

# Forever Farmland



*Fall 2019*

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Cambridge  
Community Forest





# Make it Work

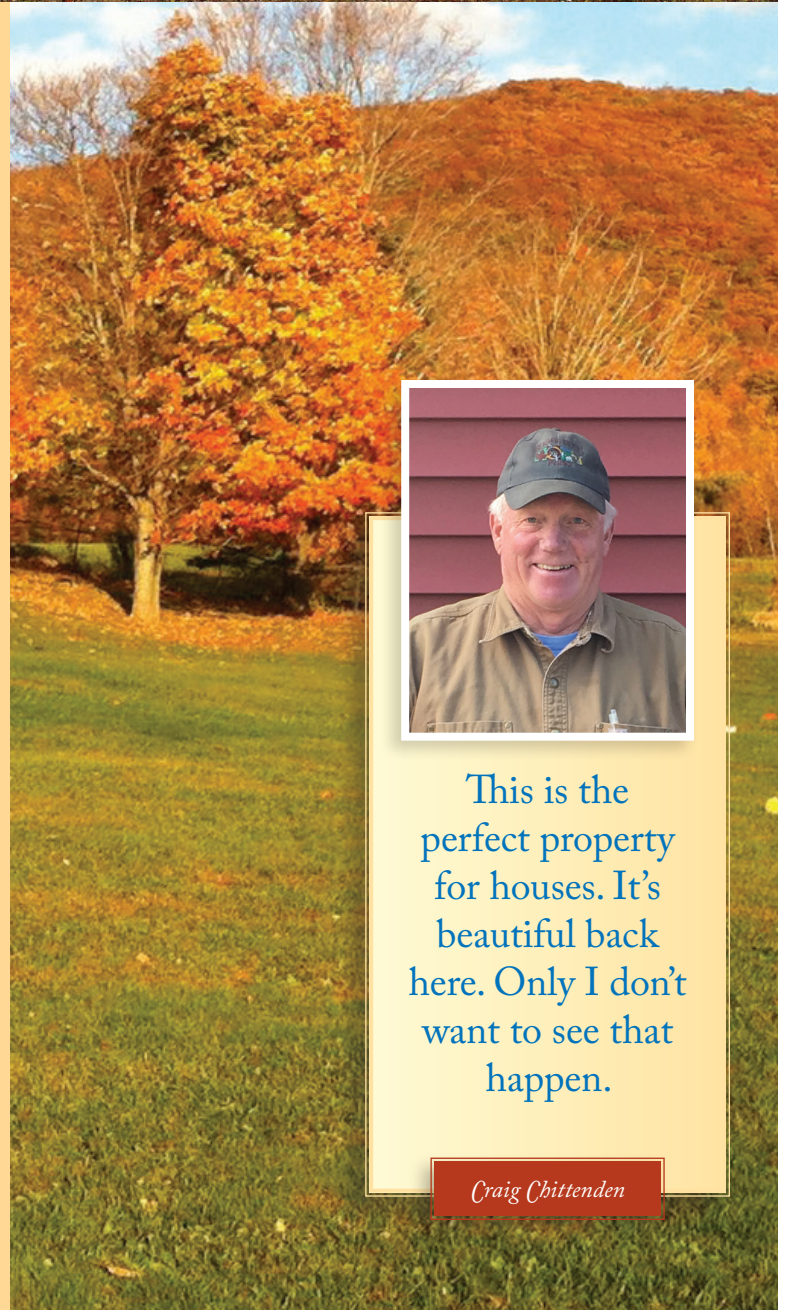
Plans May Change, But Conservation Easements are Forever

Long before the phrase “make it work” was about fashion, farmers were “making it work” by being adaptable and resilient. The Greene family has owned Mapledale Farm since 1853 and in those 166 years they’ve had to adapt to a lot. When William and Susannah Greene bought Mapledale farm in 1853, they began by raising cattle, sheep, poultry, swine and producing maple syrup. In the late 1800s, the Greene’s moved beyond subsistence farming and started shipping their fresh milk by railroad. Their oxen were soon to be downsized.

