

Hunterdon Land Trust Alliance

To Preserve and Protect the Rural Landscape of Hunterdon County

P.O. Box 143
Sergeantsville, NJ 08557

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Fall Harvest Dinner

November 11

Thursday, November 11 is the date of the third annual Fall Harvest Dinner at David's Yellow Brick Toad in Lambertville. Hunterdon restaurateurs turn ingredients provided by local farmers into a gourmet meal accompanied by Hunterdon-made beer and wine. It's always a fun, informal and memorable evening. If you'd like to attend or would like more information, please call Sandy Madon at 908-782-0805.

Wish List

- A late model copier, with automatic feed and collating capability
- Legal size filing cabinet
- Volunteers for large mailings
- Someone with computer graphic skills to help with flyers, etc.

Call Mimi Upmeyer at 908-782-0346 to make a donation or to volunteer your time.



Thanks to a grant from the NJ Conservation Foundation and a generous in-kind contribution from River Graphics of Lambertville, HLTA has a handsome new brochure. If you can help distribute it at community events or club meetings, please let us know. We'd be glad to send a supply.

To Reach HLTA

Web: www.hlta.org

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Phone: 609-397-7319

Address: P.O. Box 143,
Sergeantsville, NJ 08557



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Sergeantsville, NJ 08557

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Non-Profit Org.
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Conservation Matters

Hunterdon Land Trust Alliance

Vol. 3, No. 2

Fall 1999

Vote Yes On November 2 for Farmland and Open Space

On November 2, 1999, Hunterdon County voters will have an opportunity to approve a major new source of funding for land preservation. On the ballot will be a referendum asking voters to decide whether to add up to three cents per \$100 of assessed value to county property taxes. The funds raised will go to preserve that which sustains the high quality of life we enjoy—farmland and open space. In addition, the tax will raise money for the continued preservation of county-owned historic structures.

This three-cent tax will raise just under \$3.4 million a year, and far more as development continues. Three cents translates into \$60 a year—just sixteen cents a day—on a home assessed at \$200,000. And although this is a tax increase, it will slow the rate of future tax increases. Preserved land can't be developed. And it is development that

results in the need for bigger and more schools, road and bridge improvements, and more municipal and county personnel and equipment, all of which are funded by property taxes.

Hunterdon County has one of the most aggressive and successful farmland preservation programs in the state. As far back as 1981, before the introduction of the State's farmland preservation program, the county committed \$2 million to preserve farmland. Since then, continued capital appropriations, coupled with state funding, local funding and private donations, have resulted in the preservation of 47 farms on over 6,200 acres. Hunterdon now ranks second statewide in the number of farms and third in the acreage of farmland preserved. And we've preserved almost 5,000 acres of parkland. We should be

proud of this record. So why consider a tax if we are doing such a good job?

A tax is a dedicated source of funding. We can depend on it. As development continues, this funding will pay for the permanent protection of our best farms, parkland, conservation lands and open space. The money can be leveraged to purchase land or easements outright, and can be used to pay interest from debt incurred through preservation bonds and loans. In addition, the county may decide to use some of the funds to help support municipal and non-profit preservation projects.

Hunterdon County is in a unique position to make a difference before it is too late—to retain much of its scenic landscape by ensuring that growth is balanced with an aggressive farmland and open space preservation program. We believe this can be achieved, but only through strong support of the open space referendum. ●

HOW YOU CAN HELP

HLTA is leading a campaign for passage of the county open space referendum. You can help by talking to neighbors and friends, explaining that their vote in this off-year election is very important. We'll have flyers and signs, but word of mouth will help tremendously. Letters to the editor are also a great way of motivating people, so please consider writing to your local paper. It will make a difference!

HLTA has purchased campaign style yard signs supporting the county open space trust fund. Please help spread the word by taking some for yourself and your friends. Call 908-782-0346 to arrange pick-up or delivery.



Kingwood Farm Pond by Nancy Silvia

From "The Artist Looks At Hunterdon County" exhibit at the Hunterdon Museum of Art

Buffalo Day Brings Crowds

May 30 was a bright, sunny and quite warm day. Nevertheless, upwards of 2,000 people said “what the heck” and came to Scarlett and Gerry Doyle’s 235-acre preserved farm in Readington Township for a “Buffalo Watch,” an event co-sponsored by the Doyles and HLTA.

