

The Upland Journal

A publication of the Cazenovia Preservation Foundation ~ Summer 2007

Willow Patch project improves water quality

Funding is in place for the second phase of an important project that began five years ago to create a *management plan* for the Village's Willow Patch, an environmentally sensitive wetland just east of the Mill/Chenango street bridge. CPF owns "The Patch," part of a 10-acre wetland complex located at the confluence of Chittenango Creek, the outlet of Carpenter's Pond, and Cazenovia Lake.

A year-long survey to assess environmental conditions there began in 2002. A year later, Matt Potteiger—professor of landscape architecture at SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry and a former CPF board member—received a \$5,000 grant from the CNY Community Foundation that was matched by CPF. Additional gifts from Cazenovia Restoration Foundation, individuals, and many in-kind donations, helped to improve conditions in The Patch.

The initial survey and planning led to five objectives:

- Retrofitting an existing urban storm water system;
- Revealing the storm water processes and ecological functions of the system;
- Improving the water quality of storm water from the village of Cazenovia before it enters Chittenango Creek;
- Reviving the historic cultural practices of willow cultivation;
- Educating the community through action and participation in willow cultivation.

The broad, community-based undertaking has fostered cooperation from many sources. Working with the Village, SUNY-CESF, Cazenovia High School students, wetland experts, and engineers, the first stage of willow patch improvements was successfully completed in July 2005. Two "storm water filtration gardens" were constructed and the willows that were planted then are now ready to be harvested for use by school groups and the community.

The second phase of the project will complete the restoration of the filtration system, improving water quality before it leaves The Patch.

Work under way focuses on a portion of the Willow Patch adjacent to Mill Street that is the most visible and potentially most accessible to the public. However, this area also has the most problems in terms of access and visual and environmental quality. Pedestrian access down into the Willow Patch from the sidewalk on Mill Street is steep and graded with very coarse gravel. The view from



View of the Willow Patch from Mill Street showing excavations recently made by the Village of Cazenovia in order to solve drainage problems with the pipe under Mill Street. This area is the focus of the phase two of improvements and restoration of the Willow Patch.

President's Column

We were delighted at the strong turnout for CPF's Annual Meeting in May.

CPF's Annual Awards went this year to private individuals, as well as to state and local government officials. The awards were a cogent reminder of what a great year it has been for historic preservation and natural conservation and of the growing activism and commitment to these goals in government at all levels. From comprehensive planning to the purchase of development rights on farmland to the Historic Preservation Commission, a tremendous amount has been achieved.

For CPF it has also been a year of controversy. Of course, most of our activities are not subjects of contention, at least within our membership. The regular and expanding work of CPF in historic preservation and natural conservation goes on. The good news is that in spite of the recent controversy, the support of the membership remains strong. As Treasurer John Druke reported, the response to our membership appeal has been healthy indeed. In fact, we have received generous membership donations from those who opposed, and who supported, the Pioneer proposal. I want to convey my thanks, and those of the Board of Directors, for your continuing commitment to the goals of CPF.

With your active support and involvement, the upcoming year promises to be one of further accomplishments and progress. As Jana McDonald outlined at the Annual Meeting, we are actively pursuing projects that will bring several hundred additional acres of open space under the protection of easements and restrictive covenants. We will also be targeting the looming problem of preserving that treasured old landmark, the CAVAC barn. We were all grateful for Eric Byers's detailed presentation concerning that situation. The scope of the task is daunting, but I think we were all impressed by both the insightful comments and questions from the membership as well as the urgent and clear determination to see that unique and beautiful building saved for future generations.

Finally, special thanks are due to Tom Anderson and Marc Schappell for their spectacular fund-raiser at Meadowood last August in honor of Faith Knapp. Many contributed to making the event a success. Tom and Marc, however, not only provided the splendid venue, but were actively involved in every aspect of the planning and arrangements for this magnificent evening. On top of that, they paid all of the expenses themselves. The result is more than \$50,000 in a fund dedicated to the preservation of open space and farmland. It was a worthy tribute to Mrs. Knapp, to her tireless sense of public service, to her optimism, and her special élan. I'm sure not only the Board but the whole membership of CPF joins me in expressing my gratitude for Tom and Marc's generosity and vision.

