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Photo Credits:
Lori Coleman, Adam Montoya, and Genesee Land Trust staff

We apologize for the incorrect photographers listed in our last newsletter. Missing photo credits go to: Willie D'Anna, Laurie Dirkx, Charley Eisman, Phyllis Ely, Field Craft Farm, Packard Cattle Farm

Genesee Land Trust is partially funded by the New York Conservation Partnership Program administered by the Land Trust Alliance Northeast Program with support from the State of New York. A copy of Genesee Land Trust's annual financial report may be obtained upon request from our office or from the New York State Attorney General's Charities Bureau, Attn: FOIL Officer, 120 Broadway, New York, NY 10271



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YOU'RE INVITED TO THESE UPCOMING EVENTS!

FIRST DAY HIKE

Saturday, January 1, 2022

10am, Cornwall Preserve, Williamson. Start out the new year on a hike overlooking Lake Ontario. The views at Cornwall Preserve are fantastic during any season!

WINTER WALKS ON NEWLY PROTECTED LANDS

Saturdays, January 29, February 12, and March 19, 2022

10am and noon, various locations. Check out recently protected lands that are not-quite-ready for the public on sneak peek walks.

We invite you to sign up for our Enews on geneseeandtrust.org to receive event updates as well as conservation news and stories.

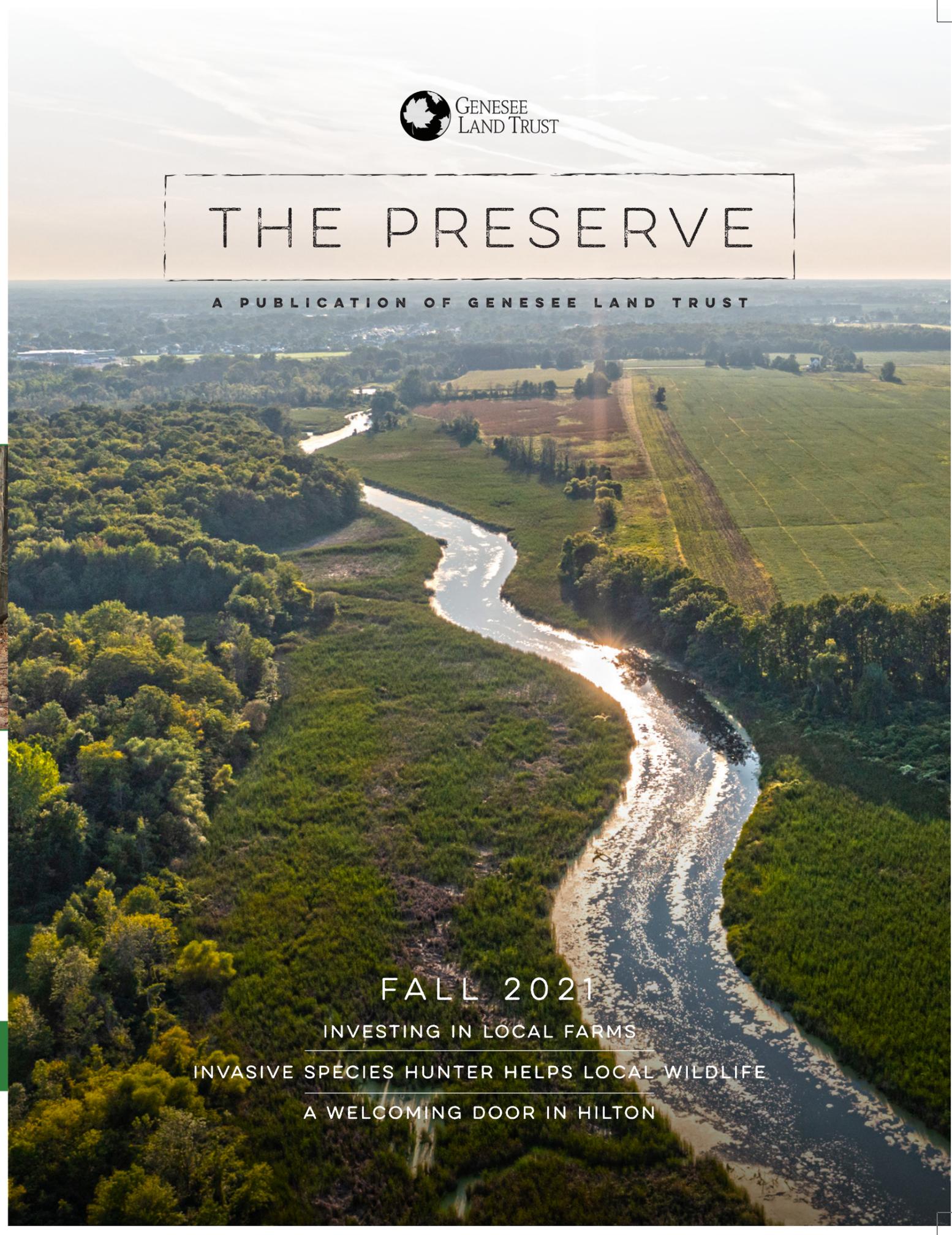


Don't forget to follow us on social media for more news!



