

Westchester Land Trust

Our Land Is Your Land



CELEBRATING



Vivien Malloy
Preservation Angel Award



The Zofnass Family
Lifetime Achievement Award



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Dear Friends,



“I give to protect land! The land doesn’t have a voice!” For many years, this rallying cry underpinned my personal philosophy on both conservation and charitable giving—no general operating gifts, no educational programs, no lectures. Just protect more land!

My “ah-ha!” moment came years later when, on a guided hike, I found myself amongst several families with young children. As we walked, a girl no older than seven fidgeted next to me. While the assembled adults listened dutifully to the hike leader, the girl tugged at her mother’s hand and pointed at something down the trail. To my surprise, rather than saying, “shush,” the mother crouched to meet the youngster’s gaze and whispered, “Ok, Sarah, go ahead. We’ll be there in a minute.” With this blessing, Sarah bolted down the trail and, cat-like, scrambled up a wildly branched oak tree. In an instant she was fifteen feet up, laughing and dropping acorns on the approaching adults.

That encounter shifted my perspective. What purpose is served by drawing a distinction between land preservation and people? If children and adults don’t use or care about the land, then efforts to preserve it will have a greater likelihood of being “undone” by future generations of policy makers. Grasping why it is crucial to protect open space is made more difficult when people perceive that humankind is separate from nature—that nature exists outside of us, and is something to be controlled, dominated, or altered. Conservation professionals talk about forests and wetlands and wildlife habitat, and not nearly enough about the relationship between the natural world and people.

Sarah represents our next generation of voters and elected officials influencing regional, national and global policy. We owe it to ourselves to teach the young Sarahs of the world now, and to instill in them a deep love of the land, respect for the fragility of our planet, and a moral obligation to protect it. It’s a short but critical conceptual leap— if experiences in nature are radically reduced, where will our future Sarahs come from and what will our world look like without them?

After nearly three decades of quietly protecting land in perpetuity, Westchester Land Trust is embarking on a bold journey that—in addition to our primary tool of holding conservation easements—will involve a greater emphasis on acquiring land outright for public access. And, we are committing greater resources to programming that unites people and land. Because with your most generous support, we are rising to the challenge of broadening our impact throughout the region. Our preserves are learning landscapes and restorative getaways—for you.

Sincerely,

Lori J. Ensinger, *President*

YOUR ROLE

in WLT’s future can take a myriad of forms—attending our Annual Benefit in June, volunteering on one of our 29 preserves, or participating in a guided meditation hike. We encourage you to join us often.

OPEN SPACE VICTORY IN PELHAM VILLAGE

WLT lent support to the Friends of the Highbrook Highline (FHH) in their successful bid to dedicate 2-acres of the defunct New York Westchester and Boston Railway site, which contains the Highbrook Avenue Bridge, as parkland. This parcel represents 22% of the open space in Pelham Village, and although the acreage is small, the impact of its preservation will be tremendous. Moving forward, WLT hopes to provide our professional counsel to FHH on land stewardship, programming, and visitor experience.

Henriette Suhr’s Magnum Opus—Rocky Hills—Permanently Protected

NEW EASEMENT: A COLLABORATION BETWEEN WESTCHESTER LAND TRUST & THE GARDEN CONSERVANCY

Henriette Suhr may have started gardening as a hobby, but it ended up becoming her life’s work. A self-taught gardener, Suhr died on March 17, 2015 at the age of 98. Rocky Hills, her magnificent 13-acre property known nationally for its extensive gardens, will remain intact and out of the development stream due to a conservation easement - which restricts development - now held by Westchester Land Trust.

Rocky Hills had just a few typical suburban plantings when Henriette and her husband, art conservator William Suhr, bought the Mount Kisco property in 1956 as a weekend retreat. Neither had any horticultural training, but together—until Mr. Suhr’s death in 1984—they created a deeply personal oasis formed with color and texture. The couple traveled extensively but always counted on being home in the spring when the garden unfolds its most vibrant layers with thousands of early season bloomers—azalea, rhododendron, magnolia, tree peony, and countless native wildflowers.

