



Westchester Land Trust



SUMMER 2025 NEWSLETTER

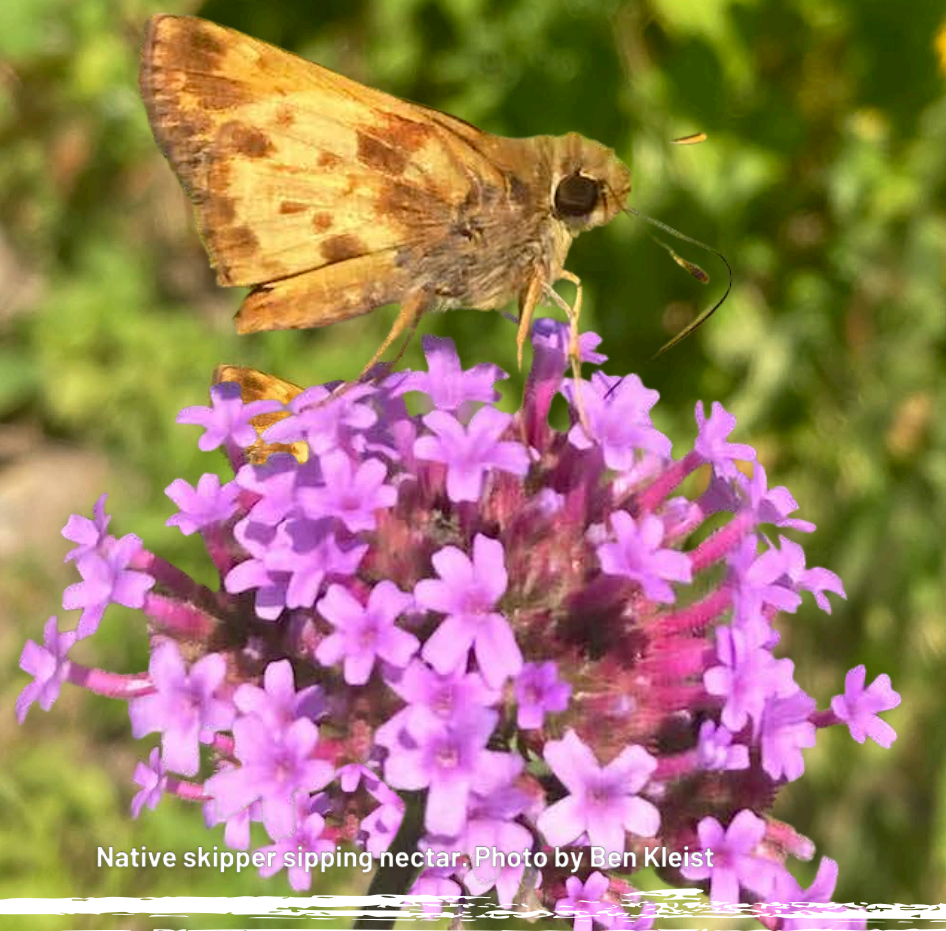


SEEDS OF WHAT'S NEXT

Growing Gardens, Leaders, and Habitat

Bee the Change

Volunteer to restore pollinator habitat



Native skipper sipping nectar. Photo by Ben Kleist

Westchester Land Trust is stepping up efforts to protect native pollinators—and we're inviting you to be part of it.

With support from the New York Pollinator Conservation Fund, the Office of the New York State Attorney General, and The New York Community Trust, we're restoring meadows, expanding native wildflower populations, and removing invasive species across our preserves. But this isn't just a staff-led effort...it's powered by community members like you.

Volunteers have already joined us in planting trees, clearing invasive plants, and tending to our vibrant meadows filled with milkweed, goldenrod, and bee balm. And the work is far from done.

We'll be hosting stewardship days throughout the rest of the year, and we need more hands (and hearts!) to help.

"These are more than just beautiful places," said Ben Kleist, WLT's Preserve Manager. "They're critical habitat. Forests, meadows, and wetlands all work together to support pollinators, which in turn support everything else. The work we're doing now ensures that balance stays intact."

Whether you're passionate about conservation or just looking for a meaningful way to spend a morning outdoors, there's a place for you in this effort.

Visit westchesterlandtrust.org/events to see upcoming volunteer opportunities and sign up to help. Together, we can ensure these habitats continue to thrive, for pollinators and people alike.

To find a WLT meadow near you, visit westchesterlandtrust.org/preserves.

Growing the Next Generation of Conservation Leaders

This summer, Westchester Land Trust welcomed two exceptional apprentices, Jake and Gertrude, to learn, lead, and grow through our Conservation Apprenticeship Program. Made possible by the generosity of our supporters, this program equips young environmentalists with real-world skills in stewardship, community engagement, and environmental leadership.

