

Stewardship  
Endowment Update



**The Kinsey Property**



**Genesee Valley Conservancy** Summer Newsletter  
2016

# From the Executive Director



With fifteen hours of day-light, you might think there is plenty of time in the summer, but at the end of each day I feel like there is much more to be enjoyed! Work at the Conservancy has similarly been filled to the brim.

Several management projects have been taking place on the preserves this spring and summer, including managing invasive species, restoring hedgerows, and regular maintenance of trails (page 3).

We are pleased to have two outstanding interns in the office this summer. Elizabeth Holland is assisting us with preservation of the palisades at Indian Fort Nature Preserve. On the acquisition side, Brandyn Balch is helping to create priority areas for habitat conservation in the Genesee River watershed. Once completed, Brandyn's project will aid the Conservancy's effort in reaching out to landowners in critical habitat areas to discuss the particular importance of considering conservation for their property.

Dave Bojanowski, our Farmland Protection Specialist, recently worked with four farm families to seek farmland protection grants from New York State to help facilitate the protection of over 4,132 acres in five towns. There is a local pre-selection process to put forth the best local farms for this program, but it is still extremely competitive and takes a great deal of work to apply. We are waiting to hear back on these proposals.

One of the many events that kick off the summer is the Conservancy annual picnic. This year we had the pleasure to re-visit Sue Kinsey's property on Route 39/Houston Road. While it was just the fourth conservancy project, it now stands among over 100 and demonstrates the impact that consistent and deliberate conservation efforts can have over time. Prior to the picnic, the Board of Directors held its quarterly meeting, welcoming an outstanding class of eager members with a wide variety of interests and skills that will assist the organization in the coming years (page 4). After dinner, we gave our first public announcement of a critical campaign to build a stewardship endowment for the organization. The support so far, including 100% board and staff giving, has been outstanding. Every extra gift this year, or pledged gift, will help build this critical foundation for the Conservancy's future and for the future of every acre protected in the community so far.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ben".

Benjamin Gajewski, Executive Director

**G**reetings members: It is my pleasure to serve you as the incoming board chair of the Genesee Valley Conservancy. It is a pleasure both because I am passionate about the mission of the organization and because the Conservancy is a solid organization. It is always easier to head an organization that is doing well than one that is floundering.

The Conservancy has a diverse, talented and dedicated board. Our staff, specifically Ben and Dave, are experienced, knowledgeable and hard working. We are financially solvent. We have an enthusiastic dedicated group of volunteers and members (You!).

We are growing. In the past year we have received two Farmland Protection Grants from NYS. We are working on several donated easements, including some outside the Genesee core of our service area. We have held successful educational activities recently including the Bald Eagle talk, Genesee Valley Landowner Workshops, and the Honeybee talk. The nature walks continue to be popular. We are working on improvements to the Indian Fort Nature Preserve. All this makes it fun to be the board chair.

However, I do have some long-range concerns. Our solid financial status is in part due to our success in obtaining Farmland Protections Grants from NYS. As many of you know, the grant writing and getting process is fickle and competitive. We can't assume we will always have this revenue stream.

The core support of our organization comes from the membership. We have had a steady membership of about 400 families for the last several years, but it is not growing very rapidly. This is where we need your help: not only to give as generously as you can to the annual campaign and this year's special Stewardship Endowment Campaign, but more importantly to talk to friends and acquaintances about the Conservancy. Invite them to participate in Conservancy activities. Encourage them to join the effort. It is a great organization.

Paul Frame, Board President

# From the President



Paul Frame is starting his second term on the board as part of the class of 2019.

# Preserve Updates

By Dave Bojanowski

Stewardship continues on the properties the Conservancy owns and manages for public use.

Implementing the Indian Fort Nature Preserve management plan, our newest and possibly most widely used property, keeps the Conservancy staff and volunteers busy. Removal of buckthorn, an invasive species that is growing in large concentrations on the eastern portion of the preserve, is starting to show progress. Cutting the large bush just above ground level and replanting with native species is time consuming, yet certainly worth the effort to create more diverse habitat.

