OPEN SPACE

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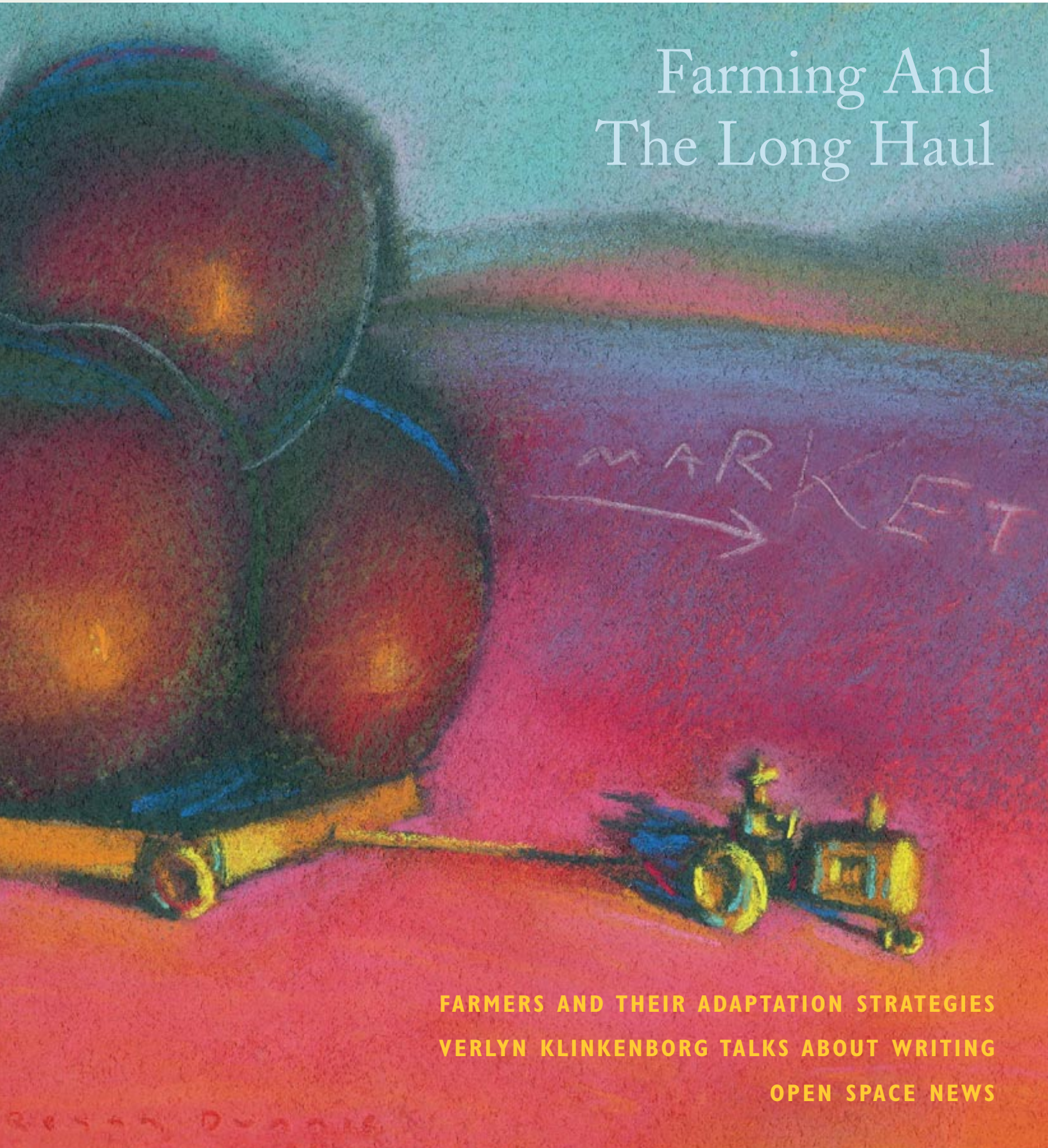

Farming And The Long Haul

FARMERS AND THEIR ADAPTATION STRATEGIES

VERLYN KLINKENBORG TALKS ABOUT WRITING

OPEN SPACE NEWS

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MISSION OF THE OPEN SPACE INSTITUTE, INC.

The Open Space Institute protects scenic, natural, and historic landscapes to ensure public enjoyment, conserve habitats, and sustain community character. OSI achieves its goals through land acquisition, conservation easements, special loan programs, and creative partnerships.

OPEN SPACE INSTITUTE

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COVER: PASTEL ILLUSTRATION BY REGAN DUNNICK

FROM THE EDITORS

Kim Elliman and Joe Martens.

Every minute, two acres of farmland are lost in the United States. That's 120 acres an hour, 2,880 acres a day, and 1,051,200 acres a year. Replaced instead with parking lots, shopping malls and residential subdivisions, this acreage of gently sloping hills, fertile soils, and open fields is gone forever.

The loss of farmland in the Northeast is vastly apparent, particularly in OSI's geography: New Jersey, portions of western Massachusetts, and New York's Hudson River Valley, rated by American Farmland Trust as one of the top ten most threatened agricultural areas in the entire country.

During the past ten years, through a variety of strategies, the Open Space Institute has worked with 25 farmers to simultaneously protect their land in perpetuity and help ensure the likelihood that their farms remain viable and productive in the face of global competition, development pressures, and many other challenges. We will continue to work with individual farmers to identify opportunities to permanently protect agricultural landscapes.

Flipping through Websters, we are reminded of the full definition of the word "cultivate." Originating from Latin *(cultivare)*, it means to grow crops and tend the land. It also means "To seek the acquaintance or good will of."

As you will read in these pages, the future of family farms depends not only on growing crops but on the cultivation of friendships and partnerships. Whether farmers are pulling 18-hour days to sell their produce at a New York City greenmarket or welcoming local residents to their farms, a stronger connection between grower and consumer is critical to success.

