

# TheResource

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE WESTERN NEW YORK LAND CONSERVANCY

SPRING 2020

## 2020 Spring & Summer Events

Due to the spread of the Covid-19, the Land Conservancy has put its spring and summer events on hold until public health officials deem that the unprecedented threat of the coronavirus no longer requires social distancing. But we encourage you to get outdoors and enjoy nature—safely.

If you take photos, tag us on social media! Check for updates in our e-newsletter and on [wnylc.org](http://wnylc.org).

## The Land Conservancy's 2020 Gala



### SAVE THE DATE

Wednesday, September 16 at 6:00 p.m.

THE ATRIUM @ RICH'S

1 Robert Rich Way, Buffalo, NY 14213

We are still planning to host the gala. If we are unable to be together in-person because of COVID-19, we are already developing creative ways for us to be with everyone virtually.

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## Our Mission

The Land Conservancy is a regional, non-profit land trust that has protected more than 6,000 acres of land with significant conservation value in Western New York for the benefit of future generations. We envision a future in which natural areas, farmlands, wildlife habitat, and scenic beauty are cherished and protected as part of the landscape and character of Western New York. It is accredited by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission and is one of 1000+ land trusts nationwide, including 90 in New York State.



Bridging Communities through Art near The Riverline

© Sara Heidinger

Western New York Land Conservancy  
PO Box 471, East Aurora, NY 14052  
(716) 687-1225 | info@wnylc.org  
WNYLC.org

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# Bridging Communities through Art near The Riverline

By Kyle Semmel, *Communications Manager*

Buffalo-based artist Christopher Kameck traces his interest in educating young people to Paul Schaffer, his high school photography teacher. “Some people inspire you to be better than what you think you can be,” he says, describing how Schaffer taught him how to work through the process of photography. “Paul took the time to talk to me as if I were an adult. From that point on, I wanted to teach.”

Chris’s road to teaching went through the Art Institute of Pittsburgh, where he received his associate’s degree in specialized photography. In 2010, following a car accident that left him with severe injuries and facing a long road to recovery, his life as an educator truly began. It was then he started teaching photography to kids with learning disabilities, in partnership with CEPA, at Starlight Studio and Art Gallery through a grant from the Arts Service Initiative. Most recently, he taught in an after-school program at the Old First Ward Community Center.

In 2019, Chris was an integral part of the Land Conservancy’s outreach efforts for The Riverline in the Old First Ward, Valley, and Perry neighborhoods of Buffalo. With support from the BlueCross BlueShield of Western New York Blue Fund, Chris taught students from Perry how to build bird houses and guided Old First Ward students through the entire process of creating a public mural. This spring the students’ mural will get its permanent home on the National Fuel building next to the future home of The Riverline.



© Sara Heidinger

# Thank you for honoring those you care for and supporting their love for nature.

## In Honor of

JUDY WEIDEMANN  
*From Joan Bozer*

MR. & MRS. STEPHEN KALOTA  
*From Bonnie Benton*

MY MOTHER BARBARA LANDREE  
*From Earl Landree*  
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& CLARA RIVER GOSSE  
*From Holly Gosse*

OUR NIECES & NEPHEWS:  
ALEXIS, KADEN, VALLEY, COLE,  
EVALYN, DEVIN, & MORGAN  
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*From Esther Greene*  
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Photo © Priscilla Titus

## Public Notice

The Land Trust Accreditation Program recognizes land conservation organizations that meet national quality standards for protecting important natural places and working lands forever. The Western New York Land Conservancy is pleased to announce it is applying for renewal of accreditation. A public comment period is now open.

The Land Trust Accreditation Commission, an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance, conducts an extensive review of each applicant’s policies and programs. “Accredited organizations like ours are nationally recognized for meeting the highest standards in land conservation,” Nancy Smith, Executive Director, said. “Accreditation demonstrates to our members that we are an organization worthy of their support, and it is a mark of distinction that we work very hard to achieve.”

The Commission invites public input and accepts signed, written comments on pending applications. Comments must relate to how the Land Conservancy complies with national quality standards. These standards address the ethical and technical operation of a land trust. For the full list of standards see <https://www.landtrustaccreditation.org/about/291>.

