

Agricultural Stewardship Association agstewardship.org

Forever Farmland



Spring 2019

Good Neighbors

Page 3

A Plan to Retire

Page 5

Spring Brings Change

Page 8

Forever Farmland Campaign: 83%

Page 9



The Wagner Family: Virginia, Marlene, Pete, Keith, Louise & Robert with 13-year-old Holstein Eleanor, Chair of the Welcoming Committee

Story on Page 3



Land Protection Team Batting A Thousand

8 for 8 with New York State Conservation Grants

In late August 2018, ASA staff submitted eight applications to the state's Farmland Protection Implementation Grant program to buy the development rights on eight local farms. Just days before the end of 2018, Governor Cuomo announced \$35 million had been awarded to 40 farms across 19 counties to protect 13,000 acres of agricultural land in the state.

Eight of those grants (totaling 2,811 of those acres and \$4.5 million of those dollars) were awarded to ASA to keep these eight farms forever farmland.

Funding for this program is provided through New York State's Environmental Protection Fund ("EPF") which was created by the state legislature in 1993. The EPF is financed primarily through real estate transfer taxes. These funds are kept separate from other state monies and are dedicated to protecting the state's natural resources and habitats—the places that make New York special. ASA is thrilled to receive this funding for the benefit of these eight farm families.

7 for 7 with Dairy Transition Grants!

Recognizing the struggle that dairy farmers are facing with prolonged low milk prices and that New York's dairy farms represent the largest sector of our agricultural industry, \$30 million additional dollars were

made available by New York State for a new "Dairy Transitions" grant program. This funding enables dairy farmers to protect their land and use the money they receive for selling their development rights to diversify operations or to transition operations to the next generation, while ensuring the land remains in agricultural use.

ASA has applied for, and been awarded, seven of these grants so far. These funds will enable ASA to protect another 2,028 acres and provide over \$3.6 million to these farm families to secure their future. There has been an overwhelming interest in this new program from our local farmers.

Accreditation Renewal is a Grand Slam

The Land Trust Accreditation program was created by the Land Trust Alliance to build and recognize strong land trusts, foster public support and help ensure the permanence of land conservation. ASA first became an accredited land trust in 2013 and was awarded a renewal in early 2019.

"Renewing our accreditation is more than compliance and paperwork; it shows ASA's ongoing commitment to the communities we serve that we are here for the long haul," says Renee Bouplon, ASA Associate Director. Accreditation is awarded for a five-year term. Renewal confirms that ASA is following best practices and continues to uphold the highest standards.

Good ~~Fences~~ Farms Make Good Neighbors

Fust a 20-minute drive from downtown Troy, in the suburbs of Poestenkill and Brunswick, is Wagner Farms, a 3rd generation family dairy farm. The farm was purchased in 1953 by Bob and Louise Wagner. Louise is still part of the daily activities, but today, sons Pete and Bobby and grandson Keith manage the day-to-day operations.

Farming in the suburbs isn't easy. "The best use of this land is for agriculture. Our community feels the same way," Pete says. "Our neighbors moved here because it was country living near the city. They love to see the cows out on pasture and appreciate the benefits our land provides." Some of those more obvious benefits include open space, privacy, plentiful parking and peace and quiet that can be hard to find in the rapidly developing Capital District.

Fortunately for the almost one hundred families who live on the same two-mile stretch of road as the Wagner Farm, this family business goes the extra mile to be a good neighbor. The Wagners host community events, tours for school groups, have an active social media presence and spend time cleaning the roads. Recently, they were featured on WMHT's Digital Field Trip series. The welcoming committee is chaired by Eleanor, a retired 13-year-old Holstein, famous to all who stop by. If

