasion and event.

There will be live music, a sumptuously wonderful buffet dinner and an exciting Live Auction led by Ivan and Laura Cohen with our famous silent auction of eclectic items, many hand crafted just for this event!

For more information contact Judy Terlizzi at 845-228-4520

All proceeds will benefit the preserves and programs of the Putnam County Land Trust. Seating is limited. Reserve now with the form below! Consider donating goods or services for the silent auction and placing an ad for the journal. We need your support to preserve open space and sensitive habitats in Putnam County.

Name: _____
Address: _____
Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Please reserve my seat at the Land Trust dinner on Saturday April 28th. Enclosed is my reservation fee of:

<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 50.00 - Per Person	<input type="checkbox"/> I would like to donate an item/service for auction
<input type="checkbox"/> \$100.00 - Per Couple	<input type="checkbox"/> I would like to place an ad in the Dinner Journal
<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 400 - Table for 8	and have enclosed a check for: \$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 500 - Table for 10	<input type="checkbox"/> Full Page \$95.00
<input type="checkbox"/> I require a Vegan Meal	<input type="checkbox"/> Half Page \$65.00
<input type="checkbox"/> I am unable to attend but wish to make	<input type="checkbox"/> Large Quarter Page \$40.00
a contribution in the amount of \$ _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Please call me for additional information
	<input type="checkbox"/> Enclosed is my Camera Ready Artwork

Please send your check and form to: Putnam County Land Trust • P.O. Box 36 • Brewster, New York 10509