



# The Upland Journal

*Spring 2024*

**Conserving Agricultural Lands and Cultural Landscape History: The Frey Farm**—CPF is delighted to announce the completion of a project that places 134-acres of agricultural land and a mid-1800's historical farmstead complex under the protection of a conservation easement. This easement addresses multiple facets of CPF's mission including the preservation of historical architecture, protection of agricultural lands, and conservation of natural resources.

When sisters Martha and Elizabeth Frey made the difficult decision to sell the farm that had been in their family for three generations, they contacted CPF to discuss how they could protect the property prior to sale. Located two miles southwest of the Village of Chittenango, the Frey Farm was previously part of the former Gates Farm, established in 1789 by Jeremiah Gates, one of the first European settlers in the area, and an ancestor of Martha and Elizabeth.

As the easement was finalized, Martha told CPF, "It's hard to be the last Gates on the road after 225 years. Elizabeth and I are excited to finalize the conservation easement and protect the farm in perpetuity."

A conservation easement is a voluntary, legal agreement between a property owner and a land trust that limits the development of the land in order to protect its conservation value in perpetuity. The conserved property remains in private ownership and on the local tax rolls. The landowner continues to own and use the land, and can sell it or pass it onto their heirs. When the land ownership changes, the conservation restrictions stay in place.

Most of CPF's agricultural easements were placed through the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets Farmland Protection Implementation Grant (FPIG) program which is specifically focused on protecting agricultural soils. The Frey Farm easement, however, was a private donation from Martha and Elizabeth. This enabled CPF staff to work closely with the sisters and carefully craft the terms of the easement to ensure that their conservation objectives for the property would be honored, while also providing sufficient flexibility for future farm viability.

Per the sisters' wish, the completed easement guarantees that this important agricultural property will be kept free forever from commercial and industrial uses and from residential overdevelopment and that its ecological, open space, and aesthetic values will be preserved. In addition, the easement will ensure that the architectural, historical, and cultural features of the farm are maintained, including a two-story farmhouse that was built in the mid-1800s, and a three-bay English barn dating back to 1840.

One of the remaining farm properties the Frey Farm is located on the Rd.) and commands sweeping

that define the gateway into the Village of Chittenango, north and south sides of Route 173 (Brinkerhoff Hill views of Oneida Lake from its highest elevation. The

*Frey Farm, continued on page 4*



cazenovia preservation foundation

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## Message from the Executive Director

**Reflecting on Place**—Earlier this month, we awarded Judy Gianforte, longtime CPF conservation manager, the first ever Judy Z. Gianforte Conservation Stewardship Award. In addition to Judy's name and the date, the wooden plaque also depicts an engraved image of a loon. Few of us would think of the loon as being deeply symbolic of Cazenovia, and, in fact, it is not. In this case, the loon symbolizes the special place, a family camp in the Adirondacks, that first inspired Judy's love for the land; because without that experience of place, which undoubtedly contributed to Judy's passion for her 16 years of work with CPF, our land trust might be a very different organization today.

*I hypothesize that most of us who work in environmental fields or who support conservation can point to a special place, or places, that ignited our curiosity in the natural world, solidified our environmental ethic, and made us fall in love with the land.*

*When you support CPF, you help to conserve and steward the properties and public-access trails that are the special places that will inspire the next generation of conservationists and land stewards. Through your membership, you are building a legacy of conservation in our community. So, thank you, for all that you do. I hope that you will take a moment to reflect on **your** special place—the one that inspired you to become a CPF member.*



Jennifer Wong  
CPF Executive Director



In April, while conducting a property review for a land owner interested in a conservation easement, we spotted this clump of *Claytonia caroliniana*, commonly known as Spring Beauty.

