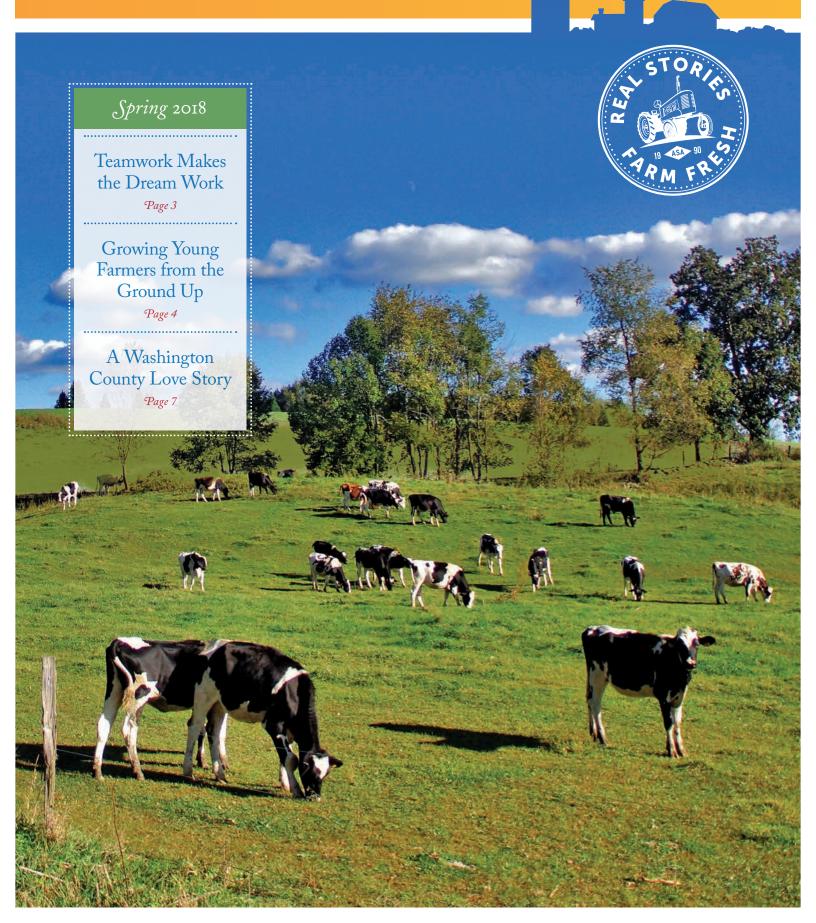
# Forever Farmance





## 18,999

acres of farm & forest land conserved!

The Agricultural Stewardship Association (ASA) protects our community's working landscape of farms and forests, connects people to the land, and promotes a vibrant future for agriculture in the region. To date, we have assisted landowners with the conservation of 18,999 acres of productive land in Washington and Rensselaer counties.

ASA receives funding from its members and supporters, which include the New York Conservation Partnership Program (funded by New York's Environmental Protection Fund and administered by the Land Trust Alliance, in coordination with the state Department of Environmental Conservation).

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Agricultural Stewardship Association

2531 State Route 40, Greenwich, NY 12834 518-692-7285 asa@agstewardship.org www.agstewardship.org



## Milk Your Land For All It's Worth

magine if every day you had to be at work by 3 a.m. (no sick days allowed), worked until 7 p.m. and then at the end of the day you owed more than you earned for the work you did. That's about what our local dairy farmers are facing right now as milk prices—over which they have little control—remain low and dairy farmers continue to lose money every sixteen-hour day they work.

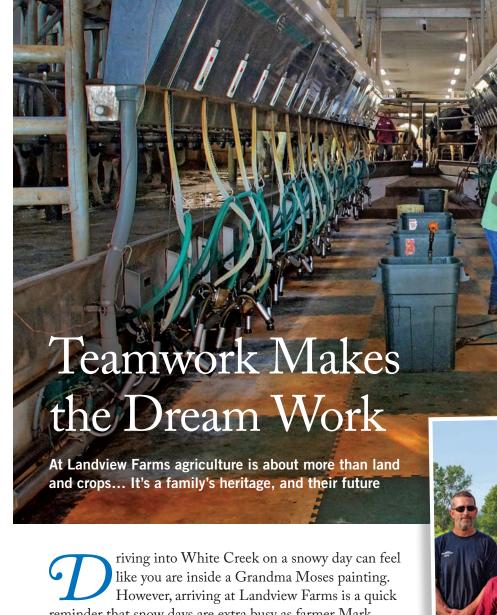
Our hearts go out to our farming community members during this tough time. We are eager for better milk prices and good weather. But in the meantime, thanks to your support, the staff at ASA is working to secure state and federal funding to help some of these farmers through this period.

