This summer, in lieu of a long planned family gathering where we would be with people from a half dozen states, my partner and I opted for a private get-away where we could minimize contact with others. We ended up in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia.

The day we arrived, we discovered just down the road was a river campus for Shenandoah University. The campus is a 250 acre restoration project with over a mile of frontage on the Shenandoah. This former 9 hole golf course is well on its way to being restored as native habitat by the university.

Not only was the property a major restoration project and a site for educational research, the former golf cart paths provided easy public access to the property. Each morning we walked these paths and ended on the bank of the river to watch bald eagles soaring overhead, blue herons stalking fish, and pairs of pileated woodpeckers climbing trees.

The habitat and water quality implications of restoring this riverside landscape were obvious, but the land had also been protected by a conservation easement. The Civil War Trust placed an easement on the land to ensure it was not lost to development -- easements are a key conservation tool we use in the Genesee Valley.

It is pleasing to know the lands we enjoyed were protected by that community forever. It reminds me that the work we do today here, protecting the Batzing Farms (page 4-5), replanting Nations Road (page 7), and providing access to lands in the Genesee Valley (page 3), are done not just for the benefit of locals today, but that people will benefit from these projects for generations from here and from afar.

Together, we must protect what we have in the Genesee Valley, so we can all enjoy these special places.

Sincerely,

Benjamin Gajewski, Executive Director
Improving Public Access to OurPreserves

New boardwalks are being installed at Indian Fort Nature Preserve to help people avoid the spring mud at the entrance to this property.

A staff workday helped finish the first loop trail at Mill Creek Nature Preserve in Wayland. Work continues here on a bridge and a second trail.

Some of the more sun exposed trails require work to keep brushy species in check so trails remain open and easily accessible for the public.
Two conservation easements placed on Batzing Farms in York will prevent the subdivision and development of over 600 acres of important lands in the Genesee Valley.

Parents Monica and Scott Batzing and their daughter Sarah Batzing worked with Genesee Valley Conservancy to ensure this land remains forever agricultural. No longer will development threaten these highly productive soils, rural scenic views, and habitat found on the property.

Batzing Farms was founded in 1915 by Sarah’s great-great-grandfather. It has been in continuous operation by the Batzing family for over 105 years.

This fifth-generation dairy farm has been in continuous operation by the family since it was founded by Charles Batzing in 1915. The farm currently has 100 milking cows; raises all of their replacement cows; and has maintained a ‘super-milk’ designation for outstanding milk quality from Empire State Milk Quality Council for the past 15 years.

The farm has also received awards from the Dairy Herd Improvement Association and the worldwide bovine genetic specialists American Breeders Service for their excellence.

With over 56% USDA Prime soils, the farm has highly productive ground that is some of the best in New York State. Through the past century, the farm has grown dairy forages, cash crops including potatoes, sweet corn, peas, cabbage, and small grains on the extremely fertile and productive land to supplement the dairy enterprise.

Due to the exceptional soil quality and high crop yields, the farm is able to rent some of their ground to other local farmers to diversify their income and support others needing access to land. Additionally, the farm boards 200 heifers for a nearby dairy and provides custom large bale harvesting of hay and straw for neighboring farms.

Batzing Farms is currently operated jointly by father-daughter team of Scott and Sarah.

Scott manages the farm finances and performs the field work with the help of an employee: planting, harvesting, and manure spreading. Sarah manages the dairy herd and meets weekly with veterinarians to maintain the health of the herd.

As Scott and his wife Monica, a full-time nurse, approach retirement, they have worked with Sarah to create a transition plan to ensure the farm operation and land can pass from their generation to Sarah, so she can continue the Batzing family farm. Protecting the land base was an important part of this decision requiring both generations to commit to permanent protection of the farm.

The Batzing Farms conservation project creates a significant protected buffer along 2.4 miles of Genesee Valley Greenway State Park, a 90-mile multi-use trail extending from Monroe County to Cattaraugus County. Protecting Batzing Farms ensures users of this park in York will continue to see and enjoy rural views when recreating on this trail.

This project is Genesee Valley Conservancy’s seventh conservation project directly adjacent to Genesee Valley Greenway State Park. Buffering the park from development is part of the Conservancy’s effort to buffer protected lands and create larger blocks of protected areas.

Taking into consideration the potential negative impacts that farming can have on water quality, special provisions in the conservation agreements address the 1.7 miles of frontage that the farm has on the Genesee River.
A required 60ft permanent vegetative riparian buffer between the Genesee River and farm activities was included to ensure activities on the farm do not end up in the waterway. Sediment, phosphorous, and stream bank collapse have been of particular concern for the Genesee River. By maintaining a forested buffer, the farm’s impact on surrounding water quality issues will be minimized. Additionally, the established riparian buffer of mixed hard and softwood trees, shrubs and grasses provides excellent habitat for a broad variety of native wildlife along the shoreline of the Genesee.

This project is the eleventh along the Genesee River for Genesee Valley Conservancy and fourth that includes enhanced protections requiring forested buffers along the Genesee.

