

Forever Farmland

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Ensuring Farmland for the Next Generation

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LINDSAY FARM
Kingsbury, NY

Board Chair Reflections

A Bright Future for ASA



As the year progresses and the seasons change, we are reminded of all that the earth offers us. What a great joy it has been to work with an organization dedicated to conserving this land for the benefit of all, now and into the future. ASA’s mission and work is more vital than ever as we strive to protect our working lands and natural resources, strengthen our farm families and communities, and support the agricultural economy in our region. With every easement, we safeguard our soil, air, and water and support healthy, local food systems. We also protect the open space and pastoral landscapes that enhance our well-being and provide everyday perspective and beauty.

While there is always more work to be done (and more farm, forest, and community lands to be conserved!), autumn is a perfect time to celebrate ASA’s success, born out of the hard work, expertise, and dedication exhibited by the organization’s staff, volunteers, and supporters. My own journey with ASA began during my college years, assisting with summer easement monitoring. I was drawn by the opportunity to hike and survey properties and then further engaged by the caring and passionate people behind every easement story. After many years away, I returned to the area and found myself quickly reconnected with the organization and excited to re-engage. Over the past six years, I’ve invested my time, energy, and financial resources into ASA because I firmly believe in the continued importance of its mission and the exceptional individuals driving its success. Let us all continue to invest in ASA, ensuring its enduring relevance, purpose, and impact. The path forward is bright indeed.

In stewardship,

Tarah Rowse

Tarah Rowse,
Board Chair (2021 – 2023)

BREAKING NEWS!

A Community Forest for Argyle

PSST, COME CLOSER. We have a secret to share. Last spring ASA purchased a property in the Town of Argyle to become our next community forest! This gem will provide area residents with a place to hike, explore nature, and learn more about forest management.

We asked former landowner, John Diaz, what inspired him to consider conserving the land as a community forest with ASA. He explained, “It was always my late wife’s and my dream to make our 80 acres an area for people to visit and walk on trails, with spots where they could relax and experience everything we loved about this land. After my wife passed away, I still held onto our shared dream but lost my drive to do it. Then, one day I made a connection with Renee from ASA and explained our vision. I have to say that I think she was just as excited as I was. I could have cleared the land and developed it, but that wasn’t what I wanted. So, I entrusted ASA to make our dream happen.”

More details about this new project will be forthcoming. ASA will be busy over the next 18 months prepping the site to ensure it is ready to welcome you. Until then, the property is closed to the public. Interested in volunteering with this effort? Please contact ASA’s office at 518-692-7285.



SUPPORT THIS PROJECT!

Please visit ASA’s website or scan the QR code.



JOIN US

ASA VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Administrative Volunteers

From filing to data entry to helping with mailings—we can always use an extra hand at the office

Forest Stewardship/ Trail Work Volunteers

Enjoy the outdoors and make a difference by maintaining and improving trails, removing invasives, and helping to monitor our two Community Forests

Outreach Volunteers

Like to get out and about? Help us distribute event flyers and materials throughout the year, assist with public tabling opportunities and promotion

Special Events Volunteers

Assist with our two largest annual events: *Forever Farmland Supper* (August) and *Landscapes for Landsake Art Sale & Exhibition* (October)

Give us a call at 518-692-7285 to sign up!

OUR EXPANDING LANDSCAPE

For thirty-four years, ASA has worked with local landowners to protect the agricultural landscape of our region. We celebrate and support the foresight of these landowners and donors who recognize that once lands are lost to development, we never get them back. It is with great gratitude and pleasure that we share a few of their stories in the pages that follow.

WASHINGTON
COUNTY



RENSSELAER
COUNTY

The Future of a Three-Generation Farm Secured



Conservation readies a family-run dairy for the next transition

For the past 30 years, Jim and Joann Lindsay have worked to create a farm that's not only profitable, but is one they're proud to call their own.

