



**DUTCHESS LAND
CONSERVANCY**



ANNUAL REPORT

2015

Celebrating 30 Years

MISSION

Dutchess Land Conservancy (DLC) is dedicated to preserving the scenic, agricultural and environmental resources of Dutchess County, New York, and the surrounding area.

DLC, as a private non-profit land conservation organization, carries out its mission primarily by obtaining conservation easements on privately held land and monitoring these easements in perpetuity. Conservation easements, acquired through either donation or purchase, are legal agreements limiting future development in order to protect land for conservation purposes.

In addition, DLC provides professional assistance to landowners and municipalities to encourage environmentally sound planning, and educates the public on matters of land conservation and stewardship.

ON THE COVER:

Enjoying a carriage ride at beautiful Wethersfield Farm (an easement-protected property) during the Fall Country Luncheon.

Photography: Mary Hilliard

A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear Friends,

It's hard to believe that it has now been 30 years since the threat of a large development in an area noted for its scenic beauty, productive farms, and critical habitat spurred local citizens into action to form the DLC. Since that time, with your crucial support, over 39,000 acres of open land have been protected for all of us to enjoy.

It hasn't been easy. The 1980's ushered in a development explosion that seemed unstoppable. More and more people wanted to escape the confines of urban areas, and it became much easier and more lucrative for farmers to sell their land when they retired rather than pass it on to their children. Farms started to disappear and with them our ready access to healthy local foods. Scenic vistas and valuable wildlife habitat also became a casualty of the new housing developments that marched up through Westchester, Putnam, Dutchess, and Columbia Counties. Thankfully, we started to realize that by drastically reducing the number of farms and the amount of open space for habitat and protection of our water supply, we were only harming ourselves. The concepts of conservation land planning and sustainable development gained momentum. Landowners began to turn to the DLC to protect their beloved properties to preserve the open spaces they valued for their children and grandchildren. Towns also sought the DLC's expertise regarding zoning and development of open space plans which would carefully manage growth and still allow protection of vital habitat and space for public recreation.


In the late 90's, both the federal government and New York State recognized the importance of protecting these valuable resources and established programs to provide funding to purchase the development rights on agricultural land. Farmers were able to sell their development rights and put the money back into their farms to ensure that the next generation inherited a thriving business, to purchase more land to expand their operation, or to secure their retirement. By selling the development rights, they ensured that the land was available to be farmed in perpetuity. More often than not, in the process, they protected habitat for all types of wildlife, open space, scenic views, and the rural character of the area.

When Dutchess County announced its Open Space and Farmland Protection Matching Grant Program in 2000, the DLC leapt into action. Using funds from the County program and from the State, we closed our first purchase of development rights (PDR) project in 2001 on Mead Orchards in Red Hook. Over the next nine years, we closed twelve more PDRs on over 2,200 acres with money from the State, County, local towns and private funding. Even when State and County funding dried up due to the 2008 financial crisis, the DLC was able to work with land trust partners, towns, and federal and private funds to close more projects totaling 1,600 acres. Today, funding is much more plentiful, as we all recognize that in order to sustain our food supply, we need our farms. Building on our successes, and with the help of land trust partners, we're working on more PDRs than ever before and 2016 is shaping up to be a great year for farmland protection.

But over the last 30 years, even as we've grown and expanded our mission and core area, we have not forgotten our roots. We have not forgotten our founding supporters. We have not forgotten those who've joined us along the way. And always in mind is the small group of residents who cared enough about our area to found the DLC and begin the process of ensuring that when we look around, we recognize our local landscape. From its rolling hills and farm fields filled with corn and hay, streams teeming with aquatic life, quaint hedgerows and dense forests sheltering all manner of wildlife, to its pastures where horses, cows, sheep and goats graze, and to the quiet shady lanes where children ride their first ponies, we recognize it and we value it greatly – because it is home.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rebecca'.

Rebecca E.C. Thornton
President

A photograph of a red barn with a grey roof, partially obscured by lush green trees and white flowers in the foreground. The scene is set in a rural, open landscape under a cloudy sky.

“If we ... dedicate ourselves to the long-term stewardship of this marvelous countryside, we will not only do a service to ourselves and each other, but to future generations.”

— Chauncey Stillman (1907-1989)
Owner of Wethersfield Farm

To accomplish our mission Dutchess Land Conservancy works hard to protect important land, responsibly steward it, and educate people about why it's so important.

We are lucky that our community understands the benefits of open land and strongly supports our conservation efforts. Because of this, over the last 30 years, local landowners, working with DLC, have forever protected more than 39,500 acres of farms, forests, water, habitat, and scenic views.

Our ever-changing landscape now boasts large contiguous blocks of permanently protected land where only minimal changes will occur over time – an amazing feat considering that other areas face transformation so drastic, they could be “anywhere America.”

Our focus on retaining our rural character by balancing resource protection with growth that fits in with our natural and farm landscape helps foster balanced and sustainable communities.

By offering education programs to people of all ages, we help answer the questions about why our land is so important to our lives.

At DLC we believe that a healthy environment and a healthy economy go hand-in-hand.

“Quality of life, from our perspective, is largely a product of our surroundings. Preserving the natural features of our community is essential to preserving the quality of life we enjoy today. Conservation easements are an essential tool to foster that preservation.”

— Michael and Paula Trimble
Easement Owners since 2013

PROTECTING THE LAND WE LOVE

The Gift of Forever— Conservation Easements

Land conservation doesn't happen because of the DLC. It happens because people care about their land, their community, and the rural character that drew them here in the first place. Most of our work here at the DLC is with private landowners who want to ensure that their land stays open forever. While tax incentives can help, a majority of people do it for one simple reason: because they care deeply about their land, and understand how valuable it is.

Landowners, whose objective is to protect the unique character and qualities of their properties, can come to the DLC for help. We work with families, couples, and individuals to help accomplish their conservation goals by creating customized land protection plans that ensure that their property's special scenic, rural, agricultural, forested, ecological, and natural features remain intact for current and future generations.