## Land Trust 101: Renewable Energy

Many people know CPF for the 13.5-miles of public hiking trails that we maintain. Fewer know that CPF has a long history of participating in community comprehensive and land use planning. It was natural, therefore, that CPF began to engage early in thinking about how solar and wind development would affect the land conservation work that we do and the rural agricultural area in which we live. As we started to hear from more landowners that had been contacted by solar developers, it became apparent that renewable energy development would be this decade's biggest topic in land use planning for rural Madison County with its abundance of open and relatively flat agricultural fields. Furthermore, the proximity of National Grid's Cortland-to-Fenner transmission line makes our area an attractive option for developers seeking to implement larger utility-scale—25 megawatts (MW) and up—renewable energy projects.

### *CPF Tools to Advance Smart Renewable Siting*

People often inquire about CPF's position on renewable energy development. Some assume that we will be strongly opposed to solar development, given our work on agricultural land protection and the protection of open spaces and scenic viewsheds. Others assume we support renewable energy development, given that the land and habitat conservation aspect of our work is well-aligned with broader environmental and climate-change mitigation goals. While it is generally recognized that a move away from fossil fuels is of critical importance, the complexities around renewable energy development require a more nuanced perspective.

For example, some might prefer that solar development in our area focuses on smaller community-scale facilities of 30-40 acres that are well sited on a farmer's less productive acreage. This strategy would create an additional revenue stream for that landowner, potentially providing a viable economic pathway to maintaining the farm operation, while reserving the best, most productive agricultural lands for agricultural uses. It is important to recognize, however, that while advantageous in many ways, solar development at this scale cannot proceed quickly enough to meet the state's energy targets designed to address broader climate goals.



# Gorge Trail Gateway Project Update

There are numerous topics such as decommissioning, disposal of spent solar panels, and the potential for a “flicker” effect generated by wind turbines that are part of the ongoing conversation around renewable energy development. As an organization, however, CPF has focused its energies on providing analytical tools and resources that support the evaluation of potential impacts on natural, historical, and agricultural resources in alignment with our mission.

## *Solar Siting Toolkit & Beyond Rooftop Solar*

In 2021, CPF reached out to Colgate University’s Upstate Institute with a proposal to have a scholar create a Geographic Information System (GIS) toolkit that would determine what areas around Cazenovia are suited for solar development. The tool would also identify which areas are less well-suited to solar development because they have the highest combined conservation values, when collectively considering natural habitat, agricultural soils, proximity to historical resources, and viewsheds.

CPF and Cassie Ferrante, a Colgate Upstate Institute Fellow, used *How to Solar Now* (a toolkit created by the land trust Scenic Hudson for the State of New York) as a framework for building the CPF solar siting toolkit. Because the CPF Toolkit uses higher resolution geospatial data than the statewide model, it can be used to answer solar siting questions at the parcel-by-parcel scale. So, it can serve as a useful tool for municipal board members in their review of proposed projects and for individual landowners seeking to determine the best areas on their lands to site a project.

Starting in the Fall of 2021, CPF hosted a four-part *Beyond Rooftop Solar* webinar series on solar development. The series explored emerging issues around planning for solar, the influences driving renewable energy development in the state, solar development on agricultural lands, and aspects related to the industry and economics of commercial solar development.

## *Recent Project Activity*

The recent activity related to renewable energy development in our area has brought this topic back into focus. Community residents are becoming more aware of commercial renewable energy generation projects proposed for our area that are currently under review at the state level.

*Renewable Energy, continued on page 4.*

This summer, CPF plans to break ground on a project which will highlight trail and recreational resources in the heart of the Village of Cazenovia. Once completed, the Gorge Trail Gateway will be a welcoming trail entrance and a beautiful place to enjoy the sights and sounds of Chittenango Creek.

In early July, construction will begin on the trail entrance and the creation of a separate pedestrian/bike entrance from the Albany Street sidewalk into Buyea’s parking lot, a trail parking area, an information kiosk, interpretive signage about the history of the area, and steps down to the creekside trail and fishing access. Trees and shrubs will be planted to define the trail, re-green the eastern portion of the Buyea’s parking area, and screen the backs and sides of nearby buildings. In addition, a crosswalk will be installed on Albany Street connecting the trail from Buyea’s parking lot to the trail leading to Creekside Park behind the Cazenovia Public Library.