The theme of the day was the direct relationship of humans and animals to the land. Visitors to the farm viewed the buffalo and their new calves and saw how much grazing land was required for these magnificent animals. The wildlife displays highlighted the importance of open space for the continued existence of birds and mammals native to Hunterdon County. HLTA’s exhibit, prepared by volunteer Kristen Gervasio, explained how landowners can provide a legacy for all.

Besides lots of food, including buffalo burgers and dogs, cooked almost non-stop by HLTA volunteers, representatives of the

Mercer County Wildlife Center, the Woodlands Wildlife Refuge of Hunterdon and the Hunterdon County Recycling Office were present with displays of live creatures and exhibits demonstrating how improper trash disposal can injure wildlife.

The event was an unqualified success both educationally and financially. Our deepest thanks are extended to Joe and Jeannie Colallilo

of Shop Rite, Mickey Flood of Delray Thriftway in New Hope, and Cheryl Good of Kings Supermarkets for their donations of food. Thanks also to HLTA treasurer Howard Parker and his “Takeout Band,” musician Jenny Avila, spinner Bev Eaton, storyteller Kathy Pierce, and the Boy Scouts of Kingwood Township for their help in traffic control.

-JOHN MATHIEU



HLTA Volunteers



Bill Rawlyk

Trustee Sandy Madon interviewed Bill Rawlyk, co-founder and vice president of HLTA and chairman of the Acquisition Committee. Bill, a lifelong naturalist, holds a degree in marine biology. He and his family have been farming the same land in Kingwood Township for 74 years. Bill chairs the Kingwood Environmental Commission and is director of the Lockatong and

Wickecheoke Planning Project Steering Committee. He is also a member of the River Monitoring Steering Committee of the South Branch Watershed Association and acts as Kingwood’s liaison to the CADB and the Farmland Preservation Program. Bill is employed as a Land Acquisition Specialist with the D & R Greenway, a central New Jersey land trust.

SM: *Having grown up in Hunterdon County, you’ve seen many changes over the years. What changes threaten the character of Hunterdon County the most?*

BR: Agriculture was generally prosperous in the '50's and '60's. In later years grain, dairy, and poultry markets faced economic difficulties.

Like many other farmers, my family and I looked for ways to live on the land and derive income without being forced to develop.

For a long time landowners wishing to sell had few choices other than development, resulting in the land being changed forever and municipal taxes increasing. Farmland preservation could only fund a few farms a year. Fortunately all this is changing dramatically. There are now significant new options for farmers and landowners.

