

RIDGE TIMES



The Official Newsletter of the Chestnut Ridge Conservancy, Inc.—a 501(c)(3) Corporation

May, 2013 Vol. III, Issue 1

ChestnutRidgeConservancy.org

First Annual CRC Gala an Overwhelming Success

The Chestnut Ridge Conservancy held its *1st Annual Gala* on Saturday, November 3, 2012 at the **Orchard Park Country Club**. This event was the centerpiece of the Conservancy's fund raising efforts for 2012, netting the CRC over \$31,000 in sponsorship and advertising revenue. As always, these funds will be used to help fund the numerous projects to restore and improve our beautiful county park.



Joanne Kamats, Ray Fabiniak and Rich Kamats

With WGRZ's Sports Director **Ed Kilgore** serving as master of ceremonies, this event featured a review of the Conservancy's efforts over the past year, a talk of the CRC's future goals, and the presentation of the first annual *Chestnut Ridge Guardian Award* to Conservancy Chairman and Founding Trustee **Raymond A. Fabiniak**. After a magnificent meal, guests were treated to dancing to music from the **Bobby Militello Quartet**.

The Conservancy is indebted to all of our sponsors and program advertisers whose generosity made the event



The Bobby Militello Quartet

so successful. A complete list of our supporters can be found on page 4. The CRC also wishes to thank **Rich and Joanne Kamats** who served as very active honorary chairpersons, CRC Trustee **Mike Neumeister**, and the entire Gala Committee for organizing this phenomenal event. Plans are already in the works for the 2013 Gala.



Dancing the Evening Away ...



CRC Awarded Capacity Building Grant From Parks & Trails New York



The growth of the Conservancy has created an increasing need for funding. Consequently, we have begun actively searching for grant monies to help fund our numerous projects.

We are pleased to announce our first successful grant application: a \$1,500 *Growing the Grassroots* Capacity Building Grant courtesy of Parks & Trails New York.

These PTNY annual grants are designed “to enhance the long-term sustainability of park and trail not-for-profit organizations by helping them better fulfill their missions; improve their reach, effectiveness, and impact; leverage resources, and increase community support for and involvement in park and trail planning, development and/or stewardship” (PTNY.org).

This grant will be used to develop a brochure to increase awareness of the CRC throughout Erie County.



CRC Trustee Ron Michnik and Marketing Consultant Bill Even with Fran Gotcsik, Director of Programs and Policy for PTNY

Sincere thanks to Fran Gotcsik and the entire Parks & Trails New York organization for their generosity and appreciation of the work performed by the CRC.



Conservancy Volunteers Plant Chestnut Tree Seedlings at the Park

On Friday, April 26, 2013, several CRC volunteers got together to plant ten American Chestnut seedlings on the large plot of land between the toboggan chutes and the exit ramp onto Chestnut Ridge Road.

Trustee Janet Benjamins spearheaded the effort to obtain the seedlings from the county and organize the planting party.

Janet explained that while these seedlings are not the variety that are blight resistant, they are planted to propagate the species, avoiding the tree's complete extinction. It is estimated that over three billion American Chestnut trees have been destroyed by the blight since it was accidentally introduced into the country in the late 1800's.

“Unfortunately, most pure American Chestnut trees in the northeastern United States will eventually succumb to the blight. Efforts are being made to find a cure for this disease. In the meantime, we will plant these seedlings and hope that we can get a few years from them to help the **American Chestnut Foundation** in their efforts to restore the American Chestnut to our eastern forests,”

said Benjamins.

Chestnut trees that are thought to be blight-resistant are available. They are a cross-breed between the American Chestnut and Asiatic Chestnut trees (which are immune to the blight). However, it is not known if the cross-bred trees are truly blight-resistant, and cross-bred saplings are very expensive to purchase.



David Shareno, Diane Morse, Janet Benjamins, Liz Cash, Jack Bertsch and Joe Cash

CRC Board Holds Strategic Planning Session

The CRC Board of Trustees participated in a strategic planning and brainstorming session on January 26, 2013 to help determine the Conservancy's direction for this year and beyond.

Facilitated by Grace Lattanzio, this three-hour session enabled the board to float ideas and then collectively rank them in order of importance and feasibility.