Flash forward to 2010 and the 6th generation of Greenes were milking about 400 Holstein cows and diversified into cheesemaking. They worked with ASA to conserve 50 acres along State Route 22. The farm kept expanding to keep up with a growing family and to improve profit margins. After all, a family business is still a business and one that now had to support multiple generations of several families.

In 2016, the Greenes approached ASA again. This time they wanted to protect another 87 acres of their own land and an additional 263 acres owned by Craig Chittenden that the Greenes were renting. Craig retired from farming in 2012 and since then has focused on his dog agility business. The Greenes planned to purchase the rental land from Craig after it was conserved.

At the time, Craig was tapping about 300 maple trees at Sugar Bush Farm in Stephentown and leasing



This is the perfect property for houses. It’s beautiful back here. Only I don’t want to see that happen.

*Craig Chittenden*



# A Cause Near & Dear:

## Donating a Conservation Easement

Michael Fried and Ruth Leys have their primary residence in Baltimore, Maryland where both work at John Hopkins University. But summers are reserved for time on their 62-acre Pittstown property walking in the woods, spotting wildlife, and enjoying the tranquility of the land. They've owned and reveled in the property for more than 30 years since an artist friend introduced them to the area.

When Michael and Ruth decided that they needed someone to care for the land while they were gone, a local farmer was the logical choice. Matt Cannon and Andy Brizzell of Hickory Hill Dairy rent the majority of the property to grow feed for their dairy herd. The Pittstown property is where Michael and Ruth reflect and rejuvenate. Now that they have donated the development rights on the land, they have peace of mind that the beautiful land they cherish will remain undeveloped forever.

Michael, our daughter, Anna and I are committed to conserving our land so that its beauty is preserved and the fields can continue to be farmed.

*—Ruth Leys*



*Michael Fried & Ruth Leys*

Funding for the transaction and stewardship costs provided by the landowners and ASA's Forever Farmland Fund.



## Connecting New & Beginning Farmers to the Area

ASA's land access work continues with our participation in the Hudson Valley Farmlink Network and the recently established state-wide Farmland for the Next Generation program. Some of our recent activities include a farm tour for farmers looking for land to lease or buy and assisting several landowners with posting their farm profiles on the farm-matching websites.

One of the tour participants expressed the following: "I'm a new farmer looking for land in the upper Hudson Valley. My vision is to steward land and create a farm operation which feeds people while helping to sustain the natural world around us. This vision includes a whole diet integrated farm, with intensive vegetable production, pastured poultry and small animals, as well as perennials. Farmers are the future, and farming needs to be able to address and combat climate change. My farm will always be open to sharing lessons and helping to educate, eventually with an on-farm program."

Another participant stated: "I have been farming since the age of six. When I came to the U.S. I wanted to create a farm that would benefit my community, by providing fresh fruits, vegetables and livestock. My primary goal is to be a livestock farmer."

Both farm seekers have completed course work and practical training and are actively looking for a long-term lease or land to purchase. We are excited to play a role in attracting some of the next generation



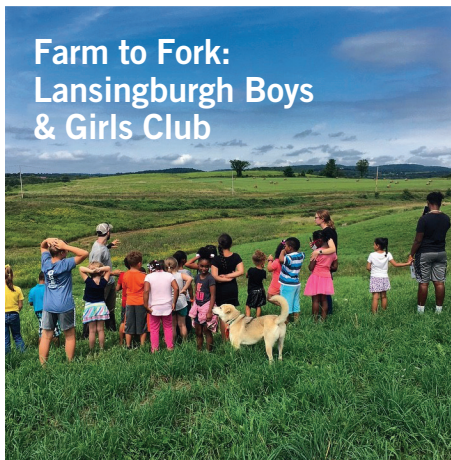
# Making a Connection with the Land

## Fostering Farms & Farmers

ASA has hosted or led over 25 workshops this year allowing the community to truly make a connection with the land.

Thank you to  
the businesses  
who support  
our programs.

