

Westchester Land Trust

Newsletter Brief 🍷 Summer 2022

Volunteer at WLT's
Sugar Hill Farm!

Sign up to grow food for
local families in need at
westchesterlandtrust.org!



Quoga Schnell (left)
and Eli Sharma (right)
take a Popsicle break
while volunteering at
Sugar Hill Farm

What's Inside...

Protecting Ryder Farm

*Meet Our Summer
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Community Nourishment

Growing a Resilient Local Food System



Farmland Forever

Protecting Historic Ryder Farm in Southeast

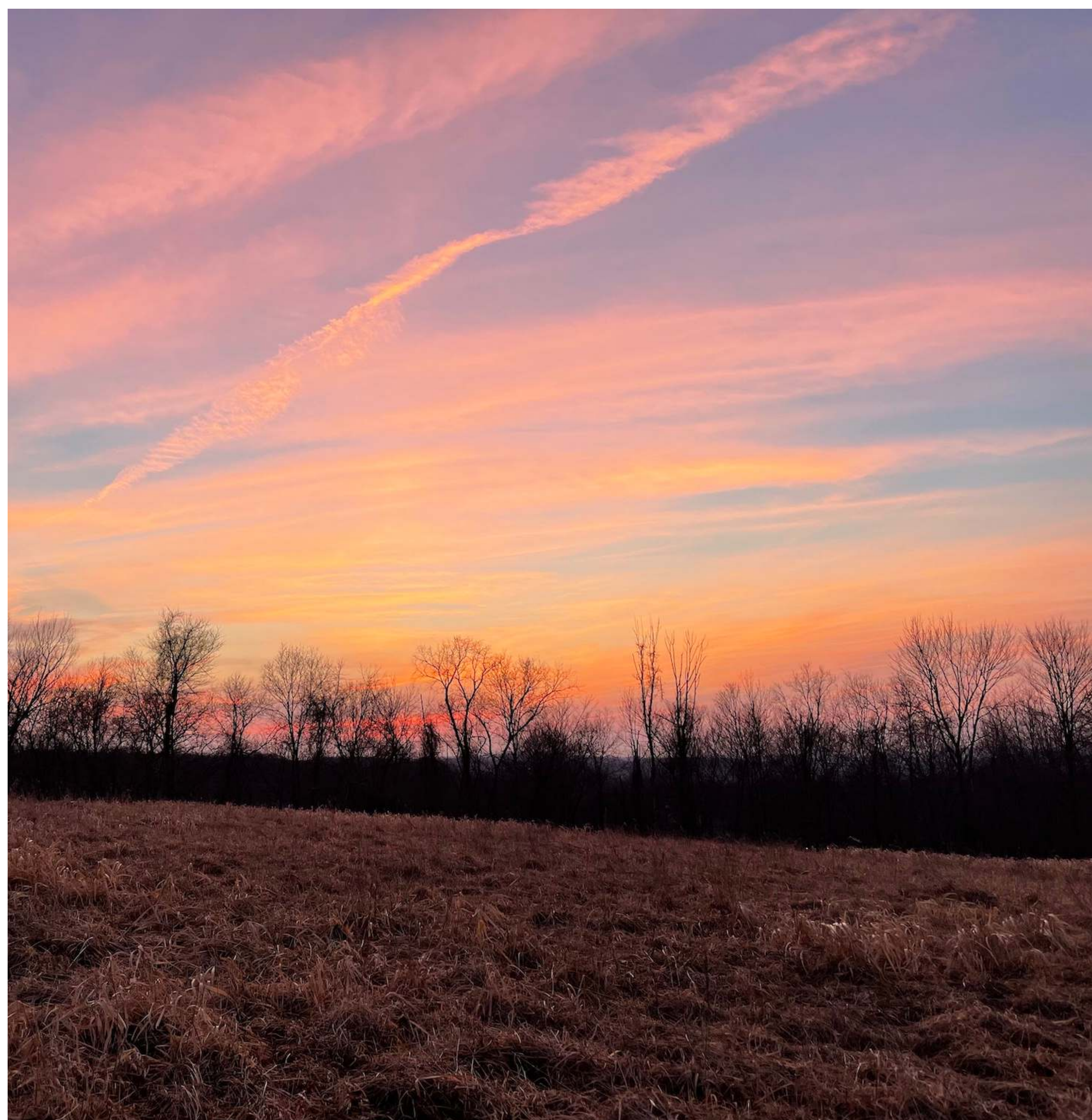
Established in 1795, Ryder Farm is the oldest working farm in Putnam County. For generations, it has welcomed visitors, offered a CSA program, and hosted farm-to-table events. But, despite its beloved place in the community and its 227-year presence in Southeast, the family-run farm was not immune to an all-too-common threat felt by local agricultural properties: the increasing pressure of development.