Land conservation provides a public benefit. We learned early on about how connected we are to the land. Our food is grown there, our trees produce oxygen, and the ground filters our water. We love using the land for



recreation; we share it with wildlife; we are just starting to understand how important ecosystems are. This is why protecting land is so critical.

The DLC is widely recognized on a national, state, and regional basis for working with landowners to accomplish our mutual land preservation goals. We worked with numerous landowners in 2015, and six completed the protection of their unique properties adding another 500 acres to permanent conservation. One example of this is the Gerard-Sharp and Wambold property.

PROTECTING THE LAND WE LOVE

Protecting a Portion of the Skidmore Valley – The Gerard-Sharp and Wambold Easement

Drawn to their Town of LaGrange property by an English manor-style home with expansive views and a large garden surrounded by woodlands, Monica Gerard-Sharp and Ali Wambold acquired their 180-plus acre property over a ten year period between 1989 and 1999. During this time, they *“...came to love the Skidmore Valley along Sprout Creek, with its huge open fields and attractive old barns.”* They appreciated the *“gentle pastoral beauty”* of Dutchess County as, *“coming from England, it felt familiar and precious.”*

After spending some time on their land, Monica and Ali became concerned about development in the area. *“In the late 90’s, we noticed the pressure building to suburbanize, welling up from Westchester. At weekends we saw houses springing up, trees and woods cut down and subdivisions appearing where farms had stood. Not long ago, Route 55 was scarcely a paved road. Huge schools were built to accommodate the new population, plus supermarkets and strip malls. But the irony was, these families who had moved in search of greenery, clean air and space, were slowly losing the very rural character that had attracted them. Our first impulse was to preserve this farming environment and the creek. The second was to prevent any future destruction of the forest land and pastures on the hillsides to retain the countryside for walking and riding.”* The couple became involved locally, helping to develop the Town’s comprehensive plan and form an Open Space Committee, and working toward

winning a ballot that devotes some of LaGrange’s tax revenue to land conservation.

After much thought and careful planning, the couple protected 178 acres of their property with a conservation easement in December. Monica and Ali now enjoy their land knowing that it will never be developed and they have protected a large area of rich farmland, valuable water resources in the Sprout Creek watershed, forest habitat, and open space. Adding their land to another 360 acres protected by neighbors, there are now 500 acres safe from development in the Skidmore Valley of LaGrange. They and their neighbors allow the public to access the banks of the Sprout Creek on their properties for walking and fishing, wanting all to enjoy the recreational opportunities available in the valley. Monica says, *“It is a marvelous feeling to know you can affect the long term character and look of an area, especially if you believe it is beautiful and the community values it.”*



PROTECTING THE LAND WE LOVE

“Let us not forget that the cultivation of the earth is the most important labor of man. When tillage begins, other arts will follow. The farmers, therefore, are the founders of civilization.”

— Daniel Webster



Ensuring Working Farms for the Future— Buying Development Rights

Did you know that agriculture is one of the largest industries in New York State and the third largest in Dutchess County? Despite this, over the last 25 years, New York State has lost half a million acres of farmland to subdivisions, strip malls, and other scattered development. You read that right - that's 500,000 acres of farms bulldozed and paved over, their valuable soils lost forever.

And that's not all that is lost. Our farmers are essential not only to the economic vitality of our rural communities, where they provide jobs and support many local businesses, but to the production of our food - essential to the health and well-being of our communities. This is why the DLC continues to focus a good portion of our work on protecting critical farmland. We are involved with several programs and activities that help establish and promote sustainable food systems. One of our key roles is protecting farms through Purchase of Development Rights (PDRs) projects.

Through a PDR program, a farmer is paid for the value of his development rights in exchange for permanently protecting his land with a conservation easement. This allows a farmer to reduce debt, enhance a family business, or retire and allow other family members to take over. Funds for PDRs are provided in large part by the state and county, with contributions also from the DLC and other partners.

The DLC partners with Dutchess County to implement its Farmland Protection Plan, and with Scenic Hudson Land Trust on its Hudson Valley

Foodshed Conservation Plan, which outlines a strategic approach to conserving the agricultural land that supplies fresh, local food to the people of the Hudson Valley and New York City, one of the largest population centers in the world. These protected farms support New York State's growing \$46.7 billion farm and food economy, and help safeguard the area's "foodshed."

Beyond providing us with healthy, local foods and contributing to our economy, protected farmland has another advantage for local residents - *even after development rights are sold, agricultural lands stay on the tax rolls*. Studies show that agricultural lands cost communities significantly less to provide services to than residential lands which ensures that towns can continue to provide critical services to all of their residents.



PROTECTING THE LAND WE LOVE



What we're doing now

While no PDRs closed in 2015, that doesn't mean that we haven't been working feverishly behind the scenes! Several farmers have committed to selling their development rights; however, often it takes many months and even years for a project to come to fruition due to lack of funding, the sometimes lengthy process of applying for available funding, or simply ensuring that restrictions on the farm make sense for the future viability of the operation.

So, rest assured that the DLC is actively assisting farmers around the County, on our own and with partners, and major strides are being made to protect more of our area's farmland. In fact, this year New York State and Dutchess County significantly increased funds available for farmland preservation.

The State budget for 2015-16 included \$35 million in funds available to protect our working farms and farmland. \$15 million of this comes from the State's Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) and \$20 million from an unprecedented special allocation for farmland protection in the Hudson Valley. We thank our local government representatives for recognizing the importance of this type of funding and for working tirelessly to ensure it remains available.

Locally, the Dutchess County Executive announced \$1 million in funding for PDRs. This is the first funding available from the County since the fiscal crisis of 2008.

Taking advantage of both of these funding streams, the DLC submitted five applications for State funds and five for funds from Dutchess County. With your support, we are gearing up for 2016 to be an amazing year for farmland protection.