SM: *What are the benefits of farmland*

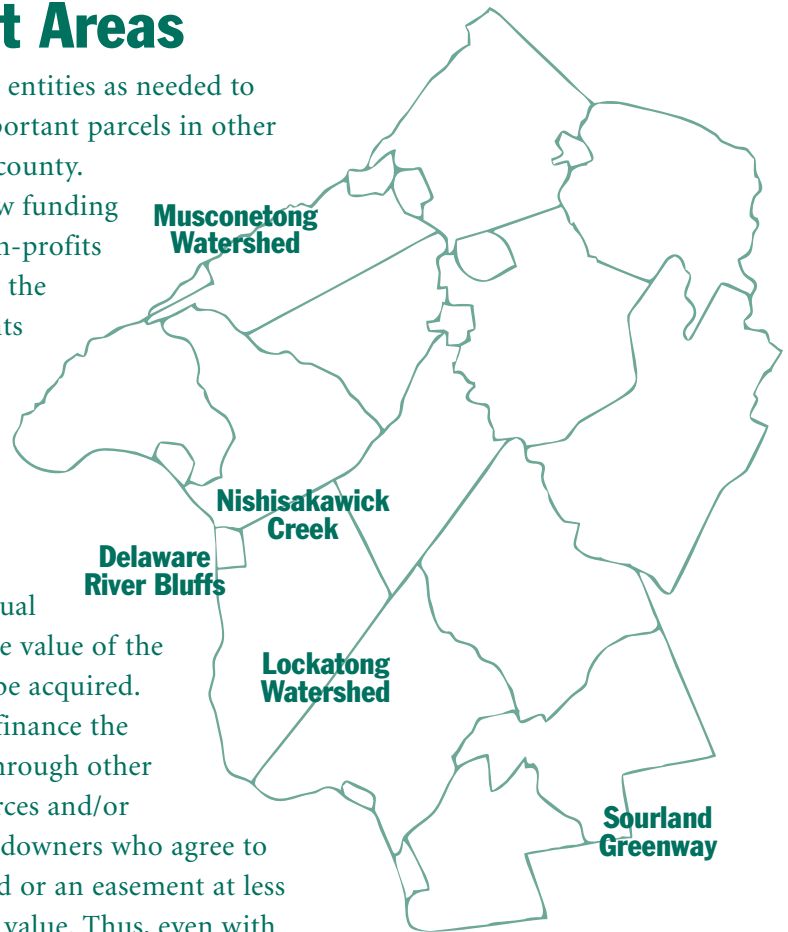
HLTA Preservation Project Areas

Beautiful stream corridors, wooded ridges, river bluffs and adjoining farmland are all part of HLTA's land protection focus areas. The newly established stable source of funding for land preservation throughout New Jersey, approved by voters last November, offers more money and new avenues for HLTA to pursue in protecting important parcels of land in the county.

Now that the state legislature has passed the necessary enabling legislation to establish the funding source, HLTA is submitting applications for funding to acquire land and conservation easements in several critical project areas: the pristine Lockatong Creek corridor and rugged Delaware River Bluffs in Kingwood and Delaware Townships, the forested Musconetcong Ridge in Bethlehem Township, the Nishisakawick Creek in Frenchtown, and the wooded slopes of the Sourland Mountains in the Amwells. We also continue to work with other conservation organizations and

government entities as needed to preserve important parcels in other areas of the county.

The new funding comes to non-profits like HLTA in the form of grants from the State Green Acres and Farmland Preservation Programs equal to 50% of the value of the property to be acquired. HLTA must finance the other 50% through other funding sources and/or generous landowners who agree to sell their land or an easement at less than the full value. Thus, even with the advent of increased state funding, HLTA needs to work in partnership with local and state governments and private individuals and organizations in order to



protect the rural landscape of Hunterdon County.

**-ALISON MITCHELL
MAP BY JOEL COYNE**

BR: *preservation to a landowner?* Direct cash sale of land and/or easements allow landowners to choose preservation and still get a realistic value for their property. Donations of all or a portion of the proceeds can provide income tax deductions and can lower or eliminate estate taxes. Preservation can be a much faster and more direct way to sell land than entering into long-term option agreements with contingencies from developers. In addition, landowners can work directly with municipal open space committees, non-profit conservation organizations, Green Acres and the Farmland Preservation Program to sell or donate land or easements. In doing so they have

control over the terms of the deal and the future use of their property.

SM: *How do municipalities benefit from land preservation and conservation?*

BR: Municipalities benefit by maintaining quality of life, biodiversity, and water quality in wells and streams. Taxes can be kept under control. With development comes expansion of schools and police forces and increased road maintenance, all of which require tax revenues. Developed land will require these services forever, while open space will help insulate municipalities from these costs forever.

SM: *Are more farmers and landowners interested in preserving their land now than in the past?*

BR: I have seen a definite increase in the number of landowners inquiring about preservation. At this time finding interested landowners is not the limiting factor in land preservation. The key is the ability to put together partnerships between municipal, county, state, and private non-profit organizations to effectively access the new funding programs. This is a great opportunity that should not be missed. The Hunterdon County freeholders are putting a question on the November ballot asking voters to support an open space tax. If passed, this will help all of these other programs work together and get the maximum value for everyone, both now and in the future. ●

Roger Harris Appointed to CADB

HLTA President Roger Harris has been appointed by the Freeholders to the Hunterdon County Agriculture Development Board. He joins seven farmers and five other general public members on the board. The CADB administers the state farmland preservation program at the county level. Its objectives include creating critical masses of farmland, preserving farms with the best soils, giving priority to full-time farmers and those likely to stay in farming, giving priority to well-managed farms, offering opportunities to create new agricultural districts, and giving priority to those municipalities that have shown a commitment to the program.