Just about every farm family who has conserved a farm tells us that they love their land and never want to see a crop of houses on the soil they worked all their lives. But even more than the land, they love their independence. By helping them to conserve their land, you—our supporters—are helping them conserve their independence and their way of life. And by doing that, you are also conserving our agricultural communities and our rural quality of life for generations to come.

With the completion of the Landview Farms (see page 3), Tilldale Farm (see page 4) and Richview Farms (see page 7) projects, you have helped us to conserve a total of 18,999 acres of land in Washington and Rensselaer counties. Those acres will help feed the 60 million people who live within five hours of here for decades to come. With your continued support, we are confident that all of us, including our farmers, will make it through this together.

As always, with our thanks, Teri Ptacek & Katherine Roome

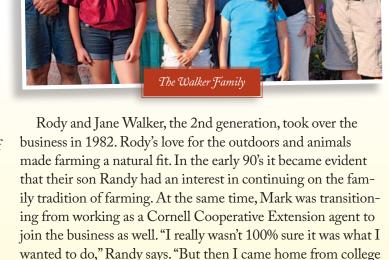
Teri Pfaul Katherine Roome



riving into White Creek on a snowy day can feel like you are inside a Grandma Moses painting. However, arriving at Landview Farms is a quick reminder that snow days are extra busy as farmer Mark Anderson tries to figure out where to put all that pretty snow. Most people think winter is a quiet time of year for the crop guy, but Mark tells us, "there is a living root in our ground 365 days a year. At the core of everything we do is building our soils and improving soil health. It is the basis of our business and we focus on improving it year round."

Business partner and third generation dairy farmer, Randy Walker, jokes, "Mark is in charge of the outside and I take care of the inside." Landview Farms is a family farm owned in partnership by Rody and Jane Walker, their son Randy, and Mark Anderson. Randy handles the dairy and staff, Mark oversees the crops, and Rody and Jane handle the business end of things. But the reality is that their success is built on a strong foundation of teamwork, deliberate planning and capitalizing on their skills.

The Walker Family started Landview Farms in White Creek in 1952 with a herd of 50 Brown Swiss cows. In 1966 they built the first free stall barn in the area, a move that was seen as highly progressive. Currently, they are milking a herd of 1,300 Holsteins and are one of the largest employers in the Town of White Creek.



To capitalize on the opportunity while mitigating risks, they established an LLC. This required an initial investment for a major expansion of the herd and the CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

and it worked pretty well. Everyone got along and it was a good

fit, so it seemed to make sense." Rody and Jane needed a plan.

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## Growing Young Farmers from the Ground Up

**Protecting Tilldale Farm** 

nears before the words "mentoring" and "magnet schools" came into common use, Dan and Joanne Tilley were mentoring kids at their magnet farm in the Hoosic River Valley. It began in 1938 when Dan's father bought a farm near the intersection of Route 7 and Route 22 in Hoosick Falls. (Yes, there are two spellings of Hoosic/ Hoosick depending on whether you are talking about the river or the town.) Dan wasn't sure whether he wanted to be a farmer upon graduating from Paul Smith College. But when his father asked him to help with the dairy, Dan came home to the farm... and stayed.

Dan stayed close to home when it came to marriage as well. His wife Joanne (Herrington) was a local gal who grew up on her parents' farm only seven miles away. In 2008, Joanne and Dan stopped milking cows at Tilldale Farm and started raising organic grass fed beef and pigs for meat. All of their animals are heritage breeds, born and raised on the farm.

Dan and Joanne are also conserving the 86 acre SherMar Farm, owned by Joanne's mother, Marjorie Herrington.

"Mom's place is just beautiful. It belonged to her mom's family first and my parents bought up all the land around it to ensure it would stay a farm," Joanne says.

Dan's three daughters didn't take an interest in farming but the rest of the neighborhood sure did!

According to Dan's daughter Erika, "Teenage boys from all around town showed up in a steady stream every summer to help out on the farm.

