

# Westchester Land Trust



[westchesterlandtrust.org](http://westchesterlandtrust.org)



# It's Our Nature.



- 🍷 Invasion!  
*Westchester's Unwanted Houseguests*
- 🍷 A Family's Path to Sustainable Farming
- 🍷 More Conservation Victories
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- 🍷 Upcoming Events



WLT Executive Director, Candace Schafer, with grandchildren, Campbell, Liam and Morgan


## Dear Friends,

Walking in the woods with my grandchildren, I learn again how to see and listen with a child's eyes and ears. We talk about "why," "what" and "what if." We listen, imagining we are explorers in a foreign land or time, wondering where the birds go in a storm, where the water flows from here and why that tree is shaped so strangely or differently from the others.

Twenty-five years ago a group of Westchester residents took on the responsibility to protect the lands they loved—lands that inspired them with the same wonder and excitement. Twenty-five years later, thousands of acres of environmentally important land are protected forever thanks to those who realized that we are all responsible for our natural resources because, **It's Our Nature.**

In terms of forever, 25 years is just a start. We have shared a legacy of conservation with many partners, community members, politicians and leaders, activists, and donors. Their commitment to conservation will continue in the voices and support of new and emerging leaders. We are grateful for those who created such a legacy; for those visionaries who lived the stories we now tell. The inspiring stories about generous land donors, tireless fund raisers, and advocates for cleaner water, healthy forests, and recreational trails and adventures remind us that **It's Our Nature**, and it belongs to all of us, forever.

We have increasing responsibility for how we treat this world. Individual actions have an even greater impact. Every decision we make affects not only us, but those who come after us. Every day we see the results of the actions we have already taken; our air, our water, our land and the products of our land reflect human decisions, they affect **Our Nature.**

I am glad to know that there are lands that will be here forever, changed only by natural cycles. Westchester Land Trust will continue to protect these important places, thanks to our community supporters and continuing partnerships. Twenty-five years from now, it will still be **Our Nature**, and we have a responsibility to care for it forever. 

The lower Hudson Valley, an area of immense biodiversity and immeasurable historic importance, is an irreplaceable treasure.



Sam Pryor and George Bianco

## Wisdom from Sam Pryor & George Bianco



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Only 10% of  
the land in  
Westchester  
remains  
undeveloped.



## Recent Conservation Victories

### FINCH FARM

Thanks to our generous supporters and local landowners, we are proud to announce that in 2012, **92 acres** of beautiful, environmentally significant land in North Salem, Pound Ridge, Ossining and New Castle is now protected forever. Laurence Fink—owner of Finch Farm along with his wife, Lori—described the importance of conserving 45 acres of his family's land: *"We are so pleased that Finch Farm LLC has been able to donate an easement on 45 acres of land that abuts our home in North Salem. This donation will protect this wonderful property in perpetuity, protect its habitat and wooded and meadow areas, and prevent any subdivision or further residential development on the protected land. We are pleased to have been able to work with the Westchester Land Trust to continue the strong tradition of stewardship in the area."*

### MARYKNOLL SISTERS

In Ossining and New Castle, WLT partnered with the Maryknoll Sisters of St. Dominic, Inc., a private non-profit religious organization, to protect **43 acres** of wetlands, fields, woodlands and a walking trail. Sister Janet Miller, Co-Director of the Maryknoll Sisters Environmental Office, described the importance of this preservation effort: *"It is our home...the place that nourishes us, the place of healing and reconnecting when we return from overseas mission... I am grateful this land will be here for future generations."*

**To learn how to make a land donation, please visit [westchesterlandtrust.org](http://westchesterlandtrust.org) or call us at 914.234.6992.**

Westchester  
County, home  
to 1,000,000  
people,  
sits on the  
drinking water  
watershed of  
New York City.

**I**n the world of land trusts and the victories that make conservation possible, there is art and inspiration. Our former board chairmen, Sam Pryor (Chairman, 1998-2007) and George Bianco (Chairman, 2007-2011) certainly possess these qualities. Sam and George raised money, united diverse constituencies, and held fast to a larger vision of conservation that protected vital natural resources for all of us. As part of our 25th anniversary, we caught up with George and Sam to talk about their legacy in Westchester and throughout the Northeast.

