



WESTERN NEW YORK  
LAND CONSERVANCY

# The Resource

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE WESTERN NEW YORK LAND CONSERVANCY

FALL 2019

**My Happy Place** (See Inside)

© Kara Frisina

Western New York Land Conservancy  
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WNYLC.org

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# My Happy Place

By Kyle Semmel, *Communications Manager*

When Kayla Stocking was six, she went on a nature hike with her uncle. She was an adventurous kid; her house in South Wales was bordered by a forest with a creek, where she would gather rocks her mother would later find stashed, like stolen candies, in her pockets.

They walked up Hunters Creek, Kayla's feet splashing cool sprays of water. Minnows darted as they approached, and the tadpoles they collected wriggled in her palm. From time to time, her uncle hefted up broad, flat stones, instantly stirring thick swirls of silt. Squatting, Kayla would watch, transfixed, as these murky clouds dissipated to reveal the treasure she sought: a scuttling crayfish. The woods, she realized, were alive with wondrous creatures. Thanks to her uncle, she developed a love for the outdoors to go along with her keen interest in science—an interest she nurtured into a career as a bacteriologist.

But she never forgot those formative hours she spent exploring the woods. "There's a peacefulness to the outdoors that cannot be explained," she says. "Whenever I'm feeling stressed or overwhelmed, I close my eyes and hear the howling coyotes and chirping crickets of the night, the electric cicadas on a hot summer day, or the constant babbling brook outside my bedroom window. I'm immediately brought back to my happy place."



Kayla & Danny Stocking

© Kara Frisina



© Kara Frisina

The Western New York Land Conservancy is a not-for-profit land trust that permanently protects natural and agricultural lands in 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. Together, we protect more than 56 million acres, and you can help us preserve even more.

Today, Kayla and her husband, Joe, take hikes wherever they go; and they're raising their six-month-old son Danny to love nature. Strapped into the Baby Bjorn, he stares wide-eyed and curious as he passes through the natural world.

But the natural world is changing. That is why she chose to become a member of the Land Conservancy and to work, in particular, to protect Mossy Point from being lost to development. It's not just an attractive patch of rolling, wooded land in Western New York; it is part of a much larger ecosystem that safeguards the Niagara watershed, the source of our region's fresh water. Protecting Mossy Point is of utmost importance to future generations like Danny's.

This summer, Kayla and Joe took Danny up to Mossy Point with a group led by Deputy Executive Director Jajeane Rose-Burney. Listening to the water burble deep in the gorge below, with her husband and son at her side, Kayla stood connected to her past and future. It was a powerful moment, one that reminded her just how significant this land is—and how close it is to being lost forever.

