



news

Tiashoke Farm in Easton Awarded PDR Funding

Brian, Eric and Stuart Ziehm, owners of Tiashoke Farm in Easton, have received full funding from the New York State Department of Ag & Markets and the U.S. Department of Agriculture for the purchase of development rights (PDR) on their 342-acre farm in Easton. Tiashoke Farm is located on both sides of Route 40 just north of the hamlet of Barkers Grove. The farm contains highly productive soils and affords a sweeping view of the upper Hudson River valley and the Saratoga Battlefield.

The Ziehm family has been farming for over 100 years. Tiashoke's 244-acre farm in Cambridge, owned by parents Frank and Terry Ziehm, was awarded full PDR funding in 2005. Together, the Ziehm family operates a 535-cow milking operation with 425 head of young stock and dry cows on the Easton farm and the milk cows and milking facility located in Cambridge. They have received the Dairy of Distinction Award for 15 years, have been given a conservation award from the Washington County Soil and Water Conservation Committee and have received numerous milk production and quality milk awards.

PDR funding will enable the Ziehms to transition their farm to the fourth generation and expand their milking operation to sustain

their growing family. All three Ziehm brothers received degrees in Agricultural Business and Animal Science from Cornell University and have worked under progressive farm managers in different parts of the country to amass a collective wealth of farming expertise. To diversify their enterprise they have added a pumpkin patch, corn maze, wagon/sleigh hayrides, alpacas and a Christmas shop.

Now that funding has been awarded, the process of negotiating and closing the easement can begin. ASA is pleased to partner with the Ziehms to help conserve this important, intergenerational farm.

"The PDR program helps to insure that farmland will be preserved. It also gives the farmer security knowing that there is money for his retirement, that he doesn't have to sell the land that the next generation in his family will need to carry on the family business."

--Brian Ziehm

New Tax Credit Rewards Land Conservation

New York State is the first in the nation to pass an innovative new tax credit that rewards people for conserving their land. The Conservation Tax Credit benefits landowners who protect their land through the full or partial donation of a conservation easement.

Eligible landowners will receive an annual rebate of 25% of the property taxes paid on their restricted land, up to \$5,000 per year. Eligible New York tax payers can start claiming this rebate on their 2006 state income taxes. The rebate is given regardless of the amount of income tax owed or when the easement was created. The credit runs with the land, enabling future owners of conserved properties to claim the tax break. Those with multiple restricted

properties can claim more than one tax credit as long as the total does not exceed \$5,000.

Since the rebate is offered through the state, there is no negative impact on town and county budgets and it does not reduce local property tax revenues. The Land Trust Alliance has been working with New York's land trust community and the state for the last six years to create a tax incentive for landowners who conserve their land. ASA's executive director, Teri Ptacek, is very pleased with the new incentive. "It's an added reward for those who have already donated an easement and a great incentive for those who are considering it. We hope that this will encourage more people to conserve their land"

“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 5,400 acres of farmland.

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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A message from the Board President



Greetings! I was pleased to be elected board president of ASA this year. In 1992 I joined the board and worked with our founder and first president Pam Cali. Since then I have served with three other board presidents, Bill Eberle, Kate McQuerrey, and most recently, Dave Horn. Each gave a big part of themselves and helped the organization grow into an effective tool for farmland conservation. I feel privileged to work with our capable board and staff to carry forward the ambitious goals we've set for ourselves.

My family operates a mixed vegetable produce farm in Argyle. We retail at farmers markets in the area and wholesale in Albany. My wife and I did not come from a farming background but we wanted to try to succeed in agriculture. In 1982, when searching the Northeast for a farm to buy, we sought an area with good soils at affordable prices, neighbors who farmed, access to markets and a strong farm infrastructure, so that equipment, parts, services—and advice, would be near at hand. Washington County had it all, and it still does.

I volunteer for ASA because I love Washington County and its working landscape. Like many people in the county, I hope that future generations will also have the opportunity to live and work in a place that has maintained its defining agricultural characteristics. The excellent soils and strong farm industry shape the landscape and culture of this area. It is our mission to work with landowners to protect this farm-friendly environment as the region grows and changes.

To date ASA and landowners in the Washington County region have conserved almost 6,000 acres of land. In response to growing development pressure, we have doubled our efforts to conserve farmland and hope to report a figure many times greater in the near future. Achieving this goal requires the continued support of our dedicated members. Thank you for joining ASA and doing your part to make our shared hope a reality. --Seth Jacobs

A message from the Executive Director



These past few months kept us extremely busy preparing NY Ag & Markets grant applications to purchase development rights on nine properties. Each application takes from 80 to 120 hours of staff time to prepare, including meetings with the landowners, developing maps and budgets, obtaining municipal endorsements and writing the proposal. Our past grant writing efforts have paid off. To date we have secured more than \$3.6 million in state and federal funding for PDR projects. Hopefully, we'll have good news in November that several of our projects will have been selected by the state for funding!

