

# GREENE LAND TRUST

protecting the many places that make  
Greene County special



Spring 2025

## GLT Steward's Corner

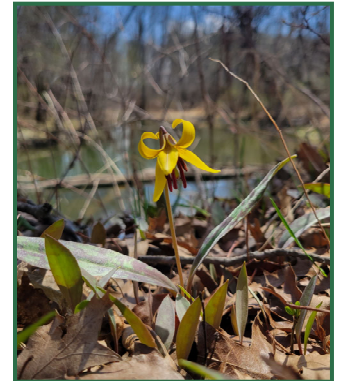
**S**pring is here! For those who walk Greene Land Trust's trails at a quieter pace, there is much to observe.

The red maple trees are in full bloom, creating a red haze in swamps and damp forested areas. Leatherwood—a regionally-rare native forest shrub with a rich cultural history—now fully blooms in the old forests of the Mawignack Preserve, decorating the sunny forest understory with abundant silvery little bell-shaped flowers. In many places, abundant invasive shrub species—such as multiflora rose and Japanese barberry—have rapidly sprouted leaves, making those areas appear greener than they would be if they only contained native shrub species.

And in the evening, the American woodcocks now perform their weird and wonderful courtship displays at Brandow Point and the Cocksackie Grassland Preserve.

Migratory bird species are also returning north, and within a matter of days we expect to hear the meadowlarks singing at the Cocksackie Creek Grassland Preserve and to watch the aerial acrobatics of tree and barn swallows.

Many of our grassland bird species nest on the ground in the grasslands, making them nervous and extremely vulnerable to disturbance and predation. With that in mind, we would like to remind all our trail users with canines to keep dogs on leash, in control, and on trail at all times. And if you bag your furry friend's poop, please take it out with you — GLT's steward collected over 80 bags of poop at Brandow Point alone over the past twelve months! — Justin Wexler, GLT Steward



A springtime trout lily at CCGP  
(Photo Credit: J. Wexler)

## GLT Hosts Inaugural Conservation Book Club Meeting at the Willows

**O**n a cold evening in March, Greene Land Trust hosted its first-ever book club meeting at the Willows. Community members joined Annemarie Gundel, GLT's Development and Admin Manager, for a cozy night chatting about *Crossings: How Road Ecology is Shaping the Future of Our Planet* by Ben Goldfarb and enjoying some tea and snacks.



*Crossings*, which featured on many

of the "Best Of" 2023 booklists and won the Sierra Club's 2024 Rachel Carson Award for Excellence in Environmental Writing, delves into the various and oftentimes surprising ways that roads shape and impact the landscape. It received positive reviews from our book club members who said they found Goldfarb's writing to be engaging and easy to read. Some of the most notable chapters included discussions on the impact of highways on mountain lions in California, the need for amphibian road crossings, the problem with noise pollution in National Parks, and the impact of roads and urban renewal projects on the human population in the mid-20th century.

Conservation Book Club recommends *Crossings* to anyone who enjoys reading books focused on nature, conservation, ecology, and our relationship with the land.

## Scholars Link the Ice Age and the Hudson River School of Art

“No glaciers, no paintings” read the back of Bob Titus’ t-shirt. And he and his wife Johanna set out to prove that claim in an entertaining and informative talk to a full house at the Willows on March 22nd. In it, they demonstrated the ancient geological forces that shaped the mid-Hudson Valley, as well as the mid-nineteenth century cultural movement inspired by the landscapes that had been shaped by the advance and retreat of the glaciers.

The two tossed the presentation back and forth to each other with Bob focusing on where and how the glaciers moved as they created particular land formations and Johanna providing the cultural context within which the Hudson River Schools of Art arose and then influenced the arts beyond the Catskills.



Johanna and Bob Titus answer audience questions following their presentation on March 22nd.

As evidence, they showed side-by-side slides of Catskill geologic formations and paintings of those same scenes by Thomas Cole and other painters of the Hudson River School. They mentioned, as well, related literary works and the birth of American landscape architecture, with houses (e.g. Livingston Manor) oriented to take in the magnificent views of the Catskills.

The pair, retired professors of geology (Bob) and biology (Johanna) regularly bring science to non-scientists through writings about Catskill and Hudson geology in newspapers, several books, and a blog site ([thecatskillgeologist.com](http://thecatskillgeologist.com)), as well as in presentations such as the one for Greene Land Trust at the Willows on March 22nd. - Janet Angelis, GLT Treasurer

## Seasons of Greene VI Coming to the Athens Cultural Center this Fall

Local artists are still capturing the landscapes of this area, as evidenced by the works displayed in the Greene Land Trust’s annual *Seasons of Greene* art show and sale.