A conservation easement will prevent further development on the secluded, wooded property and is great news for Suhr’s Chappaqua neighbors along Old Roaring Brook Road. Removing the potential for future development protects against surface-water runoff due to Rocky Hills’ location in the watershed of the Chappaqua Brook and Kisco River Basin - which is part of the drinking water supply watershed of the Croton Reservoir. It is also an important habitat for numerous species of plants and animals native to the area, and serves as a scenic view shed.

IN 2015,
Westchester Land Trust completed seven conservation easement projects totaling

206.5 ACRES

and two fee donations of land—Otter Creek Preserve in Mamaroneck and the O’Connell Boulder Field Preserve in Putnam Valley—totaling

66 ACRES.

Altogether that’s

272.5 MORE ACRES

of land permanently protected!

Mrs. Suhr originally granted a conservation easement to the Garden Conservancy in 2000 to protect the property from development, intending to pass Rocky Hills to the Westchester County Department of Parks and Recreation upon her death to be maintained as a public garden and horticultural center. In 2013, Mrs. Suhr, with the mutual agreement of Westchester County and the Garden Conservancy, dissolved her agreement with the County. Thereafter, the Garden Conservancy explored new ways to protect her property and preserve it as open space—finding a very willing partner in WLT. Following her death, Suhr’s estate acted upon her expressed wishes and worked with the Garden Conservancy on a plan to assign the conservation easement to WLT. The reassignment of the easement ensures that the conservation values of the property will continue to be protected in perpetuity.

Henriette felt a great responsibility to see that her land remain undeveloped. While the gardens may change over time, the spirit of her special place will endure forever.

—Susan Carpenter, Director of Land Preservation and In-House Counsel, WLT

Westchester Land Trust and the Garden Conservancy are pleased to continue the legacy of Henriette Suhr with the Rocky Hills Environmental Lecture Series. On Wednesday, April 27th, acclaimed landscape designer, Edwina von Gal, shares her passion for biodiversity which ultimately led to the creation of the Perfect Earth Project, a nonprofit organization promoting toxin-free land management around the world. 🌿

NEW DIRECTORS LEND THEIR TALENT AND EXPERTISE TO WLT’S BOARD



Catherine Diao of Irvington comes to WLT with twenty years of experience as a financial analyst, having specialized in the health care sector. She later transitioned into a career in education through the NYC

Teaching Fellows Program, an alternative certification teacher training program that focuses on placing teachers in low-income neighborhoods. Ms. Diao holds a BA in Economics from Brown University, and an MA in Education from Relay Graduate School of Education as well as both a CFA and CFP certification.



Fran Goldwyn’s professional credits include the Manhattan Toy Company, Ltd., where he served as both the company’s founder and president. In addition, he was the general partner and

CFO of the hedge fund, Chilmark 21st Century Capital. Mr. Goldwyn studied Economics at the University of California at Los Angeles and is a licensed CPA. He is currently the managing member of the executive search firm, Quorum Associates, LLC and a resident of Yorktown.

Westchester Wilderness Walk/ Zofnass Family Preserve

With ample parking, a 6-mile trail network, and 125-acres of some of the best natural scenery in the County, Westchester Wilderness Walk/ Zofnass Family Preserve (WWW/ZFP) in Pound Ridge is WLT's go-to preserve for hiking and community programming. It also happens to be a biological gem – everything from frogs to flying squirrels can be found living within WWW/ZFP's high quality wetlands and forests.

Mature forest covers virtually 100% of WWW/ZFP. Consequently, much of our stewardship efforts are focused on tending individual forest stands for tree diversity and longevity. Some of the tools at our disposal – tree girdling, felling, and pruning – may strike some as taboo in light of our conservation ethos but, in fact, these time tested forestry techniques allow us to make big differences while being minimally destructive.

DID YOU KNOW?

Black birch is a short-lived, native tree that is very common in Westchester County. In many stands, it suppresses understory trees that require more light and space to thrive. Stewardship techniques that increase forest longevity are critically important in northern Westchester where intense deer browse has decimated native saplings.

