If you’ve driven on Salt Point Turnpike through the hamlet of Salt Point, you’ve seen Locust Grove Farm. With its distinctive red barn and stone main house dating from 1790 on the hillside across from the quaint sign announcing your arrival in the hamlet – it’s almost like you’ve traveled back in time. It makes you think about the beautiful, rural feel of our area. It makes you hope that this picturesque scene never goes away. Well, thanks to the Atkins family, it never will.

In July, Betsy Atkins, husband Ron and family, made the decision to sell their development rights on the farm and forever protect it with a conservation easement. With help from the DLC and Scenic Hudson, along with partners NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets (NYSDAM) and Dutchess County, the Atkins family has ensured that the 170-acre farm that has been in Betsy’s family for generations will largely remain the same.

“After lengthy and thoughtful discussion within our family, we decided to move forward with selling the development rights through a sense of responsibility to maintain my ancestors’ commitment to Locust Grove Farm in perpetuity,” said Betsy Atkins. “I am confident that our children, and their children, will continue to support the farm as long as they are able. However, I am also comforted in knowing that, by selling the development rights to the farm, the property will remain open and available for agriculture should there come a time when the property leaves the family ownership.”

Originally a portion of the Great Nine Partners Patent, a land grant made in 1697, the farm has been in Betsy’s family since 1830 and has been primarily a dairy farm since the early 1900’s. Leased to the Hackett family since 2009, the farm is the home of “Hackett Holsteins,” a dairy operation which on average produces 700,000 pounds of milk per year and has been designated a Dairy of Distinction by the Northeast Dairy Farm Beautification Program since 2010. According to Betsy, there has been a longstanding relationship between her family and the Hacketts and she is “very happy with [the Hacketts’] operation and presence on the farm, and plans for this relationship to continue long into the future.”

Funding to purchase the farm’s development rights was provided in part by NYSDAM through a grant from the State’s Environmental Protection Fund, and through a grant from Dutchess County’s Partnership for Manageable Growth. Both programs are invaluable to landowners wishing to protect their family farms by selling their development rights. Scenic Hudson also provided a portion of the funding. And, as the grant applicant on behalf of the Atkins family, the DLC served as the project manager, provided a portion of the closing costs and in-kind services, and will hold and oversee in perpetuity the conservation easement on the farm.
A Dream Realized and Land That Is Forever Protected

Michele Ferraro and Kathleen Weathers searched for almost a decade for the perfect land to suit their needs. In 2012, they found it. Just outside the Village of Millerton was a 78.5-acre farm that hadn’t yet reached its potential. Its previous owner, Libby McClintock, had been working on an agricultural plan for the property but passed away unexpectedly before her plan could come to fruition. Now the land was waiting for the right buyer to bring it to life as a working farm.

Enter, Michele and Kathleen. When they saw the land’s sweeping views up the hillside and over several ponds, they knew that their search had come to an end. They explain, “It was a perfect setting for our commercial sheep and hay farm where we could also use– and demonstrate the utility of– working dogs to manage the farm.”

Caora Farm is now a 120-head sheep farm where the pair raises working dogs for use on the farm and produce their own hay. In late July, Michele and Kathleen ensured that their search had come to an end. “Last July, the owner of the property, Dr. Joseph Manne, sold his development rights on the land and placed a conservation easement on it. He then sold the property to the Jacksons. The family’s historic farm had recovered its missing piece. Verne said, “This land was originally owned by my great grandfather. We’ve been working the land for many, many years. It is a natural part of our farm. This transaction has now brought the land home.”

The DLC, Scenic Hudson, Hudson Highlands Land Trust, and the Jacksons also grow corn, hay and alfalfa on the farm. The farm produces approximately 2,300 pounds of milk each day that is sold to Hudson Valley Fresh, a dairy cooperative, and the Jacksons also grow corn, hay and alfalfa on the farm.

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Many, many years ago, the Jacksons’ ancestors sold off part of their family’s Shenandoah Farm. For numerous years, they have been able to work this same 39 acres as part of their dairy operation through a lease with the owner. Patriarch Verne Jackson’s fondest wish was to bring that land back to where it belongs– and now he and his family have done it.

