



# FINGER LAKES LAND TRUST

## ANNUAL PROGRAM SUMMARY

2013 - 2014



## Conserving special places...

The Finger Lakes Land Trust protected more than 1,100 acres of the region's most beloved lands during the last fiscal year. Using many different conservation tools, the Land Trust partnered with landowners, communities, and municipal and non-profit leaders to accomplish its work and advance its mission.

### **New Land Trust-owned conservation lands**

One way the Land Trust protects our region's lands and waters is by owning land outright. These lands are open to the community for a variety of uses including hiking, birding, learning and exploring. Currently, the Land Trust has 32 preserves spread across the region for all to enjoy. The following projects represent new lands acquired in the last year. With careful planning and a lot of hard work, the Land Trust hopes to open two new preserves to the public in the coming year and will continue to expand existing properties.

### **Hinchcliff Family Preserve**

#### *Skaneateles Lake Watershed, Spafford, Onondaga County*

206 acres of hillside meadows and forests with rugged gorges and sweeping views, these protected lands stretch for more than a mile across the steep slopes overlooking Skaneateles Lake. The property borders State Route 41 and Covey Road and is adjacent to existing conservation land on two sides.

This complicated acquisition combines two separate projects: a larger 190 acre section that extends lengthwise above the lake and a critical trail corridor connecting this area to Ripley Hill Nature Preserve – a property we helped the Central New York Land Trust protect.

The project is part of a larger effort to create a greenbelt that will ultimately extend around the southern half of Skaneateles Lake, ensuring the integrity of the area's scenic landscapes, protecting the lake's water quality and the City of Syracuse's drinking water, and providing the public with a wide range of outdoor recreational opportunities. It is one of seven projects the Land Trust has completed at the south end of the lake and was funded by the generosity of many individuals, with lead support from the extended Hinchcliff family.



Overlooking the Hinchcliff Family Preserve and the south end of Skaneateles Lake/Bill Hecht



## **Dorothy McIlroy Bird Sanctuary, Maneri Addition**

### *Fall Creek Corridor, Summerhill, Cayuga County*

With this latest 86 acre addition, the Dorothy McIlroy Bird Sanctuary now spans 250 acres. These lands were added as part of an ongoing effort to protect this area of particularly rich fish and wildlife habitat, recognized as a priority project within New York State's Open Space Plan. Extensive wetlands filter runoff to Fall Creek – a state stocked trout stream and the largest tributary to Cayuga Lake. These wetlands are also home to rare plants and, together with adjacent forests, are recognized by the National Audubon Society as one of New York State's Important Bird Areas. The Land Trust's most recent addition links two existing portions of the McIlroy Sanctuary and buffers a long stretch of Fall Creek. Partial funding for the project was provided by a grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's North American Wetland Conservation Act (NAWCA) grant program.

## **Charles Spencer Nature Preserve**

### *Emerald Necklace, Newfield, Tompkins County*

The Land Trust received a 196 acre land gift near Cornell University's Arnot Forest from the LUA Corporation, a partnership created between four friends in the 1970s who purchased the property out of their mutual commitment to protecting the region and desire to own a secluded retreat. The preserve harbors stands of mature forest, streams, wet meadows, and grasslands that offer sweeping valley views. These lands fall within the Chesapeake Bay watershed, and in the heart of the Emerald



Charles Spencer Nature Preserve/Andy Zepp

Necklace – a proposed greenbelt that will ultimately link more than 50,000 acres of existing public open space extending in a broad arc around Ithaca. The Land Trust has already secured more than 3,000 acres within the Emerald Necklace, which is recognized as a priority project within New York State's Open Space Plan.

### **Permanent protection of privately owned conservation lands**

Over the past year, we collaborated with a number of land owners and partners who looked to the Land Trust to hold their lands in safekeeping for the benefit of future generations. To this end, we often use a tool called a conservation easement to help land owners permanently protect their land. This tool allows lands to remain in private ownership and on local tax rolls, but limits future development and protects environmentally sensitive features.

## **Argetsinger Farm**

### *Hector, Schuyler County*

The Land Trust completed two projects permanently protecting a 72 acre vineyard overlooking Seneca Lake's eastern shore by purchasing conservation easements on two parcels. Funding for the project was provided through a competitive grant program administered by New York State's Department of Agriculture & Markets. The easement will prevent future development, allow the farm to remain in private ownership, and ensure protection of a stream and gorge on the property.



