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## NEWS

### Greene Land Trust acquires wetland

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*Some land was once part of the Collier Farm*

**By Susan Campriello  
Hudson-Catskill Newspapers**

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COXSACKIE — The Greene Land Trust has acquired a 38-acre wetland and grassland parcel in Coxsackie, Trust Board President Bob Knighton announced Monday. The parcel includes land along the Coxsackie Creek and the confluence of the Climax Brook.

The \$45,000 project was made possible by a \$35,000 grant from the State Department of Environmental Hudson River Estuary Program, the Environmental Protection Fund and the donation of some of the parcel's value.

The Trust purchased the land from John Flack at a discount. VanSchaak said Flack had donated \$11,500 in property value to GLT, which allowed the Trust to match the State's grant, and would donate another \$13,000 to the bank for a GLT stewardship fund.

Some of the land was once part of the Collier Farm. After farming ended, beavers and wetter seasons contributed to the creation of an extensive riparian, or streamside, wetland. The wetland flows into the Coxsackie Creek Grassland Preserve. The wetland and open grassland stretches from Kings Road to Route 9w and is now home to mink, otter, the northern harrier hawk and short eared owl among other animal species.

The hardwood wetlands adjacent to Route 9w where the roadway crosses Climax Brook are somewhat rare, VanSchaak said.

"You don't find a lot of good pristine ones left," he said.

Assemblyman Tim Gordon, I-Bethlehem, said Coxsackie is lucky to have clean areas to preserve, saying that preserving a natural habitat is less costly than completing future remediation work on a contaminated site.

"This [wetland] will be here for generations to enjoy," he said.

VanSchaak said a stream that had been relocated and straightened could be restored to bend naturally, as streams in riparian wetlands are usually sinuous and meandering. The restoration and creation of a berm connecting two areas of high ground on the property could create a larger flood plain thus keeping waters for flooding other sections of the village. VanSchaak called this function of the wetland "critical."

Coxsackie Village Mayor Mark Evans agreed.

He said keeping the area open also fits with the open space priority in the Village and Town's Comprehensive Plan.

Greene County Industrial Development Agency Executive Director Sandy Mathes, whose staff and resources helped complete the acquisition, said open space is an essential part of the IDA's strategy for economic development.

"Rural character is what people appreciate here, so we can do economic development and preserve rural character at the same time," he said.

Rene VanSchaak said the wetland parcel will not be open for public use however VanSchaak said a platform for bird watchers could be constructed off of Kings Road. A walking path along the parcel's higher ground could be established in the future, he said.

He said GLT is working with a neighbor to obtain and preserve more of the habitat.

Frances Dunwell, DEC Hudson River Estuary coordinator, said she was thrilled to have partnered with GLT and the other entities to acquire the parcel.

"This is the kind of thing the Environmental Protection Fund allows us to accomplish," she said.



From left; Frances Dunwell; State Department of Environmental Conservation Hudson River Estuary Coordinator; State Assemblyman Tim Gordon; Greene Land Trust Executive Director Rene VanSchaak; GLT Board President Bob Knighton; Greene County Industrial Development Agency Executive Director Sandy Mathes and Coxsackie Village Mayor Mark Evans celebrated Monday the purchase by the GLT of a 38-acre wetland.  
Susan Campriello/Hudson-Catskill Newspapers

To reach reporter Susan Campriello, call (518) 943-2100, ext. 3333, or e-mail [scampriello@thedailymail.net](mailto:scampriello@thedailymail.net).

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