"There was Rick, and Jeff, and Jake, and...." Erika's list went on and on. According to Dan, he just "baited them with chips and soda" and they kept coming back. Dan's grandmother fed the teenage crew lunch for years before Dan's Aunt Jane—who still lives on the farm and mowed the grass until she was 93 years old—took over lunch duty. Even Bennington College (a place well known for the arts but not for its agriculture program) sent a student intern, raised in New York City, to spend six weeks at Tilldale Farm in the dead of winter.

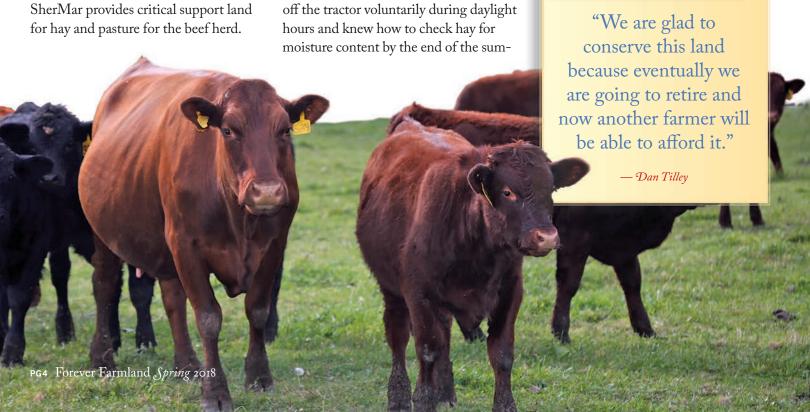
Last summer, a four-year-old son of one of Dan's former "students" arrived with his dad. The four-year-old rarely got hours and knew how to check hay for

mer. In addition to the kids, Dan's retired farmer neighbors volunteer regularly to help Dan cultivate his fields because, well, it takes considerable skill and experience to cultivate a field and they like doing it.

Dan raises the animals and Joanne is responsible for growing their customer base at three area Farmers' Markets. They also wholesale through an online grocery that has over 1,000 customers, primarily in Boston.

With ASA's help, the Tilleys will be conserving about 289 acres on Dan's farm and another 86 acres on Joanne's family farm. About 87% of the funding

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9



## Welcome to the Table

are delighted to welcome four new members to the ASA Board of Directors: David Fleming, Carole Lewis, Mary MacKrell and Tarah Rowse.

David Fleming is the COO of Featherstonhaugh, Wiley & Clyne, LLP, a law firm based in Albany. He is also the supervisor of the Town of Nassau. David brings skills in financial review, strategic planning, communications and compliance to his role on the Board. For more than 20 years, David and his wife Carolyn have worked to restore Rockwyck Farm on the southern edge of the Rensselaer Plateau where they raise sheep and two teenage sons.

Having grown up in Washington County, Carole Lewis greatly values the protection of our areas' agricultural land. Carole strongly believes that "agriculture will ensure our area's relevance over the coming decades." As President of Salem Farm Supply, Carole is in touch with

farmers on a daily basis and has an in depth understanding of their operations, needs and goals.

"I'm interested in furthering ASA's mission to connect people to the land," Mary MacKrell says. As a CPA, Mary's expertise is in non-profit auditing and accounting. Mary will be joining the Board in the capacity of treasurer and providing financial oversight.

Tarah Rowse has recently returned home to Greenwich. "I am thrilled to join the Board to share my skills and play a part in farmland conservation. I believe supporting this work is a key way to preserve our rural character, healthy food systems and community livelihoods. I see ASA's work as central to the long-term sustainability of the region and I am excited to be involved." Tarah has experience in qualitative and quantitative research, fundraising, goal-setting and communications.

## Thank You for Your Service!

his spring marks the departure of four board members, Beth Clark, Noel Hanf, John Moore and Erika Sellar Ryan who have served ASA a combined total of 23 years. We are a much stronger organization because of their personal commitment, leadership and dedication to our mission. In their own way, Beth, Noel, John and Erika has each provided critical guidance and thoughtful perspectives. We know that their legacy of service will remain a vital part of our organization and that they will continue to be champions for ASA. We thank them for their service!

## Welcome to the team, Donna!

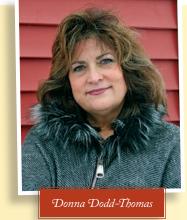
e are pleased to announce the hiring of Donna Dodd-Thomas as our Development Manager. Donna will be responsible for cultivating and expanding donors and building awareness of ASA's mission. Working closely with the Executive Director and Board of Directors, she will establish systems and create strategies to grow ASA's funding base.

