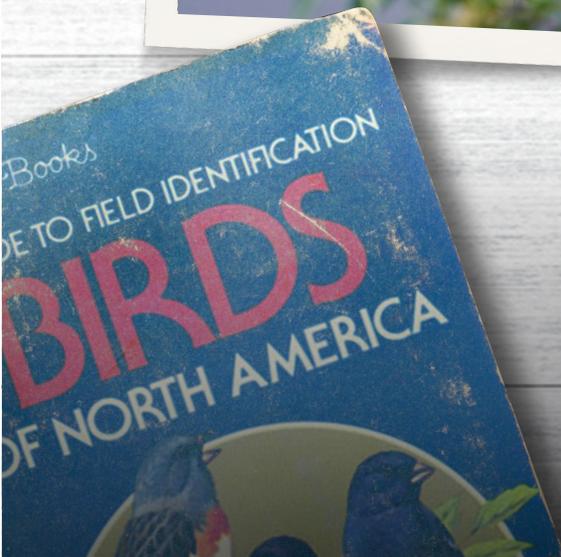


THE PRESERVE

A PUBLICATION OF GENESEE LAND TRUST



SUMMER 2022

PROTECTING THE FUTURE OF STONECROP FARM

Growing amazing food for the next generation

In 2016, Greg Hartt and Jenney Stringer had a plan to build an organic, pasture-raised pig farm. So they bought a 57-acre property in the middle of Henrietta and started Stonecrop Farm.

Greg and Jenney now raise pigs, laying hens, and turkeys, which they sell directly to loyal customers. The only certified organic livestock farm in Monroe County, their farm is also one of only 19 certified organic pig farms in the state.

And now there's great news...

In May, Genesee Land Trust received a grant to permanently protect Stonecrop Farm, and four other local family farms, from future development.

"Our goal is that when we're gone, a new generation of farmers will be able to pick up where we'll eventually leave off," Greg and Jenney shared in a recent blog post about the news. "So they can keep growing amazing food for the community."

The funds to purchase conservation easements come from the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets' Farmland Protection Implementation Grant (FPIG) program, funded through the Environmental Protection Fund.

It will take about two years for the process to be completed. And when it is, Greg and Jenney will be able to share more great news: Stonecrop Farm will be forever farmland.

MAKING A MONTHLY IMPACT

Gloria Weyerts grew up in the City of Rochester near the Genesee River. Long before there was a Riverway Trail, as a little girl she followed the paths of deer and fishermen to explore nature along the river's gorge. Today, at 82, she still avidly hunts for wildflowers, butterflies, and mushrooms at our nature preserves - now with her camera. She often shares her photographs with us as note cards.

"The only way we can preserve the future is to save our local spaces," says Gloria. "By giving here, you can make an impact on your own neighborhood." Gloria became a supporter in 2003, and has been a dedicated monthly donor since 2019.

"I try to up my monthly contribution a little bit every year," she adds. To start making an impact on your own neighborhood with a monthly donation, visit geneseeandtrust.org/ways-to-give.





DEER CREEK WOODS: YOU CAN MAKE IT HAPPEN!

You may have heard recently about a unique opportunity to protect vulnerable habitat and create **Deer Creek Woods** - a new public nature preserve that will benefit birds, climate, water, and you.

Just one mile from Lake Ontario, this is prime development territory. Without action to protect the land, it could soon have houses cutting through the woods and across the meadow.

Time for action is now

The current owner wants to keep the open meadow, beautiful woods, floodplain wetlands, and Deer Creek all forever wild by selling it for conservation. **Your help is critical to being able to complete the purchase by the end of summer, or it will be gone.**

Deer Creek Woods will preserve **resilient natural habitat that our vulnerable plants, pollinators, and animals need to survive as the climate changes.** It will also expand protection of a mile-long stretch of Deer Creek, helping to naturally filter and clean its water.

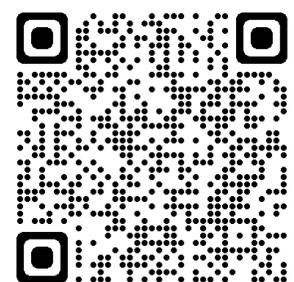
For wildlife and all of us

Importantly, the 53 acres of Deer Creek Woods is immediately adjacent to private properties that have been permanently protected by Genesee Land Trust over the years, resulting in more than 270 acres of protected land.

You can help to create a new special space for recreation and relaxation, with trails and boardwalks designed for inclusive access for all ages and physical abilities. Deer Creek Woods will always be open, always be free, and always be protected like our 17 other nature preserves.

Your help today will make it happen.