When asked to discuss one memorable project, they both reflected on conservation victories in 2000. These projects were realized because **Sam and George are masters of their craft as artful negotiators and passionate advocates**. As president of the Palisades Interstate Park Commission, Sam Pryor led a campaign to protect more than 15,000 acres of Sterling Forest, representing one of the largest unbroken forest in New York and a species-rich environment that protects water quality for more than 2 million New Jersey residents downstream. *(continued on following pages)* >

# Invasion!

**W**estchester conservationists are mobilizing against an aggressor that may already be creeping onto and taking over your property. Invasive plants are the unwanted houseguest of our native environment. They stay too long, grow too fast, and cripple the plants and trees that ensure a healthy ecological balance on our lands. The Asiatic bittersweet, for example, a rampant vine heavily laden with fall berries, can bring its host tree to the ground by the weight of its tangled mass.

Property owners and many of our conservation partners are increasingly concerned about these plants. This concern is leading to action, and we all can play a part in tackling invasives. WLT's 2013 programming ranges from educational forums and volunteer work days to hands-on workshops and comprehensive training sessions that will teach you how to use your cell phone to map invasives in your own backyard and beyond.

You can participate in this effort through support of new legislation, management of your own private lands, and by volunteering to map and remove invasive plants from shared public spaces. **Check out our events calendar, page 8**, for our complete listing of programs and activities.


**County-wide, our neighbors and partners are working toward the containment and eventual eradication of these unwanted invaders:**


**The Bronx River Conservancy's Vine Cutters Initiative** uses a single focus strategy to tackle invasive vines, such as oriental bittersweet, porcelain berry, mile-a-minute vine and kudzu. You can see how this targeted effort has positively

impacted areas along the Bronx River Parkway, especially when compared to the kudzu growing rampant along the Saw Mill Parkway.

**The Invasives Project—Pound Ridge (TIP-PR)** is taking on a broader approach by cataloging plants of greatest concern—such as Japanese barberry, Japanese stiltgrass, Japanese knotweed, and mile-a-minute vine—and focusing on a specific location. WLT is working with TIP-PR to educate property owners and local officials about the issue and to mobilize volunteers to contain the spread of plants.

WLT is also working with the **Invasive Species Strike Force** to locate and catalogue problem plants on a regional level. The initiative is organized and led by the NY-NJ Trail Conference in cooperation with the State of New York and Rutgers University.

As the owner and steward of 650 acres of WLT preserves, we recognize the need to proactively manage invasives on our preserves and to add diversity by replanting natives. Several of our upcoming programs are designed to empower private landowners to deal with invasive plants on their own land, an approach supported by the Mianus River Gorge. Mark Weckel PhD, Director of Research and Land Management at Mianus River Gorge, promotes the idea that the preserve is not a landscape that exists in isolation from its surroundings: "Conservation activities that take place within our park lands and preserves need to be replicated in residential areas because a healthier, more diverse Westchester ecosystem depends on good stewardship of private properties...Our neighbors can be the source of unwanted plants waiting for the chance to invade, but they can also be the source of native plants that we want to invite into the preserve." 

**Pryor/Bianco continued >** George Bianco reminisced about a 90-acre site on Barnegat Bay that was used for decades as a summer retreat for the blind. As a board member of Lighthouse International—the owner of the camp—George brought in the Trust for Public Land to finance the purchase and transfer the title to the New Jersey Division of Fish & Wildlife.  Sam and George went on to discuss

why they got involved in conservation and the most pressing issues facing all of us today. "I was, and still am, an Eagle Scout. We spent a lot of time hiking all over the country, and **I appreciated and understood that it was people before me that made these wonderful resources possible,**" says George. Sam's experience ranged from fishing in Florida with his father and brothers to

Kudzu



Porcelain Berry



Mile-a-Minute Vine



Asiatic Bittersweet

## WHAT IS AN INVASIVE PLANT?

Invasive plants are able to survive and thrive in a new home and quickly spread thanks to wind, birds, and other dispersers. Invasives crowd out native species and even change the growing conditions of an ecosystem. There is often a public health consequence. For example, the Japanese barberry can harbor ticks that transmit Lyme disease. Once invasive plants are removed from the landscape, the space left behind becomes a candidate for invasion by another plant that could be equally unwanted. In some cases, replacing invasives with natives can be successful, and the best source of natives is often close by.