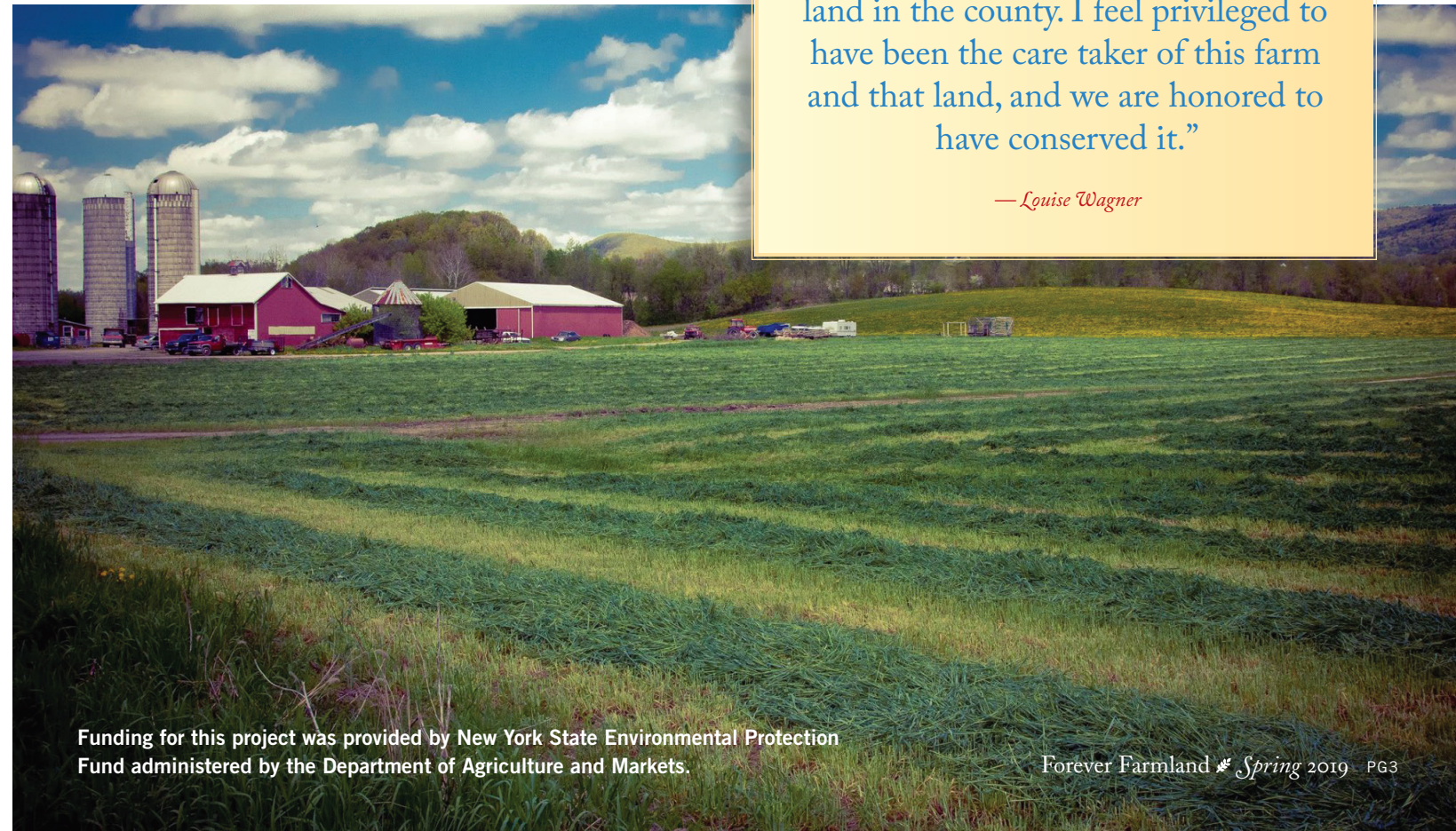
she could speak, she would certainly invite you in for a glass of warm milk and some cookies.

Wagner Farms is the smallest dairy farm in New York State to build and maintain an anaerobic digester, which breaks down manure and utilizes the methane to generate electricity to power the farm and supply the grid. Neighbors appreciate the digester. The digester reduces odors associated with stored manure, and the manure that is spread doesn't emit the odors some find offensive.

"Conserving the farm is our opportunity to give back to the community," Keith says. "Our neighbors are really cooperative with us and we want to continue to be good stewards of the land." It's clear that the Wagners have mastered the art of being good neighbors.

"Each year I feel moved as I stand out back looking at the flats as they are turned over. It would be a shame for them to be developed. It's the best land we own and it's the best land in the county. I feel privileged to have been the care taker of this farm and that land, and we are honored to have conserved it."

