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**CONTACT:**  
Kyle Semmel  
Communications Manager  
(585) 519-1564 (cell)  
[ksemmel@wnylc.org](mailto:ksemmel@wnylc.org)

## **Western New York Land Conservancy to Host Renowned Author Joan Maloof at October 29 Virtual Event to Save the College Lodge Forest**

This year, with the help of the Friends of the College Lodge Forest and the Western New York Land Conservancy, the community is trying to save the College Lodge Forest near Fredonia. The College Lodge Forest is home to one of the last remaining groves of old-growth forest in the region, as well as rare wildlife, colorful orchids, and carnivorous plants. The community has until the end of this year to match a \$200,000 challenge gift and reach its fundraising goal of \$790,000. The Land Conservancy will then purchase the land and maintain it as a publicly accessible nature preserve. If not protected, the land could be logged.

To kick off the final fundraising push of the campaign, the Land Conservancy will host a free virtual event on October 29 featuring Joan Maloof, nationally-renowned writer, professor emeritus, and founder of the Old-growth Forest Network, who will discuss her book *Nature's Temples: The Complex World of Old-Growth Forests*. Attendees will also hear from Jajeane Rose-Burney, Deputy Executive Director of the Land Conservancy, about how they can save the College Lodge Forest.

### **Speaking for the Trees: How you can Save our Old-growth at the College Lodge Forest**

**When:** October 29, 2019, 7:00-8:00 p.m. EDT

**Where:** YouTube

[Register online at wnylc.org/events](https://wnylc.org/events)

The public is encouraged to attend this free event, but anyone who wishes to watch must register at the Land Conservancy's website, WNYLC.ORG. Prior to the event, all registrants will receive a link to watch it on YouTube. Although the event is free, we encourage all registrants to make a donation to save the College Lodge Forest.

The College Lodge Forest is a cherished community gathering place and one of the most exquisite natural areas remaining in Western New York. This spectacular property is perched on the crest of a continental divide. When rain falls on the forest, some water drains toward Lake Erie and the Atlantic Ocean, while some drains toward the Mississippi and the Gulf of Mexico. The heart of the College Lodge Forest is a habitat that is increasingly rare in Western New York: a large grove of towering old-growth trees, hundreds of years old. Old-growth forests are some of the most biologically diverse habitats in the world, and they play a crucial role in slowing down climate change. The property is also home to a historic lodge and miles of hiking, snowshoeing, and cross country skiing trails.

The land has been owned by the Faculty Student Association (FSA) of SUNY Fredonia since 1969. Since the cost of maintaining the land and all of the buildings at the property is high, the FSA proposed

a plan to raise funds by logging the forest, including the old-growth trees. Fortunately, the FSA decided to sell a large portion of the land to the Land Conservancy instead. If the community is unable to meet the fundraising goal this year, however, the forest could be logged and its rich habitats destroyed. Once the community reaches its fundraising goal, the Land Conservancy will purchase 168 acres of the 201-acre property from the FSA and keep it open as a publicly accessible nature preserve forever. The FSA will continue to own and operate the historic lodge.

To help educate our community about the importance of old-growth forests, the Land Conservancy is teaming up with Joan Maloof, founder of the Old-growth Forest Network, the only nationwide organization dedicated to the preservation of old-growth habitats. “Thanks to a passionate community of conservationists in Western New York,” Maloof says, “the College Lodge Forest has long been on our radar as a forest of significant value. Old-growth forests like this are crucial to the continued success of all the plant and animal species that make up the complex web of life on earth—including our own. We can’t afford to lose any more of them.”

“Though our community has a ways to go to make it to the finish line,” says Nancy Smith, the Land Conservancy’s Executive Director, “the Land Conservancy is fully committed to keeping the old-growth forest intact. We look forward to the day when the College Lodge Forest will be one of the first in our region to join the Old-growth Forest Network. Time and again, our community has demonstrated how much it values natural places like the College Lodge Forest.”

The community has stepped up in its efforts, with gifts ranging from small to large, but donors are *all* united behind the one consistent goal of protecting the College Lodge Forest. For larger donations, naming opportunities remain. They include:

- One donor of \$200,000 can name the preserve
- One donor of \$100,000 can have the old-growth grove named in their honor **(Reserved)**
- One donor of \$100,000 can have the beaver pond named in their honor
- One donor of \$50,000 can have the small island named in their honor **(Reserved)**
- One donor of \$50,000 can have the birdwatching blind named in their honor
- One donor of \$50,000 can have a wooden footbridge named in their honor
- One donor of \$50,000 can have a panoramic viewpoint of the beaver pond named in their honor **(Reserved)**
- Donors of \$20,000 can have a bench in the outdoor amphitheater named in their honor
- Donors of \$10,000 or more will have their name listed on a plaque placed at the preserve
- Donors of \$2,000 or more will be recognized in the Land Conservancy newsletter

If you are interested in learning more about the Western New York Land Conservancy’s work, contact the office at (716) 687-1225 or [info@wnylc.org](mailto:info@wnylc.org). If you would like to donate to save the College Lodge Forest, you can donate online at [wnylc.org](http://wnylc.org) or send a check to P.O. Box 471, East Aurora, NY 14052.

The **Western New York Land Conservancy** is a regional, not-for-profit land trust that permanently protects land with significant conservation value in Western New York for current and future generations. The Land Conservancy envisions a future in which open spaces, working lands, wildlife habitat, and scenic beauty are cherished and protected as part of the landscape and character of 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. Land trusts have protected 56 million acres of land.

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