The understory trees currently established in WWW/ZFP represent the forest's next and last canopy trees. To lose a long-lived white oak, sugar maple, or shagbark hickory to a short-lived black birch tree doesn't make for good land stewardship. By selectively girdling or felling black birch trees, we have the ability to 'release' understory trees such as maples, oaks, and hickories—all of which are very beneficial to wildlife—and have the potential to live for hundreds of years.

WWW/ZFP IS FULL OF LIFE!

The biological diversity of Westchester Wilderness Walk/ Zofnass Family Preserve has drawn the attention of retired New York Botanical Garden's botanist, Dr. Scott Mori (pictured left), who has led an effort to inventory all of the preserve's plants and fungus. With the assistance of other experts and naturalists, Dr. Mori has recorded 260 plants and fungi at the preserve. For each species, Dr. Mori's team collected a part of the plant that makes it unique—flowers, spores, leaves, etc.—and pressed them into specimens which are now catalogued in the herbarium at the New York Botanical Garden.

Dr. Mori's efforts are critically important to WLT's continued stewardship of the Westchester Wilderness Walk/ Zofnass Family Preserve. This inventory can be used as a baseline against which future inventories can be measured. Such comparative studies are fundamental to understanding ecological change over time.

To see Dr. Mori's complete botanical inventory, visit:
<http://sweetgum.nybg.org/wlt/index.php>



THANK YOU ZOFNASS FAMILY

WLT is forever grateful to Paul Zofnass, Renee Ring, Joan Zofnass and their entire family for having the foresight to establish WWW/ZFP for present and future generations. The Zofnasses are tireless conservation partners—and we marvel as they continue to expand their namesake preserve. Help WLT honor the Zofnass Family with a much-deserved Lifetime Achievement Award at WLT's Annual Benefit on June 18th, 2016 at Sunnyfield Farm in Bedford.

SEE BACK COVER FOR DETAILS!

BE OUR PARTNER

As a Corporate Partner, your business will be recognized as an environmental leader in land conservation. To learn more please call Vice President, Kara Whelan – 914.234.6992 ext 12



What Do the Leon Levy Preserve and Your Backyard Have in Common?

"When a woodland, stream bank, or field is impoverished by the loss of its native plants, landowners can help. Using basic plant identification skills to locate and remove invasives, as well as sheltering remaining natives from deer browse, you can give native plants a chance to thrive."

— Jim Nordgren, WLT conservation-easement donor and consulting naturalist

Located in the hamlet of South Salem, the 383-acre Leon Levy Preserve was protected forever thanks to generous funding from the Jerome Levy Foundation and the Dextra Baldwin McGonagle Foundation—which were pooled with financial support from the New York City Department of Environmental Protection and the Town of Lewisboro. WLT holds a conservation easement on the property and oversees habitat-management projects with community groups like the Lewisboro Land Trust and the Town's trails committee.

Historic fieldstone walls and the foundation of the former Black Mansion are focal points within the Leon Levy Preserve. Because the mansion and its environs were at one time the most developed part of the property, invasive trees, shrubs, and vines such as Norway maple, Japanese barberry, burning bush, and Oriental bittersweet are rampant in these areas. Unwanted plants have shaded the ground, crowded out natives, impoverished the soil, and strangled trees.

Working in tandem with WLT's stewardship team, consulting naturalist, Jim Nordgren, is encouraging the return of native plants and wildlife impacted by the rampant growth of invasive plants and heavy browsing by deer. Jim is focusing his efforts, which were made possible through the continued support of the Jerome Levy Foundation, on a 20-acre project area—reclaiming and restoring one acre at a time.

With the inaugural year of a planned five-year project completed, we are already seeing results. Seeds of native wildflowers that were dormant in the soil have germinated and grown. Protected from hungry deer by wire cages (above left), native tree seedlings are growing vigorously and will soon replace the 100-plus Norway maples that were removed. Freed from strangling vines, maturing oaks, hickories, and other woodland hardwoods are recovering. Hemlocks, treated to resist the woolly adelgid—a small aphid-like insect that threatens the health of the eastern hemlock—will continue to be part of the plant community and provide nesting areas for owls and other birds.

Within the five acres restored to date, we will be looking for the return of bees, butterflies, and bird species that are a barometer of a healthy ecosystem. The restored area will be a springboard for native species ready to spread.