To make a donation, please use the enclosed envelope, scan the QR code, or visit geneseeandtrust.org/savingland. **Thank you!**



2001

Rochester Area Community Foundation awards Genesee Land Trust a \$10,000 civic engagement grant to gather community interest in a new trail in Northeast Rochester on the CSX rail right-of-way



CELEBRATING THE PAST AND FUTURE OF EL CAMINO

Genesee Land Trust, the City of Rochester and the Ibero-American Development Corporation (IADC) joined forces to host a "National Trails Day" party celebrating the first 10 years of the Thomas R. Frey Trail at El Camino. The June 4 festivities included presentations, music, games, and lunch. And playing on the playground!

"We bring the kids down here to play," said Tommy Gardner, as a local father of 8, "and walk to the Rec center all the time."

Tom Frey, a board member of Genesee land Trust, started building community support for the trail in 2001. Persistence helped create Conkey Corner Park as a gateway to the future trail in 2008. Together the City, IADC, Genesee Land Trust and hundreds of neighbors built the playground over a weekend in 2010.

Then, on National Trails Day in 2012, patience paid off with the dream of a rails-to trails transformation complete with the opening of El Camino. Recently, IADC completed a new Community Center adjacent to the trail to host community events and activities.

2002

We began hosting Day of Caring annual work parties to spruce up the future trail area, which continue today

2004

Groundbreaking for Ibero-American Development Corporation's El Camino Estates in the neighborhood

2008

City of Rochester awards us a Sector grant to create Conkey Corner Park as a gateway park to El Camino; CSX negotiations continue



October 2008

More than 100 city school students plant hundreds of perennials and bulbs at the park; Ibero-American Development Corporation initiates Project HOPE

June 25, 2009



Conkey Corner Park ribbon-cutting ceremony

Summer 2010

Genesee Land Trust, Project HOPE and City partner on playground build with more than 100 volunteers and residents



**August
2021**

“Creating the trail helped ignite the El Camino community, the city, and local organizations to invest in neighborhood improvements. It is a testament to the power of nature to connect and inspire people.”

– Miguel Melendez, El Camino neighbor and City Council president

Pedaling for PathStone features an off-road bike ride along the Genesee Riverway and Thomas R. Frey Trail at El Camino in partnership with the Genesee River Alliance

And now in 2022, there is a new dream unfolding with the proposed High Falls State Park only four blocks from Conkey Corner Park. A potential community connection could be made with an entrance where El Camino crosses Saint Paul Street.

To get involved in making this dream a reality and stay updated on its progress, please contact Helen Dumas, Genesee Land Trust’s Genesee River Alliance Coordinator, at hdumas@geneseeandtrust.org.

10th Anniversary Celebration of Conkey Corner Park

**Spring
2018**

El Camino is re-dedicated as the Thomas R. Frey Trail at El Camino at an event honoring the Genesee Land Trust board member



2017

2016

Genesee Brewery hosts Tap it Forward Day to work on the park and trail; Conkey Cruisers hits 1 Million miles of biking

**June
2014**

First Northeast Family Fitness 5K at El Camino

**Summer
2013**

WALL\THERAPY completes 9 murals along El Camino



Earlier this year the Governor announced plans for a new High Falls State Park stretching from High Falls to the El Camino Trestle (known as the Running Track Bridge) connecting to the west side. In this first concept plan a connection into the park from El Camino is shown.

Email your input on the new state park to: ROCHighFallsPark@esd.ny.gov.

2012

Genesee Land Trust starts Landscaper Apprentice employment program for City youth; runs Conkey Corner Play, a free summer recreation program

Theresa Bowick founds Conkey Cruisers, a neighborhood family fitness and bicycling program

El Camino trail ribbon-cutting party!



June 2, 2012





THE MAKING OF A MEADOW – JUST IN TIME

Grassland birds get a boost, community get's new trails

Meadow making is not a typical day's work for Lou Brongo of Parma-based BC Excavating, but this past March he found himself loading up 600 pounds of specially selected seeds to spread across 14 acres of former cornfield. "This is gonna turn out real nice," Lou said as he drove across the mud. "I'm glad you're taking care of this spot. Listen to those birds."

The timing couldn't be better

According to a 2019 report by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, nearly 3 billion birds have been lost in the United States since 1970. Grassland populations have been reduced by 53 percent – about 720 million birds - due to loss of habitat, pesticides, and climate change. It's a wakeup call that demands action.