Archdale Agricultural Products, Associated Grocers of New England, Battenkill Veterinary, Blue Flame Gas Co., Breanna Lundy—Financial Advisor, Brown's Brewing Company, Caffry & Flowe—Attorneys at Law, Cambridge Valley Machining, Capital Tractor, CaroVail, Currin Compliance Services, Farm Credit East ACA, Fingerpaint, The Fort Miller Group, Golde Engineering, Granville Veterinary Service—Large Animal, Brian Holbritter Land Surveying, King Wealth Management Group, Lakeside General Store—Cossayuna, Levey Farm Service, Maple Abstract & Realty Corporation, Owl Pen Books, PKHP CPAs, Perry's Orchard, Preble Realty, Price Chopper's Golub Foundation, Salem Farm Supply, Schutze Family Dentistry, Spiral Design Studio, Stewart's Shops, Victory View Vineyard, Washington County Farm Bureau, Whipple City Studio & Farmstead Originals, Wiley Bros.



Farm to Fork:  
Lansingburgh Boys  
& Girls Club

ASA was pleased to offer "Farm-to-Fork" to the Lansingburgh Boys and Girls Club. The children visited four farms and learned about types of farming operations, the importance of soil health and the seasonal cycles of farming. They ended with a "harvest" meal using ingredients from each of the farms, and a trip to the Troy Waterfront Farmers Market. The Farm-to-Fork Summer Series was made possible in part by a grant from The Review Foundation. Thank you, Wagner Farms, Hand Melon Farm, Hickory Hill Dairy and Laughing Earth, for opening your doors to the program!



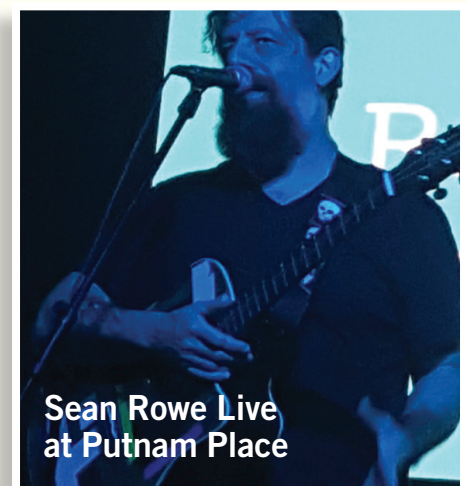
Farm Photography  
for Kids



Game of Logging



Forever Farmland Supper



Sean Rowe Live  
at Putnam Place





**Klezmer for Konservation**



**Sunrise Birding Walk**

## Upcoming Events

### Hunters Helping the Hungry

#### November & December

Help provide over 1,500 meals. Hunters harvest deer from an overabundant population. Area meat processors produce high protein venison burger. The meat is distributed to local food banks. ASA reimburses the area meat processors for producing the ground venison. For more information, contact Kara Scieszka at [kara@agstewardship.org](mailto:kara@agstewardship.org).

Made possible by a grant from The McCarthy Charities, Inc., Upper Hudson Quality Deer Management and individual donors.

### Food System Film Series

#### Wednesdays in February 6–8 pm

Join ASA and The Greenwich Free Library for a film screening and discussion series this winter for a closer look at your food system.

## Bequest Challenge: Help Raise \$15,000 for ASA

Thanks to a generous anonymous donor, ASA has been offered an amazing fundraising opportunity. When you commit to including ASA in your will, trust, or estate plans—for any amount or any percentage of your estate—we receive \$500 immediately—up to a total of \$15,000.

If you've already included ASA in your estate plans, that counts, too. All bequest commitments, old and new, will be matched by an immediate \$500 gift. We can use that money today to directly support our ongoing farmland protection efforts.

To participate, fill out a Bequest Challenge Commitment form on our website, or contact Donna Dodd-Thomas, Development Manager.

✉ [donna@agstewardship.org](mailto:donna@agstewardship.org)

☎ 518-692-7285

[agstewardship.org/xxxxxx](http://agstewardship.org/xxxxxx)



# A Focus on Climate Smart Solutions

There is increased pressure and interest in society today to determine the carbon footprint of our actions and examine new approaches to reduce it. Our farmers are among the first to see and feel the impact of climate change on the land. Farmers—both big or small, organic or not—can take care of the planet, regardless of how much land they farm and how they are labeled.