To ensure this land remains farmland forever, Westchester Land Trust will protect the 128-acre Ryder Farm in perpetuity, using \$2M in funding from the Farmland Protection Implementation Grants Program, a program of New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets (AGM). WLT will hold a conservation easement on the land and the Ryder family will continue to own and operate the farm.

“Safeguarding this land and its inhabitants from development will allow Ryder Farm to continue to serve our community’s agrarian needs and ecological well-being for generations to come,” said Julia Gibson, a member of the Ryder family board.

“We could not be more grateful for the steadfast partnership of WLT, who have shepherded us through this process for several years.”

Ryder Farm, which has been operated by the Ryder family for nine generations, is one of the few remaining large properties in Southeast. The farm has over 3,000 feet of frontage on Peach Lake, and restricting further development on the land will safeguard the lake’s water quality. The land also protects drinking water that flows through the Croton Reservoir system, which serves Westchester County and New York City.



Photos courtesy of the Ryder Family

Sustaining the Local Economy

The fruits, vegetables, and agricultural goods produced at Ryder Farm play a crucial role in the regional economy, helping to meet the increasing demand for locally sourced organic produce. The property is also home to SPACE on Ryder Farm, a nonprofit artist and agricultural residency program that attracts tourists to the region, where they not only support the farm, but also local small businesses and restaurants. *Learn more about SPACE on Ryder Farm at: spaceonryderfarm.org*

We're grateful for the support and generosity of the Ryder family, New York State, and all who were integral in making this land protection project happen. 🌱



What's Growing at Sugar Hill Farm

Since 2012, we've partnered with local food banks to grow veggies and herbs for our neighbors in need—everything we produce is distributed by the Community Center of Northern Westchester (CCNW), which serves over 10,000 low-income, food insecure people each year, including more than 3,000 children.

Throughout the past decade, we've been grateful to learn from our community to better understand what types of food are needed and how resources like bilingual recipe cards can inspire new meals and reduce food waste. We look forward to our continued work with CCNW to ensure those in need receive the foods they prefer to cook and eat.

WLT's farm garden program is made possible by the dedicated volunteers who join us twice weekly to plant, weed, harvest, and weigh the food before it's delivered to CCNW. The farm is overseen by our contract farmer, Allison Turcan, who shares sustainable farming practices with our staff and volunteers. 🌱

Funding Sugar Hill Farm

WLT received a **\$16,840 grant** from the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets (AGM) as part of the Community Growers Grant Program. This funding helps support Sugar Hill Farm, enabling us to: **1. Expand our food-growing capacity, 2. Leverage existing farm infrastructure to reduce the cost per serving, and 3. Meet the needs and preferences of families that receive the food we grow.**

Thank you to New York State AGM!

Summer is blazing by and we've got a lot *growing* on at our Sugar Hill Farm garden! Since April, our small-acre farm has produced more than **175 pounds** of vegetables, such as kale, garlic scapes, rhubarb, chives, zucchini, broccoli, mustard greens, garlic, peppers, kohlrabi, tomatoes, cabbage, and squash.

“Growing food is one of the best ways we can support our local community,” Turcan said. “This season is already off to a great start and we're glad to see so many new and returning volunteers show up each week to help out and learn about sustainable farming techniques.”

Meet great people and pitch in on our small-acre farm. We need your help! Visit westchesterlandtrust.org to sign up for a volunteer shift at Sugar Hill Farm.



Did You Know? WLT's Sugar Hill Farm garden grows an average of 8,000 servings of produce each year!

Learning on the Land

Conservation Apprentices Dig In

This summer, we have welcomed two paid conservation apprentices to join our team. Brianna Rodriguez and Christian Fierek will be with us until the fall as part of our conservation apprenticeship program, which aims to help students and recent graduates develop new skills, learn about the different roles within a regional land trust, and gain field experience in nature preserve management.



Brianna Rodriguez first garnered a love for conservation while working on Groundwork Hudson Valley's Green Team. During that time, she traveled to Yellowstone National Park to install bear boxes at campsites and collect data to monitor dragonfly populations in the park. She has also participated in the initiative for solutions to environmental concerns, such as flooding and the urban heat island effect, which impact her hometown of Yonkers. She graduated from Yonkers Middle High School and plans to attend SUNY New Paltz this fall, where she will major in environmental studies.



