

**River Access
Site Opened!**



View from Riverside Campground



Genesee Valley Conservancy Summer Newsletter
2017

From the Executive Director



One of the strengths of Genesee Valley Conservancy is the partnerships we have created with various organizations over the years.

Our Livingston County Agricultural Tour has benefited from a number of agencies lending advice and time each year and, in particular, support from Livingston County officials who saw the value of this tour to educate elected leaders on the local agricultural industry nine years ago. As preparations are underway for this year's tour, the tour is being featured in a national publication (page 7).

The only remaining section of the 'Big Tree' has sat for years in an outbuilding of the Livingston County Historical Society Museum, providing little interpretation for the visitors that ventured out back to peer through the glass. This summer we are pleased to be raising funds jointly with the museum to ensure this artifact is properly preserved and featured in the museum, with interpretive information, so it may be used as a tool to teach school children and all visitors about the cultural history of the Genesee Valley (page 3).

We have a seat on the board of Genesee River Wilds, a group focused on improving access to and the quality of the Genesee River in Allegany County. This summer we were pleased to open another public access site for canoes and kayaks (page 4). With 29 public access sites on the Genesee River, we are also leading an effort with area tourism offices to create a comprehensive map detailing these sites from Pennsylvania all the way to Lake Ontario so they can be more easily used by the public.

It has been said that if you want to go fast, go alone, but if you want to go far, go together. By partnering with organizations in the Genesee Valley, we have been able to go much farther than we could alone. This year and in the future, we will continue to look for partnerships that can help our work go farther.

Sincerely,

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

Benjamin Gajewski, Executive Director



Dr. Jenny Apple

The mission of the Genesee Valley Conservancy is to protect the habitat, open space and farmland of the Genesee Valley region.

A Monarch Caterpillar on milkweed at the John Chanler Island Preserve.

Preserving the Last Remaining Section of the Big Tree

By Livingston County Historical Society

Oak trees have been part of the Genesee Valley region which was well-settled by the Seneca Indian Nation when the area was simply called “Big Tree.” One particularly large and ancient oak tree, measuring 26 feet 9 inches in circumference at its base, grew along the bank of the Genesee River and, like an eminent Seneca Chief, was also named Big Tree.

This tree stood on the now Wadsworth family property that hosted the Big Tree Treaty of 1797 negotiations whereby Native Americans ceded rights to approximately 3.5 million acres of land. By this tree, representatives of the Seneca Indian Nation, members of the Holland Land Company, and members of the Wadsworth family met. After having been rooted in that original location of witness for many years, the tree fell in 1857 as a result of a great flood. Given its significance, a section of the fallen tree was kept by the Wadsworth family until 1934, when the tree section was moved to the Museum property.

The Livingston County Historical Society is sending the tree to the studio of conservator Brian Howard of B.R. Howard and Associates, Inc. for conservation treatment.

According to Museum Administrator, Anna Kowalchuk, “The urgency for treatment of the Big Tree is clear. Its current condition is the result of years of weathering prior to its arrival at the museum combined with the weathering of time since then. The only remaining sections of the Big Tree’s trunk are decaying, exposed to poor environmental conditions as well as to dirt and pests. Left unattended, the tree specimen



A painting of the Big Tree, artist unknown, courtesy of the Livingston County Historical Society, growing on the bank of the Genesee River.

will only continue to decay, perhaps beyond the point of being able to be conserved.”

Because the Big Tree has been in an out-building set on the back property of museum, one of the most significant stories of this region is oft times lost to the public as a result of not being part of the main museum building.

Thus, the Big Tree will be disassembled and soft packed for transportation to a conservation facility located in Carlisle, PA. After proper cleaning treatment, surfaces will be protected by a process called consolidation. The sections of the tree will then be prepared for an indoor display inside the Livingston County Museum and transported home.

Livingston County Historical Society is raising public awareness of the tree’s significance and plans to work closely with the Seneca Nation in planning the exhibit. **GVC**



The only remaining section of the Big Tree is in desperate need of restoration work and sits in an outbuilding hidden behind the museum, making it an often overlooked part of the collection.

