



**THE POUND RIDGE  
LAND CONSERVANCY**  
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**THE PRESERVES**

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

**A Bold, New Project for Your Community Land  
Conservancy...**

Our Newest Project- **The Renovation of the 'Armstrong House' at the 43-acre Armstrong Preserve** located off Rt. 121 will accelerate the pace of conservation efforts in Pound Ridge and the towns in Northern Westchester.

In conjunction with the PRLC's mission~ to preserve open land in its natural state in Pound Ridge--the PRLC board of directors has approved a major expenditure from its operating budget to renovate the Armstrong House to provide a residence for a land steward whose responsibilities will supplement the volunteer efforts now available to the organization. Land steward responsibilities are to preserve and maintain the land conservancy's trails and conserved open space as well as to provide best practices stewardship capabilities to other land preservation organizations in Northern Westchester. With trail and preserves expanding throughout town, stewardship requirements are growing. Leading-edge conservation organizations throughout the country are contemplating future stewardship needs and moving forward with strategies for sustainable open space management.



In addition to providing housing for the organization's land steward, the Armstrong house is to be an educational, private facility prototyping a 'green' living lifestyle to promote the recognition that land preservation, natural resource protection and habitat conservation are possible through a combination of outright land protection and lifestyle choices. The off-the-grid residence will demonstrate that a smaller ecological footprint is

possible without having to 'give-up' the benefits of modern 21<sup>st</sup> century living.



By preserving the historic components of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century home while introducing a successful program of alternative technologies to 'power' an off-the-grid residence, the 'historic viewshed' of the

property will be preserved. Preserving this 'historic' viewshed' is vital to protecting the integrity of the surrounding open space.

## President's Message...

Yes~ this is a large commitment for the PRLC, but one that has engendered much support and excitement over the past months. The board has approved \$75,000 from our operating account, along with raising an additional \$25,000 from board members. We hope to match this \$100,000 with a similar amount raised from the community over the next year. Yes~ it takes a community to build a house- a very special house indeed and a major resource for our community. It is hoped that 50 families will donate \$1000.00 with 100 additional families contributing \$500.00. More of course is fine- but these are our targets. A major fundraising campaign will commence this summer with a packet of materials, targeted phone calls and letters sent to everyone we can think of. A fall open house is planned.

To date— a respected contractor from South Salem who is well-known in our community for quality historic renovations has agreed to build out the project at cost. A local engineer has agreed to donate the engineering required for the project, and a local architect has been working for the past year pro bono to provide all the drawings and architectural needed for the job. Presently work is being done in preparation for a building permit. Components of the energy system including a high efficiency wood burning stove have been pledged from local businesses. The Mid-Hudson/Westchester Chapter of the American Institute of Architects has included this project in their recent newsletter. Representatives have visited the site and have expressed interest in providing expertise and hands-on assistance. The National Historic Trust has sought out the project for presentation at the North-East Land Trust Alliance Conference this spring. Fox Lane and John Jay High School students have already contributed community service hours to the project and more have expressed an interest. The site will be buzzing this summer...

With these contributions of time, labor and in-kind donations, we are well on our way... So—what do we need from you...

We need a financial contribution of course. In addition, if you have a few hours of time and want a hands-on experience, we need volunteers to build out this house... Send us your email, and we will let you know volunteer opportunities each week. If you have two good hands and a strong back, you are needed. Young adults and retirees are especially welcome to join our efforts.

If you are connected to a business and can provide building materials, fixtures, appliances, building supplies, we would love to speak to you. If you have a special interest in alternative, 'green' technologies, we can use your research and networking capabilities. If you have contacts in the building trades, we can certainly use your influences. Certain contributions along with financial contributions are tax deductible as we are a qualifying not-for-profit organization. A formal 'open house' will be scheduled for mid-September and all contributors will be asked to attend. In addition, in all publicity and community education materials, each contributor will be acknowledged and thanked. The goal of this project is wide-exposure to the northern Westchester communities for the purposes of support and education.

We are very excited about this project and its future possibilities. We hope you will join us. Please contact me at 764-4778 or arnow@optonline.net.

Elyse Arnow  
President, PRLC Spring 2007

We continue ecological studies in several of the preserves...

### Hemlock Study at the Bye Preserve Is There Hope for Eastern Hemlocks?

Thousands of acres of hemlock forest in the eastern U.S. have been lost to a furry little insect, the hemlock woolly adelgid (pronounced uh-DEL-jid), related to aphids and scales. It feeds only on hemlocks, and when infestations are heavy, even mature hemlocks can be killed within several years.