"We initially rented the farm from the previous owner and ran it on a part-time basis with me, Joann, and the two kids. Between Joann managing the books and the rest of us doing the manual labor, we managed to get the work done," recalls Jim. Then, after he retired from his UPS delivery job in 1999 and the family's eldest son, Dan, expressed an interest in farming full-time, they decided to make the farm their own.

"We purchased the farm primarily as a dairy operation, but plummeting milk prices prompted us to sell off the cows in 2000," says Jim. "We spent the next five years growing and selling hay to local horse and cattle operations. We eased back into dairy with somewhere between

30 to 50 cows in 2017 with Dan leading the charge. He's really spearheaded expanding that effort and today we have over 150 cows and sell over one million pounds of milk to Stewart's every year. We're still growing hay and some corn, but now it all stays on the farm to feed our own herd."

In recent years, the Lindsays have worked to update and improve the farm's infrastructure by renovating a barn, updating the machine shop, and installing new high-tensile fence around the pastures.

Now in his seventies, Jim is looking ahead to retirement and transitioning the farm operation to Dan. For his part, Dan is also looking ahead to eventually transition the farm to his daughter Danika. Conserving the land with ASA is a critical component of the multi-generational planning.

Jim says, "The project will allow Dan to pay off the mortgage and to continue



LINDSAY FARM
Kingsbury, NY



"I'm proud of what we've done and excited that the land will be here for my family."
— JIM LINDSAY

investing in improving and conserving the land. It also gives Dan and Danika the chance to consider diversifying things moving forward...maybe adding beef or crops other than corn and hay."

He adds, "Thirty years is a long time to give to a farm. I'm proud of what we've done and excited that the land will be here for my family and whoever might follow them to farm and appreciate it like we have."

To see a map of all of ASA's conserved properties, visit our website www.agstewardship.org/land-conservation/

Funding for this project was provided by the New York State Environmental Protection Fund administered by the Department of Agriculture and Markets



SUGAR MOUNTAIN FOREST
White Creek, NY



A Dream That Will Last Forever

Long before Bob Somers and Susan Stiner ever set foot on the property that came to be known as Sugar Mountain, they had a vision for where they wanted to live.

“We wanted to live in the mountains, back in the woods, and with a lot of land,” recalls Bob, a certified forester and retiree of the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets. Susan, a Biology Professor at Hudson Valley Community College, adds, “That was the dream, for sure. We just had no idea we’d fulfill it on the scale we did.”

Situated between Mount Tom State Forest and Chestnut Woods State Forest and abutting the Jermain Hill Farm easement in the town of White Creek, Sugar Mountain spans 269-acres. Dense with stands of beech, sugar maple, red oak, and other trees, and species of wildflowers and native plants almost too numerous to count, the land is also home to deer, coyotes, turkeys, owls, songbirds galore, a raven rookery, porcupines, fox, and the occasional bear.

Mindful stewards of the land with a vested interest in the long-term health of the forest, one of the first things the couple did after purchasing the land in 1994 was enroll the forest in New York State’s 480a tax abatement

program. In addition to providing an annual property tax reduction incentive, the program requires the landowner to commit the land to active timber management. The forester in Bob is only too happy to comply.

“When we bought the property, I saw the potential for both merchantable timber and to put sustainable practices into place,” he says. Today, the property is managed for timber, firewood and maple sap production, recreational opportunities, wildlife habitat, and to promote native natural communities.

Conserving the property was on the couple’s minds for many years. “We spoke periodically with ASA about the importance of protecting the property through a conservation easement, but felt it was unaffordable” says Susan.

Then, in 2022, they received a call from ASA Executive Director Renee Bouplon about a grant opportunity through the Forest Conservation Easement Land Trust (FCELT) Program. “Thanks to the grant,” says Bob, “we’re finally able to conserve 259 acres of land.”