To learn more about the accreditation program and to submit a comment, visit [www.landtrustaccreditation.org](http://www.landtrustaccreditation.org), or email your comment to [info@landtrustaccreditation.org](mailto:info@landtrustaccreditation.org). Comments may also be faxed or mailed to the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, Attn: Public Comments: (fax) 518-587-3183; (mail) 36 Phila Street, Suite 2, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866.

Comments on The Land Conservancy’s application will be most useful by July 25.

# Respect Your Elders: A Report from the College Lodge Forest

By Priscilla and Jonathan Titus



Photo © Priscilla Titus

Who doesn't like to plant a tree, knowing that it will provide food, shelter, and other resources for wildlife? There is plenty of research on the benefits trees provide, including how they can ease the negative impacts of increasing global temperatures. What is less obvious is the importance of planting native species appropriate to the region and choosing the right location for each tree so they will thrive as a member of a cohesive plant community.

Non-native species do not provide appropriate habitat and resources to local wildlife, unlike our native trees, which supply critical and bountiful resources to numerous wildlife species. Research by Doug Tallamy and others has demonstrated that the vast majority of our bird species depend upon caterpillar species to feed their young. These caterpillars consume the leaves of native trees and generally are not found on non-native trees. Simply put: native trees are the foundation of the web of life.

But what about the value of planting trees for carbon sequestration, that is, the uptake of the greenhouse gas carbon dioxide? Plants take up CO<sub>2</sub> during photosynthesis and incorporate it into their trunks, branches, leaves, and roots. The CO<sub>2</sub> that trees convert into wood is removed from the atmosphere for a long period of time—until the wood decomposes or is burned. Tree species vary in how much CO<sub>2</sub> they pull from the atmosphere based on rate of growth, wood density, and lifespan. Some fast-growing species may pull more CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere over the short term, but because they die at a younger age and have softer wood, the CO<sub>2</sub> soon returns to the atmosphere through rapidly decaying wood.

Actively growing trees do pull greenhouse gases from the atmosphere, but a tree seedling will take many, many years before it is large enough to pull significant levels of CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere. Our own research from the College Lodge Forest has shown that the fastest-growing trees are old and large, making them the most important in the effort to reduce greenhouse gases. Furthermore, old-growth forests support a myriad of species that are not present in younger forests, and many of these plant, animal, and fungal species are found nowhere else.

Planting trees is helpful, especially in highly altered areas, but the most important thing we can and should do is respect our elders and protect our large trees and mature forests, ensuring that standing forests are allowed to mature to old-growth. This is an important goal of the Western New York Land Conservancy in prioritizing current and future land protection including Mossy Point and the College Lodge Forest.

## Save the College Lodge Forest

The College Lodge Forest in Chautauqua County near Fredonia is one of the most exquisite natural areas remaining in Western New York. It is home to old-growth trees, rare plants and animals, and unmatched beauty. In order to purchase this forest and protect it for future generations, **we need to raise \$790,000 by December 31st, 2020.** We've already raised \$400,000. Can we count on your contribution today?

If you would like to protect the College Lodge Forest, please send a check with College Lodge Forest on the memo line to the:

Western New York Land Conservancy  
P.O. Box 471  
East Aurora, NY 14052

You can also donate online at [www.wnylc.org](http://www.wnylc.org). Select "College Lodge" in the dropdown menu on the donation page.