This spring, ASA embarked on a multi-year project to understand and articulate the climate resiliency benefits farming and conservation easements provide. One of the most exciting things we have learned is that farmland

offers immediate, low-cost and proven ways to address climate change.

As a steward of conserved land in perpetuity, ASA is invested in ensuring that conserved land is sustainable for the future. We are committed to providing learning opportunities for both farmers and community members to improve soil health and invest in renewables. Our goal is to integrate climate adaptation and mitigation into land conservation and to spread the word about the solutions farmers are putting into practice to sequester carbon.

ASA offered the following programs focusing on climate smart solutions:



## **Agrivoltaics: Could Solar Panels on Farms be a Win-Win?**

Agrivoltaic solar arrays are raised far enough off the ground and spaced in such a way that crops can still grow and animals can graze around and beneath the panels. The goal is to help farmers diversify their income through renewable energy generation, while keeping land in agricultural use and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Jake Marley & Michael Lehan from Hyperion Systems, LLC, a solar company working with The University of Massachusetts Crop Research and Education Center, spoke about the pros and cons of “dual-use” solar.



## **What is a Soil Sponge Anyway? Regenerating Soil Health for Resilience**

In April, guest speaker Didi Pershouse discussed strategies to build the health of agricultural soils by fostering a “soil sponge”, capable of restoring the natural carbon and water cycles that determine our climate. By re-creating landscapes that soak up rain, retain nutrients and filter water, farmers can build climate resilience in the face of extreme weather events. These practices can also improve the bottom line.



## **New York Soil Health Trailer Visits Hoosick**

Dany and Joanne Tilley of Tilldale Farm in Hoosick hosted Cornell Cooperative Extension Specialist Fay Benson for a soil health discussion in August. Mr. Benson brought the New York Soil Health Trailer to demonstrate how the soil health of pasture and cropland affects water infiltration and run-off. The evening included demonstrations of techniques to measure compaction and other soil health indicators, and a discussion of practices which help improve our agricultural soils.



## **Restoration Agriculture: Using perennial crops to restore the health and viability of farm enterprises.**

ASA was pleased to host a talk by Mark Shepard, Founder and President of Restoration Agriculture Development and CEO of Forest Agriculture Enterprises. Mark teaches agroforestry and permaculture design and techniques around the world and is the author of Restoration Agriculture, Real World Permaculture for Farmers.

Mark spoke to a group of 80 on the benefits of incorporating perennial crops in farm enterprises.



# Cambridge Community Forest

Community Conservation Project: Ensuring Access to Nature for Everyone

They say we ought to slow down from time to time, stop and smell the roses, bathe in the forest. Many of us are fortunate to have a special place to go when we need to escape. For others, finding that sense of place can be more challenging. Many communities, even rural ones, often lack land that is open to the public and easily accessible within a short walk or drive.

The Village of Cambridge and Town of White Creek identified the need to protect natural resources and create more recreational opportunities, when developing their comprehensive plans. However, there was no obvious way to address this need when the plan was developed.

Since then, opportunities for public access to nature worsened. Studies show that kids are spending less time outside than the average prisoner. A study of children 10-16 years old determined they spend, on average, 12.6 minutes per day on vigorous outdoor activity and 10.4 waking hours being relatively motionless.

When 140 acres across from the Cambridge Central School went on the market, community members led by Jared Woodcock approached ASA to advocate for the public use of this land. ASA listened to the voices

and the stories. ASA board and staff discussed and debated this opportunity, looking at it from every angle. While ASA's mission has always included protection of working forests, and the majority of our easements contain at least some woodlands, all of ASA's conserved properties were, until now, privately owned. ASA had never owned a property.

ing to make this all possible. If all goes well, ASA hopes to open the property to the public during the fall of 2020. Going forward, the land will be managed for public recreational use, educational programming and as a demonstration site for sustainable forestry management.

The Cambridge Community Forest is a strong step in the direction

**“Cambridge Community Forest serves as a fantastic resource as an outdoor classroom. This past fall, AP Biology students investigated field sampling techniques in the forest and observed evidence of current and historic human activity.**

*—Stephanie Gifford, Biology Teacher,  
Cambridge Central School*

## Including More People

With grants from the Open Space Institute, The Fields Pond Foundation, the Community Foundation of the Greater Capital Region and leadership gifts from community members, ASA purchased the 140-acre forest now known as the Cambridge Community Forest in June That was Phase 1.