For the Somers-Stiner family, the easement provides valuable peace of mind. Susan says, “It’s comforting to know that, whether we’re



here or not, this land will forever be managed responsibly. And it’s nice to be part of creating a legacy that values and respects the important role a forest plays in the wellbeing of us all; that includes carbon removal, biodiversity, and air and water quality. Our sons, Lyle and Liam, grew up here exploring nature and now have careers in the natural sciences and conservation, so they are whole-heartedly on board with our decision.”

The project also benefits local wildlife as it creates a contiguous block of nearly 3,100 acres of protected land and provides a traversable corridor between two state forests.

Although he’s retired, Bob knows that he’ll have plenty to do for the next 15 to 20 years. “For the foreseeable future, it’s all about beech management and working to create a healthier forest. Susan, Lyle, Liam, and I often wondered what we could do or leave behind to benefit future generations and the environment. The easement provided that answer.”



BOB SOMERS &
SUSAN STINER

“It’s nice to be part of creating a legacy that values and respects the important role a forest plays in the wellbeing of us all.”
—SUSAN STINER



Deep Roots Holsteins Reaches 623 Total Conserved Acres

Second project helps secure the future for a fourth-generation farm

With all of the pressures on today's farmers, Donna and Albert Marns' latest conservation effort has given the third-generation Deep Roots Holsteins farm a 283-acre addition.

This is their second project secured with ASA in the last 10 years. Combined with other adjoining ASA conserved lands this newest easement helps create a 904-acre continuous area of "forever farmland" and provides a future homestead for the fourth generation of Marnses.

"When we bought the land 10 years ago, our eldest son was just 14 years old," says Donna. "We couldn't have imagined that he would one day want to fix up the original—and dilapidated—house on the property so that he could live there and continue to run the farm. But here we are, and we couldn't be happier."

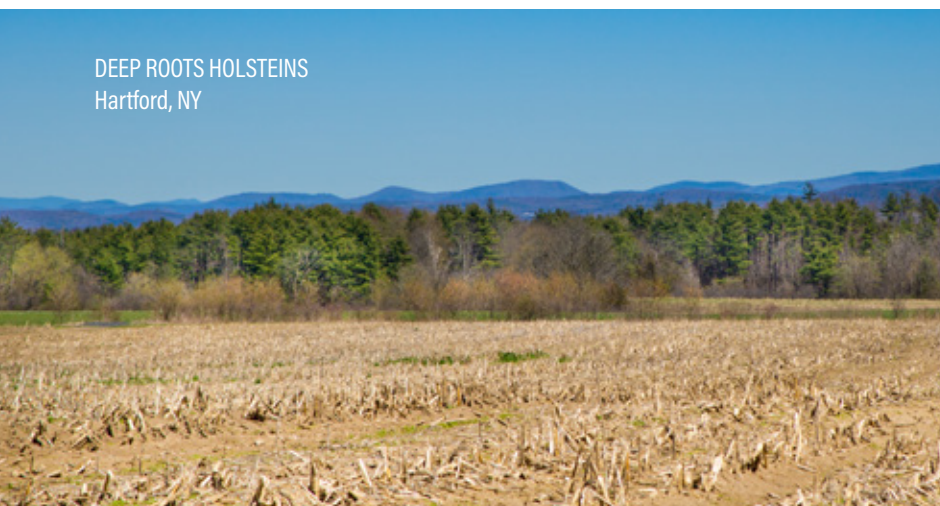
"When the blacktop goes down, the farm is done."

— ALBERT MARNs

The choice to sell their development rights speaks volumes about the Marns' commitment to safeguarding farmland.

"We get letters all the time from people asking to sell our land for development or convert to solar. For us, development is not a good choice for high-quality farmland," says Donna. As for how much land is worth to these potential buyers, the Marnses don't even know. "We throw the letters out and Albert's closed the door more than once in the middle of a developer's pitch."

Albert adds, "Just look around. Local farms are dwindling in size as is the number of farmers. The local food supply is disappearing. Now more than ever, we have got to protect farmland. When the blacktop goes down, the farm is done."



