



WESTERN NEW YORK  
LAND CONSERVANCY

# TheResource

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE WESTERN NEW YORK LAND CONSERVANCY

FALL 2021



## Through the Generations: The Allegany Wildlands

Steve Sluga at the Allegany Wildlands, photo © Erik Danielson

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

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# Through the Generations: The Allegany Wildlands

By Kyle Semmel, *Communications Manager*

As an adventurous boy, Steve Sluga always looked forward to spending time at his grandparents' farm in rural Cattaraugus County. It was the perfect place to be a kid. A thick, 200-acre forest sloped up the hill beyond the pasture where the cows grazed, and Steve and his three sisters liked to wander among the tall trees, exploring all that nature had to offer. This forest, they knew, had been a gathering place for their family for generations. Their great grandparents built the farmhouse back in 1859, and their mom and dad, who were neighbors as children, hunted and fished and rode horses on the property. For Steve and his sisters, the farm was a home away from home.

Now 60, Steve has collected a treasure trove of happy memories of this forest the Land Conservancy has named the Allegany Wildlands. "My mom taught me how to hunt here, for one," Steve says fondly, "and then I taught my own boys."

Steve's grandfather passed away in 1968, and his grandmother remained in the farmhouse until 1977, when it burned to the ground. With no cows to graze in the pasture and no farmers to plow the fields, the forest soon reclaimed the land. When you visit the Allegany Wildlands today, you have to look very closely to see the foundation of the house or barn.

What you see clearly, instead, is a truly spectacular forest rich with a diversity of plants and animals, including black bears, bobcats, rare orchids, and even some of the last surviving American Chestnut trees in Western New York. Gazing down from the top of the slope, you can even glimpse the shimmering blue water of the Allegheny Reservoir, smooth and shiny as polished glass.

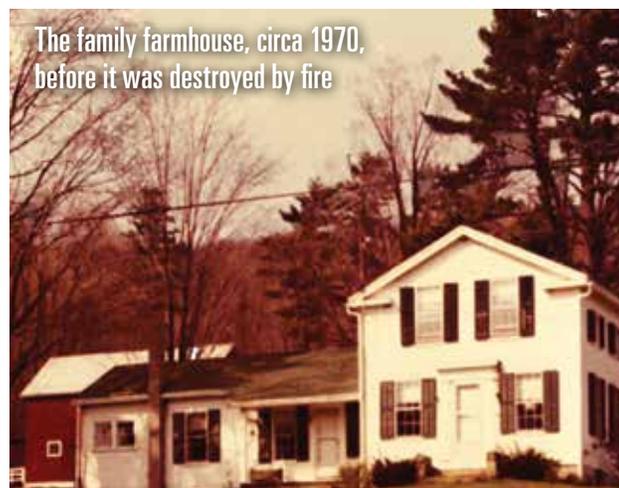
When the family decided it was finally time to let go of the land, they had several strong offers but voted unanimously to sell the property to the Land Conservancy. "By selling to the Land Conservancy we knew we'd get to share this special place with others, as we wanted," Steve says, "but also that we'd have some control over what happened to it. That was important to us. We didn't want to see the forest exploited."

If our community can raise the funds to protect the Allegany Wildlands, the Land Conservancy will purchase the land and keep it open as a publicly accessible nature preserve. Due to its proximity to nearby protected forests, like Allegany State Park or the South Valley State Forest, the Allegany