Summer intern Elizabeth Holland, who will be a junior at SUNY Geneseo this fall, is working on preservation of the palisades at the preserve. These mounds are threatened by tree roots and blow overs. Elizabeth is helping determine procedures for maintaining the area based on guidance from Jay Toth, a Seneca

Nation of Indians archeologist.

Just this past month we found a fairly heavy infestation of wild parsnip on the John W. Chanler Island Preserve. Wild parsnip is very aggressive and can dominate in areas of occasional mowing, a management practice we follow to promote grassland bird nesting habitat at the preserve. The additional concern with wild parsnip is that the sap during the flowering stage can cause significant burns to the skin, much like giant hogweed. We have developed a multi-year management plan to hopefully eradicate the plant from the preserve. Trails remain open for use.

The good news on the Railroad Bed Trail is that the culvert that washed out in 2014 has been repaired and the trail is open from end to end. Last fall oats were planted to help stabilize the soil and this spring volunteers helped plant trees and shrubs along the trail and creek to reestablish the hedgerow removed in the trail



On Arbor Day, volunteers helped plant trees and shrubs along the Railroad Bed Trail to replace a hedgerow that was removed to facilitate the restoration efforts south of South Avon Road.

restoration effort. A lot of time has been spent keeping these plants alive in the drought, but this will bring the area back into top shape. **GVC**

# Genesee Valley Landowner Workshops a Success

By Dave Bojanowski

Over 90 people attended the first Genesee Valley Landowner Workshops held this past March at the Genesee Valley Educational Partnership facility in Mount Morris.

The workshops were organized by Genesee Valley Conservancy in partnership with Livingston County Cooperative Extension. The goal of the workshops was to provide landowners an educational opportunity

to receive up-to-date information on land management topics relevant to the region.

Landowners had the opportunity to choose three different hour-long workshops on topics relevant to their particular land management interests. Each workshop was conducted by a regional specialist. Speakers presented on a wide range of topics such as invasive species, forestry, legal and survey issues to name just a few.



Dinner was provided, giving landowners a chance to network with each other and the presenters.



Attorney David Colligan of Colligan Law, LLP, discusses landowner liability concerns: access for sportsmen, trespass, and proper boundary posting.

The event was funded in part through a New York State Conservation Partnership Grant provided through NYS DEC and the NYS Land Trust Alliance.

Use of the facilities was generously provided by the Educational Partnership.

Response to the event from the attendees was very positive and plans are underway to make it an annual event.

While the Conservancy works with landowners to protect important properties, facilitating improved management on protected and unprotected land, will have a positive impact on the region's environment.

Landowners, our current expectation is to organize this event again in early 2017, so stay tuned for a registration date.

If you have topics you are interested in or speakers you think would fit this event, please contact me at the office so we can provide programs most relevant to your current management challenges. **GVC**

# Meet the Board of Directors Class of 2019



**Jim Memmott**, a retired reporter and senior editor at the Democrat and Chronicle and an instructor in journalism at the University of Rochester, writes the weekly Remarkable Rochester column for the Democrat. A graduate of Hamilton College and the University of Minnesota, he taught English for nine years at St. Lawrence University before joining the Rochester Times-Union in Rochester in 1980 as a reporter. He lives in Geneseo with his wife, Cindy, and is chair of the Geneseo Central Education Fund. **GVC**



**David Robertson** is an Associate Professor of Geography at SUNY Geneseo. A social scientist, his teaching and research focuses on environmental issues and landscape change. Dave is presently working on a project devoted to understanding the ecological and cultural history of the Genesee Oaks. Dave is originally from Alberta, Canada but now resides with his family in the Village of Geneseo. **GVC**



**Joyce Wechsler** was born and raised in the NYC area. A graduate from New York University, she taught health and physical education at a junior high and at Briar Cliff College.