Donna brings over 25 years of sales, marketing and new business development experience to ASA's team. Most recently, Donna was an international and domestic sales representative for Original Works in Stillwater. During her successful tenure with Original Works, Donna was responsible for territory sales, account relationship management

and customer service for 500 accounts.

Donna is especially passionate about her new role with ASA as she is the daughter of a 5th generation Saratoga dairy farmer. "I understand the great importance of the

conservation of our precious farmland," says Dodd-Thomas. "My dad was born in the farm house on Dodd Road in 1919. He watched his grandfather and his father work the land. He grew up knowing no other lifestyle. Farming filled his soul. The deep gratitude that we experienced as a family when the McMahon family purchased the farm was immeasurable. The landscape



remains beautiful with McMahon mares and foals in the meadow. This was truly a blessing for my mom and dad in their final years."

"I'm thrilled to be a member of the ASA family. My entire

career has led me here and I couldn't be more sincere when I say that I've come home," adds Dodd-Thomas.

Donna resides with husband Cliff Thomas in Fort Miller, Town of Greenwich. The couple has four children: Brooke Thomas-Record, Blake, Schuyler and Mikaela Thomas. Welcome to the team, Donna!

## Honoring a Father's Conservation Legacy

Cambridge native donates land in North Carolina



ast fall, Justine (LeBarron)
Larado, along with her husband
David, approached ASA about
gifting their house lot in Shallotte,
North Carolina. They purchased the lot
in 2005 with the intention of building
a retirement or seasonal home someday,
but plans changed. Justine found out
about ASA's Gift of Real Estate
Program, which resells donated real
estate to further ASA's mission. They
gifted the lot to ASA in May 2018,
for which we are extremely grateful.

ASA's Gift of Real Estate Program "was an ideal program that suited our needs," explains Justine. "We had real estate that we wanted to part with, didn't want the hassle of selling ourselves, and knew was going to a cause that was near and dear to my father."

Justine's dad, Loren LeBarron, was a Cambridge farmer who believed deeply in conservation. He, along with his wife Marilyn, protected their family's farm in 2006. "This gift is in memory of him."

The available house lot is in a gated community known as Rivers Edge Golf Club & Plantation, with frontage on the 7th fairway of a highly acclaimed Arnold Palmer designed course.

Ownership of the lot includes membership to the private golf course, with pool, tennis, beach and clubhouse amenities. There are only a few homes in the vicinity of this lot. Its end of the road location adjacent to a wooded buffer owned by Rivers Edge provides privacy while still being close to the fairway. It is the perfect property for the golf enthusiast!

To learn more about this listing or ASA's Gift of Real Estate Program, contact Renee Bouplon, (518) 692-7285 or renee@agstewardship.org.

## Ways to "Gift" Real Estate

### **Outright Gifts**

Donor conveys the real estate outright to ASA during his or her lifetime and receives tax benefits.

### **Bequests**

Donor gifts the real estate to ASA in a will.

## Charitable Remainder Trusts

The real estate is used to fund a charitable remainder trust with ASA as a charitable beneficiary.

## Charitable Gift Annuity

The donor transfers the real estate to ASA in exchange for a partial tax deduction and a lifetime stream of annual income from ASA.

#### **Retained Life Estates**

Donor conveys the real estate to ASA but retains the right to live on the property until death or relinquishment of life estate.

#### **Bargain Sale**

The owner sells the real estate to ASA at less than fair market value and takes a tax deduction on the difference.

#### **Undivided Interest**

The donor conveys a partial interest in the real estate to ASA prior to selling.

## A Chance at the Auction:

A Washington County Love Story

out, raising his fist into the air to signal the auctioneer that he had the high bid. "Going once, twice, three times...sold," the auctioneer announced as the hammer struck the table. Dan Richards was at the auction to buy a few cows. What he wasn't planning on, was falling in love. "When we were married," Erin Richards jokes, "our commitment to farming was practically in the vows."

Dan and Erin's farming operation started off small, a few pieces of machinery, 40 milking cows and of course, a bunch of debt. After renting for a few years, they ended up purchasing a 110 acre farm on State Route 40 in Argyle in 2008. But as their business grew, so did their desire to get off the main road and away from the traffic.