Christian Fierek, a Chappaqua resident, recently graduated from SUNY New Paltz with a BA in biology and during his studies, he discovered an interest in the environment and environmental science. He aspires to work in either a fieldwork or laboratory setting, but most importantly wishes to gain the hands-on experience required to advance his knowledge and discover his niche and passion. He hopes that this apprenticeship will take him one step further toward his goals and serve as a fun and exciting learning experience.

Thank you to Lower Hudson PRISM and Rusticus Garden Club for partially funding WLT's conservation apprenticeship program!

This project was contracted by the Lower Hudson Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (LH PRISM) using funds from the Environmental Protection Fund as administered by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.





Giving for the Future

Leaving a Lasting Legacy

Peggy Stevens loved her land and she especially loved knowing that it would be preserved forever. In 2003, Peggy worked with WLT to place a conservation easement on her bucolic ten-acre property which expands an important conservation corridor in the heart of Waccabuc. Peggy was an avid gardener and proudly advocated for WLT's farmland preservation work. She was an enthusiastic participant in WLT's farmland match program and hosted her dear friend, Louisa Purcell, who farmed Peggy's land for many years. **In June, WLT received a generous bequest from the estate of Peggy Stevens.**

We celebrate the lasting impact that Peggy has had on our organization and will use her generous gift to further expand our stewardship and land preservation work in Westchester. 🌱

In partnership with American Farmland Trust, Westchester Land Trust is a proud partner of Farmland for a New Generation. Learn about farmland linking and preservation efforts at: nyfarmland.org

The Martha Dinerstein Fund for Conservation Leadership was created in 2018 to honor the life and legacy of Martha (Marti) Dinerstein who was a treasured member of WLT's leadership for many years.

The fund, which supports training and professional development opportunities for WLT staff, has allowed staff to be trained in GIS mapping technology, nonprofit leadership, and fundraising.

It was also used to send four WLT staff to the NY State Land Trust Alliance conference in Saratoga.

To learn more about planned giving opportunities, contact Kara Whelan at kara@westchesterlandtrust.org.

Thank You to Our 2022 Annual Benefit Supporters!

More than 300 people gathered at the home of Angelina and Monte Lipman in Katonah on June 4th for our Annual Benefit, where we raised \$435,000 for land protection.



Joy Oladokun, Angelina and Monte Lipman, Noah Kahan. Photo Credit: Peter T. Michaelis



Wine Pull display built by WLT Advisory Board Member Mike Surdej. Photo Credit: Andrea Ceraso



Glenwood Lake Honorees with WLT President, Lori Ensinger. Photo Credit: Andrea Ceraso



WLT Vice President Kara Whelan, Board Chairman Bruce Churchill, President Lori Ensinger. Photo Credit: Andrea Ceraso



Noah Kahan and Joy Oladokun. Photo Credit: Andrea Ceraso



Youth Conservationist Award Honoree, Rhys Healy and Parents, Wendy and Philip Myers. Photo Credit: Andrea Ceraso

Friends and supporters celebrated our Community Conservation Honorees, Glenwood Lake Association and Friends of Glenwood Lake; and Youth Conservationist Honorees, Rhys Healy and Halle Vernon. Funds raised at the event will be used to support WLT's efforts to conserve land, increase access to the outdoors, and strengthen local food systems.

Guests enjoyed live music, including performances by Joy Oladokun and Noah Kahan, a "Wine for Wildlands" wine pull, and a lively paddle raise fundraiser.

Thank you to Angelina and Monte Lipman; our business supporters; the 2022 Benefit Committee; our Youth Conservationist Award Honorees and Community Conservation Award Honorees; and the countless supporters, partners, friends, and staff that made this special night possible!

Stay Tuned!

Keep an eye out for information about our 2023 Annual Benefit. Learn how you can get involved at [westchesterlandtrust.org!](https://westchesterlandtrust.org)



Join Westchester Land Trust this fall for...
Bluegrass in the Barn

Thursday, September 15, 2022



Enjoy live music, creative cocktails, and gourmet snacks as we raise funds for Westchester Land Trust's land conservation mission, including farmland preservation and food justice programs.

Since 2012, we've partnered with local food banks to grow and donate an average of 8,000 servings of produce a year for families in our community.



Get your tickets today at
bit.ly/WLTBluegrass22



Westchester Land Trust (WLT) works with public and private partners to protect natural lands—from farmlands to woodlands, meadows and more! Over the last 33 years, WLT has permanently preserved over 9,000 acres (and counting!) across Westchester and eastern Putnam counties.



Westchester Land Trust

Connect with Westchester Land Trust



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@WLT_NY

westchesterlandtrust.org

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ALL ARE WELCOME
Meet the WLT team!
Bring a friend to our
**Volunteer
Appreciation Party**
August 10th from
5-7pm at Sugar Hill Farm
in Bedford Hills