Once funding is secured, we work with the landowner and attorneys to draft the conservation easement, prepare a baseline documentation report describing the property and to bring the easement to a close. This process takes anywhere from six to eighteen months, depending on the complexity of the project. Currently we have ten projects that are nearing completion or are in various stages of the transaction.

Once acquired, we must also manage the easements we hold. We work with volunteers to monitor all of our easements on an annual basis, responding to inquiries and requests from landowners and addressing any violations. We monitor over 5,400 acres of farmland, woodland and wetland annually.

In addition to land protection projects, we also spend staff time on advocacy and education, grant writing, hosting events, and making sure we as an organization have the wherewithal and momentum to sustain our efforts.

We could not do our work without the support of our members, volunteers and the farming community. We are fortunate that so many of you share our commitment to conserving farmland and are generous with your time and donations. I want to assure you that your contributions are greatly appreciated and carefully spent. --Teri Ptacek

Landscapes *for* Landsake

A Wine and Cheese
Reception and Art Sale

October 7th
3-6 p.m.

At **Maple Ridge**

172 State Route 372, Coila, NY
(just west of the village of Cambridge)

Featuring the art of Harry Orlyk

Additional work by:

Stephen Alcorn • Holly Jean Clark
Jeri Cole McDonald • Diane Cook
Joan Duff-Bohrer • Sally Eckhoff
Lisa Haun • Tom Kerr • James
Howard Kunstler • Virginia McNeice
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Helen Young

Barbara Price, Curator



Potato Harvester by Harry Orlyk

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Walker's Farm, Home and Tack

Gallery open **October 8 & 9, 12-4 pm** and **October**
14 & 15, 12-4 pm or by appointment, (518)-692-7285

40% profits from art
sales benefit
farmland
conservation

A Word from the New *Landscapes for Landsake* Curator

by Barbara Price

I have lived in Greenwich for nearly thirteen years but discovered Washington County more than twenty years ago while visiting from New York City. I love the open, rolling hills, the wavering lines of plowed fields and having access to locally grown foods. Up here we don't have Whole Foods markets—we have farmers—and because of them, we are fortunate to have the bounty we do.

After attending past Landscapes shows, I wanted to give something back to ASA and help with the important work of conserving farmland in our area. As curator, I sought artists whose works explore the traditional landscape palette and images, but also those who push the boundaries of the dialogue about what we think of as landscape. Sometimes a landscape is a grand vista; sometimes it is just

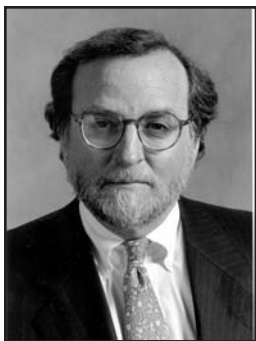
across the river and sometimes it is a close-up look at a flower along a woodland path. In this year's exhibition we want to show landscape through the seasons and the rhythms of the day, with its micro and macrocosms. For the first time the show will include photographs, work which will show us something we might not see in a painting, something we would otherwise miss. I think that might be the most important message of the Landscape exhibition, to open our eyes to what is precious and right in front of us. And then take action to conserve it.

Barbara Price has worked in arts management for over 25 years. She studied fine arts at The Art Students League in New York and has exhibited for the past two decades.

ASA Elects New Officers and Board Members

Seth Jacobs, a vegetable farmer from Argyle, has been elected as the new president of ASA. Seth has been a dedicated board member for twelve years and served last year as vice president. Sean Quinn has been elected vice president. Sean is a heifer facility operator and crop farmer in Easton and has served on the Board since 2004. Nancy Brown was re-elected as secretary and Glenwood Rowse was re-elected as treasurer.

ASA also welcomes two new Board members



Philip Gitlen is a partner at Whiteman Osterman & Hanna LLP, an Albany law firm. Phil has been practicing environmental law since 1974, first at the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and then in private practice. Phil has previous experience working with land trusts on conservation projects.



Mary Ellen Williams is a retired school library media specialist. She has worked in the Saratoga Springs City School District, Fort Edward and Fort Ann Central Schools. In her spare time she is a consultant with BOCES and a trustee with the Percheron Horse Association of America. She was formerly on the Greenwich Town Planning Board for seven years. Mary Ellen is a native of Washington County and lives on a small farm in Greenwich with her horses, chickens, cats and a dog. She has been a committed volunteer for ASA for the last two years.

ASA Awarded \$20.6K for Land Conservation

ASA has been awarded \$20,600 in grants from the New York State Conservation Partnership Program (NYSCPP) to fund projects in Washington and northern Rensselaer Counties. We were one of 33 land trusts that received a portion of \$450,000 of funding from the Department of Environmental Conservation, a partnership program administered by the Land Trust Alliance.

ASA will use \$16,000 to launch a conservation initiative within the Hudson River/Route 40 corridor. ASA has conserved nearly 2000 acres of farmland to date within this agricultural corridor. Working

with local towns, landowners, agencies and other conservation organizations, ASA plans to protect an additional 1,000-1,500 acres of land in this key farming area through this initiative. Farms along the Route 40 corridor contain some of the area's most valuable soils and provide the scenic backdrop for the Saratoga National Battlefield.

