



Friends of the Old Croton Aqueduct

Newsletter

No. 8, March 2001

Aqueduct Neighbors Sign Conservation Easement to Preserve Trail View

Gwen Michele Thomas

There is a quietness in the air. Birds and squirrels abound, and a deer is seen rambling down the nearby ravine for a drink from Kemy's Brook. One feels deep in the woods. This is the home of Peter and Dorothy Rinaldo of Briarcliff Manor, New York. Their property is adjacent to the Old Croton Aqueduct, visible across the ravine from their kitchen window. The Rinaldos have had the foresight to place a conservation easement on their property to protect this idyllic scene.

Long-time nature enthusiasts, Dorothy and Peter are known as the "backpack couple" who are frequently seen hiking and skiing along the Aqueduct to the local store for groceries. They have a passion for the out-of-doors and a strong desire to protect it. When they built their house in Briarcliff in 1968, they had already witnessed unsightly development on land next door to previous residences in Mass-

achusetts and New York. They knew their land, should they decide to move, could be subdivided and developed, and began to search for ways to protect the property and its pastoral view.

Peter says, "we originally wanted to give the land away but it turned out to be an expensive and complicated undertaking. We then learned about conservation easements as a viable alternative." The Rinaldos identified the Westchester Land Trust to assist them with the legalities of placing a conservation easement on their property. The easement has been signed and will be officially registered in 2001, a fitting way to begin the new millenium. The Rinaldos' action is good news to Aqueduct and environmental enthusiasts alike, as it benefits not only the Rinaldos but also all those who enjoy and value the Aqueduct trail.



The Aqueduct near the Rinaldos' home. (Photo by G. Thomas)

The Old Croton Aqueduct, a National Historic Landmark,

offers views of woodlands, the Hudson River and Palisades, and historic and architectural treasures along the 26-mile portion of its route in Westchester. Protecting these views from increasing development pressures in the lower Hudson region is vitally important to the Aqueduct user's experience. Conservation easements and other innovative tools offer the hope of accomplishing this while preserving the beauty and character of adjacent land.

Conservation easements were in use as early as the 1930s, but it wasn't until the 1980s that they came into prominence as a preservation tool. An easement in this context is a voluntary agreement by a landowner that



Peter and Dorothy Rinaldo (Photo by G. Thomas)

there will be no development on the property. The easement remains in force "in perpetuity," that is, regardless of future ownership. According to Susan Carpenter at the Westchester Land Trust, "easements are tailored to the specific characteristics of the property and are dependent upon the needs and desires of the property owner as well as the guidelines of the facilitating local organization."

While legal documentation of an easement is filed with the property deed, it does not transfer property rights nor does it mean there will be public access to the land, as many people think. The property remains in the landowner's hands. The owner decides whether or not to allow public access, and spells out his or her commitment to protect the character of the property. In addition, the owner benefits from a number of federal, estate, and/or charitable gift tax deductions.

As pressures to build increase, Friends of the Aqueduct will work to encourage landowners to consider conservation easements as a way of protecting the

beauty of the lands along the trail. Dorothy Rinaldo puts it this way: "With all the development taking place in the county, there is something you can do about it. It gives us great satisfaction to think that this land will remain as we have it now."

For those interested in learning more about conservation easements, please call Brian Goodman, Site Manager, Old Croton Aqueduct State Historic Park, at 914-693-5259, or Susan Carpenter, Westchester Land Trust, at 914-241-6346.

County Plans Aqueduct Link with South County Trailway

If current plans by the Westchester County Department of Planning succeed, Aqueduct users will one day have a wealth of new opportunities to create challenging circular walking routes. The county is working to connect two of its major greenways — the Old Croton Aqueduct and South County Trailway — by means of a new trail, nearly two miles long, to be called the Hillside Woods Trail. To quote the planners, the new trail "would provide the only formal east-west link in the county trailway system in this densely developed area" of Westchester.

The Hillside Woods Trail would be an unpaved path six to eight feet wide traversing a mosaic of public lands and rights-of-way in Dobbs Ferry and Hastings. One end would be at South County Trailway's Lawrence Street crossing in Dobbs Ferry. The trail would cross the Saw Mill River Parkway, turn south onto Stanley Avenue to enter the former Carvel property, traverse Hillside Woods Park in Hastings (a county/village park), and continue on existing trails through the village-owned Hillside Park and Reynolds Field, where it would meet the Aqueduct at Five Corners.