HLTA Staff

There comes a time in the evolution of every organization when too much is asked of volunteers. Although HLTA is fortunate to have many hard-working community-minded volunteers, trustees decided that having paid staff would ease some of the inevitable strain of keeping up with increasing activities. HLTA has hired Mimi Upmeyer to provide part-time administrative help. Mimi worked for ten years as a Project Director for the Association of NJ Environmental Commissions. She is a member of the Delaware Township Planning Board and Environmental Commission, and a trustee of the Friends of the Locktown Stone Church and the Delaware River Mill Society. Welcome aboard Mimi!

HLTA Adopts National Land Trust Standards

HLTA trustees voted to adopt national land trust standards and practices as a tool for measuring progress and competence in a variety of ways. The standards address both organizational strength and land transactions. Participating land trusts should have a clear statement of goals, board accountability, avoid conflicts of interest and fulfill basic legal requirements. Guidelines for selecting projects, choosing conservation methods and examining property are included in the standards. If you would like a copy of the standards, please call 908-782-0346.

President's Message

Perpetuity or "A New York Minute"?

Now that HLTA has its corporate seal firmly affixed to an easement protecting a farm from development, I'd like to say a few words about the strength and longevity of protective easements in general.

An easement is a legal document that is filed and recorded with the County Clerk's office as a Deed of Easement. It is permanent and runs with the land, meaning that it is binding upon the landowner and any subsequent landowner - in perpetuity. Yet many times in the discussion of property protection I have heard the skeptics: "All it's gonna take is some hot-shot lawyer to come along and that easement will be busted up in a New York minute." ...Perpetuity or a "New York minute". Which will it be?

First, let's understand that the easement is a well-recognized and accepted tenet of property rights in New Jersey. It may be for agriculture, conservation, or something as simple as driveway access. As such, an easement IS property, albeit intangible. Property rights are among the most sacred and honored rights in the United States. Both state and federal court decisions repeatedly uphold the validity of deed restrictions even if they have been in place for long periods. The easement tool is not unique to New Jersey. It is, and has been, in use throughout the United States for many years. Think about our parks: The Adirondacks in New York, where 100,000 acres are protected by easement or Acadia National Park in Maine, which holds conservation easements protecting over 11,000 acres on coastal islands. This is some of the highest priced real estate in the country. If ever there were a property ripe for development, this one would certainly have had its easement "busted in a New York minute".

Second, the State of New Jersey (read—the public) is the largest easement holder in New Jersey. If, after spending all this money for all these years, the State were to start breaking easements, do you think the public would stand for it? I believe that the taxpayers of New Jersey would revolt if that protection were to start to vanish. Easements held by non-profits like HLTA are no different.

Third. Yes, as development pressures spread and strengthen, the desire to extinguish an easement may also become stronger. But the opposite is also true: The desire, concern, and hope about preserving these resources—the very issue that is driving support of our work now—will also become stronger. There will be less open land to protect, which will elevate the importance of that which is already protected. Anyone who doesn't think that Hunterdon residents care about a rural county hasn't been reading the local paper. Every issue has at least one article, editorial, or letter concerning land preservation. That concern will only get stronger.

Finally, let's look out into the future. Say, the year 2100. Does anyone reading this newsletter know what will happen? As to "perpetuity", we'll all die some day and we'll be leaving the world in the hands of another generation. We have no way of knowing what the generations-to-come will see as good or bad. We can only hope that there will exist an appreciation for some of the green areas left and that that appreciation will engender enough concern to persevere. Whether these easements last will depend upon the value and public benefit seen in them. That, in turn, will depend on the examples set through our actions and the message we send to our children. After that—it's up to them.