You may have noticed large numbers of hemlocks diseased throughout the lower Hudson Valley. However, some hemlocks seem to continue to do well. Is it possible that characteristics of the habitats in which these trees are growing explain the resistance of some of these trees, or is it because they possess resistance to the adelgid in some way?



In an attempt to answer these questions, Dr. Paul A. Weston, Department of Entomology, Cornell University, along with his team, are propagating healthy hemlocks culled from several locations in the Hudson Valley, including the PRLC's Bye Preserve located off High Ridge Road, and exposing them to the adelgid. Simply put, if the trees survive attack, it means they are most likely resistant to the adelgid and might pass their resistance on to their offspring. We would then have disease resistant trees that could be re-planted in areas that have been

devastated by the adelgid.

The project is being funded by USDA, and NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. It is our hope that in light of this work, future generations will continue to be able to walk through cool, shady forests dominated by the hemlock and breathe in their unmistakable scent.

### Update on the Isaacson Preserve Phragmites Project Preserving Valuable Fen Habitat

*Phragmites australis* is an invasive reed whose purple seed fronds are seen along many highways and roads. Although beautiful in its own right, *P. australis* takes over wetlands by outgrowing native plants both in height and vigor. In the fall of 2005, volunteer and Board member, Dr. Kearns, visited the PRLC's Isaacson Preserve off of Donbrook Road and estimated that *P. australis* occupied approximately 0.75 acres near identified fen areas which are home to rare plants which thrive in rare alkali conditions.

Dr. Kearns expressed concern that *P. australis* might overwhelm the fragile fen ecology, which happily still contained many sedges and other native fen plants, as well as fauna such as blue herons, wild turkeys, snapping turtles, deer, and a myriad of colorful dragonflies.

#### Background for the Research Plan

The research plan for containment was based on information from the [Element Stewardship Abstract for \*Phragmites australis\*](#) authored by Marianne Marks, Beth Lapin, and John Randall in 1993 for The Nature Conservancy. In this abstract, a method for controlling *P. australis* was outlined by cutting reeds in late July when the plant's carbon is sequestered in the reproductive parts of the reed at the height of

## Phragmites Project cont.

the photosynthesis season. Cutting the reeds at the first leaf node removes the carbon before it is transported back to the rhizomes for energy storage. Lacking carbon sources for the winter, the rhizomes are weakened or die, and the spread of the reed is curtailed.

The PRLC board, after careful consideration, voted to begin research on the efficacy of cutting *P. australis* starting in late July 2006. The PRLC board believes this natural cutting approach, in contrast to chemical application, most closely aligns with the intent of the donors of the Isaacson Preserve and the PRLC mission targeting water quality and habitat preservation. The NYS-Department of Environmental Conservation gave its approval on July 5, 2006, and the project began on July 25, 2006.

### Research Details

The perimeters of the *P. australis* colonies were marked and five plots were established to monitor efficacy of cutting in late July. Prior to cutting, the numbers and heights of the reeds in the plots were measured to establish a base line. During July, 2006, cutting was completed with flat hedge trimmers and sixty 30-gallon black plastic bags of cut material were removed to dry, high ground to avoid reintroduction to the site.

Efficacy of cutting will be monitored in late July 2007 by (a) comparing the number and heights of reeds in the plots to the precutting base line numbers and heights and by (b) determining the growth line of shoots with respect to the marked precutting perimeter of the colonies. **Volunteer teams will be on site this summer from Wednesday, August 1st through Sunday, August 5th. Contact us if you are interested in joining the teams. You will need high muck boots, a hand shrub clipper, and insect protective clothing and spray.**

Dr. Kearns wishes to thank to Rebecca Crist of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, whose dedicated review of this project made it possible.

## Upcoming Walks

PRLC is proud to continue its series of preserve walks given by volunteer and board member, naturalist Brenda Bates and others. Limited parking is available at each of the preserves.

- Sunday June 10<sup>th</sup>, 1:00 p.m. Join Lisl in the Halle Ravine located off Trinity Pass.
- Sunday July 1st, 1:00 p.m. Join Brenda at Carolin's Grove located off Rt. 137.



- Sunday September 16th, 1:00 p.m. Join Brenda at the Bye Preserve located off High Ridge Rd.
- Sunday October 21st, 1:00 p.m. Join Brenda at the Halle Ravine located off Trinity Pass.

- Sunday November 18th, 1:00 p.m., Join Brenda at the Clark Preserve located off Autumn Ridge.

