

ASA Projects in Jackson and Schaghticoke Receive Federal Matching Funds for PDR

On July 21, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Services informed ASA that the projects ASA submitted for federal farmland protection grants were awarded a total of \$340,229 in matching funds. This money, together with a state award, will be used to purchase the development rights and acquire easements on nearly 900 acres of prime farmland in Washington and northern Rensselaer counties.

“This is great news!” said Teri Ptacek, executive director, “We now have full funding and can move ahead on the 654-acre Hi-Brow and Richland Farms project along the Battenkill in Washington County and the 328-acre Weir-Arnold project near the Hoosic River in Schaghticoke.”

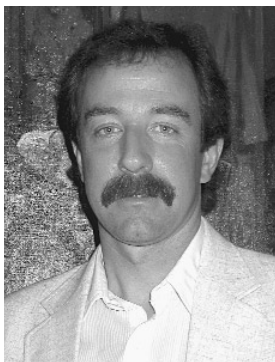
In January of this year ASA secured \$1.16 million in state funding for the two projects, which covers 75 percent of project costs. In May, with the help of NYS Agriculture and Markets, we applied for federal matching funds to make up the shortfall. ASA is partnering on these projects

with The Conservation Fund, a national nonprofit conservation organization.

The Hi-Brow and Richland Farms project in Jackson was awarded \$220,840 in federal farmland protection funds. The project consists of 2 farms with 5 parcels in Jackson, 1 in Greenwich and 2 in Salem. Hi-Brow Farms is owned and operated by Jay and Kim Skellie and Thomas Jilek. The Conservation Fund has purchased the 254-acre Richland Farms. Once protected, the farm will be resold to Hi-Brow Farms for continued use as a farm operation.

The Weir-Arnold project in Schaghticoke was awarded \$119,388 in federal funds. The project consists of the Robert Weir Dairy Farm on 278 acres and an adjacent 50-acre parcel of prime farmland which has been purchased by The Conservation Fund for resale to the Weirs after it has been protected.

Meet Sean Quinn, New ASA Board Member



currently he has about 950 heifers year round.

In 2000, Kernel Acres had the opportunity to purchase a neighboring farm on which the owner had sold the development rights through the Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program. Sean noted that it worked out well for all involved. “The farmer was able to retire from farming, sell his land at an affordable price to us, and still receive the

Sean Quinn is part of a farm operation, Kernel Acres, which owns 650 tillable acres in Easton and rents the remaining 1600+ acres within a 15 mile radius from their main facility. Kernel Acres presently can store about 146,000 bushels of grain, consisting mostly of corn, alfalfa and rye. In 1994 they started the custom raising of heifers and

benefit from the full value of the land.” Furthermore, Sean added, “if it wasn’t for the PDR, it is likely that the land would have been sold to the highest bidder and have been turned into a housing development instead of remaining agricultural.”

Sean feels that protecting farmland is critical and that although farming is the root of our society, it struggles to survive. According to Sean, “we must protect the lands we work, and also the agricultural infrastructure that supports us.” He believes that fair prices for farmer’s products are central to the whole system so that farmers can afford the services they need. “Keeping land prices in an affordable range for those of us that are continuing to farm helps to keep the costs and income closer to a balance. That’s why support of organizations like ASA and programs like PDR are instrumental in the sustenance of the entire agricultural infrastructure.”

“We believe having local farms and farmland is vital to our future.”

The Agricultural Stewardship Association is a non-profit land trust founded in 1990 by local farmers, agribusiness representatives, and conservationists to protect land for agricultural use in the Washington County, New York region. We accomplish this mission through our land conservation and stewardship programs and public education efforts. To date, we have protected over 3,700 acres of farmland in the county.

ASA receives funding from its members, The Conservation Fund, the New York Conservation Partnership Program and private foundations. The New York Conservation Partnership Program is administered by the Land Trust Alliance Northeast Program with support from the State of New York.

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message from the President



This year has been busy and productive for ASA. We are progressing on our large PDR projects along the Battenkill and Hoosic Rivers and we will apply for more projects for next year. We have several donated easements to complete before the end of the year.

Our office continues to expand with staff and equipment. We are training volunteers and we have a summer intern to help us get all the work done.

Fundraising is still a major part of our efforts throughout the year and we have been successful with several grants including the second year of our 3-year matching grant from The Conservation Fund. We received the full match of \$65,000 again for the second year.

The board meets at least monthly and we work very well together. I am very pleased with the board's efforts as well as the smaller committees that work on specific areas within ASA. Teri and the rest of the staff have really stepped up the pace of work and our office is always buzzing with activity.

