

September Newsletter:

This has been the summer of Stewardship. Where should we begin?

1. Management plans: Every one of our preserves has a management plan. As we were writing these, we did not aim for a perfect plan, but we wanted a plan that could be revised in future years. Many of the plans have already been modified. We discovered the deficiencies as we were working on the monitoring reports and made the necessary changes. This is still a work in progress, and it will be a continuing effort. Thank you summer interns for getting this started
2. Monitoring reports: To get accreditation, we need 3 years of monitoring reports. We have that and we are getting more: the 2017 reports are sort of complete, the 2018 reports were done last year and were much better, the 2019 reports are great, and the 2020 reports will get done, but they will be a real challenge...they are going to be done in the winter. We may be being a little passive aggressive, but if they want 3 years of reports, we will give them 4 years and let them tell us that all we saw in 2020 was ice and snow. Hey, welcome to Central New York. This time, the thanks go to the stewards.
3. Improvements at properties:
 - A. Old Fly: The beavers are flooding the trail system. One board walk is flooded and we are moving it to another location because another trail is also flooded. This is being done with the help of the Fabius-Pompey fifth graders... each student will move one board.
 - B. Heron Marsh: You may have read about this "stinking swamp". Again, beavers are causing flooding, but we did a little maintenance on a previously installed Clemson Pond leveller and the water level went down. The water level is down on our property, but not on neighbors who live .75 miles away. We think there is another dam farther upstream on somebody else's property. Thanks this time to the Onondaga Soil and Water Conservation District for their help.
 - C. Rosewood wetlands: We paid a tree man to cut down a tree that was falling on a shed and three neighbors' fences. This is a problem we have when we own preserves in residential areas. We had the tree cut, but we should not in the business of cutting trees. Unfortunately, this will happen again and again.
 - D. Heron Marsh...again: The Emerald Ash Borer beetles are killing ash trees and these are going to fall on fences, swimming pools, and houses. One house has about 6 trees that are about to fall. We have looked at them, but we haven't done much else.
 - E. Whiskey Hollow: Thank you Girls Scouts in Troop 10210. They made about 500 feet of the prettiest trail you have ever seen. A bucket of wood chips makes about one foot of trail, and all of the chips, bucket by bucket, were carried up the hill. (Guess how many trips were made?)
 - F. Ripley Hill: A sign thanking the Finger Lakes Land Trust was put up, and the rest of the trail was marked.
 - G. Three Falls Woods: We have a parking lot. We hope you will visit it on September 18 and take a walk with us. Thanks go to Phil Bonn. There is still much to do there, but this is going to be a diamond that we will love.
4. Other initiatives:
 - A. Riverwalk: More houses are being built so that means more trail will be built. There is another problem that we need to address....Deer are munching on neighbors' gardens. We are trying to figure this one out. Other land trusts have programs where permits to hunt are given to neighbors. We may copy one of these programs.
 - B. Pleasant Valley Preserve: A recent acquisition has dramatically increased the size of this preserve to over 200 acres. We need to figure out parking, a trail system, and beaver activity. You will love this area after some improvements have been made.
 - C. Beacon Pond: SRC, Inc. approached us earlier in the summer about making a small trail for their employees. I have to follow up on this one to see what progress has been made.

D. High Hickory: This is going to be another destination you will enjoy. The trail leads to some special areas, but this area is also going to educate visitors about the relationship between the watershed and drinking water in Skaneateles Lake. Plans are being made to show how farmers live in harmony with the environment. So far, just plans. We will let you know when there is more to see.

It has been a very busy summer, and a very important summer. This newsletter has been about stewardship, but the Central New York Land Trust has been busy in other areas as well: acquisitions, outreach, and a lot of internal work towards accreditation. For a more formal report, please come to the Annual Meeting on October 24.

Finally, we are having our fourth and final walk of the year on September 18. This will be at Three Falls Woods. We will meet in the new parking lot at 5:30 and then walk in to the rim of the gorge. The trail has not yet been made, but we will have a good guide and you will see why we value this property so highly regarded.

Thank you for making this a summer to remember.