In 1969 Joyce accepted a position at SUNY Geneseo and fell in love with the Genesee Valley. In 1998 she retired as an associate professor from the School of Education.

Joyce now spends her time doing volunteer work. **GVC**



**Cathy Gardner** is currently Deputy Supervisor for the town of Lima and serves as Chairperson for the Livingston County Community Initiatives Council and as Secretary for the Western Finger Lakes Chapter of the NY Forest Owners Association.

She received a Bachelor's degree in Economics from the University of Rochester and retired from careers as a Senior Vice President in banking and Vice President of Sales in newspapers.

Cathy grew up on a Pittsford dairy farm that has been conserved and has lived in Lima since 1992. She and her husband enjoy managing parts of their property for bird and wildlife habitat. She is passionate about conserving farmland and important landscapes and habitat areas. **GVC**



**Dick Thomas** resides with his wife, Mary, in a restored farmhouse in Caledonia, Livingston County. In 2015, he retired from a 32 year career with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. Dick was an Environmental Conservation officer for 27 of those years, patrolling Livingston County and working ten years in the Bureau of Environmental Crime Investigations. He retired as the Lieutenant in charge of the Region 8 Bureau.

Dick has moved on to more fully pursue his passion for landscape photography. He is a well-known photographer in the Genesee Valley and advocates for the conservation and preservation of ecosystems and open space through his imagery. **GVC**



**Clara Mulligan** is the third generation to live on her family farm in Avon, a farm under easement since 2009. The project was one of the first Genesee Valley Conservancy conservation easements approved for the NYS Farmland Protection program. She is proud that her family was able to easily come to such a big decision to protect the land she grew up exploring and observing.

She is a dedicated conservationist, taking care to promote ground nesting birds and young trees. Her vegetable and flower gardens, a recently added flock of sheep and family history are among her list of passions.

Her community work presently includes leading the committee updating the Town of Avon's Comprehensive Plan, and as a board member on the Avon Historical Society. She is also active in the family-owned property, Linwood Gardens, especially during the Tree Peony Festival season. **GVC**



## Stewardship Endowment Campaign

# Preserving the Valley

By Joyce Wechsler

I was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York. I came to the Genesee Valley 47 years ago and landed in heaven. My love of the Valley has grown each year and pride in the work the Genesee Valley Conservancy has done to preserve the beauty of the land has grown along with it.

For over 25 years the Genesee Valley Conservancy has been preserving and protecting land. The thousands of acres of farm fields, woodlands, preserves and waterways protected are mostly in the hands of private owners. When an easement is signed jointly by the owner and Conservancy they agree to not make changes that can harm the environmental quality of the property.

It is the Conservancy's obligation to monitor

each property every year. We must send people to six counties to check that new roads haven't been cut or structures built where not permitted and other violations of our joint agreement have taken place. Staff is responsible for monitoring or managing every property.

Reaching the goal of the Stewardship Endowment Campaign will assure that assets will always be available to support the monitoring, management and legal challenges to conservation agreements and that is why I have made an extra gift to the Stewardship Endowment this year.

Your donation to this Stewardship Endowment Campaign will assure the beauty of the valley and the continued productivity of the farmlands in western New York. **GVC**

properties, their property became a very important piece of a much larger conservation area that is protected today.

To Sue's delight, three neighboring landowners have since protected their land and her property is now connected to over 3,000 acres of protected open space!

Every conservation area begins with a single project, but can grow significantly. **GVC**



*Sue Kinsey explains the history of her property, along with her reasons for ensuring the land remain open for the future of the community at the Conservancy picnic.*

# Annual Picnic

Over one hundred attended the annual Conservancy picnic, this year held at Sue Kinsey's protected property along Route 39 and Huston Road in Geneseo.

Sue and Ted Kinsey hosted a previous picnic on their property many years ago and it was a pleasure to return to such a beautiful location.

In 1993, in the very early years of the Conservancy, Ted and Sue took the steps to protect their land with a conservation easement. At the time, they were just the fourth landowners to protect their land.

