



WESTERN NEW YORK
LAND CONSERVANCY

The Resource

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE WESTERN NEW YORK LAND CONSERVANCY

FALL 2020

At Home in the College Lodge Forest

© Kara Frisina

Western New York Land Conservancy
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At Home in the College Lodge Forest

By Kyle Semmel, *Communications Manager*

As a boy, Erik Danielson had been fascinated by bugs, especially the fat horned beetles he found in the forest near his family's home in Kentucky. With his mother's encouragement, Erik dreamed of becoming an entomologist. When he moved to Fredonia, NY at the age of 9, his beloved beetles couldn't follow him north, and his interest in bugs waned—but not his interest in forests. A shy child who preferred the solitude of the trees to the bustle of the crowd, Erik made frequent trips to places like the College Lodge Forest to explore. "I took solace in the natural world," he said.

Early in the summer of 2013, when he was twenty-two, Erik took his camera to the College Lodge Forest intending to photograph wildflowers. Like many young people, he wasn't sure where he was heading in life. But he was interested in, as he calls it, portraitzing wild plants in the same way artists create portraits of people. While roaming an area of low-lying wetland, he stumbled upon a captivating and vibrant purple flower behind a great big fern. By doing a little research, he learned the flower was a purple-fringed orchid (see his photo on the next page). He then took his photographs to local experts Jon and Priscilla Titus and learned something else: His was the first recording of this species at the forest. Discovering the purple-fringed orchid stirred both his imagination and his dormant interest in science.

"There was this moment of aesthetic discovery," he said, "but there was also this neat sense of biological discovery. It called me back to when I was a kid running around playing entomologist and every new bug I discovered was a thrill."





Purple-Fringed Orchid



Photos from left to right © Erik Danielson, Twan Leenders, Kara Frisina

It was a pivotal moment for Erik, and he credits it for helping him find direction. Now, just seven years later, he works as a naturalist and explores forests all across the state. By following his solitary passion for the trees and the natural world, he gets to make thrilling new discoveries nearly every time he's in the field, including at his home base in the College Lodge Forest—where he's added three orchid varieties and eighty-six species of plants and mosses to the site's list of flora.

So when plans to log the College Lodge Forest were announced in 2016, it was as if a close personal friend was diagnosed with a terminal illness. "The time I had spent there as a child and young adult had left me caring very deeply for those communities, those natural spaces, that are not human communities," he said. "Because it had helped me

when I was a child, as an adult I felt a powerful need to help save it when it came under threat."

The good news is that our community is very close to saving this incredible forest. Thanks to the dedication of the Friends of the College Lodge Forest and a \$200,000 challenge gift, we are within reach of meeting our \$790,000 fundraising goal. Once the challenge gift is matched, the community will meet its goal, purchase the land, and keep it open as a publicly accessible nature preserve forever. Can our community count on your contribution today, so that future naturalists like Erik Danielson will have a place in which to find themselves?

WATCH Erik's videos at the College Lodge Forest on our YouTube Channel

Save the College Lodge Forest

The College Lodge Forest 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, the community must raise \$790,000 by December 31st, 2020.

This summer we announced a \$200,000 challenge gift to be matched by the community. Your donation now will be doubled. Once the challenge gift is matched, the community will be able to save the College Lodge Forest.

DONATE If you would like to help meet the match and protect the 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.wnyc.org
Select "College Lodge" in the dropdown menu under "This contribution is for" on our donation page.

