



**THE POUND RIDGE
LAND CONSERVANCY**
P.O. BOX 173
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www.prlc.net

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THE PRESERVES

Armstrong Preserve
Bye Preserve
Carolin's Grove
Clarke Preserve
Della Torre Preserve
Goldfein Preserve
Halle Ravine Preserve
Isaacson Preserve
Meadow on Fancher
Richards Preserve
Russell Preserve
Schwartz Preserve
Thalheim Preserve
Robert Whitehead Preserve

President's Message

We have been busy this year. Much of what we have accomplished is not entirely visible to our supporters but is integral to building a stronger organization, better tied into the community and our mission of conserving land and natural resources in Pound Ridge. For instance, we have a new Vonage phone line tied into our website and my email so we can consistently and timely retrieve messages. We have a new website address- www.prlc.net- which, the owner of the former Pound Ridge Learning Center sold to us for \$1.00. (A Big Thank You!)

Our Mapping Committee has completed its review of our 'priority parcel' book first published in December of 2000. We will be distributing it for use by our town boards and committees. ('Priority parcels' are those which because of their proximity to already preserved land or their natural features or characteristics- such as being an important natural viewshed or comprising one of several parcels creating a biotic corridor- are considered critically important to preserve either in the development application process or by conservation tools.) This coming year, our goal is to build relationships with landowners. Watch for our new programs in this area.

Our Preserve Management Committee has been busy keeping trails both cleared and well-marked with new trail markers. We are in the process of updating preserve signage as well as highlighting our preserves and trail information on a newly designed website. Please check it out in the upcoming months.

The Armstrong House subcommittee continues its process of gathering data and research into the costs of a proposed 'green' retrofit of the donated 1500 sq. ft. Armstrong House as a four-season land steward's home. Local businesses and residents have pledged donations to the effort. The board will make a determination on the project in the coming year. A town-wide fundraising campaign may be on the horizon!

Membership continues to grow. Please consider making an annual membership contribution in the enclosed envelope. Our newly designed membership database will highlight families whose memberships have lapsed. You might just hear from us! Please also consider attending our open board meetings the 3rd Wednesday of each month to learn more about us. However many hours a month you have to volunteer, your efforts will be welcome. Look forward to hearing from you.

Elyse Arnow
President, PRLC 2006

Upcoming Winter and Spring Walks

Beginning early in 2007, the PRLC is proud to announce its series of preserve walks given by volunteer and board member, naturalist Brenda Bates.

- Sunday January 28th, 1:00 p.m., Brenda will be leading a Winter Wonderland Walk through the beautiful Clarke Preserve located off Autumn Ridge Rd. We will identify winter resident birds, animal tracks and patterns, and discover natural winter wonders.
- Sunday February 25th, 1:00 p.m., Brenda will be leading a walk entitled Searching for Signs of Spring. As winter winds down, the woods behold secrets of spring's birth. We will discover the hidden surprises of spring at the Bye Preserve off High Ridge Rd.
- Sunday March 25th, 1:00 p.m., Habitat to Behold walk will take place. We will join Brenda at the Clarke Preserve to discover the importance and ecological value of vernal pools. Learn about the amphibians that gather at these precious pools to breed and the other life forms that call vernal pools their home.
- Sunday April 29th, 1:00 p.m., Join naturalist Brenda Bates at the Halle Ravine for a Spring Blossoms identification walk of early wildflowers.

Look for an announcement of our annual photography walk in May or June, guided by board members and professional photographers, Gail Jankus and Lisl Steiner-Monchek. Be sure to bring your cameras. Both younger photographers and those more experienced will enjoy this photographic hike through one of the PRLC's preserves



Photo: Gail Jankus

Black Cohosh

The Halle River Ravine Preserve has been chosen as a study sight for Black Cohosh (*Actae racemosa*) by the Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia. It is amazing that our little preserve will be a scientific research sight for a university so far away. They have received a grant from the National Institute of Health for two students to study the chemistry, biology and population genetics of Black Cohosh.

The study is designed to better understand the genetic variation of the plant, to help determine if there is chemical support that the species is an herbal remedy, and to help prevent over-collecting in the wild. They will be examining the chemistry of the plants during different stages of its lifecycle: while it is beginning to grow in the spring, while in flower, in fruit and after fall die back.

