

**FINGER LAKES LAND TRUST
ETNA SWAMP - BROTHERTON FARM PROTECTION PROJECT
TOWN OF DRYDEN, TOMPKINS COUNTY**

The 324-acre Brotherton Farm is located on both sides of State Route 13 in an area of Dryden that is experiencing increased pressure for both commercial and residential development. Approximately 54 acres of freshwater wetland is located on the property – encompassing two-thirds of the Etna Swamp/Tompkins County Unique Natural Area #82. The Etna Swamp consists of a small island of hemlocks and with pines in a swamp, surrounded by old pasture. The Swamp is the source of water which flows directly through a perennial stream to Fall Creek. The Tompkins County Unique Natural Inventory lists grazing as a potential threat to the swamp’s function.

The Prince-Brotherton family has owned this farm since 1933 and is committed to its conservation. They are willing to forego a windfall from the sale of the property and are instead interested in donating a conservation easement that will ensure that the farm remains in agriculture and that substantial formal protected buffers to Etna Swamp are provided. Their intent is to keep the land within their family. The Finger Lakes Land Trust seeks a grant of \$20,000 from Tompkins County’s Natural Infrastructure Program to cover a portion of transaction and stewardship costs associated with this donation.

The Brotherton Farm includes farmland that is considered to be prime (71.8 acres) as well as agricultural land that is ranked to be of statewide importance (135 acres). Previously operated as a dairy farm, much of the property is now leased to Jerry Dell Farms for the production of organic hay.

In addition to its value for agriculture and natural infrastructure, this property also has significant scenic value given it features 2,700 feet of highly visible frontage on Route 13 and additional frontage on Ringwood Road.

Since the property is bisected by State Route 13, and given a number of possible scenarios for future agriculture on the land, the Land Trust intends to secure the land by actually placing two separate easements on the property. One of these will apply to the portion of the property on the north side of Route 13 and the other for the south side of the state highway.

Both easements will provide for continued agricultural production and also for one permitted farmstead/residential area in each. Sustainable harvest will be allowed on wooded portions of the property, provided that harvest is overseen by a professional forester and subject to the Land Trust’s prior approval of the management plan. An environmental protection zone will prohibit disturbance of the freshwater wetland and adjacent upland buffer. Though the exact dimensions of the upland buffer are still being finalized, they will exceed the state’s regulated 100-foot buffer, thus providing additional formal protection for the Etna Swamp.

Estimated costs for the project are estimated at \$40,000. Projected costs are:

Stewardship Fund Contribution	22,000
Survey	8,000
Project Staff	5,000
Easement Baseline Study	3,000
Legal/Closing Costs	2,000

A grant of \$20,000 from Tompkins County will be matched on a 1:1 basis through fundraising that will be undertaken by the Land Trust. Completion of the project will advance agricultural and natural resource protection goals articulated in both the Town of Dryden and Tompkins County comprehensive plans.