



**THE POUND RIDGE
LAND CONSERVANCY**
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THE PRESERVES

Armstrong Preserve
Bye Preserve
Carolyn's Grove
Clark Preserve
de la Torre Preserve
Meadow on Fancher
Goldfein Preserve
Halle Ravine Preserve
Isaacson Preserve
Richards Preserve
Russell Preserve
Schwartz Preserve
Robert Whitehead Preserve
Thalheim Preserve

Conservation is not only about plants and animals, it's also about people...

Since August, when PRLC received a building permit to renovate and retrofit the 1500 square foot structure situated near a rock outcropping on the 43-acre Armstrong Preserve off Rt. 121, high school students, community volunteers and professionals have been dedicating hours to exterior and interior demolition, researching 'green' building materials and technologies and learning new hands-on skills. Working with our contractor, Ian Ashby, Phase One of the project has been defined: stabilizing the structure. The old chimney has been demolished to be replaced by a super efficient wood burning stove. The footings are dug and structural reinforcement of the ground floor is underway.

Our hands-on approach to retrofitting this future land steward's home and private, educational 'off the grid' 'green' residential prototype has already brought Pound Ridge residents together to save both the land and our planet through learning about renewable energy options. Did you know that *resource efficiency*—one of the criteria's for 'green' material or product selection—highlights several elements simultaneously? These include:

- the product's recycled content
- whether the material is natural, plentiful or renewable (are the materials harvested from sustainably managed sources)
- have they been manufactured with resource-efficient processes including reducing energy consumption, minimizing waste and reducing greenhouse gases
- are the materials locally available thus saving energy and resources in transportation to the project site
- have they been salvaged, refurbished or re-manufactured saving the materials from disposal
- are they durable in having a comparatively longer life expectancy than conventional products or materials

Our first Open House Event on October 28th, with over 50 folks in attendance, showcased work done to date and our vision for the future. We had the opportunity to thank volunteers, benefactors, and local companies that have donated or pledged substantial services, products or materials.

If you have contacts or influence with a local building supply, materials, or appliance manufacturers and would like to be involved in this project, please let us know. Every contribution—labor, materials and expertise—is very much appreciated.

Suppliers and Contractors to date:

- Ian Ashby, General Contractor, South Salem, NY for his ongoing support and leadership of the project
- Ciaran Carruthers of RedCourt Tree Service and Second Nature Tree Service, Stamford, CT.
- Marchetti Consulting Engineers, Pound Ridge, NY
- Electric Snake, Dave Fitzpatrick, Brewster, NY
- Bottege Septic, Bill Bottege, Brewster, NY,
- Chubby's Hardware, Pound Ridge, NY
- Wittus, Fire By Design, Pound Ridge, NY
- Bria Carting, Lawrence Bria, Somers, NY
- Members of the Mid-Hudson Chapter of the American Institute of Architects facilitated by Pound Ridge resident Carol Cioppa



PRLC Board is kicking off our formal fundraising campaign for the Armstrong House project this winter. Last spring, the board voted \$75,000 of our operating account to provide the seed funds for the project. The board raised an additional \$25,000 from its members for a total of \$100,000. We are looking to raise a matching \$100,000 over the next year from Pound Ridge residents and surrounding communities. To date, several families have come forward with 'lead' gifts of \$1,000.00. We are looking for 50 families to donate \$1,000.00 towards the completion of this project. If you are a landowner whose land abuts one of our preserves, please take notice of our letter mailed earlier this fall asking for a \$500.00 contribution to the project. Look for upcoming events and a phone call from one of our board or development committee members. If you would like a copy of our fundraising packet that outlines the tax deductibility of contributions, both in-kind and financial, please let us know.

Federal and State Tax Incentives Accelerate the Pace of Conservation...

The PRLC works with local landowners who are encouraged by recent tax legislation to place a conservation easement on their lands. As an alternative to an outright donation of land to a qualifying organization such as the PRLC, a landowner can continue title ownership but place restrictions on development through a conservation easement. Landowners, who place a conservation easement on land, which is scenic, environmentally sensitive, or having historic value, have been able to get federal tax breaks. Under expanded federal incentives, landowners can now deduct the value of a donation up to 50% of their adjusted gross income per year, up from the previous allowable 30%. If a landowner's income is too low to deduct the full amount of the gift in one year, the deduction can be carried forward for 15 additional years, up from the five years previously allowed. In addition, property held in family limited partnerships, limited liability companies and some types of corporations may also be able to take advantage of the increased deduction limits.

Conservation easements can generate other tax benefits as well. They can cut estate taxes as the land is considered to be worth less restricted by an easement. In addition, New York State offers a real estate tax credit up to \$2,500 per year for qualifying gifts. Please contact us for more information.

Protecting Local Treasures for Everyone...