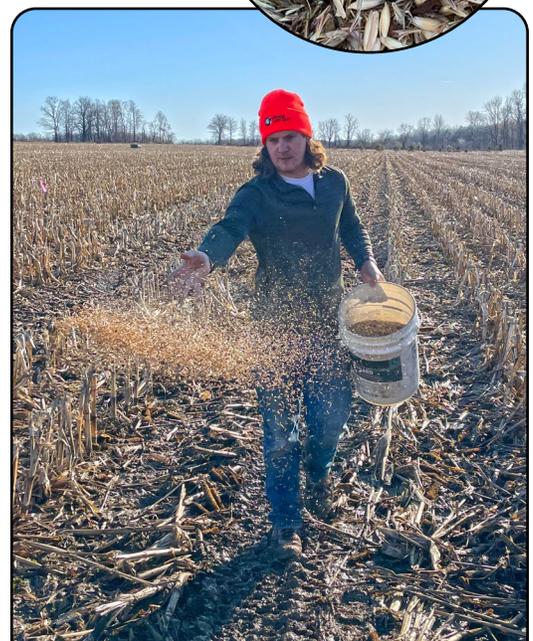
Last fall we purchased 28 acres of land on Bennett Road in Hilton to create the Salmon Creek Nature Preserve and make it an accessible birding and recreation spot. The property, surrounded on 3 sides by hundreds of acres of conservation land, is bordered by Salmon Creek and includes a small pond. More than 30 species of birds have already been observed, including northern shrike, American kestrel, and tree swallow.



New hope for threatened birds

Now, thanks to the generosity of land trust community members, the initial funding has allowed Lou to plant 29 types of seeds, including warm-season grasses designed to withstand a changing climate, sedges, and native wildflowers like butterfly weed, blue vervain, and lance-leaved asters. Fast-growing annual rye and oats were also planted as a cover crop to help keep out weeds while the slower native species germinate and grow.

"The grasses will grow in clumps and create hiding places and corridors for ground-nesting birds and other animals like rabbits to help them stay safe from hawks and other



predators,” explains Will Macaluso, Genesee Land Trust’s Preserve Manager overseeing the restoration. Will has spent months observing the property’s seasonal changes, consulting with various experts and neighbors, and planning improvements like the meadow planting.

Bigger is better for grassland birds, so Will plans to remove shrubs from the northern hedgerow that currently divides the new meadow from neighboring grassland to make it feel like one large open space. The meadow planting also benefits pollinators threatened by extreme weather and loss of habitat, like bees and butterflies.

A welcoming experience for birds and people

Establishing a meadow takes time. So too, is the establishment of welcoming trails and overlook areas. This year, in addition to the initial meadow seeding, we are working to create 1.5 miles of wide, gentle grass trails mowed several times a month as needed. They’ll provide a place for people of all ages and abilities to enjoy nature.

A new gravel parking lot and signage is also underway. As funding becomes available, we’ll install new observation platforms, benches, and a fishing deck to welcome visitors and help everyone enjoy these special wide-open spaces every day, all year long.

Lou and Will smile when thinking about what Salmon Creek Nature Preserve is going to mean to so many people in the region. “If the Pandemic has taught us anything, it’s that people need nature. Birds bring such joy to so many people, yet there hasn’t been a welcoming way to experience them here in the past,” reflects Will. “That’s about to change.”



SAVE THE DATE! GRAND OPENING AND COMMUNITY CELEBRATION

A ribbon cutting celebration, with guided birding walks, plein air painting, kid-friendly games, and light refreshments will take place September 24 from 11am - 2pm.



DID YOU KNOW WE WENT ELECTRIC?

Using our new electric mower, we typically mow our grass trails once every 10 days during peak season. If you are interested in helping us mow at any of our 17 nature preserves, please reach out to Will Macaluso at wmacaluso@geneseeandtrust.org.

Mowing not your thing? There are a lot of ways to make a difference. You can join our monthly Trail Keepers, take photos at our preserves, volunteer to help at an event, or help in our office. To find out more, visit our website.

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YOU'RE INVITED TO THESE UPCOMING EVENTS!

SUMMER BUTTERFLIES AND WILDFLOWERS GUIDED WALK

Saturday, August 6, 2022 - 10am

Ganargua Creek Meadow Preserve, Macedon. Join naturalists Carol and David Southby from the Rochester Butterfly Club to look for butterflies and flowers in this lovely wildflower meadow.

FARM TO PICNIC DINNER

Sunday, August 21, 2022 - 5pm - 8pm

Broccolo Garden Center, Fairport. Enjoy live music and a delicious meal made with local produce. Support farmland protection by purchasing a ticket, which are available on the events page of our website.

MUSHROOM HUNTING GUIDED WALK

Sunday, October 9, 2022 - 10am

Macyville Woods Nature Preserve, Sodus Point. Dr. Shannon Nix and the Rochester Area Mycological Association will share the magic and mysteries of the fungus among us.

Please register at geneeseelandtrust.org/all-events

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



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