Residents of Oswego County and northern Onondaga County may be familiar with Great Bear Springs Recreation Area (GBSRA), an expansive property located on the eastern shore of the Oswego River. Located midway between the Village of Phoenix and the city of Fulton, this tract comprises nearly 450 acres and features a series of drumlins and a variety of hardwood trees and plants. Moreover, this important natural area offers year-round, non-motorized recreational opportunities to area residents and visitors alike.

The GBSRA is an outstanding example of how dedicated volunteers can provide critical support to enhance and maintain an important community asset. The 450-acre tract is actually owned by four different parties with the NYS Canal Corporation owning the Oswego River front, the City of Fulton controlling slightly more than half of this natural area, the Town of Volney owning another 18%, and the northern—and final—portion of the area (nearly one-third of the entire GBSRA) under private ownership.

Under a management agreement with the private owner of the northern third of GBSRA, a volunteer group known as Friends of Great Bear has developed and maintained facilities that encourage hiking, biking, and—in the winter—snowshoeing and cross-country skiing. In its stewardship role, Friends of Great Bear has built multiple bridges and boardwalks, and a network of trails for public use and enjoyment.

The privately owned portion of GBSRA is now for sale and a change in ownership of this acreage could jeopardize the integrity of the entire GBSRA and might result in the loss of public access to nearly one-third of the entire natural area. As a result, the CNY Land Trust has joined forces with Friends of Great Bear in an effort to acquire—and thereby preserve—the privately held acreage that is now for sale. If this campaign is successful, the Land Trust will purchase the property and eventually transfer it to the Town of Volney for permanent management as part of GBSRA.

The challenge now is to raise the funds needed to acquire the property and both parties (CNYLT and Friends of Great Bear) estimate that $175,000 will be needed to accomplish this. Toward this end, the Land Trust is pursuing grant funding through the NYS Office of Parks and Recreation and has already submitted a formal grant application.

(continued on page 2...)
Riverwalk Nature Preserve — A New Diamond

There was a nice celebration on September 20, 2016 at the Riverwalk Nature Preserve in Clay. Over 50 people attended a ceremonial ribbon cutting of the “Bill Weaver Trail,” to recognize Mr. Weaver’s 40+ years of service to the Town of Clay. The trail dedication, however, was only the latest of many activities that have taken place at the preserve. Now, for the rest of the story. The Central New York Land Trust was approached over 10 years ago by The Bragman Companies, about accepting a donation of about 90 acres of wetland along the Oneida River. South of the donated land would be a housing development called Riverwalk. The developers planned to build a walking trail for the preserve.

The CNY Land Trust liked the idea and agreed to the offer. CNY Land Trust members have assisted in the planning and interpretation of the trail, and volunteers built .7 mile of trail. The trail will be over a mile long when it is completed.

Riverwalk now meets all of CNY Land Trust’s criteria to be classified as a diamond, the highest level in its ranking system. There is a trail, a sign, and parking. Finally, the neighbors are stewards of the property. They feel ownership of the area, and they should. Riverwalk may be owned by the land trust, but the neighbors make the preserve a Diamond. Thank you to all of the parties who made this such a success. By Jack Gramlich, CNYLT Board Member

Please consider making a donation to ensure that GBSRA remains intact and permanently accessible to the public.

Contributions for the Great Bear campaign can be sent to the CNY Land Trust at P. O. Box 9417, Syracuse, NY 13290 with a notation of “Great Bear” on the memo line. Alternatively, secure donations can also be made on the Land Trust’s web site (cnylandtrust.org/donate).

Please join in this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to save an important natural area for ourselves—and for future generations.

Board of Directors News

The CNYLT Board of Directors recognizes Gail Calcagnino for her service to the board. Gail stepped down in September 2016 after twenty years of dedicated service. Gail embraced a key role in making CNY Land Trust’s annual Garden Tour fundraiser a success, applying tireless creativity to all aspects of the event. Over her board tenure, Gail served as steward for Baltimore Woods Preserve and High Hickory Wildlife Sanctuary. Gail plans to continue volunteering for the Fundraising/Membership Committee.

In turn, CNYLT welcomes new board member, Margaret Bocsor. Margaret resides in Phoenix, close to the Great Bear Springs Recreation Area where she enjoys hiking with her dogs, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing as well as trail work. Other interests include canoeing and listening to live folk music at the Oswego Music Hall. She holds a BS in Management from Syracuse University and is retired from a career in Financial Administration for not for profit agencies in Central New York - expertise CNY Land Trust will appreciate! The CNY Land Trust board welcomes Margaret.
A special thank you to CNY Land Trust’s 2016 Garden Tour & Plant Sale presenting and media sponsors. Please recognize their generous contributions to local land conservation by supporting these organizations with your business!

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A CNY Land Trust Walk at Great Bear Springs Recreation Area, Saturday, November 5, 2016

Intrigued by The Journal’s front page article on the Campaign for Whiskey Island & Northern Great Bear? Get to know Great Bear Springs Recreation Area with Central New York Land Trust!

If you have not visited Great Bear Springs Recreation Area (GBSRA) near Fulton—or have not visited in a while—join Central New York Land Trust members for a guided walk to explore Great Bear Springs Recreation Area. CNY Land Trust volunteer, Matthew Young, Collections Management Leader at the Macaulay Library, Cornell Lab of Ornithology, will lead the walk, lending his expertise in bird life and ecology.

- When: Saturday, November 5, 2016
- Time: 9:00am
- Who: CNY Land Trust members & friends
- Where: Meet at GBSRA entrance & parking lot, where Great Bear Road intersects County Route 57 in Volney, four miles north of Phoenix, Oswego County

Central New York Land Trust and Friends of Great Bear, working together to raise the funds for the land purchase to keep GBSRA intact, will be on hand to answer questions about this well-loved recreation area. Questions or plan to attend on November 5th? RSVP to Meredith Perreault, Executive Director, 315-575-8839 or director@cnylandtrust.org.

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Stay in touch—sign up for CNY Land Trust email updates
You can sign up to get timely email updates on events, stewardship activities, newly protected lands and more. On the CNY Land Trust website, cnylandtrust.org, add your email next to “Join Our E-Newsletter List” on the homepage.

CNY Land Trust is on Facebook— “friend” us if you are too! www.facebook.com/CNYLandTrust

Is it time to renew your membership? Check the address label to see if your membership has “lapsed.”

Name:_______________________________________________________
Address:_____________________________________________________
City:_______________________ State:____ Zip + 4:____________________
Phone:_______________________________________________________
Email:_______________________________________________________

Mail to:
Central New York Land Trust
P.O. Box 9417
Syracuse, NY 13290

Please make checks payable to Central New York Land Trust, Inc. Thank you for your gift!

☐ I would like to receive CNYLT’s E-newsletter by email.
☐ I would like information on remembering CNYLT in my will and other planned giving opportunities.
☐ I am interested in volunteering for CNYLT.
☐ Make this a gift membership.

Members' Walk at Great Bear Springs - November 5th

Minimum amount for membership

$35 Individual*
$50 Family
$100 Sponsor
$250 Sustaining
$500 Benefactor
$1000 Life Member
Other _________

*Minimum amount for membership

A copy of Central New York Land Trust, Inc.’s latest annual report may be obtained, upon request, from the Office of the Attorney General, Charities Bureau, 120 Broadway, New York, NY 10271 or at www.charitiesnys.com