Westchester Land Trust

It’s
Our
Nature
The Westchester Land Trust (WLT) is the leading conservation organization working with public and private partners to preserve land in perpetuity, and to enhance the natural resources in Westchester and eastern Putnam counties. Since its founding in 1988, WLT has protected more than 7,500 acres of open space, including over 700 acres of preserves owned by our organization.
WLT’s conservation efforts benefit the long-term health of over 9.5 million people who live and work in the metro region by protecting our air and water quality, local food supply, and critical habitats. Our work also ensures the preservation of scenic viewsheds and the creation of passive recreation opportunities in communities throughout Westchester and eastern Putnam counties.
Westchester Land Trust works with local private landowners, municipalities, and other partners to protect land because ultimately... we are all the beneficiaries of that action. Land preservation positively impacts the long term health of the communities we live in through the protection of water resources, air quality, food supply, wildlife habitats, and so much more. It is something that improves our lives today, as well as the lives of future generations.

**We protect land in three ways...**

1. We partner with landowners who wish to permanently preserve the natural or scenic values of their land while still retaining ownership of their property. We do this with a conservation easement – a permanent legal agreement between a landowner and a land trust that restricts or eliminates the development potential of the property, while potentially qualifying as a tax-deductible charitable contribution. In total, WLT holds more than 180 conservation easements on over 5,000 acres of land.

2. We partner with landowners who wish to create a lasting legacy by donating their land to WLT to be managed as a nature preserve. In total, WLT owns 30 preserves totaling over 700 acres.

3. We work with other conservation organizations, as well as county, state and local governments to prioritize land for protection, secure funding sources, and negotiate and complete land acquisition projects.

“When you put an easement on your land, you are giving a gift to the community at large, and certainly to the immediate neighborhood. It is one of the few things we can do that will outlast our stay on this planet.”

— Peter and Daun Hauspurg

Easement Donors
WLT’s mission is to preserve the natural resources in the communities we all share for generations to enjoy. Once protected, WLT has the ongoing responsibility to continue monitoring and caring for these resources forever! That means yearly visits to more than 200 properties, as well as clearing trails, updating signage, removing invasive species, rehabilitating habitats, and leading hikes on many of our preserves.

Launched in the fall of 2014, the Hudson to Housatonic Conservation Initiative (H2H) engages landowners across Westchester, Putnam, Dutchess and Fairfield counties in the effort to protect imperiled streams, drinking water reservoirs, and plant and wildlife habitat. WLT is leading this effort collaboratively with the Highstead Foundation (on behalf of Fairfield County Regional Conservation Partnership), Mianus River Gorge, and Housatonic Valley Association, and is engaging more than three dozen local and regional conservation organizations and municipal partners thanks to funding from the US Forest Service.
and conservation is not only about protecting land, it is also about enriching lives and providing opportunities for people to connect with nature. WLT’s programs for children and adults seek to enhance the community’s appreciation for the beauty of the land and the natural resources we all share. These include guided hikes on our preserves, hands-on land stewardship training, sustainable agricultural forums, and volunteering on the farm!

The best way to connect to the land is to get out on it. Many of WLT’s 30 preserves throughout Westchester and eastern Putnam counties have trails that are readily accessible to the public year-round and free of charge. Whether you are looking for a meadow, forest, wetland, or scenic vista, WLT has a special place for you to visit close by. We encourage you to get out for a walk on any and all of them. To view a complete list of all our preserves open to the public, please visit “Enjoying the Land” on our website westchesterlandtrust.org.
WLT’s Farmland Match program, VegChester, links farmers who need land with property owners who have land to lease. The goal of this program is to ensure that land with agricultural value stays in production, is considered for permanent protection, and that new and beginning farmers who might not have the resources to purchase land in Westchester have the opportunity to farm here.

WLT works with conservation partners throughout the Hudson Valley to actively explore and refine new conservation tools and techniques that address the issues of farmland accessibility, affordability, and sustainability.

WLT’s Sugar Hill Farm headquarters is also one of the Food Bank for Westchester’s five Food Growing Program farm sites which supplies much needed fresh produce to local food pantries and soup kitchens. Volunteers help manage our farm during twice-monthly volunteer-days from April through October.
Thinking about protecting your land for generations to come?
Looking for a local preserve to hike?
Interested in our Farmland Match Program?
Want to be a Force for Nature by making a tax deductible contribution or by volunteering?

Contact us. We can’t wait to hear from you!