Projects like this can be done in your own backyard. To get started learning how to enhance your property while saving energy and reducing maintenance costs visit our web site to get started—westchesterlandtrust.org.



NEW TRUCK MAKES STEWARDSHIP A BREEZE

New Land Steward, Ben Ganon, and Director of Stewardship, Tate Bushell, were able to easily move a toppled tree from the Tom Burke Preserve (Bedford, NY) with our new truck.

WLT owns 29 preserves across Westchester and eastern Putnam counties and our stewardship staff spends a lot of time on the road caring for them. Until recently, that meant relying on personal vehicles. The acquisition of a pickup truck is a huge milestone for WLT. We now have a means of transporting all the necessary gear—wheelbarrows, weed whackers, fence posts, shovels, etc.—in a single trip!

Special thanks to our new friends at Rivera Toyota of Mount Kisco for their generous support of WLT—we are delighted to include Rivera Toyota to our growing list of business supporters!

"I'm so glad we got the opportunity to partner with Westchester Land Trust and learn more about their work. They look after so much land and I'm thrilled that my Rivera team was able to help them transport their equipment safely."

—Mariano Rivera, New York Yankees legend and owner of Rivera Toyota

MAKE A GIFT OF STEWARDSHIP EQUIPMENT

Our stewardship staff welcomes donations of any of the following equipment in good working condition.

STEWARDSHIP WISH LIST

- Handheld GPS Unit
- 18-Inch Pruning Saw
- Drain Spade
- Professional Grade Clearing Saw

Contact Director of Stewardship, Tate Bushell for more information: 914.234.6992, ext. 10.



OUR FACEBOOK COMMUNITY is constantly growing...join us. facebook.com/wlandtrust

WE'RE ON INSTAGRAM! Follow @WestchesterLandTrust and tag #westchesterlandtrust on your next hike for a chance to be featured!



What's Growing on?

Since 2011, a half-acre of our Sugar Hill Farm headquarters has been farmed through a partnership with the Food Bank for Westchester. All of the produce is grown with the help of dedicated volunteers and distributed to needy residents.

WLT CONNECTS AREA FARMERS AND LANDOWNERS WITH RESOURCES—AND EACH OTHER

Westchester Land Trust encourages sustainable practices on working lands and supports positive connections between land-seeking farmers and non-farming landowners through our Farmland Match Program. Through WLT's Vegchester! program, WLT has sought to raise the profile of local growers under a shared brand.

Vegchester!

In 2016, WLT joins fifteen Hudson Valley-based partners in the Hudson Valley Farmlink Network (HVFN)—a consortium coordinated by the American Farmland Trust—offering shared farmland linking services, training and networking events, and one-on-one assistance for both farmers and landowners. WLT is now aggregating all current Farmland Match Program listings through HVFN's shared website—hudsonvalleyfarmlandfinder.org—as a means of streamlining the matchmaking process. The HVFN's Farmland Finder is a secure online database of available farmers and farm properties in 13 counties, including Westchester, designed to provide applicants with a more proactive venue for securing matches as well as robust resources for small farm enterprises.

WHO: Hudson Valley Farmlink Network
A partnership of 15 organizations—coordinated by American Farmland Trust—committed to strengthening farmland linking services throughout the Hudson Valley.

WHAT: Find Farmers and Farmland
Look for updates on workshops and networking events for farmers and landowners and find resources including sample leases, financing, tax and insurance information, and more.

WHERE: Learn About Events and Resources
Go to hudsonvalleyfarmlandfinder.org to search listings of farmers and farm properties.

LET'S GET GROWING!

WLT hosts public volunteer sessions at Sugar Hill Farm on the second and fourth Tuesday of the month from April - October. All are welcome—no experience necessary!

SEE BACK COVER FOR DETAILS

2015 WAS OUR BIGGEST SEASON EVER!
WLT hosted 15 public volunteer sessions, welcomed a dozen corporate and institutional volunteer groups, and grew 1,694 pounds of vegetables. That's 16,886 servings of fresh nutritious produce. We aimed high, and conditions mostly cooperated with our plans. But more importantly, we witnessed our amazing volunteers demonstrate day-in and day-out that a tiny farm can grow enough to improve people's lives and foster community.

