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TheResource

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE WESTERN NEW YORK LAND CONSERVANCY

SPRING 2019

Let's go for a **walk...**



© Rachel Chrostowski

Spring Wildflower Walk

Saturday, May 4, 2019 | 12 PM to 2 PM

Join us for a walk through the Niagara Escarpment Preserve in Lockport in search of spring wildflowers. This beautiful forest is part of a unique geological formation that is associated with unusual plants and ecological communities.

Geology Walk at Kenneglenn & Mossy Point

Sunday, August 25, 2019 | 10 AM to 12 PM

Join us and learn about our region's geology as we splash in Hunters Creek as it winds through a 100-foot tall gorge and over a small waterfall. This family-friendly adventure will be led by Geologist Stan Radon. Hunters Creek runs between our Kenneglenn Nature Preserve and the Mossy Point Forest we are currently working to protect in the Town of Wales.



© Rachel Chrostowski

Save the Date

2019 LAND CONSERVANCY GALA

Wednesday, September 25, 2019 | 6 PM to 9 PM

Templeton Landing on Buffalo's waterfront

For more information, call (716) 687-1225 or visit wnylc.org/events



A Mossy Point Memoir:
Protecting one forest's magical memories



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The Western New York Land Conservancy is a not-for-profit land trust that permanently protects natural and agricultural lands in Western New York. The Land Conservancy is accredited by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission and is one of 1000+ land trusts nationwide, including 90 in New York State. Together, we protect more than 56 million acres, and you can help us preserve even more...

In the Wake of a Windstorm

By Shelby Perry, Stewardship Director,
Northeast Wilderness Trust

Many of our region's forests were cleared for agriculture in the not-so-distant past, and many of them have only returned to forest in the last 50 to 100 years. Forests this young aren't very complex. If you walk through a patch of woods around here it is often easier to find evidence of old fields than the dead and down trees common in a mature forest. This means a lack of habitat for wildlife.

Everything from nesting Winter Wrens to hibernating black bears to breeding amphibians rely on the holes and exposed roots of blown over trees for part of their life cycle. What's more; downed wood in streams and rivers helps to distribute and slow storm flows, which increases water quality and adds diversity to the aquatic habitat in the stream by forming debris dams and plunge pools, which are preferred by many species of fish. These micro-habitats are also critical to many stream vertebrates and invertebrates.

Earlier this year, wind storms tipped over many trees. You might be wondering: With so many obvious benefits of downed trees, why don't we see more down trees in our forests?

Humans, it seems, generally dislike forest complexity. We tend to want to "clean up" a forest after an event like this. And while clearing away downed trees from lawns and trails and driveways is appropriate, heading deeper into the woods to "clean up" downed trees and pulling them out for firewood, removing them from streams, or filling in the holes beneath the upturned roots can actually damage wildlife habitat.

Recent storms have presented us with an opportunity to enhance the complexity, and therefore improve the wildlife habitat in our woodlands. So as you clean up after our springtime storms, please consider leaving those tip-ups and dead trees in place. You may even be greeted by more wildlife in the future!

This guest article was written by Shelby Perry, Stewardship Director at Northeast Wilderness Trust. NWT is a land trust that conserves forever-wild landscapes for nature and people in New England and the eastern Adirondacks.



© Alicia Fahrner

At the DL&W corridor, the world takes note

Wow! Did you see all of the designs for the new trail and greenway at the open house and exhibitions in April?

We are so impressed with the time and creativity that teams put in to their work. We received 98 poster submissions. They came from artists and designers right here in Western New York, students and professionals from across the country and from all over the world.

The teams proposed new walking and bicycling trails, bridges, playgrounds, outdoor art, and community farms. They included something for every season, like sledding hills for snowy days, and kayak launches for summertime. And their designs imagined the corridor with restored forests and wetlands for wildlife.

Thank you to the sponsors who made the competition possible: BlueCross BlueShield of Western New York Blue Fund, M&T Bank, the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Legacy Funds at the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and the Land Trust Alliance, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy through the Doppelt Family Trail Development Fund, and numerous individual Land Conservancy members and donors.

So what's next?

- We'll announce the winners of the competition in just a few weeks. You can see all of the submitted designs online at wnylc.org/dlw/
- With help from our homegrown marketing firm, Block Club, we will be unveiling a new name and identity for the project later this spring.
- This summer, keep your eye out for special events with our partners around the corridor, sponsored by the Blue Fund.
- Later this year, with a grant from New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, we will hire designers to create concept and schematic designs for the project.

Can you believe how far we've come? It is only thanks to you that this iconic, innovative, and inspiring project is so close to reality.



© All photos above by Alana Adetola Arts Photography, LLC



Creature Feature: Spring Peepers

How do YOU know when it's spring? Is it the sight of a robin bop-bop-bopping along? Is it the buds bursting on tree branches? Is it the unexpected pops of color from crocuses floating above dark earth?

At our Kenneglenn office, and across the region, spring is announced by the cacophonous chirping of Spring peepers, pseudacris crucifer, in the pond along the driveway. These tiny one-inch tree frogs are often heard but rarely seen. They live near water in forests and grasslands, have smooth light brown skin and dark lines on their backs that form a telltale X. Their hind feet are webbed and they have sticky toe pads that help them grip onto plants, which must be easy considering they weigh around four grams. The males get very excited during the spring, as it is time to find a female to breed with, so they congregate near water and sing in trios, repeating their high-pitched peeping sound 20 times a minute! Have you heard these choristers yet this year?

Farms for the future

Our farmers work tirelessly through every season to make sure that we have fresh, local food to put on our tables every day. They do all of this in the face of a changing environment, an unpredictable economy, and everyday challenges of life.