Part of my job as president is to dream and create a vision for ASA. I am very proud of the entire organization, especially Teri who has exceeded even my very high expectations (they start out dreams, but for me they become expectations pretty quickly).

I would also like to thank all of our members and supporters who make it possible for ASA to do this important work. Please continue to support ASA.

message from the Director



Getting to know the families who work the land is one of the most rewarding aspects of the work I do here at ASA. During the past 3 months, we've been out and about more than usual visiting farmland owners about our programs. We found great interest in our programs and met many incredible people. This has included farmers who have applied for PDR funds as well as those who are willing to donate easements to conserve their land.

Right now we're working on 10 projects that will protect an additional 2200 acres of farmland. We hope to close on two projects before the end of the summer, the 108-acre White Oak Farm and the 124-acre Cornell Farm owned by Constance Kheel along Route 103 in Pittstown. Kheel is placing easements on these two farms which have restored historic farmsteads and cropland that's leased to a local farmer.

Most farmers can't afford to donate easements on their land, which represents a substantial portion of their equity. That's why the state and federal governments have set up PDR funding to pay farmers for the equity they are giving up when they choose to conserve their farms. But the level of available funding isn't enough to meet the demand. That's where you, the community, come in. With your support, ASA can establish local funds to purchase the development rights on key farms. Here's an opportunity to make a difference—to keep farmland available for future generations, to keep farming a part of our community. I ask each and every one of you who donates to charities to consider supporting ASA's programs here in Washington County first, and make a difference locally.

ASA CORDIALLY INVITES YOU TO ATTEND

landscapes *for* landsake

A Wine & Cheese Art Reception and Sale Featuring:

Bob Nunnely • Stephen Lack • Patricia Hansen
Sean O'Connell • Virginia McNiece • Arlene Targan
Teddi Garrett • Jean Clarke • Christopher Pierce
Joanne Murphy • George Wilson • Gerald Coble



TO BE HELD AT

Maple Ridge

172 St. Rte. 372 in COILA, just outside CAMBRIDGE, NY

October 9, 4-7pm

For further information please contact 518-692-7285

40% of profits from art sales go to ASA

Business Sponsors of Landscapes for Landsake 2004

Silver Patrons (Sponsorship of \$250)

Dickinson & Company, CPAs, Greenwich
Dr. Suzanne Palmieri, Family Practice, Affiliated with Saratoga Hospital, Greenwich
Helping Hands Physical Therapy, LLC, Greenwich • Salem Farm Supply, Salem
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Premier Dairy LLC, Argyle • Washington County Co-Operative Insurance Company, Greenwich
Whitman's Feed Store, North Bennington, VT

Friend (Sponsorship of \$50)

Cambridge Valley Livestock Market, Inc., Cambridge • Cambridge Valley Veterinary Hospital, Cambridge

thank you sponsors!

Thanks to Bill Frazier, Former ASA Board Member

In 1997 ASA had a vacancy on its Board and former board member Jim Perry thought Bill Frazier was just the right person to fill it. "Bill is a conservation-minded individual who believes in farmland protection. I thought that he would be great for ASA," remarked Jim. At that time Bill was already serving on the White Creek Planning Board, but he agreed to accept this new challenge.

Bill leased his aunt and uncle's farm on Route 22 in White Creek. When the opportunity arose, he also bought a farm adjacent to it, which expanded his dairy farming operations. At the present time Bill raises heifers on his farm and subleases his aunt and uncle's farm to a dairy farmer for crop production. Bill continues his advocacy for farming by serving on the Washington County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board.

While reflecting on Bill's years of service to ASA, Jim commented, "Bill really thought through the decisions that had to be made and I respected his opinion."

New Summer Intern On Board

ASA has been fortunate to have Washington County resident Kathryn Shay as an intern this summer. A resident of Easton, Kathryn is an environmental studies major at Skidmore College in Saratoga. This independent study program gives Kathryn the opportunity to learn about farmland conservation and assist the ASA staff with various projects. She is a welcome addition to our team.



Kathryn Shay

Thank You Columbia Land Conservancy

Columbia Land Conservancy has been "mentoring" and assisting ASA on everything from training new monitoring volunteers to organizational development to giving helpful advice whenever asked. They've been there for us and we appreciate it. We want to thank the CLC Board and staff for their extensive help, especially their executive director, Judy Anderson.

www.agstewardship.org

ASA has been working with web designer Jim Schantz of Saratoga to design our new web site. You can visit us at www.agstewardship.org. Although still in the final stages of construction, this site offers you an opportunity to learn more about ASA and our conservation efforts. ASA wants to thank Jim for all of his work in creating this important outreach tool for us. Please visit us on the web!