Drop Us a Line

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In this issue of OPEN SPACE, we asked Jan Greenberg, a Dutchess County resident and award winning journalist, to write our feature *(see page 4)* because Jan knows farmers intimately and is well acquainted with the daily challenges they face.

Ron Khosla, who was recently (October 14) awarded the 2005 Glynwood Harvest Farmers Award for his exemplary work in support of sustainable agriculture, writes about his CSA in New Paltz and the experience of marketing his produce to a local, mostly rural buyer *(see page 10)*. Tom Strumolo, director of the Greenmarket, describes an urban marketplace that has been for 30 years the lifeblood for many farmers in New York's Hudson River Valley *(see page 11)*. And Kate Bartley reports on farmers who have successfully adapted their operations to survive *(see page 8)*.

In this issue we are also introducing a new look for OSI *(see below)*. In light of our programmatic and geographic growth — see page 13 for news about our new conservation loan funds for the Southern Appalachians and western Massachusetts — we have developed a new logo that emphasizes our strategy of landscape level conservation. By adopting this image of a river traversing a mountainous landscape, we are underscoring our commitment to the expansiveness and timelessness of the natural places we protect. We thank creative consultant Paul Soulellis for capturing the spirit of OSI through this simple and telling image.

Open Space Institute

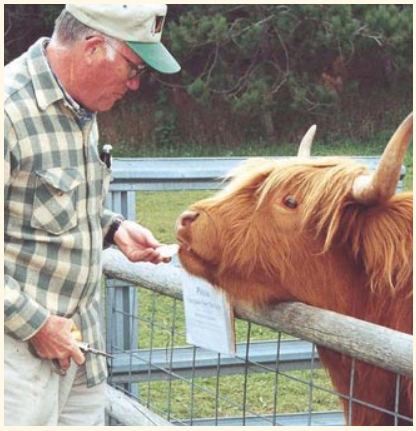
We hope you enjoy this issue of OPEN SPACE. As always, we thank you for your support and commitment.

Best wishes.

Kim Elliman,
Chief Executive Officer

Joe Martens,
President

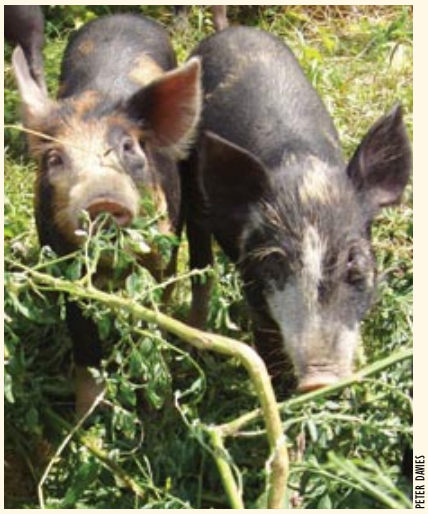
DIETRICH C. GEHRING/INDIAN LADDER FARMS



KIRSTEN FERGUSON

Indian Ladder Farms, top, was protected through a conservation easement recently acquired by OSI and partners. Above, Peter Ten Eyck, is the fourth generation to continue the tradition of farming at Indian Ladder Farms in New Scotland, Albany County.

Below, Ossabaw pigs at Turkana Farms in Columbia County.



PETER DAVIES

VISIT ONE OF THE HUDSON VALLEY'S FARMERS' MARKETS AT THE HEIGHT OF THE HARVEST AND YOU WILL ENTER A WORLD THAT BEGAN IN THE SUMMER OF 1976. THAT WAS THE YEAR THAT SEVEN HUDSON VALLEY FARMERS SET UP TABLES ON A 200 BY 60 FOOT VACANT LOT UNDER THE 59TH STREET BRIDGE IN NEW YORK CITY AND BEGAN SELLING GOODS DIRECT FROM THEIR FARMS.

It was the start of Greenmarket, the lifeblood of many small family farms throughout the Valley. Observing this new venture, the produce manager of a nearby supermarket commented, "It will be interesting to see how this thing develops. Hopefully, it doesn't."

Develop it did, beginning the resurgence of the area's agricultural heritage, one that began with Henry Hudson's sail up his namesake river in 1609. The waterway became the highway on which agricultural products grown and produced along its banks were transported to the vast New York City marketplace. By the mid-1950's, however, the river, of which painter Thomas Cole said its "natural magnificence is unsurpassed," was a polluted mess. Farmland became worth more for development than agriculture. The growing population required police, fire and other services. Taxes rose, and farmers who owned most of the open land, shouldered the burden. "Cows don't go to school" became a rallying cry for the few who recognized that this agricultural heartland was becoming a landscape of malls and suburban sprawl.

Farmers like Tivoli's Ken Migliorelli could not have remained in agriculture were it not for Greenmarket. In the 1970s, prior to the Greenmarket, selling wholesale brought in an average of 21 cents on the retail dollar whereas selling direct meant collecting 100 percent. Migliorelli now oversees a 400-acre operation which employs about 20 people. Migliorelli still sends trucks to New York City Greenmarkets but now also sells at area markets as well as his stand near the Kingston-Rhinecliff Bridge. "That first year of the Greenmarket," says Migliorelli,

THE FATE OF FARMING

BY JAN GREENBERG

COURTESY OF NYC GREENMARKET

DIETRICH C. GEHRING/INDIAN LADDER FARMS

COURTESY OF NYC GREENMARKET

"I figured we had nothing to lose. We were selling a lot wholesale but just weren't profitable. Selling direct at the Greenmarket, we ended up doubling our best year."

Direct sales also meant direct communication between farmers and consumers. It wasn't always easy for producers, most of whom had never dealt one to one with their customers. But as consumers tasted, often for the first time, the difference between fresh, just-picked product and what came from their supermarket shelves, a connection was made between food on the plate and where it came from.