THE PRESERVE

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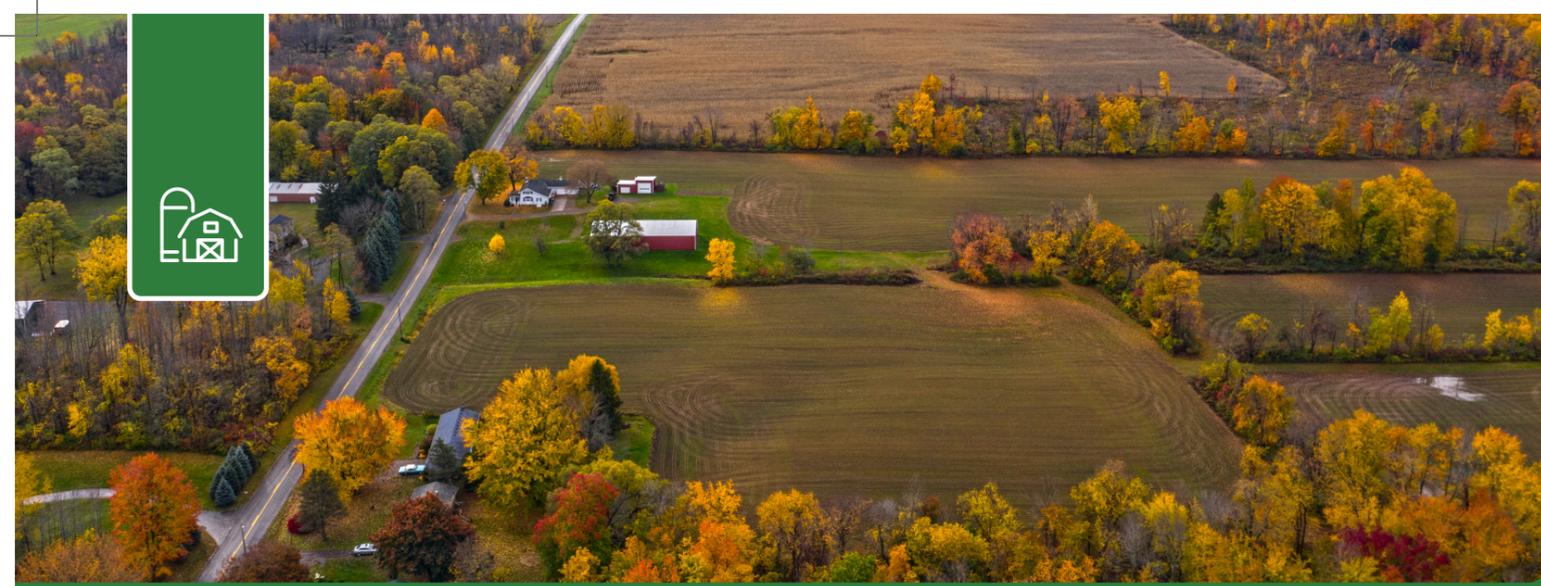


FALL 2021

INVESTING IN LOCAL FARMS

INVASIVE SPECIES HUNTER HELPS LOCAL WILDLIFE

A WELCOMING DOOR IN HILTON



INVESTING IN LOCAL FARMS

When we answer the phone these days, we frequently hear from farmers with the same question, “What can we do to protect our farm?” Farmers across the region are worried about their farm’s future. And many are looking for options to ensure that their farm will continue to be farmed for generations. Without a clear path to the next farmer, there is a high risk of the farm being lost to development when it is sold.

And that is where Genesee Land Trust comes in. We help farmers in Monroe and Wayne Counties learn about options including the Purchase of their Development Rights (PDR) from New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets. Hundreds of hours over several years will be spent from that first phone call to in-depth conversations to preparing a grant application and then completing the PDR process.

HOW WE CAN HELP

Investing in our farmland protection team will increase our ability to protect more of the incredibly productive soils in our region to ensure a community of diverse farms generation after generation.

In 2021, successful applications for PDR funding resulted in 10 farmland protection projects currently in process—projects that when completed will double the amount of protected farmland in the region.

Genesee Land Trust is also part of New York’s Regional Navigator program, looking to connect interested farmers to available land. We reach out to diverse communities and build bridges with current farm owners to new farmers for the next generation.