ASA's 2004 Officers



l-r : Nancy Brown, secretary; David Horn, president; Seth Jacobs, vice president; Glenwood Rowse, treasurer

On April 23, following the award dinner for George Houser, ASA conducted its annual meeting for 2004. Glenwood Rowse of Cambridge was elected as the new ASA treasurer, replacing Al Klein of Salem. We want to thank Al for serving as ASA's financial management officer this past year.

membership



We would like to thank the following for supporting our organization through membership from January 1, 2004 to July 28, 2004

Norman W. Allen
Mr. & Mrs. David Ashton
Mark & Deborah Anderson
Ronald & Felicitas Anderson
Andrew Austin
Andy Beers & Beth Meer
Jay & Heather Bellanca
Paul Borghard & Karen Weinberg
Terry & Terese Brennan
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Gerard & Anna Falotico
Flying Pigs Farm, LLC
Wayne & Elizabeth Foote
George E. Foster
FRA-MER-FARMS
William Frazier
Aaron Gabriel
Jeff & Linda Gaess
Liz Gordon &
Thomas Christenfeld
Barbara Glaser
Edmund & Ellen Green
George & Carol Green
James Q. Green
Donald & Carolyn Henry
Dr. & Mrs. Frederic P. Herter
Richard Hogan & Carron Sherry

Jon Katz & Paula Span
Alfred & Debora Klein
Noel & Judy Hanf
Sophia Healy
Hi Brow Farms, LLC, Jay Skellie
Margaret & David D. Horn, DVM
George & Earline Houser
Kenyon Hill Farm
Constance Kheel
Eric Klein
Loren & Marilyn LeBarron,
Valley View Farm
Josh Levy & Julie Simms
Kim & Catherine Littell
Alden & Camille Ludlow
Louis Marchaland
John Mashkak, Purple Dell Farm
Bruce McAllister
John & Laura McDermott
Assemblyman Roy McDonald
McIntosh Woodworks
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Elizabeth Murray
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Annette Nielson &
Dr. Dan Garfinkel
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Dennis & Patricia Phillips
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Barney Rubenstein, M.D.
& Sandra Scroggins
Dr. George Ruta &
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Allen & Barbara Schwartz
Lawrence J. Sconzon Jr. &
Laurie Simon
Tracy & Fred Seeba
Lionel R. Sharp
Ray & Mary Ann Short
Don & Donna Skellie
Jeff & Sally Small
Janet & Clifford Stewart,
Autumn View Acres
Shelly Stiles
Daniel, Deko & Grace Stone
Jim & Amy Stott
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Beth Trabka
John Tudor
Up and Over Farm
Walker's Farm, Home & Tack
B. Martin & Joan C. Warner
Anna & Tim Whalen
Mary Ellen Williams
Windy Hill Sawmill
Mrs. Mary Withington
Woody Hill Farm, Inc.
Ben Zipperer
Anonymous - 5

Come See ASA at Washington County Fair

Stop by to see us August 23rd – 29th in the County Bounty building. Come have your picture taken in one of our silhouette cutouts and pick up a packet of vegetable seeds. We will have information about our organization and services, as well as a raised sandbox with toy tractors for children to play with. We look forward to seeing you there!

Thank You

- To our easement monitors: **Nancy Brown, Clem & Mary Dee Crowe, Jim Green, Seth Jacobs, Al Klein, Rob & Bliss McIntosh, Annie Miller** and son **Daniel, Glen Rowse, Greg Smith** and **Ray Wells**
- **Renee Bouplon** for conducting our monitoring training workshop
- **Flo Lucky** for our new logo design
- **Jim Schantz** for designing our web page
- **Balet Flowers & Design** for the beautiful flowers put on every table at the George Houser award banquet
- **Meghan Galbraith** and **Kerrie Culhane** for assisting with the design and printing of our outreach materials
- **Thomas Christenfeld** for writing our annual appeal letter
- **Dillon Horn, Annelise Kelly, Carrie Smith, Ellie Fitzgerald** and **Dana Woodruff** for assisting with the annual appeal mailout
- **Kathryn Shay** and **Annie Miller** for research
- **Dillon Horn** for office assistance
- **Deb Scambelluri** for fundraising advice

Dinner Honoring George Houser a Huge Success



l-r : David Horn; George Houser, Jr.; Ralph Grossi; George Houser, III

Nearly 100 people filled the banquet room at the Cambridge Hotel on April 23rd to pay tribute to George Houser of Brotherhood Farms, a sixth-generation dairy farmer in Easton.

As friends, family and guests dined on deliciously prepared selections such as locally raised buffalo and locally grown salad greens, they conversed about the accomplishments made in conserving our area's farms and the positive role that George has played in obtaining those goals. The room was alive with excitement and a flow of positive energy as people reflected on the past and planned for the future.