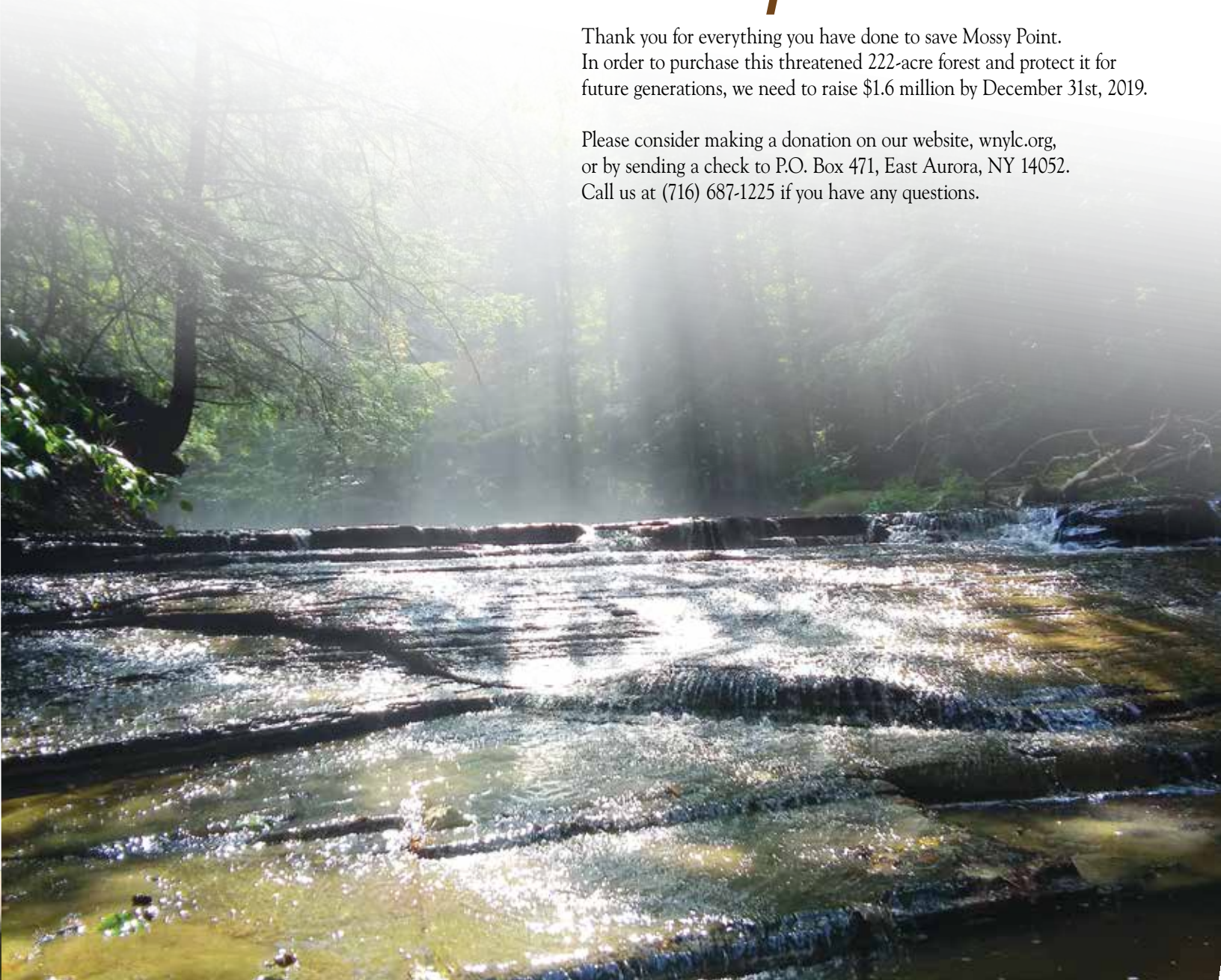
"Mossy Point is a unique piece of land that everyone should be able to enjoy," she says, "and I hope there are still places like this around here when Danny's older."

Thanks to the community's efforts, the Land Conservancy is just months away from purchasing the land and ensuring that it will be here when Danny is older—if we can reach our goal of raising \$1.6 million dollars by December 31st. With nearly \$1.1 million now raised, we are getting very close, but Kayla, Joe, Danny, and the entire community need your help.

## Save Mossy Point

Thank you for everything you have done to save Mossy Point. In order to purchase this threatened 222-acre forest and protect it for future generations, we need to raise \$1.6 million by December 31st, 2019.

Please consider making a donation on our website, [wnylc.org](http://wnylc.org), or by sending a check to P.O. Box 471, East Aurora, NY 14052. Call us at (716) 687-1225 if you have any questions.



# Twenty-One Percent

By Nancy Smith, Executive Director

**D**id you know that the Great Lakes are home to almost 21% of our world's surface freshwater? This astonishing figure is crucial to the health of our entire planet.

We are the beneficiaries of the bounty of our Great Lakes. What will be the legacy of our stewardship of this amazing treasure? What can we do to make a difference? Will our children and grandchildren tell stories of our courageous actions caring for our land and water so that they too will have access to the waters they will need to survive?

I credit my dad, the botany professor and lover of nature, as the inspiration for my career in land conservation. When I was in college, I studied abroad in the UK. Hard as it is to believe, we didn't have cell phones back then, and on my budget using a pay phone was not an option. Just before Thanksgiving I received a small package. Inside I found an audiotape that Dad created walking outside our home in the middle of a rain storm.