— Louise Wagner



Donating a Conservation Easement

15 Years in the Making

The Roome Family

We found a curious thing in the office some time ago—a note, dated 2004. “Saturday night was terrific... I look forward to working with you on a cause that is near and dear to my heart.” It was signed “Kathy Roome”. Paperclipped to it was another note: “Kathy has some land she is interested in protecting.” No other information was included.

Kathy, who grew up in Westchester County when there were still a few farms around, has seen firsthand how development can change a community forever. When they were planning a move north, Kathy said to her husband Hugh, let’s drive as far as it takes to make sure we will always be close to farm country. They bought a house in Washington County in 1986 and moved up full time from New York City in 2000 to raise their children, Ren and Annie.

On December 19, 2018, Kathy and her husband Hugh finally got around to protecting that land by donating an easement on 275 acres in Jackson. Their generous donation covered all the transaction costs and included a donation to the Stewardship Fund. This newly protected land is currently being leased to a local dairy farmer who uses it as support land.



Hugh & Kathy Roome

“In a world that is rapidly losing its rural landscapes, food producing soils, and small-town communities, we wanted to do our bit to preserve this unique and beautiful region between the Hudson River and Taconic Mountains.”

—Katherine Roome



“We can do our part right here, protecting this land. We believe in ASA and that’s why we are such strong supporters of this work.”

—Glen Rowse

Doing our part at Manx Station

The Rowse Family

Glen Rowse bought the 173-acre property on County Route 60 in Cambridge in 1989. “I really like an agricultural environment and you could just see the creeping growth where we lived in

Rensselaer county. This area is so nice. We moved here because this is where we wanted to raise our family,” Glen says.

Today, Glen raises grass-fed beef (with a herd of 45 belted Galloway cattle), Bashkir Curly horses and Manx cats. While the horses and cats are for personal enjoyment, the beef is sold directly to a restaurant in New York City and through the Lewis Waite CSA. The farm also has a small meat goat herd.

The farm name, Manx Station, comes from the cats. They are a big part of the Rowse family’s lives and the farm. Glen not only donated the easement on his farm, but also pledged to cover the stewardship costs. The transaction fees of the project were covered by ASA’s Forever Farmland Fund.

A Farming Legend is Ready to Retire

It can take a while to conserve a farm so that it can never be developed. Typically, a couple of years.

So Dave Schmidt’s farm may take the cake for taking the longest. Dave decided to conserve his farm on the edge of the Tomhannock Reservoir 16 years ago after he watched some of the best farmland around Pittstown and Schaghticoke being bought up by developers and covered with houses.

The problem was, that while Dave’s land was good, it was the bigger dairy farms that were getting state funding to be conserved in 2003. Dave worked with various conservation groups for years before the scarcity of drinking water began making headlines. That’s when people began paying more attention to their reservoirs, and just as important, the land surrounding their reservoirs. So, Dave asked ASA to help him conserve his farm and finally the stars aligned. Last year, ASA received a grant to purchase Dave’s development rights. Dave will use the money he received to fund a well-deserved retirement.

You can see Dave’s farm, which has been in agriculture for hundreds of years, if you look south as you drive along the northern edge of the Reservoir. Dave’s parents bought the farm in 1931 after Dave’s father lost his job at a Troy steel mill. Dave’s parents never milked more than 40 cows and made a living doing it until the dairy herd was sold in 1973 and replaced by beef cows. Today, about 55 Black Angus grass fed cows are raised each year on the 217-acre farm.

Dave’s two brothers moved away but Dave stayed on the farm to work with his father, a progressive and innovative farmer. Dave never married. (“I made other mistakes, but not that one,” according to Dave.)

When Dave was a kid, there were eight dairy farms on Valley Falls Road alone, back when farmers could make a living milking just half a dozen cows. The farmers put out a half can of milk by the road to be picked up each morning, and another half can at night. But after World War II, when the milk subsidies went away, those small farms disappeared under rows of houses.