Assessing What to Protect and Why – the Benefits of Conservation Land Planning

Have you ever wondered if your land could be permanently protected by a conservation easement? Many of us become very attached to our property and feel protective of it. It might be a relatively small parcel of just a few acres, or it might be several hundred acres of woods, meadows, streams and wetlands. Whatever the size or characteristics, you bought it, have lived on it, and recognize its special qualities.

You stand at the kitchen sink looking out at the field behind the house and observe a flock of turkeys in the distance. You walk with your kids and dogs down the old farm road that meanders through the woods of your property. Stone walls and crumbling foundations speak to a history of another age; this used to be a small settlement of farmers. Now ducks settle on the ponds in the fall, deer forage year-round, you thrill to see a bobcat darting across your path, or hear the distinctive shrill cry of a red-tailed hawk. The land is doing what it does best: providing habitat to wildlife, sustaining migratory pathways, keeping the balance of the natural world intact for the benefit of us all.

But how do you make the decision to protect it? How do you evaluate the importance of one field over another? Should this one be maintained for

agricultural use, or is it preferable to let it grow into shrubs and brambles for bird cover? Are your forests healthy? Is that plant an invasive, or one that should be given room to thrive? Have you always dreamed of building a home on the edge of your pond or on the high point of a field with views to forever? If you did – what impacts might those choices have?

Having an opportunity to look closely at what exists – agricultural, scenic, and environmental resources – and the role they play, as well as considering your future personal goals, can help you make informed decisions about the future of your land, and whether permanent conservation is right for you.

The DLC works with landowners to help them understand the conservation value of their property. We use Geographic Information Systems (GIS) capabilities to map important features such as farmland soils, wetlands, forest lands, habitats and other natural and scenic resources. Our staff can identify important resources on a property, opportunities for well-placed home sites for future planning purposes, and strategies that help landowners visualize their options, while maintaining value in the marketplace.

PROTECTING THE LAND WE LOVE

Some of the questions we use to evaluate a property for conservation easement purposes are:

1. Is the property visible to the public from roadways, waterways, recreational areas or other public places and/or does it contain an important ridgeline?
2. Is the property in active agricultural or forestry use?
3. Does the property contain or buffer wetlands, important wildlife habitats, known wildlife migration routes or other ecologically sensitive areas?
4. Does the property include and/or border a river, stream, pond, or other body of water and/or will the development of the property affect the integrity of a significant watershed area, aquifer or floodplain?
5. Is the property in a relatively natural, undisturbed condition and/or is it part of an unfragmented forest and/or natural area that extends beyond the property borders?
6. Is the property of sufficient size that its significant features (as stated in the above criteria) are likely to remain intact in spite of adjacent development?
7. Will the protection of the property preserve a historically important area?

Because of our strong belief in the benefits of conservation land planning, and knowing that education is the first step to responsible stewardship, we provide these services at no cost to you, even if it doesn't ultimately result in a conservation easement.

Towns also can tap into the DLC's conservation expertise. We've been working with municipalities to incorporate conservation land planning techniques into their land use ordinances to help achieve the protection of those areas identified locally as important.

Numerous landowners in 2015 obtained guidance from our professional land analysis helping them achieve a better understanding of the unique resource values of their land before making decisions. One of them was David Marshall.

David purchased his 238-acre property in Milan in 2011. The land was not in the best shape, but had amazing views of

the Catskills, the Shawangunks, Stissing Mountain and the Berkshire foothills. David worked to return it to its natural state and then embarked on a plan *"to prepare for building two homes (a guest house/office and a main house), ...and to protect the land and develop a forestry management program for its woodlands. The DLC and a local surveyor helped me select sites for a driveway, the two homes, a small barn, a solar field and a variety of trails. [The DLC's staff] helped me discover more about the land, including endangered species, aquatic life, the topography, types of soils and potential for agricultural and forestry uses. At every level of my planning, the DLC was there to answer questions and help me develop a thorough understanding of what my new property offers and my opportunities for conservation."*

For more information on conservation land planning, please call our office at 845.677.3002. We'll be happy to help!

"Conservation planning helps landowners, communities, and planners work together to identify their resources and accomplish multiple objectives that are best for the land, water, and people."

— USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service

PROTECTING THE LAND WE LOVE



Inspiring People Outdoors - Municipal Conservation Areas

Having a chance to get outside and experience the wonders of the outdoors provides us with so many personal benefits such as maintaining our physical and emotional health. It's so important that we have access to high quality natural areas for passive recreational use.

While many local towns want to enhance the quality of life for their citizens by conserving important natural resources and providing recreational opportunities, often they lack the resources to acquire important open land. This is where the DLC can help!

With our competent staff, local relationships and transactional experience, we are uniquely positioned to help communities establish public conservation areas. Towns can turn to the DLC for help to identify well-suited properties, raise funds, and to successfully achieve the acquisition, protection and long-term management of important public recreational land. One successful example of an amazing collaboration is Bob and Valerie Suters' gift to the Town of LaGrange.

For more than 15 years, **Robert and Valerie Suter** owned and loved their 63-acre property along the Wappinger Creek for its natural beauty. They say, *"This land has functioned as something like our own nature preserve since we bought it in 1999. We've watched otters and muskrats there, seen eagles, hawks, owls, and herons, and have followed the tracks of coyotes and bobcats. Even some endangered Indiana bats took up residence there for awhile."* In thinking of the land's future, the Suters recognized how valuable it would be as recreational space for trails and fishing. They also knew that their land contained valuable natural resources and irreplaceable habitat, and wanted to be certain that these would be protected.

In 2014, the Suters decided that they would like to place a conservation easement on the property and then donate it to the Town of LaGrange to be used for future passive recreation. Town leadership quickly recognized the value of the land for recreational purposes and also saw the importance of protecting its critical wildlife habitat and water resources. The property is located on Titusville Road near Red Oaks Mill, across the Wappinger Creek from the Town of Poughkeepsie's Greenvale Park, and has frontage on three-quarters of a mile of the creek. It contains valuable habitat for rare animal and plant species and overlies an aquifer recharge area vital to protecting the Town's water supply. The property's floodplain forest also plays a very important role in retaining water during rainstorms and helping reduce flood events downstream.

