

Westchester Land Trust



It's
Our
Nature.



♡
What You
See Is What
Will Be:
Reflections
by George Bianco

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Botonists at
Work

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Hill Farm

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Vegchester
Launched!

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A Conservation
Legacy

Reflections on a Conservation Legacy

By Susan Carpenter

WLT Consultant, Land Preservation and In-House Counsel

I have been part of Westchester Land Trust for 17 of its 25 years, and it has been wonderful. I moved to Westchester County 28 years ago, and I miss many of the beautiful woodland trails I used to walk with my dog. **These trails are long gone, covered by pavement, houses and lawns.** That is why I treasure the outposts that have survived in the wilder areas of Westchester County. For me, the protection of these woodlands and fields, wetlands and rocky hillsides is the lasting legacy of what we have accomplished in the last 25 years. These lands will remain natural forever.

We have preserved land in the north from Patterson in Putnam County to New Rochelle in the south and most towns in between. **We own nature preserves visited by thousands of residents and families each year** and have worked with 43 towns to raise more than \$43 million dollars to protect land and waters throughout the County.

People love what they know and take care of what they love. **The Westchester Land Trust is committed to providing opportunities for people to learn about the land they live on.** We work to foster an awareness of nature's beauty by keeping our preserves open to the public. We are inspiring the next generation of conservationists by inviting students and young volunteers to work with our professional staff. And we encourage an ethic of caring for and protecting the land by advising homeowners on how to manage their land. I am the "old guard" at WLT, and I am heartened by my younger colleagues' enthusiasm and energy for the tasks ahead. I feel confident that the next 25 years of land preservation at WLT will be more productive than the last. When my co-workers say, **"Gotta go save land!"** I know we will do great things.

What You

The following remarks are by **George Bianco**, WLT Chairman Emeritus, who was honored during our 25th Anniversary Benefit this summer. The event was held at Maple Grove Farm, George's beautiful and historic property, which is protected forever with a conservation easement. George and Maple Brook Farm embody the purpose and spirit of WLT's conservation mission: to create protected corridors throughout Westchester on land with exceptional scenic, historic and conservation value.

"I am very, very happy to be here literally 'out-standing in my field' with all of you tonight! I am particularly honored and pleased to receive this award among my friends, family and all of you that have contributed to the Land Trust's 25 years of success.

I am told that there are 350 people here tonight. Thank you so much for turning out in force. The last time there were 350 people in this field was in July of 1779 when this meadow was occupied by 360 British soldiers, members of Colonel Samuel



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See Is What Will Be...

Birch's 17th regiment of Light Dragoons. Several days later they burned almost every house in Bedford to the ground. The house here only survived because it was occupied by British officers.

235 years later this meadow hasn't changed much, and it won't change much in the next 235 years because I have placed a conservation easement on this field. What you see is what will be.

I was inspired to do this because of all the land conservation that has been done nearby.

To the south, less than 5 miles from here, is the very first project of the Nature Conservancy, the Mianus River Gorge. It started out as a simple 60 acre project in 1954 and has grown to 755 acres today. Westchester Land trust helped in adding some land to the Mianus Preserve just last year.

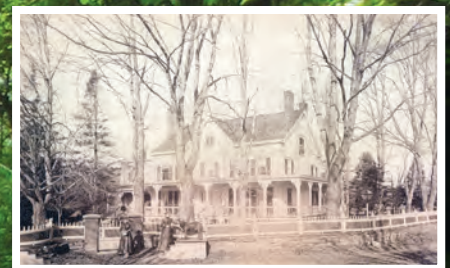
To the west, just across the street, there is 26 acres in the Palmer Lewis Sanctuary. This land was given to the Bedford

Audubon Society in the 1940's by the family that owned this property before me. WLT holds a back-up easement on the Sanctuary. What you see is what will be.

To the North, about a mile up the road, there is almost 5,000 acres of land at Ward Pound Ridge Reservation that was preserved by Westchester County in 1938 and the wonderful 383 acre Leon Levy Preserve that Westchester Land Trust helped establish in 2005.

Each generation has left a gift for the generations that have followed. Many, many people have been and are currently involved in this effort and the results will endure past our lifetimes.

I thank you for recognizing me tonight, and I thank you for your help over the years in land preservation. Our work is not done. There are more projects to do, and we now have the responsibility to steward the lands already protected in the best way possible. ”



Photos clockwise from top: c. 1900 the Francis A. Palmer farmhouse, now known as Maple Grove Farm, stands today as it did more than 100 years ago. Photo courtesy of the Bedford Historical Society; George Bianco (center) with his family at the benefit; A view of Maple Grove Farm's protected lands; Maple Grove Farm the day of the benefit.



