



WESTERN NEW YORK
LAND CONSERVANCY

The Resource

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE WESTERN NEW YORK LAND CONSERVANCY

SPRING 2018

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Meet the Board of Directors

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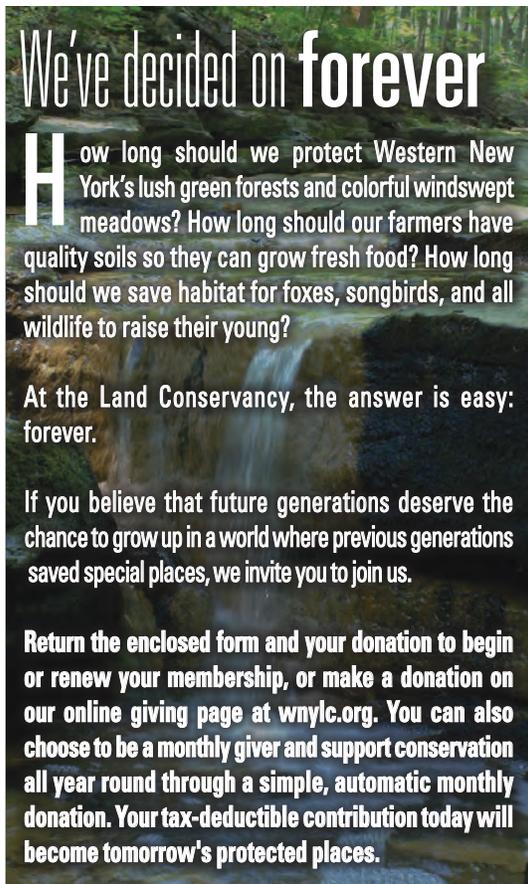
Vicki Jancef

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Our Story

Some people say 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 protect natural lands so our region's children will always have wild places to discover and we protect farmland so our farmers will always have places 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. 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 every day we work to preserve even more.



We've decided on forever

How long should we protect Western New York's lush green forests and colorful windswept meadows? How long should our farmers have quality soils so they can grow fresh food? How long should we save habitat for foxes, songbirds, and all wildlife to raise their young?

At the Land Conservancy, the answer is easy: forever.

If you believe that future generations deserve the chance to grow up in a world where previous generations saved special places, we invite you to join us.

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. You can also choose to be a monthly giver and support conservation all year round through a simple, automatic monthly donation. Your tax-deductible contribution today will become tomorrow's protected places.

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Get In Touch with Us

(716) 687-1225

info@wnylc.org | www.wnyc.org

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From Florence Biel

In memory of Franklyn Collins

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In memory of David Floyd

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In memory of William L. Haag,

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From Carolyn Haag

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In memory of Eleanor Kojm

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In memory of Lee Oprea

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In memory of Esther Sherman

From Peter Sherman

In honor of Harvey Stahl

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From Betsy Tomkins

In honor of Stephen E. and Susan C. Cobb

From Evan Matthew Cobb

In honor of Sarah Jane Duax

From Caroline & Bill Duax

In honor of Nancy Smith

From Anne Floyd

In honor of Sheila Vaughan

From Nancy Cimbal



The DL&W Trail Project is chugging along

© Priscilla Titus

Last year, the Land Conservancy and our community partners began a visioning process aimed at creating an iconic, innovative, and inspiring trail along the abandoned DL&W rail corridor owned by the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA) in downtown Buffalo.

The DL&W Corridor is a mile and a half long ribbon of green that runs through The Valley, The First Ward, and the Perry Neighborhood, from the Buffalo River near Solar City to downtown Buffalo near Canalside. The Land Conservancy has been working closely with neighborhood residents, business owners, and community leaders to develop a vision plan for the future of this corridor.

We envision the DL&W corridor becoming a place where people can walk or ride a bike and where wildlife can find a home. We hope to



© Larry Brooks



© Jajean Rose-Burney

convert this remnant of our industrial heritage into a beautiful, engaging, and ecologically resilient linear park.

In March, the Land Conservancy held an open house that featured presentations by the Land Conservancy and community leaders, an exciting fly-over video of the corridor filmed by a drone, and draft guiding principles and strategies based on community input to date. The community came out in droves to hear more and share their thoughts and opinions about the early plans for the corridor. The community vision plan will be completed in early summer.

Stay tuned for the next big phase of the project-an exciting design competition for the corridor, sponsored by M&T Bank. We still need additional funding to make the design competition possible, so please contact us if you'd like to help.



Partner Spotlight: WNY PRISM

Western New York Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management



© WNY PRISM

The Land Conservancy would like to acknowledge our friends at WNY PRISM. Every year their talented crew comes out to our preserves and helps us keep invasive species in check. They do this skilled work at no cost to the Land Conservancy!