Last November, the Suters' plan was realized and the Town took title to the property with a conservation easement

in place. The Town simultaneously extended protection to a portion of Town-owned lands adjacent to the Suters' property, creating a total of almost 70 acres of preserved land which will be used for passive recreation in the future, including hiking, fishing, bird watching, cross-country skiing, environmental education and other non-motorized activities. LaGrange Town Supervisor Alan Bell said, *"We deeply appreciate the Suters' gift of this beautiful and ecologically important land. We also appreciate our ongoing relationship with DLC; they have been great partners in conserving critical lands in LaGrange. Protection of this property was a priority in the Town's Open Space Plan and once opened to the public, we know it will provide great recreational opportunities for the residents of LaGrange."* Their goal achieved, Bob and Valerie say, *"It gives us great pleasure now to see the land both protected and opened for others to enjoy."*

"Thanks to the DLC and its many supporters, the landscapes of Dutchess County will forever remain a treasure for residents and visitors alike. Our forests, brooks and ponds are not just a sanctuary for wildlife, they restore our own souls as well."

— Bruce Kraus
Easement Owner Since 2005



STEWARDSHIP

“Working on the premise that one does not really own land, but merely borrows it for a while before passing it on to somebody else to borrow, it would make sense to at least try to leave it a little better, and certainly no worse, for one’s stewardship.”

— Taylor Pyne
Easement Owner
since 2007

Taking care of and managing our resources not only for our own benefit, but with future generations in mind.

It’s up to all of us to responsibly care for our natural resources, and steward them in a way that ensures they are available for our children, and our children’s children. By respecting the land, and choosing to be good stewards, we can leave our world a better place.

When a landowner puts their land into conservation, they might think: “Good. Preserved for the future. Cross it off the list.” In fact, it’s just the beginning of a forever relationship. As the easement holder, the DLC has an ongoing responsibility to both the landowner and the public trust, to monitor and enforce the terms of the easements.

It’s safe to say that of our more than 380 conservation easements, no two are exactly alike. Each easement reflects the property’s unique qualities and the landowner’s individual concerns and values. While one person might want to preserve woodlands and wetlands for wildlife habitat and flood protection, another might be a third-generation farmer seeking to keep a family tradition alive with an eye to growth and economic prosperity. A few easements restrict buildings all together, but most allow for future houses or farm structures in pre-defined building envelopes.

We consider owners of land under easement to be stewards of their land. We strive to maintain positive, active relationships with our land stewards, and this partnership is essential in managing the provisions set forth in their easements. We enjoy working cooperatively with landowners to ensure that activities are in compliance with their easement’s terms.

Our Land Stewardship staff is vital to our success in accomplishing our growing task of annually monitoring conservation easements. A total of four full-time staff members are involved in Stewardship. This includes annual aerial monitoring of all properties, and ground monitoring site visits on a three-year rotational basis. In 2015 alone, our ground monitoring team logged hundreds of miles on foot walking properties under easement! Stewardship staff also maintain communication with landowners, reach out to new landowners who purchase a property under easement, and help landowners as they plan to make changes to their property.

Contributions to the DLC’s Stewardship Endowment Fund help defray the costs

involved with the task of overseeing nearly 40,000 acres of easement-protected land. On the rare occasion that problems are identified during monitoring, we work with landowners to remedy the situation.

The DLC works not just with individual landowners who own easement protected property but also with municipalities which have protected land to provide public recreation areas. We have a history of working with the Town of Dover on the historic Dover Stone Church Preserve dating back to the early 2000’s to 2004 when it was first protected with an easement and again in 2009 and 2014 when more land was added to the easement.



STEWARDSHIP

Dover Stone Church Preserve – A Community Stewards its History

In late 2014, an additional 50 acres were added to the Dover Stone Church Preserve and protected by a conservation easement. In 2015, the DLC, the Town, and the NYNJ Trails Association (who adopted the preserve's trails in April of 2014) were hard at work planning trails on the new section, designing an informational kiosk, and organizing activities to take full advantage of the now 170+ acre preserve.

After the Town worked with the DLC to assess the new acreage for the best placement of trails, volunteers and DLC staff pitched in to help the NYNJ Trails Association to mark and construct them. A grant was obtained to build an informational kiosk, and the Town readied for a grand-opening celebration.

On June 6, 2015, a crowd of over 80 people gathered to celebrate the opening of four miles of new trails. We were honored to hear remarks from County Executive Marc Molinaro, County Clerk

Brad Kendall, Dover Town Supervisor Ryan Courtien, Deputy Director of Dutchess County Tourism Lydia Higginson, Hank Osborn of New York New Jersey Trail Conference, and DLC President Becky Thornton. All of the speakers described the uniqueness of the Dover Stone Church, the importance of its protection, and the opportunities that the new trails bring to the public to explore this truly special place.

Dover Stone Church has historical ties to Native American Pequot Chief Sassacus and his warriors, who fled from British troops. The trails celebration was highlighted by a Native American Blessing delivered by Ed Wolf-Walker Conley of the local Schaghticoke tribe, and Donna Coane sang and drummed a song of welcome for all future visitors.

The citizens of Dover worked to protect the historic Stone Church cavern and the area surrounding it in 2004 and 2009. In 2015, they showed their commitment to this special place and demonstrated how seriously they dedicate themselves to the long-term stewardship of it.

"The Town of Dover is exceptionally grateful to the DLC for their tireless dedication to open space and recreation."

- Town of Dover Supervisor Ryan Courtien



An accredited land trust since 2009, the DLC continues to work constantly to improve our organizational effectiveness. Being an accredited land trust helps to ensure supporters and our community of our commitment to excellence.



The DLC is also approved by the Better Business Bureau's Wise Giving Alliance as meeting its Standards for Charity Accountability and displays both the Accreditation Seal and the BBB logo on our letterhead, publications, and website. Donors can feel secure that their contributions are going to a credible charitable organization.