INVESTING IN OUR TEAM

To address the growing need, we expanded our farmland protection team with Amanda Grisa as the new Farmland Protection Manager. She joins Lorna Wright, Deputy Executive Director, and Liz Sheehan, Farmland Protection Assistant. Amanda comes from a family of farmers in Naples, New York, and runs a small market farm. She previously worked at Cornell Cooperative Extension of Monroe County, Fruition Seeds, LLC, and the State of Oregon’s Water Resources Department.

Much is at stake as we look to the future. According to American Farmland Trust, “When properly managed, farmland and rangeland support wildlife and biodiversity, recharge aquifers, clean water, and—of paramount importance in our fight against climate change—sequester carbon.”



A WELCOMING DOOR IN HILTON

When Lori and Roger Koss reached out to Genesee Land Trust about protecting their land last winter, they had hopes that they might find a good home for their 25 acres of wildlife habitat along Salmon Creek across the road from the Village of Hilton. They had a special request for us—that the land be cared for with people in mind as well as the wildlife that make it their home.

Roger grew up in the area, never too far away from his grandmother’s house that was next to West Creek. He and his brother, cousins, and friends enjoyed “a big backyard” including West Creek and the marshes alongside, the farmland on the high ground—the land between the creeks—and then Salmon Creek on the other side, all open lands connecting to Braddock Bay and Lake Ontario. While Lori is not from Rochester, her childhood on dairy and horse farms in the Cape Vincent region of New York, fostered her love of the outdoors, nature, and all living creatures.

“Not everyone gets the chance to grow up like we did,” said Roger. “We need to find ways to keep some of nature open to children, now more than ever. When Lori and I grew up, it was common to be outside all day and not come in until dinner time.” It has been shown that being outside is good for our physical and mental health and well-being. “We feel it is important to have places set aside for children, families, and everyone to explore, learn about, and enjoy the plants and animals that live around us.”

Creating a new nature preserve on their 25 acres is especially exciting because the land is surrounded by over 300 acres of the New York State Department of Conservation protected land. The new preserve will open the door to the outside, the way Roger’s grandmother once did.

LOOKING FOR SUPPORT AND INPUT

You can help protect this special place and start its transformation into a new nature preserve with a year-end gift at geneseeandtrust.org/ways-to-give. Easy parking, mown trails, and overlooks are in the plans. Please share your ideas to make the land feel welcoming to you with Kevin Farrell at kfarrell@geneseeandtrust.org.



Roger Koss showing his property



PROTECTING WATER: STUDYING SECOND CREEK

Only a handful of streams feed into Sodus Bay, making each one significant. The actions upstream make a difference, including ten years ago when Nancy Mangan decided to protect her land—and water—with Genesee Land Trust in partnership with Cracker Box Palace.

Students from St. John Fisher College spent an afternoon this fall in the water at Alasa Farms for a good reason—collecting data to assess the health of Second Creek. In a time of overwhelming technology and data via the internet, getting in the water with a net in hand is still the best way to make direct observations.

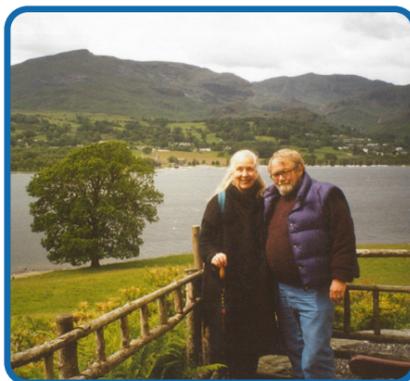
Students searched for aquatic macroinvertebrates including small insects, snails, worms, and crayfish. The presence or absence of certain species is important data that tells the story of a creek’s health and water quality. We look forward to receiving the final analysis from Professor Boller’s students.

PROTECTING WILDLIFE HABITAT YEAR AFTER YEAR

What started out as a brilliant idea years ago when Iris and Luther Miller were considering wedding anniversary gifts for each other became an annual tradition of gifts to support land conservation. “After years together we realized that we did not need to give each other any more things,” explained Luther. “We did want to celebrate our anniversary, so we decided to give gifts honoring each other to something we both really care about.”

“We knew right away it should be about preserving nature and be close to home, so we could see and enjoy what our contributions helped to make possible. Genesee Land Trust was a perfect choice,” added Iris.

After more than 20 years of giving, as Iris and Luther approach their 66th wedding anniversary, the gifts they have given are visible from the habitats preserved and the birds living there to the farms conserved with their harvests of local food. Giving a gift of nature to a loved one shows you care and saves precious habitats all year long; go to [geneeseelandtrust.org/tribute-gifts](https://www.geneeseelandtrust.org/tribute-gifts).



Iris and Luther Miller



In addition, in the next 15 years, one-third of America’s farmland will likely change hands as current landowners age and sell. Amanda and the rest of Genesee Land Trust’s farmland protection team will be here and ready to help.