Efforts began to reclaim the area's agricultural heritage. In 1997, the American Farmland Trust named the Hudson Valley one of the nation's ten most endangered farmland areas. Nonprofit land conservation groups like OSI, Scenic Hudson, and dozens of small local land trusts began to work with farmers on programs such as the acquisition of property development rights, legislative initiatives and tax relief.

Most farm sales continue to be direct, with individual farmers selling at what is now an extensive network of 40 Greenmarkets throughout New York City and about fifty seasonal markets throughout Valley. Agritourism, including farm visits, seasonal festivals, and pick-your-own, plays an increasing role. CSA's (community supported agriculture) supply produce, dairy products, baked goods and even livestock to participants who sign up and pay in advance for a share of a farm's output. Some members pick up weekly at the farm while others pick up at designated delivery spots through New York City and the Hudson River Valley (see articles on pages 10 & 11 for more information about Greenmarkets and CSA's).

Some restaurants work directly with specialized niche growers to supply exclusively grown and raised products and others work with consortiums that contract with local farms to grow specific product and then truck it into the city. There is an understanding of value added, ranging from simple preserves and relishes made from locally grown fruits and vegetables to the well-known Ronnybrook Farm Dairy's flavored milks, yogurts and ice cream. A growing network of first-rate cheese producers use milk from Hudson Valley raised sheep, goats and cows.

There is recognition of the metropolitan area's growing ethnic market

Continued on page 6

"That first year of the Greenmarket," says Migliorelli, "I figured we had nothing to lose. We were selling a lot wholesale but just weren't profitable. Selling direct at the Greenmarket, we ended up doubling our best year."

FARMING *continued from page 5*

and interest in heritage breeds of livestock. In pastures that abut the New York State Thruway between Kingston and Saugerties, Dr. John Addrizzo raises meat goats which he sells to Halal Fresh Meats and direct from the farm to customers for whom goat is part of traditional religious and holiday feasts.

In Columbia County, Germantown grower Peter Davies this summer became the first in the region to raise Ossabaw pigs at Turkana Farms. These are the pigs descended from the pigs left off the Southern coast by early Spanish explorers and contain a fat rich in oleic acid, the same fat in olive oil which promotes the production of "good cholesterol." In addition to tasting, well, like real pork, the Ossabaw is among this year's hot menu items.

The question, of course, is what does the future hold for agriculture in the Hudson Valley. One segment that is ripe for growth is the area's livestock potential. Nationwide, farmers cannot keep up with the demand for pastured, humanely raised, non-antibiotic loaded animals. According to Mark Grennan, of the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, "Livestock is where produce was years ago. There is a huge market for well-raised animals and the Hudson Valley is one of the best areas in the country for raising beef. We have ample water and tremendous grass resources and for many years, this has been underutilized."

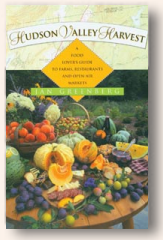
The problem is infrastructure. Stephen Kaye is organizer of the Valley Livestock Marketing Cooperative. It offers customers the convenience of a single pick up location and offers farmers marketing services and transportation to slaughtering facilities. Right now, he must drive animals to a slaughterhouse in Vermont. "A critical need," he says. "is a local slaughterhouse, cutting rooms and more efficient transportation to market."

"We are at a crossroads," says Jerry Cosgrove, northeast director of the American Farmland Trust, which recently concluded that the next ten years are critical to the future of farming in the Hudson Valley. "We need to move quickly to strengthen the agricultural businesses and secure the agricultural land base as development pressures continue to increase and real estate prices skyrocket."

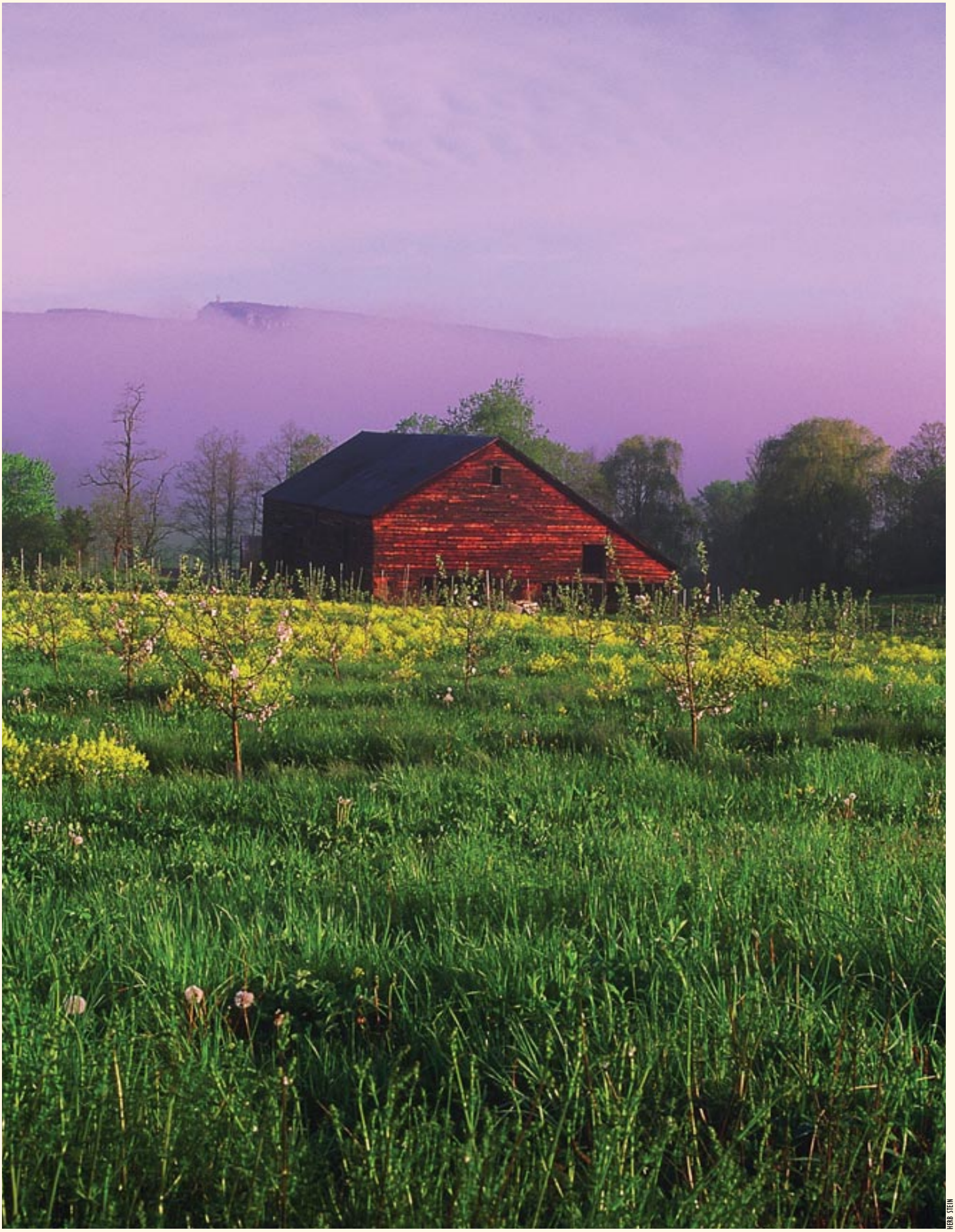
Compared to its neighboring states, New York State's commitment to farmland preservation is paltry. In 2003, Pennsylvania allocated $43 million and the small state of New Jersey dedicated $80 million. Although requests from farmers totaled $86 million, New York appropriated just $12 million.