Part of the Shenandoah Valley’s picturesque landscape, the farm sits between Shenandoah and Hosner Mountains – both of which contain a portion of the Appalachian Trail. Located close to two highways, the farmland had a high risk of development, but thanks to the Jacksons, this portion of their farm will remain an icon of our deep connection to the farming tradition and to the land itself.

Shenandoah Farm

Bringing the Land Home to Shenandoah Farm

Verne Jackson and sons

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The DLC, Scenic Hudson, Hudson Highlands Land Trust, and Dutchess County, partnered to work together with Dr. Manne and the Jacksons to ensure that this portion of the farm will forever remain open to agriculture.

For those who know this area, the Shenandoah Farm vista signals one’s arrival in pastoral Dutchess County. Visible from both the Taconic Parkway and I-84, the farm stands as a symbol of our agricultural heritage. It is a Century Farm, and a Dairy of Distinction and the return of the lost portion of the farm could not have come at a better time. This year Shenandoah Farm celebrated its 125th anniversary. The farm produces approximately 2,300 pounds of milk each day that is sold to Hudson Valley Fresh, a dairy cooperative, and the Jacksons also grow corn, hay and alfalfa on the farm.

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Education and Outreach

There’s always an opportunity to learn something new!

Engaging Friends and Meeting New Ones:

Caora Farm in Millerton bustled with visitors eager to watch and compete in the farm’s annual Sheep Dog Trials in association with the DLC in late June. They learned about the value of open land for farming and outdoor pursuits.

September afforded citizens the chance to learn about what the DLC does at two local events: the Game Fair held at Orvis/Sandanona in Millbrook, and the Environmental Fair held at Vassar College’s farm in Poughkeepsie.

Dutchess County Ducks Unlimited’s Great Swamp Clays for Conservation event’s conservation program in September gave participants a look at protecting wetland habitat. The group visited Millbrook School wetlands protected by a DLC easement to discuss wetlands conservation.

Connecting with State and Local Officials:

US Representative John Faso learned the importance of land conservation and how it benefits his constituents on a hike in September at Cat Rocks in Pawling. DLC staff member Art Collings and representatives of other conservation organizations joined Representative Faso to update him on local conservation projects.

Dutchess County Ducks Unlimited’s Great Swamp Clays for Conservation event’s conservation program in September gave participants a look at protecting wetland habitat. The group visited Millbrook School wetlands protected by a DLC easement to discuss wetlands conservation.

In November, members of the public were invited to a Down to Earth workshop, “Climate Change and Farming in the Hudson Valley,” where panel members including NYS Assemblymember Didi Barrett discussed how climate change is predicted to impact the future of farming in our region. The workshop, part of the DLC/Columbia Land Conservancy Farmer Landowner Match Program, and the last Down to Earth workshop of 2017, was held at and co-sponsored by the Cary Institute, and by American Farmland Trust. The workshop series is also funded in part by a grant from the USDA.

Reaching out to the next generation of conservationists

Teenagers from the City of Poughkeepsie working to become “Youth Environmental Educators” joined the DLC’s Julie Hart and staff from Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) and the Cary Institute in June on a guided walk through the Institute’s woodlands, marsh, and fields as part of their training. The group is part of CCE’s No Child Left Inside program that trains teenagers to “work with their peers and younger youth to teach them about the environment and encourage them to get outdoors.”

In November, students from an Environmental Science class at Millbrook School learned about monitoring and controlling the invasive plant Purple Loosestrife in the School’s marsh. The plant has declined now thanks to a 2006 release into the marsh of bio-control beetles who feed on the plant. The students also learned how invasive plants crowd out native ones and can endanger wetland habitats.