Pringle Symonds quintessential CPF-er

Whether in her board seat, chairing the land use committee, attending public meetings, or briskly walking Village streets with a market basket over one arm, Pringle Symonds is a familiar face in Cazenovia.

Pringle, CPF vice president, was born in Cazenovia and attended the Central School's kindergarten and parts of second and third grades during World War II while her naval officer father was at sea. The family moved about to various ports when he was ashore. Pringle remembers the horse-drawn sidewalk snow plows and sledding on Lincklaen Street before the days of salting and re-grading. After graduating from Radcliffe College and a master's degree in library science she worked at Harvard University Library and the Library of Congress. Upon marrying John Symonds, she moved to Annapolis, a National Historic Landmark city, that she describes as "challenged with powerfully led, inappropriate development easily accepted by a docile city council." She immediately went to work full time with an innovative historic preservation group, the Historic Annapolis Foundation, which received numerous national awards for its pioneering work over the years. Sick of the city council's pro-development policies, residents used a referendum to vote in a well-drafted historic preservation ordinance.

Pringle's vocational die was cast. She served nine years as chairman of the resulting commission. Additionally, she continued to work in a private capacity on local preservation projects and planning issues. In 1989, when her husband retired, they came to Caz which reminded him of his native, rural England. Still interested in her surroundings, Pringle found, through CPF, people vitally concerned with establishing land use patterns that would preserve and enhance the environmental features of Cazenovia to preserve its special character. She has served on the board of the Friends of Lorenzo, was active for many years on the committee for the Lorenzo Driving Competition, has chaired the CPF Land Use committee since 1991, and served as co-chair of the CPF/Chamber of Commerce-sponsored



Willow Patch - Continued from page 1

the street also is not attractive. Like most wetlands the Willow Patch has been treated as a wasteland. There are generations of buried trash, and people continue to illegally dump construction debris and other materials. To maintain the sewer line and the storm water culvert that run under Mill Street, the Village must constantly remove the dams that resident beavers build on top of an exposed portion of the sewer line. This produces piles of organic debris (mud and sticks) that increase the steepness of the stream banks and impede water flow.

Changing the visual quality of the area is vital in order to change the perception of the Willow Patch from a wasteland to that of a valued and cared-for place, says Dr. Potteiger.

Less visible, but perhaps most critical are the problems with water quality. The "storm water filtration gardens" completed in phase one of the project capture and treat the "first flush" of pollutants from the Village yards and streets as it enters the willow patch. At Mill Street, experts agree the water exiting the Willow Patch and joining Chittenango Creek should be of the highest quality. Instead, the standing water, disturbed soils, steep stream banks, and lack of taller vegetation for shade results in higher water temperatures with low oxygen content and algal blooms. These conditions hinder the water quality improvements begun by the willow filtration gardens.

Phase two objectives are specific:

- *Restore ecological function and change the visual image of the Willow Patch.*

The first step is to change the wasteland image by removing debris piles, including asphalt chunks and dredged material from former beaver dams that are also detrimental to water quality. Next, the existing ecologic functions need to be strengthened by reshaping the landform to create deeper pools as well as shallow areas and more gently sloping stream banks. This will create conditions that support greater vegetation complexity and ecological diversity. Increasing shaded areas with additional willow plantings and other deciduous shrubs and trees will also help to reduce water temperatures.

- *Improve access and create a public space.*

Create an attractive area that is visible from the street for sitting, small group gatherings and events related to the history and ecology of the Willow Patch. This public space will frame the views to the Willow Patch and provide a way for the public to be "in" the Willow Patch and experience its unique qualities. The walk down to the space will need to be re-graded to meet standards for people with different abilities.

- *Develop interpretive elements integrated with the physical form and ecological processes.*

This area will function as a starting point for environmental education. However, the goal is to use a minimum of text or plaques. Instead, the structures, pathways, and other physical elements will reveal patterns, processes and stories that people can experience directly.