At the picnic Sue recalled, "it was a good thing to do...it was the right thing to do." Sue also reckoned their property, standing alone, was perhaps not too meaningful, but over time as adjacent landowners also sought to protect

**Update:**  
**\$190,000 raised from Board to kickoff Campaign!**

## Give Today!

Complete the information below, enclose a check, and return to: Genesee Valley Conservancy | PO Box 73 | Geneseo, NY 14454.

Please accept my enclosed gift of...

- \$2,500
- \$1,000
- \$500
- \$250
- \$100
- Other: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

...in support of the Stewardship Endowment Capital Campaign. This gift is to be placed in the Genesee Valley Conservancy's donor designated Stewardship Endowment and used for the purposes of that endowment.

NAME (as you would like it to appear in the annual report)

ADDRESS Line 1

ADDRESS Line 2

CITY

STATE

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All gifts are tax deductible.

- I am interested in making a gift of securities, please send me information.
- Please send me information on bequest giving and other estate planning options.
- Please do not list my name in the Annual Report.

Genesee Valley Conservancy, Summer 2016 5

**An extra gift this year will help reach the goal of \$1.2 million by 12/31/2016**

# Steer Clear of Wild Parsnip

By Trevor Edmonson

About a week ago, I came home and turned on the evening news. The first news story I saw involved a woman who had an incredible skin rash from a plant she encountered. Turns out it was the wild parsnip, a plant that I am very familiar with and see almost every day.

Wild parsnip is native to Europe, where its roots were harvested for food. It was likely brought over here for that cultivated purpose but, like most of our “favorite” invasive species, it escaped out of our control. Today, it is found



all over most of the United States and Canada.

It generally is found in low quality natural areas like roadside ditches, early restorations, fallow fields, trail sides, fence rows and other unmanaged land varieties.

Identifying wild parsnip is fairly easy once you start to notice it.

The plant forms basal rosettes in the first year, meaning only it stays in a leaf cluster, and then flowers in the second year.

The flat-topped flower is yellow and kind of resembles its carrot family cousin Queen Anne’s lace, which has a white flower. This flower type is called an umbel. It looks like one big flower but really it has many smaller umbellets making up the structure.

It has compound single pinnate leaves that alternate along the stem. The leaves are larger at the base and are deeply lobed with coarse teeth along the edges. The plant gets pretty tall and can grow in thick clusters.

Why should one stay far away from wild parsnip? The plant sap is the real villain. If your skin comes in contact with some of the sap, it causes something called

“phytophotodermatitis.” Basically, this is a very intense rash that is triggered when fluid on your skin is exposed to sunlight.

The rash turns into blisters and can last for months.

Without the sunlight, it is generally harmless. You can give it a hug at night and if you take a shower before sunrise, you will be fine. Kind of interesting — but I still might not recommend you try that.

If you need to deal with it, you have to wear gloves, long pants, long sleeves and preferably face protection.

The easiest way to combat this invader in small patches is to cut it below the ground with a spade. You can mow it repeatedly but be sure that debris doesn’t reach your skin.

In restoration settings, several different broadleaf herbicides are used (2-4D, Garlon) when large patches are present.

As the season progresses, the yellow flower will turn bronze, but the same structure of the plant will be identifiable. **GVC**

**This article first appeared in the Kankakee Daily Journal and is reprinted with permission.**

Wild Parsnip was found on the John W. Chanler Island Preserve. Work is being done to limit its spread and eliminate it from the preserve.



## Legacy Giving

*Make the Genesee Valley part of your legacy.*

Whether made during your lifetime or as part of your estate, a legacy gift is a one-time extraordinary contribution that propels conservation forward and will leave a lasting impact.