Genesee River Access Site Opens in Wellsville

By Kathryn Ross, Wellsville Daily Reporter

With birds singing and the Genesee River placidly flowing by, Genesee River Wilds cut the ribbon on its latest River Access kiosk.

Located at Riverside Campground on state Route 19 between Wellsville and Scio, the new informational kiosk is the sixth to be opened by Genesee River Wilds on the Genesee. It marks, according to president Bill Hart, “Another important link to the Genesee River.”

Cathy Faulkner, who with her husband Reg owns the campground where the new kiosk is located, said, “I think that it is about time that we take advantage of our



A parking area for river access has been setup at the campground for any users not renting a site for the night, allowing the public access to the river.

county,” Hart said. “It’s going to draw new recreation and tourism, and importantly, new dollars. We’ve got to identify our assets, and this is an amazing one to take advantage of.”

Among the crowd on hand at the ribbon cutting were state Senator Catharine Young, several county legislators and officials, and members of the Genesee River Wilds board.

Young commented on the serenity of the site, saying, “This is truly a remarkable place and a labor of love. Over its history the Genesee River has given us sustenance, commerce and now recreation and tourism. Now we can, with these kinds of developments, highlight what we have to offer and attract people with the beauty and wildlife in the area. This is awesome.”

Curt Crandall, Chairman of the Allegany County legislature, said “These types of events are another milestone for the county” and he commended members of the Genesee River Wilds group for having the vision to see the economic potential offered by access to the river.

After thanking the DEC, DOT, town, village and the Faulkners for their help, Hart explained the kiosk is one of 20 that will run the length of Blueway Trail. **GVC**



Senator Cathy Young, Genesee River Wilds President Bill Hart, and Riverside Campground owner Cathy Faulkner cut the ribbon to open the site.

natural resources. Over the 25 years we’ve owned the campground we haven’t really taken advantage of the river. I think that it can bring more tourism to [Allegany] county if we start letting people know about the wildlife we have here and the benefits of the river.”

Statistically, kayaking is one of the fastest growing sports for recreational activities according to outfitters, fishing professionals and tourism specialists.

The new River Access is at water level and is only a few yards from the river. It is located within the Riverside Campground.

“The Blueway Trail is going to be a very important recreational facility for [Allegany] county, and I really think it’s going to draw a lot of new people into the

Genesee River Access Map

Since 2009, Genesee Valley Conservancy has worked with individuals to organize and implement the mission of Genesee River Wilds, *‘to restore, protect, and enjoy the upper Genesee River.’*

As part of this effort, we are spearheading a project this fall to create a comprehensive river map detailing every public access point, hazards on the river, and mileage between launches, in order to improve accessibility for the public.

Are you a river rat? We are looking for experienced individuals to help ensure the accuracy and functionality of this map!

Upcoming Nature Walks and Events

September 3 - Oak Tree Half Marathon & 5K Run/Walk, 8am

Registration is open! www.geneseevalleyconservancy.org/race
Run, watch, or volunteer for our largest fundraising event of the year!

September 17 - Big Tree Walk, 2pm

Walk to the site of the Big Tree and learn about the effort to save this important artifact!
Park roadside at the end of Big Tree Lane, Geneseo (near the airport)

September 29 - Livingston County Agricultural Tour

Invitations to municipalities and public officials will be sent out directly.

September 30 - Creek Walk w/ Geologist Dr. Jeff Over, 9am

Visit the newly protected Moore Farm on this hike through forest land and Little Beards Creek
Park roadside at 2053 Bush Road, Leicester NY 14418

October 14 - Genesee Valley Hunt Races, 10am

Details at geneseevalleyhunt.org/races These races take place on protected lands!
Parking is off of Nations Road, Geneseo - follow signs. Hosted by the Genesee Valley Hunt.

