



The Pound Ridge Land Conservancy Green Spaces

Private Non-Profit Organization

Preserving Pound Ridge Lands Forever

Fall 2016

www.prlc.net

P.O. Box 173
Pound Ridge, NY 10576

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Our Preserves

Clark
Carolin's Grove
Halle Ravine
Russell
Bye
Richards
Thalheim
Isaacson
Della Torre
Fancher Meadow
Goldfein
Robert Whitehead
Armstrong
Honey Hollow
Sand
Schwartz
Old Stone Hill
Laurel Ponds

Upcoming Events

See the Events section on our website www.prlc.net for full event listings.

Clark Preserve Guided Family Hike

Saturday, January 28th 12Noon-2p

Learn to identify trees and wildlife signs in the winter landscape

Citizen Science and Volunteer Forum

Sunday, February 26th 6p-8p

Join us in celebrating volunteer and citizen scientist community initiatives

Halle Ravine Guided Family Hike

Sunday, March 26th 2p-4p

Join naturalist guide staff and hunt for early signs of Spring in search of frogs, salamanders and turtles

Volunteer In-The-Field Work Sessions

Starting Saturday, March 14th 10a

The first Saturday of each month

For the Love of Halle's Trails...and Woodlands

The trails into and out of the ravine at the 38- acre Halle Ravine Preserve off Trinity Pass are particularly prone to erosion during rainfall and snow melt. In years past, volunteer projects included the layout and construction of water bars at critical trail intersections to divert storm runoff and prevent soil erosion, both severe problems for water quality, aquatic life and amphibians that call stream-beds their home.

This year, PRLC targeted an aging embankment staircase on the east side of the Ravine and replaced a seventy foot section that had, over the years, become unstable through frost upheaval and erosion. Hikers have enjoyed visiting the Ravine since the 1960's, when Pound Ridge residents rallied to purchase the property from heirs of Hiram Halle and dedicated it as a nature preserve in perpetuity.

We chose Eastern red cedar for the risers as it is both durable and, for hikers, less prone to being slippery in wet weather. Cedar is available as standing dead-wood on many of our preserves and in Pound Ridge backyards. Having scouted this wood, we cut it in place and stockpiled appropriate-sized lengths for upcoming volunteer work sessions. At each of four field work mornings, a core team of volunteers cut trenches and laid logs with a comfortable and constant rise up the embankment slope, setting extra-long water bars every fifteen feet or so. Other volunteers worked to protect plants at the project site by installing temporary silt fencing to contain disturbed soil to the trail bed, and planting ferns and ground cover plants along the embankment edge. Biodegradable erosion cloth will help to promote plant root growth and hold soil in place. Upon completion, volunteers carried the old steps out of the preserve for re-use in building raised beds for

PRLC's protected, native plant nursery at the Armstrong Education Center's productive backyard. As has been PRLC's good fortune over the years, neighbors granted us access to short-cut transport distance to and from the work site.

Woodlands throughout Pound Ridge and the region are under siege by one of the gentlest of animals, the white-tailed deer. Deer eat from five to seven pounds of vegetation per day and dine richly on the summer buffet of tender plants often provided by home landscaping. In the winter, herds turn to the forest to browse buds, tender saplings, and even tree bark, stripping the forest bare of its understory. At normal population densities, deer browse checks the growth of plant life without hindering forest regeneration. At higher densities, we face the loss of wildflower species first, then pollinators that depend upon them, then birds that can't find shelter or food, and finally, the forests themselves as trees die and are not replaced.

Scientists and natural historians have documented these effects, including our friends at Mianus River Gorge who found that tree sapling diversity in local protected forest decreased from 15 species to 4 over the last 30 years. Recent research techniques have moved from counting deer or deer density to measuring the effect of deer browse. Comparing browse in selected study plots over time can show trends in any given landscape and therefore guide future woodland management. For more information on PRLC's efforts, see PRLC's land steward/educator's blog at <http://prlc.net/2016/11/15/assessing-forest-regeneration>.