On their occasional free afternoons, Dan and Erin would drive up to Bunker Hill in Greenwich where there was a beautiful 164-acre farm for sale. They loved it. Erin could imagine a small farm store and renovating the farmhouse. Dan had ideas about how to fix up the farm and to eventually own it. With the help of interim buyer Iroquois Valley Farms, LLC (IVF), a farmland investment company focused on providing land access opportunities to young farmers, they started renting the farm with an option to own. In 2013, the Richards purchased 29 acres of the farm that contained the farmstead. Dan and IVF decided to pursue selling the development rights on the entire farm as a way to transition the remaining farmland to the Richards at its agricultural value, which was a first for IVF. indeed, everything was a first with the Richards, according to Sally Dodge with IVF. "The Richards were

"Conserving the land on Bunker Hill makes the farm affordable for us and will help ensure our long-term viability."

—Dan Richards

the first organic dairy farm for IVF, the first farm project in the northeast and our first to convey a conservation easement."

As many young farmers do, Dan and Erin have struggled. Switching from a conventional dairy to organic allowed them to stay in business when times got tough, but now the organic price of milk has dropped, too. "Dan has this 'I have to make it mentality'," Erin says. "It's hard to be the first to do something, but he is always stretching his comfort zone and we think it's important that our kids see how hard we work for this life." Dan and Erin have four young children, Mason (5), twins Jack and Randy (4) and Olivia (2 months). "Everything we do is with their future in mind. We hope that someday they will take over the business," she says. For now, the boys are happy to help with chores and are good at bedDan & Erin Richards with sons Jack, Randy & Mason

ding calves and shoveling the barn.

They are currently milking 120 cows at the Bunker Hill Farm and another 60 at the Route 40 farm. As soon as they sell the State Route 40 farm, they will move all the cows up to Bunker Hill.

Dan took a chance at the auction when he approached Erin for the first time. Now they are excited to take another chance this summer when they start bottling their organic milk under their own label, Bunker Hill Creamery. The first product they'll be offering will be half-gallons with a cream top. Dan explained, "Conserving the land on Bunker Hill makes the farm affordable for us and will help ensure our long-term viability."



Funding for this project was provided by New York State through the Hudson Valley Agricultural Enhancement Program administered by the Department of Agriculture and Markets.

Forever Farmland Spring 2018 PG7

oin us for some fun on the farm!

Make a Connection to Our Working Landscapes

ASA offers a variety of programs and events to give you and your family an opportunity to visit local farms and learn more about our rich agricultural heritage. We organize farm tours, bike rides, nature walks and educational workshops throughout the year. Be sure to sign up for our e-news at www.agstewardship.org and "like" us on Facebook to get all the latest details.

## July **Farm Photography for Kids**

Sign up through Cambridge Village Youth Center, Greenwich Youth Center and Salem Courthouse Community Center



Learn how to take great photos of your favorite farm animals and landscapes. Farm Photography for Kids gives children (ages 8 and up) a unique opportunity to visit some of our region's most interesting farms, explore what goes on and learn how to take fantastic photos. Professional photographers Dona Ann McAdams and Cliff Oliver will teach the participants the fundamentals of photographic composition and lighting, while sharing their expert insights and techniques for getting that perfect shot.

For 2018, we've updated the Farm Photography for Kids program to be a four-part experience. Participants will receive an introductory lesson and visit 2 area farms! After the farm field trips are completed, the young, budding photographers will have a final session to edit and select their favorite photos to share. One photo from each child will be chosen to be professionally displayed in ASA's

booths at the Washington County Fair, Schaghticoke Fair and other gallery-type venues around the Capital District. Don't miss this great opportunity for your children to experience and capture the beauty and diversity of our area's working farms.

This project is made possible with funds from the Decentralized Program, a re-grant program of the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature, administered by LARAC.

## August 2nd **Forever Farmland Supper**

6 to 9 pm Hand Melon Farm, Greenwich Tickets \$75 per person, on sale in July

Join us while we honor those families who have made a gift to our community by conserving their land at this unique harvest dinner on the farm. Featuring a menu of foods sourced from local farms at the height of the growing season, this event promises to be a sumptuous celebration of the bounty our farmers provide. The Forever Farmland Supper will be catered by Chef's Consortium, a group of dynamic chefs dedicated to sharing the joys of local foods. The evening will also feature a live auction for some exciting one-of-a-kind experiences.



## August, September ප October

### Join ASA's Glean Team!

Help supply our local food pantries with fresh, local food.