ASA also received a \$4,600 grant to cover some of the transaction costs incurred with the protection of the 225-acre Mulligan Farm on Route 372 in Jackson.

To date, ASA has received over \$92,000 from the New York State Conservation Partnership Program.

"I am very happy to see these grants awarded to ASA. The tireless work they do on behalf of their friends and neighbors to preserve and restore the farmland of our beautiful community is very important."

Assemblyman Roy McDonald

"Conserving open space is an important investment for future generations of New Yorkers. I commend the Agricultural Stewardship Association for their hard work in securing this matching funding for two projects in Washington County."

-Senator Betty Little, member of the Senate Environmental Conservation Committee



(l-r) Teri with Lynn Schumann, new director of the Land Trust Alliance's Northeast Program Office and Jerry Cosgrove, director of the American Farmland Trust's Northeast office, with others at the NYSCPP grant award press conference in Albany. DEC commissioner Denise Sheehan stands behind them in the center of the photo.

ASA Staff and Board Attend Land Trust Alliance Conference

Members of ASA's staff and board joined others in the land trust community at the Land Trust Alliance's 2006 Northeast Land Trust Conference held in June at Skidmore. Dave Horn, a large animal vet and ASA's former president, led a field trip to the Hanehan Dairy in Saratoga, a portion of which is conserved through a conservation easement. Participants learned about the inner workings of a dairy farm, the unique considerations involved in drafting farm-friendly easements, and about New York's Purchase of Development Rights Program.



Charlie Hanehan and Dave Horn, DVM leading a tour of the Hanehan's family dairy farm in Saratoga for the Land Trust Alliance's annual Northeast Land Trust Conference. ASA board member Mary Ellen Williams listens to the presentation.

Thank you for your vital support!

The board and staff of the
Agricultural Stewardship
Association would like to
extend our sincerest thanks
to everyone who made a
contribution since
February, 2006.



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ASA's Annual Dinner Drew an Enthusiastic Crowd

More than eighty people attended ASA's annual dinner held in April at B&B On the Green in Kingsbury. Judy Anderson, the former Executive Director of the Columbia Land Conservancy, gave an inspiring talk about how community members with different viewpoints can find common ground and achieve conservation goals. After witnessing the rapid pace of development in Columbia County, she urged ASA's members to take advantage of the narrowing window of opportunity to conserve farmland.

ASA honored outgoing President David Horn, thanking him for his dedicated service over the last six years. Dave will remain honorary president and continue his efforts to further ASA's mission. ASA also honored former board members William Eberle, who served six years on the Board, two as president; and Louis Marchaland, who served as ASA's treasurer for thirteen years.

ASA Co-Hosts Planning a Future for Agriculture Conference

In conjunction with American Farmland Trust, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Farm Bureau and planning departments and land trusts from three regional counties, ASA co-hosted a one day seminar on planning a future for agriculture in March at Christ the King Spiritual Center in Easton.

The conference drew more than 130 participants, including town and planning board members, farmers and conservationists. Seminars focused on issues such as developing land use regulations that promote agriculture, conservation subdivisions, developing local purchase of development rights programs, and how public infrastructure can be used to support the agricultural industry.

Visit ASA on the Web! www.agstewardship.org

You can view a slide show of local farms, download our landowner's guide to conservation easements, find technical information about conservation options and read about how we are achieving our mission.

Thank You Volunteers!

Judy Anderson, speaker at our annual dinner

Jonathan Barber, photography for *Landscapes for Landsake*

Mary Dolden-Veale, for hosting a fundraising dinner party

Karen Kozial, for assistance planning *Landscapes for Landsake*

Clifford Oliver, for photography

Judith and Ashley Bridge, Clem and Mary Dee Crowe, Cathy Firman, Annie Miller and Mary Ellen Williams for mailing assistance

Want to volunteer with ASA?

Call Meegan at 692-7285 to discuss different volunteer opportunities, either in the office or in the field.

Local Farm Makes 3-year Pledge

“At New Minglewood Farm we realize that the success of our farm is directly tied to a strong agricultural land base. We believe that ASA is the best organization in this area working to secure agricultural land through permanent land conservation. Because the work of ASA is so important to us, New Minglewood Farm is making a three-year pledge of one-half of one percent of our farms gross income, each year, for the next three years. Together we can keep farming viable in this region and protect our agricultural lands.”

-Tammara Van Ryn and Christopher Lincoln, Owners of New Minglewood Farm, Greenwich



Tammara Van Ryn and Christopher Lincoln pictured with some of their produce at the Saratoga Farmers Market.



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

October 7

Save the Date!

October 7th • 9:30-3pm

Take a tour of Bedlam Farms with celebrated local author Jon Katz. Jon will give a sheep herding demonstration with dogs Rosie and Izzy, followed by a country lunch at the Bunker Hill Inn and a book talk and signing at Gardenworks in Salem. Tickets are \$100 and proceeds will benefit ASA. Space is limited so call 692-7285 to reserve your ticket now!

October 7th • 3-6pm

Landscapes for Landsake, details inside.

www.agstewardship.org