As a result of the session, committees were formed to examine the practicality of the following ideas:

- Restoration of the iconic *100 Steps*
- Hire a full-time (or part-time) executive director to coordinate and facilitate Conservancy operations
- Restoration of the five Casino murals (already in progress)
- Obtain more funding through grants and endowments
- Establish a dog park
- Establish a full-service restaurant in the park
- Increase seasonal festivals held at the park



With Gratitude

The Conservancy thanks County Executive Mark Poloncarz, Parks Commissioner Troy Schinzel and Deputy Parks Commissioner/CRC Trustee Daniel Glowacki for their continued support and cooperation.



Foxes mural, Photo by Eileen Sullivan, M.A., C.A.S.

Casino Mural Restoration Underway!

The CRC will be shortly embarking on the restoration and conservation of the five murals located in the Chestnut Ridge Casino. These magnificent wall paintings were completed in 1948 by an artist known only as "*Feldman*." His (or her) full identity is a mystery, as our extensive search for clues about the artist's resume and history have come up empty.



Skiers mural, Photo by William C. Even

The Conservancy has joined forces with Eileen Sullivan of *Aurora Art Restoration* for the completion of the project. The project is expected to take months to complete. Sixty-five years of dirt, grime, fireplace smoke, and cooking grease have accumulated on the paintings making this a long, labor-intensive project.

The total cost of cleaning, restoration, and maintenance of all five Casino murals will total approximately \$33,000. The CRC has secured a \$10,000 donation from a generous local benefactor to get the project started.

Additional funds necessary to complete the project will be solicited from charitable foundations and individuals through grants and donations.

The CRC welcomes your contributions to this very worthwhile cause. It is the first of many proposals and ideas being evaluated to restore Chestnut Ridge Park to its former prominence and greatness.

If you have any insight into the artist responsible for creating these beautiful murals, please let us know!



Calling All Volunteers!

Organizations rely heavily on volunteers; the CRC is no different. Your generous donation of time can be very rewarding. If you have not been contacted in the past and are interested in volunteering, please send your name, telephone number, and email address to volunteers@ChestnutRidgeConservancy.org.

When volunteers are needed, you will be notified via email. If you wish to help, we will find a way for you to contribute. Many thanks for your support of the Chestnut Ridge Conservancy.



2013 Park Improvements

The following improvement projects are slated for 2013:

- Repaving lower eight tennis courts near the Casino, as well as installation of new hardware
- Resurfacing the parking lot at Shelter #2
- New snow fences on the sledding hills (completed)
- Repaving the road to the Commissioner's Cabin
- County Parks and Boy Scouts to stain new fishing dock
- Major parking lot improvements made possible by a HAVA (*Help America Vote Act*) grant
- Removal of several dilapidated buildings and unsafe shelters; restoration of five other shelters

Our 2012 Gala Sponsors

The Chestnut Ridge Conservancy wishes to thank all of the very generous companies and individuals that sponsored our 2012 Gala event. We couldn't have done it without you!

Platinum Sponsors



Gold Sponsors



Silver Sponsors



Patrons



Comings and Goings

Since our last newsletter, the Conservancy has added two new board members, David Shareno (Secretary) and Elizabeth Cash.

We also wish to thank Paul Powell and Marilyn Heim for their service to the board and the park. Their contributions are greatly appreciated.

About the Chestnut Ridge Conservancy

Mission Statement

The Chestnut Ridge Conservancy was formed to support the restoration and preservation of the rich natural, recreational, and historic resources that comprise Chestnut Ridge Park.

Chestnut Ridge Conservancy, Inc.

P. O. Box 1376

Orchard Park, NY 14127

web: ChestnutRidgeConservancy.org

email: info@ChestnutRidgeConservancy.org

Facebook: [Facebook.com/ChestnutRidgeConservancy](https://www.facebook.com/ChestnutRidgeConservancy)

Our office is located at the Casino in Chestnut Ridge Park.

Ridge Times Editor: William C. Even, Marketing Consultant

The Chestnut Ridge Conservancy is a 501(c)(3) corporation.