Dobbs Ferry is in the process of acquiring part of the Carvel property for public purposes, while the county carries out a survey and is doing the preliminary mapping and design of the new trail with a grant from the Hudson River Valley Greenway Conservancy.

The South County Trailway is a paved path along the right of way of the former Putnam Division of the New York Central Railroad (the "Old Put"), and paralleling the east side of the Saw Mill River Parkway. It extends from the New York City border to Eastview, where the path continues for another 22 miles as the North County Trailway.

More than ever, the Aqueduct is being used not only as a green, historic spine within the rivertowns, but as an invaluable source of potential connections in the effort to create an integrated county-wide trail network.

"Water and the City"

A talk by Kenneth T. Jackson
Professor of History and the Social Sciences,
Columbia University

What makes New York the remarkable city that it is, and what role has its water supply system played in its growth to greatness? Professor Jackson will discuss these and other questions, including how several other US cities obtain their water. Kenneth Jackson, editor of *The Encyclopedia of New York City* and author of many books including the prize-winning *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States*, is also a popular speaker.

Friends of the Old Croton Aqueduct invite you to attend this year's talk in our annual lecture series, to be held on **Sunday, April 1st, 2001**, at 2:15 pm, in the West Wing Auditorium of Phelps Memorial Hospital Center, 701 North Broadway (Route 9), Sleepy Hollow, NY. There will be cookies and conversation afterwards. Admission is free. Please join us!

Reservations are recommended. Call 914-693-4117. Please leave your name, phone number, and number of people to attend.



Directions: Phelps is located on Route 9, 4 miles north of the Tappan Zee Bridge and just south of Route 117. From the Route 9 entrance, proceed straight, then bear left at the fork in the road. Continue past the Emergency Room entrance and proceed to the rear of the hospital complex. The main entrance to the West Wing Auditorium is to the right of the large loading dock.



A Walk and a Farewell

Don't miss a last chance to enjoy the popular guided walk Marge and Dan Schlitt have led twice a year, under the auspices of the Sierra Club, on a prime section of the Aqueduct. The walk is on **Saturday, May 12th**. It starts at 10 am from Metro-North's Greystone station in Yonkers and ends in mid-afternoon at Tarrytown station, with a lunch break in Dobbs Ferry, for a total distance of about 8 miles.

Marge's voice when she speaks of the Aqueduct is full of the passion that afflicts so many of us. The Schlitts are hikers, and the proximity of the trail—pointed out by a smart realtor—helped convince them to move to Hastings in 1987. Marge first heard colorful stories of the sights along the trail from an English teacher who led a walk at a Greenburgh celebration. (Can anyone identify this teacher? We'd like to contact her.)

Gradually she collected every article about the Aqueduct she saw, amassing the details now in the

handout she and Dan distribute on their walks. They led their first walk in 1990, on March 17, a date they consider fitting since it was Irish immigrants who built the famed water tunnel.

Marge and Dan are moving back to Nebraska and have graciously agreed to contribute their collected material to the nascent archive of Old Croton Aqueduct State Historic Park. The Friends wish them well, extend thanks for their devotion to the Aqueduct, and hope new volunteer guides will keep their Aqueduct tales alive.

"Healing Waters"

This small exhibit at South Street Seaport in Manhattan, on display through the summer, is subtitled "Utopian Responses to Dirt, Disease, & Disorder 1890-1940." It explores the role of water in creating a livable city, exploring such themes as the water supply, recreation, firefighting, health and hygiene, and sanitation. For general information, a list of lectures scheduled in connection with the exhibit, and group tours, call 212-748-8725 or click on www.southstseaport.org.