In collaboration with Comfort Food Community in Greenwich and the Capital Root's Squash Hunger program in Troy, ASA's Glean Team Volunteers help "glean" at local farms. Gleaning is the act of harvesting produce from fields and gardens after the main harvest is over. Often, farmers have difficulty finding secondary markets for their "leftover" crops. Gleaning allows willing farmers to direct this fresh surplus produce to community organizations that redistribute it to people who need it most. The crops gleaned by ASA's Glean Team are made available to Comfort Food Community and Capital Roots. Last year, the Glean Team helped harvest over 20,000 pounds of fruits and veggies from local farms. Help ASA make a difference and join our Glean Team!

New for 2018!—Now accepting venison donations! If you have nuisance tags and/or extra venison and are interested in learning more about donating it to people in need, please contact Kara at 518-692-7285 or kara@agstewardship.org.

## Sponsorship Opportunities for Your Business

grants make these incredible

## October 6th through 8th

## 17th Annual **Landscapes for Landsake Art Sale & Exhibition**

Opening reception: October 6, noon to 5 pm

Gallery hours: October 7 & 8, noon to 4 pm

ASA's Landscapes for Landsake Art Sale & Exhibition is the premier event of the Fall season and our biggest fundraiser of the year. The show features artwork from more than 45 local artists inspired by the beauty of our region's working landscapes. Fifty percent of the proceeds benefit ASA's Farmland Conservation Program.



"TEAMWORK..." CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

construction of a new barn. The expense would be Rody and Jane's alone, but with clearly outlined incentives for continued commitment from Mark and Randy. "We put all the financial equity in," Rody says. "They put in sweat equity, and became vested over ten years before they got anything out of it. The ten year idea was so that the barn and cattle would already be paid for. If they'd decided to leave two or three years into it, there would have been more cattle than we wanted to handle at our age."The business has flourished ever since.

Recent improvements include

"We are working on planning for the future and trying to build a business that will attract the next generation."

—Randy Walker

the construction of a new milking parlor to replace the one Rody and his father built in 1966. For the team at Landview, conserving the land was a big decision. The economic climate for dairy is tough. Milk prices have plunged. Conserving the land will not only ensure the land is protected for generations to come, but it will also ease the financial stress during these uncertain times. "We are working on planning for the future and trying to build a business that will attract the next generation. Thanks to ASA, we have peace of mind that the farm will be doing just that," Randy says.

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

"GROWING YOUNG FARMERS..." CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

to conserve the farms is coming from New York State through the Hudson Valley Agricultural Enhancement Program. The remaining funding is being donated by the Tilley family.

Tilldale Farm lies close to the junction of Routes 22 and Route 7 in Hoosick Falls. While it is very beautiful, the proximity to these roads also makes the farm very attractive to developers. It would not be hard to imagine a line of big box stores popping up on what are now the Tilley's flat, fertile fields along the Hoosic River. In fact, over the years several developers have suggested just that. But Dan and Joanne couldn't stand the thought of their land being covered with parking lots and stores after their family invested 75 years of "blood, sweat and tears" into making that good ground grow good food.

Ironically, now that many big box stores have fallen on hard times due to an increase in online shopping, there might have been a string of empty, decaying stores strung along that river bank had the Tilleys sold their land for development when they were first approached 20 years ago.

Tilldale Farm is part of ASA's Hoosic River Watershed Priority Area where—because of your support—ASA has already conserved over 5,000 acres. It seems a pretty sure bet that future generations will thank the Tilleys and others who conserved their farms nearby for saving good river valley soil and keeping food, families and communities growing along the Hoosic River.

Funding for this project was provided by New York State through the Hudson Valley Agricultural Enhancement Program administered by the Department of Agriculture and Markets.

PG8 Forever Farmland Spring 2018

## You are a Part of History!

The impact highlighted in this newsletter is all because of you! We are grateful to each of the following supporters for their generous contributions from November 1, 2017 to March 31, 2018. Thank you for investing in the future of food and farming in our region.

#### **GRANTS**

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Gordon Foundation

Nordlys Foundation, Inc. New York State Conservation Partnership Program<sup>3</sup> New York State Department of Agriculture & Markets The Peter & Carmen Lucia Buck Foundation The Review Foundation Richard Hogan & Carron Sherry Foundation Inc. Robert H. Wentorf Foundation, Inc.

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