

**Bluebell
Hikes Scheduled**



Mulligan Farm, Avon NY



Genesee Valley Conservancy

Spring Newsletter
2018

From the Executive Director



You may be tired of snow at this point, and by the time this reaches your mailbox we may not see another flake until next year, but I thought I would use this newsletter to show off a few snowy pictures and stories to wrap up winter.

Below is a photo of Nation's Road that travels through Geneseo and Avon in the Nation's Road Grasslands Important Bird Area. Short eared owls have been hunting protected lands here this winter, as they do each year, relying on land protected from development by conservation minded landowners.

Come springtime, grasslands in this area will be filled with threatened and endangered bird species like the bobolink and henslow's sparrow.

The Conservancy continues to seek land protection projects in this region to ensure these important grasslands remain undeveloped. Our work allows landowners to retain private ownership and use of the land, but secures legal protections to ensure the land is not developed and the important open spaces remain open.

I took this photo in February, on a morning before plows had made the rounds. With my passion for photography, I especially enjoy knowing that scenes like this will be enjoyed for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Benjamin Gajewski, Executive Director



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

Design by Kathy Mannix

Photography by Benjamin Gajewski, unless noted.

Tapping Maple Trees in the Genesee Valley

By Benjamin Gajewski

Sugaring, as it is called, has been a family activity for Forrest Watson ever since he was born, riding along in a backpack as his father did the work.

Forrest quickly began lending a hand and learned the joys of producing syrup on his family's land.

When you are a farmer and your livelihood depends on the weather, you stay in tune with the temperature, rainfall, and wind. This is true for Forrest. As a fourth generation farmer on the protected Mulligan Farm dairy in Avon, Forrest keeps a close eye on the weather. Come late winter, his attention to the weather changes purpose.



At two and a half, Forrest was already enjoying tapping trees.

Provided

Preferring to use traditional buckets, Forrest sets out on a cold afternoon, just days before temperatures rise above freezing, to tap maple trees on the farm. A battery powered drill is faster than the hand crank used in his younger days. A hammer is used to tap in an aluminum spigot. Forrest hangs a metal bucket and secures a lid before moving to the next tree.

Forrest will repeat this process over 120 times, often with help of his mother, Clara Mulligan.

Tap the trees too early and the hole will dry out, preventing sap from flowing out the tap. Tap too late and the sap will have ascended into the tree to begin this year's growth and the bucket will not fill. Tapping on just the right day allows the sap to flow readily from the spigot over the course of several weeks. Every time the temperature rises above 32°,



Collected sap is poured into a tank and transported to the boiler at the farmstead.

sap travels from the roots into the tree top. With each freezing night, the sap returns to the roots. This change in temperature moves the sap back and forth through the tree, draining a small portion out through the tap.

This ebb and flow can produce three gallons of sap per tree in a 24 hour period. After tapping, Forrest then tracks the weather to gauge when to visit the woods and empty buckets into a collection tank he drives out with a tractor. The sap will eventually be boiled off at the farmstead to make maple syrup.

As a child, a team of horses were used during the collection period to haul the sap, but times change.

Families change too. In 2015, Forrest's father, Peter Watson, passed away in a Vermont woods preparing for the sugaring season, as he did each year up there.

That year, Forrest decided it was time to revitalize the family's local syrup operation. With the help of his mother and sister, Holly Watson, Forrest has led the effort for three seasons now.

Enjoyed by many, the syrup produced means a lot to Forrest, it is a way to keep connected to his father.

The conservation easement on the Mulligan Farm allows for managed forestry activities such as tapping trees, for today and generations to come. **GVC**



Memorial Plantings To Provide New Life in Genesee Valley

By Benjamin Gajewski

This winter, the development committee established a new effort to use memorial gifts, an unpredictable source of contributions to the Conservancy, to fund tree and seedling planting each year.

This program aims to use the memory of a loved one to create new life in the community, providing direct benefits for decades to come.

Shade keeps homes cooler in the summer, street trees slow traffic and make villages more enjoyable places to live, and the habitat created will benefit the species living among us.