Krista Munger, Land Steward



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Land Conservancy**
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President's Message: Connecting Our Community to Conservation

Through our efforts this year, entrances of PRLC preserves along with many acres of protected woodlands look different. At our monthly volunteer sessions and summer internship program, PRLC staff teach and use best field management practices to build resilience (in response to climate change stresses) and habitat health. PRLC's work in our community is vital as we involve neighbors, students and landowners in building knowledge around healthy ecosystems including critical water quality, soil management, and restored habitat to support wildlife diversity and human health.

At the Russell Preserve, located at the intersection of High Ridge Road and Upper Shad, neighbors, town employees along with Supervisor Lyman, cleared trails and the roadway viewshed of tangled invasives. This work built upon the invasive management work of an Eagle Scout the previous year. At the 70-acre Clark Preserve off Autumn Ridge, volunteers cleared 9 acres of nasty, invasive barberry, bittersweet and winged euonymus, and built hundreds of feet of bog bridges to protect critical watershed land. At the popular Halle Preserve off Trinity Pass, board members, neighbors and young volunteers rebuilt stairs along an embankment to protect the Ravine's watercourse and stabilize soil. We are proud of the results of many hours of work at the Halle entrance where hundreds of native plants have been planted and protected from deer browse.

Our Propagation Lab (Prop Lab) is the first in our area where native plants are grown from local seed and where students and volunteers come to learn propagation techniques including seed collection, storage, early spring indoor germination and transplanting. At the off-the-grid Armstrong Education Center, we doubled our nursery space and raised more than 500 plants for restoration projects throughout PRLC preserves. Some of our favorite easy-to-grow plants for pollinators (bees and birds) are milkweed, aster and goldenrod. For future tree canopy, we continue to grow oak, maple and hickory saplings that will be planted in our protected woodlands. Next year, we will increase PRLC's shrub nursery by using cuttings from existing plants- including chokeberry, spicebush and sweet pepperbush among others- thereby sustaining local seed varieties and genotypes. Volunteers can continue to help by donating their own cuttings next spring or by assisting with seed

preparation this fall and winter. This is, in the truest sense, a community sustainability initiative!

A new initiative to protect the old-growth hemlock forest at The Halle Preserve requires special note. These stately trees have fallen prey to the Woolly adelgid, a small, aphid-like insect that threatens the health and viability of the Eastern hemlock. These long-lived trees grow well in shady, steep areas unlike many other tree species, and provide a unique, shaded habit (for critters such as the Pileated Woodpecker) and important soil erosion protection.

The Halle Preserve hemlock forest has declined from 18 acres to 4 acres. After considered discussion and consultation with area experts, PRLC's board has decided to move forward with an insecticide application early spring of 2017 before pollinators have arrived when

negative impacts can be minimized. Large scale spraying will not be used, instead, application is directly to the trunk bark of individual trees. Results will be carefully monitored.

PRLC remains committed to the use of mechanical and hand-pulling techniques but in certain cases, we have come to understand that to combat the significant threats and changes in our local environment, limited-use chemical applications may be necessary.

Please know, our work is supported, in part, by grants from the NY Watershed Council and the New York State Conservation Partnership Program. However,

the heavy lifting for the majority of PRLC's work comes from our community- individuals, family foundations, and small organizations. We do not have development or fundraising staff, with only a single landsteward/educator providing our programming. Our volunteer board works tirelessly to support her efforts. We need to raise a minimum of 45K each year for necessary expenses including but not limited to insuring public access on our privately owned trails, Armstrong Education Center maintenance, along with costs of program implementation including staff salary, benefits, and informative, neighborhood gatherings. We hope you will continue your support and lend a hand to our important, community-driven initiatives.

Mike Kagan, Fall 2016



Fox Lane Volunteer, Carson P.

**Reminder: Dogs must be leashed at
PRLC preserves for everyone's safety &
to protect wildlife. Questions?**

Email us at info@prlc.net

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