Steve's mom as a girl

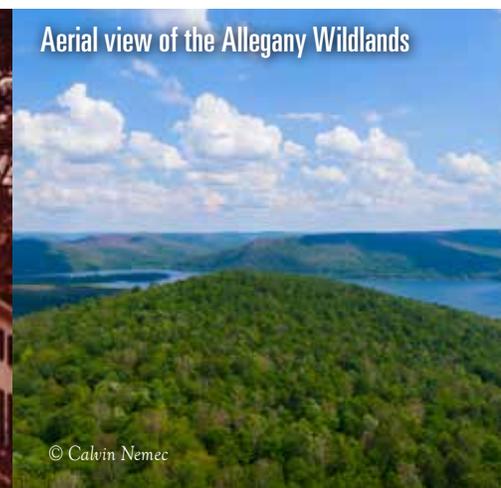


Farmhouse and family photos courtesy Steve Sluga



The family farmhouse, circa 1970,  
before it was destroyed by fire

Aerial view of the Allegany Wildlands





© Jamie Hoggard

# Save the Allegany Wildlands

Our community has until December 31, 2021 to raise a minimum of \$879,000 to save the Allegany Wildlands. The Land Conservancy will purchase the land, maintain it as a forest, and open a walking trail so people can always experience this incredible place. We are getting close, but we still need to raise around \$290,000 to meet our fundraising goal. Thanks to a generous

challenge gift, the next \$80,000 in donations will be matched 1:1, doubling your gift!

**DONATE** You can save the Allegany Wildlands by donating today. When you donate, you ensure that future generations will enjoy the amazing diversity of this forest.

If you would like to donate to protect the Allegany Wildlands, please send

a check with Allegany Wildlands on the memo line to: 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 “Allegany Wildlands” in the dropdown menu under “This contribution is for” on our donation page.

Wildlands will then become part of a broader network we’re calling the Western New York Wildway. As climate change and habitat fragmentation cause more and more plants and animals to become threatened or go extinct, it’s critical that we protect more of our intact forests before they are lost forever. This will allow our forests—and the creatures that live in them—to thrive and adapt. “What we hope,” Steve Sluga says, “is that people 100 years from now will visit this place and say, ‘Wow, look at all this old-growth!’”

Perhaps some lucky boy or girl in the future will even get to enjoy the same kind of adventures Steve and his sisters once did here, or their parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents before them.



© Jamie Hoggard



© Angie Woodworth

# The Super Generation

By Kyle Semmel, Communications Manager

Each fall, thousands of chunky eastern monarch caterpillars—with their distinctive yellow, black, and white stripes—turn into butterflies here in Western New York. Known collectively as the super generation, these butterflies have one purpose in life: to fly to Mexico and keep the cycle moving. To get there, these little guys need a lot of good food in the form of nectar. Unfortunately, according to Dave O'Donnell, founder of Eastern Monarch Butterfly Farm, these same caterpillars also have a 95% mortality rate in the wild. Pesticides, habitat loss, and invasive insects all factor into the decline of this once ubiquitous species. Over the past two decades, the Center for Biological Diversity estimates, we've seen an 80% decline in monarchs.

That's a steep drop. But here's the good news: Every single one of us can do something to stem this precipitous decline. Monarch caterpillars eat the leaves of native milkweeds, of course, but we can plant native nectar flowers that provide nourishment to the super generation on their flight down to Mexico. Without these nectar flowers, in fact, they wouldn't have the strength to fly that far.

Twenty years ago, when O'Donnell learned of the plight of eastern monarchs, he started his farm to help preserve the species. Today, his small home garden in Clarence is a lush paradise of nectar-rich native flowers. These include goldenrod, asters, coneflowers, bee balm, mistflowers, cardinal flowers, and snakeroot—all of which sustain the super generation, and of course the generations that follow them. You don't have to own hundreds of acres to do good for monarchs or the environment; you just need to turn a small patch of lawn into a native garden. If you build it, the monarchs will come.

Learn more about Eastern Monarch Butterfly Farm by visiting [easternmonarchbutterflyfarm.com](http://easternmonarchbutterflyfarm.com).

Photos © Dave O'Donnell



Eastern monarch caterpillars



Swallowtail butterfly on coneflower



Virginia ctenucha on mistflower



Asters



Gallogly Nature Sanctuary, Grand Island



Blue-spotted salamander, Love Road Preserve

## News

### Grand Island

At the Gallogly Nature Sanctuary, we continue to remove invasive buckthorn shrubs. This fall, we'll begin to reforest the sanctuary by planting over 750 native trees, including swamp white oaks, red maples, and American elms. We expect that Gallogly will continue to be one of Grand Island's gems. The trail is open to the public year-round, and we encourage you to visit this wonderful forest.

