



Bob Ellis/staff photographer

Tom Reese installs planks on a storage building at Lime Hollow Center for Environment and Culture's new educational center on Gracie Road. The campus will include a maple syrup sugar shack, a 100-seat amphitheater, a picnic pavilion, an arts and crafts pavilion, and storage facilities.

# Nature's classroom

## Lime Hollow building new educational center

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The new Lime Hollow Center for Environment and Culture educational center will not be open until November as a result of complications, the executive director said Thursday.

Located about a quarter-mile south from Lime Hollow's visitor center on McLean Road and adjacent to the Eric Kroot Art Trail, it was originally set to open in September.

Two modular buildings, which will comprise the center for a total of about 2,600 square feet, are being built off site by students in the Onondaga-Cortland-Madison BOCES Construction Technology program.

Construction on the buildings began in September 2012.

The campus, which will include a maple syrup sugar shack, a 100-seat amphitheater, a picnic pavilion, an arts and crafts pavilion and storage facilities, will be open to BOCES New Vision program students during the school year.

Lime Hollow campers will use the facilities during the winter and summer months when the New Vision students are not attending classes.

The foundation for the modular buildings has been laid, but the placing of the buildings themselves, which will have to be transported to the site, has been held up because no crane was available, Executive Director Glenn Reisweber said.

Right now is the peak season for cranes, he said, so the modular buildings will not be placed on site until Aug. 4.

If all had gone according to plan, the modulars would have been on site next Monday, Reisweber said.

While waiting for the modular buildings to arrive, volunteers have been working on remodeling and retrofitting peripheral buildings from the old lumber mill, including the maple syrup sugar shack, which is set to be completed in 2015-16, and the picnic pavilion, which is on track to be completed by summer 2015, he said.

"The timeline has shifted," Reisweber said. "We are doing our best. We are a small mom and pop (organization), and this is taxing every element of our organization to put this online."

During the last two years, volunteers and staff also have been clearing 5 acres of invasive species from the entire periphery of Gracie Pond, a Herculean task, Reisweber said.

Once the modular buildings are placed on site, crews can frame the buildings, install solar panels and begin the interior work, he said.

While knowing few projects are completed on time, the delays are frustrating, Reisweber said.

"I am excited where we are at, but I am also a very impatient guy ... I don't like being behind," he said.

As the amphitheater is close to the site where the modular buildings will go, crews are waiting to start construction on that project until after the modulars have been placed and framed, he said.

Crews are hoping to break ground for the amphitheater by mid-August



A recently built foundation awaits Lime Hollow's new education center building, which will be placed on the foundation later this summer.

## Land near Lime Hollow awaiting DEC decision for preservation

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CORTLANDVILLE — The fate of a 16-acre tract of land that environmental officials want to preserve remains in limbo as Cortland County is still awaiting the state Department of Environmental Conservation's input on site remediation.

The tract of land, which officials from the Lime Hollow Center for Environment and Culture want to acquire and preserve, contains two marl ponds and is a fragile wetland area.

It lies adjacent to the center but belongs to the county, since it was donated to the county in 1995 by Benny and Sheva Gunzenhauser.

The property came into question when the nearby gravel mining company, Cortlandville Sand and Gravel, offered to buy it from the county in October 2013. Lime Hollow Executive Director Glenn Reisweber objected, stressing the need to preserve the property and urging the county to instead turn it over to the center.

Since that time, the county has been working with the DEC to rectify the problematic mining activities that occurred on site, Legislator Kevin Whitney (R-Cortlandville) said Thursday. It was determined that Cortlandville Sand and Gravel mined over the boundaries of its property onto the 16-acre tract of land and the DEC is now investigating the matter, Whitney said.

"We are waiting to see what the

resolution is going to be to address that and set the parameters of, who did what and this is how we'll fix that," Whitney said.

He said the ultimate goal is to ensure the land is turned over to Lime Hollow for preservation but first the DEC must weigh in because the county wants to avoid any potential liability issues that could arise from the mining having occurred on site.

Whitney said his contact at the DEC is on vacation but he said they are usually in touch about once a month.

Reisweber said he is just frustrated with the length of time this has dragged on.

"We are hoping for a quick resolution and in our opinion there has been more than enough time that has lapsed for an inspector to go out there," Reisweber said.

He pointed to the intent of the donation in the 1990s, which was to preserve the land, saying there is no better organization to steward the land than Lime Hollow.

"We're hoping to resolve this thing so we can incorporate that underneath our preservation umbrella," Reisweber said.

The property is broken into two parcels, one 4.7 acres in size and assessed at \$4,700 and another at 11.7 acres assessed at \$11,700, according to the county Real Property Tax Services Office.

The DEC was unavailable for comment by press time.

Cortlandville Sand and Gravel owner Roy Susskind was also unavailable for comment.

and have the stage completed before the first snows, Reisweber said.

"We're going to work until it snows, and then we're going to hibernate like the rest of the natural world and cross country ski and snowshoe," he said.

General Contractor Art Bell of Bell Construction and a former student of the BOCES construction trade program said he believes the experience this project offers the BOCES

students constructing the modular buildings is very important.

The whole trades industry is dying and needs young workers with knowledge of a trade and the ability to work with their hands, and the experience gained in this project will open up various opportunities for the students, he said.

"So I think it is a great opportunity for the kids if they pay attention and want to learn," he said.