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Board of Trustees

Chairman: Raymond Fabiniak

President: John C. Bailey

Vice President: Ed Starosielec

Treasurer: Jack Bertsch

Secretary: David Shareno

Directors: Janet Benjamins

David M. Buyer

Liz Cash

Daniel J. Glowacki

Erin Grajek

Justine LeFauve

Michael Merritt

Ronald J. Michnik

Diane Morse

Michael Neumeister

William Thornton



CRC Board of Trustees Biographies

Our board is comprised of fifteen dedicated volunteers who donate their time, talent, and resources to help make our organization and our park the best they can be. We profile several of our trustees in each newsletter.

Ray Fabiniak

As Conservancy Chairman, Ray has served as the Chairman of the Chestnut Ridge Conservancy Board since its inception and is one of the CRC's seven Founding Trustees.

Born in Buffalo, NY, Ray was a B-17 pilot in the 95th Bomber Group (H) in Europe during World War II. After returning, Ray owned and ran a **Jubilee Foods** grocery chain in Western New York.

Ray is also a charter member of the **Orchard Park Economic Development Committee**, where he served as chairman. He continues to play an active role in various civic organizations, spearheading the efforts to restore Chestnut Ridge Park to its former glory.



Justine Lefauve

Life-long resident of Orchard Park, Justine is one of the Founding Trustees of the Chestnut Ridge Conservancy, as well as its past Secretary. Justine also served on the Founding Board of the **Orchard Park Council of the Arts**.

A member of the **Orchard Park Garden Club** for over 30 years, she has launched a new garden club, **The Southtowns Gardeners**. The young club has partnered with the Conservancy to plant the garden at the flagpole outside the Casino.

Justine also serves on the Board of the **Federated Garden Clubs of New York State, Inc.** and is a **National Garden Club Master Flower Show Judge, Emeritus**.



Ron Michnik

Married to Lynda for 45 years, Ron is recently retired after serving as president and owner of **Independent Funding Service**, a local mortgage broker, for 26 years.

Active in the community, Ron has served multiple terms with the **Orchard Park Chamber of Commerce**, including several terms as President. He was also associated with the

Orchard Park Economic Development Committee for over 20 years.

Ron is instrumental in the initiation of events at Chestnut Ridge Park, including summer outdoor movies and the restoration and conservation of the existing murals in the Park Casino.



William Thornton

Bill has been a resident of Orchard Park for 45 years. He is married to a life-long resident, the former Carol Belurgi. Bill and Carol have six children and eleven grandchildren.

He has retired 3 times—from **Remington Shaver** (Operations), the **Southgate Plaza** (Vice President/General Manager), and **Erie County** (Deputy Commissioner of Buildings and Grounds).

Bill has been affiliated with the **Boy Scouts of America** for 61 years, including Scoutmaster Emeritus Troop 230/Nativity Church. He has served on the board of the **Finance Academy at West Seneca Schools** and Judge Coordinator for New York State DECA/Career Conference.

He is a member of the Facilities Committee for **Bishop Timon/St. Jude High School** and serves as a Eucharistic Minister for **Nativity Church**. Bill's passions include a love of the outdoors and anything to do with cars.



Questions About the Park?

