



WESTERN NEW YORK
LAND CONSERVANCY

The Resource

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE WESTERN NEW YORK LAND CONSERVANCY

FALL 2017

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Our Story

Some people say that nothing lasts forever. It's our job to make sure that some things do. The Western New York Land Conservancy is a not-for-profit land trust that permanently protects transformative and ecologically important places in Western New York. We make sure that our region's children will always have wild places to discover and that our region's farmers will always have quality land to grow our food. We protect the streams, forests, and meadows where wildlife can thrive. We preserve incredible scenic places that are beloved by our community. Without places like this, Western New York just wouldn't be the same. There are organizations like ours across the nation, including 87 in New York State. Together, we protect more than 56 million acres, and every day we work to preserve even more.

Do you believe in Conservation?



(c) 2017 Rachel Chrostowski

It happens every year. A quiet forest is bulldozed and a strip mall goes up. A retiring farmer sells his grandfather's land and twenty houses suddenly appear on his fields. The animals who lived here become homeless. The carefree children who built forts amongst the trees have lost their playground.

The fields that have fed generations of Western New Yorkers now produce lawn clippings and nothing more. These places are changed forever. What if it happened to your favorite place?

You have the power to stop this from happening to special places all over the region.

Our members have already protected over 6,500 acres of forests, meadows, and farmland, and you can protect even more.

Return the enclosed form and your donation to begin or renew your membership, or make a donation on our online giving page at wnylc.org. Your tax-deductible contribution today will become tomorrow's preserved and treasured places.

Get In Touch with Us

Phone: (716) 687-1225
Email: info@wnylc.org
Website: www.wnyc.org



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Margaret Julia Titmus
from Elizabeth Kyger & Stephen Moscov

Martha & Ira Knicherbocker
from Jo-An Campbell

The Richter Family
from Norman & Martha Richter

Vanda Spicola
from Vanda Albera

(c) 2017 Amanda Cesari

Legacy Society

We are grateful to the following members of our Legacy Society who have designated the Land Conservancy as recipients of their planned giving:

- James Battaglia
- Larry and Sheila Drake
- Deborah H. Fenn
- Amy Holt
- Paul and Jane Lehman
- Kalista Lehrer
- Barbara Mierzwa
- Dorothy Westhafer
- Clarence Wigler

Sunset at Somerset

A Conservation Success Story

(c) 2017 Sue & Tom Carestia

Living at the junction of two Great Lakes, after a summer with plenty of rain, it's easy to forget how precious freshwater is. We turn the tap; water flows. We forget that only a tiny bit (3%) of the earth's water is fresh. Of that tiny bit of freshwater, an even tinier bit (0.3%) is at the surface in wetlands, rivers, and lakes where it's relatively easy to use. Lucky for all of us, some people are paying attention. Tom and Susan Carestia are two of those people. In June, the Carestias protected 63 acres of their Lake Ontario property with a conservation easement.

The Carestias discovered their beloved property in March 2001 when Susan's mother sent them a newspaper article about an online foreclosure auction. Tom and Susan traveled from Maryland to Somerset, where Susan grew up, to check it out. With shoreline, streams, wetlands, shrublands, and forests, the property is a haven for birds and wildlife of all kinds. Tom knew immediately, "We need to buy this place!" So, having sold their business in Maryland, they packed up their Ryder moving truck, and moved with their two-year old daughter to Somerset.

Tom and Susan have always lived near water. As residents of Maryland for nearly 20 years, they watched natural land around the Chesapeake Bay disappear as countless waterfront homes were built. They saw what overdevelopment does to water quality and wildlife. They also saw the Chesapeake Bay Foundation's concerted effort to save the bay and bring it back to health. It was seeing the Foundation's successes that inspired the Carestias to contact the Land Conservancy about protecting their own property.