Sam Argetsinger and Argetsinger Farm  
Courtesy of Star-Gazette, Elmira, NY

## LUA Corporation

### *Emerald Necklace, Newfield, Tompkins County*

When the LUA Corporation gave the Land Trust 196 acres to create the Charles Spencer Nature Preserve, they also donated a conservation easement on an additional 24 adjacent acres.

## Yellow Barn Conservation Easements, 1 & 2

### *Emerald Necklace, Dryden, Tompkins County*

An anonymous family donated two easements on adjoining lands that protect nearly 110 acres with more than a half-mile of shared border with Yellow Barn State Forest. The properties are located near the headwaters of Six Mile Creek, the source of Ithaca's drinking water, and add to a nearly continuous arc of conserved land that includes three state forests, a Cornell Natural Area, and the Land Trust's Roy H. Park Preserve. A \$5,500 grant from Tompkins County's Capital Reserve Fund for Natural, Scenic, and Recreational Resource Protection helped cover costs associated with the project.



## Rybinski Farm

### *Pompey, Onondaga County*

By forever protecting their 248 acre property with a conservation easement, John and Katie Rybinski ensured the integrity of their land forever. The property, set within a larger landscape dominated by forest, agriculture and wetlands, provides habitat for a wide range of birds and other wildlife

Rybinski Farm/ John Rybinski

### Partnership projects

The Land Trust relies on close partnerships with non-profits, and local, state and the federal governments to advance land conservation across the greater Finger Lakes region. This past year, we collaborated with many different groups to complete important land protection projects.

## Bock-Harvey Forest Preserve

### *Emerald Necklace, Enfield, Tompkins County*

The Land Trust worked closely with the Bock family and the Finger Lakes Trail Conference to protect a 48-acre property that hosts a ½ mile of the Finger Lakes Trail, and a remnant stand of old-growth maple trees.

The new preserve is owned by the Finger Lakes Trail Conference, managed by the Cayuga Trails Club and under an easement held by the Land Trust.



Bock-Harvey Forest Preserve/ Betsy Darlington



## **Pine Tree Wildlife Preserve**

### *Six Mile Creek Watershed - Ithaca, Tompkins County*

The Land Trust partnered with the Town of Ithaca and an anonymous local family to expand a public conservation area that includes the East Ithaca Nature Preserve and the Pew multi-use trail. The family gave 14 additional acres just off Pine Tree Road to the town, and the Land Trust holds a conservation easement on the property. Protection of the land creates an area of contiguous conserved land that totals nearly 40 acres.

## **Queen Catharine Marsh**

### *Montour Falls, Schuyler County*

The Land Trust accepted 140 acres bordering the Catharine Creek Wildlife Management Area and the Catharine Valley Trail from Enterprise Products Partners L.P. The property is part of a wildlife-rich wetland complex that spans more than 1,000 acres and has been recognized by the National Audubon Society as one of New York State's Important Bird Areas. Acquisition of these wetlands is the fifth project completed by the Finger Lakes Land Trust to secure natural resources found in the vicinity of Watkins Glen and Montour Falls.

## **Lipman Property**

### *High Tor Wildlife Management Area - Naples, Ontario County*

Just over nine acres of steeply sloping hardwood forest with more than 1,300 feet bordering State Route 21 were given to the Land Trust by the Lipman family. The property, located adjacent to High Tor Wildlife Management Area, was considered a priority for protection due to the important role it plays in helping to maintain water quality and also because it is located within a National Audubon Society Important Bird Area. This acquisition represents the Finger Lakes Land Trust's tenth land protection project completed in the vicinity of the High Tor Wildlife Management Area.

## **Glattley Property**

### *Bare Hill - Middlesex, Yates County*

This five acre forested property, located near the summit of Bare Hill, was recognized as a priority for protection. The Land Trust intends to sell the property to New York State as an addition to Bare Hill Unique Area when funding is available. Bare Hill is well known locally as the scenic ridge that rises 865 feet above Canandaigua Lake's eastern shore just north of Vine Valley. Old photos show that the area was indeed "bare" in the past, but today it is largely forested, except for its summit which is covered with a mix of meadows and shrub lands.



Queen Catharine Marsh and Watkins Glen/ Bill Hecht

## A Noteworthy Year!

### Land Gift

Tom Reimers, long-time volunteer and dear Land Trust friend, donated his 53-acre retreat property in Danby, Tompkins County. His beautiful property is already subject to a conservation easement and will be resold with the easement intact. All proceeds from the sale will be reinvested by the Land Trust and will be used to protect additional lands and waters across the region.