- *Demonstrate green building practices using living willow structures and recycled concrete rubble.*

Much of the project can be built with materials found on site. Willow can be grown and shaped to create living structures for the proposed public space: seating, low walls, archways, and trellises. There is also a significant quantity of concrete rubble that has been dumped on the site over the years. As demonstrated in phase one of the project, this material can be recycled to build steps, seating, and other structures that have interesting sculptural qualities.

Collaboration and Partnerships:

This project has a diverse range of community support and professional collaboration. The work will continue in close collaboration with the Village and Town of Cazenovia, Project Café, local residents, the New York State Canal Authority, Madison County Soil and Water Conservation District, Stearns & Wheler, and EcoLogic. Educational partners include Cazenovia School District, Cazenovia College, SUNY-CESF, and the Willow Museum of Liverpool, NY.

ESF will provide expertise in landscape design, engineering, ecological restoration, and willow cultivation. ESF faculty are recognized nationally for their expertise on willow cultivation as well as beaver habitat and ecology.

Cazenovia's Willow Patch is one of several sites in the region that explore innovative uses of willow for restoring wastelands and producing biomass for energy.



Storm flow through one of the weirs constructed from concrete rubble generated from sidewalk repair in the Village of Cazenovia, demonstrating the sustainable practice of building with local recycled materials.

Program showcases land trust PDRs

Cornell Cooperative Extension, in conjunction with CPF and the Southern Madison Heritage Trust, hosted and presented a spring program for farmers and other owners of large properties in Madison County. The program was designed to showcase the preservation and conservation work of the two local land trust organizations and their important involvement in farmland and open space preservation, particularly in the context of New York State's Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) Program.

CPF has long been an advocate of the variety of tools available to preserve farmland and open space, including use of those tools that provide an approximation of market value financial benefit to the property owner, either by way of state grant money, like the PDR program, or by way of tax deductions and credits. CPF also is supportive of those preservation efforts that allow monetizing large properties in other ways, including limited development that involves preservation of environmentally sensitive, scenic, agriculturally productive, or

historically significant areas of the property in exchange for well-planned, limited development in other areas of the property. For this reason, CPF is pleased to be playing a role in the PDR process in the Cazenovia area.

The most important role land trusts play in the PDR program is holding the conservation easements on the protected land once the landowner has exchanged the development rights for cash payment from the state. By holding the easement, the land trust has accepted a long-term obligation to protect, monitor, and defend the conservation values of the property. While local governments can and sometimes will hold easements, most local governments work with local or national land trusts. A new statewide agricultural land trust recently has been established to hold agricultural easements in areas where local or national land trusts are not operating.

The local government, landowner, and the land trust are in a collaborative working relationship long before the easement is finalized. In the case of the successful Critz Farm PDR application in the Town of Cazenovia, many additional parties were involved in the application process, including Cornell Cooperative Extension, American Farmland Trust, Madison County Planning Department, Madison County Farmland Protection Board, and the Cazenovia Area Community Development Association. Many of these same parties will stay involved through the implementation of the project as the PDR program requirements are extraordinarily complex and require extensive state agency review.

Speakers at the March program included Karen Baase of Cornell Cooperative Extension; board members of both land trusts; Judy Wright, American Farmland Trust consultant; Nancy Hourigan, an Elbridge farmer who has been awarded two grants by the state for the protection of more than 1,000 acres of farmland; and the Honorable Assemblyman Bill McGee, a long-time champion of farmland preservation efforts.

For further information, please contact Jana McDonald at 655-3875

Did you know?

CPF holds nine of the eleven conservation easements registered in Madison County on the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation list. Listing qualifies owners of those properties to apply for a state income tax credit. CPF has notified the nine property owners of their registration designation.