A Mark of Distinction

The accreditation seal **AFFIRMS** national quality standards are met.



- ✓ SOUND FINANCES
- ✓ ETHICAL CONDUCT
- ✓ RESPONSIBLE GOVERNANCE
- ✓ LASTING STEWARDSHIP

www.landtrustaccreditation.org

Our Farmer Landowner Match Program

We continue to collaborate with the Columbia Land Conservancy (CLC) on our joint Farmer Landowner Match Program. This exciting program facilitates lease agreements between landowners seeking to have their land farmed, and farmers seeking land. It's a great way to keep land actively farmed and provide beginning and seasoned farmers with access to land.

Our Down to Earth Workshop Series held in connection with the Match Program offers farmers and landowners interested in leasing farmland the opportunity to learn how to establish successful, long-term rental relationships. This year two workshops were held in October. Participants in *"Understanding your Land and Options: Farmland Suitability and What's Right for You"* learned about the interaction between farming and nature and how to evaluate their land to decide what type of farming would make the best fit. A panel of farmers was on hand to provide an overview of the different faces of farming in our region. At the *"Farmland Access and Conservation Tools"* workshop, participants were taught how to navigate the farmland leasing and/or purchasing process. They also learned about farm-friendly conservation easements that protect the natural resources of a property while improving access and affordability for farmers. Both workshops were very well attended. If you couldn't join us this year, we look forward to seeing you in 2016!

Learn more about the DLC/CLC Farmer Landowner Match Program on our website.

PUBLIC EDUCATION

Are Pokemon Go sessions the only thing luring you outside these days?

Then let's expand your horizons! Part of our mission is helping you explore the wonders of our natural world. We feel it's important to offer opportunities to get people to learn about, understand, and value nature and the outdoors, ensuring that our current and future generations care about the land and are good stewards of its resources. Following is a sampling of what our members took advantage of in 2015.



PUBLIC EDUCATION

“The best classroom and the richest cupboard is roofed only by the sky.” – Margaret McMillan

Reaching out to the next generation of conservationists:

In their Citizen Science class, a group of **Bard College students** discovered how forest fragmentation affects the spread of Lyme Disease; after a screening of “Green Fire,” a movie about conservationist Aldo Leopold, **Environmental Science majors at Marist College** participated in a lively discussion about Leopold’s “land ethic;” **Dover High and Middle School students** were educated about land conservation and the Dover Stone Church Preserve when they visited our booth at the Dover Earth Day Fair; high school students in a **Millbrook School science class** were introduced to land conservation and our mission; and, for the second year in a row, the **Kildonan School** held their field day at the Dover Stone Church Preserve where students learned about the history of the preserve and its natural environment.

Connecting with municipal officials and volunteers:

At the seminar “**Online Mapping for Municipal Officials and Volunteers**,” attendees learned about comprehensive plans and community values, site overview and natural resource assessment, evaluation of historic, built and agricultural resources, and received hands-on practice using online mapping tools. Participants also explored the online resources available to officials and left the workshop with additional ways to help their towns. Representatives of local town boards, planning boards and conservation

advisory committees gathered at DLC’s office to hear Laura Heady from the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation’s Estuary Program discuss their new guide for communities on **creating a natural resource inventory**. Participants left armed with knowledge of how to identify and catalog natural resources in their towns in order to work toward protecting them.

Engaging friends and meeting new ones:

At a **forum on invasive plants**, people learned how to recognize and manage them; a **reception honoring farmers and chefs of the Hudson Valley** featured in Francesco Mastalia’s photograph book “Organic” at the Red Devon restaurant included a panel discussion with farmers; and a **trail blazing workshop at the Dover Stone Church Preserve** provided instruction to volunteers on how to mark the new trails which opened in the spring.

A Historic Red Hook gathering included a **discussion of land use changes** in the area and featured DLC board member and local farmer Chuck Mead who spoke about the history of his third-generation orchard in Upper Red Hook; and the **grand opening of the new trails and kiosk at the Dover Stone Church Preserve** provided visitors with a chance to enjoy the new trails, explore

the preserve, and learn about its unique history.

The **Caora Farm Sheep Dog Trials** offered exciting competition for the many enthusiastic spectators who braved the rain to watch. Attendees also enjoyed the **self-guided woods walks** that explored the diverse habitats on the neighboring property and stopped by the DLC tent to learn about our mission.

Volunteers learned the methodology used to **construct and maintain trails** including the technique of “side-hilling” on the new trails at the Dover Stone Church Preserve. At the **Orvis Game Fair**, attendees gained knowledge of forest regeneration from the perspective of ecology research and land conservation; and participants in a **Hudson River Valley Ramble walk** at the Dover Stone Church Preserve discovered the history of the Dover area and its Native American tribes then took a guided hike along the new trails.

At the Third Annual Dutchess County Ducks Unlimited **Great Swamp Shoot and Conservation Program**, non-shooters learned about the importance of protecting wetland habitats while sportsmen took part in a sporting clays competition.



STEWARDS OF THE LAND

Conservation Easement Donors and Property Owners as of December 31, 2015

Our very important partners – our Stewards of the Land – are essential allies who manage and steward their conservation easement protected properties into the future. (Please note that while some of our easement donors have passed away, we still list their names out of great respect for their commitment to land conservation.)