US Representative John Faso (right)
Guests were warmly welcomed to the farm by the hosts and by co-chairs Irene and Jack Banning, Encarnita and Robert Quinlan, and Coco and Tim Quinlan. After catching up with friends to the bluegrass sounds of the Hayrollers and dining on delicious picnic-fare from caterer Hathaway Young, guests learned the history of the farm and about its previous owner, Libby McClintock, a passionate conservationist, who sadly passed away unexpectedly in 2011. Libby’s two sisters, Mary Dusenbury and Lucy Calhoun, and family attended the luncheon, and Mary spoke of how she and her sister made the decision to pursue Libby’s dream to protect the land. An 85-acre portion was placed under easement with the DLC in 2012 and transferred to Libby’s partner, Joe Rinaldi. After numerous offers by developers, the sisters agreed to sell the 79-acre balance of the land to Mich and Kathleen with an understanding that conserving the land was part of the plan. Mary said the family is thrilled that Mich and Kathleen followed through and protected the rest of the farm, and that Libby would be so pleased with their decision.

After the luncheon, all were invited to watch a sheep herding demonstration at the farm featuring well-known Border Collie handler Amanda Milliken with luncheon host Mich Ferraro providing the commentary. By all accounts it was a great ending to a wonderful lunch!

Special thanks to Mich and Kathleen for welcoming us to their lovely farm; to our Co-Chairs for ensuring the success of the luncheon; to our Underwriters – the luncheon would not happen without your support; to Peter Corbin for the amazing artwork for our invitation and for donating the original to our Silent Auction; to our Silent Auction donors whose generosity allowed us to raise much-needed funds for our programs, to our auction winners for their support of DLC’s work, to Kings Highway Fine Cider for the cider tasting; and to all who came out to show their dedication to land conservation and to celebrate the land.

We also sincerely thank our Luncheon Committee for their help in making this annual event a great success: Susan Abu Haidar, Judy & Steve Benardete, Felicity & Tim Bontecou, Hannah & Duke Buchan, Rosie & Barry Chase, Wendy & John Curtis, Jodi & Andrew Dady, Marion & Willem de Vogel, Nicole & Dana Drury, Stancy DuHamel & Constance Handler, Eliza Dyson & Joel Levangia, Leslie Farhang & John Tuke, Jodie & Andrew Fink, Deban & Tom Flexner, Olivia Fussell & Francis Finlay, Lynn & Joe Gubernick, Nancy & David Hathaway, Nancy & Fritz Henze, Angela & Woody Keesee, Fernanda Kellogg & Kirk Henckels, Elissa Kramer & Jay Newman, Christina Lang, Simone & Chris Mailman, Claire & Chris Mann, Elizabeth & Tim Mayhew, Bernadette Murray & Bran Raskovic, Connie & Tom Newberry, Genie Revson, Dede & Eric Rosenfeld, Rebecca & Bryant Seaman, Pam Scott & Phil Balshi, Sarah & David Stack, Jacqueline & Oakleigh Thorne, Olivia van Melle Kamp.
How Would You Like to be Remembered?

Marta Nottebohm, a DLC Legacy Society member, answers the question this way, “I only want to be remembered if my example would help motivate others to preserve open land. We had the privilege of receiving it unspoiled from previous owners and we should pass it on that way.”

Marta and her husband Fernando put a conservation easement on their land in 1994, ensuring that their highly visible property and its mix of fields, forest, wetlands, and wildlife habitat would remain protected forever. As long-time residents of Dutchess County it was very important to them to preserve the rural countryside where they lived, worked, and raised a family.

Marta says, “When the DLC was created I realized immediately what an amazing tool this was to plan for controlled growth, and to keep our countryside unspoiled.”

Her enthusiasm for the work of the DLC inspired her to volunteer, and in 1993 she joined the Board, serving for 18 years. Marta established and chaired both the Long-Range Planning and Development committees. She was deeply involved with the Farm Tour Patron Lunch, and educating town board members, and local Realtors about the value of land preservation.

Marta joined the Legacy Society in 2016 when she made a provision for the DLC in her will. “It allows me to take care of my family and leave something significant to the DLC, which is an organization I care passionately about. I want to help ensure that the DLC continues to preserve land in our county.”