DEEP ROOTS HOLSTEINS
Hartford, NY



OLIVIA FULLER NAMED NEW YORK CONSERVATION STEWARD



"I consider it an honor to serve on the board and support the critical mission of ASA to protect working farms like ours."

CONGRATULATIONS to easement landowner and ASA board member, Olivia Fuller, for being named a Conservation Steward by America's Conservation Ag Movement (ACAM). Olivia and her partner Tom Hughes operate Fuller Acres, a 308-acre conserved farm in Fort Ann. The farm transitioned to Olivia from her father, Doug Fuller, who ran a dairy and maple operation for more than 50 years, after taking it over from his parents. In 2017, Doug made the decision to protect the farm from development with ASA, which sparked new conversations with Olivia about the future of the farm.

The dairy herd was sold to another local farm in February 2023 and the operation has transitioned to pasture raised beef, lamb and pork—as well as maple syrup and log-grown shiitake mushrooms through stewardship of their forested land. Olivia and Tom market their products direct to consumers in a self-serve farm store they opened in May 2024 and through monthly "Farm Club" deliveries throughout the region. Both generations continue to work closely together, and Doug produces hay for the livestock.

ACAM is a public-private partnership dedicated to supporting the adoption of

conservation practices by farmers across the U.S. The organization recognizes farmers who are innovative and successfully changing their farming practices to improve soil health, climate resiliency and farm viability. Conservation stewards share their insights with other farmers during on-farm field days.

Fuller Acres hosted a field day on September 25. The day-long event included a farm tour with discussion of how Olivia and Tom have transitioned the farm operation, using rotational grazing management and diversifying their production and marketing. American Farmland Trust reviewed management practices and on-farm monitoring of soil health. The Washington County Soil and Water Conservation District presented information on resources available for farmers to improve water quality and reduce erosion.

In the afternoon, ASA provided a pasture walk with grazing consultant Sarah Flack. Sarah is an author, consultant and speaker specializing in grass-based livestock farming systems. During the pasture walk Sarah reviewed best management practices to improve pasture quality and productivity and demonstrated practical hands-on monitoring of pasture soil health.



ASA SERVES AS A RESOURCE for farmers and landowners interested in improving soil health and climate resiliency while supporting farm viability. If you are interested in these types of programs, sign up for our monthly e-newsletter at www.agstewardship.org to stay informed.



FROM THE BOARD

THANK YOU!

We would like to thank Dave Horn, Mary MacKrell, Shane Nolan, and Tarah Rowse for their years of service on our Board of Directors.



WELCOME!

Last spring we welcomed Clifford Oliver Mealy, Annie Paulsen, Hugh Roome, and Mary Ellen Williams to ASA's Board of Directors.

Pictured above: Dave Horn, Tarah Rowse, Renee Bouplon, and Shane Nolan

THE TEAM

ASA Continues to Grow



Kathryn Klanderman

Development Associate

Kathryn is honored to be working for ASA and farmland conservation. Previously she worked for Pitney Meadows Community Farm in Saratoga and is also a visual artist. She has been deeply involved with several grassroots community-based organizations in the New York City area and is a firm believer in the power of individuals to make their world a more compassionate and better place.



Alexander Warshal

Project Manager

Alexander comes to ASA with a background in agricultural certification, outreach, and project management. Though he didn't grow up on the farm, both sides of Alexander's family were dairy farmers from Central New York. When not at work, Alexander spends time tending his small-scale vegetable farm, hanging out with his family and friends (and dog), or practicing photography.



Sean Murphy

Stewardship Assistant

Sean came to Washington County in 2014 from North Carolina to grow vegetables on The Alleged Farm and later, on Denison Farm — both ASA conserved farms. He also worked for 8 years at Argyle Brewing Company in Greenwich, where you may have enjoyed one of his famous grilled cheeses. He is thrilled to join the team at ASA and is excited to expand his connections to the farming community in our area.

