



**WOODSTOCK  
LAND  
CONSERVANCY**

December 1, 2007

Dear Friend,

This New Year will mark the Woodstock Land Conservancy's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary! Begun in 1988 when a group of concerned residents came together to save the historic Zena Cornfield, the Conservancy has proven what is possible when a community unites around a common goal: protection of the land that we all cherish. We write to you now with deep gratitude—and the wish to celebrate what we have accomplished together over these many years with a call to action.

As a lean and effective organization, we are continuously engaged in efforts to improve the scope and impact of our work. **But in order to fulfill our mission for the next 20 years, we must renew and strengthen our bonds, forge new relationships, and deepen our commitment to do this work together. Your continuing support is essential to helping us meet this goal.**

To date, the Conservancy has helped to permanently protect almost 1,000 acres of forests, fields, mountain ridges, and other unique places. In this achievement, we join in the work of many other concerned citizens across the country who together with the help of land trusts have protected nearly 37 million acres, with one million more added each year. That is more land than is contained in the entire National Park System!

At the same time, **more than 5 million acres are lost to development each year**—posing great challenges for protecting the places we care most about, but also affording many new opportunities. This is the case not only for those of us in and around Woodstock, but for every person on the planet. From melting Arctic ice to persistent drought in the southwestern US and more extreme floods and wildfires everywhere, there are constant reminders of the stakes of failing to act now to safeguard the land and natural resources on which we all depend.

Fortunately, there is still time to make the changes necessary to set us on a better course for the future. And it is heartening to know that what each one of us does locally makes a difference globally. The Woodstock Land Conservancy is keenly aware that the work we do matters. **Every acre of woodland, ridgeline, stream corridor, or meadow that we—with your help—can permanently protect, provides habitat for wildlife, absorbs carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions, protects water supplies, keeps the air clean, and inspires current and future generations to learn from and respect the natural world.**

It is this “big picture” perspective that inspires us to approach our work with a sense of urgency, and to set ambitious conservation goals. Our all-volunteer board of directors, Executive Director, network of skilled professionals who donate their services, and committed volunteers continue to work tirelessly to be effective advocates for land conservation. Just in the last year, this commitment and your support have made so much possible:

- Approached completion of two projects with the Town of Woodstock: the transfer of nearly 200 acres of town-owned land in California Quarry to the Overlook Mountain Wild Forest; and a conservation easement of the Comeau property.
- Opening of the 88-acre Sloan Gorge Preserve to the public, providing an inspiring place for walking and nature study with the region's first interpretive geology trail.
- A growing partnership with conservation organizations, state agencies, and area residents to preserve and enhance the integrity of the Bluestone Wild Forest between State Route 28 and Sawkill Road.
- Donor Appreciation Day, with a lecture and a walk in Sloan Gorge Preserve by noted ecologist and author Tom Wessels on “reading the forested landscape.”

**Directors**

Jim Bogner  
Michael DeWan  
Sabine Hrechdakian  
Peter Koch  
David Marell  
Kevin Smith  
Nadia Steinzor

Gay Leonhardt  
*President Emeritus*

John Winter  
*Executive Director*  
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- Co-sponsorship of “Our Lives and the Mountains Through Storytelling & Art,” a multi-generational event inspired by Alf Evers’s children’s book about Overlook Mountain.
- Collaborative efforts with other Ulster County land trusts, including co-sponsorship of a first-ever regional conference for landowners interested in their conservation options.
- A revamped website ([www.woodstocklandconservancy.org](http://www.woodstocklandconservancy.org)) and stepped-up outreach to both local landowners and the community at large.

**Every dollar you give helps us do what it takes to achieve land conservation throughout the Woodstock area—and to improve quality of life here and everywhere.** Please give as generously as you can. We’re always happy to answer any questions you may have about your contributions, be they cash, stock, or a bequest—and we’re eager to discuss the financial and tax benefits for landowners of adopting a conservation easement or donating land for permanent protection. And while your monetary support is critical to sustaining the Conservancy, there are many other ways of contributing as well, such as volunteering for trail maintenance, outreach efforts, and giving of your time and professional skills and services.

*Most of all, please share your enthusiasm about land conservation and the Conservancy with your friends and colleagues. Help us widen our circle by introducing us to new potential supporters. And do let us know about critical land conservation issues in our community that concern you.*

With our hearts full of thanks for all we have accomplished together and great hope for the future, we want to close with the news that Michael DeWan, after nine years of leading the Conservancy with passion and tireless dedication, has stepped down as President. Thankfully, Michael will continue to share his wisdom and expertise as a member of the Board of Directors. We are pleased to announce that our new President is Kevin Smith. A long-time member of the Woodstock community, Kevin’s ardent commitment to land conservation and demonstrated leadership will guide us well in the coming year. He is honored to carry forward Michael DeWan’s legacy and excited to have the opportunity to help bring to fruition the many projects and activities begun under Michael’s and the Board’s leadership.

On behalf of all of us at the Conservancy, thank you for your continuing support and best wishes for a peaceful and joyous new year.

Warmly,

Michael DeWan, President Emeritus

Kevin Smith, President

*The WOODSTOCK LAND CONSERVANCY is a tax-exempt public charity as defined by Section 501(c)(3) of the United States Internal Revenue Code. Contributions are tax-deductible to the fullest extent of the law.*