## Where Can I Buy Native Plants and Learn More?

### Sources of native plants:

**Earth Tones Native Plant Nursery and Landscapes**  
[www.earthtonesnatives.com](http://www.earthtonesnatives.com)

**Broken Arrow Nursery**  
[www.brokenarrownursery.com](http://www.brokenarrownursery.com)

**Index of native plants:**  
[www.newyork.plantatlas.usf.edu](http://www.newyork.plantatlas.usf.edu)  
[www.newfs.org](http://www.newfs.org)

**Index of landscape plants:**  
[www.Hort.uconn.edu/plants](http://www.Hort.uconn.edu/plants) or  
[www.wisplants.uwsp.edu](http://www.wisplants.uwsp.edu) or  
[www.mobot.org/gardeninghelp/plantfinder](http://www.mobot.org/gardeninghelp/plantfinder)

**More information on invasive plants:**  
[www.cipwg.uconn.edu](http://www.cipwg.uconn.edu)  
[www.nyis.info/plants/default.aspx](http://www.nyis.info/plants/default.aspx)

## What Other Resources Are Available?

**Bedford Audubon Society**  
"Audubon at Home"  
[www.bedfordaudubon.org/at\\_home](http://www.bedfordaudubon.org/at_home)

**Federated Conservationists of Westchester County**  
[www.fcwc.org](http://www.fcwc.org)

**Hudsonia**  
[www.hudsonia.org](http://www.hudsonia.org)

**iMapInvasives**  
[www.iMapInvasives.org](http://www.iMapInvasives.org)

**Institute of Ecosystem Studies**  
[www.ecostudies.org](http://www.ecostudies.org)

**Invasives Strike Force**  
[www.nynjtc.org/invasives](http://www.nynjtc.org/invasives)

**Leave Leaves Alone**  
[www.leaveleavesalone.org](http://www.leaveleavesalone.org)

**Restoring Native Connecticut**  
[www.restoringnativect.wordpress.com](http://www.restoringnativect.wordpress.com)

traveling to Africa during his college years—a rare opportunity that came with his father’s tenure as Senior VP of Pan American. Sam was also largely influenced by hiking the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) trails in New Hampshire starting around 1941. “I was greatly influenced by Andrew Falendar, who became Executive Director of the AMC [in 1988] during my tenure as

president. AMC focused largely on land preservation in northern New Hampshire and Northern Maine, where protection of land has been very significant.” 🦋 Sam and George discussed current challenges and opportunities facing the conservation movement. **“Today, the price of land poses a significant challenge to conservation.** You have to be increasingly creative about >



# *a* Family's Path to Sustainable Farming

**S**hep Goodman is a multi-platinum music producer, songwriter, former Vice President of A&R for Universal Records, and...organic farmer? It's hard to believe, but it's true. Together with his wife, Kelly, and their sons Max, 10, and Landon, 4, Goodman

operates Mt. Holly Farm, which recently expanded through a WLT-facilitated Farmland Match in North Salem. The story of how the Goodman family entered into farming reflects how growing public awareness is shaping not only the local good food movement but sustainable life choices.

The couple first met in New York City, where Kelly was working as a model. Though they loved the city, each longed for a slice of the country: "Every Friday we'd pack up and hit the road. We thought we were going to find a place in Woodstock,"

says Shep. A chance detour brought the Goodmans to Bedford Village. "It was so beautiful," says Kelly. "We couldn't believe we were only an hour outside Manhattan."

The Goodmans familiarized themselves with Westchester and settled on a home in Chappaqua, where their first son, Max, was born. At age two, Max was diagnosed with autism. "We had no idea what it actually meant for our son. Our only experience with autism was the movie, *Rain Man*," recalls Shep. The Goodmans dove headlong into the world of

alternative treatments and began a process of modifying Max's diet and, by default, their own. To their delight, Shep and Kelly began to see marked improvements in Max's development.

Energized by his son's progress, Shep decided to learn more about how to raise the organic vegetables that now formed the basis of the family's diet. He began volunteering at Rainbeau Ridge in Bedford Hills. It was there that he met Deb Taft, a Westchester farmer trained as a biodynamicist. Biodynamic agriculture emphasizes a holistic approach to plant and land care that uses organic farming and promotes the health of soil, plants and animals as a self-sustaining system.