The Community Preservation Act, which would give local communities the means to enact real estate transfer taxes and raise funds dedicated for land conservation, was passed by the New York State Assembly but did not move in the Senate. Several towns in Long Island and the town of Warwick in Orange County have been able to implement the transfer tax but, says, Cosgrove, "We need Hudson Valley legislators to get some backbone and push for this act."

Of most importance, according to Cosgrove, is the creation of a Hudson Valley Agricultural Development Corporation. Many groups are working on agricultural preservation and initiatives throughout the region but there is little coordination among these groups. There is also little incentive for the counties in the Hudson Valley to work together. The American Farmland Trust is currently working to raise seed money for such an organization which will hopefully be formed by early next year. "We need," says Cosgrove, "an entity with sufficient authority and resources to implement and develop an integrated and broad array of agricultural development initiatives."



Jan Greenberg is the author of Hudson Valley Harvest: A Food Lover's Guide to Farms, Restaurants and Open-Air Markets, a useful reference for people in search of nearby farmers' markets, vineyards, festivals and family activities throughout the Hudson River Valley. Her Food Arts Magazine feature on the Hudson Valley received the Association of Food Journalists' award for "Best Food Feature in a Magazine."



HERB STEIN

Ulster County, N.Y., farm with a glimpse of the Shawangunk Ridge through the morning mist.

FARMERS SHARE THEIR STRATEGIES TO ADAPT

BY KATE BARTLEY

AS A CONSERVATION PARTNER, OSI HAS WORKED WITH MORE THAN 25 FARMERS THROUGHOUT THE HUDSON RIVER VALLEY. Through outright land acquisitions, often in conjunction with lease or resale arrangements with local farmers, and through the purchase of development rights, OSI protects unspoiled viewsheds and encourages continued agricultural operations in areas facing intensive development pressure. We are often reminded, and humbled, by the fact that the permanence of family farms, while profound, is just one of many challenges that farmers face. We have checked in with four farmers we've worked with over the years to see how they are adapting to the numerous challenges of running a farm.

With his family, George Allen (far right) runs a large scale dairy in upstate New York.

MICHAEL HOCHHAUSEL

ALLENWAITE FARM, EASTON, NY

"Farming is in our blood," says George Allen, the current patriarch of the seven generation Allenwaite Farm in Washington County. Along with his sons, Allen runs a large dairy operation housing about 1,000 cows that provide milk products to markets along the Northeastern seaboard. "We've had to grow our dairy operations to stay competitive," says Allen, "We depend on the economic efficiencies offered by large scale farming." As with most Hudson Valley farms, Allenwaite is a family affair. Allen and his family routinely put in 14-hour days and Norman, Allen's 83-year-old father, helps out every day. "It requires hard work and dedication," Allen says, "but I get to walk out the door each morning and view land that my family has worked for generations."

Richard Hodgson, Jr., and his wife, Melissa, were among the first farmers in the USA to create a corn maze.

JENNIFER GROSSMAN

HODGSON'S FARM, WALDEN, NY

In the mid 1940s, Richard Hodgson Sr. started a chicken farm for egg production in Orange County. At its peak, Hodgson's Farm housed 50,000 chickens who in turn created a lot of fertilizer. "When the egg business experienced a downturn in the mid 70s, we bought more land and put the manure to good use growing vegetables," says second generation farmer Rich Hodgson, Jr. "But even though we did well selling vegetables at the greenmarkets, we have had to diversify to stay in business." Hodgson and his wife Melissa were among the first farmers in the United States to put in a corn maze and a petting zoo. "Entertainment farming is the wave of the future for small farmers who want to stay in business," says Hodgson.

KATE BARTLEY

Jean-Paul Courtens and his wife, Jody Bolluyt, run a successful CSA in Columbia County.

DIETRICH C. GEHRING/INDIAN LADDER FARMS

Laurie Ten Eyck is the fifth generation to farm at Indian Ladder Farms in Albany County.