Mr. Stephen Abel & Family
- O. Vincent Abel Inc.
Mr. and Mrs. Munir Abu-Haidar
Mr. and Mrs. Ramzi Abu-Haidar
Mrs. Binti Ackley
Ms. Elizabeth Allen
Ms. Saralyn Allen
Ames, LLC
Mr. James Archer
Mr. and Mrs. Jon Arnason
Ms. Eve Ashcraft
Mr. Al Attara
Ms. Kathleen Vuillet Augustine
- Sunnyside Farm, LLC
Mr. and Mrs. Jack Auspitz
Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Babcock
- F.H.B. Resources, LLC
Mr. and Mrs. John B. Babcock
Mr. Aldo Badini
Mr. Elton V.V. Bailey, Jr.
Mr. David Bain
Mr. and Mrs. Jack Banning
Mr. and Mrs. Lee Barba
Mr. and Mrs. Rutgers Barclay
Mr. Richard Barrale
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Mr. Michael Bassett and
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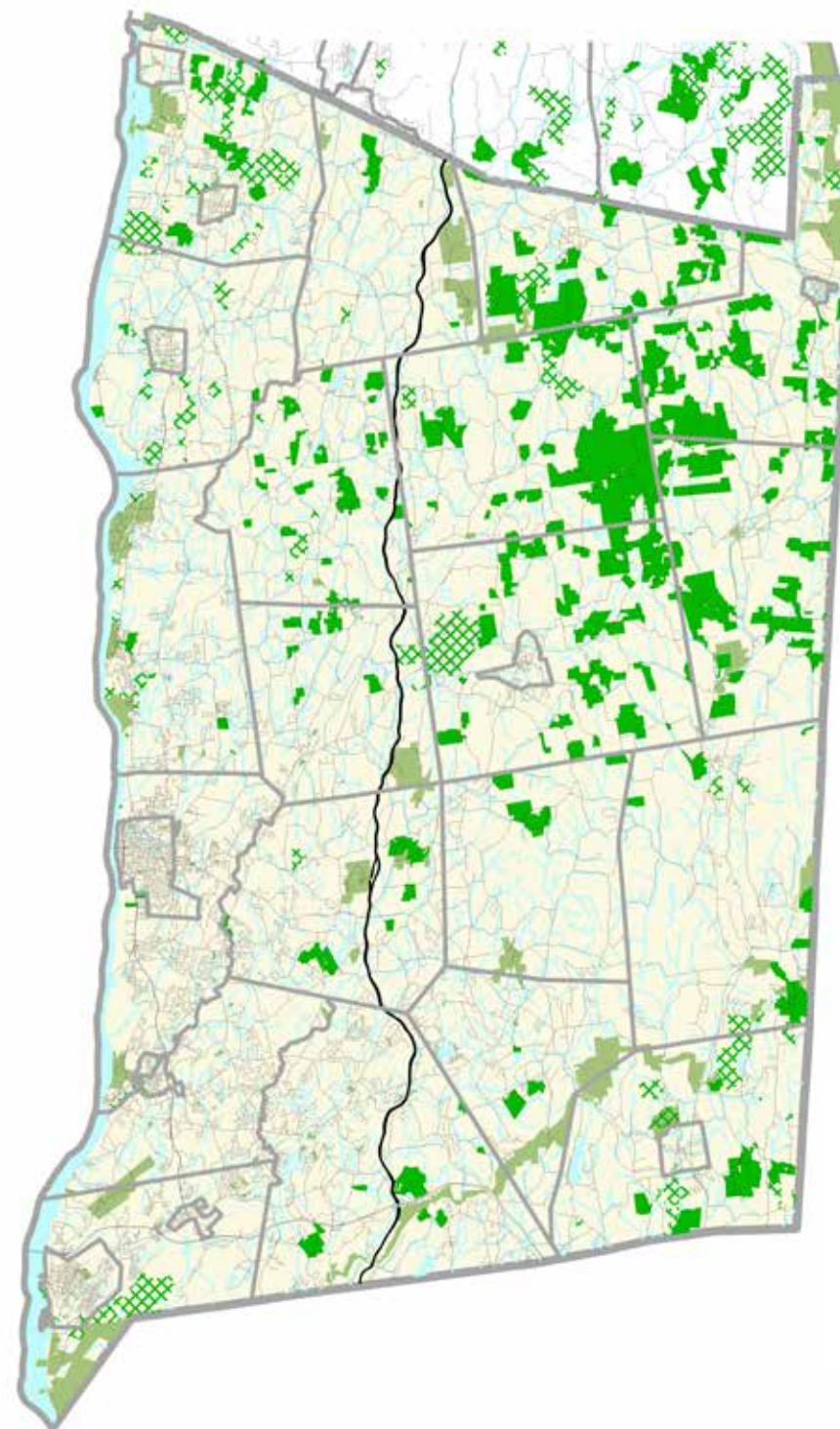
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2015 CONSERVATION ACHIEVEMENTS

Our most sincere thanks to the following people for placing conservation easements on their properties in 2015 protecting over 500 acres, and joining us as Stewards of the Land:

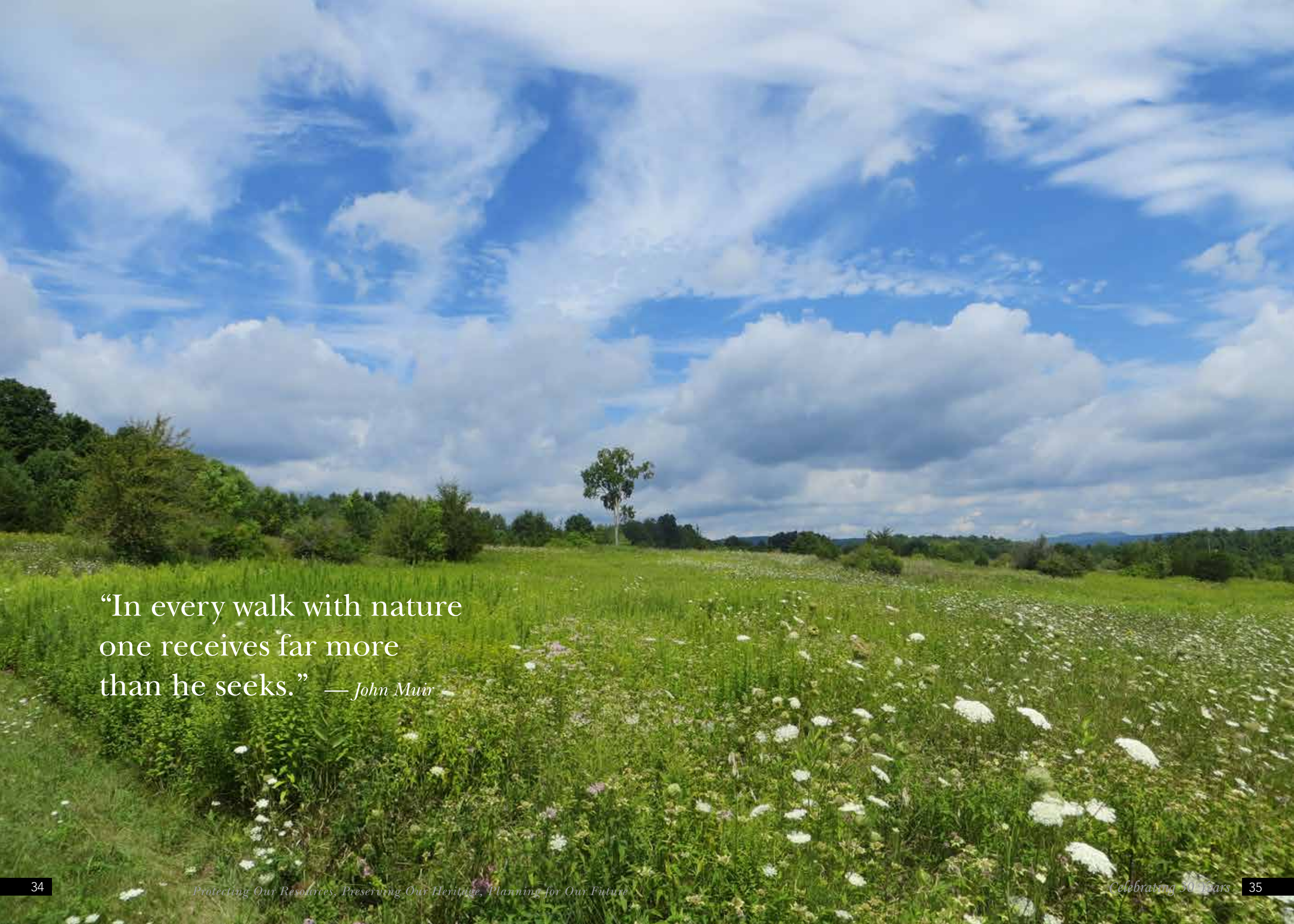
The **Verbank Hunting and Fishing Club, Inc.** sold their development rights and placed an easement on over 73 acres of their property in Union Vale; **Bob and Valerie Suter** protected their 63+ acre property in LaGrange with an easement and then donated it to the Town for public access. The **Town of LaGrange** placed four acres of their property adjacent to the Suters' land under easement; 178 acres of Ali Wambold and Monica Gerard-Sharp **Wambold's** farm in LaGrange has now been permanently protected by conservation easement; **Stancy DuHamel and Carolyn Handler** placed a conservation easement on 53+ acres of land in the Town of Dover; **David Marshall** added another 88.5 acres of his property in Milan to the 145 acres already under easement; and 43 acres of land was protected by a landowner in the Town of North East.



It is only through the generosity of our landowners, farmers, supporters, local communities, government agencies, and land trust partners that we can continue to help protect Dutchess County's watersheds, vital farmland, wildlife habitat, diverse ecosystems, and unparalleled scenic views for future generations.

Legend

- Land Protected with Dutchess Land Conservancy Conservation Easements
- Land Protected by Other Conservation Organizations
- Land Protected by Government
- Roads
- Water Bodies
- Municipal Boundaries



“In every walk with nature
one receives far more
than he seeks.” — *John Muir*

SPECIAL EVENTS



The Fall Country Luncheon and Silent Auction



On a sparkling fall day, over 375 friends and supporters gathered at Wethersfield Farm in Stanford for our 24th Annual Fall Country Luncheon.

We could not have chosen a more perfect setting to celebrate 30 years of land conservation, the transfer of stewardship of the Wethersfield easement to DLC, and to honor the memory of DLC Board members Molly Schaefer and Dick Kimball. Wethersfield Farm was the home of the late Chauncey Stillman (1907 – 1989), an early environmentalist and conservationist who purchased the land in 1937, adding to it until it totaled more than 1,200 acres. He protected it with a conservation easement ensuring its rural beauty and agricultural use for all time. The venue also boasts one of the finest classical gardens in the U.S., built in the second half of the 20th century. As guests enjoyed a delicious lunch catered by Gourmet to Go and wines from Little Gates and Co. Wine Merchants, they

were surrounded by over 8,000 acres of protected land. Music provided by The Hayrollers was a perfect backdrop to our country setting and to tour Wethersfield's amazing garden.

Our sincere thanks to all who made the luncheon a touching tribute and an amazing celebration! To Honorary Co-Chairs **Fernanda Kellogg and Kirk Henckels** and **Anne and Farnham Collins** – we can't thank you enough for your hard work and guidance that led to an outstanding event. Fernanda and Farnham – your heartfelt words about Molly and Dick brought their legacies to life for all who attended. To **Cat Kennan** – your tireless efforts behind the scenes were unbelievable! We thank you so much for the gorgeous centerpieces and for your cheery and unflappable manner in the face of ever-mounting headcounts! To **Tim Bontecou**, past DLC Board Chairman and all-around amazing guy – who else would guarantee that we had 15 foot birch trees to decorate the inside of our tent and transport a full-size antique sleigh to and from our silent auction? Thanks, Tim! To our **Underwriters** and **Silent Auction Donors and Winners** – we so appreciate your wonderful generosity!

And, as always, to all of our loyal **Supporters** who attend the luncheon year after year – and to new friends who joined us for the first time – thank you! Your support of the luncheon ensures that we have the funds to continue our programs, preserve our beautiful landscape, and steward more than 39,000 acres of protected land.

Photos: Barbara Beatty and Mary Hilliard

SPECIAL EVENTS

Our Spring Barn Dinner Dance, held May 9th at **Silver Mountain Hay Barn** in Millerton, was a delightful event and a spectacular success!