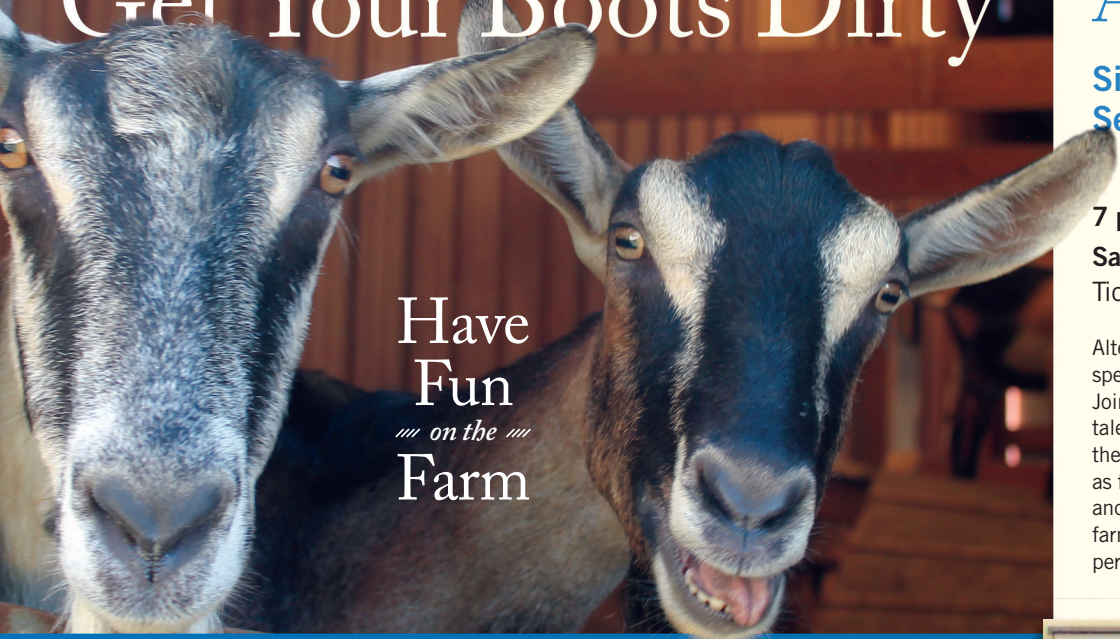
Dave Schmidt

Mike Ratigan, who grew up across the road, has been working on Dave’s farm for years. Mike will be able to buy Dave’s farm at an affordable price now that the land can never be developed. A very satisfactory result for all concerned, including those of us who will be able to see that beautiful farm from across the Tomhannock Reservoir for generations to come.



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

Get Your Boots Dirty



Have Fun
on the Farm

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 15th–18th

Farm Photography for Kids

Sign up through the 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 eight 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 photographer Cliff Oliver will teach the participants the fundamentals of photographic composition and lighting, while sharing his expert insights and techniques for getting that perfect shot.

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.

July 20th

Forever Farmland Supper

4 to 8 pm

Hand Melon Farm, Greenwich

Tickets \$75 per person

\$600 for a table of 8

Tickets on sale beginning June 7

Join us while we honor those families who have made a gift to our community by conserving their land at this unique farm-to-table dinner. 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.



Sponsorship Opportunities for Your Business

Business sponsorships and grants make these incredible programs possible. For more information about sponsorship benefits, contact Katie Jilek at (518) 692-7285 or at katie@agstewardship.org or by visiting www.agstewardship.org.

August 17th

Singer-songwriter Sean Rowe performance to benefit ASA

7 pm, Putnam Place,

Saratoga Springs

Tickets \$25

Alternative folk singer Sean Rowe often speaks about his connection to the land. Join us for an evening with this brilliantly talented artist. A native of Rensselaer county, the baritone's powerful voice is described as folksy with edgy character. Putnam Place and Sean Rowe are proud to support ASA's farmland conservation work through this performance. Tickets go on sale July 1.



October to December

Hunters Helping the Hungry

Contact Kara Scieszka

518-692-7285

kara@agstewardship.org

ASA is now arranging venison donations as part of our on-going gleaning program. 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 Scieszka, Community Coordinator.

In 2018, more than 120 pounds of venison were donated to ASA through this program, providing more than 500 meals for families in the Capital District during the holiday season.



October 12th–14th

18th Annual Landscapes for Landsake Art Sale & Exhibition

Opening reception:

October 12, noon to 5 pm

\$10 admission

Gallery hours:

October 13 & 14, noon to 4 pm

Free admission

ASA's Landscapes for Landsake Art Sale & Exhibition is the region's premier event of the Fall season and our biggest fundraiser of the year. The show features artwork from more than 50 local artists inspired by the beauty of our area's working landscapes. Fifty percent of the proceeds benefit ASA's Farmland Conservation Program.