Sadly, Western New York has lost more than 600 farms since 2012. We are committed to helping keep our agricultural heritage alive and our farmland in working hands. Thanks to grant funding from New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, the Land Conservancy will protect even more of our farmland this year, including farms in Alden and Eden.

Are you a farmer or do you own farmland?

Let us know if you want more information on protecting your land by giving us a call today at (716) 687-1225.



© Calvin Nemec

Thank you for honoring those you care for and supporting their love for nature. In honor of

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from Paula & Randall Pirson



© Abby Songin

At the Land Conservancy, we start to get excited about sharing these special places with Western New Yorkers of all ages, reconnecting them with nature, as we work together to protect them forever. If you would like to join us and protect our region’s special places, we welcome you to begin or renew your membership today.

Simply make a donation online at wnylc.org or return the enclosed envelope with your donation. You can also choose to be a monthly giver and support conservation all year through a simple, automatic monthly donation. Your tax-deductible contribution today will become tomorrow’s protected places.

You can also make a difference by lending a hand in the office or on the land. If you’re interested in becoming a volunteer, let us know with a call at (716) 687-1225 or an email at info@wnylc.org.

Learning from the Land: Ecological Restoration of the Niagara Gorge

By Graham Tuttle, PhD

Western New York has a long and proud industrial history. Unfortunately, it has also left our region with many degraded environments. In the Niagara Gorge, years of tree and wildflower removal for industrial and recreational development have left the ecosystem heavily invaded by non-native species and only a shadow of the rich biodiversity that it used to be known for.

Ecological restoration is the process of managing a degraded natural area in a way that allows it to function the way it did before it was degraded. This process can be challenging. It takes time, patience, careful consideration, and often heavy initial investment of resources.

Successful restoration projects like Restore the Gorge require several steps to set the ecosystem on a path to recovery:

1. Start by studying the site and consulting with scientists to learn the important characteristics of the ecosystem.
2. Learn why the system is degraded and why it doesn’t function the way it used to, so we can address the cause, not just the symptoms.
3. Look for a healthy ecosystem that has similar qualities to use as your example and aim for that. For unique areas like the Niagara Gorge, consult historical records about the site, too.
4. Design a management plan that puts the system on the path to recovery. In the gorge, this means controlling the non-native plants and replacing them with the right natives.
5. Monitor and track how the system is responding and adapt the management plan accordingly throughout the project.

Successful restoration projects create natural areas that persist on their own, providing essential ecosystem services, like clean air, water, and wildlife habitat, and they store carbon. We are excited to see growing momentum for Restore the Gorge and projects like it to restore our native ecosystems so they can continue to enrich Western New York for generations to come.

© Priscilla Titus





© Rachael Chrostowski

A Mossy Point Memoir



© Kasey DeLuke



Protecting one forest's magical memories

In the summer of 1947, as she was anticipating the birth of her second child, Helen Kennedy Tirrell handwrote, in elegant penmanship, a beautiful memoir of her childhood at Kenneglenn, the family's summer home in Wales.

It was an Elysian playground for a child and later for an expectant mother—400-plus acres with a working farm at one end, a mansion and guest house called Hillcrest at the other, and a creek running through the middle of it. In her memoir, Helen brought to life a magical part of the world comprised of forest, field, pasture, creek, orchard, deep gorges with steep cliffs, and places with names that conjure images of A.A. Milne's Hundred Acre Wood: The View, The Grove, The Wagon Track, The Camp, The Ridge Trail, The Virgin Timber, Cuspidonia, The Playhouse, The Swamp, and Mossy Point.

Sundays at Kenneglenn, Helen tells us, were family days that began with a church service presided over by her father, Buffalo businessman Charles Kennedy, with all five of the Kennedy children participating. Then there was a lavish breakfast buffet with fresh fruit and fresh cream, sweet rolls, and eggs. Listen as Helen recounts what happened each day after breakfast.

When breakfast was over we went to town for the newspapers. On many a beautiful Sunday morning we would set out for a long family hike. Most often we started out back of the tennis court on the path to the View, then down through the cool woodland, up and down and up again across tiny streamlets and over dry leaves and twigs until at last we descended to the creek. Sometimes we walked down the creek to The Grove and home, but more often we crossed it and went into the woods again, climbing up to the ridge, which led us up to Mossy Point. There we would stand in all the glory of its magnificent height looking far down into the creek or across to where, a little while before, we'd stood at the View.

Later in the day, the whole family would head to the Grove, an open area on the creek below Hillcrest and the Big House, for dinner of hot dogs and hamburgers cooked over a fire, salad, ice cream and punch. "The Grove was a perfect picnic ground," she wrote, "a cool retreat from the midday sun for the grown-ups and close to the water [Hunters Creek] for the small fry who delighted in the fun of wading."

Fortunately, the Land Conservancy has already protected half of Kenneglenn and, today, we have the chance to protect Mossy Point, the other half of the forest where Helen's magical summertime stories took place. With your help, we can protect Mossy Point so that future generations can explore this wild wonderland and make their own memories.

Once protected, the 222 acres of the Mossy Point forest will be a part of a massive tract of over 1,100 acres of protected land, but we have only until the end of 2019 to raise \$1.6 million that is needed to make this dream a reality. Fortunately, we have already raised half of that.

Do you want Mossy Point to be a part of your legacy?

Please consider making a donation on our website, wnylc.org, or send a check to P.O. Box 471, East Aurora, NY 14052. If you have any questions, please call us at (716) 687-1225.

Text adapted from an article written by Rick Ohler.



Historic photo compliments of Prill Bisher