Applying Botany to Land Protection and Use at Flagship Preserve

By Scott Mori and Rob Naczi



1) Robert Naczi, NYBG Curator of North American Botany, Caroline Carollo Matos and Camila Jingchen Jiang collect fungi. **2)** Camila uses a portable canvas field press at the preserve. **3)** The bitter bolete (*Tylopilus pileus*), one of 70 species of fungi documented at WWW/ZFP. **4)** Caroline documenting the collection online. **5)** Camila showing a preserved plant ready to enter NYBG's herbarium.



We are botanists with the Institute of Systematic Botany of The New York Botanical Garden (NYBG) and residents of Westchester and Putnam counties, respectively. For years we have admired the outstanding accomplishments of Westchester Land Trust and have wanted to contribute to its goals of

protecting land and promoting sound land use in Westchester County.

NYBG, WLT, and the Taft School joined forces to inventory the fungi and plants at the Westchester Wilderness Walk/Zofnass Family Preserve (www/zfp). Our main goal is to complete an inventory of the fungi, lichens, mosses, liverworts, ferns, and flowering plants

We hope our work will help others appreciate how important native plants are in maintaining clean water, pure air and healthy soils.

at one of the most pristine preserves of Westchester County. **These collections create a story that will last for hundreds of years.** For example, scientists in future generations can study changes in the flora and fungi caused by invasive plants and climate change. These changes indicate activities that may be impacting a specific area and how that area may continue to change over time.

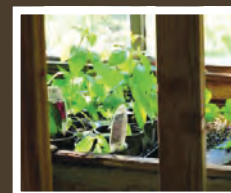
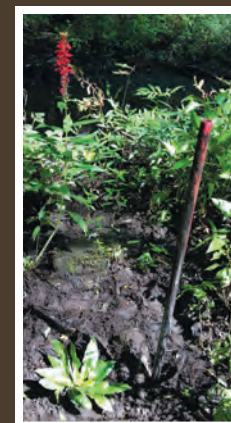
Our project was aided by hardworking research assistants, Carol Carollo Matos and Camila Jingchen Jiang, and we accomplished more than we thought possible this summer. Camila is a senior at the Taft School in Watertown,

Connecticut and received a fellowship from Taft to intern with NYBG.

We have gathered 400 specimens from www/zfp. Each went through the following process: we start by collecting a sample plant or fungus from www/zfp which is then placed in a field press. Each plant or fungus is photographed in situ and is given a written description. At NYBG we dry the specimen; transcribe data from the field books into NYBG's database; generate a label; glue the specimen onto a sheet of special herbarium paper (fungi and lichens are placed in packets or boxes); identify the collection; and permanently store the specimen at NYBG's herbarium.

Our work is also being documented online at "Flora and Mycota of the Zofnass Family Preserve," northeastflora.myspecies.info/. We are particularly excited to have an online component, which makes this research available to a broad audience of non-scientists and botanical enthusiasts.

We hope our efforts will provide the information and tools needed for others to learn the plants and fungi of www/zfp and appreciate how important native plants and animals are in maintaining clean water, pure air, and healthy soils. Our work will continue into the winter, and we will be out on the preserve again when spring wildflowers come into bloom next year!



COUNTRY PLANT MEET CITY PLANT

WLT is growing Cardinal flower seedlings—shared by Stamford, Connecticut's Scalzi Riverwalk Nature Preserve—in our Sugar Hill Farm greenhouse. We are 'paying it forward' by distributing the native plants to local land trusts, and some of our Stamford natives found a home at WWW/ZFP. We picked a location near where established plants are thriving and expect good relations between our Stamford 'city' and Pound Ridge 'country' natives.

INVASIVE WORKDAYS



More News from Westchester Wilderness Walk/Zofnass Family Preserve: Staff and volunteers from WLT and New York-New Jersey Trail Conference remove invasives from the Preserve, as part of NY-NJ Trail Conference Invasives Strike Force. You can join this effort and learn more at www.nynjtc.org/invasives.



Launched!

As we wrap up the fourth season of WLT's Farmland Match Program, we reflect on all that we have learned—from how we can support our farmer-landowner partnerships to how we can promote sustainable farming and land use. What was founded on the hunch that Westchester could be an incubator for new farmers, has turned into a full-fledged gateway for WLT's conservation mission.

Being mindful about where our food comes from—who grows it and how it is grown—gets people thinking about the long-term health of their family and community. People want to know that their food is grown in healthy soils nurtured by a clean environment. This outward shift in perception dovetails with what it means to be a conservationist today. We all eat, and we all have a role to play in supporting local farms.