August 1st

Game of Logging Registration Opens

10/19: Level 1 10/19: Level 2

10/26: Level 3 10/27: Level 4

To learn about scholarships,

contact Janet Britt

518-692-7285

janet@agstewardship.org

Game of Logging is a world-recognized chain saw safety training curriculum. The “game” refers not only to the friendly competitive aspect of the training, but also to the necessity of having a winning plan or strategy for felling trees and working safely. This hands-on training will teach participants better work habits and greater confidence in their ability to safely fell trees and work in the woods.

Welcome New Board Members

Meet Sarah, Dave, Diane and Lauren

We are delighted to welcome four new members to ASA's Board of Directors: Sarah Ashton, Dave Horn, Diane Quick and Lauren Williams. They each have a unique background, with diverse experiences that make them an asset to ASA. The four also embody the spirit of community and have tremendous leadership skills. We are very fortunate to have them on Team ASA.

Sarah Ashton brings a unique blend of experience with philanthropy and community development. She has been a long-time consultant for the Ford Foundation assisting with grantmaking to reduce poverty and promoting social justice in Africa. Sarah also helped found the Cambridge Valley Community Development and Preservation Partnership, Inc. and facilitated its signature project, the Cambridge Freight Yard Revitalization Project leveraging public funding sources to revitalize the commercial heart of the village. Sarah and her family raise sheep on their farm in White Creek, participate in 4-H, and show their livestock at the Washington County Fair.

Dave Horn returns to the board, having previously served from 2000-2006. Dave's leadership skills, passion and experience are well known around ASA and beyond. For the past two

years, Dave has served as the chair of ASA's Forever Farmland Campaign, tasked with raising \$1.9 million in private funding to help protect 45 farms on 8,400 acres. Learn more about its progress on page 8.

While Diane Quick has called Granville home for over 30 years, she grew up in Connecticut. She came to know and love farming through her husband and his family while raising three farm kids. As a professional educator and farm mom, Diane has been instrumental in the community through the Washington County Dairy Princess program and the Granville FFA Advisory Board. “I am a firm believer that one should be engaged in their community and express support for things they care about. As a member of the ASA board, I will continue to do so,” Diane says.

Lauren Williams is the Senior Associate Director of National Affairs at New York Farm Bureau and a recent graduate of LEAD NY. She also serves on the New York State Soil and Water Committee. Lauren believes ASA serves a vital need in Rensselaer and Washington Counties. She is excited to use her role as board member to give back to the agricultural community and help ASA develop more relationships in Rensselaer county.

Thank You for Your Board Service

At a ceremony in February, we recognized the talents of Travis Allen, Cindy Parillo, Sean Quinn and Mary Ellen Williams who have shared their time, knowledge and talents with the board of directors and staff. While their terms have ended, all four are committed to remaining involved in ASA through the sharing of knowledge, volunteering at events and serving on committees.

Together, these four people have provided a total of 45 years of volunteer board service to ASA. We know they will continue to be champions for ASA. We thank them for their dedicated service.

Monthly Giving Spotlight

Monica Dore

Monica Dore might be new to monthly giving, but she is far from new to ASA. In 2016 Monica spent her summer as ASA's program intern. She graduated a year later from SUNY Oneonta with a bachelors degree in conservation biology and ecology.

Monica's connection to ASA goes deeper than her internship. She was about 9 years old when her grandpa Mosher passed, but he took advantage of their short time together to impart the values of the farm to her. Today, Dave and Margaret Horn own the Mosher Farm. When they purchased the farm along with



their partners in 1993, they promised the Moshers that they would not subdivide the land. Two years later, they fulfilled that promise by donating the development rights to ASA. Naturally, in the summer of 2016 when it came time for the annual stewardship visit to the property, ASA's easement steward, Janet Britt invited Monica along for the walk.

Monica says, "I hope one day I am in a position where I can write a check that accurately reflects how grateful I am to ASA for the work you've done for our community. For now, I am thankful to be able to give what I can. It makes me so happy every month when I get a notification that my donation has been received. It would mean a lot to my grandfather, and it means a lot to me that the farm is here forever." Currently, Monica resides in Greenwich and is the Conservation Project Manager at the Lake George Land Conservancy.

