

The Reynolds Pond Native Habitat Restoration Area Project Angle Fly Preserve, Somers NY

Angle Fly Preserve (AFP) is a 654 acre public nature preserve located on Route 139 in Somers, New York. The property was purchased in 2006 by, and is jointly owned by, the Town of Somers, the County of Westchester and the City of New York. The property is managed by the Somers Land Trust (SLT), a not-for-profit volunteer group of local residents.

After nearly fifty years of neglect the property is overgrown by invasive alien vegetation that is killing the native vegetation needed to support native wildlife. The Somers Land Trust's plan for the Angle Fly Preserve is to remove and control the invasives as much as possible in order to restore the property to a native vegetative state and develop it as a conservation and recreation preserve.

On October 3, 2009 the preserve opened with a new 1.4 mile hiking trail through the forest. Ultimately ten miles of hiking trails are planned.

In addition to the creation of the network of hiking trails, one of the first important projects the SLT has planned is the creation of the Reynolds Pond Native Habitat Restoration Area, surrounding the 150' Reynolds farm pond at the main entrance to AFP. As a central hub of activity, this highly visible area will become a stunning natural habitat that multitasks as a large demonstration garden for homeowners, as well as, provide learning opportunities for both young and old regarding our environment. The restoration will include the pond itself, the creation of a buffer area of plants and shrubs native to the northeast that are attractive to the native insects, birds and animals and several 'rain gardens'. A handicapped accessible pathway, in addition to a portion of the main north-south connector trail (from Reis Park to Lasdon Arboretum) will circumvent the pond making it a retreat for all residents. Outdoor education areas, which can be used by both the schools and the community, are included in the plan. As the project progresses, SLT plans to restore the meadows with native grasses, shrubs and wildflowers and to restore the barn for use as an education center/mini-museum.

This project is currently in its initial phase. Implementation is being done in stages as sponsorships and volunteers become available.

The pond is an important part of the NYC watershed as it retains surface water runoff from the surrounding hillsides and roadways helping to prevent flooding downstream. The buffer area surrounding the pond contains a high percentage of alien invasive vegetation which allows erosion, does not support optimal numbers of local wildlife nor provide adequate water filtration. Over the years the pond depth has been reduced to less than half its original 6-8' down to 2-4' due to silt erosion and is currently covered with invasive algae. Both conditions are not only unsightly but create unhealthy conditions, such as decay and low oxygen levels, that if left to continue will make it unable to support beneficial plants or wildlife. It is imperative that

the health of this pond be restored.

Grants and/or donations of funding and/or services are needed by the Somers Land Trust. Funding is needed to purchase the hundreds of native plants that will be required, along with related wetland planting supplies. Other components of the restoration project include: a reliable water source needs to be established including a solar powered well, a water storage system and a rain barrel system. Tools, equipment and supplies need to be obtained for installation and maintenance. Dredging of the silt is needed to restore a healthy water depth. A solar aeration system is needed to prevent algae growth and restore oxygen levels. Ecologically sound and 'green' solutions are being used throughout AFP to protect the environment and enhance the educational value. This is a true community effort which is being planned, implemented and will be maintained by local volunteers and sponsors.

Several companies, groups and individuals have come forward to help with this important community project. Darrin Duling, Executive Director of the Native Plant Center and Tait Johansen, Naturalist with the Bedford Audubon Society have provided consultation with us on various ecological aspects of the restoration. Eberlin & Eberlin, consulting engineers and landscape architects, have assessed and measured the area to create scaled schematic drawings that reflect AFP's overall vision. Brenner Builders reconstructed the formerly derelict chicken coop building with historically correct siding to house the solar aeration equipment. Lakeland Lumber contributed the framing lumber. The Somers Lions Club installed the new roof and painted the building. Con-Tech Construction Technology, Inc. has replaced the broken concrete pad by the chicken coop with a bluestone terrace, built steps and a fieldstone sitting wall surrounding it. Agriventures Agway contributed an initial set of hand tools to enable volunteers. The Somers Women's Club made a donation toward the purchase of the planned native shrubs and plants. The Somers Recreation Department built the initial pathway around the pond. Somers Land Trust board members purchased and planted six high-bush blueberry bushes. Several Somers Scout groups helped to clear and mulch the area surrounding the blueberries. Everyone's help is needed and appreciated!

Thank you for your consideration.

The Somers Land Trust is a not for profit 501[c]3 organization. Donations are tax deductible, to the extent allowable by law, and may possibly be matched by employers. Expansion and continuation of Angle Fly Preserve projects and development is dependent totally on grants, donations and volunteers. For more information please view the Somers Land Trust web site: www.somerslandtrust.org

Checks should be made out to the: 'Somers Land Trust', and earmarked for the: 'Angle Fly Preserve'

Please mail to: The Somers Land Trust, PO Box 248, Somers, NY 10589-0248

If you need further information please contact Pat MacGregor via email at: pmacgregor@somerslandtrust.org, or via phone: 914-338-8758.