I love to imagine him walking around with an upside-down kettle and a tape recorder to capture the magical sounds and rhythm of those backyard raindrops. I played that tape many times during my year away. Water, as is so often the case, was a connector, a lifeline really – connecting me with my family across the Atlantic and to a future where the land's embrace of the water would become part of my life's work. Here in Western New York, we are guardians of the world's fresh water. Your support for our forests, meadows, and streambanks ensures that our fresh water will be a lifeline for our children, our grandchildren, and our world.

*(This text was adapted from Nancy Smith's opening remarks at this year's annual gala.)*

## Want to save our natural habitats for future generations?

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

## Saving Working Lands: Getting our Boots in the Dirt

By Rachel Chrostowski, Farmland Protection Specialist

**A**t the Land Conservancy, we work hard to make sure there will always be a place for our farmers to grow fresh local food that we can put on our plates. This year, for the first time ever, the Land Conservancy has a full-time staff person working to protect our region's farmland.

As our Farmland Protection Specialist, I will build on the nearly 30 years of progress we've made. To date, the Land Conservancy has protected over 3,500 acres on more than 40 farms in Western New York! Most recently, with funding from New York State Department of Agriculture & Markets, we have permanently protected the D&J Brawdy vegetable farm and the third-generation Triple Oak dairy farm in Eden. We are currently working to protect a family farm in Alden and three farms in Eden thanks to another round of State funding.

In addition to ensuring that the people who grow our food stay on their land, we are also safeguarding our region's agricultural heritage and way of life. As our region's farmers will tell you, there's nothing like growing up and raising a family on a farm. No other way of life can provide you with that connection to the land or our heritage.

It is critical that we protect Western New York farmland today—future generations will thank us. If you own farmland, or know someone who does, please reach out to me. Let's talk about protecting your land and your legacy.

© Bob Wideman



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

## In Memory of

HENRY BIEL

*From Florence Biel*

CATIE CAREY

*From Patricia Kane*

SHERLOCK "SKIP" HERRICK, JR.

*From Charles & Sandra Hahn*

*From Don & Barbara Owens*

*From Michael & Susan O'Brien*

*From Kathleen & Gerald Patterson*

*From Tracy & Scott Perrapato*

*From Jane Robbins & Peter Westphal*

*From David Ryan*

*From Kenneth A Swain*

*From Shelby Deck & Tim Vukelic*

*From John R. & Laura Whitney*

JOHN KOCIELA

*From Carol Kociela*

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*From Carolyn Haag*

JANET A. MCMAHON

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*From Elaine McGrady*

*From James Regan*

*From Anthony & Julie Rizzo*

*From Scott Schafer*

JIM TOMKINS

*From Betsy Tomkins*

DOUGLAS A. WRIGHT

*From The Schultz Family*

## In Honor of

PAUL REITAN

*From Kirsten B. Reitan*

SUZANNE TOMKINS

*From Betsy Tomkins*

LYNDA STEPHENS

*From Janet M. Goodsell*

## Thank you

The Land Conservancy wishes to thank Bill Pictor, our dedicated broker at Trubee Collins in East Aurora, who has helped facilitate stock donations to the Land Conservancy for years. If you would like to donate stock, call our Deputy Executive Director, Jajeon Rose-Burney, at (716) 687-1224 ext 113 and he will connect you with Bill.

## Let's go for a **walk...**



### **Winter Tree Walk at College Lodge**

Saturday, January 25, 2020 | 12pm-2pm

College Lodge Forest 8067 Route 380, Brocton, NY 14716

Western New York is a magical winter wonderland. Learn how to identify our region's trees while walking through College Lodge, an old-growth forest near Fredonia, NY. This walk will be led by guest guide and tree expert Erik Danielsen.

