

# Westchester Land Trust

## Great News from Otter Creek!

**W**estchester Land Trust was one of 25 NY and CT-based organizations awarded a highly competitive grant through the Long Island Sound Futures Fund. This grant allows us to restore 12 acres of coastal forest at our Otter Creek Preserve in Mamaroneck.

**OTTER CREEK IS A SPECIAL PLACE:** Westchester Land Trust owns and manages Otter Creek Preserve, a 35-acre natural area with saltwater marshes, forests, and meadows. It is the **largest privately owned tidal estuary protected as a preserve in Westchester County.** New York State has designated Otter Creek as a Geologic Area of Particular Concern, and the Village of Mamaroneck has classified it as a Critical Environmental Area. Otter Creek Preserve performs an important ecological role in protecting the health of Long Island Sound.

**THE PRESERVE AND THE SOUND ARE AT RISK:** Long Island Sound provides crucial habitat for a wide variety of wildlife, but human development has left it and those who depend on it at risk. Residential and commercial construction has eliminated many of the natural areas around the Sound that once intercepted run-off and filtered harmful chemicals like lawn fertilizers and pesticides. Residential landscaping and gardening practices encourage the spread of invasive plants into the remaining natural areas, further degrading the habitat. Otter Creek Preserve's 12-acre forest has been heavily impacted by invasive plants that do not provide food for birds and are smothering native trees. Many of the trees are unable to survive saltwater flooding, which is happening more frequently with rising sea levels and severe storms. Significant gaps in the forest have resulted from these stresses, reducing the overall health and diversity of the forest's flora and fauna.

**FEDERAL FUNDS HELP MAMARONECK & LONG ISLAND SOUND:** To improve the ecological function of Otter Creek, WLT has launched a forest restoration *continued page 3*

*"WLT is a strong partner in building an ecological community in lower Westchester. Their ability to secure funding will give us a wonderful teaching location as well as a special place for area residents to enjoy."*

*—Mary Ellen Kelly, Executive Director, Sheldrake Environmental Center*

**IN 2016**  
**WITH YOUR HELP**  
 WLT permanently  
 preserved an additional  
**120 ACRES** of land in  
 Westchester and Putnam  
 Counties in partnership  
 with two local and  
 regional land trusts.



*save the date*

*Annual Benefit*  
 —· 2017 ·—

**CELEBRATING  
 WOMEN**  
*in*  
**Conservation**



SATURDAY, JUNE 17, 2017  
 SUGAR HILL FARM  
 Bedford Hills, New York

*See back page for details*

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**“Resilience: the capacity to recover from difficulties; the ability to cope with change.”**



Like individuals, organizations and communities must be resilient if they are to thrive. One of the hallmarks of organizational resilience is the ability to flourish through a leadership transition. **Jonathan Wiesner**, WLT’s Chairman since 2011, has retired from the Board after nine years of dedicated service to WLT. Jonathan steered the organization through some of the most difficult years that non-profits faced during the Great Recession. He leaves us in sound financial shape and with a robust pipeline of land and community conservation projects. Jonathan remains a passionate supporter of WLT, and I am pleased that he will serve as Co-Chair of our Advisory Board with George Bianco, another past Board Chair.

Our new Chairman, **Bruce Churchill**, takes the reins after serving on our Board since 2013 in various leadership roles. Bruce brings deep experience in business, finance and strategic planning from his career at DIRECTV where he was Chief Financial Officer, and then President of DIRECTV Latin America. Bruce lives in Pound Ridge with his wife Christine and their two children on a property protected in perpetuity by a WLT-held conservation easement. Bruce is passionate about local land preservation, and a staunch believer in the impact that individual landowners can have in caring for their property in a manner that benefits the community. We are thrilled to have Bruce assume this critical leadership role for WLT, and I am eager for you to meet him.



Bruce Churchill

Organizational resilience is dependent on collaboration. With this in mind we move forward, not singly, but with others who share our goal of community conservation. We are working to protect land with many partner organizations and community groups. Our work in **Yorktown** draws on the strengths of our partners the Open Space Institute Land Trust and Teatown Lake Reservation. Together we will preserve 42 acres of important habitat in the midst of the Reservation. In **Somers**, we established a public-private partnership to protect the **172-acre Stuart’s Fruit Farm**, the oldest working farm in Westchester County that opens its orchards to thousands of Westchester school children each year. This is one of the largest and most successful partnerships in WLT’s history—New York State, Westchester County, the Town of Somers, Scenic Hudson and the Somers Land Trust have joined forces with WLT to move this amazing project to conclusion. Inspiring projects like these don’t happen alone, and we have many like them in the pipeline.

Finally, I can’t invoke the word “resilience” without addressing community resilience, which increasingly is being tested on so many fronts. Land and water conservation is one step toward strengthening our own resilience. More than ever, we recognize and are responding to the need to give nature a “leg-up” by restoring habitats that have been degraded by human pressure. The goal of the habitat restoration project at Otter Creek Preserve that we have featured in this issue is to restore the land, so that it can contribute to the resilience of southern Westchester communities. We have pulled in an amazing array of community partners who will work and learn with us.