Five Annual Awards presented at CPF Annual Meeting

The Robert C. Webster Award:

Given for its dedication to farmland preservation by working steadfastly to implement a purchase of development rights program in the Town of Cazenovia. Presented to the Cazenovia Town Board; accepted by Town Board member Carol Schoch



The Architectural Award:

For thoughtful restoration of Notleymere, one of the few remaining shingle-style "cottages" on Cazenovia Lake, as a bed-and-breakfast open to the community to enjoy and appreciate the splendors of lakeside living in 1888. Presented to Notleymere's owners, Bob and Dianna Slodowitz (shown above)

The Landscape Award:

For coordinating a community environmental demonstration project along the shore of Lakeside Park using native plant material to protect and enhance the shoreline. Presented to Cazenovia Area Community Development Association; accepted by CACDA chair Betsy Powers

Farmland and Open Space Award #1:

For supporting the Conservation Easement Tax Credit thus greatly encouraging the use of easements to preserve our beautiful Central New York environment. Presented to NYS Senator Dave Valesky; accepted by Megan Patterson on his behalf

Farmland and Open Space Award #2:

For his long-time support of CPF objectives: the Conservation Easement Tax Credit, funding for the NYS Conservation Partnership Program, increased appropriation for the Environmental Protection Fund, and funding for farmland protection. Presented to NYS Assemblyman Bill Magee

All recipients expressed appreciation and emphasized the importance of community support and collaboration among individuals and organizations in reaching successful outcomes.

June Haley new recording secretary

June Haley is pleased to be involved with CPF as the new recording secretary. Born and raised in beautiful "Apple Country" of the Lafayette/South Onondaga/Route 20 area, the landscape made a strong impact on her awareness and concern about our environment and balanced eco-systems. June is retired from New Process Gear in East Syracuse. After having an exciting and challenging career that was non-traditional for a woman at the time, she loves the time she now has to be involved in Tai Chi, Cazenovia Library Reading Club, and Owahgena Toastmasters.

Route 20...

“The CPF Board is currently examining serious proposals concerning the future of part or all of the Ambrose property on Route 20 East. We expect to be able to communicate at least the broad outlines of such proposals to the membership in the near future.”

— Jim Evans

The Upland Journal

Cazenovia Preservation Foundation
P.O. Box 627
Cazenovia, NY 13035

U.S. Postage Paid
Non-Profit Org.
PERMIT #37
Cazenovia, NY
13035

Board of Directors:

Jim Evans, President
Pringle Symonds, Vice President
John Druke, Treasurer
Eric Byers, Corporate Secretary
Barbara Clarke
Brian Coughlin
Emil Filkorn
Judy Gianforte,
Environmental Project Manager
Jim Jurista
Al Marshall
Jana McDonald
Tom Pratt
Scott Shannon
Wendy Taylor

CPF's six "easy-walking" trails are always open to the public

Fairchild Hill access is at the intersection of Routes 20 and 92 at the south end of Cazenovia Lake. Parking and trail access are behind the large brown building.

Sherman's Gulch access is at the marker on Burlingame Road about one mile from Route 13 or from the top of the Woodland Trail section of Fairchild Hill.

Carpenter's Pond access is either at Mill Street at the northwest corner of the bridge or at Carpenter's Pond across from the CAVAC building on Routes 20 and 13.

Gorge Trail's trailhead and parking are on Clark Street near Chittenango Creek.

South Trail can be accessed from two locations. Access in New Woodstock is north across private property at the end of Railroad Street. Access from Ballina Road is approximately one mile from Route 13, on the south side of the road.

Kassy's Piece Trail is CPF's most recent. It was designed and developed by Brian Eberst with help from family and friends. The trail is off Burlingame Road near the abandoned Grassy Lane.

Trail maps are available free to CPF members, or may be purchased by sending \$3 to CPF, PO Box 627, Cazenovia, NY 13035.

This issue of *The Upland Journal* includes a lot of information about current projects and activities of the Cazenovia Preservation Foundation. Many of CPF's efforts are not always apparent, but without them Cazenovia would be a different place. CPF works to preserve what is unique and important to our community. It exists with the help of the community.

We would welcome you as a new, or renewing, member of CPF!

Make your contribution payable to Cazenovia Preservation Foundation and mail to: CPF, P.O. Box 627, Cazenovia, NY 13035-0627.

CPF Annual Memberships

Conservator membership — \$1,000+	Sponsor membership — \$50 - \$99
Benefactor membership — \$500 - \$999	Sustaining membership — \$25 - \$49
Patron membership — \$100 - \$499	Regular membership — \$10 - \$24

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Membership donation \$ _____

Please enclose your employer's matching gift form, if applicable.