In late July, in accordance with NYS Department of Environmental Conservation guidance, construction will begin on a LUNKER along the bank of Chittenango Creek. A LUNKER is an underwater crib-like wooden structure placed along streambanks to protect and stabilize the bank, prevent erosion, and provide an edge-cover aquatic habitat for fish. A large slab of native limestone will be placed upstream to direct the flow of water away from the bank, and prevent further streambank erosion.

The majority of project funding was made available through a Central New York Community Foundation grant, a private donation in memory of David Bennet and Barbara Settel, and a grant from the Finger Lakes - Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance (FOLLOWPA). On May 14, CPF will launch a modest community campaign to raise the remaining funds required for the construction and ongoing maintenance of the project. CPF has secured a 20-year agreement with the property owner, Earl Buyea, Sr., for public access and use of the space. The target time for project completion is the fall of 2024.

***Save the Date! CPF will host a Gorge Trail Gateway  
Grand Opening Celebration for the Cazenovia  
community on Saturday, September 21.***





Commercial solar and wind projects that have a generating capacity of 25MW and above are considered to be utility-scale projects and are approved and permitted through the New York State Office of Renewable Energy Siting (ORES). In April of 2020, ORES was established through the Accelerated Renewable Energy Growth and Community Benefit Act to more efficiently review renewable energy projects and help the state achieve its ambitious targets for clean energy as outlined in the 2019 Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (Climate Act or CLCPA). This Act calls for 70% of the state's electricity to be generated from renewable energy sources by 2030.

CPF is following these large-scale projects:

- ⌘ The Hoffman Falls Wind Project is a proposed 100MW project involving the installation of 24 windmills with a maximum height of approximately 660 feet in the Towns of Fenner, Nelson, Smithfield, and Eaton.
- ⌘ Cypress Creek Renewables Development, LLC, has secured leases on approximately 1300 acres of land in the Town of Fenner for the installation of a solar array capable of generating 140MW of electricity. The developers for the project, known as the Oxbow Road Solar Project, filed a notice of intent to submit an application with ORES in March of this year.

More information about these proposed projects can be found at [www.ores.ny.gov](http://www.ores.ny.gov).

In addition, two new utility-scale projects, one solar and one wind, are being considered in the Town of Cazenovia and the Town of Tully.

CPF is also following the Remington Solar project on Route 20 East, a smaller 5MW project that is currently under review by the Town of Cazenovia Planning Board.

CPF will continue updating and expanding our GIS mapping and modeling work to identify and characterize those areas of highest conservation value. This is important both for our ongoing land conservation work as well as renewables siting. To support that effort, CPF recently applied for funding through ORES to complete expanded mapping and modeling work related to the review of the Hoffman Falls Wind Project. This work will also inform the future evaluation of the Oxbow Hill Solar Project. Ultimately, the permitting and siting decisions for these utility-scale projects will be made at the state

level. However, CPF will use the results of this mapping and modeling work to collaborate with municipalities in advocating for the application of smart-siting principles for these and future proposed projects in alignment with our mission of protecting natural, agricultural, and scenic resources.

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*Frey Farm, continued from page 1*

Frey Farm is close in proximity (less than a mile) to other CPF agricultural conservation lands, and has added to a pocket of protected farmland that will sustain a viable agricultural community and maintain the agrarian culture of the area. Formerly a dairy farm, for the past 50 years, the farm fields have been used to grow field crops and hay.

In order to attract a new farming landowner, the Frey sisters chose to list their property in the Farmland for a New Generation-New York (FNG-NY) online directory. The FNG-NY program, coordinated by American Farmland Trust and in partnership with the State of New York, agricultural organizations, land trusts, and others, works to connect farmers seeking land with landowners who want to keep their land in farming. The land was recently purchased by a farmer who owns other property that is protected under agricultural conservation easements with CPF and who will continue the agricultural use of the Frey Farm fields.