Photo © Twan Leenders



Chris and his students

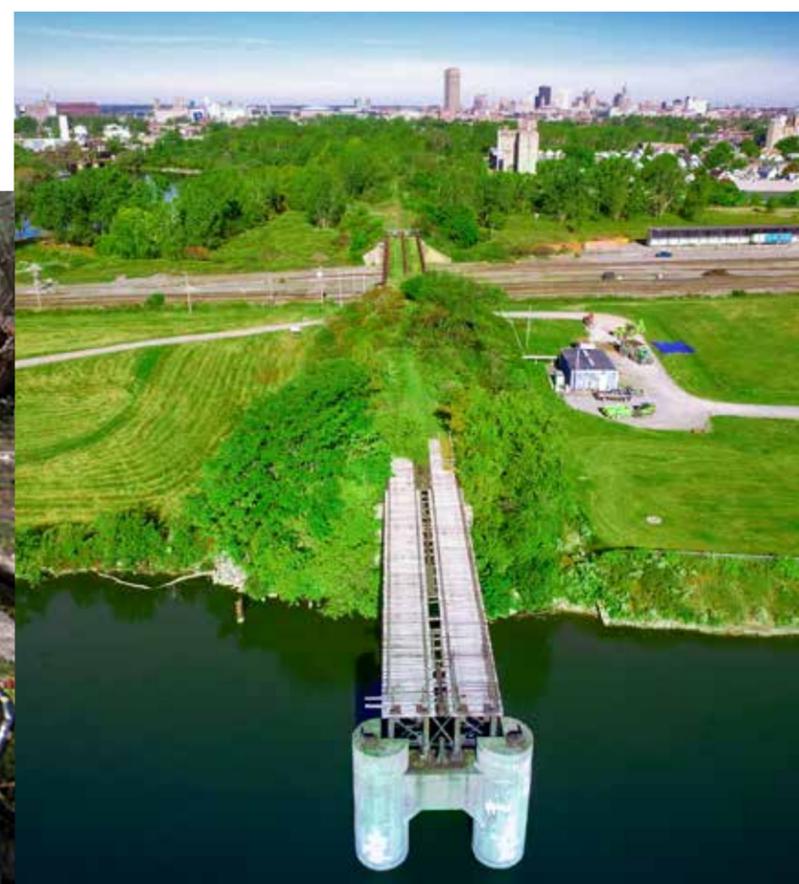


Photos from left to right © Sara Heidinger

In 2020, Chris will teach a five-week course for the Land Conservancy for students from the Perry neighborhood. Using digital point and shoot cameras provided by CEPA, each week Chris will explore with his students a different site along The Riverline, allowing them to get inspired by the natural world in their communities and to build bridges between those communities.

"Art is a way to express yourself and your vulnerability," he says. "Most people don't want to be vulnerable so they're not comfortable expressing the way they feel through artistic means."

Self-expression is no trouble for Chris. But his goal as an educator is to help young people in Buffalo feel more comfortable expressing themselves, finding their voice through a visual medium—and to think bigger than themselves. He wants to inspire his students, as Paul Schaffer once did for him, to be better than they think they can be.



## THE RIVERLINE

In November, 2019, the Land Conservancy announced the official branding for The Riverline, slated for the one-and-a-half-mile former rail corridor running from Canalside to the Buffalo River across from the new Tesla solar panel manufacturing facility at Riverbend. The Land Conservancy is transforming this corridor into an iconic, innovative, and inspiring nature trail and greenway as it crosses through the Old First Ward, Perry, and Valley neighborhoods. The Riverline enters its third phase of development, Concept and Schematic Design, in 2020. To learn more about this project, visit [theriverline.com](http://theriverline.com).

© Cathrin Nemeč



# Niagara River Corridor Earns Ramsar Designation

By Jajean Rose-Burney, Deputy Executive Director

Last October, in a public ceremony, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service designated the U.S. side of the Niagara River a Ramsar site: a Wetland of International Importance.

We witnessed from underneath a tent the massive Niagara River disappear into the gorge below. Mist swirled around us. The roar was constant. The power of the Niagara was overwhelming. This day was many years in the making, and the Western New York Land Conservancy, and all of our members, helped lead the way.

For decades, people have seen the Niagara region in a negative light. A rust belt community. Abandoned factories and neighborhoods. Contaminated land and water. But the river is incredibly important. The Great Lakes contain 21% of the world's surface freshwater and most of that flows over Niagara Falls, one of Earth's natural wonders. The river is home to hundreds of rare plants and animals, old-growth forests, great migrations of birds, and massive fish.

And the river is healthier now than it has been in generations. There's cleaner water. Greener shorelines. Bike trails that were once expressways. Hundreds of thousands of people now swim, boat, and fish in the river. This recovery is the result of the dedication of many people—and Ramsar helps celebrate that turnaround.

If you're unfamiliar with it, the Ramsar Convention is an international treaty that promotes the sustainable use of wetlands. But Ramsar does not protect the Niagara River. The designation is voluntary and non-regulatory. Instead, Ramsar changes the perception of the river. It says it is one of the most irreplaceable natural places in the world. It says the river is worth protecting.

Now it's on us all to do so. With the help of many friends, we will rise to the challenge. The Western New York Land Conservancy is proud to be part of an international, multi-organizational effort to celebrate and protect this incredible river.