INDIAN LADDER FARMS, ALTAMONT, NY

A fourth generation orchard, Indian Ladder Farms is one of two remaining fruit farms of 60 that populated Albany County a century ago. Once a gentleman's farm raising a herd of Guernsey dairy cows, Indian Ladder has evolved over 90 years into today's lively mix of pick-your-own, a farm store, hay rides, the Yellow Rock Café restaurant, a baby animal petting farm, the Barn School summer camp, a wedding locale for rent, and the Helderberg Farmer's Market every Saturday morning July through October. Laurie Ten Eyck has taken over management of the farm from her father Peter Ten Eyck. She is the fifth generation of Ten Eycks to farm. "The apple orchard business is highly seasonal as well as weather dependent, so we needed to diversify. Creating several small retail operations took the pressure off and has allowed us stay on our family farm," says Laurie.

ROXBURY FARM, KINDERHOOK, NY

Being directly connected to the people who consume the harvest drives the success of Columbia County's Roxbury Farm. A Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farm, Roxbury is one of the largest of its type in the country and grows vegetables, herbs, melons, and strawberries for 950 members living in the Capital Region, Columbia and Westchester Counties, and Manhattan. Organic farmer Jean-Paul Courtens founded Roxbury Farm in 1990 using biodynamic agricultural principles. Along with his wife Jody Bolluyt, their apprentices, and family members, Courtens produces a weekly share for CSA members totaling about 375 pounds each for the season. "Roxbury Farm joins people with the farmers in a direct relationship," says Courtens. "Members benefit from knowing where their food comes from, who grows it, and how, and we gain a stable consumer base."

Kate Bartley is a freelance environmental writer and graduate student in the Environmental Conservation Education Program at New York University. She grew up in Southeastern Michigan near her grandmother's family farm.

BY RON KHOSLA, *Huguenot Street Farm*

If I only knew in Junior High that the secret to popularity was to feed people fresh organic  vegetables!

In 1999, my wife Kate and I started Huguenot Street Farm as a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) project here in New Paltz, NY. We are one of approximately 2,000 CSA's in the country right now. They average 35 "shareholders" who come once a week to pick up a basket of just-picked organic fruits and vegetables. To become a shareholder, you pre-pay a fixed price at the beginning of the season (in our case it starts at $325/family), and accept both the risks and rewards of our Hudson Valley 5-6 month harvest season.

WITH HIS WIFE KATE, RON KHOSLA RUNS HUGUENOT STREET FARM, A COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE (CSA) PROJECT IN NEW PALTZ, NEW YORK. THROUGH THE CSA, RON AND KATE SHARE THE RISKS AND THE BOUNTY OF EACH FARM SEASON WITH 235 MEMBERS WHO LIVE LOCALLY AND VISIT THE FARM DURING HARVEST SEASON TO PICK UP THEIR SHARE.

Though we started out small with 25 shareholders the first year, perhaps to make up for all those hard, lonely years in Junior High, Kate and I somehow ended up with a 235 member CSA for 2005. Over 90% of the members return year after year and we already have a waiting list for 2006!

From Thursday through Sunday, our farm is crowded with people making use of the "bonus" U-Pick areas picking flowers, cherry tomatoes and raspberries. There are kids catching tadpoles in the pond, squirting each other with the hose in front of the greenhouse and just outside my window I can see them devouring the raspberry patch. (It's okay, it fully recovers every 2 days or so).

"We're never alone in this — our problems and successes are shared by 700 other people that have committed to sustaining themselves on local food"

We used to deliver down to New York City, and to be honest, the prices there are much better. We are getting maybe 25-30% of the price per pound that our two farmer friends who do NYC Greenmarkets get. But by focusing on our local market, we have drastically reduced our operating costs. We have no need for a delivery truck since everyone — CSA members and restaurant owners — comes to the farm. We give out an enormous amount of produce for what people pay, but don't wash, sort, bunch, pack or any of the things other farmers have to do. It's MUCH faster for us, and it's the secret to how the farm can profitably support us even as we sell our vegetables for a fraction of the going rate. We learned early on that washing, sorting, packing and driving accounted for more than 75% of the cost that went into getting that tomato to the customer!

If you visit on a pick-up day you'll generally see instructions like "Take 1-2 bags of any kind of Greens." Sure it's true that one persons "bag of Kale" may be stuffed to several times the size of someone else's, but… they both seem happy, so everyone wins! If it's a popular week for Greens, well… we just run out to the field and harvest some more. You can't do that at a Farmer's Market!

Kate and I wake up every morning excited for a new day on the farm. It's a busy way of life during the growing season, but busy doesn't have to mean stressful. We know by April that all our expenses and profits are paid for and in the bank. All we have to do is grow the vegetables and haul them up to the front of the property to be snatched up by our friends and neighbors! We're never alone in this — our problems and successes are shared by 700 other people that have committed to sustaining themselves on local food — for better and for worse!! I can't think of a better way to farm — or to make a living.

For more information about Huguenot Street Farm, visit ***www.flyingbeet.com***

BY TOM STRUMOLO, *Director, Greenmarket*

AS DIRECTOR OF THE LARGEST NETWORK OF FARMERS' MARKETS IN THE COUNTRY, I AM PROUD TO ADVOCATE FOR LOCAL FOOD.

But I like to remind people that it's nothing new. A hundred years ago, over 95% of Americans lived on farms. Industrial cities were surrounded by agriculture, and city dwellers ate food brought by horse and buggy from nearby farms. In the 1800s, Brooklyn was the most productive agricultural county in the United States. My own grandfather farmed on Long Island. Local food made up the bulk of the American diet.

Industrial cities were surrounded by agriculture, and city dwellers ate food brought by horse and buggy from nearby farms. In the 1800s, Brooklyn was the most productive agricultural county in the United States. My own grandfather farmed on Long Island. Local food made up the bulk of the American diet.