### The Love Road Preserve

This summer we purchased a beautiful 44-acre forest on Love Road in Grand Island from the Buffalo Ornithological Society. The purchase was funded by the Greenway Ecological Standing Committee and was supported by the Niagara River Greenway Commission. Though the property is not yet open to the public, we hope to open a walking trail system in the future. The Love Road Preserve includes mature forests that are home to colorful songbirds like Scarlet Tanagers and elusive salamanders like the Blue-spotted Salamander.

### Goldenrod





## The Riverline Coming Together as a Place of Refuge

In July, we presented final concept designs for The Riverline, our planned nature trail and greenway near downtown Buffalo. We were joined at the press conference by our award-winning design partners W Architecture, Hood Design Studio, and Green Shield Ecology. The concept designs were the result of four years of public engagement, as well as community feedback. They are constructed around a common theme: The Riverline as a place of refuge.

Take a look at some of the designs. You can see the rest at [theriverline.com](http://theriverline.com). If you are interested in learning more about this project, or donating to create The Riverline, please visit [theriverline.com](http://theriverline.com). You can also reach out to the Land Conservancy at (716) 687-1225 or [info@wnylc.org](mailto:info@wnylc.org).



Concept designs, W Architecture and Landscape Architecture/Seven G

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 cherished and threatened places today. To donate, use the envelope in this newsletter or visit [wnylc.org](http://wnylc.org) and make your payment online. Thank you!



Photos © Brendan Bannon

# Down on the Farm: Planting the Future of Farming

By Kyle Semmel, Communications Manager

When civil war ravaged Somalia in the early 1990s, thousands of innocent people fled the country, embarking on a perilous journey across the border to Kenya. Along the way, small children and the elderly succumbed to the baking heat or malnourishment. Those who reached Kenya were sent to enormous refugee camps, like Kakuma, where to this day asylum-seekers from around the horn of Africa find shelter in leaky shacks with sheet metal roofs. Life in a refugee camp is difficult and dangerous, and it was easy for Hamadi Ali to wonder if he'd ever get out. He was eleven when he arrived at Kakuma; he was twenty-one when he moved to Buffalo to begin his new life.

Like many of Western New York's Somali Bantu community, Hamadi (pictured above, center, with his son Hassani) grew up in a farming family, and he dreamed of one day getting back to the soil, planting the crops that could sustain his community. Though college is not an easy path for a refugee to take, given financial barriers, he was determined to get an education when he arrived in the U.S. in 2004, first at ECC for his associate's, then Buffalo State for his bachelor's, and finally UB for his Master's in Economics.

Today, Hamadi puts his education and experience to use as the Markets Manager of the Providence Farm Collective (PFC) in Orchard Park, a non-profit that supports Black, immigrant, refugee, and low-income farmers in Western New York who cannot

otherwise access farmland. What started in 2017 as a grassroots effort by the Somali Bantu community to get back to their farming roots has now grown to encompass refugees from multiple nations, and with its incubator farms and after-school programs, it not only provides Western New York's refugee communities with a place to grow their own food as they once did; it also allows them to earn extra money doing something they love, while at the same time teaching the next generations the ways of their ancestors.

That's where our community comes in. We have an opportunity to make a real difference in the lives of many of our region's most underserved. Providence Farm Collective and the Western New York Land Conservancy are collaborating on a joint \$2.3 million capital campaign to "Plant the Future of Farming" at PFC's 37-acre farm it leases in Orchard Park. Once the goal is met, Providence Farm Collective will purchase the farm, add needed facilities, and sustain it into the future; and we will protect it forever. That means farmers like Hamadi Ali, who have overcome tremendous obstacles to get here and yet strive to make a positive difference in our region, will get to plant deep roots in the soil and watch them grow. Learn more at [wnylc.org/providence-farm-collective](http://wnylc.org/providence-farm-collective).