(c) 2017 Kathleen McCormick

Their timing was nearly perfect. Within the year, Ducks Unlimited reached out to the Land Conservancy seeking land for a combined protection and restoration project. "The Carestias know that wetlands are not wastelands. They were the first people I thought of when Ducks Unlimited called looking for project sites," said Kathleen McCormick, Land Conservancy Stewardship Director. The Land Conservancy introduced Ducks Unlimited to Tom and Susan who gave their blessing to restoring 13 acres of marsh and native grassland. The restoration area is being designed to support both waterfowl and pollinators.

"Grasslands and marshes are important habitat. Unfortunately, over 60% of wetland habitat has been lost in the Lake Ontario watershed," said Sarah Fleming, Manager of Conservation Programs for Ducks Unlimited. "We were grateful for the opportunity to work with the Carestias. We're excited to watch as waterfowl make this place their home."

As they sat, overlooking another gorgeous Lake Ontario sunset, Tom and Susan agreed they couldn't be happier about working with the Land Conservancy and Ducks Unlimited. "We are hopeful that our story will inspire others to cherish the magnificent waterfront along our Great Lakes. We want our success to pave the way for more land and natural resource protection in the region."



Restore the Gorge Update

\$2.1 Million! That's the total amount we now have to Restore the Gorge thanks to the Buffalo Billion II, the Greenway Ecological Standing Committee, and the Yahoo! Empire State Development Community Fund for Niagara County. The Buffalo Billion funding will allow us to take on even more ecological restoration in Whirlpool and Devil's Hole State Parks. The Yahoo! funding will enable us to do the largest local seed collection and propagation in Western New York history!

This summer we have been busy in the gorge mapping the existing vegetation, planning, and reviewing the environmental impacts of our work. When this work is done, this winter we will start the on-the-ground invasive species control.

We began our first series of educational hikes in the Niagara Gorge this year, and held presentations and meetings with the community. Stay tuned to our website and email blasts for information about upcoming events you can join.



(c) 2017 Ana Hernandez-Balzac

Margery Gallogly Nature Sanctuary



(c) 2017 Dan Pancano



(c) 2017 Ana Hernandez-Balzac



(c) 2017 Ana Hernandez-Balzac



(c) 2017 James Hoggard

Margery Gallogly Nature Sanctuary:

A link to Grand Island's past...

Surrounded by the turquoise waters of the Niagara River, Grand Island has always been a special place. Thousands of years ago it was carved by the last glaciers as they receded north, leaving behind the Great Lakes. For millennia, it was the hunting and fishing grounds for indigenous communities. Even into the 1800s, Grand Island's forests were world renowned, home to towering white oaks as large as five feet in diameter.

As was the practice in those days, Grand Island's resources flowed into building a nation. Most notably, her oak forests were sent piece by piece over Erie Canal waters to build ships on the eastern seaboard. Timber harvesting and new farming endeavors caused Grand Island's landscape to dramatically change in the nineteenth century.

Today, while extensive forests of white oak no longer exist, remnant historic forests do remain, and they give us a glimpse into Grand Island's past. The Margery Gallogly Nature Sanctuary will protect one of those forests.

The 140-acres of land to become the new sanctuary forms the undeveloped portion of the Assumption Cemetery on Whitehaven Road. This land is incredibly ecologically important. It is one of the largest, undeveloped, privately-owned properties left on Grand Island, and is part of one of the largest headwater forests in the entire Niagara River watershed. The property includes almost a mile of Little Sixmile Creek, a tributary of the Niagara River. The forest's landscape includes vast wooded wetlands reminiscent of cypress forests in the bayous of the Southeast. In fact, the combination of oaks and hickories is more typical of forests further south of New York State, and represents what may be a newly described plant community. This sprawling forest is also teeming with life. Passing migratory songbirds rest on the limbs of tall trees, while blue-spotted salamanders make their home on the forest floor below.



(c) 2017 James Hoggard

"The sanctuary will be named after
Margery Gallogly,
an avid birdwatcher."