As we approach our **30th anniversary**, we are deeply grateful to you for being our partner and contributing to the resilience of Westchester Land Trust and the communities you have entrusted us to serve. **Thank you.**

Sincerely,

Lori J. Ensinger, *President*



**THANK YOU  
SUSAN CARPENTER**

Susan Carpenter has retired after 21 years on staff. During her tenure, she authored more than **170 conservation easements**, and oversaw the preservation of **7,400 acres**. She played an integral role in securing accreditation from the Land Trust Alliance in 2008—making WLT one of the **first 20 land trusts in the nation** to achieve this status—and saw to it that our reaccreditation in 2014 was also successful.

Susan’s commitment has, quite literally, propelled us to our present position in the conservation community. Possessing unwavering ethics, wisdom, insight and institutional knowledge, Susan always approached her job from the lens of what was right for the community, for the land, and for Westchester Land Trust’s diverse constituents. She has a rare talent for relating to land owners and municipal leaders of all stripes, as well as engaging productively outside the realm of conservation and amongst the wider land-use and planning worlds.

**Susan is missed deeply**, not only by our Board of Directors and Staff, but by the hundreds of community members who have worked alongside her on land preservation projects. We thank Susan for her incredible contribution to Westchester Land Trust—and indeed to the broader Westchester community—one which will be difficult to ever match. 🙏

**Watch for a special newsletter later this year highlighting the 172-acre Stuart’s Fruit Farm conservation victory.**



# SHRUBLAND AND MEADOW RESTORATION CONTINUES AT THE FREDERICK P. ROSE PRESERVE

**H**ealthy forests are obviously important, but two other habitats – meadows and shrublands – also play a vital role in our region’s health. When considered together, these three habitats reinforce one another to sustain high levels of biodiversity and ecosystem services. This is exactly what we manage for at the Frederick P. Rose Preserve in Lewisboro.

For 3 years, we have been restoring and expanding a meadow and shrubland that are nestled within a 100+ acre forest. These two ‘early successional’ or ‘open’ habitats are not comprised of trees. Instead, they are dominated by woody shrubs (shrubland) and flowers and grasses (meadow). They are sunny habitats that naturally emerge every time a big disturbance (fire, hurricane, ice storm) destroys a large chunk of forest. Over time many plants and animals (bluebirds, monarch butterflies, and turtles to name a few) have evolved to live in these early successional habitats. Our management strategies include mowing young tree saplings and removing shade-producing trees. If we lose our meadows and shrublands, we will lose the unique species that call them home.

*Adam R. Rose, the donor of the Frederick P. Rose Preserve, said “it gives us great pleasure to see the Preserve’s role expand in strengthening biodiversity as well as serve as the locus of training events for regional land stewards.”*

This year we will be erecting deer netting around the shrubland to allow new shrubs to thrive in the absence of deer browse. Partner groups will continue to provide critical support with all aspects of our enhancement work including tree removal, invasive plant management, blueberry pruning, and planting natives. 🌱

Game of Logging Chainsaw Course benefits land conservation professionals from Westchester and Fairfield. In late 2016, WLT invited conservation partners to the preserve for a two-day course in chain saw safety.



## GREAT NEWS FROM OTTER CREEK CONTINUED FROM FIRST PAGE

project with funding provided by the Long Island Sound Futures Fund. This grant program pools funds from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. WLT’s individual award of \$55,000 will be matched with more than \$33,000 of our own resources, which comes in the form of generous volunteer and financial support from you, and your neighbors.

### WHAT EXACTLY ARE WE DOING?

We are focusing our efforts on the Preserve’s 12-acre coastal forest through the strategic removal of non-native invasive plants and the planting and seeding of appropriate native trees, shrubs and herbs. We will remove approximately 70 invasive trees, 5,000 invasive vines and 3 acres of invasive shrubs. We will restore these areas by planting more than 500 native trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants. We will temporarily fence portions of the restored forest in order to protect newly planted trees from deer browse and antler rub. By changing the plant composition and returning structural complexity to the forest, we will increase forest connectivity, improve its function and longevity, and directly benefit the abundance and diversity of wildlife.