## 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.



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

## In Honor of

ERIK DANIELSON  
*From Karen Roberts*  
CHARLES GOODRICH  
*From Daniel Schifeling*  
BILL HORBETT, SR.  
*From Audrey Horbett*  
KARIN JOHNSON  
*From Stacy Johnson*  
ART KLEIN  
*From Gladys Gifford*  
JANET S. PETERS  
*From Susan Peters*  
WILLARD F. STANLEY  
*From Gerald Mathewson*

## In Memory of

CATHERINE AGUSTIADY BECKER  
*From Timothy Carey; Deborah Edattel; Heather Fineberg; Kristie Horton; Matthew Howdysshell; Shannon Thompson*  
WILLIAM BRODERICK SR.  
*From Anonymous; Tom Burke; William Choboy; Francine DelMonte; Marjorie Gillies; Peter & Serena Grainge; Betty Lamb; Christine Makowiecki; Frank, Tom, & Michael Moore; Frank & Cindy Voelker*  
OLIVE BURCH  
*From Tom Burke; Frank & Cindy Voelker*  
CAITLIN CAREY  
*From Patricia Kane*  
JAMES DAUL  
*From Carolyn Haag*  
STANLEY DUSZCZAK  
*From Donna Duszczak*

GIOVANNI FAVRETTI  
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GERHARD NEUMAIER  
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*From Gary Reed; Catherine Schrock; Mary Ann Straube; Charlene Trimmer*  
RITA M. SEIVERT  
*From Joanna Ransom*  
DOROTHY WESTHAFFER  
*From Terri Parks; Betsy Tomkins*

## 2022 Winter Events

**Tree ID Hike at the Niagara Escarpment Preserve**  
Saturday, January 15, 2022  
11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

**Hemlock Woolly Adelgid Survey at the College Lodge Forest**  
Saturday, February 12, 2022  
11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

For more events, visit [www.wnyc.org/events](http://www.wnyc.org/events)

## Restoration Work: Niagara Gorge

By Andrew Lance, PhD,  
Restoration Project Manager

The Land Conservancy, in partnership with NYS Parks, has made incredible progress controlling non-native invasive plant species in the Niagara Gorge. Native plant communities are recovering, and coupled with opening the former expressway as parkland with trails, visitors are now able to experience more diverse native plants and animals in the gorge. Elderberry, raspberry, and dogwood now cover many of the areas where invasive plant removal took place, and our native birds and bees are thriving. We encourage you to pay the gorge a visit and see these changes for yourself.



## Reaccreditation

Did you know we go

through a rigorous process to ensure we are operating at the highest possible conservation standards? We are thrilled that the Land Trust Accreditation, the national accrediting body for land trusts, has renewed our accredited status. Once again, we have proven that we have sound finances, practice ethical conduct in our work, and have responsible governance to ensure lasting stewardship. We are proud to work with our community to protect the places in Western New York that we all love.



## Our Mission

The Land Conservancy is a regional, non-profit land trust that has protected more than 7,000 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. We are accredited by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission.



Follow us for more news & updates!



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## Why did you become a Legacy Society Member?

We wanted to provide lasting financial support to the Land Conservancy. Their goals—providing natural spaces like forests, meadows, and streams for future generations—are so important to us. We love nature and wildlife. Since plants and animals are going extinct faster than we realize, protecting land is critical to our future. This is why we added the Land Conservancy to our charitable trust.

**Amy Choboy and Pamela Rossotto**

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

Are you interested in joining our Legacy Society and ensuring your favorite places are protected for future generations? Email Kyle Semmel, Communications Manager, at [ksemmel@wnylc.org](mailto:ksemmel@wnylc.org).

James Battaglia  
Lawrence M. and  
Carolyn K. Brooks  
Amy Choboy and  
Pamela Rossotto  
Larry and Sheila Drake  
Edward G. and Joan Eschner  
Deborah H. Fenn  
Chuck and Ann Fournier  
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