Currently ASA is working on Phase 2, which includes site improvements, trail work, signage and community engagement. And, of course, fundrais-

of building the hearts and minds in today's youth so that they, too, will care about the land and all that inhabits it. Aldo Leopold" stated, "When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect." Community forests become part of the heart and soul of a community, creating a place for all generations to both enjoy and learn. ASA is thrilled to be working with the community to help meet this need.



# Landscapes *for* Landsake

18th Annual Art Sale & Exhibition



Virginia  
McNeice

1936–2019

Honoring the  
memory of a woman  
who exemplified  
the spirit of  
Landscapes  
for Landsake

As an artist, Jini was a master of light, contrast and color relationships. She lived and worked on an old farm in Cambridge where her studio space and gardens almost blended into one. She was inspired by nature both in her art and in her life.

Jini was a woman who championed her peers, supported causes she felt passionate about and always stopped to enjoy the beauty around her. ASA was honored to be able to share her work with the community. Many thanks to the McNeice family for allowing us to spend just a little more time admiring their mother's work.

Maple Ridge Gallery was the perfect setting once again for Landscapes for Landsake. Nestled amidst the fall foliage in Coila, the post-civil war barn opened her towering doors to showcase over 600 pieces of art from 69 local artists. Landscapes has been ASA's Columbus Day Weekend tradition for the past 18 years. We hope you had an opportunity to stop by and indulge in this unique nexus of art, nature and history.

225 pieces were sold, totaling over \$104,000 (50% of which goes to the artists). This was a revenue record for this regionally famous event.

Virginia "Jini" McNeice painted this year's featured piece titled "Jini's Barn". Jini is one of three artists who have participated in the show since the very

beginning. When Jini passed away last winter, the event planning committee felt strongly that this was the perfect tribute to a woman who embodied the warmth, generosity and spirit of ASA's signature event.

We wish to express our deepest gratitude to Larry Sconzo for his gracious hospitality in hosting Landscapes each year. Many thanks to Leah McCloskey for curating an amazing exhibition, Jim Schanz for all of his technical expertise, Milton Ilario for adding his keen eye for beauty, ASA Board Chair Dave Horn for the hours he dedicated to the event's success, Katie Jilek for her leadership role in orchestrating the event, the artists who shared their works and donated half their proceeds to ASA, our generous sponsors and the army of volunteers who helped make it all happen.





Thank you!

**Artists:** Deborah Bayly, Susan Beadle, Gigi Begin, John Begin, Virginia Bryant, Jill Burks, Seth Butler, Marilyn Cavallari, James Coe, Eden Compton, Susan Coon, Joan Duff-Bohrer, Hannie Eisma Varosy, Judith Ellers, Yucel Erdogan, Ann Fitzgibbons, Jerry Freedner, Tracy Helgeson, Ali Herrmann, Margaret Horn, Mary Iselin, Thomas Kerr, Lynne Kerr, Clarence King, Randi Kish, Rose Klebes, Palma Kolansky, Karen Koziol, James Howard Kuntsler, Matthew Lerman, Zack Lobdell, Nina Lockwood, Dona Ann McAdams, Virginia McNeice, Naomi Meyer, Robert Moylan, Lynne Oddo, Clifford Oliver, Harry Orlyk, Leslie Parke, Terry Peca, Leslie Peck, Mark Pohl, Neil Roberts, Tom Ryan, Elisa Sheehan, Fumiko Shido, Laura Shore, Pam Short, Robert Skinner, Trudi Smith, Rebecca A. Sparks, Anne Sutherland, Marguerite Takvorian-Holmes, Scott Taylor, Terry Teitelbaum, Janine Thomas, Shira Toren, Mark Tougias, George Van Hook, Gyula Varosy, Laura Von Rosk, Frank Vurraro, MaryPat Wager, Catherine Wagner Minnery, Takeyce Walter, Susan Whiting, Regina Wickham, George Wilson.

