



Indian Fort Nature Preserve

Genesee Valley Conservancy 2011 Annual Report



2011 Year In Review



This year, the Genesee Valley Conservancy has experienced tremendous growth, both in acreage and maturity. We closed on two easements, adding 1,400 acres to our total of protected acreage in the area, expanded our involvement within the community through programs like the Genesee Farmers' Market and purchased 64 acres of land as a nature preserve and for public access. Even our office at One Main Street received a facelift, thanks to our wonderful landlord!

Our Board of Directors has grown, as well. This June, we welcomed Jeff Mulligan to the Board. He rejoins after a several year absence, during which time he and his family participated in the NY State Purchase of Development Rights Program, effectively conserving important farmland in Avon. Jeff is a successful dairy farmer and

brings valuable perspective to the organization as we continue working with this important group of landowners.

Dean Jewett and Dick Sheflin retired from their positions on the Board this year. Dean has been a member of the Genesee Valley Conservancy Board of Directors since 1990, and has served on the Finance and Acquisitions Committees. Dick joined the Board of Directors in 2005 and has served as Chair of the Stewardship Committee. We are grateful for their dedication and years of service.

GVC's committees have been very busy the past few months, too. They have some creative ideas for keeping the community informed about our mission to protect the habitat, open space and farmland of the Genesee Valley region and I'm very proud of their progress.

As many of you know, GVC experienced another major change this year as well. Eric Grace, Executive Director for the past 14 years, moved west at the end of the summer. Our office staff, comprised of Interim Executive Director Ben Gajewski, Development and Communications Coordinator Katy Festa, and Farmland Protection Coordinator Dave Bojanowski, is doing a remarkable job of filling in the gap until a new Executive Director can be found. Our Search Committee is reviewing applications and hopes to have a new Director in the near future.

As we look towards 2012, we thank you for your continued support and dedication.

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Myrtle G. Merritt".

Myrtle Merritt
President, GVC Board of Directors



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

GVC Achieves National Accreditation

by Katy Festa

Strong, well-managed land trusts provide local communities with effective champions and caretakers of their critical land resources, and safeguard the land through the generations. In 2005, the Land Trust Accreditation Commission developed an accreditation program to recognize organizations that operated at the highest ethical and legal standard in the land conservation field. Of the 1,700 land trusts across the country, GVC is one of only 135 to achieve this extraordinary distinction.



Genesee Valley Conservancy

Before the application process began, GVC spent a considerable amount of time implementing policies and procedures to increase efficiency and effectiveness in conservation efforts. In January of 2010, GVC began compiling the documentation required for the in-depth application.

During a several month period, the Land Trust Accreditation Commission reviewed GVC's land transactions and finances, as well as the written policies and procedures for the ethical and efficient operation of the

organization. The process also included a follow-up phone call with GVC staff and members of the Board of Directors.

The experience provided GVC with the opportunity to reflect upon its mission, past conservation successes and future goals. In turn, the accreditation seal will provide the community assurance in GVC's continued dedication to excellence, upholding the public trust and ensuring the permanence of our conservation efforts. **GVC**



Ag Tour a Success

by David Bojanowski

On September 16, Genesee Valley Conservancy hosted 40 decision makers from Livingston County for a tour of several local farms. This year's tour, called Strength in Diversity, focused on the wide variety of resources, both human and agricultural, Livingston County possesses. County, town and village planners and members of zoning boards joined GVC staff to explore seven agricultural operations of all shapes and sizes throughout the county.

Stops ranged from Eagle Crest Vineyard, the oldest sacramental winery in the new world, to Katherine Humphrey and her daughter Jerrianné's family business at All Western Evergreen Christmas Tree Farm, all the way to Holly and John Moore's 400 cow rotational grazing operation at Graceland Dairies in the heart of the Dansville flats.

