

Ribbon cutting at White Sulphur Springs Ranch

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The Mohawk Valley Stewardship Council established a milestone in the recent history of the valley when it announced acquisition of the ranch Oct. 20.

Now, a celebratory ribbon cutting at the ranch house Thursday, Dec. 9, has marked the event.

Some 100 loyal ranch supporters took advantage of a rain-free afternoon to quietly reflect on the blessing and Native American flute melody performed by Becky Stockdale.

Those gathered received a welcome from council president Alice Berg, and cheered as she cut the symbolic ribbon.

All visitors accepted the invitation to explore the house and roam the property. Many ventured to the pool to see if the water was as warm as they remembered — sure enough, a pleasant 70 degrees!

The 80-year-old pool is fed by warm springs that dot the hillside, along with numerous cold springs, and enjoys that moderate temperature in its crystal waters year-round.

Visitors reminisced about fun times shared around the pool and were disappointed to see the rickety high-dive platform had succumbed to time and weather.

The council's immediate plans are to restore the pool for community use as soon as feasible. The first steps to reach that end are to analyze the available springs and to maximize their potential in raising the temperature, as well as the flow rate through the pool from its present 100 gallons per minute.

The house, although closed up since 2003, is in amazingly good shape. Through broken windows, local birds relished in the human-free environment to do what birds do best — gather, nest, multiply and generally act in a fowl manner.

John and Sugie Barker proved that was not a problem some judicious cleanup could not cure. The invasion has been largely stemmed due to Kim Kalbaugh's efforts in covering all the windows with plywood panels.



Mohawk Valley Stewardship Council president Alice Berg thanked Caltrans representative Carolyn Sullivan for the donation that enabled the group to buy White Sulphur Springs. Photo by Susan Pettinato

As visitors nibbled on homemade cookies, provided by a crew of volunteers under the organization of Janet Reihsen, they had the opportunity to secure membership in the MVSC, to sign up for volunteer possibilities and to share memories that will be included in a collection of stories of days past on the property, saved for future generations to read.

The purchase of the White Sulphur Springs/McLears Ranch property was made possible through a grant from Caltrans and a generous matching gift from former owner Stephen J. Luczo.