This project is the first conservation project in the Town of York for Genesee Valley Conservancy. Around 2007, the Batzing family approached the Conservancy to learn about farmland protection and conservation options available in the Genesee Valley. Fast forward to 2018, Batzing Farms was selected as a top priority farm for protection by the Livingston County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board after a competitive ranking process that considered soil quality, development pressure, and other characteristics of the farm.

Later in 2018, Batzing Farms was the first farm selected by New York State for permanent protection through a farmland protection implementation grant aimed at assisting dairy farms in transition. In this case, assisting the family in transitioning the farm from Monica and Scott, to their daughter Sarah.

This project was the result of a collaboration between Genesee Valley Conservancy, Livingston County Board of Supervisors, Livingston County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board, Town of York, and New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets. To-date, the collaborative effort between Genesee Valley Conservancy and local partners has resulted in over $18 million invested in protecting over 10,500 acres of some of the state’s most productive agricultural lands in the Genesee Valley.

The Conservancy now oversees the protection of 21,294 acres. GVC
Crisis Leads to Efficiencies

This spring and summer have been a challenge for everyone, whether you have been directly impacted by COVID or are facing the ancillary impacts of closed stores, canceled events, and restrictions on traveling around and out of the state. It is the optimist, however, that sees the positives that this new normal has forced upon us.

At Genesee Valley Conservancy, we’ve taken some major technological strides forward that expand our potential for collaboration and reach, that were possible before the pandemic, but not anywhere near the forefront of our task list.

Our office server, the computer where we store all of our project files and data, was getting out of date and remotely accessing the files outside of the office was cumbersome. We have since transitioned to a cloud-based server, making it easy and fast to access all of our files from any internet browser. Although we started looking at this transition pre-COVID, the pandemic accelerated the need to complete the project and demonstrated the immediate benefits of this new system.

All staff can now work remotely, seeing the same folder structure and files as if they were at the office. The new cloud-based server also allows for easy collaboration where multiple staff can be editing the same document at the same time. We no longer have to worry about which document is the most up-to-date version or where a particular file is kept.

Like everyone else, we also have had our fair share of video meetings in place of in-person meetings. While video meetings are not nearly as enjoyable as sitting across the table, using video technology has opened our eyes to ways we can collaborate with peers across the state and country, and engage with communities without driving hours to see them. Less time behind the wheel means lower travel costs and more productivity.

With the safety precautions in place that limit our staffing levels to partial capacity, video meetings have also allowed staff to continue to hold weekly meetings to ensure everyone is up on the latest projects. We can address logistics together and maintain the personal bond that keep staff passionate about the work we do and makes the Conservancy a rewarding place to work. When staff are happy, connected, and care about the work, more work and better work gets done. GVC
What Happened On Nations Road?

In the winter of 2020, the Town of Geneseo removed over 270 dead and dying ash trees, killed by the emerald ash borer (an invasive insect), from along Nations Road.

As the emerald ash borer moved through the Genesee Valley, many forests began losing their ash trees and many individual trees in yards and along roads also became casualties.

In our forests, we will see other species fill the gaps created in the canopy. Individual trees dying in yards and along roads won’t be naturally replaced unless we make a conscious effort to replant these places.

On Nations Road, a country road that is enjoyed regionally, the loss of the ash trees has significantly altered the character of this place.

A $5,000 pledge was made to match, dollar for dollar, any funds donated to the Conservancy to plant trees on Nations Road. The goal seemed lofty, but a reasonable start and no matter if the goal was met, whatever was raised could be put into planting trees.

In less than two days, community members matched that goal and inspired a second individual to offer another $5,000 matching pledge. Again, in less than two days, the second pledge was fully met.

Donations have poured in from long-time area residents, bird watchers enjoying the Nations Road Grassland Important Bird Area, equestrians, Oak Tree Race runners, painters and photographers.

As donations continue to come in for this effort, the Conservancy is working with the Town of Geneseo on replanting plans. A diverse mix of native species, those suited to increasing and prolonged droughts and heat waves, and those providing the most habitat benefits are being prioritized. Planting will begin this fall. 

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Plant a Tree!

**Large Tree & Hired Planting**

$300

**Large Tree**

$150

**Small Tree & Hired Planting**

$100

**Small Tree**

$50

**Volunteer Planting Materials**

$10

Donate Online or Mail Contribution to:

Genesee Valley Conservancy
PO Box 73
Geneseo, NY 14454
First Project Lined Up For Wethersfield/Orangeville

Marquart Farm Begins 1,200 Acre Conservation Project

New York Chips, found on grocery store shelves, is the featured product from Marquart Farm, a fourth generation vegetable farm in Wyoming County that grows potatoes, wheat, corn, canning crops, and hay in addition to producing energy from wind.

With 49% USDA Prime soils and 24% State Important soils, this was the first farm selected in NYS for a special farmland protection program.

“We feel it is our obligation to provide future generations of farmers with the same opportunities to make a living, and raise a family while doing the great task of providing people with food.”