**Cream of the Crop Sponsor:** Salem Farm Supply, Inc.

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**Volunteers:** Debbie Anderson, Tyler Andrews, Todd Batease, John and Gigi Begin, Steve Betts, Jay Bridge, Art Brod, Nancy Brown, Matt Chinian, Becky Christner, Anna Courtney, Ian Creitz, Clem Crowe, Marie Culver, Annie Cummings, Patricia Driscoll, Judy Ellers, Mark Ericksen, Mike Favata, Meegan Finnegan, Carolyn and David Fleming, Betsey Foote, Tracy Frisch, Laura Gosnell, George Green, Lane Green, Greenwich FFA, Hannah Groesbeck, John Hand, Dave and Margaret Horn, Jesse Horn, Beth Horrigan, Milton Ilario, Tanya Jansen, Diane Jilek, Kane Jilek, Kurt Jilek, Heidi Kaufman, Sara Kelly, Diane Kennedy, Gale and Kelvin Keraga, Arthur Kraamwinkel, Amy Larmon, Kristina Lee, Carole Lewis, Tricia Lockwood, Nina Lockwood, Erin Luciani, Deanna Lulla, Elijah Lulla, Steve Lulla, Donna Marns, Jordan Matteson, Amy Maxwell, Anna Maxwell, Madison Morris, Kathy Nichols-Tomkins, Tara Nolan, Anastasia Nute, Randy Odell, Terry Oosterom, Cindy Parillo, Linda Parillo, Dan and Maryanne Patane, Diane Quick, Hannah Rawlings, Phil Rea, Kathy Roome, Tarah Rowse, Sue Sampanthar, Jessica Schaeffer, Jim Schanz, Emily Scieszka, Jack Scieszka, John Scieszka, KC Scott, Lori Simon, Liz Skinner, Andy and Terry Teitelbaum, Donna Tew, Sue Van Hook, Annette Van Rooy, Roma Walsh, Carter White, Lauren Williams, Mary Ellen Williams, Marine Zagoreos, Jessica Ziehm

**Decorations:** The Farm Stand at Tiashoke; Lot 32 Flower Farm, Erin Luciano; and Linda Parillo

**Parking:** A huge thank you to the members of Cambridge Valley Cycling and the students in Greenwich and Salem FFA for helping with parking throughout the weekend.

120 acres of tillable land. "This is the perfect property for houses. Its beautiful back here," Craig said, "Only I don't want to see that happen. I'm in love with this property and have been since we purchased it in 1981."

By 2018, the economic challenges of dairy farming had taken their toll. Paul and John Greene notified Craig that they were no longer interested in purchasing the rental land since they were selling their milking herd. They planned to shift the business to raising heifers for other farms and no longer needed Craig's support land. Craig's first thought was, "Well, this puts a monkey wrench into things."

After a phone call to Chris Krahling at ASA revealed that the entire project would fall through if the Greens pulled out, John Greene's first thought was, "well, that puts a fly in the ointment." At that point, it looked like neither family would be able to protect their land. "We each had our reasons for wanting to do this, and when you get down to it, none of those reasons had changed," said Craig. So, the Greens and Craig decided to proceed with conserving both properties. The joint project was completed in April of this year.

Conservation easements are forever, and are designed to allow farmers to be resilient. As Mapledale and Sugar Bush Farm continue to change and adapt, the land will be protected for future generations, forever. "Even though we're doing different things, our family's goal has always been to care for this land," said Paul Greene.

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



# 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 April 1, 2019 to October 15, 2019. Thank you for investing in the future of food and farming in our region.

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Thank you, Dan  
Lundquist for hosting  
a porch party this  
summer at your home,  
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\*\*\*\* A complete list of supports will be published at the completion of the campaign



# 22,389

acres of  
farm & forest land  
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Agricultural  
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2531 State Route 40  
Greenwich, NY 12834  
518-692-7285  
asa@agstewardship.org  
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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 landowners with the conservation of 22,389 acres of productive land in Washington and Rensselaer counties.

As a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization, ASA receives funding from individual donors, foundations and government grants. ASA is accredited by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission.



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“It brings tears to my eyes when I think about all of the good work that is happening and how strong this organization has become in just 30 years.”

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