But in the 20th century, refrigerated transportation enabled large farms to grow food far from cities. Wholesale prices dropped. Cities sprawled into suburbia, and land values rose. Many small family farms which had fed the cities were lost to development. The Hudson Valley became one of the most threatened agricultural regions in the country.

Meanwhile, food quality suffered as produce was grown not for taste and nutrition but for ability to withstand machine harvest and long-distance transport. By the 1970s, New Yorkers complained of mealy apples, wilted lettuce, and hard, pink tomatoes.

Greenmarket was a natural solution to a two-fold problem: by selling their home-grown crops direct to consumers in New York City, local farms could stay in business and bring fresh, healthful foods to city neighborhoods. Greenmarket's founders, Barry Benepe and Bob Lewis, started with an $800 grant from America The Beautiful, a private foundation, and successfully persuaded numerous city agencies to allow their farmers' market experiment. After conversations with Lys McLaughlin, executive director of the Council on the Environment of NYC (CENYC), they decided a good home for Greenmarket would be the CENYC.

Our first market opened in July of 1976. Seven growers brought their tomatoes, lettuce, raspberries, blueberries, peaches, and corn. The customer response was overwhelming. According to one farmer, Dick Hodgson, who attended that first morning and still sells at Greenmarket: "The people were 15 deep. I couldn't believe it. They went after the corn so fast I just dumped it on the ground. The people fell on it, stripped it, threw the husks around. They were fighting, grabbing, snatching up anything they could get their hands on. I had never seen anything like it. We sold a full truck in 5 hours. It was as if there was a famine going on."

TOM STRUMOLO IS THE DIRECTOR OF THE NEW YORK CITY GREENMARKET, WHICH RUNS FARMERS' MARKETS AT 40 DIFFERENT LOCATIONS THROUGHOUT THE CITY, SERVING APPROXIMATELY 250,000 CUSTOMERS EVERY WEEK. IN CONTRAST TO THE CSA APPROACH. THE GREENMARKET BRINGS THE FARM TO THE CUSTOMER.

Tom Strumolo's aunts, circa late 1920s, at the family farm in Patchogue, Long Island. In the 1960s, when Tom's grandfather died pruning a fruit tree at the age of 97, the fate of the family farm was called into question. It was the subject of agonizing debate in the Strumolo family until it was finally determined that the farm would be sold to a developer, an outcome that Tom regrets to this day.

Hudson Valley farmers who had been selling tomatoes wholesale for three cents a pound got ten times that at the Harlem Greenmarket. What began with 7 farmers in an empty lot in 1976 has grown into the largest network of its kind in the country, with rigorous "grow-your-own" standards. In peak season we run farmers' markets in 40 locations citywide, attended by almost 200 local food producers, who sell to 250,000 customers a week. Close to 30,000 regional acres are kept in open space.

For more information about the Greenmarket, log on to ***www.cenyc.org***.

ROCHELLE ROSENFELD

OSI has pledged to raise $1.45 million to permanently protect Arrowhead Farm (left) in Ulster County. The Davis family has been farming the land since 1911.

Tahawus Phase 2

In September 2005, after nearly two years of planning, OSI submitted its "Phase II" application to the APA for its signature Tahawus Tract, which, once approved, will result in: a nearly 7,000-acre addition to the Adirondack Forest Preserve; a 3,000-acre, sustainably managed, "working forest" open for public recreation; the restoration of the Mt. Adams Fire Tower and associated Ranger's Cabin; the partial restoration and interpretation of the abandoned Village of Adirondac and 1854 Blast Furnace; and, the sale of the 1906 "Masten" House to a conservation buyer.

In addition, OSI's efforts to expand recreational opportunities at the Tahawus Tract include a plan to acquire a rail corridor once used by NL Industries to transport titanium dioxide to distant markets. OSI plans to convey to the State of New York a 23-mile segment of the railroad right-of-way (ROW) for use as a recreational trail. OSI also plans to convey 5 miles of the ROW to Warren County and approximately 2 miles to Barton Mines Company for potential future rail use.

During development of its disposition plan, OSI, in cooperation with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, opened up most of the Tahawus property for public use. Log on to **www.osiny.org** for details.

Campaign To Protect Historic Farm

In August, OSI entered into an agreement with the Davis family, the owners of the 293-acre Arrowhead Farm in the Town of Rochester, Ulster County, in which OSI has 18 months to raise $1.45 million to acquire an agricultural easement permanently protecting the picturesque farm. The Davis family has been farming here since 1911 and intends to continue.

Arrowhead Farm anchors the southern end of a corridor of agricultural lands in the Rondout Valley that is considered one of the most important agricultural "breadbaskets" in New York. OSI intends to seek a farmland protection grant from the NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets, as well as local donations, in order to complete the protection of Arrowhead Farm.

OSI Announces New Loan Funds

This summer, the Open Space Institute announced two new loan funds to protect threatened landscapes in western Massachusetts and the Southern Appalachian Mountains.

The funds will provide short-term, low-interest loans to land trusts working to permanently protect working farms and forests, as well as other ecologically sensitive landscapes.

In the Southern Appalachians, which includes parts of North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Georgia, and Alabama, OSI made its first loan in August, lending $3 million to the Carolina Mountains Land Conservancy to help protect a 1,600-acre tract known as "World's Edge." The property, located in western North Carolina, will become part of the newly authorized Hickory Nut Gorge State Park, and is a top acquisition priority for the State of North Carolina.

The loan fund was an outgrowth of an OSI study of threats and conservation opportunities in the region, funded by the Lyndhurst, Z. Smith Reynolds, and McClure Foundations and the Merck Family Fund.