Conservation Connection to COVID Response

Food Link hosted two food-pickup days at Geneseo Central School. The Island Preserve hosted an information sign to help manage the event.

Black Button Distilling, supplied with grains grown on the protected Edgewood Farm, switched production to hand sanitizer early in the pandemic.
Register Today!

Solo Oak Tree
To keep runners and volunteers safe, the Oak Tree has gone solo. Run or walk the course solo and support local conservation!

1) Register at discounted price
2) Run or walk Oak Tree course
3) Submit your time

2020 Solo Oak Tree
Half Marathon 5k Run & Walk

August 1 - September 7
Geneseo, NY

THE OAK TREE IS THE CONSERVANCY’S LARGEST FUNDRAISER OF THE YEAR

2019 Winners:
Half Marathon
Alex Burks
Melissa Johnson-White

5K
Steven Haagsma
Ali Briggs

www.GeneseeValleyConservancy.org/Race

Register Today!
Community Art Continues

Painters are again at work this year creating their piece for the Genesee Valley 100 community art project. Started in 2018 with painters, last year the project switched to photographers, and now in its third iteration the project returns to painters.

Guidelines for each painting remain simple: use a provided 12x12 canvas and create a piece inspired by the Genesee Valley. That’s it.

Paintings are due to the Conservancy office by October 26. Pieces will be on sale in November. Details to come.

Genesee Valley 100: A Community Painting Project

Accepting painters! See website for details.

Welcome Lina Clifford - Land Steward

This winter, we welcomed to our staff a familiar face with the hiring of Lina.

Lina, a graduate of SUNY Geneseo in 2020 with a degree in geography and minors in environmental studies and history, joined our staff as a land steward to support nature preserve maintenance and baseline documentation for new conservation projects.

During her time at SUNY Geneseo, Lina completed a formal internship with the Conservancy, mapping the land parcels and natural resources as part of the protection of the Christiano Farm project in Leicester.

Before and since that internship, Lina volunteered in her free time through the Friends Of Recreation, Conservation and Environmental Stewardship (F.O.R.C.E.S.), a club at SUNY Geneseo that assists the Conservancy annually with invasive species removals and tree planting on nature preserves among its many environmental related workdays.

Lina also found opportunities to focus class projects on the Conservancy. Her report “Geospatial Analysis of Genesee Valley Conservancy Protected Lands” helped visually articulate the history and growth of the organization’s land protection work as part of a senior level geography class.

The addition of Lina this year has not only provided additional staff hours to keep up with our work -- such as maintenance of our nature preserves -- she has increased efficiency of our field work documenting new conservation projects. A new tablet device allows Lina to load maps of the property she is visiting and take notes and photos while walking the land. When back at the office, the photos and notes are referenced to the maps for easy compilation into the reports we need.
Your Estate Can Accelerate Our Work

Naming Genesee Valley Conservancy in your Will can substantially increase our success:

- Your house could generate funds for the next nature preserve acquisition
- Your retirement account could provide the match to important grant funded projects
- Your land could be our next conservation project

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 our nature preserves
- Where Need is Greatest

MEMORIAL GIFTS RECEIVED MARCH 1 - JUNE 30

Memorial gifts allow us to remember loved ones through continued local conservation efforts.

Charles ‘Bud’ Van Arsdale
Miki Starr and Matt Ashaffenburg
Tracey and Charles Carrier
Jane Wisley and Jay Cavins
Gail Chasey
Jo F Conant
Ann and Steve Foster
Nancy Fritch
James and Marjorie Fulmer
John Guffey
Art and Pam Hatton
Ray and Roseann Mayo
Myrt Merritt
Thomas and Deborah Molano
Joan Wood and Susan Nawn
Thomas, Kimiko and June Parker
Tony Starr and Joe Rothwell
Cathy Green and Jim Starr
Ruth Heinold
Northhampton Driving Society
Terry Lloyd & Winifred (Perky) Wadsworth Lloyd
Lisa Lloyd Hobson & Bill Hobson

Memorial gifts allow us to remember loved ones through continued local conservation efforts.

When you can’t shop local, Shop AmazonSmile
Same Products, Same Prices, and .5% of purchase is donated to
Genesee Valley Conservancy

Use your normal login here:
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Memorial gifts allow us to remember loved ones through continued local conservation efforts.

Curbside Pickup or Shipping:
www.geneseevalleyconservancy.org/news/detail/mug
$30 donation | Green, Black, Red, Blue, Pink, Orange, Brown, Grey, Yellow

Buy at Sweet Arts Bakery in Geneseo in August!

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Tree Hugging
LAND STEWARD JIM MOTT SIZES UP A BURR OAK ON PROTECTED LAND

While monitoring a property protected by a conservation easement, Jim estimated this burr oak at a 20 foot circumference. Impressive, but the state champion for burr oaks grows several miles from this location at Boyd Parker Park, owned by the town of Leicester, measuring in at 23 feet circumference.