Larger street trees can cost several hundred dollars, so pooling memorial gifts throughout the year will allow the Conservancy to plant larger trees. The effort will adjust to the number of memorials received in a given



Ten white oak trees were planted along public roadways in the fall of 2017 thanks to a special gift by Sally Wood. These trees were planted along Nations and Roots Tavern Road and Route 39.

year. This program will allow anyone to remember a loved one and know their gift is being used to enhance the green in the Genesee Valley. **GVC**

Oliver Chanler Remembered for Many Contributions

By Benjamin Gajewski

This year, the Genesee Valley lost a dear friend with the passing of Oliver Chanler.

In 2000, along with his siblings, Adrian, Alex, John, Margaret, Elizabeth, Alida, and Felicity, Oliver donated a conservation easement on his family's property in Geneseo, protecting 215 acres of land sitting on the edge of the Genesee River.

Oliver was generous to allow the Conservancy to frequently access the Fall Brook gorge to conduct field trips and facilitate geologic study of the site.

Along with his sister, Elizabeth Chatwin, Oliver donated what would become known as the John W.

Chanler Island Preserve in 2004.

Named in memory of his brother, this nature preserve provides 40 acres of grassland fields, a pond, and small woodlot in the Village that is used by the community for recreation, the Geneseo Central School for class trips from kindergarten through AP Biology, and faculty and students from SUNY Geneseo for conducting research projects.

Oliver also spent many years supporting the Conservancy with his time. He served for nine years on the Board of Directors, serving two as vice president. Oliver also served as the chair of the communications committee for many years.

Consider planting a tree for Oliver this year; he would enjoy that. **GVC**



Oliver Chanler, 1944-2018

"The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago, the next best time is today."

Upcoming Nature Walks and Events

April 11 - Genesee Valley Landowner Workshops, 5pm - 9:15pm

Please register: www.geneseevalleyconservancy.org/events/other/GVLW

Nine workshops offered, \$25 includes dinner and three workshops, Mt. Morris

April 11 - Agricultural Land Leases, 8:15pm - 9:15pm

RSVP to this FREE workshop presented by attorney Steve Walker thanks to American Farmland Trust and the Great Lakes Protection Fund, suitable for farmers & landowners

April 23 - Arbor Day Tree Planting, 11am

Join us at the office (1 Main St, Geneseo) as we pot 175 seedlings for restoration projects

May 5 - Bluebell Hikes, 10am & 2pm

See the spectacular Bluebell flowers on the protected Culvert Farm, please carpool, arrive early, wear boots, and bring \$5 for the bluebell print auction! 3432 Nations Road, Geneseo

June 3 - Genesee River Float, 10am

Held in partnership with Genesee River Wilds, check website for details

June 3 - Annual Picnic, 5:30pm

Save the date! Invitations will be sent this summer

September 2 - Oak Tree Half Marathon & 5K Run/Walk, 8am

Registration opens June 1! www.geneseevalleyconservancy.org/pace

Run, watch, or volunteer for our largest fundraising event of the year!

October 13 - Genesee Valley Hunt Races, 10am - 4pm

Details at gvhraces.com These races take place on protected lands!

Parking is off of Nations Road, Geneseo - follow signs. Hosted by the Genesee Valley Hunt

November 9 - Genesee Valley Quiz Night, 7pm

****Join our e-mail list for new events and changes****

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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Monthly Giving Options Sustain Conservation All Year

By Benjamin Gajewski

You have heard about monthly giving; consider becoming a monthly supporter of the Conservancy.

We are pleased to have rolled out new options this year making it easy to do.

When you become a monthly donor, you are supporting the important conservation work of the Conservancy all year long. We have monthly expenses maintaining preserves, meeting landowners, and working on new projects. Monthly gifts help support this work as it happens.

I think you will also find monthly giving an easier way to give. A simple sign-up is all that is needed and your gift automatically processes each

month. You won't forget to give at year end and the smaller monthly gift will be easier on your bank account.

Give via a checking or savings account or by credit card. See our website (or office) for details. **GVC**



This recent repair to the Railroad Bed Trail took 12 months to fix, from surveying the damage, developing a restoration plan, hiring contractors, and supervising the work. Monthly gifts help cover ongoing expenses like this.