Andy Zepp

### Shoreline to Summit

The Land Trust completed an ambitious capital campaign this year, raising five million dollars to advance conservation efforts across the Finger Lakes and protecting important lands and waters along the way. Dollars raised during the campaign: protected over 400 acres of important habitat, more than 23,000 feet of land bordering our creeks,

and over 3,000 feet of undeveloped lakefront; created four new preserves across the region; expanded our outreach and education efforts; and bolstered our stewardship fund to support long-term management of over 16,000 acres of land.



Stephen E Tompson

### 25th Anniversary

The Land Trust was incorporated in 1989, making 2014 our 25th anniversary year. We celebrated on June 21st by hosting a hike, bike, paddle, run, potluck or other outdoor event in each of the 12 counties we serve across the region.

### Learn with the Land Trust

Children, families, and community members across the region all had a chance to learn with the Land Trust

this year. We held more than 15 “Talks and Treks,” our series of free, naturalist-led hikes, and expanded our Story Walk project at the Ellis Hollow Nature Preserve in Tompkins County. We also hosted volunteer work days, which provided groups of children and adults a chance to help manage our lands, and gave focused presentations to landowners, municipal leaders, and conservation groups.

### Over 16,000 Acres to Manage

The Land Trust’s stewardship staff has been diligently working with a growing network of volunteers and interns to manage our 32 nature preserves, over 35 miles of trails, and more than 100 conservation easement properties.

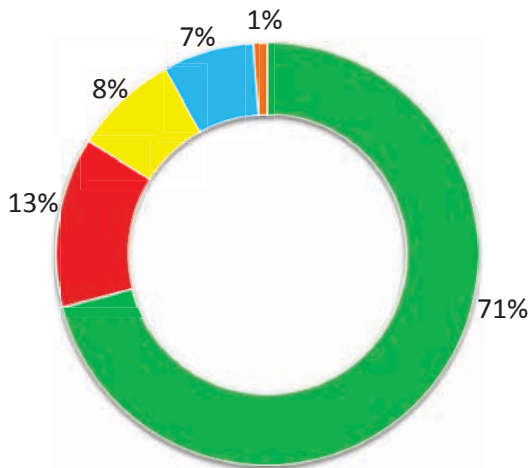


Edie Jodz



# FINGER LAKES LAND TRUST 2013-2014 OPERATING FINANCIAL SUMMARY\*

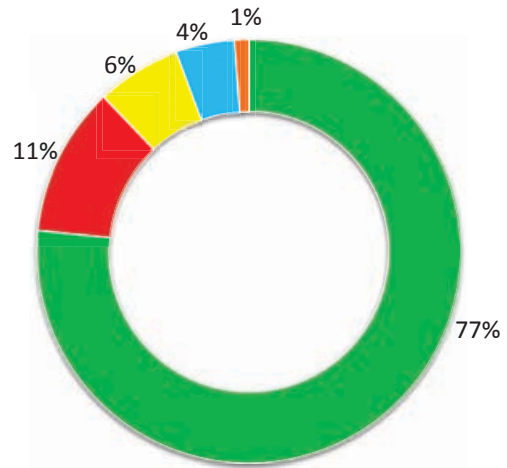
## REVENUE



- Individual Contributions (\$636,848)
- Campaign and Project Transfers (\$116,490)
- Grants (\$74,300)
- Earnings from Stewardship Fund (\$58,454)
- Investment Income (\$7,177)
- In-kind Donations (\$1,299)

**Total Revenue: \$894,568**

## EXPENSES



- Personnel (\$677,928)
- Non-Staff Operating Costs (\$100,990)
- Outside Services (\$57,347)
- Occupancy (\$39,213)
- Transaction Fees (\$9,530)

**Total Expenses: \$885,008**

**Net Ordinary Income: \$9,560**

\* Unaudited. Income does not include **\$1,395,858** in additional funding raised for land protection projects, stewardship funds, and campaigns.



Story Walk at the Ellis Hollow Nature Preserve/Rick Lightbody





Rick Lightbody

*The Finger Lakes Land Trust was founded in 1989 to work with landowners and local communities to conserve those lands that define the character of the Finger Lakes region.*

**Officers:**

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Cover photos by Rick Lightbody (*top left*), Melissa Groo (*top right*), Chuck Feil (*bottom left*), Pete Wiedmann (*bottom right*)

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