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The Land Conservancy Permanently Protects Bush Property, Part of a Critical WNY Wildway Linkage

The Western New York Land Conservancy is thrilled to announce the purchase of the 86-acre Bush property, a beautiful hardwood forest in Holland. With this acquisition, the Land Conservancy has now permanently protected all of the 4 for '24 projects in southern Erie County. The other three are known as Paul (Concord), Kaiser (Concord), Wales Ravine (Wales). The 4 for '24 properties total 155 acres, and they will not be publicly accessible.

The 4 for '24 properties fall squarely within the WNY Wildway, with three—Paul, Bush, and Wales Ravine—located in critical WNY Wildway linkages (see map). Linkages between large core forest areas are among the most important and vulnerable parts of the WNY Wildway. As corridors, they provide the easiest, or best, connection for animals and plants to move between large core areas. Without them, wildlife may become trapped on ever-smaller islands of land.

By locating the best routes for wildlife to navigate, the Land Conservancy has identified 48 linkages in Western New York, totaling approximately 360,000 acres. Unfortunately, just 1.3% of land found in these critical linkages has been protected.

The Land Conservancy aims to significantly increase this percentage.

“We’ve made tremendous progress with our WNY Wildway,” says **Marisa Riggi, Executive Director of the Land Conservancy**. “We’ve protected many important forests in recent years, including Mossy Point, the College Lodge Forest, Janet Gallogly Allegany Wildlands, and Floating Fen. But since only a small fraction of land in WNY Wildway *linkages* is conserved, I’m thrilled to have protected the 4 for '24 properties. They represent a hopeful step toward creating the corridors of connectivity that wildlife requires to survive.”

About Bush and the 4 for '24 projects:

Bush (Wales; 86 acres): The Bush Property, located along Hunter's Creek Road in the Town of Wales, is a significant parcel within a priority linkage of the Western New York Wildway. Bush contains critical water features, including small streams and vernal pools, and is situated near headwaters that contribute to Hunter's Creek. The property was donated to the Land Conservancy as part of the previous owner's will.

Wales Ravine (Wales; 26 acres): Wales Ravine, located on the east side of Hunter's Creek Road in South Wales, is strategically located within a wildlife linkage zone. Entirely forested, the terrain slopes upward from west to east and supports significant wildlife habitat. Intermittent streams that contribute to Hunter's Creek flow through ravines and gullies and eventually into Lake Erie. These deep ravines feature gravel and bedrock streambeds with small waterfalls and cascades that support diverse microhabitats.

Robert G. Kaiser Preserve (Concord; 22-acres): This shady forest provides excellent habitat for nesting and migratory birds. It lies entirely within the headwaters of Eighteenmile Creek, part of the Eastern Lake Erie Basin, in Concord. The Kaiser Preserve was part of Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper's Water Quality Improvement Program (WQIP) program. Protecting this property allows its forests to continue providing groundwater recharge and stormwater filtration. These functions benefit not only the property itself but help communities downstream by providing clean drinking water and limiting the potential for future floods.

Paul (Concord; 22 acres): Eighteenmile Creek, the second largest tributary to Lake Erie in New York State, runs through the center of the Paul property. As such, it provides the same groundwater recharge and stormwater filtration as the Kaiser Preserve. Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper's WQIP grant paid a portion of the purchase and restoration. Restoration began last year with the planting of 100 trees and the treatment of 13 acres of invasive species.

The Western New York Land Conservancy is a regional, non-profit land trust that has protected more than 8,000 acres of land with significant conservation value in Western New York for the benefit of future generations. We envision a future in which forests, farms, meadows, and waterways are connected, cherished, and protected in Western New York. Our clean air, clean water, and fertile soils will equitably support the health and wellbeing of future generations of every living thing. The Land Conservancy is accredited by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission. For more information on upcoming events, volunteer opportunities, or the mission of the Western New York Land Conservancy, please call (716) 687-1225 or visit wnylc.org.

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