



CONSERVED ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21 FOREVER



Cover: Lindsay-Parsons Biodiversity Preserve, Long Creek Photography; Above: Clark Gully, Nigel Kent

Dear Friends of the Finger Lakes,



The Finger Lakes Land Trust is pleased to present the following report, filled with good news and highlights of our greatest accomplishments this past fiscal year. We hope it will bring you joy to read about the many conservation successes you helped make possible during these challenging times.

With the help of dedicated volunteers, our team now stewards over 27,000 acres, including over 45 nature preserves with more than 47 miles of hiking trails and 160 conservation easements that protect privately owned lands.

We are immensely grateful for you – one of over 3,400 Finger Lakes families who have given generously and invested in our mission so we can protect more of the lands and waters we all love. We know this work is more important now than ever before, and with your continued support, we see a bright future ahead for generations to come.

With gratitude,

Andrew Zepp
Executive Director

Dave Birchenough
Board President



CLEAN WATER

Six Mile Creek, Scott Levine

Protecting Six Mile Creek and Ithaca's drinking water

The FLLT completed three conservation easements this year that protect Six Mile Creek – a public drinking water source for Ithaca. The first protects 171 forested acres with ponds and seasonal tributaries in Dryden, Tompkins County. The easement protects drinking water by prohibiting development on the property's steep slopes which drain into the creek. While the easement was generously donated, the FLLT received a grant from the City of Ithaca's Six Mile Creek Watershed Protection Fund to support this project.

The remaining two easements were completed in partnership with New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and were funded in part through the state's Water Quality Improvement Project (WQIP) Program. The first protects 13.5 acres with 1,100 feet of frontage on Six Mile Creek in Dryden. The FLLT is working with Tompkins County Soil and Water Conservation District to restore stream banks on the property to prevent runoff into the creek.

The third easement protects 126 acres with more than 6,200 feet of frontage on the creek in Caroline. The property features picturesque farmland as well as forests

and wetlands that contribute to critical water protection, helping to slow runoff, filter and absorb pollutants, and reduce drinking water treatment costs. In addition to the WQIP grant, FLLT also received funding from the City of Ithaca and Tompkins County to provide long-term stewardship for this easement.

Acquisition adds to protection of Skaneateles Lake

The 68-acre acquisition in Niles, Cayuga County features steep hillsides overlooking Skaneateles Lake, extensive road frontage, and more than two miles of streambanks on nine tributaries, making it significant for watershed protection. This latest project is



Six Mile Creek, FLLT



located within an FLLT focus area known as the Skaneateles Highlands, an arc of high hills extending from Carpenter Falls on the lake's western shore to the Staghorn Cliffs in the east. This land was purchased from Cayuga County, which acquired the property through tax foreclosure.

Conserving and restoring lands in the Owasco Flats

The FLLT acquired a 38-acre property with 785 feet of frontage along the Owasco Inlet, immediately adjacent to the Owasco Flats Wildlife Management Area in Cayuga County. An important area ecologically, the flats are

part of the National Audubon Society-designated Greater Summerhill Important Bird Area, and protecting lands here also safeguards the water quality of Owasco Lake. The FLLT is partnering with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to conduct wetland restoration activities on the land prior to conveying it to DEC.

Securing lands bordering Owasco Inlet

A new conservation easement permanently protects 93 acres in the Owasco Lake watershed, featuring wetlands, agricultural fields, woodlands, and 4,710 feet of frontage on the Owasco Inlet and a tributary in Groton, Tompkins County. Protecting



lands here safeguards the water quality of Owasco Lake by filtering runoff to the inlet. The land, donated to the FLLT in 2019 with the understanding it would be sold, was recently purchased by a private buyer subject to an easement limiting development and permanently protecting this environmentally sensitive parcel. Proceeds from the sale will be used to support the FLLT's growing land protection and stewardship programs.