Vegchester! is our way of making the values of sustainable agriculture real and celebrating the growing success of small farms in Westchester County. **Vegchester!** farmers can be found at your favorite area farmers markets, restaurants, and shops. Look for our **Vegchester!** sign today!



Thanks to a grant from Back to Nature & Conservation Resources, we'll be installing a deer fence around our garden parcel. Farmer, Doug DeCandia, will be able to grow a wider variety of crops in 2014.



A SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR VOLUNTEERS

They planted and cared for crops and trees and cleared trails and preserves. They got dirty. They didn't stop until the job was done. In 2013, our volunteers logged in more than **200 hours of hard work** because they knew their efforts would help feed our neighbors and protect our environment. We made new friends and were joined by phenomenal groups including Regeneron, Ernst & Young, Morgan Stanley, FaVoRs, the Harvey School, and the Girl Scouts.





A Day at Sugar Hill Farm



WHY VOLUNTEERING MATTERS

An interview with Jen Schwartz, Volunteer

Our volunteers make good work possible. WLT welcomes volunteers of all ages to Sugar Hill Farm to care for and harvest produce grown for some of our neediest Westchester neighbors. These work days are a true win-win for all participants. Volunteers dig in to help; WLT offers fertile land and coordinates work days; and the Food Bank for Westchester receives locally grown, incredibly delicious produce. We caught up with Jen Schwartz, a loyal volunteer, supporter and fan of this program. We wanted to know why, so we asked!

Tell us about volunteering at Sugar Hill Farm.

What was it like working in the garden?

It felt great to be outside, get my hands dirty and know that I am making a tangible difference. I had a chance to chat with other volunteers, and it was such a welcoming environment that we all felt really good about spending a few hours at the farm. I love the synergy of this program and that it's a chance to help two organizations. It inspires me to think out of the box on how you can create complimentary programs.

You brought your kids one day. Why?

This seemed like a good opportunity to introduce volunteering and community service in a way that is fun. My kids 'got it.' They understood how their weeding and watering relates to a plant growing and that the food goes to people that really need and appreciate it.



Come to Sugar Hill Farm and you'll find visitors of all kinds!

- Children**
- Families**
- Corporate Volunteers**
- Conservationists**
- Neighbors**
- Citizen Scientists**
- Farmers**





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WHAT'S GOING ON



**NEW PARKING LOT
BRINGS BETTER ACCESS
TO LEON LEVY**

This fall, the Leon Levy Preserve in Lewisboro will gain greater public access through the installation of a gravel parking lot off Route 123. The parking lot was made possible by a generous, lead gift from The Jerome Levy Foundation and support from the Lewisboro Land Trust (LLT). WLT, LLT, The Town of Lewisboro and Supervisor Peter Parsons worked diligently over the past several years to increase the public's access to and enjoyment of the Leon Levy Preserve. Together, the groups have hosted a variety of activities and work days, including hikes, trail clearing, and invasive species removal.

Ms. Shelby White, trustee of The Jerome Levy Foundation, said, "Providing a parking area has long been a goal for the Leon Levy Preserve. Future plans include a native plant restoration project, that will bring back, on a 10- acre part of the preserve, the diversity of native plants of this region. By providing the necessary parking, the Foundation is delighted to help make this treasure trove more accessible to school children and others so they might appreciate the rich history and natural beauty of Westchester County."

The Leon Levy Preserve is an ecologically diverse area of land defined by 383 acres of extensive wetlands, maturing woodlands and rugged terrain. It features a dramatic ravine, sweeping cliffs and views of the Hudson River. The Preserve is a watershed area that protects drinking water for thousands of residents.

"This project represents a shared desire and commitment by everyone involved to better connect the public to this preserve. It is truly a local gem, beloved by many residents, and we all worked in partnership to provide the public with a solution for greater accessibility."

—Lori Ensinger, WLT Acting Executive Director

**WLT TO PRESENT
AT 2013 YOUNG
FARMERS
CONFERENCE**

December 4th-6th
Stone Barns Center for
Food & Agriculture

Find WLT at "Listing, Linking, and Learning Panel: Connecting Beginning Farmers to Land." This session will introduce new resources to aid beginning farmers in finding farmland.
www.virtualgrange.org/learn/young-farmers-conference/



Westchester Land Trust is a member of Earth Share, a nationwide federation of the country's most respected environmental and conservation charities. To find out more about how you and your workplace can support us through an Earth Share charitable workplace giving campaign, please contact, Grace Buck, at 914-234-6992 x23. You can also visit Earth Share's web site at: www.earthshare.org.

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