With the addition of the Frey Farm, CPF now protects over 3,300 acres of farmland and scenic landscapes through conservation easements. CPF is currently working with six other local farms to permanently conserve an additional 1,600 acres of important agricultural land through the FPIG program and private easement donation.



The low doorway on the side of the historic Frey Farm barn has a stone overhang over the "pig door."

***Join us for CPF's Annual Meeting on May 14 at 7 p.m. in St. Peter's Parish Hall (10 Mill St.) to hear directly from Martha Frey about her conservation experience with CPF and to learn more about the rich history of this property.***

## New CPF Award Presented

CPF has established a new award, the Judy Gianforte Land Stewardship Award, which will be conferred annually to an individual who has made exemplary contributions to conservation land stewardship. The first award was presented to Judy herself at CPF's annual volunteer appreciation event held on April 10, 2024 at the Madison County Distillery.

Since 2007, Judy has worked tirelessly to advance CPF's mission through her work on farmland and open-space protection, trail maintenance, education and outreach, and historic preservation. As the conservation manager, she shepherded CPF through a series of initiatives, including an initial successful application for accreditation by the Land Trust Alliance. CPF honors Judy for her commitment to conservation and land stewardship.



Awardee Judy Gianforte and CPF Executive Director Jen Wong at CPF's 2024 Volunteer Appreciation Event.

## New Board Member

**Lisa Lounsbury** is an association executive serving as President and CEO of two trade organizations that represent independent insurance agents in New York and Connecticut. She is also co-founder of a company that helps insurance agents navigate technology solutions for their businesses. When not working or serving on industry boards, Lisa and her mother love exploring CPF's Burlingame trails on horseback. She looks forward to helping preserve and expand the special spaces in Cazenovia for the community to enjoy.

## Accreditation Renewal

CPF is excited to share that the Land Trust Alliance (LTA) has renewed our accreditation. Through a rigorous review process completed by the national Land Trust Accreditation Commission, CPF has demonstrated continued excellence in fiscal accountability, organizational leadership, sound transaction practices, and diligent stewardship of the lands we conserve. The Land Trust Accreditation Commission announced CPF's accreditation renewal in March 2024.

Accreditation status provides potential land and easement donors with assurance that CPF can steward their property in perpetuity. Importantly, it is also an eligibility requirement for certain state and private grant programs, such as the Forest Conservation Easements for Land Trusts (FCELT) grant program and The Nature Conservancy of New York's Resilient & Connected Network Grant Program.

## National Trails Day

**June 1, 2024.** This year, CPF is excited to celebrate the dedication of four new trail kiosks. Kiosk sponsorships support the ongoing maintenance and upkeep of CPF's public access trails and properties. Join us as we recognize the contributions of Rockbridge Investment Management, LLC, Andrew and Lauren Bennett, Knowles Precision Devices, Chuck and Gyata Stormon to bettering the community's trail network.

Following the dedications, you can join us for guided trail hikes. For more information on this and other upcoming events, visit [cazpreservation.org/events](https://cazpreservation.org/events).

## Trail Work Days

On the last Thursday of the month, from April through October, you can join CPF board members, staff, and other volunteers to improve your community trails. At 4:30 p.m., we meet up to collect tools and divide into work crews. Afterward, a CPF Board member will host us for some well-deserved refreshments. Be sure to wear sturdy footwear and bring work gloves.

This year, we will also be hosting Saturday Volunteer Workdays. For dates, see the calendar on page 6.

*Volunteer credit is available for high school students. All volunteers under the age of 18 must be accompanied by a responsible adult.*



## Walks 'n Talks

### ***Global Big Day Birding Walk—Fairchild Hill, Saturday, May 11 at 8:30 a.m.***

Kick off your springtime birding season with an early morning walk led by John Pumilio, Director of Sustainability at Colgate University. We will be on the lookout for chickadees, juncos, sparrows, tanagers, bluebirds, warblers, hawks, woodpeckers, and other species who also make Cazenovia their home. Wear comfortable shoes and bring binoculars.