No matter the size, a legacy gift can help initiate new projects, fund larger undertakings and increase the pace of conservation locally, **protecting the places you love.**

Contact Ben Gajewski to discuss legacy giving

585-243-2190

[ben@geneseevalleyconservancy.org](mailto:ben@geneseevalleyconservancy.org)

### Types of Gifts

- Cash
- Stock
- House & real-estate
- Retirement accounts
- Art & other collectables

### Potential Gift Uses

- Stewardship Endowment  
*to ensure permanence*
- Acquisition Fund  
*to protect new places*
- Preserve Maintenance  
*for GVC’s nature preserves*

*If you have included Genesee Valley Conservancy in your estate planning, please let us know so we may understand your gift and wishes.*



# Oak Tree Half Marathon and 5K Ready to Run Again

By Benjamin Gajewski

Once again, it is time for the largest running race in the Genesee Valley, The Oak Tree Half Marathon & 5K Run/Walk. The race is being held Sunday of Labor Day weekend, September 4. Registrations are well underway and are outpacing last year.

The race courses are in fine shape, after last season when they ran through construction in downtown Geneseo. Past participants will notice very few changes in the well established event that receives rave reviews by newcomers and veterans alike.

The Oak Tree is the Conservancy's largest fundraising event of the year, and therefore one of the most important public events held to ensure the organization has the resources to work with landowners to protect their farm

and forest lands in the Genesee Valley. The course itself highlights thousands of acres of protected lands in the Town of Geneseo and, of course, passes the mighty Oak Trees for which the event is named.

If you do not run or walk in the Oak Tree, you can still support this important event by volunteering at a water station with your group or working as a road marshal at a street corner. Contact the office to learn about tasks we could use a hand with. Otherwise, step outside to watch the race and cheer the nearly 800 runners on!

Our full list of sponsors is on the race website and will be included in the Annual



Last year's half marathon female champion, Jessica Kennedy, traveled from Florida specifically to run the Oak Tree. Fifteen states and three countries were represented last year.

Report this fall, but I am pleased to tell you that owners or employees from **every** sponsor will be at the race participating! Please thank them and return the favor when you can! **GVC**

**#RunOakTree**

**Register Today!**

[www.geneseevalleyconservancy.org/race](http://www.geneseevalleyconservancy.org/race)

There are no extra fees online!



## Free Trees Available

By Wyoming Co. Soil & Water Conservation Dist.

Free native trees and shrubs are available to streamside property owners in the Genesee River Basin. Water quality in the Genesee River is impacted by both phosphorus and sediment pollution. Planting trees and shrubs along the banks of streams and rivers can help improve water quality.

The Genesee River Basin Trees for Tribes Program aims to increase the number of trees and shrubs along the river and its tributaries. Trees for Tribes creates a partnership with property owners to plant trees.

Trees for Tribes provides:

- free native trees and shrubs
- tree tubes (to protect against deer)
- signage
- assistance selecting the types of trees and shrubs

Property owners are responsible for:

- planting the trees and shrubs
- watering the plants until they are established
- protecting the plants from cutting or mowing

For information visit: [www.wcswcd.org/index.php/tree-shrub](http://www.wcswcd.org/index.php/tree-shrub) **GVC**

## 2016 Walks and Events

### September 4 - Oak Tree Half Marathon & 5K, 8am

Registration is open [www.geneseevalleyconservancy.org/race](http://www.geneseevalleyconservancy.org/race)

\*Run, watch or volunteer!

### October 8 - Genesee Valley Hunt Races, 10am-4pm

Details at [www.geneseevalleyhunt.org/races](http://www.geneseevalleyhunt.org/races)

\*Takes place on protected lands!

### October - Fall Foliage Hike, TBD

We will announce this hike via our website and e-mail list. To receive periodic Conservancy related emails, sign up at [www.GeneseeValleyConservancy.org](http://www.GeneseeValleyConservancy.org)

**Join our e-mail list for more events like our Foliage Walk and Cross Country Ski!**

Sponsored by



For details visit:

[www.geneseevalleyconservancy.org](http://www.geneseevalleyconservancy.org)



# Genesee Valley Conservancy

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