The preserve lends itself well to this natural history study because of its extensive population of Black Cohosh and its well-maintained trail system, which makes this population accessible. It is wonderful to be able to provide a protected preserve for organizations such as this university to perform scientific research. Dr. Tim Motley, formerly of the New York Botanical Garden and now of Old Dominion University and his partner, Dr. Ed Kennelly from Lehman College (CUNY) tell us that Halle has the only large population of this species near New York City. A 'voucher' specimen will be collected and deposited in the New York Botanical Garden Herbarium.



Scout Troop #2829 hard at work

Photo: Merri Virgilio

Scouts

The Pound Ridge scouting community has, over the past several years “adopted” several PRLC preserves and performed important maintenance and clean up of trails and habitat. Louise Paolicelli pioneered the program with Girl Scout Troop #1001. Since inception, the scouts have been regularly visiting the preserves with lead volunteer steward and board member, Rick Rodgers, and have learned the importance of natural habitat preservation.

Girl Scout Troop #2929, 2nd graders, with their leader Laura Henry have adopted the Bye Preserve and during the spring months this year helped spread wood chips along the trails and trail head. Wheelbarrow rides topped off the fun.

Girl Scout Troop#2829 and #1014, 3rd and 4th graders, with their leaders Lisa Smith, Merri Virgilio, Kim Hartnett, and Rita Whitelaw have adopted Carolin’s Grove and have visited several times, removing debris and larger fallen trees from the trails and erecting a sign for the educational old ‘glass dump site’.

Girl Scout Troop #2830, 4th graders, with their leaders Sue Tosto and Bonnie Schwartz have adopted the Armstrong Preserve. They have been instrumental in blazing a new trail, clearing branches and debris. In the future they hope to assist with connecting this trail to the Ward Pound Ridge Reservation through DEP land that is nearby. (Approval for this project has been received from the New York State DEP). This energetic group has also visited Carolin’s Grove and the Morgenthau Preserve belonging to The Nature Conservancy.

Girl Scout Troop #1001, 5th graders, and their leaders Louise Paolicelli and Sandie Pfeiffer have adopted the Halle Ravine. They too have cleared debris from the trails and have carried wood boards down to the site for a new bridge. High school student Robert Tenreiro has since completed the bridge.

Cub Scout Tigers Pack # 106, 1st graders, with their leader Nancy Multari, along with several other cub scout packs, have explored the preserves with volunteer ‘Ranger’ Rick in preparation for what we hope will be future projects on PRLC preserves. The PRLC appreciates all the support from the scouts, their leaders and their families.

Bigger Tax Benefits for Easement Donors Passed by Congress and New York State

Property owners who have protected their land in partnership with the Pound Ridge Land Conservancy are well acquainted with the benefits of donating conservation easements and outright donations of land. Donations and easements help protect water quality, keep wildlife habitats intact and protect the wooded character of our Town. They can also add to the value of existing homes.

Not only are there benefits to our community, but there are individual benefits as well. The IRS and New York State have enacted rules that create larger tax benefits than existed before. Landowners who have been weighing the benefits of conservation protection may well now decide that there is no time like the present to take advantage of the federal income tax benefits and state property tax credit. If you are a landowner with an adjacent undeveloped, subdivided parcel, a landowner with land in excess of the zoning requirement whether formally subdivided or not, or a landowner of undeveloped land, you can take advantage of these expanded tax benefits if your gift of land is made to the PRLC in 2007.

The new IRS rules make it easier for average Americans to donate land. They allow a conservation easement donor to deduct the value of the easement up to 50% (from 30%) of their adjusted gross income in any year. Most importantly, if the value of their donation is larger than this, they can continue to use the deduction for up to 15 years (up from 5) after the initial year of the gift.

New York State has also increased the tax benefits by allowing easement donors past and present, to get an annual refund of 25% of the property taxes paid on the land, up to \$5,000 per year, especially important to retirees and residents with modest incomes.

We have been helping Pound Ridge landowners make gifts of land for over 30 years. These new tax incentives are a win-win for both the landowner and our community. Gifts of land provide protection against inevitable development and growth while simultaneously protecting the natural resources, which sustain our property values and the wonderful lifestyle we experience in Pound Ridge. Please call us to discuss how you can benefit. (914-372-1290)



Bye Preserve Photo: Gary Carlson