### ***Stream Invertebrates for Anglers—Creekside Park (behind the Cazenovia Public Library), Saturday, May 18 at 1 p.m.***

Join natural scientist Mat Webber to learn about stream invertebrates in our local waters. This session will help you improve your fly tying and give you tips about which flies to use during different times of the year. Remember to wear your waders or water shoes. All ages welcome.

### ***Bobolinks and Meadowlarks—Burlingame Meadow, Saturday, June 8 at 8:30 a.m.***

Since CPF began managing the Burlingame Meadow for field-nesting bird species in 2021, the bobolinks have returned in increasing numbers. Avid birder and former CPF Board President, Jim Steinberg, will lead a guided walk to identify nesting sites of bobolinks and meadowlarks. Bring your binoculars.

### ***Learn to Fish/Fly Fish—Fenner Conservation Pond, Saturday, June 15 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.***

CPF has teamed up with Madison County Trout Unlimited and the Shane Pinard Future Fisherman's Foundation to host a fishing event open to anyone of any age and ability. Depending on your interest and experience, instructors will show you basic fishing or fly fishing techniques. You can bring your own rod and lures or use the ones we'll have available.

### ***Crepuscular Creatures at Burlingame Trails, Wednesday, July 24 at 7:30 p.m.***

Nature educator Amy Kochem will guide you and your kids through a discovery of the critters that come out at dusk at the Burlingame Trails. We'll be on the lookout for fireflies, beavers, and flying squirrels.



*Scan for more event info*

## Upcoming Events

**May 11:** Walks 'n Talks Birding Series: Global Big Day

**May 14:** CPF Annual Meeting

**May 18:** Walks 'n Talks Fishing Series: Stream Invertebrates

**May 30:** Trail Work Thursday

**June 1:** National Trails Day—Dedication of New Trail Kiosks

**June 8:** Walks 'n Talks Birding Series: Bobolinks and Meadowlarks

**June 15:** Walks 'n Talks Fishing Series: Learn to Fish/ Learn to Fly Fish

**June 27:** Trail Work Thursday

**July 20:** Saturday Volunteer Workday

**July 24:** Walks 'n Talks Kids' Discovery Series: Crepuscular Creatures

**July 25:** Trail Work Thursday

**Aug 10:** Saturday Volunteer Workday

**Aug 17:** Music in the Meadow (Rain date Aug 24)

**Aug 29:** Trail Work Thursday

**Sep 14:** Saturday Volunteer Workday

**Sep 26:** Gorge Trail Gateway Grand Opening

*For more details, visit [cazpreservation.org/events](http://cazpreservation.org/events).*



Come fishing with us on June 15, from 9 am to 1 pm at Fenner Conservation Pond.





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Jack Stevens  
Chuck Stormon

## ***CPF Members and the public are cordially invited to the CPF Annual Meeting and Celebration***

May 14, 2024, 7:00 p.m.  
St. Peter's Episcopal Church Parish Hall  
10 Mill Street  
Cazenovia, NY 13035

### ***Staff***

Judy Gianforte, Conservation Manager  
Mary Kate Gutiérrez, Communication & Development Specialist  
Pia Murray, Bookkeeper  
John Tobin, Stewardship Manager  
Jen Wong, Executive Director



- Sound Finances
- Ethical Conduct
- Responsible Governance
- Lasting Stewardship

### ***Presentation of Awards***

Robert Webster Award — Mike Walker  
Restoration Award — Larry and Glenda Wetzel, 8 Liberty Street  
Restoration Award — Heidi Ravven, Century House at 36 Albany Street  
Landscape Award — Lorenzo State Historic Site  
**NEW!** Judy Z. Gianforte Conservation Stewardship Award — Judy Z. Gianforte

### ***Election of Directors and Officers***

Returning directors for a second three-year term: Jim Dungey, Chuck Stormon  
New director for a three-year term: Lisa Lounsbury  
Officers for one-year terms:  
President: Cynthia Maxwell Curtin  
Treasurer: David Beam  
Vice President: Dave Gerber  
Executive Secretary: Jim Dungey