Investing in our farmland protection team will increase our ability to protect more of the incredibly productive soils in our region to ensure a community of diverse farms generation after generation.



Pictured L to R: Lorna Wright, Liz Sheehan, and Amanda Grisa



PLANNING FOR A LEGACY OF LAND

With a planned gift, your love of the land can live on, over the generations. You can choose to remember Genesee Land Trust in your will with a bequest—a wonderful gift for the future that costs you nothing in your lifetime.

Another planned giving option (one that potentially avoids a significant income tax burden for your heirs) is to include Genesee Land Trust as a beneficiary of a retirement account or annuity. To name Genesee Land Trust as a beneficiary of a retirement account or annuity, you will need to file a Change of Beneficiary form with the company holding the account. More information can be found at [geneeseelandtrust.org/planned-giving](https://www.geneeseelandtrust.org/planned-giving) or feel free to call Gay Mills at 585-256-2130.



GENESSEE RIVERWAY TRAIL: NEW ROUTE FOR FUNDRAISER

The Genesee River was featured in the Pedaling for PathStone's bike ride fundraiser in August. For the first time, PathStone offered an off-road bike ride along the Genesee Riverway and El Camino Trails as an alternative to the 30- or 50-mile on-road routes.

Allen Handelman, Genesee River Alliance member, mapped out the 30-mile roundtrip ride from Genesee Valley Park to Lake Ontario. Nearly 100 riders signed up for the river ride to enjoy the "best way to see the river." Black Girls Do Bike Rochester, ROC Freedom Riders, and Genesee River Alliance members joined in the fundraising and fun!

Keep an eye out for Pedaling for PathStone next summer and join the riverway trail riding team! To keep in the know about events along the river, email Helen Dumas at hdumas@geneseeandtrust.org.



CHOOSING QCDS: GIVING FROM YOUR IRA

"I am lucky that the required distribution from my IRA is more than I need right now," explains Norma Platt. "By doing a QCD, I am able to give more generously to causes like Genesee Land Trust that I really care about."

"There is joy of the nature that is preserved through doing and giving," adds Norma. She and her husband John Boettcher have been preserve stewards of Gosnell Big Woods for 15 years and are active with Friends of Webster Trails.

When individuals reach their 70s, their IRA retirement funds can be donated to charity as a QCD (Qualified Charitable Distribution). A QCD must be directly transferred from an IRA to a charitable organization with a limit of \$100,000 per year. Consult with your IRA account manager to find out when you can take advantage of QCDs to support the causes you care about. More details can be found at geneseeandtrust.org/qcd.

INVASIVE SPECIES HUNTER HELPS LOCAL WILDLIFE

You may have heard the term "invasive species" and wondered what they are and why they're a problem. Invasive species can be plants, insects, animals, or fungi that are introduced into a local ecosystem, are likely to spread easily, and cause harm to the environment and the local economy. Invasive plants are often not eaten by and cannot be digested by local insects or wildlife, which allows the aggressively spreading invasives to take over large areas. This behavior crowds out room needed for our native plants to grow, and in turn, removes important sources of food for local wildlife—threatening their survival.

This summer we hired experienced botanist and "invasive species hunter" Kyle Webster to search for invasive species on our preserves and conservation easements. The results will let us know which ones he found so we can take action before they spread and become problematic. "It's about being proactive and trying to stay one step ahead of new invasive species as best we can," noted Kevin Farrell, Land Stewardship Director. "If we know what's out there, we can make a plan to protect the health of our important plant and wildlife habitats."

THE SEARCH IS ON

The Finger Lakes Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (FL-PRISM) helped to fund Kyle's search to assist with land management decisions. Kyle has explored 875 acres of Genesee Land Trust conservation lands by foot and kayak searching for highly threatening invasive species that are not yet widespread in order to stop them before they become a problem.

Jim and Martha Miller who protected their woods in 2018 are excited to put Kyle's recommendations into action. "Kyle gave me a mind-boggling amount of information and specific instructions on how to control some of the most pernicious ones," said Jim. While his final reports are underway, Kyle identified Japanese barberry and wineberry along with European dewberry and border privet as invasive species that we can take targeted action to stop them from spreading into nearby wildlife habitats.



INVASIVE SPECIES IN YOUR YARD?

HOW YOU CAN HELP WILDLIFE

You can help curb the spread of invasive species by learning more and taking action if you discover them in your yard. High on the list of concern are Japanese barberry, Japanese wineberry, and tree of heaven. Tree of heaven is also a favorite food plant for the spotted lanternfly that attacks native trees and shrubs as well as fruit trees and other crops. For more information check out FL-PRISM's website at fingerlakesinvasives.org.



Spotted Lanternfly
Image courtesy news.cornell.edu