November 10 - The 12th International Genesee Valley Quiz Night, 7pm

Save the date for this fun filled evening of trivia and start building a diverse team!
Big Tree Inn, 46 Main Street, Geneseo NY

November 28 - ROC the day!

Giving Tuesday is a chance to make an investment in the future of the genesee valley!
Online at www.geneseevalleyconservancy.org

Join our e-mail list for more events like our winter cross country ski.

Many of these events are held with permission on private property, please respect landowners private property so we can continue these great events.

For details visit:

www.geneseevalleyconservancy.org



Dick Thomas

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International Genesee Valley Quiz Night To Benefit Genesee Valley Conservancy

By John Perkins

The quiz has its roots in English pub quizzes. It was brought to Geneseo in 2006 by John and Bee Perkins and has been going strong ever since. It has raised money for the Genesee Valley Hunt, Livingston County Historical Society, Wadsworth Library and Genesee Valley Conservancy.

It's a team sport and teams are limited to eight members. The format is roughly ten very diverse categories over the space of about two hours. There is one aspect of this quiz that is different from most, in that teams are handed a picture quiz as they arrive. The picture quiz needs to be worked on throughout the evening, is marked at the end and is worth about a third of the total score. Whilst it is, of course competitive, Quiz Night is intended to be a fun evening and has been known to get quite noisy. **GVC**



Celeste Grace

Bee Perkins (C), husband John Perkins (B), and John Lockhart (A) read multiple choice answers for participants to consider. A hundred questions are asked in a wide variety of subject areas.

Board of Directors Spotlight: Dick Thomas

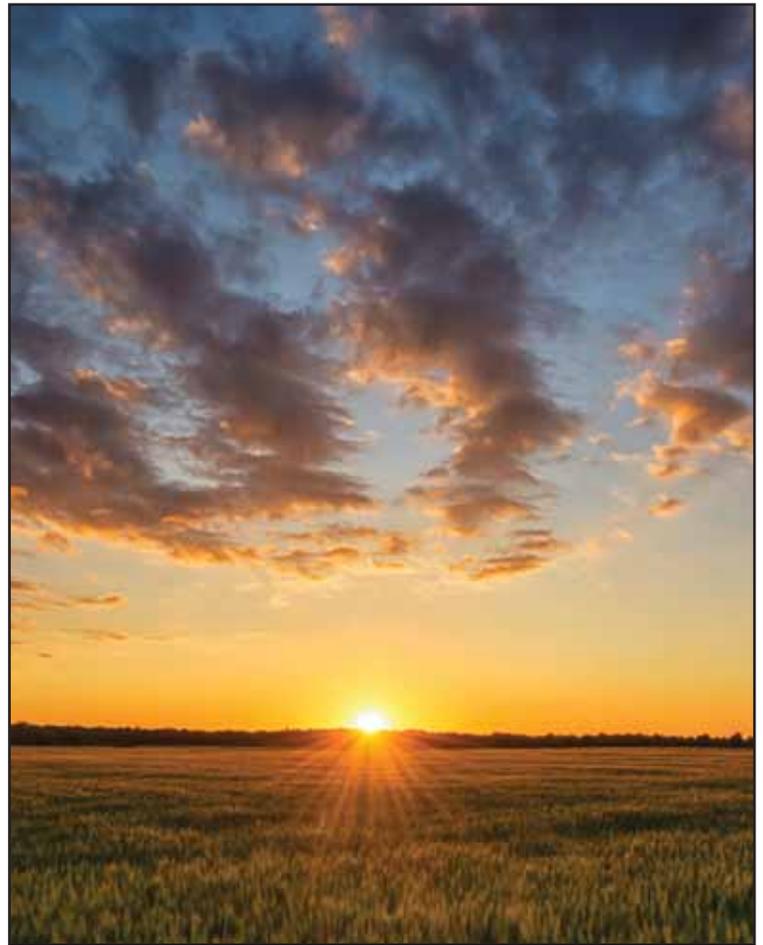


Dick Thomas

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**



Dick Thomas Photography

The views off of Quarry Road provide Dick plenty of opportunities for capturing stunning landscapes right outside his front door, like this sunset.