This year’s show, *Seasons of Greene VI*, will run from September 26 - October 26 at the Athens Cultural Center.

Mark your calendars for the opening reception on **September 27th from 4pm–7pm**. Come and view the amazing contributions from this year’s artists and meet the Greene Land Trust board members!



*The Grove of Woven Light* by Kevin Cook, inspired by a hike at the Mawignack Preserve in Catskill. This painting will be the first prize in this year’s fundraising raffle.

## Upcoming Events with GLT

- ◆ Spring Ephemeral Walk at Brandow Point: **May 3rd at 10am**
- ◆ Geology Walk with Robert & Johanna Titus: **June TBD**
- ◆ Summer Seasonal Walk with Justin Wexler at CCGP: **July 12th at 10am**
- ◆ Pollinator Walk with Chris Layman at Brandow Point: **July 27th at 3pm**
- ◆ *Seasons of Greene VI*, Opening Reception: **Sept. 27th at 4pm**

Looking for volunteer opportunities? Have a property that you want to keep forever wild?

Contact [steward@greenelandtrust.org](mailto:steward@greenelandtrust.org) to learn about volunteering and conservation easements!



Interested in supporting GLT as a **member**? Visit our website or scan the QR code for a secure, easy way to send your **member gift today!**

## Spring Ephemerals

Spring is fleeting, and so are the earliest flowers to emerge in the season! Known as spring ephemerals, these woodland flowers live their entire above-ground lifecycle during spring. While we can only enjoy their blooms and foliage for a short time, spring ephemerals have lasting effects on our local ecosystems. Arguably their greatest impact is their support of the first pollinators to emerge in the spring, like ants, bees, butterflies, flies, beetles, and more. Below are a few examples of spring ephemerals that can be found in our region. — Kelsey West, GLT Volunteer

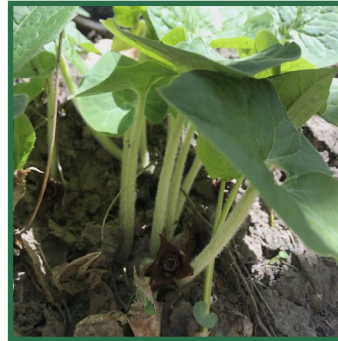
Take a walk at one of the Greene Land Trust's wooded trails from late-April to mid-May to see if you can spot these plants!



**Yellow trout lily:** In addition to their gorgeous nodding yellow flower, trout lilies also have distinctive mottled leaves. These brown and green leaves are the origin of trout lilies' name, as the markings are said to look like those of brown and brook trout.



**Red trillium:** Looking for trillium? Think in threes! Red trillium's three-petaled flower emerges from a whorl of three bracts (modified leaves). The flower is situated on a 6-24 inch stem that's home to three large, spade-shaped leaves.



**Canadian wild ginger:** Not every spring ephemeral has show flowers. You need a keen eye to notice wild ginger's small reddish-brown, bell-shaped flower that grows hidden beneath its leaves at ground level. The roots of this plant smell strongly of ginger.

## Did You Know?

People were once enslaved at the William Brandow house, the historic home we now call "The Willows". Public records of sales of enslaved people show that a "part negro wench named Sara" was sold to the Brandow family on July 16, 1790 and on November 25, 1794, a "negro man



Brick found during renovations at the Willows with finger marks likely left by an enslaved person.

named Franz" was also sold to the Brandow family. It is likely that these enslaved people lived and worked at the William Brandow House (aka the Willows).

Jonathan Palmer, Greene County Historian, provided a very informative talk to a full house at the Willows in February. He provided details and examples of the widespread practice of slavery in Greene County. Jonathan pointed out that the finger marks in the brick that GLT found during the renovation of the William Brandow house were likely left by an enslaved person. The brick is in the artifact display case at the Willows, be sure to take a look the next time you are there.

— Bob Knighton, GLT President



P.O. Box 387  
Coxsackie, NY 12051  
518-731-5544

### Board of Directors

Bob Knighton  
*President*

Hal Brodie  
*Vice President*

James Coe  
*Secretary*

Janet Angelis  
*Treasurer*

Leslie Albright

John Cameron

Charlotte Carter

Joel DuBois

Frank Plattner

Mark Vian

### Staff

Colleen Gerwitz  
*Admin & Program Director*

Justin Wexler  
*Stewardship & Acquisition Manager*

Annemarie Gundel  
*Development & Admin Manager*