To learn more, contact Donna Dodd-Thomas, Development Manager, at 518-692-7285 or donna@agstewardship.org.

Forever Farmland Campaign Update

In 2015, ASA launched the Forever Farmland Campaign, to raise \$1.9 million in private funding by the end of 2020 to protect 8,400 additional acres of farmland. To date, we have raised \$1.5 million through donations and pledges. This campaign raises special funds that directly pay for land protection project costs not typically covered by state and federal grants. These funds enable ASA to protect farmland at a faster pace than ever before.

.....

\$333,209 to go!

\$1.9 Million GOAL

.....
SPRING 2019

.....
\$1.5 MILLION



Spring Brings Change

Arthur Kraamwinkel and Melanie Seserman chose the name *Hepatica* for the 100-acre farm they purchased this winter in Greenwich for several reasons. First, it is the name of a main character in the children's book "House Above the Trees" by Ethel Cook Elliot in which the author explores the idea that nature is more than meets the eye.

Arthur and Melanie plan to create a diversified, biodynamic farm with poultry, pork, lamb, vegetables and dairy. They will sell their products directly to consumers. Arthur says "the biodynamic approach to farming begins with the notion that nature is a living organism that requires the cultivation of our sensitivity in order to understand its finer, less noticeable processes."

Hepatica nobilis is also the name of an early spring flower. Arthur and Melanie hope that biodynamic farming will blossom and become more widespread, just as *Hepatica nobilis* starts out small and tender, but promises a summer abundant with activity and life.

Farming has been a lifelong dream for both Arthur and Melanie. Arthur has been involved in agriculture since he was a small child in the Netherlands where he helped on his grandfather's vegetable farm. Melanie was born in a farming family in the Midwest and spent many of her vacations on the farm as a child. She later worked as a gardener and trained in biodynamics. Equity Trust (a Massachusetts nonprofit) worked closely with ASA to find the right farmer and figure out the strategy for protecting this farm.

Equity Trust's *Hudson Valley Farm Affordability Program* paid for the purchase of the conservation easement that includes an affordability restriction on the property, ensuring that in the future, the property can only transfer to working farmers. Iroquois Valley Farmland REIT provided a loan to finance the purchase of the farm.

"Conserving the land assures us that the farm will be farmland forever and that it will remain unaffected by sprawl. That is extremely important to us. The conservation easement also has made the purchase of the farm affordable, something we are extremely grateful for."

- Arthur Kraamwinkel

Funding for this project was provided by Equity Trust and ASA's Forever Farmland Campaign. Visit www.equitytrust.org to learn more.



22,328

acres of
farm & forest land
conserved!



Agricultural
Stewardship
Association

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

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 22,328 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).

Board of Directors

David Horn
Chair, Greenwich

Carole Lewis
Co-Vice Chair, Shushan

Tarah Rowse
Co-Vice Chair, Greenwich

Mary MacKrell
Treasurer, Greenwich

Katherine Roome
Secretary, Greenwich

Sarah Ashton
White Creek

David Fleming
Nassau

Emily Getty
Gansevoort

John Hand
Easton

Diane Kennedy
Buskirk

Breanna Lundy
Argyle

Dayton Maxwell
Jackson

Diane Quick
Granville

Rob Southerland
Salem

Lauren Williams
Brunswick

ASA Staff

Teri Ptacek
Executive Director
teri@agstewardship.org

Annmarie Boduch
Office Manager

Renee Bouplon
Associate Director

Janet Britt
Easement Steward

Donna Dodd-Thomas
Development Manager

Katie Jilek
*Communications and
Outreach Manager*

Chris Krahling
Senior Project Manager

Kara Scieszka
Community Coordinator



SAVE THE DATE

July 20
The Forever
Farmland Supper

Hand Melon Farm, Greenwich

August 17

Sean Rowe Concert for ASA

Putnam Place, Saratoga Springs

October 12-14

18th Annual
Landscapes for Landsake
Art Sale & Exhibition

Maple Ridge, Coila

visit us online
agstewardship.org

follow us   

We Conserve Good Farmland.
For Good. Forever.