### **Snowshoeing in the Owens Falls Sanctuary**

Saturday, February 22, 2020 | 11pm-1pm

720 Center St, East Aurora, NY 14052

Have you ever snowshoed through a forest? Would you like to try? Then join us at one of our signature properties in East Aurora, the beautiful Owens Falls Sanctuary, and give it a go. This snowshoe walk will be led by Buffalo Audubon Society's naturalist-in-residence, Mark Carra. Children ages 8 and up are welcome to participate.

*To sign up for these events or for information about our other events, please visit [wnylc.org/events](http://wnylc.org/events) or call us at (716) 687-1225.*



© Marisa Riggi

# Building Biodiversity at Stella Niagara Preserve



© Priscilla Titus

By Marisa Riggi, Conservation Director

Many hands—and hooves—were at work this summer at the Stella Niagara Preserve. Stewardship Interns Marissa Parker and Jon Ericksen spent the summer trimming vegetation, removing invasive species, and installing native plants in our new wildflower meadow. In July, we welcomed six helpers from “Let’s Goat Buffalo” to treat invasive species on an acre of meadow. The goats happily munched away on curly dock, knapweed, Queen Anne’s Lace, and other invasive species. The majority of invasive plant seeds are sterilized by the goats’ digestive process. Thanks to them, native plants like narrow-leaved mountain mint, which were previously shaded by the invasive species, have finally had a chance to grow. By early August we were seeing dozens of butterflies, including many monarchs, feeding on plants in the area. If you didn’t get a chance to see the goats in action, they’ll be back next year for another round of invasives management!

We are also using a management technique known as smothering, in which opaque landscaping fabric is used to cover invasive plants and prevent sunlight from reaching them. This method takes time, but by next year, we hope to see progress in ridding the upper portions of the preserve of invasive quackgrass.

Our ecologist, Priscilla Titus, became the Stella Niagara Preserve Manager in August. Her many years of experience monitoring, managing, and restoring native plant communities have already been put to good use as we help Stella reach its full potential. Already, giant blue lobelia and cardinal flower flash their brilliant colors at the edge of the sedge meadow, and at least eight aster species have begun to bloom and feed butterflies, bees, and other pollinators.



© Marisa Riggi

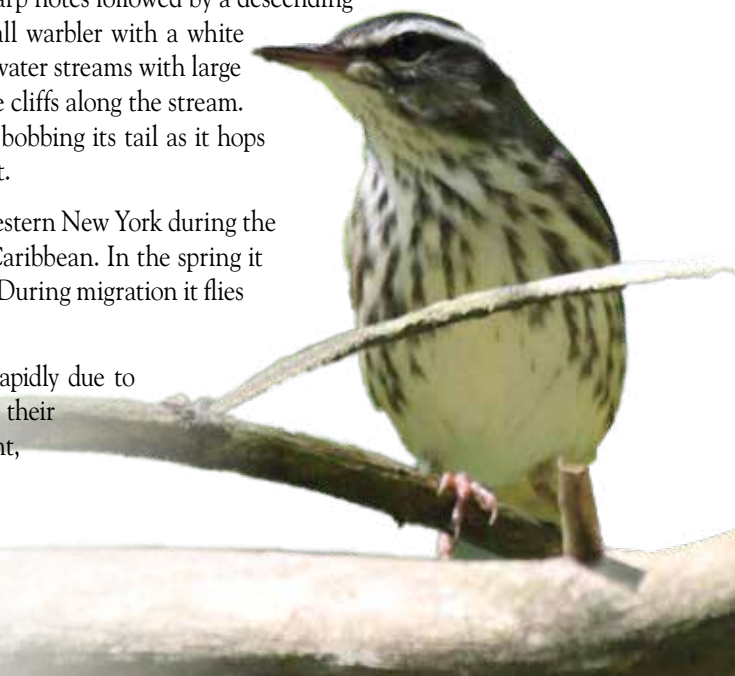
## Habitat Matters: Louisiana Waterthrush

By Jajeon Rose-Burney, Deputy Executive Director

If we’re in the right place, it’s one of the songs we hear in the spring: three sharp notes followed by a descending jumble of whistles. The song comes from the Louisiana Waterthrush, a small warbler with a white eyebrow, brown back, and streaked, cream-colored chest. It prefers cool, headwater streams with large areas of continuous, mature forest, and it makes its nest in tree roots and shale cliffs along the stream. The Louisiana Waterthrush is rarely seen, but when it is, it is usually alone, bobbing its tail as it hops along the rocky streambank. This is exactly what you can find at Mossy Point.