Board of Directors Descend on Peebles Island

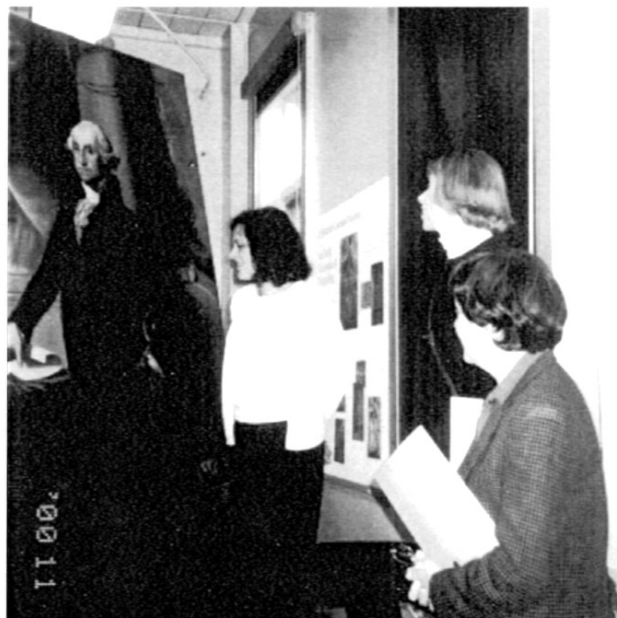
Seven members of the Friends' board and Aqueduct Historic Site Manager Brian Goodman paid a rewarding visit to Peebles Island on November 6, 2000. Located outside of Troy, New York, this is where the state's historic preservation work goes on. It is an amazing facility, part of the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, and is unique in the 50 states. Our goal in making this 100-mile trip was to maintain interest in the restoration of the Overseer's House.

Brian Goodman had warned us that Peebles Island is unlike anything one expects of a government office. The state bought the island from the Cluett Peabody company and is using the old factory buildings for the various restoration functions. One still feels the presence of Cluett Peabody, who made Arrow shirts. There are old posters and ads displayed in the hallways and one room is devoted to the history of the textiles woven here and the shirts that were made here in the early 20th century. The grounds of the island are a state park, open to the public for walking and picnicking.

Our appointment was with Christopher Flagg, Landscape Conservation Officer. Board members Doug Emilio, historic preservation specialist, and Robert Kornfeld, Jr., architect and Aqueduct historian, made an impressive presentation on the Overseer's House and its needs, as well as the history of the old barn.

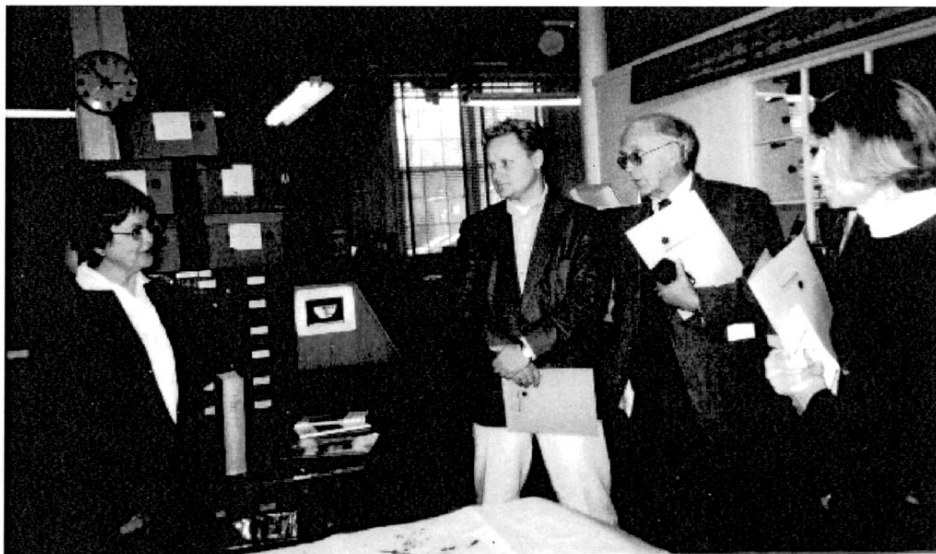
We consulted with Chris on the Historic Structures Report, a work-in-progress under Doug's direction that will provide the technical underpinning for eventual restoration of the Overseer's House. We also discussed the major roadblock to continuing volunteer work on the house, the presence of lead paint. We were cheered to learn from Chris that, thanks to changes in the market for this work, lead paint abatement could cost less than the original high estimate we had earlier been given. We owe Doug and Bob a big thank you for their professional presentation.