THANK YOU!

Monthly Supporters

Richard and Mary Thomas*
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Megan Walters*
John & Mary Kay Yanik
Max Yarowsky

* Began monthly giving in 2018

Board Spotlight: Nat Kinsey

Nat grew up in the Genesee Valley, riding horses, fox hunting, cycling, and enjoying the beauty of the area. His parents' property was among the first farms to be protected by a conservation easement.



Nat Kinsey

Holding a BA in Mathematics from Hamilton College, Nat recently moved to Palmyra running a small business, volunteering with local organizations, and still loving the Genesee Valley.

The first second-generation Conservancy Board member, Nat started volunteering in 2012, was asked to sit on the stewardship committee shortly thereafter, and has been on the Board since 2015.

Nat enjoys many hobbies and interests, among them photography and flying radio controlled aircraft. Recently, he has been combining these two by piloting multicopters to take aerial photographs and video of the valley,

protected properties, farming, and Conservancy nature preserves. Nat hopes the views from above will illustrate the work the Conservancy does and the importance of land conservation. **GVC**



Nat Kinsey

The 'island' of the John W. Chanler Island Preserve is very distinctive when seen from above. These trails provide for daily recreational use as well as visits by Genesee Central School and SUNY Genesee classes.



Give by Bequest

Make the Genesee Valley part of your legacy.

Including Genesee Valley Conservancy in your will gives you the opportunity to make an extraordinary contribution to propel conservation forward.

A bequest through your will 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 our nature preserves
- Where Need is Greatest

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



Genesee Valley Landowner Workshops - April 11th

By Dave Bojanowski

Genesee Valley Conservancy and Livingston County Cooperative Extension are pleased to present the third annual Genesee Valley Landowner Workshops. The Workshops are intended to provide landowners the opportunity to learn land management strategies and practices that will assist them in reaching their land ownership goals. Nine different speakers will present on a variety of topics.

Everyone is welcome to attend, but due to room size limitations, pre-registration is required. **GVC**

Seating is Limited, Register Online:

www.geneseevalleyconservancy.org/events/other/GVLW

Wednesday, April 11, 5:00-9:15pm, Mt. Morris
Cost is just \$25 for dinner and 3 workshops.



- *Emerging Invasive Species*
- *Small Forest Management*
- *Wild Game Cooking*
- *The Value of Hedgerows*
- *Managing 10 acre Woodlots*
- *Hunting Leases*
- *Farmland Leases*
- *Black Bears in NY*

FREE Session-> **Read more online**

Protected Farmland Signs Arrive in Genesee Valley

By Benjamin Gajewski

Astute observers in the towns of Avon, Genesee, Leicester, Lima, and Rush may have noticed new signs installed just before the New Year proclaiming 'Protected Farmland.'

Eight signs were recently installed by Genesee Valley Conservancy to recognize the local farms that have been protected in partnership with the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets farmland protection program.

The highly competitive Agriculture and Markets program protects farms in the State to ensure the State's most productive soils remain available for future generations and are not lost to development.

The newly installed green and white signs are cast aluminum and appear similar in style to the blue historic marker signs seen across New York State. The resemblance is no accident. These cast signs convey the permanence of these farmland protection projects and carry with them the understanding that something significant happened at that site.

Interested passersby can read the date, acreage, and family associated with the protected farmland, along with the local town and county that supported the farmland protection effort. **GVC**



Roger, Randy, and Leslie Hamilton next to their sign on Route 63 in Genesee.



Genesee Valley Conservancy

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Views of the Valley: Joseph Stevenson

CONTACT US TO FEATURE YOUR VIEW OF PROTECTED LAND.



Joe spotted this barred owl near his home, in the protected Granger woods.

Joseph Stevenson

“When we hear his call we hear no mere bird. We hear the trumpet in the orchestra of evolution. He is the symbol of our untamable past, of that incredible sweep of millennia which underlies and conditions the daily affairs of birds and men.” - Aldo Leopold



Genesee Valley
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