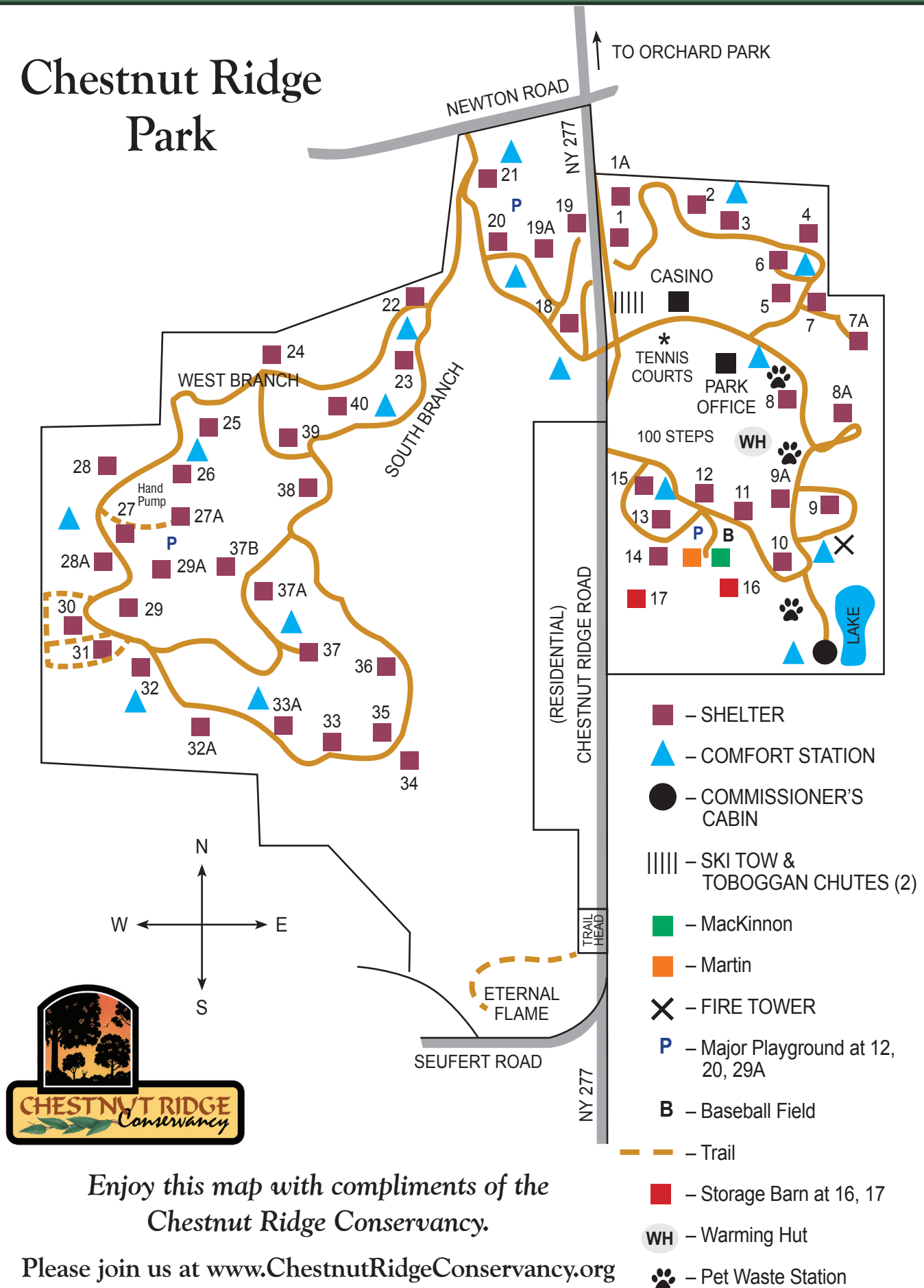
While the Conservancy is always happy to take your questions about the park, very often the best place for answers is the Erie County Parks Department.

Whether you wish to reserve a shelter for a private affair, or you want to share your ideas or concerns about the park itself, you can:

- Call the Erie County Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department at **(716) 858-8355**
- Visit the Erie County Parks, Recreation and Forestry web site at **www2.Erie.gov/parks**



Chestnut Ridge Park



Enjoy this map with compliments of the
Chestnut Ridge Conservancy.

Please join us at www.ChestnutRidgeConservancy.org



CHESTNUT RIDGE *Conservancy*

In an effort to assist the County of Erie in restoring and maintaining Chestnut Ridge Park in the midst of budget cuts and rising expenses, a dedicated group of concerned citizens has come together to form the ***Chestnut Ridge Conservancy***.

Established in 2009, this not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization was established to support the restoration and preservation of the rich natural, recreational, and historic resources that comprise our own Chestnut Ridge Park.

We are working with the Erie County Parks Department to:

- Define projects that need to be completed
- Raise funds through the generosity of corporations, community groups, and grants
- Sponsor events to raise awareness and encourage county residents to take advantage of the park's facilities and scenery

We need your help to carry out our mission!

Please consider donating to our worthy cause. Simply complete the form below and include it with your check made out to ...

Chestnut Ridge Conservancy

P. O. Box 1376
Orchard Park, NY 14127

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State/Province: _____

ZIP/Postal Code: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

☐ Please add me to your email mailing list.