After our meeting, we were given a tour of the various units by John Lovell, Assistant Director of the Bureau of Historic Sites. Right inside the front door is a display of the meticulous work being done to restore life to the intricate and



Portrait of George Washington undergoing restoration. Left, Painting Conservator Joyce Zucker, with Friends board members looking on. (Photo by W. Cassella)

colorful designs done by artist Frederic Church for his home, Olana. We were shown treasures from the most recent dig done by the archeology unit. Perhaps the highlight of our tour was a visit to the laboratory where a life-sized portrait of George Washington, and its gilt frame, are being restored in time for the 150th anniversary of the designation of Washington's Headquarters State Historic Site in Newburgh, the first publicly operated historic site in the United States.
—Mavis Cain



Archeology unit head Lois Feister with, l. to r., Doug Emilio, Brian Goodman, and Mavis Cain. (Photo by K. Schatzel)



View from the trail above River Club site. Note Greystone station platform, seen as a thin white band next to the near shore of the Hudson. (Photo by C. Fahn)

River Club Project Endangers Grand Trail View

The views of the Hudson River and Palisades from the Aqueduct in Yonkers are among the most spectacular features of the trail and are unique to this section, making it a favored destination for trail users. Yet the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed high-rise 524-apartment River Club project denies the project would have a significant impact on views from the trail.

At a Planning Board hearing on December 13th, Friends board member Robert Kornfeld, Jr., dramatically contrasted photographs of the view from the trail above the River Club site taken by the Friends with the view shown in the EIS, which somehow manages to show neither the Hudson nor the Palisades. In its written comments, the Friends stated:

"This view has belonged to the public for more than 150 years. Yet it is now to be appropriated for private gain, since it is, of course, the views of the river and Palisades that propel this development and that will give its apartments their high market value. . . . The virtual loss of this scenic vista from the Yonkers portion of the trail is without question a major, permanent harm. Whatever goes up here will have a significant impact on the Aqueduct, a National Historic Landmark, State Historic Park, designated segment of the Hudson River Greenway, and a major cultural, historic, and recreational resource. . . ."

The environmental group Scenic Hudson, in its comments, wrote: "Any development between the Old Croton Aqueduct and Hudson River should be sited, designed and constructed in such a manner as to protect and preserve these views." *(continued on p. 7)*



Remnant of the Old Croton Aqueduct at 104th St. on the Upper West Side, Manhattan, a photo included in "Water Works." This copy was provided by Robert Kornfeld, Jr., who comments that the Aqueduct demolition was carried out by Boss Tweed in 1870 and "replaced by buried iron mains at a stupendous cost to the taxpayer."

"Water-Works"

Were you one of the lucky viewers to catch the exhibit of this title during its all-too-brief tenure at Cooper Union? Displayed were some 300 maps, engineering drawings, and photos from the vast archive of the New York City Department of Environmental Protection, the agency that oversees the water supply serving Westchester and Putnam counties as well as the city. The exhibit brochure notes:

"For 165 years New York City has been designing and building structures that collect, store and deliver water. The result of this monumental process is a system that reliably provides nine million people an abundant supply of the precious resource. The city water-works is widely regarded as one of the best urban water supplies in the world. It is a body of civil engineering that is without equal, representing a range of design and construction innovations whose formal clarity and structural logic is both technically inspired and artistically beautiful."

The exhibit had exquisite examples of the drafting art. There were delicately colored plans for enlarging the capacity of the High Bridge; images of the New Croton Aqueduct construction in the 1880s; and drawings of the New Croton Dam with the stones hand-shaded so you could almost feel their roughness. Many photos were of the Catskill and Delaware systems. A few showed romantic ruins of Roman aqueducts.

The exhibit, curated by Professor Kevin Bone of Cooper Union, was on view from January 8 to February 10. Besides a longer stay, one would have liked more interpretive information. But the emphasis was presumably meant to be on esthetics rather than history, and one visit was hardly enough to take in what was offered. DEP has been working with Cooper Union to organize and preserve its collections, and hopefully will succeed in its plans for a permanent archive and exhibit space in a landmark pumping station near Jerome Park Reservoir in the Bronx. - *Charlotte Fahn*

Cornering the Overseer's House

Perhaps you noticed the scaffolding that blossomed at the Overseer's House in Dobbs Ferry late last fall. Water seepage the previous winter had accelerated damage to the wooden soffit and brick masonry at the northeast corner of the house. Taking advantage of a few warm days in December, the skilled restoration team from the Taconic Region of State Parks were able to repair the bulging masonry. Replacement woodwork will be installed as soon as weather permits.