Also this summer, OSI created a revolving loan fund in western Massachusetts, launched with an initial $2 million contribution from the Kohlberg Foundation. The fund was preceded by a detailed conservation assessment of the region, also funded by the Kohlberg Foundation.

In September, OSI made a $250,000 loan to the Mt. Grace Conservation Land Trust to purchase a 140-acre parcel near the Northfield State Forest in the Quabbin region of western Massachusetts.

Log on to **www.osiny.org** for OSI's detailed conservation assessments of these regions.

Joint Venture Bids $17 Million for Awosting Reserve

In late October, the Open Space Institute and its Joint Venture partner, the Trust for Public Land, offered $17 million for 2,518 acres of a privately held property known as the Awosting Reserve in Ulster County, New York. If the Joint Venture is successful in its bid, the land will be added to the adjacent Minnewaska State Park Preserve.

The Awosting Reserve encompasses a large swath of the eastern escarpment of the Shawangunk Ridge, where OSI has protected more than 19,000 acres through its Shawangunk Ridge Land Protection Program.

Two years ago, the private owner of the Awosting Reserve proposed a 350-unit subdivision which would have posed a considerable threat to the wild beauty and delicate ecology of the Shawangunk Ridge. In response, the local community launched a highly visible campaign to "Save the Ridge."

New Study About Factory Farms

"New York has not only failed to regulate factory farms, it has starved DEC of the resources it needs to oversee the 600+ factory farms currently in the state," said Robert Moore, executive director of Environmental Advocates at a recent press conference announcing a report detailing the impacts of factory farms on public health. The report was prepared by Sierra Club and Citizens' Environmental Coalition and is available online at **http://www.sierraclub.org/factory**

Remembering Gaylord Nelson, Father of Earth Day

The founder of earth-day, co-sponsor of many pivotal environmental laws, former governor and senator, Gaylord Nelson, died this summer. His legacy as an environmentalist will always be celebrated. Nelson will also be remembered for his sharp mind, turn of phrase and endless capacity for humor, even under duress. In 1974, he had this to say about Tom Petri, with whom Nelson competed for a U.S. Senate seat: "an able, honest, talented, fair-minded, perceptive man of commitment and dedication." And then Nelson quipped, "How often do you find two people like that in the same race?"

Judge Rules On Mega Resort

An administrative judge required more data from the proposed massive development, the Belleayre Resort, within the Catskills Park. In September, Judge Richard R. Wissler of New York's Department of Environmental Conservation ruled that 12 issues, including water supply, aquatic habitats, and wildlife, would require thorough examination in an adjudicatory hearing. To read the entire ruling, log on to **www.friendsofbelleayre.org**

Report On Alien Invaders

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and the Department of Agriculture and Markets have released a draft report on invasive species. The public is encouraged to log on to **www.dec.state.ny.us** to view a copy of the report and voice comments which can be sent via email to **fwhabtat@gw.dec.state.ny.us**.

Another Record Breaking Apple Harvest

Thanks to abundant sunshine this summer, the New York Apple Association predicts 27 million bushels. The most popular variety is McIntosh, followed by Empire, Red Delicious, and Rome, to name a few. Log on to **www.nyfarmsinfo.com** to find out where you can pick apples.

New Incentives For Charitable Donations

The newly enacted Katrina Emergency Tax Relief Act of 2005 provides incentives for large cash contributions to charities in 2005, even if such charities are not involved in hurricane relief.

Under the legislation, cash donations to charities such as Open Space Institute made between August 28th and December 31st, 2005, may be deductible up to the full amount of the donor's adjusted gross income (AGI). Normally, cash donations can only be deducted to the extent of 50% of a donor's AGI. Cash contributions in excess of the special 2005 deductibility limits may be carried forward and deducted for up to five years.

Donors who contemplate making large cash gifts to OSI in 2005 should contact Tally Blumberg, OSI's director of development, at 212-290-8200 for further details.

NY Open Space Plan

Every three years, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation update the State's Open Space Conservation Plan, with the assistance of nine regional advisory committees. The Plan guides the State's land acquisition program, which has helped to preserve more than 900,000 acres during the last decade with the expenditure of nearly $600 million. A draft update to the 2002 Plan will be released this fall and will be followed by public hearings across the State. The hearings are a great opportunity for the conservation community to encourage the State to continue its aggressive land acquisition program and to enhance the Environmental Protection Fund, which is the State's primary source of open space funding. Log on to **www.dec.state.ny.us** for more information.

Update On Casinos In The Catskills BY MARK IZEMAN

PHOTO COURTESY NRDC

SINCE LAST JANUARY, A COALITION OF ENVIRONMENTAL, LAND TRUST AND CIVIC GROUPS — INCLUDING OSI — HAS BEEN VIGOROUSLY FIGHTING RENEWED PLANS TO BUILD MULTIPLE LAS VEGAS-STYLE CASINOS IN THE SOUTHERN CATSKILLS IN SULLIVAN COUNTY.

Under one scenario, now being considered in Albany, Indian tribes would build three massive casino complexes. The locations they have proposed are the Kutscher's Sports Academy (or the Raceway) in Monticello; directly along a one-mile stretch of the Neversink River in Bridgeville; and at the base of the Shawangunk Ridge in Mamakating.

According to the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), which has spearheaded the anti-casino coalition, these giant casino developments — one of the proposed casinos is comparable in size to the MGM Grand, the largest casino in Las Vegas — would bring transformative changes to the region and result in a wide array of adverse environmental impacts.

The proposed casino in Mamakating, for example, would mar the magnificent landscape of the Shawangunk Ridge and threaten its delicate ecosystem — one of the highest priority areas for biodiversity conservation in the northeastern United States. The Neversink casino proposal would likely result in increased water temperatures in this celebrated river, posing a significant threat to aquatic life, including the world's healthiest population of dwarf wedge mussels and 29 other globally rare species.