Legacy Giving

Make the Genesee Valley part of your legacy.

Made during your lifetime or as part of your estate, a legacy gift is an 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

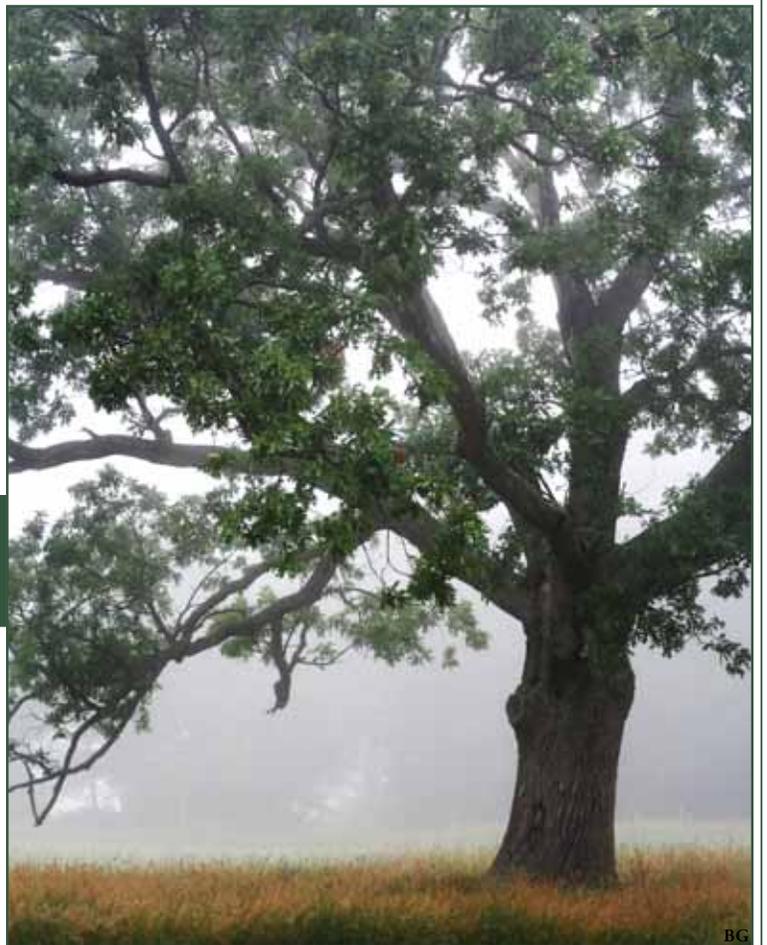
Types of Gifts

- 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

& 5K Run/Walk

September 3rd

Prices increase
in August & September

Individual and Group
Volunteers Needed



www.geneseevalleyconservancy.org/race

Livingston County Ag Tour Featured in Saving Land

By Benjamin Gajewski

A full page spread featuring the Livingston County Agricultural Tour was published in the summer edition of Saving Land, the nation's leading magazine written by and for land conservationists.

This quarterly publication by the Land Trust Alliance features stories from land trusts across the country on innovative programming and best standards and practices in the conservation field.

The Conservancy took this program idea on nine years ago, initially conceived as part of the Livingston County Farmland Protection Plan.

We are pleased the Livingston County Agricultural Tour has garnered this national attention and hope the story will inspire

other land trusts to reach out to their own local officials and work to connect them to the landscapes that their land-use decisions, zoning, and laws effect in the community.

The tour includes 50 participants a year and is supported by the Rochester Area

Community Foundation.

The tour will be held September 28th this year. Invitations are being sent to municipalities this month. **GVC**





Genesee Valley Conservancy

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Views of the Valley: Dick Thomas Photography

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Letchworth State Park offers wonderful public access all year long, hiking, biking, white water rafting, hot air balloons, and scenic views like this spectacular view taken this spring at 6am at dawn over Great Bend. Somewhere below the clouds flows the Genesee River.

Dick Thomas Photography