Photo by Charlotte Fahn

Mud Season Alert: Be Kind to the Trail!

The headline says it all. As the snows melt and spring rains arrive, the trail is more often in a wet condition than during the rest of the year. To avoid causing ruts, bikers and others using wheels on the trail will be doing a service if they allow the trail to dry out before using it. Thanks!

Mark Your Calendar!

April 1. Talk by Prof. Kenneth T. Jackson on "Water and the City," sponsored by Friends of the Old Croton Aqueduct. See p. 3 for details.

May 12. Guided Aqueduct walk led by Marge and Dan Schlitt. See p. 3 for story.

June 9. Guided tours of the Ossining gatehouse and a segment of the tunnel (tentative). Call 2 weeks before to register. 914-693-5259.

November 23. Turkey Walk! Mark it on your calendar now - details in next newsletter.

River Club (continued from p. 5)

River Club, together with existing buildings and the more recently proposed 11-story, 90-unit Millennium, would create a wall of overlapping buildings from the trail, essentially obliterating a wide viewshed. If approved as proposed, River Club would consist of two towers placed at right angles to the river, 11 stories tall on Warburton Avenue and 18 stories on the side facing the Hudson, connected by a lower structure paralleling Warburton. The site has a frontage on Warburton of over 500 feet. It is immediately north of the building at 1185 Warburton (the Greystone), a short distance north of Odell Avenue, and above Greystone station.

Under state environmental law, significant impacts must be mitigated. The Friends maintain that mitigation must start with changes in the design of the building, as well as in the density, to bring the view impacts to the minimum possible, and that additional mitigation should be required. (For a copy of the full statements submitted by the Friends and Scenic Hudson, call the Friends at 914-693-4117.) —Charlotte Fahn

MEMBERSHIP COUPON BE A FRIEND!!

Your tax-deductible contribution helps to protect and preserve the trail.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Renewal | <input type="checkbox"/> New Member |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friend \$10 | <input type="checkbox"/> Family \$20 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Good Friend \$50 | <input type="checkbox"/> Best Friend \$100 |

Please make check payable to Friends of the Old Croton Aqueduct. Send it with this coupon and your name, address, and day and evening telephone numbers to the Friends at Overseer's House, 15 Walnut St., Dobbs Ferry, NY 10522-2109

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____



Map Orders

If you wish to order the Friends' full-color map/guide by mail, send a check for \$5.25 to Friends of the Old Croton Aqueduct, Overseer's House, 15 Walnut St., Dobbs Ferry, NY 10522 (tel. 914-693-4117).

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Please send in your news items, reminiscences, and historical tidbits.

For information about the trail and Old Croton Aqueduct State Historic Park, call the **Historic Site Manager**, Brian Goodman, at 914-693-5259.



The Trail in Dobbs Ferry, viewed from Cedar Street.

(Photo by Anne Marie Leone, reproduced with permission. First published in Rivertowns Enterprise.)

Friends of the Old Croton Aqueduct

is a private, non-profit, volunteer organization formed to protect and preserve the Old Croton Aqueduct (Old Croton Aqueduct State Historic Park). The Aqueduct, completed in 1842, provided New York City with its first public supply of clean drinking water. It is a National Historic Landmark, one of the great engineering achievements of the 19th century. Old Croton Aqueduct State Historic Park encompasses the portion of the Aqueduct located in Westchester County. From the New Croton Dam to the New York City line it spans 26.2 miles, linking the Hudson River communities of Croton-on-Hudson, Cortlandt, Ossining, Briarcliff Manor, Sleepy Hollow, Tarrytown, Irvington, Dobbs Ferry, Hastings-on-Hudson and Yonkers. The Friends work to raise public awareness of the Aqueduct and trail, and to secure the resources that will enable this historic greenway to remain unspoiled in perpetuity.

Friends of the Old Croton Aqueduct
Overseer's House
15 Walnut Street
Dobbs Ferry, NY 10522

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