With more than \$700,000 from the Greenway Ecological Standing Committee and a generous gift from the Gallogly Family Foundation, the Land Conservancy is working to buy the land from Catholic Cemeteries of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Buffalo to permanently protect the forest and create a publicly accessible nature sanctuary. The sanctuary will be named after Margery Gallogly who is an avid birdwatcher and grandmother to Kasey DeLuke, Executive Director of the Gallogly Family Foundation, and one of the newest members of the Land Conservancy Board.

Once purchased and opened to the public, the new preserve will be only a few minutes from Buffalo and Niagara Falls. It will be a place where people of all ages can enjoy outdoor activities year-round, like hiking, snowshoeing and cross country skiing. Residents and visitors will be able to take a peaceful walk on nature trails, view colorful songbirds during migration, and witness the frenzy of salamanders and frogs as they emerge each spring.

We are so grateful to the residents of Grand Island, Catholic Cemeteries, and our friends Paul Leuchner and Sister Sharon Goodremote for spearheading the effort to protect this forest, which will enhance biodiversity and educate future generations about the importance of our natural environment.

The Land Conservancy hopes to raise another \$600,000 by June 2018 to create an even better walking trail system, restore wildlife habitat, and maintain the preserve in the long run. To help create the Margery Gallogly Nature Sanctuary, please call us at (716) 687-1225 or send an email to info@wnylc.org



Margery Gallogly



Bringing Nature Downtown: An Urban Rail Trail

(c) 2017 Priscilla Titus

(c) 2017 James Hoggard

In Buffalo, wildlife is reclaiming an unused rail corridor. This land, owned by the NFTA, connects the DL&W Terminal in downtown Buffalo near Canalside to the Buffalo River across from Riverbend and Solar City.

This fall and winter, the Land Conservancy is meeting with neighbors and community leaders to start a conversation about what this rail corridor could become. One possibility is an inspiring and environmentally-friendly urban rail trail, like the High Line in NYC.

For a mile and a half, through The First Ward and The Valley, this post-industrial landscape could become a place where people can reconnect with nature. Places like these are an important part of a vibrant city. They give people a place to come together and build relationships, which lead to more cohesive neighborhoods.

Here, families will be able to take a relaxing stroll or ride their bikes amongst the wildflowers. Neighbors and visitors alike will be able to watch as the seasons change and enjoy the fall migration of colorful songbirds and monarch butterflies.

Right now Buffalo has the opportunity to create an incredible rail trail and provide much needed public space for our community to enjoy.

Thanks to a \$50,000 grant from the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Legacy Funds at the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo, and donations from many of our members, we are working with the community to create a vision plan for the corridor that serves the community's needs. Join us at one of our upcoming informational events and hikes and let us know what you want to see in this trail.

Stella Niagara Preserve Update



(c) 2017 Nancy Smith

Native Plants in Place

Land Conservancy Ecologist, Priscilla Titus, has collected thousands of seeds from native wildflowers and grasses around our region. We have been planting these seeds and seedlings at Stella for the past two years. Thanks to ample rain this season, the temporary cover crops grew tall and lush,

but next season be on the lookout for the native grasses and wildflowers we planted to start taking center stage.



(c) 2017 Amanda Cesari

Sedge Meadow Construction

Our most recent restoration area at Stella is the sedge meadow along the north side of the preserve, which will help manage water flowing down the slope there. The sedge meadow features a shallow basin, which will sometimes hold water, and is planted with a variety of sedges and other plants to provide habitat for dragonflies, leopard frogs, and lots of different kinds of wildlife.



(c) 2017 Jayann Rose-Burney

Underwater Landing

If you went down to the Stella landing this summer, you probably noticed that it was mostly underwater. The water levels in the Niagara River have been abnormally high, which has held up work on the Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper shoreline enhancement project. By the time you read this, work at the landing may have already started.