This year, they will be removing mugwort at Kenneglenn in May and Canada thistle and shrubby invasives at the Niagara Escarpment Preserve in June. In July, the crew will help us celebrate Invasive Species Awareness Week with our annual Honeysuckle Harvest at Kenneglenn. The crew will also remove shrubby invasives and Phragmites at The Owens Falls Sanctuary in September.



© WNY PRISM

Thank you for all you do, **WNY PRISM!**



© James Hoggard

Keeping one family's dream alive



© Amanda Cesari



© James Hoggard



© James Hoggard



© Amanda Cesari

Keeping one family's dream alive: The Kenneglenn forest reconnected at last

When Charles and Florence Kennedy bought their 400-acre country retreat in 1920, they only thought of the joy the lovely meadows, lush forests, and glittering stream would bring their young family. They had no idea that they were just the first of many Western New Yorkers who would grow to love and cherish this special land.

For decades, Charles and Florence brought their five children out to Kenneglenn, as they called the estate, to escape the hustle and bustle of city life and spend their summers together as a family. They were forest explorers who passed the days hiking and playing games. They splashed in Hunter's Creek and carefully lifted rocks in search of crayfish and salamanders. In time, the young Kennedys grew up, got married, and brought their own children back to frolic amongst the same trees where they had played as children.

As the eldest members of the family passed on and the youngest members moved away, at long last, the time came to sell Kenneglenn. Thankfully, in 2000, the community came together to purchase 131 acres on the west side of Hunter's Creek. This land became the Kenneglenn Scenic and Nature Preserve that the Land Conservancy protects today. But the Kennedys' land on the other side of the creek was sold to a different landowner, separating it from the preserve.



© Rachel Chrostowski



© Amanda Cesari



© Amanda Cesari

Today, the Land Conservancy has a chance to purchase the 222-acres of forest that lie across the creek from Kenneglenn. The forest is home to impressive old growth trees where barred owls settle silently onto the outstretched limbs of the tall oaks overlooking the deep Hunter's Creek gorge. Lush green ferns line the shores of the clear, cool stream as it flows serenely over shale waterfalls.

You can bring the halves of Kenneglenn back together and revive the Kennedys' dream of a **wild wonderland** for generations of children to explore and find joy and magic in the natural world.

Once protected, the reunited Kenneglenn and Hunter's Creek County Park will form a massive tract of over 1,100 acres of protected land, which will provide clean water for our entire region. The newly protected 222 acres would be opened to the community with new walking trails and a new entrance.

We have only 18 months left to raise at least \$1.6 million that is needed to make this dream a reality. If you are interested in being a part of this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, please call us at (716) 687-1225 or send an email to info@wnylc.org.



Restoration of the Niagara Gorge has begun

© Priscilla Titus

© Dave Spiering

© Priscilla Titus

If you have been following our Restore the Gorge project detailed in the last two newsletters, chances are that you are as excited as we are that the project is now underway! On a frosty February afternoon we were joined by Lieutenant Governor Kathy Hochul, City of Niagara Falls Mayor Paul Dyster, Western District State Parks Director Mark Thomas, and a room full of other friends and supporters to kick off an ambitious ecosystem restoration project in the Niagara Gorge.



Our dedicated crews are ever safety-conscious as they work to remove invasive plants during the dormant season so as to protect the fragile soils and tender roots of natives species.

Crews were on site this winter working every day that the weather allowed in the 34 acres included in the initial phase of the project on time. Aggressive invasive trees and shrubs including Norway maple, Ailanthus, and Eurasian bush honeysuckle are being controlled to allow native species to flourish once again.

As spring tiptoes in we look forward to seeing the emergence and growth of native plants in the understory and will begin enhancing the plant community by adding trees and shrubs that were once much more common but were diminished by the proliferation of invasive species. Currently, native grasses and perennial forbs from seeds collected in Western New York are being propagated for planting in the Gorge where dense stands of invasive trees and shrubs have been controlled. Please join us at one of the upcoming events detailed in this newsletter to learn more about what lies ahead for the Niagara Gorge.

This project is supported by generous funding from Governor Cuomo's Buffalo Billion Phase II, Niagara River Greenway Ecological Standing Committee, and Oath Community Benefit Fund for Niagara County by Empire State Development.



Planning for Extreme Weather

Two years ago, we had the worst drought on record. Drinking water wells were empty. Stream beds were dry. Crops failed. The following spring was one of the wettest on record. Farmers couldn't plant their crops or harvest hay to feed their animals because the ground was too soft to use their machinery. Lake Ontario hit record high water levels, which caused severe shoreline erosion. This is what climate change looks like in Western New York.