Attendees listened intently as speakers like Ralph Grossi, president of American Farmland Trust, thanked George for his dedication and active participation in conserving farmland. ASA president Dave Horn credited George Houser with "single-handedly launching the farmland conservation movement in Washington County. His dedication to agriculture and his respect for history have driven him and others to realize his dream of ASA." There was a standing ovation as Ralph Grossi and Dave Horn presented George with a Farm Legacy Award for his life-long commitment to farmland conservation.

George has demonstrated his commitment to protecting farmland by acting on his beliefs. He and his wife Earline will have donated easements on nearly 700 acres of their own farm. George co-founded ASA in 1990.

"George – We all owe you a huge debt for showing us that persistence, dedication, and hard work pays off eventually with the results. Thanks for inspiring us by your example."

— *Jerry Cosgrove,*
Northeast AFT

Help Spread the Word About ASA

If you know of a new resident to our area or have friends who are interested in protecting farmland, please share their name and address with us so that we may contact them. We will be happy to send them one of our newsletters and information about our organization. The more people who know about ASA and our conservation efforts, the more farms and beautiful vistas we can protect.

Your Membership Counts

If you haven't already sent in your membership donation, please consider doing it today! We need your support. In 2002, ASA was the recipient of a multi-year matching grant from The Conservation Fund that would match every dollar ASA raises up to \$65,000 per year. Your basic membership gift of \$30 means \$60 to ASA. The gift you give today will go twice as far to support ASA's mission of conserving farmland. Every dollar you give counts double!

I want to join ASA
in supporting land conservation
and stewardship in the
Washington County region.

Name _____

(Please print your name as you would like it to appear in our annual report.

Check here for "anonymous.")

Mailing address _____

City/Town _____

State _____ Zip _____

Friend \$30

Enclosed is an additional donation of

Supporting \$50

\$ _____

Sustaining \$100

for ASA's easement stewardship program.

ASA Patron \$500

I would like to volunteer. Please contact me at the following e-mail address or telephone number: _____



Thank you!

Volunteers Train to Be ASA Easement Stewards



Volunteers Monitor Farm in Easton

Approximately 3,700 acres have been permanently protected through ASA's agricultural easement programs. ASA staff and volunteer monitors visit the easement properties annually to ensure that the lands remain protected.

This past spring, ASA conducted a two-part training session to train new easement monitors and to refresh the skills of our veteran monitors who have had several seasons in the field. On March 27th volunteers attended a workshop led by Renee Bouplon, Senior Project Manager of the Columbia Land Conservancy, to learn about why there is a need for monitoring, how to prepare for a site visit, how to build relationships and how to monitor the property.

On April 24th, Kerri Culhane, ASA project consultant, led a hands-on training session at a farm in Easton. By participating in this actual monitoring visit, volunteers were able to ask questions and review what they had learned in the workshop. Monitors had a chance to practice their map reading skills while they hiked the boundaries of the property with the property owner. It was a beautiful sunny day and the views from the farm were spectacular.

Monitoring easements is essential to ASA's success. As we continue to succeed in conserving and protecting hundreds and [we hope] thousands of additional acres per year, our reliance on volunteer monitors also grows. We monitor our easement properties annually, usually in the spring or fall. If you are interested in learning more about easement practices and how you can join our team of volunteers, please contact our office.

ASA's LANDSCAPES for LANDSAKE Art Event— OCTOBER 9, 4-7 pm

Since its inauguration in 2002, people from all over the region look forward to ASA's annual Landscapes for Landsake art sale benefiting ASA. This year mark your calendars for October 9th from 4:00 – 7:00 pm at Maple Ridge, 172 Route 372, in Coila, just outside of Cambridge. Larry Sconzo's barn has proven to be a perfect location for showing the original paintings of the area's best landscape artists.

While you relax and enjoy our wine and cheese reception, you can view the works of prominent artists Bob Nunnely, Stephen Lack, Patricia Hansen, Sean O'Connell, Virginia McNiece, Arlene Targan, Teddi Garrett, Jean Clarke, Christopher Pierce, Joanne Murphy, George Wilson, and Gerald Coble.

In support of our land conservation efforts, forty percent of the proceeds from all of the art sales benefit ASA. This event is open to the public and we hope that you join us for this memorable evening.

This year ASA is proud to announce that Landscapes for Landsake is sponsored by many local businesses that want to show their support for our local farmers and the farming community. See inside for more.



Drawing by Bob Nunnely



Agricultural Stewardship Association
28R Main St.
Greenwich, NY 12834



View of Cornell Farm, one of two farms in West Hoosick Hills that will soon be protected.