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CONTACT:
Nancy Smith
Executive Director
(716) 687-1225 ext. 117
nancyrs@wnylc.org

Kyle Semmel
Communications Manager
(716) 687-1225 ext. 112
ksemmel@wnylc.org

The Western New York Land Conservancy Reaches \$1.6 Million Dollar Fundraising Goal and Will Purchase Mossy Point near East Aurora

The Western New York Land Conservancy is pleased to announce that it has met its \$1.6 million dollar goal to save Mossy Point. As a headwater forest, the land will provide clean water and prevent flooding in communities downstream.

During the past two years, the Land Conservancy and the Friends of Mossy Point carried out an ambitious fundraising campaign to protect the property. "This campaign was a tremendous effort by *everyone* involved," said Nancy Smith, Executive Director of the Land Conservancy. "The Friends of Mossy Point, our members, and the entire Western New York community came together to make this dream a reality. Since the great lakes contain almost a quarter of the world's surface fresh water, it is so inspiring to protect a forest that enhances the quality of the fresh water we all rely on."

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation played a significant role in the early stages of the campaign by awarding the Land Conservancy with a \$655,000 Water Quality Improvement grant. "Protecting a large, contiguous tract of unspoiled forest like Mossy Point is critical to preserving water quality, including here at the headwaters of the Niagara River. This land is home to vital wildlife habitat, including ancient and rare fern species, and a stopping place for migratory songbirds. DEC is pleased to support this acquisition through a Water Quality Improvement Project grant and congratulates the Western New York Land Conservancy on its work to protect Mossy Point," said Basil Seggos, DEC Commissioner.

The Land Conservancy will now enter the final stages of purchasing the property, and will be the proud new owners of Mossy Point in the early spring. Once the sale is official later in 2020, the Land Conservancy will build a trail for walking, cross-country, and snowshoe hikes. Combined with the adjacent Kenneglenn Nature Preserve and Hunters Creek County Park, it will form a 1,100-acre protected area, one of the largest patches of protected forests in the entire Niagara River watershed.

The Western New York Land Conservancy is a regional, not-for-profit land trust that permanently protects land with significant conservation value in Western New York for current and future generations. The Land Conservancy envisions a future in which open spaces, working lands, wildlife

habitat, and scenic beauty are cherished and protected as part of the landscape and character of Western New York. The Land Conservancy is accredited by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission and is one of 1000+ land trusts nationwide, including 87 in New York State. Land trusts have protected over 56 million acres of land.

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