Shep and Deb hit it off immediately. "We both wanted what the other had," says Shep. "I couldn't get enough information about organic farming and she just wanted to talk to me about music." He laughs: "I'd say, 'Hey Deb. How come the cukes have yellow spots on them?' And she'd say, 'That's lack of nitrogen, Shep....but what do you think of that new Radiohead album?'"

"Deb's my farming guru. When she got her own place," says Shep—referring to a WLT sponsored Farmland Match with private landowners in Waccabuc—"I worked with her to get things up and running. Any time she needs help, I'm there. Even now, I probably text or call her at least once a day during the growing season with questions."

Soon after Max was diagnosed, the couple moved to a quieter location in Katonah, and Shep started planting vegetables anywhere he could find sun. Despite their recent farm education, the Goodmans weren't convinced that they could replicate this magic at home. When pole beans appeared from a spot where Shep had casually chucked seeds, he blanched, "I

**Pryor/Bianco continued >** developing public/private partnerships that lead to action. Fortunately, we do have greater collaboration between organizations today, and this is really key to any conservation effort," explained George. "In terms of the shrinkage of open space, **I'm amazed that WLT has accomplished what it has with fewer opportunities.** When I was board chair, there was more

funding and landowners willing to sell or place easements on their properties. Partnerships with government—country, town, state, congress—are still very feasible and definitely the most advantageous way to proceed with any major effort," says Sam, **"In addition, people have to be reminded of the annual cost of preserving, stewarding and maintaining all of these**



Erica & Brendon from Erica's Kitchen with Kelly & Shep



**Mt. Holly Farm** produce can be found at Table Local Market in Bedford Hills, on the menu at Erica's Kitchen in Bedford and Purdy's Farmer & the Fish in North Salem, and at the John Jay Homestead Farmers Market on Saturdays from June through October.



Shep at work (below).



was scared to eat them. I was like: what are these things?" Recognizing that Shep's project was outgrowing the confines of their backyard, Kelly seized an opportunity to farm on a 40' x 50' organic garden in Katonah on Mt. Holly Road.

Suddenly faced with the task of planning a large vegetable garden for an



**"There's a myth," says Shep, "that farmers are just laborers. But in my experience, the farmers I've met are some of the most intelligent people out there."**

entire growing season, Shep and Kelly discovered a steep learning curve. As a musician/record executive and co-owner of Dirty Canvas Productions, Shep was accustomed to buckling down in marathon sessions, practicing and refining a song or album until satisfied. Farming presented a different kind of work ethic. Choices made when the ground is barren have major repercussions that become apparent later in the growing season. A row of incorrectly thinned carrots can yield a puny harvest that can only be corrected through another 60-70 day cycle of seeding, thinning and waiting.

In the first two years on Mt. Holly Road, the Goodmans focused on raising food for themselves with any overages going to friends and family. Last year, they started supplying area shops and restaurants, but with the possibility of the landowner's

property going on the market and the lack of expansion potential, the momentum of their venture slowed. In late fall 2012, WLT helped secure a one-acre parcel in North Salem, thereby expanding their business and keeping Mt. Holly Farm in operation.

During the height of the growing season, a typical day includes an early morning start for Shep, who tends crops and does farm chores. Later in the morning, Kelly joins with Max and Landon, and the family works together until noon. Shep then heads to his studio to make and record music until late in the evening. If a band is in town, he doesn't hesitate to throw them into the mix of weeding, watering, and harvesting.

In pre-Mt. Holly Farm days, Max subsisted on an extremely limited diet, typical of most children on the autism spectrum. Today, Max and Landon understand where their food comes from and take great pleasure farming alongside their parents. "They trust our little system, and now they love to eat what we grow," says Kelly.

"I've learned that the most wonderful feeling in the world is going to sleep when you are exhausted, showering when you are filthy, and eating when you are hungry," says Shep. "Farming keeps me in the now. It has brought me closer to my family than I could have ever imagined." 🌱

[facebook.com/MtHollyFarm](https://www.facebook.com/MtHollyFarm)