The Louisiana Waterthrush is an international traveler. Though it nests in Western New York during the summer, it spends the winter in Central America, South America, and the Caribbean. In the spring it flies thousands of miles north, and in the fall it flies thousands of miles south. During migration it flies at night along with thousands of other songbirds.

Like most of our songbirds, Louisiana Waterthrush numbers are decreasing rapidly due to habitat loss from here to South America. At Mossy Point, we are lucky to hear their sweet song echo across Hunters Creek. When our community saves Mossy Point, we can help ensure that the Louisiana Waterthrush finds a place to nest and raise its family. Generations of people that follow us will be able to hear the same beautiful songs.



# Design Ideas Competition Winners Announced

Along the old DL&W rail corridor, a ribbon of green runs from the Buffalo River across from Solar City to the DL&W Terminal in downtown Buffalo near Canalside. This land extends for a mile and a half through the Valley, the Old First Ward, and the Perry neighborhoods. The Land Conservancy plans to develop a new nature trail and greenway on this corridor. This past year, we ran an International Design Ideas Competition and received 98 design idea proposals from individuals and teams from across the region, the country, and around the world. The community then voted for their favorites at an open house. Winners of this exciting competition were revealed in June.



Congressman Brian Higgins



**1st Place Community Choice Award**  
**“The Del: A Steel and Rail Heritage Trail”** was designed by Matt Renkas, a Buffalo firefighter who has a degree in Landscape Architecture from SUNY Environmental Science and Forestry.



**1st Place Juried Design Ideas Competition**  
**“All Aboard! Reclaiming Hill & Del”** was submitted by MNLA, a NYC-based landscape architecture firm. Pictured are Greg Leonard and Molly Bourne.



Attendees and media at the DL&W Design Competition Award winners announcement.

© All photos by Sara Heidinger

For a complete list of top designs, visit [wnylc.org/dlw](http://wnylc.org/dlw)

## Next Phase

For the past year, the Land Conservancy has been working with branding agency and design firm Block Club. This fall, we will hold a press conference officially announcing the name of the new trail and launching a new project webpage. After that we begin the concept and schematic design phase. Once a contractor is selected, ongoing workshops and community engagement events will guide the design work. Stay tuned!

**THANK YOU**  
 to all of our sponsors for  
 the design ideas competition

### Design Competition Sponsors:

M & T Bank, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Western New York Blue Fund, Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Legacy Funds at the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo, Land Trust Alliance, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy through the Doppelt Family Trail Development Fund, and numerous individual Land Conservancy members and donors.

Also to Blue Cross Blue Shield of Western New York Blue Fund for sponsoring a series of events along the DL & W corridor this summer.



© Deb Fenn

To learn more about including the Land Conservancy in your will and joining the Legacy Society, contact Nancy Smith, Executive Director, at (716) 687-1225.

## What will your **legacy** be?

### Why I became a Legacy Society member

Protecting open space and forests. Restoring wetlands and meadows. Conserving farmland. These efforts are essential to preserving diversity, wildlife habitat, and securing the integrity of our invaluable land and water resources—and they are the reason that I put the Land Conservancy in my will and became a member of the Legacy Society. The next generation demands and deserves our purposeful contribution to assure the future of a green and prosperous planet.

– **Deb Fenn**, Vice President, Board of Directors & Legacy Society Member

## Legacy Society Members

James Battaglia

Larry and Sheila Drake

Joan M. and Edward G. Eschner

Deborah H. Fenn

Douglas Germony

Amy Holt

Ed and Gayle Hutton

Art and Marilyn Klein

Paul and Jane Lehman

Barbara Mierzwa

Dorothy Westhafer

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