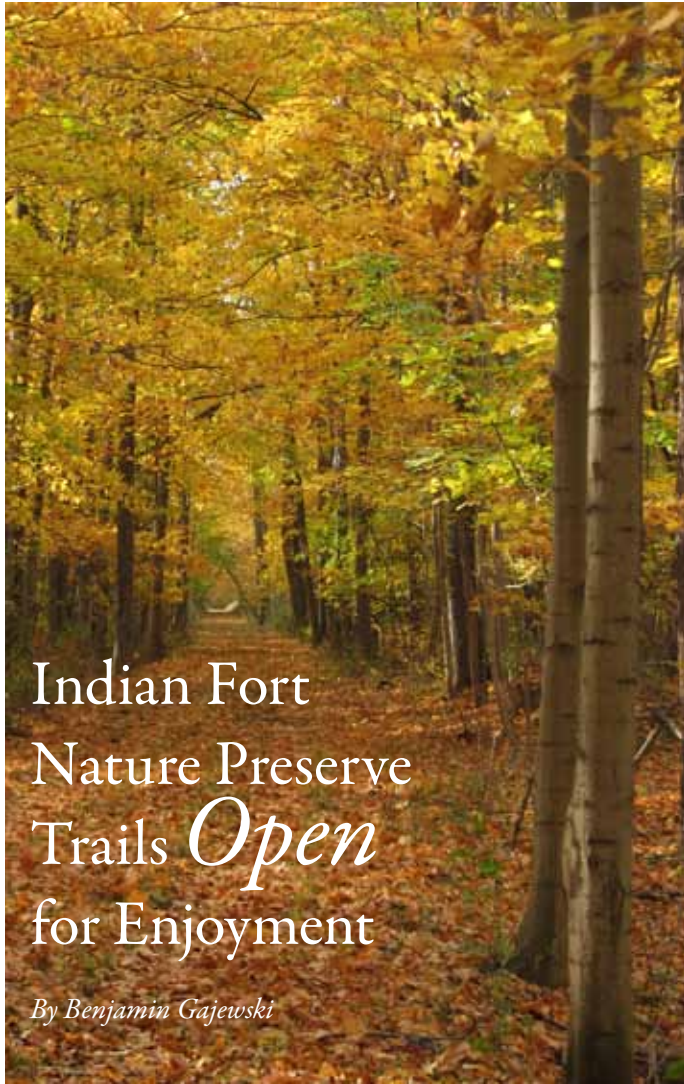
Guest speakers on the tour adding to the diversity theme included former Commission of Agriculture Nathan Rudgers, Livingston County FSA Director Dean Pendergast, and Lisa Burns of Livingston County Tourism. The take home message: diversity in the Genesee Valley provides the region with the opportunity and resilience to continue as a leader in agricultural innovation. **GVC**



Katherine Humphrey, left, speaks at the All Western Evergreen Nursery and Tree Farm in Springwater. The farm grows between 25,000 and 30,000 trees and has been in operation for over 40 years.



John and Holly Moore, far left, speak about their rotational grazing farm started in 2007 through a three way partnership between Holly and her parents Gary and Betty Burley. Graceland Dairy is located in West Sparta.

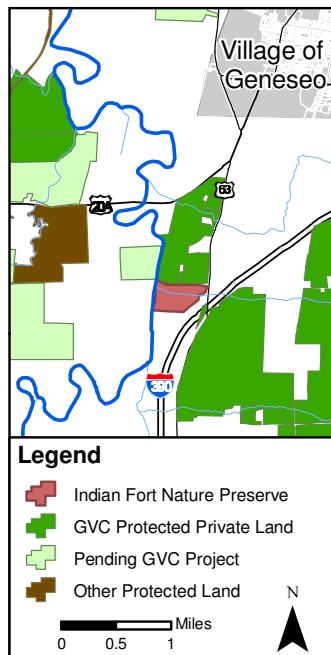


Indian Fort Nature Preserve Trails *Open* for Enjoyment

By Benjamin Gajewski

Earlier this year, when GVC acquired a 64 acre parcel in the town of Geneseo, plans for the property were only a vision: protecting the natural resources, providing recreation, and establishing educational uses. After seven months of planning, meetings and property visits, these visions are now being realized.

GVC's management plan details four goals for the Indian Fort Nature Preserve and outlines strategies to accomplish these goals. Preserving the quality and diversity of habitat on the property will be achieved through allowing natural succession in the



field and forest and combating invasive species when necessary. Preserving the cultural significance of the property will be achieved through careful planning of other property uses and developing educational materials. Developing an appreciation for nature among the community will be achieved through establishing hiking trails and Genesee River access for the public. Finally, the preserve will serve as an educational site through the creation of a Research Committee that will evaluate and oversee class visitations and research requests.

The management plan has barely begun to cool off since printing, yet progress is already being made on many of the above goals.