Gertrude Phiri

What does conservation mean to you?

"Conservation is love in action. It's about protecting nature, yes, but also preserving the stories and cultures woven into the land."

What's been most memorable this summer?

"Helping launch Project Kiana's 'Roots & Voices' and walking Zofnass Preserve's hand-built stone trails. Land remembers—and it's powerful to listen."

Jake Sacket

What drew you to this apprenticeship?

"I wanted to learn more about positively impacting the environment and knew of the work being done at Westchester Land Trust. I grew up with place-based connection, and I hope to inspire others to develop it."

What's a highlight from your summer?

"Discovering a migratory eel that travels from the ocean to the Hutchinson River and back again—it's a wild journey I never knew about!"



(From right) Gertrude and Jake, WLT's summer conservation apprentices. Photo by Kim Fendrich

Both Jake and Gertrude have brought energy, insight, and passion to WLT's work this summer. They're gaining the knowledge, skills, and connections needed to carry their conservation leadership far into the future and protect the land and waters we all depend on.

You make this possible. Your gift supports conservation careers at WLT—training and inspiring the next generation of environmental stewards. Give today: bit.ly/donateWLT



Grow bag assembly day. Photo by Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority

Tiny Gardens, Mighty Roots

Nourishing communities, one grow bag at a time

For the third year in a row, Westchester Land Trust's grow bag program is helping communities connect through the simple and powerful act of growing food.

This spring, as the cost of vegetables continues to rise, more than 300 grow bags (mini portable gardens) found homes with families in Mount Vernon and Port Chester. Each bag was filled with healthy veggie seedlings and the promise of nourishment and learning. From lettuce and tomatoes to pak choi and marigolds, the bags were planted with care and distributed with love by volunteers, student helpers, and local partners.

In Mount Vernon, WLT teamed up with the Zeta Nu Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., D.I.G. Farm, First Presbyterian Church, and Westchester County to host a garden kickoff celebration featuring the Pollinator Pop-Up.

In Port Chester, WLT joined Port Chester Middle School and Feeding Westchester for a mobile food pantry event. PCMS student volunteers played a key role, distributing grow bags, translating for families, and photographing the day. Thanks to Stone Barns, an additional 10 bags were created on-site for guests eager to get their hands in the soil.

Later this season, we'll host "Zoom with the Farmer" sessions to give participants a chance to share photos, ask questions, and get tips for keeping their plants happy.

Rooted in generosity and shared knowledge, this program continues to grow one bag, one family, one season at a time.

"This is about more than vegetables," reflected Kim Fendrich, WLT's program manager. "It's about community, dignity, and hope."

You're invited!

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 18

REGGAE IN THE BARN



FEATURING MUSIC BY

**RHO
& THE
NOMADS**



**BID ON ITEMS IN OUR
SILENT
AUCTION**



PLUS, ENJOY

**CARIBBEAN FOOD, CRAFT
COCKTAILS, FUN GAMES,
FACE PAINTING, AND
DANCING**

**GET YOUR TICKETS AT
[WESTCHESTERLANDTRUST.ORG](https://www.westchesterlandtrust.org)**

We're Seeking Reaccreditation!

Westchester Land Trust is applying for renewal of our accreditation through the Land Trust Alliance (LTA), a mark of our ongoing commitment to excellence and lasting land protection. As part of the process, the LTA Commission is accepting public comments through September 28, 2025.

To learn more or submit a comment, visit www.landtrustaccreditation.org or email info@landtrustaccreditation.org.

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- Sound Finances
- Ethical Conduct
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ON THE COVER: PRESERVE MANAGER BEN KLEIST LEADS THE GROUNDWORK HUDSON VALLEY GREEN TEAM AT OTTER CREEK PRESERVE IN MAMARONECK. PHOTO BY JANELLE ROBBINS

Photo by Kara Whelan

Westchester Land Trust joined our partners at Somers Land Trust for their Open House at Rhinoceros Creek Reservation in July. We are honored to hold the conservation easement on RCR, helping to ensure it remains open and protected for generations to come.

WLT and Somers Land Trust have a long and cherished history of working together to protect land, through projects like Stuart's Farm, RCR, and Angle Fly Preserve

To learn more or plan a hike, visit somerslandtrust.org.



GIVE TODAY, MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOREVER.

Including Westchester Land Trust in your estate planning leaves a lasting legacy of conservation for you and your family.

To learn more about the impact you can make, contact Kara Whelan at 914-234-6692 ext. 12 or kara@westchesterlandtrust.org.