*(This text was adapted from Jajean Rose-Burney's blog post for the Land Trust Alliance.)*

© Meredith Forrest Kutzicki

# Saving a Family Farm: Through the Generations

By Kyle Semmel, Communications Manager

Brenda and Warren Bippert are third-generation farmers. Growing up on their families' respective farms in Erie County, they fell in love with the agricultural way of life. After farming all of their lives, Warren and Brenda officially bought his parents' farm in Alden in 2007.

They raise angus cattle, hogs, grow sweet corn and pumpkins, and teach their nine grandchildren how to farm in the hope that, one day, their award-winning WBB Farm will be passed on to the next generation. This is no simple hope. Small family farms like theirs are disappearing all across the country, and many young people choose to walk away from farming for other pursuits—even when a farm has been in a family for generations.



Brenda & Warren Bippert

Brenda and Warren's dream of passing their family farm on to a fourth generation is now one step closer to becoming a reality. In 2018, the Bipperts contacted us to find out how they could protect their farm. The Land Conservancy team applied for a New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets grant and secured funding to protect their farm.

We are now finalizing the conservation easement to permanently protect the farm. That means it cannot be paved or subdivided, and it will always be available for agriculture—plus, the proceeds from the grant will allow the Bipperts to reinvest in their farm. The next generation will have an easier path to the farming life they love. But don't worry, they don't plan to retire anytime soon. They like farming too much to give it up.

That means their grandkids have plenty of time to learn the ropes.

## Are you a farmer?

Would you like more information about protecting your farm? Contact our Farmland Protection Specialist, Rachel Chrostowski, at [rachelc@wnylc.org](mailto:rachelc@wnylc.org) or (716) 687-1225 ext.126.



Brenda & Warren Bippert's Grandchildren

Photos provided by the Bippert Family

## Become a Land Conservancy member!

Want to save our farms, forests, streams, and meadows for future generations? Become a member, renew your membership, or donate to protect Western New York's most valuable resources today. To donate, use the envelope in this newsletter or visit [wnylc.org](http://wnylc.org) and make your payment online. Thank you!

## Conservation Updates

### Mossy Point: You did it!

Thanks to the Friends of Mossy Point and everyone who donated, we met our \$1.6 million goal to save Mossy Point. We now have enough funding to purchase Mossy Point, build a new trail system, and manage the land. We are now in the final stages of purchasing the property, and we hope to be the proud new owners of Mossy Point soon.

### Margery Gallogly Nature Sanctuary: The trails are coming!

On Grand Island, the trails are being constructed on the 145-acre forested preserve in the heart of the Niagara River. Later this summer, we hope to unveil them for the public.

### From the Niagara Gorge

The first round of invasive species management in the Niagara Gorge has been successful. Our work restoring native ecosystems is ongoing, and will continue until at least 2023.

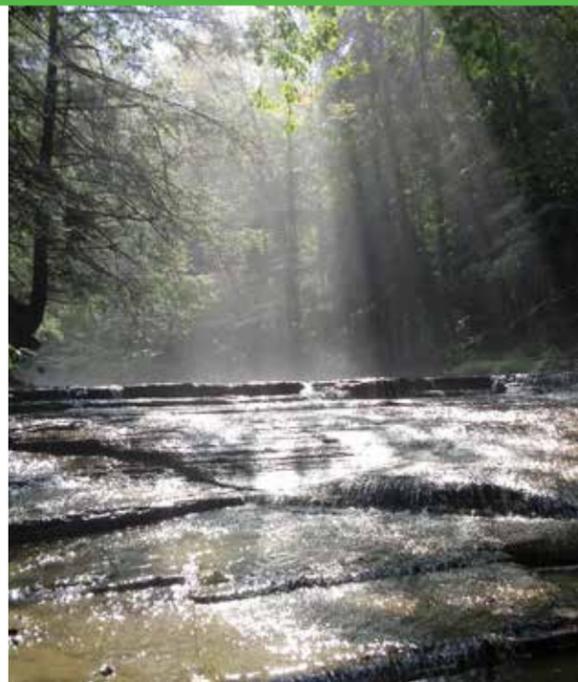


Photo © Jajean Rose-Burney

# A huge thank you

to our **Legacy Society members** who have made us part of their legacy by including us in their planned giving.

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