(c) 2017 Dave Spiering

Eagle Scout Projects

Lewiston Eagle Scout Tate Gildner transformed the area around the statue of St. Michael by creating a native plant garden there, thanks to the help of Master Gardener Lyn Chimera, Land Conservancy Ecologist Priscilla Titus, and Stella Niagara Preserve Stewards Peter Grainge and Vicki Jancef. Tate transplanted over 150 plants, including lupine, goldenrods, milkweeds, and 16 other native plant species. Tate's project also included the installation of three bird houses and two bat boxes at Stella.



Coming Soon! New Trails at Owens Falls

(c) 2017 Vijay Swamy

(c) 2017 Vijay Swamy

The Owens Falls Sanctuary in Aurora is one of the most beautiful places in our region. It is home to two gorgeous waterfalls, a deep shale ravine, and 57 acres of forest.

A few years ago the property was threatened. It could have been lost, its wonders cut off from the community forever. Fortunately, after you all stepped up to protect it, we purchased the property last December. Since then, public access has only been available through our organized hikes and events. Soon, however, you will be able to come and explore this breathtaking land on your own.

Earlier this year we hired Tahawus Trails, a nationally-renowned trail design firm, to plan a new trail system for The Owens Falls Sanctuary. Tahawus has designed and built trails in well-known places that include Frank Lloyd

Wright's Fallingwater in Pennsylvania and Western New York's own Niagara Gorge.

During our trail planning process, we invited the community to participate at multiple events and presentations. We now have a final trail design that will protect sensitive wildlife habitats while providing safe walking access through the forest to viewpoints overlooking the waterfalls.

We are building the first portions of the trail system right now. We hope to open an entrance on Center Street and a walking trail through the forest to the waterfalls by spring 2018. We will let all of our members know as soon as this work is complete. If you are interested in getting involved and helping out, please contact us at info@wnylc.org or by calling (716) 687-1225. We are excited for the year ahead!



(c) 2017 Rachel Chrostowski

The Forest: A Legacy Society Story

By Barbara Mierzwa, Legacy Society Member

Where I lived as a child, at the end of the street was a forested wetland. I didn't call it that. We always just called it "the woods." I lived there from the time I was 7 until I went off to college. My time

in the forest was a very important part of my life, which I didn't realize until I couldn't go there anymore.

Years later, I came to appreciate how important the time I spent as a child in the forest was to who I am today. How sad for the kids who don't have that kind of opportunity. Sure there are large national and state parks that you can go and visit, but here I literally stepped outside and was in "the woods."

Fortunately, the Western New York Land Conservancy, along with Buffalo Audubon Society has protected the Klydel Wetlands property. It's now the North Tonawanda Audubon Nature Preserve. You can have a heck of a good time outside, looking at leaves or for critters. You can snowshoe or ski, or look at bugs and flowers! I think that's really important. I support the Land Conservancy's work through a legacy gift so that this work will continue. Every kid deserves the opportunities that I had to walk in the woods.

You can join Barbara and make conservation your legacy, too. To learn more, please contact Executive Director Nancy Smith at (716) 687-1225 or info@wnylc.org.

Take a hike!

The Land Conservancy offers a number of nature hikes throughout the year that are free and open to the public and we add events all the time. Visit us online at www.wnyc.org/events or call (716) 687-1225 for information on our upcoming events.



Winter Tree ID Hike

Saturday, January 6th | 10 AM

Bundle up and join us for a unique winter walk at the Niagara Escarpment Preserve in Lockport and learn how to identify some of our region's trees in the wintertime. This free hike will be guided by Erin Redding, an environmental scientist with Gomez and Sullivan Engineers. Please register online at wnylc.org/events or call (716) 687-1225.

Save the date!

Mark your calendars for an evening lecture in Niagara Falls by Dr. Doug Tallamy, author of "Bringing Nature Home", on March 16, 2018.



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