Nestled amongst the residences on Trinity Pass is a wonderfully rich piece of property owned and managed by the Pound Ridge Land Conservancy. The Halle Ravine hosts a variety of plants that are hard to come by in these deer-browsed days. The serenity of the winding trails along the pond and streams are relaxing and meditative. The beautiful stonework along the dams and riverbanks leads one to contemplate the days gone by. The ravine itself is glorious in its' steep rise above the river- you can just picture its creation over the millennia.

My first walk in Halle was such a pleasant surprise. I was in awe to see native plants including Bloodroot, Trillium, Maiden-hair Fern, Black Cohosh, Blue Cohosh, and a plethora of others holding their own. The lack of invasive plants struck me also. Although there is a substantial amount of Garlic Mustard covering the forest floor, it is not over- run with other common invasives such as Barberry, Asiatic Bittersweet or Mile-a-Minute weed. It is so nice to come by these rare places, as the real threat of deer and invasive plants are evident just about



everywhere you go.



Photos by Michael Gambino

Every time I have gone there, I have run into people that recognize Halle Ravine for the treasure it is. They are pleased that the land has been protected, whether they are naturalists, hikers, or neighbors. If you haven't been to the ravine yet, I highly recommend it, and remember to take nothing and leave nothing behind- it's beautiful just the way it is!

by Brenda Freeman-Bates, Board Member PRLC and Sr. Curator, Ward Pound Ridge Reservation

Preserve Walks

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| January 6 th at the Bye Preserve | 1pm | April 6 th at the Clarke Preserve | 11am |
| February 3 rd at Carolin's Grove | 1pm | May 18 th at the Russell Preserve | 11am |
| March 2 nd at the Halle Ravine | 1pm | June 1 st at the Halle Ravine | 11am |

Interested in helping inventory and monitor the plant growth at the Halle Ravine and the Clarke Preserve? Brenda Bates will be strategically setting up inventory plots at both preserves to monitor plant growth in regards to deer browse. We will also be collecting baseline data on the flora and fauna in the preserves. Please contact Brenda at 864-7317 (daytime) if you are interested in helping out. This will be an ongoing survey, over consecutive years, so any amount of help, even an hour or two, is appreciated.

PRLC LAUNCHES NEW WEBSITE, BLOG, AND CALENDAR

If you haven't already visited our new website (www.prlc.net) please do so. The website provide enhanced information regarding our preserves, projects, and improved navigation. Your comments and suggestions for strengthening our communications are encouraged and welcome!

President's Message....

Although you may think the Land Conservancy has gone into the building business in light of the Armstrong House, please know the important work of preserving and protecting our undeveloped, open space in town has never been more important.

This past year, we received our first-ever grant, actually, the first the PRLC has ever applied for! The grant of \$8,000 was awarded from the New York State Conservation Partnership Program in conjunction with the Land Trust Alliance. We have become one of the 59 land trusts in New York State to receive funding. The award will be used to re-survey the Richards and Schwartz preserves to protect these parcels. In addition, the survey of the Richards Preserve will assist in designing a new trail from the Armstrong Preserve through DEC lands to the Richards and Ward Pound Ridge Reservation trails.

Our Preserve Management Committee is busy maintaining trails on our five preserves that are open to the public. Members of the committee are also busy monitoring the deer-culling program underway on several preserves through the end of the year in conjunction with the Town's program. In addition, we are implementing a deer-monitoring program to quantifiably assess over the next years the impact our culling is having on the rejuvenation of plant diversity in our meadow and woodland habitats. This program is being designed in conjunction with a PhD candidate whose work focuses specifically on whitetail deer impacts.

Our mapping committee has dedicated this past year to updating our 'priority' parcel book first published in 2000. Once published, it will be distributed to our Town Planning Board, ZBA and Wetlands Commission. Priority parcels include those that remain open and un or under-developed and are important to the smaller biotic corridors that continue to exist throughout town. Some of these parcels abut or, in combination with others, protect important water sources or act as buffers to larger, undisturbed lands. Decisions about development intensity, placement, fencing, intrusion into established wetland buffers all impact the continued viability of our ecosystems. Indeed, some, if not all, of these parcels are critical to our view sheds and maintaining wooded community character.

Through the mining of our updated database, the Mapping Committee has identified several groupings of homeowners whose properties are critical to preserving the integrity of distinct areas of town where environmental protection is paramount. Neighborhood get-togethers will commence early this coming year with the goal of educating landowners as to vehicles for preserving their land through outright donation or conservation easement, often with tax benefits. The mining of our database has also resulted in continuing discussions with town leadership on preserving important town-owned, undeveloped parcels. Through our new program of seminars in conjunction with the WLT, we are reaching out to our local realtors to inform them of our work and assess how we can best preserve land before, during and after a sale.

Through our comprehensive work, we continue to protect local treasures. We urge you and your family to support our work both financially and with your time and expertise. Our board is growing and we would like to add 5 new board members this year. If information in this newsletter is interesting to you and you have even a few hours a month to spare, we can use your energy and enthusiasm. The all-volunteer PRLC prides itself on educating strong environmental leadership in our community. We look forward to you joining us.

Elyse Arnow Brill
November 2007

This newsletter is printed on recycled paper!