Co-Chairs Jodie Fink, Elizabeth Mayhew and Connie Newberry created an intimate and elegant setting within the architecturally-unique barn. Over 200 attendees were treated to Serevan Restaurant's delicious and creative hors d'oeuvres and dinner, a very entertaining live auction with guest auctioneer Gordon Elliott, and an evening of dancing to the music of the Mike Barry Band. It was a wonderful evening; the second year of a fun new tradition.

We offer our sincere thanks to the following people who worked tirelessly to ensure an outstanding event:

Thanks so much to our gracious hosts, **Scot Galliher and Katharine Leech**, who welcomed us to their beautiful barn, and to their Farm Manager **Bruce and staff** for all of their help and hard work on our behalf; to our amazing Co-Chairs: **Jodie Fink, Elizabeth Mayhew and Connie Newberry** who very generously supported, planned, organized, designed, decorated and delivered a superior event; to our fantastic auctioneer, **Gordon Elliott**, who reaped maximum bids while entertaining us all with his wit and humor; to **Serge Madikians of Serevan Restaurant** for his creative and delicious cuisine; and the **Mike Barry Band** for sharing your talents throughout the night. We'd also like to thank our **Underwriters, Auction Donors, and Auction Winners** for your wonderful generosity; and to **all who supported and attended the event** – we couldn't have done it without all of you!

Photos: Barbara Beatty Photography

The Spring Barn Dinner Dance and Auction



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Trustees of the Land demonstrate the most dedicated financial support of conservation with annual gifts of \$10,000 or more.

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Special thanks to an anonymous donor who made generous gifts of \$20,000 and up each in honor of:
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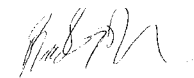
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Dear Members,

On behalf of the entire board, I extend our sincere thanks for the strong financial support you provided in 2015. Thanks to the consistently dedicated backing of our Trustees of the Land and members, DLC's annual fund campaign was a true success.

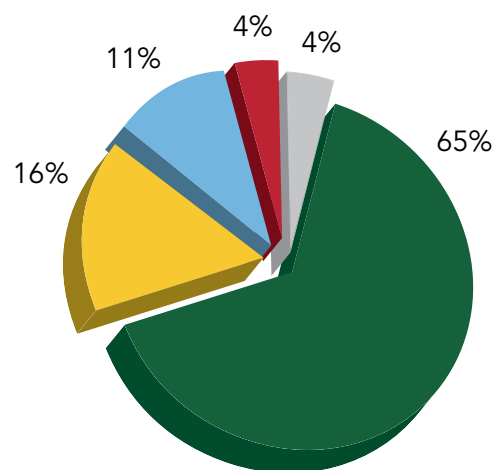
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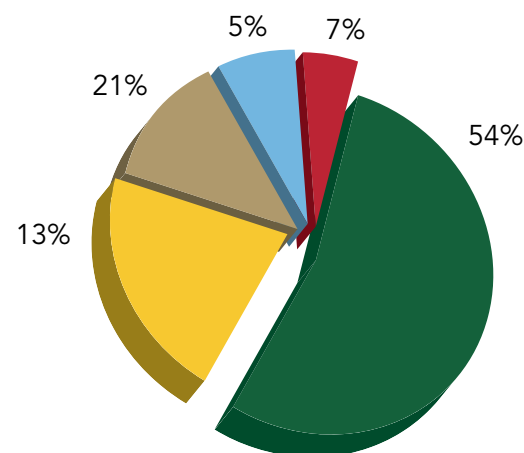
Operating Revenues

Individual Contributions	65%	●
Grants	16%	●
Interest and Dividends	0%	●
Special Events	11%	●
Miscellaneous Income	4%	●
Investment Spending Plan	4%	●



Operating Expenses

Land Conservation	54%	●
Stewardship	21%	●
Education	13%	●
Administration	7%	●
Development/Marketing	5%	●



2015 Statement of Financial Position

ASSETS

Cash/Cash Equivalents	\$ 322,181
Unconditional Promises to Give	64,951
Certificates of Deposit	199,158
Prepaid Expenses	13,743
Property, Equipment (net Depreciation)	146,477
Investments (endowment & restr. gifts)	5,250,921
Property Held for Sale	106,000
Accounts Receivable	300
Grants Receivable	14,000

Total Assets **\$ 6,117,731**

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Accounts Payable	\$ 49,992
Accrued Expenses	7,028
Temporarily Restricted	1,918,809
Permanently Restricted	672,962
Board Designated	3,021,119
Unrestricted	447,821

Total Liabilities & Net Assets **\$ 6,117,731**

2015 Statement of Activities

REVENUE AND SUPPORT

Operating Revenue

Contributions	\$911,224
Grants	219,000
Miscellaneous	9,629
Consulting Services	9,517
Events (net of expenses)	153,383
Donated Rent	25,200
Interest-Bank	788
Donated Legal Services	14,108
Investment Planning	50,000

Operating Revenue **\$ 1,392,849**

Non-Operating Revenue

Realized Gain-Securities	\$ 23,688
Investment Income-Dividends	61,288
Stewardship Endowment Contributions	41,875

Total Revenue **\$ 1,519,700**

EXPENSES

Operating Expenses

Program Services	
Land Conservation	\$ 890,502*
Stewardship	357,077
Education	215,805
Administrative	114,748
Development/Marketing	76,916

Total Operating Expenses **\$ 1,655,048**

Non-Operating Expenses

Unrealized (Loss) on Investments	\$ 195,041
Investment Spending Plan	50,000

Total Expenses **\$ 1,900,089**

Increase (Decrease) in Net Assets **(\$ 380,389)**

*Includes capital project cost of \$350,000
– funding raised in prior years



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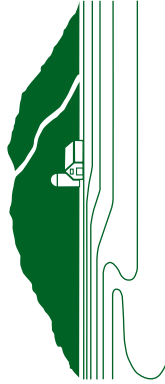


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