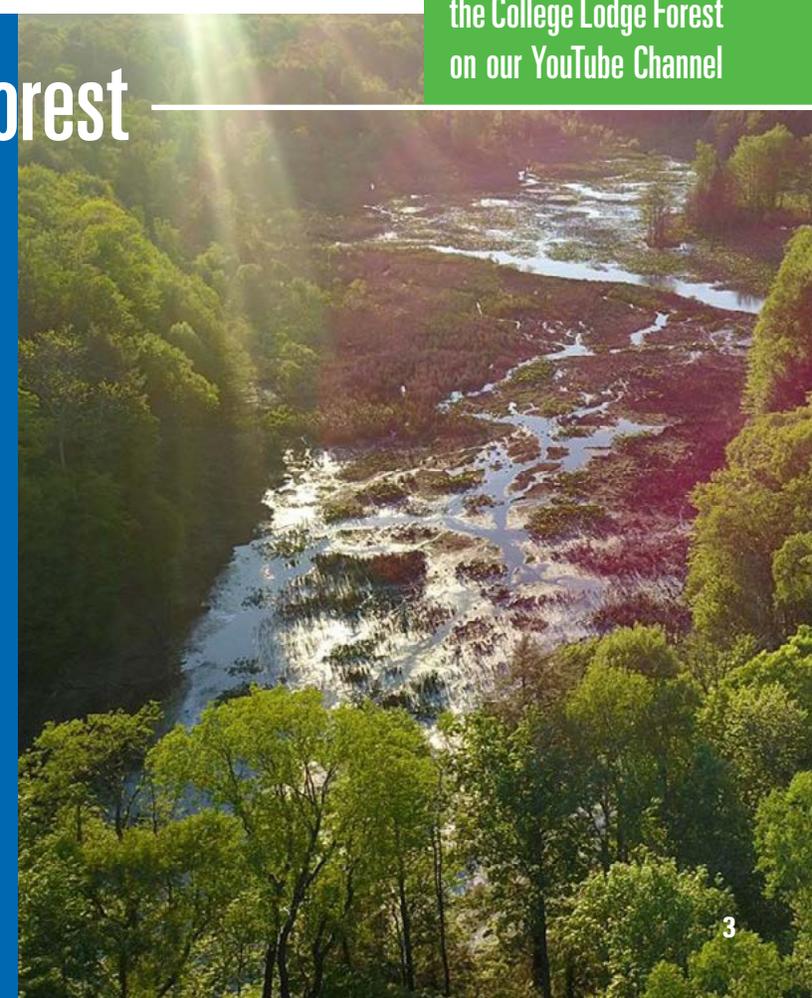


Photo © Inale Merchant



Trails at the Gallogly Nature Sanctuary are Now Open!

By Kyle Semmel, *Communications Manager*

Photos © Kara Frisina

The trails at the Margery Gallogly Nature Sanctuary on Whitehaven Road in Grand Island are now open to the public. Western New Yorkers and visitors alike will be able to enjoy activities like hiking, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing at this remarkable 145-acre oak and hickory forest. Big and Little Sixmile Creeks each flow through this unique landscape as they make their way to the Niagara River. The large, wooded wetlands provide a haven for migratory songbirds like the Wood Thrush, with its distinctive black spots on its white belly and its sweet musical trill. Protecting the Margery Gallogly Nature Sanctuary means that this beautiful bird, whose numbers are sadly in decline, will continue to have a spring home in which to nest. To make the forest more hospitable to such birds, as well as native plants and animals, the Land Conservancy will also begin controlling invasive shrubs, like buckthorn, at the sanctuary.

To learn more about this sanctuary, visit wnylc.org/margery-gallogly-nature-sanctuary.



Thank a Farmer

By Rachel Chrostowski, *Farmland Protection Specialist*

This has been a challenging year for us all. While Western New Yorkers pressed pause, our farmers kept going: milking the cows in the barn before sunrise, planting fields with vegetables and sweet corn, harvesting the pumpkins and apples that we bake into our holiday pies. Our farmers keep fresh, local food on our plates in the face of every new challenge thrown at them by the pandemic. Despite supply chain problems or labor shortages, our farmers persist. You can support our farmers. You can buy local produce at grocery stores and farm markets. You can donate to the Land Conservancy to permanently protect the land they farm. As we gather with friends and loved ones during this season of gratitude, thank a farmer.



Right photos © Marie George

Conservation Updates

Mossy Point: Purchased!

Thanks to the Friends of Mossy Point and our community, the Land Conservancy officially purchased Mossy Point in July. The process of building trails for walking, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing will begin soon. Upon completion of the trail system, likely in 2021, Mossy Point will be publicly accessible year round for everyone to enjoy.

New Mural on The Riverline in the Old First Ward

In August, students from Chris Kameck's class at the Old First Ward Community Center publicly unveiled a mural on the National Fuel building adjacent to The Riverline, the Land Conservancy's signature project in downtown Buffalo. The mural project was one of a suite of community events sponsored by BlueCross BlueShield of Western New York's Blue Fund.

Design Team Selected for The Riverline's Next Phase

W Architecture and Landscape Architecture has been selected as the design firm that will lead the Concept and Schematic Design phase of The Riverline over the next year. A woman-owned business founded in Brooklyn by Barbara Wilks in 1999, W Architecture specializes in reimagining urban spaces by integrating natural systems to help communities unlock their potential for positive change. They have assembled a team of firms that will work together in this design phase, including Hood Design Studio, a minority-owned business founded by MacArthur Genius Grant recipient Walter Hood; and urban ecologist Steven Handel from Green Shield Ecology.