I'm sure you've noticed that Western New York's weather has been swinging from extreme to extreme recently. Two years ago, we had the worst drought on record. Drinking water wells were empty. Stream beds were dry. Crops failed. The following spring was one of the wettest on record. Farmers couldn't plant their crops or harvest hay to feed their animals because the ground was

too soft to use their machinery. Lake Ontario hit record high water levels, which caused severe shoreline erosion. This is what climate change looks like in Western New York. While we might feel helpless in the face of these changes, there are things we can do. By protecting forests, floodplains, and wetlands, we can make our region more resilient. These natural areas absorb rainwater, which replenishes our aquifers so water is available during drought conditions. These lands also reduce stormwater runoff, which decreases flood severity during heavy rain events. Trees and plants store carbon, so protecting

large forests reduces carbon emissions. Natural lands improve water quality, and provide clean safe water for drinking and recreation like swimming and fishing.

The Land Conservancy is kicking off a project to protect these important places thanks to a grant from the NYS Conservation Partnership Program, which is funded by the Environmental Protection Fund. We are working to save more land throughout the Buffalo Creek Watershed, which runs from West Seneca to Marilla and Wales, then beyond into Wyoming County. This healthy stream ecosystem is home to the headwaters of the Niagara River. It includes streams and floodplain valleys, rolling hills, large tracts of protected forests like Hunters Creek County Park and Kenneglenn Scenic & Nature Preserve, and fertile farm soils. This project will improve climate resiliency, sustain ecosystem services, and protect plants and animals. Protecting corridors of healthy habitat will also allow wildlife to move and seek suitable habitat as climate changes.

By protecting these places today, we will fortify our region against weather extremes for countless generations to come. Stay tuned for developments in this important initiative...



Take a Hike!



© Jajean Rose-Burney

© Jajean Rose-Burney

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

Wildflower Walk at the Niagara Escarpment Preserve

April 29 | 10am-12pm



Join Ed Fuchs and Joanne Schlegel on a walk through the Niagara Escarpment Preserve in Lockport in search of spring wildflowers. Located on the Niagara Escarpment, this 36-acre property is part of the unique geological formation that is associated with unusual plants and ecological communities. The property is home to several interesting woodland plants and 10 acres of restored grassland habitat. Ed and Joanne are long-time members and past presidents of the Niagara Frontier Botanical Society.

This hike is dedicated to the memory of Kalista Lehrer.

© Prudy Allen

Invasive Species Awareness Week: Honeysuckle Harvest

Kenneglenn Scenic & Nature Preserve

July 12 | 9am-12pm

In honor of Invasive Species Awareness Week, we are partnering with the Western New York Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (PRISM) to remove invasive species like valerian and bush honeysuckle. Please bring gloves if you have them. Tools will be supplied.

Geology of the Niagara Gorge

Niagara Discovery Center

July 22 | 10am-12pm



Join us as we explore the geology of the Niagara Gorge where the rocks are more than 460 million years old! This hike will be led by geologist Stan Radon, an engineering geologist with the New York State Department

of Environmental Conservation. Stan teaches geology, energy, and environmental classes at SUNY Buffalo. This promises to be a fascinating hike along the cliffs and slopes of the Niagara Gorge. Attendees should be prepared to hike up and down steep steps and on difficult terrain.

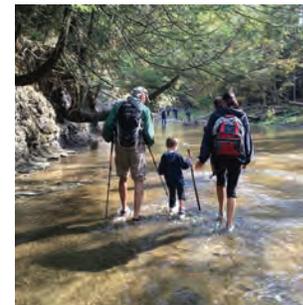
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Native & Invasive Plants of the Niagara Gorge

Niagara Discovery Center

August 1 | 6-8pm

The Niagara Gorge is home to the majority of the plant species found in the Niagara Frontier, many of them very rare. Unfortunately, the health of this sensitive environment can easily be harmed by many factors, especially the threat of exotic invasive plant species. Join us as we explore the plant life of the Niagara Gorge with invasive species expert, Andrea Locke, who works as the coordinator for the Western New York Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (PRISM).



© Rachel Chrostowski

Geology Hike

Kenneglenn Scenic & Nature Preserve
September 8 | 10am-12pm

Led by geologist Stan Radon, this hike features a walk right through Hunters Creek, views of the gorge walls, and a small waterfall at the Kenneglenn Nature Preserve in Wales. This popular hike is a great family adventure on a warm summer day.



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
- ✿ Paul and Jane Lehman
- ✿ Larry and Sheila Drake
- ✿ Barbara Mierzwa
- ✿ Deborah H. Fenn
- ✿ Dorothy Westhafer
- ✿ Amy Holt
- ✿ Clarence Wigler
- ✿ David Kimball



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