More broadly, casino development would also cause a dramatic increase in traffic and congestion on Route 17 and Route 17A, the region's main arteries. According to a study conducted for NRDC by an independent engineering firm, the development of multiple casinos would generate miles of backups and would potentially double the volume on key stretches of Route 17.

The new casinos would also trigger substantial secondary development, including thousands of new housing units, gas stations, shopping strips, and fast-food restaurants built to support the casino industry.

Due in significant part to the advocacy work of the anti-casino coalition, there has been some scaling back of the original casino proposals in recent months. The Governor, who was pushing for five casinos in February, appears, at least for now, to be seeking approvals in the state Legislature for just one casino, a position that the Assembly leadership also seems to support. But the State Senate, led by Majority Leader Joseph Bruno, remains determined to hold out for at least three casinos. We will keep you posted on this critical environmental and open space battle.

Mark Izeman is a senior attorney at NRDC, where he has been coordinating their casino advocacy work.

OSI In the Catskills

"TO PROTECT YOUR RIVERS, PROTECT YOUR MOUNTAINS" — *Emperor Yu of China, 1600 BC*

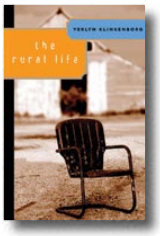
Located about 100 miles northwest of New York City, the 705,000-acre Catskill Park is comprised of a patchwork of public and private land. The Park has 98 peaks rising above 3,000 feet in elevation, miles of trout streams, picturesque valleys, an abundance of working farms and forests, and quaint hamlets. It was these outstanding natural, historic and cultural features that drew OSI to the Catskills more than 30 years ago. Led by John Adams, OSI's founder and chair, OSI has protected more than 20,000 acres in the Catskills, principally in the Beaverkill Valley in the southwestern corner of the Park.

While our work in the Beaverkill Valley continues, OSI has expanded its landscape protection effort to include the upper reaches of the iconic Overlook Mountain in the eastern Catskills. In partnership with the Woodstock Land Conservancy and the State of New York, OSI has protected close to 400 acres on Overlook. We're also looking to protect large, unfragmented blocks of farms and forests throughout the Catskills that will help protect New York City's watershed and stabilize the region's rural economy.

RECOMMENDED READING

Verlyn Klinkenborg Writes From The Heart In THE RURAL LIFE *(Little, Brown)*

By James Norton



An airline pilot or interstate trucker will shrug at the distance between Times Square and upstate New York. New York's a big state, but the physical distance between city and country is one that modern infrastructure transcends with a casual flick of concrete and metal.

Emotionally, however, it's a longer trip. People still raise animals in the countryside. A few hours south, people are consumed by the nuances of restaurant openings.

Verlyn Klinkenborg's words span the gap. Reaching a national audience through publications including The New York Times (where he also serves on the editorial board), Klinkenborg's lean prose brings the country life to urban sophisticates who may never have set eyes on a live chicken, let alone raised one from egg to adulthood.

He doesn't underestimate the challenge of his work.

"It's very hard to explain to someone how profound the satisfaction of walking into a pen and scratching a couple of red pigs behind the ears while they eat really is," Klinkenborg said in an interview by phone from New York.

Klinkenborg recently published his third book, *The Rural Life* (2002), based on a series of columns published on the editorial page of the Times. In twelve chapters that encompass a single year, starting with January, Klinkenborg offers snapshots of profound but everyday events such as driving through Wyoming in a pickup truck, picking blackberries in the rain or looking after a colony of bees.

But for all his appreciation of natural beauty, Klinkenborg avoids the syrup-sweet cliches that smother so much that is written about the natural world, and he digs into the challenges that face America's modern farmers. Among them, Klinkenborg singles out heavily subsidized corporate farms as a real threat to the American landscape.

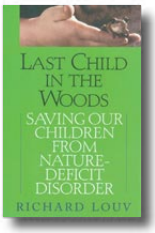
"My nutshell vision of all this is that after World War II, American agriculture made a wrong turn — a serious wrong turn," he said. "If there aren't people out there on the land watching the way the land is overseen and cared for, who is going to take care of it? Corporate America? I don't think I want that. It takes many, many, many small farmers — and many, many, many small ranchers — for the land to be really taken care of properly. Corporate America will not do it, the government will not do it. It's up to landholders themselves living on their property."

While Klinkenborg is happy to talk about his next project, a book on 18th century natural historian Gilbert White, don't ask him if he's planning to write the great American nature novel. He's not.

"I believe in the glory of nonfiction," he said. "I don't believe in the hierarchy of genres that seems to prevail in the United States. Is the novel the higher calling, or is poetry the higher calling? Frankly I think nonfiction is equally great and equally profound — and often gloriously better. I'm a convert to my own genre."

*James Norton is the co-editor of Flak Magazine (**www.flakmag.com**). His upcoming book, "Saving General Washington," will be published in spring of 2006 by Tarcher/Penguin.*

LAST CHILD IN THE WOODS: Saving Our Children From Nature Deficit Disorder



(Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill)

By Richard Louv

Richard Louv has coined the term "nature deficit" to describe the impact of alienation from the natural world. The solution, he writes, is right under our noses in our own backyards. Tell that to the fourth grader who reports, "I like to play indoors because that's where all the electrical outlets are."

THE PERILS AND PLEASURES OF DOMESTICATING GOAT CHEESE

(Catskill Press)

Words by Miles Cahn;

Pictures by Julie Cahn

Miles Cahn, who created Coach handbags, humorously documents his foray into artisanal cheese making. The farm ultimately prevails, despite major obstacles and the nagging "fear of appearing foolish," as the author puts it.

*Order this book online at **www.coachfarm.com***

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Stonewall Preserve, part of the Center for Discovery in the south-eastern Catskills, was recently protected through a conservation easement acquired by OSI.

PHOTO: ARMAND AGRESTI

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