## New Farmer Match in Katonah!

**Cathy Carter's Adele's Garden, a floral and landscape business, will now expand to a property in Katonah, thanks to WLT's Farmland Match Program. Adele's Garden specializes in event flowers and design, landscape design, and richly colored pots. [108carter@gmail.com](mailto:108carter@gmail.com)**

protected lands." 🌱 Sam went on: "Westchester is unique from its core to outer limits. You have one of everything—from fairly large towns and cities to the northern edges, which are in many ways undeveloped. A big step [for WLT] was expanding to the Hudson River, the Long Island Sound and the towns in central to lower Westchester." 🌱 "The overriding concern is

climate change," notes Sam, "The most noticeable effect in the east is the weather—particularly with strong storms, hurricanes and even tornadoes. It differs across the country. In the West, there has been drought, which has far-reaching effects, including impacts to rivers such as the Mississippi." George agreed: "I think we've reached the tipping point. The majority of conscientious >



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914.234.6992

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## WHAT'S GOING ON

### IMAP INVASIVE PLANTS TRAINING SESSION WEDNESDAY, APRIL 10

Homeowners can learn about common invasives and how to use iMap to track these pesky plants—includes online practice and field experience. WLT is proud to support this event of The Invasives Project-Pound Ridge. For more information & RSVP: [invasivesPR@bedford.audubon.org](mailto:invasivesPR@bedford.audubon.org)

### A WALK ON THE WILD(FLOWER) SIDE SATURDAY, APRIL 20

Join ecologists and naturalists for a guided tour of Mianus River Gorge's exclosures and forests to learn about wildflowers and efforts being made to conserve them. For more information: [westchesterlandtrust.org/wildflowers](http://westchesterlandtrust.org/wildflowers)

### GARDENING WITH NATIVE WILDFLOWERS SATURDAY, APRIL 27

Learn the basics of gardening with native wildflowers in this hands-on workshop set in a beautiful woodland garden. For more information: [westchesterlandtrust.org/wildflowers](http://westchesterlandtrust.org/wildflowers)

### INVASIVE PLANT TRAINING SATURDAY, MAY 18

Learn how to identify and map invasive species. Participants will be trained and recruited to assist in stewardship and mapping outings at Westchester Land Trust preserves. Presented in partnership with NY-NJ Trail Conference. RSVP & More Information: [Evelyn@westchesterlandtrust.org](mailto:Evelyn@westchesterlandtrust.org) or 914.234.6992 ext. 24

### PRIDE DAY WORK PARTY – THE INVASIVES PROJECT- POUND RIDGE SUNDAY, MAY 19

Join local experts to clear invasives from the Pound Ridge Town Park. WLT is proud to support this event of The Invasives Project-Pound Ridge. For more information & RSVP: [invasivesPR@bedford.audubon.org](mailto:invasivesPR@bedford.audubon.org)

### CONSERVATION CAFÉ: CLIMATE CHANGE & SEA LEVEL RISE FRIDAY, JUNE 7

Co-hosted by WLT, as part of a collaborative series of local environmental topics. More details to come!

### INVASIVE PLANT TRAINING SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 7

Learn how to identify and map invasive species. Participants will be trained and recruited to assist in stewardship and mapping outings at Westchester Land Trust preserves. Presented in partnership with NY-NJ Train Conference. RSVP & More Information: [Evelyn@westchesterlandtrust.org](mailto:Evelyn@westchesterlandtrust.org) or 914.234.6992 ext. 24

Subscribe to WLT's ENews and receive updates on all events!  
[www.westchesterlandtrust.org](http://www.westchesterlandtrust.org)

## *It's Our Nature, Now & Forever*

### A BENEFIT TO SUPPORT WESTCHESTER LAND TRUST *Saturday, June 15*

#### *Honoring*

GEORGE D. BIANCO  
2013 Preservation Angel Award  
Maple Grove Farm, Bedford NY

#### *Benefit Co-Chairs*

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Neil J. Alexander  
Amy & Keith E. Ferguson  
Susan & James Henry  
Vivien G. Malloy  
Lee Manning-Vogelstein  
Kathy & Benjamin F. Needell  
Mary Ann Petrilena &  
Jonathan L. Wiesner

#### *Media Sponsor* The Scout Guide



To purchase tickets:  
[www.westchesterlandtrust.org/wlt-benefit](http://www.westchesterlandtrust.org/wlt-benefit)

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](http://www.earthshare.org).



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Pryor/Bianco continued > people believe that there has been some dislocation of weather patterns, and the violence of the storms shows some evidence."  George concluded the interview with some basic words of advice for conservationists and all of us concerned about our local communities and beyond:

**"Focus your resources on the most critical, as opposed to scattering your resources. Monitor your footprint; use less; recycle more. Once that gets imbedded in culture it makes a difference."** 