HLTA MEMBERS

Anonymous	Robert Clare*	Bryant Griffin	August Knispel	Ralph Peters	Samuel Stothoff
Harriet Akoulitchev	Bruce & Barbara Coe	Diane and Edgar Griffith	Lazelle Knocke	Dick and Sally Phillips	Fred & Janet Strackhouse
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Julia Allen*	Lee Cole	Leslie Hamilton*	Carl Koch	David Pierce	John Sundman
Mark Andrews	Donald Colombo	Dick & Kay Hannan	Linda Koval	Stephen Pizar	Robert and Deborah
Andy Armstrong	Ken Cook	Don Harjes	Theodore Koven	Gary Pohorely	Sussna
Deborah Ashton	Jo Coudert	Jeff and Ronnie Harris	Matilda Krebs	Russ and Janet Poles	Betsy Sweetser
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Alix and Scott Bacon	Carolyn Creed	Harriette Hawkins	Peter Kwiatek	Paul V. Profeta*	Larry Taylor
Michelle and David Bader*	Richard Cushing	Shelley Hearne	Laurie and Bruce Lakin	Martin Rapp	Thomas Taylor III
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Frank Banisch	John Deacon	Otto Heck*	David and Mair LaTouche	William Rawlyk	Anne Thomas
Miguel & Kathy Barca	John DeMarrais	Grover Helsey	Edmund LeGrand*	Earl and Judi Reeder	John Thomas
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Stanley & Nancy Baron	Guy DeSapio, esq	John Hoff & Son	Susan & Russ Lockwood	William Riley	Thomas Tippet
David and Constance	Mervin Dilts	Kathi Hoffman	Phil Lubitz	Paul Rodgers	Mary Ellen Tolmie
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Kristin Bergquist	Harry and Elisabeth	George Howard	Sandra Madon	John Schaff	William Tunison
Roger and Erika Bergquist	Dugger	Jim Hughes	Marquerite Martin	Richard Schatzman	Roul Tunley*
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Ludwig Bohler	Joe & Sue Egan	Tom & Katherine Hunt	Scott Matthews	William Schiemann	Dana Ulrich
Thomas and Donna	Heritage Consulting	Henry Hunt	Janet McMahon	Andrew Schiller	Neil & Mimi Upmeyer
Bolkcom	Engineers	Elizabeth Hunton	Tom McMillan	Barbara Schlichting	Marian Van Buren
George Bork	Naomi Errico	Doug Hurd	Wilson McWilliams	Bill Schluter	Jeffrey Vernam
Thompson and Carol Boys	Denise Evans	Ken and Linda Hyman	Bruce Miller	Gerald and Barbara	Lois Voronin
Robert Boysen	Floyd Evans, Jr.	Richard and Sandy Inwood	Bob & Roni Mitchell	Shamey	Andy Ward
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Jim and Kate Breuning	Thomas Flagg	Richard and Sharon	David Moore	Skowronek	Mary Weeden
Jim Brightwell	T. Michael Forney	Jarboe*	Ira and Roberta	David Slobodin	John Weingart
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Rita Bush	Richard Ginman	Edith Kawano	Tim Newell	Soldavin	Bob and Barbara Wolfe*
Steve Buyske	Don & Martha Gonzalez	Chris Keep	Connie and Ray Norteman	David Spector	Steve and Barbara Wolock
D & R Canal Commission	John and Bobbie	John Kellogg	Walter O'Brien	Janet Spinella	George Yefchak
David and Hope Carter*	Goodfellow*	John & Jane Kengeter	Stephen & Lynn Opdyke	Kenneth Stern, MD	Edwin Zerrer III
Michael Cerrato	Marfy Goodspeed	Frank & Anita Klesney	Howard Parker	Dave and Lois Stoltz	Michael and Janet Ziegler
Robert & Pam	Nicholas Greendyk	Kenneth Klipstein, II	Wilton Pearson	Richard & Cindy	
Chamberlain	Gaye Greenwald	Marie Kneser	Sidney Pearson	Stoneking	
Louis Cissone	D & R Greenway	Douglas and Grace Knight	Dean Pennington	Dick & Priscilla Stothoff	

* Charter Member



Hunterdon Land Trust Alliance

To Preserve and Protect the Rural Landscape of Hunterdon County

Membership Tear-off form

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Fax _____

Email _____

- \$25-49 Contributor
- \$50-99 Supporter
- \$100+ Steward
- \$500+ Charter Member

Make checks payable to:

Hunterdon Land Trust Alliance

PO Box 143

Sergeantsville, NJ 08557

- Please check this box if you would like to learn about volunteer opportunities on our land acquisition, fundraising or public outreach committees. Whether you are a beginner, an expert, or somewhere in between, HLTA could use your help.