Thanks to the ambitious work of volunteers Jerry and Peggy Merrill and daughters Tristen, Courtney, and son Cale, two miles of trails have been established on the property. Jerry took care to establish trails that follow existing trails and deer paths to minimize cutting and maintenance needs. The trails were also planned to showcase some of the outstanding elements of the property such as the 100 ft waterfall and ancient Oak Trees.

As the trails were nearing completion, an email arrived from Scott Wilkerson. Scott had several surplus benches from

his summer carpentry and was looking for locations to place them. Scott's hope was to find a location where the benches could be appreciated and used by the community. As you walk the trails you will see these well-crafted benches; please stop a moment to enjoy them when you visit the preserve.

Research use of the property is also underway. Dr. Jim Kernan from the Geography Department at SUNY Geneseo is using the property as part of his research on the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB). This beetle threatens to drastically alter the state of New York forests by eliminating ash trees. More on this research will be presented by Jim on March 21 at the St. Mary's parish center in Geneseo starting at 7:30pm.

During the winter months progress on the land itself will pause and work will begin to establish a narrative for the property. Materials for interpretive displays detailing the cultural history, the ecology, geology, and other topics of interest will be researched and developed. These items will be added to the property in 2012.

As you visit and enjoy this natural wonder, please help minimize our impact by remaining on the trails, taking nothing but photographs and leaving only footprints behind. **GVC**

Nature Walk Series Recap



by Katy Festa

Over 500 people participated in the eleven events that ranged from a geology waterfall walk to a winter snowshoe and ski. The most popular walk was to see the Bluebell flowers: over 300 participants this year! Community members also enjoyed themselves on GVC's canoe trip down the Genesee River. This 8.5 mile trip showcases the valley from a new perspective for many participants and for some it was their

first canoeing experience.

This year's walk series was sponsored by the Genesee Valley Federal Credit Union whose donation helped provide snacks at each of the events.

Keep your eyes out for the 2012 nature walks and events. Join GVC's email list at info@geneseevalleyconservancy.org to receive reminders and notifications of events! **GVC**



Genesee Valley Conservancy Staff

From left: Marcia Koch, *Bookkeeper*
Benjamin Gajewski, *Interim Executive Director*
David Bojawnowski, *Farmland Protection*
Katy Festa, *Development and Communications*

Credits: Photography by Benjamin Gajewski, Design by Kathleen Mannix



2011 Giving

GVC's membership year runs from November to the following October. The following list consists of contributions to GVC's annual fund, as well as other donations.

CONSERVATION CHAMPION (\$10,000+)

Anonymous
Kenton & Amy Gibbs Brown
Elizabeth Chatwin
Coyne Farms: Jerry & Carol,
Dick & Jeanne
Sally Wood

BENEFACTOR (\$5,000-9,999)

The Cornelius N. Bliss
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In Appreciation of the Service of Eric Grace
 Steve and Jan Ashley
 Neil and Angela Bliss
 David and Sandra Bojanowski
 Oliver Chanler
 Louis and Allis D'Amanda
 Donnan Family
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 Kristi Hannam
 Dean and Ann Jewett
 Marcia Koch
 Bill & Meg Lloyd
 John Lockhart, III and
 Lynne Mazadoorian
 Gail McGuire
 Myrtle Merritt
 Jon and Bee Perkins
 Craig Phelps
 Sharon & Chip Presutti
 Louise & Will Wadsworth
 David W. Walters and
 Jo Beth Bellanca
 Joyce Wechsler
 Sally Wood

For the Birthday of Celeste Grace
 Genesee Valley Equine Clinic

IN HONOR OF

For the Anniversary of Donald Holland and Robert Bull-Brett
 Kyra King Stuart

IN MEMORY OF

Livingston Mulligan
 Josephine Buckley
 Shelia Chanler
 Catherine and John Hanchar
 Philip Neuer and
 Jeanette Hauck
 Michael A. and Christina A.
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 P. Hans Tanner
 Martha D. Wadsworth
 Sally Wood

Mitzie and Targhee Grace
 Justin Andre and
 Carolyn Wehle

Paul Gibson
 Ruth Gibson

Richard Edmonds (Pinky)
 Hank & Laura Minor

SPONSORS

Oak Tree Half Marathon and 5k
 The Bank of Castile
 Tompkins Financial Advisors
 Tompkins Insurance Agencies
 UPS Store - Genesee
 Swain Sports II
 The Genesee Sun
 Once Again Nut Butter
 Worm Power
 Fit Club 24/7
 Tom Jerris Masonry
 Lattimore Physical Therapy
 Expressions Salon and Spa
 Oak Valley Inn