This coming season, we plan to continue to increase production levels while advancing our land's capacity to generate abundantly for many years to come.

Sugar Hill Farm's half-acre is so much larger than the food we grow: it's about forging healthy relationships between people, their food, and the land from which it grows. As we head into another ambitious season, we are grateful most of all for those relationships—the vibrant network of dedicated volunteers, generous supporters, and enthusiastic eaters that make it possible to nurture this special place. Thank you!

Here's to another year of growing—both food and community. 🌱



WLT LEADS COLLABORATIVE CONSERVATION IN A CLIMATE RESILIENT LANDSCAPE

The Hudson to Housatonic (H2H) initiative, funded by the US Forest Service and co-led by WLT, is gaining ground. Launched in 2014 as a two-year project to engage private landowners in the care and protection of high priority land, H2H has grown into a collaborative force of nearly 3 dozen organizations committed to conservation at scale – particularly projects that span state, county, town, and parcel boundaries. “Our land conservation efforts are far more effective when we reach beyond borders. H2H partners have joined together to share expertise, connections, and resources,” said WLT’s Vice President, Kara Whelan. “With this in mind, WLT and Highstead (Redding, CT) have announced plans to co-lead H2H as a Regional Conservation Partnership (RCP) when the grant ends.” Spring and summer plans are underway for a second round of landowner engagement workshops and neighborhood gatherings in 13 priority focal areas. H2H partners will launch a dedicated website in late spring of 2016 and H2HRCP members will convene in June and October to identify regional conservation priorities and continue working toward shared goals.

New Programs Launching this Spring!

Our Lands Are a Health Resource for You!

Westchester County is endowed with tremendous natural beauty and resources—a main attraction for its nearly one million residents. Yet many of us have little or no regular interaction with the outdoors. With a goal of enriching lives through the healing powers of nature, we are thrilled to announce two new programs in partnership with Northern Westchester Hospital (NHW).



Inspiring Generation Next!

Beginning this spring, WLT's Sugar Hill Farm will morph into an outdoor classroom demonstrating the restorative, inspiring, therapeutic and educational benefits of the natural world for middle schoolers from Atmosphere Academy—a newly launched Bronx-based charter school. Students will explore the sights and sounds of WLT's Sugar Hill Farm during a series of field-based seminars extending from April through September.

“We identified Westchester Land Trust as a strategic partner early on,” said Colin Greene, Bedford resident and founder of Atmosphere.

Students will learn first-hand what it takes to be a good steward of our natural resources.

“With WLT’s land as the backdrop, our students will have the opportunity to explore how protected lands of any size impact their own health and wellbeing. They will also learn first-hand what it takes to be a good steward of our natural resources and why it is important to do so,” said Greene, who also serves as Atmosphere’s principal.

“We’ve been working with Atmosphere to ensure that WLT’s curriculum compliments and expands upon what students are learning in school. We want to instill a sense of wonder about the natural world with fun lessons that allow for personal reflection. Our goal is simple: inspire the next generation of conservation leaders—and WLT staffers!” said WLT’s Vice President, Kara Whelan. 🌱

FAMILY WELLNESS HIKE PROMOTES HEALTHY CHOICES

Join us this April for a high-energy family-friendly nature walk at Westchester Wilderness Walk / Zofnass Family Preserve (Pound Ridge, NY) co-led by WLT’s Director of Stewardship, Tate Bushell, and NWH’s Director of Community Health Education & Outreach, Maria Simonetti. Along the walk, parents and youngsters will learn more about the merits of diet and exercise for both physical and mental well-being as well as gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between environmental health and human health. During a short—healthy—snack break, families will have the opportunity to chat with both professionals.

SEE BACK COVER FOR PROGRAM DATES AND RSVP INFO!

Instilling a love of the natural world in people has profound implications not only for the protection of land but also for the direction of the conservation movement. If we can begin to recognize something as simple as the health benefits of nature experiences, we may also begin to re-calibrate the worth of the environment.

—Lori Ensinger, President, Westchester Land Trust

Developing a more intentional and intimate relationship with our environment yields countless benefits, and land conservation becomes an important tool in keeping us healthy and supporting our own well-being.