Our connection to the land is essential to our health and well-being. Taking care of and managing our resources, not only for our own benefit, but for future generations, is the guiding spirit behind the Legacy Society.

If you want to be remembered as someone who cared deeply about the land and its future, as someone who had the foresight to plan for its protection and not leave it to chance, if you want to be part of a lasting legacy – you can join Marta and other members of the Legacy Society. It’s so simple.

Legacy Society members may take advantage of many options, including naming the DLC as a beneficiary in your will or trust.

Please call Tara Kelly at the Dutchess Land Conservancy at 845-677-3002, or by email at tarak@dutchessland.org to request more info, or to have it sent to your attorney or financial advisor.

Legacy Society Members

Ms. Barbara Agren
Ms. Sara Allen
Ms. Kathleen Vuillet Augustine
Mr. and Mrs. Steven Benardete
Mr. and Mrs. Everett Cook
Mr. and Mrs. David Hathaway
Ms. Nancy Henze
Ms. Fernanda M. Kellogg
Ms. Tara Kelly
Mr. and Mrs. George McLaughlin
Mrs. Marta Nottebohm
Mr. and Mrs. David Rosenberg
Mr. Jay Schwamm
Ms. Becky Thornton
Ms. Olivia van Melle Kamp
The Weindling Family
Farewell

And a warmhearted farewell to Ralph Weindling and Stancy DuHamel who stepped off the Board this year.

Ralph helped guide our organization for more than 18 years and also served as Treasurer.

Stancy joined the Board in 2014 and has provided invaluable advice during her tenure.

We’ll miss you both!

Irene & Jack Banning
Mr. & Mrs. Steven Benardete
Mr. & Mrs. Russell L. Carson
Mr. & Mrs. Eliot C. Clarke
Mr. & Mrs. Wolcott B. Dunham, Jr.
Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Henninger
Barbara & Andrew Gundlach
Mr. & Mrs. David R. Hathaway
Mr. & Mrs. William R. Hettinger
Andrea & Roger Kaas
Mr. & Mrs. Thomas W. Keesee
Ms. Fernanda Kellogg & Mr. Kirk Henckels
Mr. & Mrs. Ragnar Knutsen
Elissa Kramer & Jay Newman
Mr. & Mrs. Peter Kraus
Christina Lang-Assael
Claire & Chris Mann
Mr. & Mrs. Timothy Mayhew
Mr. & Mrs. Thomas L. Newberry
Arnold S. & Madalaine Penner
Mrs. George W. Perkins, Jr.
Candace & William Platt
M. Taylor Pyne
Terry & John Regan
MC & Eric Roberts
Mr. Jay M. Schwamm
Ms. Jennifer P. Speers
Mr. & Mrs. John Sprague
Sarah & David Stack
Mr. & Mrs. William W. Stahl, Jr.
Mr. & Mrs. Oakleigh Thorne
Mr. Oakleigh B. Thorne
Mrs. Felicitas S. Thorne
David & Tetsuna Tisch
Barbara & Donald Tober
Mr. Robert S. Trump
Mr. & Mrs. Jeffrey Urrin
Olivia van Melle Kamp
Mr. & Mrs. Alan B. Vickery
Mr. & Mrs. Robin A. Vince
Mr. & Mrs. Ralph Weindling
Dorothy S. Whitmarsh & William J. Benedict, Jr.
Mr. & Mrs. Frederick W. Whitridge, Jr.

FOUNDA TIONS AND GRANTS
The Alexander Bovina Foundation
Katherine Bontecou Charitable Trust
The Buchan Foundation
Heisenberg Foundation
Millbrook Tribute Garden
The Peter and Carmen Lucia Bovina Foundation
RJF Foundation
The Walbridge Fund

Welcome
To the DLC’s New Board Members
A heartfelt welcome to new Board members Candace Platt, Terry Regan, and Kathleen Weathers.

Terry and Kathleen both previously served on the DLC Board. We are delighted to have all three join us. They bring years of experience and knowledge valuable to the governance of our organization.
Have you made your year-end gift to the DLC?