CORRECTION

We regret that the article titled "A Second Easement Creates an Impressive Block of 486 Conserved Acres" published in our last newsletter contained a couple of errors. The corrected article can be found by clicking this QR code:



A Lasting Legacy

Greg Hansen, newest member of ASA's Legacy Society, shares why leaving a planned gift means so much to him and his wife, Patti

"RURAL JOHNSONVILLE, otherwise known as Millertown, in northern Rensselaer County, was a good place to grow up. The 60-acre cattle and hay farm where I lived with my parents and sister gave me an early appreciation for farming and the land. A short bicycle ride took me to my grandparents' dairy farm where over 400 acres were farmed for generations before me.

Now, much of that land on both of those farms grows houses instead of cows and crops.

Over the years many factors contributed to the gradual replacement of scenic views, wildlife habitats, and recreational opportunities with those new homes. One of those factors was a lack of options for dealing with the land when transitioning out of farming. This is what makes ASA such a valuable resource. ASA gives farmers options and helps save an irreplaceable asset from extinction.

My wife, Patti, and I believe in ASA's mission. We support them now as much as we're able. By joining the Legacy Society, we hope to continue that support even when we're gone."



GREG HANSEN
ASA Supporter
Since 2005



INTERESTED IN JOINING THE LEGACY SOCIETY?

Leaving a legacy gift to ASA may be accomplished in many ways, depending on what works best for you. And, you don't have to be wealthy to leave a legacy gift. Any amount helps and anyone can create this type of legacy. It can be as simple as naming ASA as a beneficiary on a life insurance policy, bank or brokerage account. Just visit our Planned Giving page on ASA's website to complete a Bequest Commitment Form.

Ways to leave a forever gift:

- Bequests through your will or living trust
- Retirement plan
- Life insurance policies
- Donor-advised funds
- A gift of real estate
- CDs, bank and brokerage accounts
- Charitable remainder Trust

If you've already included ASA in your will or estate plans, please let us know so we can say "Thank You" during your lifetime.

Some of our Legacy Society members and friends gathered at Brown's Walloomsac Brewery in October for a behind-the-scenes tour of the brewery.



Agricultural
Stewardship
Association

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We Conserve Good Farmland
For Good. **Forever.**



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PHOTOGRAPHY: Olivia Fuller, Brian Haynes, Drake McDonough,
Kara O'Malley Scieszka GRAPHIC DESIGN: Kate Hocker

Additional Ways to Make a Difference



Thank you for your generosity and continued financial support of ASA. We hope the stories in this newsletter continue to inspire you to protect local farm and forest land and support our agricultural economy. As a 501(c)3, donations to ASA are tax-deductible.

Additional meaningful ways you can support ASA include:

- 1 Donating gifts of stock:** Donating appreciated stock is one of the easiest ways to give more to causes you care about. It's also one of the most tax-smart ways to give.
Note: This donation must be initiated before Dec. 31 in order for you to receive the tax benefit for the year.
- 2 Donating from your retirement accounts (traditional IRAs, rollover IRAs, SEP plans, 401k or 403b):** If you have reached age 72 (or 70.5 if you were born before July 1, 1949), this opportunity includes maximizing your Required Minimum Distributions. This option allows eligible donors to give up to \$100,000 per year to charities like ASA.
Note: These must be initiated before Dec. 31 for you to receive the tax benefit for the year.
- 3 Including ASA in your estate planning:** By leaving a bequest in your will or living trust, you can benefit ASA in a very simple and direct way. You can craft a unique gift that will honor your legacy and continue your commitment to ASA beyond your lifetime.

Contact Donna Dodd-Thomas at donna@agstewardship.org or (518) 692-7285 for information.

32,664

ACRES OF FARM AND
FOREST LAND CONSERVED!

The Agricultural Stewardship Association (ASA) protects our community's working farms and forests, connects people to the land, and promotes a vibrant future for agriculture and forestry in the region. To date we have assisted with the conservation of 32,664 acres of productive land in Washington and Rensselaer counties.

ASA receives funding from its members and supporters, which include the New York State Environmental Protection Fund and PCLB Foundation, among others.