—Keeva Young-Wright, President, Northern Westchester Hospital Foundation

WALKING MEDITATION FOR HEALTH & HEALING

In May, attend a guided meditation at Pine Croft Meadow Preserve (Waccabuc, NY). WLT’s Betty Sue Hanson—a certified Reiki Master and Integrated Energy Therapy Instructor—will be joined by Marcela Denzer, a Physical Therapist with NWH. Program attendees can expect to reap the benefits—changes in mind and body—that accrue to those who spend time in nature. Please note: Two sections of this program will be offered—the first to graduates of NWH’s rehabilitation center who are incorporating holistic therapies into their post-surgical care; and the second to community members and supporters.

SEE BACK COVER FOR PROGRAM DATES AND RSVP INFO!



Westchester Land Trust
403 Harris Road
Bedford Hills, New York 10507



914.234.6992

westchesterlandtrust.org

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

SUGAR HILL FARM VOLUNTEER SESSIONS

10am – 2pm, rain or shine

APRIL 12 & 26

MAY 10 & 24

JUNE 14 & 28

JULY 12 & 26

AUGUST 9 & 23

SEPTEMBER 13 & 27

OCTOBER 11 & 25

Questions? Contact
Communications & Programs
Manager, Kate Sann—
914.234.6992 ext 15

SIGN UP FOR WLTS VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION

APRIL 12, 2016 | 10am-11:30am

WHY VOLUNTEER?

- Learn new skills you can use in your own backyard
- Meet people who share your passion for the outdoors
- Enjoy fresh air and beautiful scenery
- Do your part to preserve our precious natural resources

Of course, you don't need to wait for the April orientation to get involved. Contact Assistant Development Director, Grace Buck—914.234.6992 ext 23—to find out how you can get started right now!

FAMILY WELLNESS HIKE

at Westchester Wilderness Walk/
Zofnass Family Preserve (Pound
Ridge, NY) with WLT's Tate Bushell
& NWH's Maria Simonetti
SUNDAY, APRIL 10
SESSION A | 1-2pm
SESSION B | 2:30 – 3:30pm
RAIN DATE: SUN., APRIL 24

ROCKY HILLS ENVIRONMENTAL LECTURE

with Landscape Designer, Edwina
von Gal at Chappaqua Library
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27TH | 7:30PM

WALKING MEDITATION FOR HEALING & WELLNESS

at Pine Croft Meadow Preserve
(Waccabuc, NY) with WLT's
Betty Sue Hanson & NWH's
Marcela Denzer
WEDNESDAY, MAY 11
SESSION A | 10 – 10:45AM
SESSION B | 11 – 11:45am
RAIN DATE: WED., MAY 18TH

Space is limited!
Please RSVP to Development
Assistant, Joan Reilly –
914.234.6992 ext. 22 OR
joan@westchesterlandtrust.org

Sunnyfield Farm, Bedford
SAVE THE DATE
2016
BENEFIT
Saturday, June 18th, 2016

Our Land is Your Land

CELEBRATING

Vivien Malloy
Preservation Angel Award

The Zofnass Family
Lifetime Achievement Award

For sponsorship & ticket information, please call Grace Buck at 914.234.6992 ext 23 or visit westchesterlandtrust.org

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Beth Crowell
Liza Clymer
Melissa Marcogliese

Celebrate Someone Special

GIVE SOMEONE YOU LOVE SOMETHING GREEN THAT
WON'T NEED TO BE WATERED!

Supporting WLT reflects not only your belief in our organization but also demonstrates a commitment to both land preservation and every Westchester resident.

I would like to contribute:

- \$2,500 \$1,000 \$500 \$250 \$100 other \$.....
- My gift is in honor/memory of
- I have enclosed/will send a matching gift form from my employer.
- I wish my gift to remain anonymous.
- I have remembered the Westchester Land Trust in my will.

Name

Address

City State Zip

Phone

Email

- Enclosed is my check payable to Westchester Land Trust.
 Please charge me credit card: American Express MasterCard Visa

Account no. Exp. CSV

Signature

To contribute online, please visit westchesterlandtrust.org