Email: info@ChestnutRidgeConservancy.org

Web: ChestnutRidgeConservancy.org

Facebook: [Facebook.com/ChestnutRidgeConservancy](https://www.facebook.com/ChestnutRidgeConservancy)

Will You Help Us Revitalize Chestnut Ridge Park?

The **Chestnut Ridge Conservancy** is working to restore our local treasure. Your assistance is critical! Please select your membership level and return this slip with a check for your tax-deductible contribution made payable to ***Chestnut Ridge Conservancy***.

Thank you for your support!

Join on-line at:

ChestnutRidgeConservancy.org/membership

Annual Membership Levels:

Chestnut Family Membership	\$100
Family Membership	\$50
Individual Membership	\$30
Senior Membership (55 and over)	\$25
Community Groups	\$125
Conservationist	\$500
Preservationist	\$2,500
Park Benefactor	\$5,000

Conservationist, Preservationist, and Park Benefactor levels will be recognized on the Chestnut Ridge Conservancy Patrons board inside the Chestnut Ridge Casino.

I Would Like to Volunteer!

I am interested in helping with:

- ☐ Fund Raising
- ☐ Events Planning
- ☐ Event Setup, Cleanup, and Activities
- ☐ Administrative Tasks



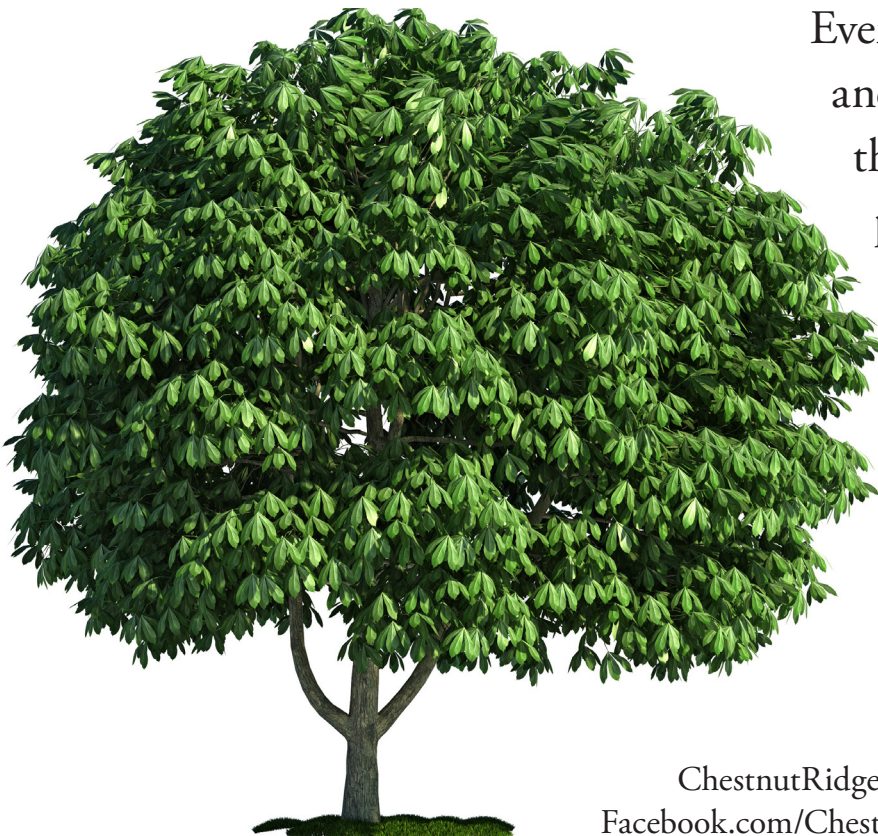


CHESTNUT RIDGE *Conservancy*

You are Invited!

Chestnut Ridge Conservancy 2013 Annual Meeting

- Saturday, May 11, 2013 at 11:00am
- Chestnut Ridge Park Casino, Lower Level
- Refreshments and Lunch will be served



Everyone is welcome! Bring a friend and learn more about the park and the successes of the CRC over the past year.

For details, Like us on Facebook and join our mailing list.

We look forward to seeing you in May!

ChestnutRidgeConservancy.org
Facebook.com/ChestnutRidgeConservancy

