

GENESEE VALLEY CONSERVANCY

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“To protect the habitat, open space and farmland of the Genesee Valley region”

Press Release

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Genesee Valley Conservancy Hires Third Full-Time Staff

The Genesee Valley Conservancy (GVC) is pleased to announce the hiring of Amber Hamman as its new full-time staff. Hamman joined the organization as its Farmland Protection Specialist on January first. Her duties include overseeing all of the Conservancy’s farmland protection efforts.

“The past three years there has been tremendous growth in the farming community’s interest in seeing the land that is needed for production remain undeveloped,” stated GVC Executive Director, Eric Grace. “To keep pace with demand, it is necessary for the organization to hire a staff member dedicated to working on these farmland protection opportunities,” he continued.

Hamman comes to the position after a six month internship in the spring of 2008, and six months working part-time at GVC during the fall of 2008. Her internship and part time work at GVC were also related to farmland protection projects. “I have always wanted to work in agriculture, so it is particularly rewarding to work on projects that ensure quality farmland will be available to the next generation of farmers,” she said.

One of Hamman’s primary responsibilities will be to implement Livingston County’s Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program. This cooperative effort between GVC and the Livingston County Planning Department seeks NY State funding to purchase conservation easements on viable, productive farmland. A conservation easement is a permanent restriction on the development of land. The land remains in agriculture, but can not be subdivided or sold for residential, commercial or industrial purposes. “We are privileged to have some of the most productive soils in the State here in the Genesee River Valley, every time this land is converted from agricultural production to residential or commercial use, we lose an irreplaceable resource,” said Hamman.

In the past three years, Livingston County farmers have been awarded grants through this program that will, when completed, protect close to 6,000 acres. The work necessary to complete these projects is staggering. Hamman’s job will be to work with the County, the State and the farmers to make sure the closing process is completed as quickly as possible.

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These farmland protection efforts supplement other land conservation programs that GVC has undertaken in its 18 year history.

GVC recently undertook a strategic planning process. One area identified in the plan is for GVC to become more active in the agricultural community. “So much of Livingston County’s land base is used for agriculture. While it is important to continue protecting important scenic views and habitat, we must also find ways to provide practical conservation opportunities for farmers to see their land protected,” stated Grace. The strategic plan will be made available later this month.

Funding for the position is made possible through the generosity of private donations to the Genesee Valley Conservancy. “I am always thankful to our loyal donors who consistently rise up to meet the financial goals of the organization, and this is no exception,” stated Grace. “In the past three years, our operating budget has grown from \$90,000 to \$230,000. This is a remarkable testament to the value that our community puts on the Conservancy’s conservation programs.”

The Genesee Valley Conservancy was founded in 1990, with the goal of protecting the farmland, habitat and open space of the Genesee Valley region. To date the organization protects over 8,300 acres, not including the 6,000 acres of farmland described above. There are now three, full-time and one part-time staff working at GVC. For more information on GVC’s activities, visit their website: www.geneseevalleyconservancy.org.

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