### PARTNERS PROVIDE SUPPORT:

Our forest restoration project has opened the door to exciting new and expanded partnerships with the Mamaroneck Public Schools, Sheldrake Environmental Center, Atmosphere Academy, The Nature Conservancy, and others. Local students will be assisting with the propagation and planting of natives, participating in active stewardship and assessment, and learning more about natural resource management and Long Island Sound ecology. 🌱



Joe Edgar



Beth Crowell

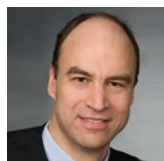
## WELCOME NEW DIRECTORS

**W**e welcome three new members to our Board of Directors and one member to our Advisory Board. “Our newest Directors are Pound Ridge resident, Joe Edgar; Bedford resident, Beth Crowell; Mamaroneck resident, Marjorie Kaufman; and Stamford, CT resident Ron Burke,” said Lori Ensinger, President of the Westchester Land Trust. **“We feel fortunate that they will lend their time, talents and geographic diversity in support of our mission that is as important now as it has ever been.”**

For complete biographies, visit [westchesterlandtrust.org](http://westchesterlandtrust.org)



Marjorie Kaufman



Ron Burke

## WE NEED YOU!

We are looking for volunteers to help us perform all of our 2017 restoration projects. If you would like to join us, please sign up for advertised events or email us to be placed on the volunteer list. Please call or email Grace Buck ([Grace@westchesterlandtrust.org](mailto:Grace@westchesterlandtrust.org), 914.234.6992, ext 23) to volunteer.

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



914.234.6992

westchesterlandtrust.org

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### UPCOMING EVENTS

For a full list of our programs visit:  
westchesterlandtrust.org/calendar

#### LET'S GET GROWING! SUGAR HILL FARM VOLUNTEER SESSIONS

Grow produce for our neighbors in need.  
All ages welcome.  
10AM – 2PM, RAIN OR SHINE | EVERY  
SECOND AND FOURTH TUESDAY FROM  
APRIL 11-OCTOBER 24

#### ANNUAL VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION

APRIL 11, 2016 | 10AM-11:30AM  
Meet with WLT staff and current volunteers  
and learn about the volunteer opportunity  
that is right for you!

To volunteer contact Grace Buck at  
914.234.6992 ext 23 or  
Grace@westchesterlandtrust.org

#### GUIDED WALKS FEATURING OUR NATURE PRESERVES WITH DR. SHAUN MCCOSHUM, WLT'S PRESERVE MANAGER & EDUCATOR

THURSDAY | APRIL 20 | 5:30 – 7:30PM  
LOVE PRESERVE (LEWISBORO)

SATURDAY | MAY 6 | 1:00 – 3:00PM  
HUNTER BROOK PRESERVE (YORKTOWN)

THURSDAY | MAY 25 | 9:00 – 12:00  
WESTCHESTER WILDERNESS WALK/ ZOFNASS  
FAMILY PRESERVE (POUND RIDGE)

SATURDAY | JUNE 3 | 9:00 – 12:00  
FREDERICK P. ROSE PRESERVE (LEWISBORO)

To RSVP for Guided Walks contact  
Joan at 914.234.6992 ext 22 or Joan@  
westchesterlandtrust.org.  
Visit westchesterlandtrust.org/calendar to  
find other future Guided Walks.

### Join Us

## Annual Benefit — 2017 —

# CELEBRATING WOMEN in Conservation



SATURDAY, JUNE 17, 2017  
SUGAR HILL FARM  
Bedford Hills, New York

Honoring  
Susan Carpenter  
Norma Silva  
Aimée Whitman

For early sponsorship & ticket information  
please contact Grace Buck,  
Grace@westchesterlandtrust.org 914.234.6992 ext.23



### REGIONAL CONSERVATION UPDATE

WLT continues to co-coordinate the Hudson to Housatonic Regional Conservation Partnership (H2HRCP) with Highstead Foundation (Redding, CT). At the latest All Partner meeting, more than three dozen conservation organizations convened from Fairfield, Dutchess, Putnam and Westchester counties to review our vision for this vast landscape. H2H partners worked in small groups to identify goals and objectives that support our work toward collaborative conservation between the Hudson and Housatonic Rivers. A steering committee and working groups are in formation to further advance the H2H vision. Visit [H2HRCP.ORG](http://H2HRCP.ORG) or call Kara Whelan, Vice President 914.234.6992 ext. 12 to learn more.



Westchester Land Trust (WLT) is a member of EarthShare New York, a nationwide network of America's most respected environmental and conservation charities. To find out how you and your employer can support WLT through an EarthShare workplace giving campaign visit their website at [earthsharenyc.org](http://earthsharenyc.org) or contact Grace Buck—[grace@westchesterlandtrust.org](mailto:grace@westchesterlandtrust.org) or 914.234.6992 ext. 23  
Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) Number: 77308

## Your Commitment Means the LAND to Us.

I would like to contribute:

- \$1,000  \$500  \$250  \$50  \$25  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.

WLT is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization and your contribution is tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

Name .....

Address .....

City ..... State ..... Zip .....

Phone .....

Email .....

Entering my email indicates my consent to receive occasional enews from Westchester Land Trust.  
We never share this information.

Enclosed is my check payable to Westchester Land Trust.  
Please mail to: 403 Harris Road, Bedford Hills, NY 10507

For other ways to give, including by credit card, visit us online at: [westchesterlandtrust.org](http://westchesterlandtrust.org)