Livingston County Chamber of
 Commerce
 Genesee Valley Chiropractic
 Wegmans
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Oak Tree Half Marathon and 5k Gifts-in-kind
 GioVanna's Pizza & Pasta
 Vital Energy
 Palmiters Garden Nursery
 Big Tree Inn
 Abbey of the Genesee
 Barilla
 Crossfit Genesee
 Hog Shed Studio Pottery

Genesee Trio
 GioVanna's Pizza & Pasta

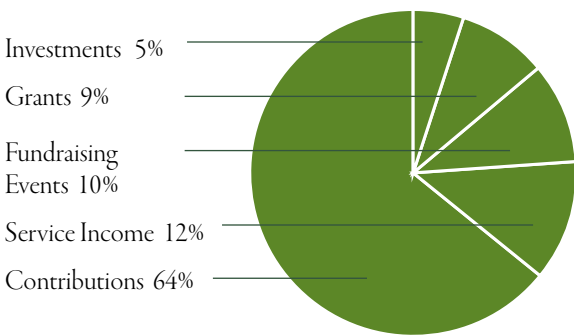
Nature Walk Series
 Genesee Valley Federal
 Credit Union

Gifts-in-kind
 Signlanguage, Inc.
 Once Again Nut Butter

2011 GRANT AWARDS
 Rochester Area Community
 Foundation
 New York State Conservation
 Partnership Program (2)
 Land Trust Alliance

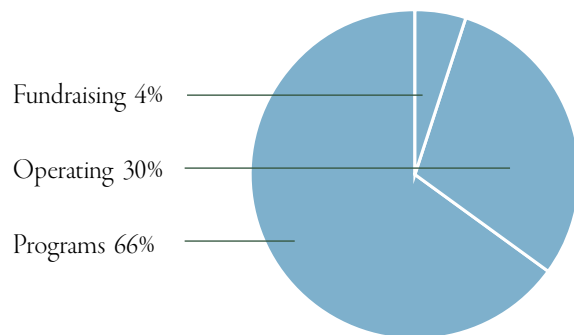
We sincerely apologize for any errors or omissions. For correction, please contact the GVC office.

** indicates deceased*



2010 OPERATING REVENUE

| | 2010 Income | 2009 Income |
|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Contributions | \$155,932.00 | \$140,716.00 |
| Service Income | \$29,438.00 | \$55,754.00 |
| Fundraising Events | \$24,529.00 | \$25,260.00 |
| Grants | \$20,957.00 | \$63,236.00 |
| Investments | \$12,318.00 | \$12,056.00 |
| NET INCOME | \$243,174.00 | \$297,022.00 |



2010 OPERATING EXPENSES

| | 2010 Expense | 2009 Expense |
|--------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Programs | \$151,786.00 | \$139,429.94 |
| Operating | \$67,535.16 | \$59,778.37 |
| Fundraising | \$9,518.00 | \$9,202.00 |
| TOTAL | \$228,839.16 | \$208,410.31 |

The Oak Tree Continues to Grow



by Katy Festa

The seventh annual Oak Tree Half Marathon and 5k drew a record breaking 650 participants this past Labor Day weekend. The race serves as both a

fundraiser for the Genesee Valley Conservancy and an opportunity to share GVC's mission with the community.

The half marathon takes participants past seventeen

properties preserved by the Genesee Valley Conservancy, inspiring a few "a-ha" moments amongst the runners. Participant Meghan Kukla of Rochester, NY noted, "When you are out there running and you hit your stride, you just feel connected. You can't help but appreciate the gorgeous surroundings."

The event was sponsored by several local businesses, including The Bank of Castile, Tompkins Financial Advisors and Tompkins Insurance Agencies and raised \$13,000 for the Genesee Valley Conservancy. At the end of the race, runners snacked on pizza and wraps and were honored with unique awards from local business. To see the full list of sponsors that helped make this event such a success, please see page 7 of this report. **GVC**

Board of Directors

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Louise Wadsworth
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Join us in protecting the places we love.

ONLINE GIVING IS AVAILABLE.

Please give today!

geneseevalleyconservancy.org



Genesee Valley
Conservancy

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geneseevalleyconservancy.org