Mossy Point



The Riverline Mural



Are you a farmer?

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



The Western New York Wildway

By Marisa Riggi, Conservation Director, and Rachel Chrostowski, Farmland Protection Specialist

When was the last time you saw a sleek bobcat or elusive fisher in Western New York? Very likely, your answer is a long time ago or never. Although both animals are native to our area, they have largely been driven elsewhere due to habitat loss. But what if we said you could help bring them back?

The Land Conservancy is beginning an exciting initiative to create the Western New York Wildway, a network of protected land that will link the vast Appalachian forests of Pennsylvania to the Great Lakes, through to the Finger Lakes and Adirondack regions, and beyond. Due to our region's plentiful fresh water, productive agricultural soils, and cool climate, experts suggest that Western New York will become a destination for climate migrants. Given this ever-increasing pressure on our natural resources, we must protect our region's forests, meadows, wetlands, and streams now.

The Western New York Wildway will be part of the Wildlands Network's Eastern Wildway—an extensive wildlife corridor that connects eastern Canada all the way down to the Gulf of Mexico. The Eastern Wildway was inspired by biologist E.O. Wilson's influential book, *Half-Earth: Our Planet's Fight for Life*. Wilson argues that if humans conserve half of the land and sea, we can save 85% of the world's biodiversity from extinction.

To achieve this goal, the Wildway will build on our region's large protected parks and nature preserves and protect more core forested habitat. You will be able to create protected corridors through our fields and forests to allow plants and animals to be able to move between them. This will ensure ecosystems—and everything that lives in them—can thrive in the face of climate change.

The Western New York Wildway will maintain our region's healthy natural habitats, capture and store carbon to help slow down climate change, and help bring back the bobcats, fishers, and many other animals we've lost. That's what we call a win-win!

Given the size and scope of this project, we will need to gather many partners to work together to be successful. The Land Conservancy will work with other land trusts, environmental organizations, private landowners, local and state agencies, and *you*. If you are interested in learning more or conserving your Wildway property, please contact our Conservation Director, Marisa Riggi (marisa@wnylc.org).

Map courtesy of the Wildlands Network and the Land Conservancy



**Save Land by
Donating Today!**

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 and make your payment online. Thank you!

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

In Honor of

LAMONT BEERS

*From Nancy Stabins
WILLIAM MATTAR,
JOHN FEDERICE,
& JEFFREY GANGI*

*From Jeffrey Freedman
JOHN OWEN & LARRY
BROOKS*

*From John Cordes &
Michele Heffernan
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From Tina Ryan*

In Memory of

CAITLIN CAREY

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ANNELIESE GARVER
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From Paula Janicki

MIMI

*From Eloise Redding
& Sarah Buckley*

MARGE VESLEY

*From the Hesslink sisters,
Nancy E. Miller, Lucille J. Butts,
Ruth A. Moore*

For the College Lodge, In Memory of

BRUCE & NANCY GARLAPOW

*From John Bergenstock
Renee Bush*

*Gary & Karen Koeppel
Debra & James Walsh
Don Zelazny*

JANE HEYER

From George & Carolyn Catalano

DANIEL STANFORD

From Joy Bilharz

Restoration Work: Niagara Gorge

By Andy Lance, PhD, Restoration Project Manager

During the first three years of our Restore the Gorge project, we have made great strides in restoring the natural habitats found within the Niagara River Gorge. This work has included the treatment of over 20 invasive plant species in an area spanning from the Niagara Gorge Discovery Center to Devil's Hole State Park. Many newly opened areas have benefited from the natural spread of seeds. In addition, we have spread over 450 lbs. of native plant seeds. Much of this seed was collected from local plant populations by Land Conservancy staff. Approximately 19,200 wildflowers and grasses and 1,600 trees have been planted. This work is essential to protecting and/or providing habitat for the vast diversity of wildlife found throughout the Gorge. We will continue this work to ensure that the benefits of our restoration work last for years to come.

Photos © Andy Lance





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Will you make the Land Conservancy part of your legacy?

A huge thank you to our Legacy Society members who have made us part of their legacy by including us in their planned giving, like Robert and Nancy Black, who established an annual fund to support our work through the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo.

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|---------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
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Photo © Larry Brooks

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.*



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