Bear Swamp project a win for wildlife, water quality, and recreation

The 102-acre property, located in Sempronius, Cayuga County, is bordered to the north by Bear Swamp State Forest and



Bear Swamp, Rob Howard

contains 2,275 feet of frontage on Bear Swamp Creek - a critical tributary to Skaneateles Lake. Situated at the southern end of the state forest, the property also contains 26 acres of wetlands, diverse tree species, and a well-maintained trail system. The FLLT purchased the land and intends to transfer the property to the state as an addition to Bear Swamp State Forest. This is the organization's sixth project in the vicinity of the forest.



Otisco shoreline protected through public-private partnership

The 35-acre property in Onondaga County featuring 2,300 feet of undeveloped shoreline at the southeastern end of Otisco Lake was identified as a priority for protection due to its extensive shoreline and role maintaining the lake's water quality. The acquisition was accomplished through a partnership between the FLLT, DEC, and Onondaga County. DEC helped fund the project through its WQIP – an initiative to support the protection and restoration of environmentally sensitive lands that buffer public drinking water supplies. Onondaga County will own and manage the site as a public conservation area and the FLLT will retain and monitor a perpetual conservation easement.



Kehoe Nature Preserve, Chris Ray

Tree planting on Otisco lakeshore and Chemung River streambanks

650 native trees and shrubs were planted along Otisco Lake by FLLT staff, a contractor, and members of the Onondaga Earth Corp, a Syracuse-based group with the mission “to empower youth to be active participants in creating positive change for their communities and the environment.” The plantings will buffer wetlands and lakeshores on the property.

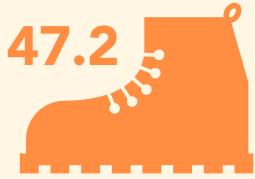
Restoration efforts at our Kehoe Nature Preserve in Big Flats, Chemung County include planting 1,200 native trees and shrubs in partnership with the Upper Susquehanna Coalition. Establishing native plants at this site, which includes 1,480 feet of frontage on the Chemung River, will enhance wildlife habitat, promote native plant diversity, and create an important forest buffer.

Vernal pools in the Skaneteles watershed

At the FLLT's Staghorn Cliffs Nature Preserve, the Land Trust worked with the Partners for Fish and Wildlife program of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to construct five vernal pools in a former agricultural field. These pools provide habitat for amphibians and other wildlife while also detaining runoff and helping to maintain water quality within nearby Skaneateles Lake – the unfiltered drinking water supply for the City of Syracuse.



FLLT BY THE NUMBERS



47.2

miles of hiking trails
ready to explore



21,500

feet of protected
lakeshore



1000+

acres
preserved
each year

570 miles of



3,400 members

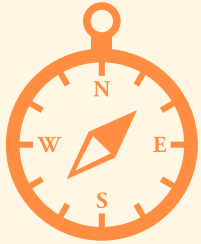


200 volunteers



345

parcels conserved
permanently

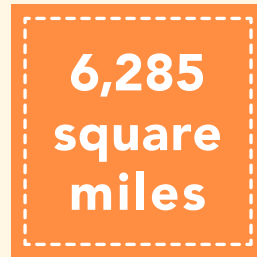


27,625
acres
protected
forever



28
nature preserves
with deer-hunting by permit

we work in



across 12 counties

we've spent



protecting lands & waters



Birdsall Farm, Matt Champlin

310 acres of pastures, fields, and woodlands protected

The FLLT completed two conservation easements, protecting 310 acres of pastures, crop fields, and woodlands at Birdsall Farm in Cortland County. The easements will ensure the property is not subdivided and that it will remain in agriculture in perpetuity. The property also contains scenic frontage on State Route 41 and several small streams that eventually drain into Factory Brook, a state-classified trout stream and tributary of the Tioughnioga River. Funds for the project came from the state's Farmland Protection Implementation Grants (FPIG) program.

Over 600 acres of Ontario County farmland protected

A conservation easement ensures protection of 606 acres of farmland at Kim-Mar Farms in Canandaigua and Hopewell, Ontario County. Funds for the project came from the state's FPIG Program as well as the Town of Canandaigua. The farm is located just off State Route 332 in an area with intense development pressure. Kim-Mar Farms is the fifth farm protected through a partnership between New York State, the Town of Canandaigua, and the FLLT.





324 acres of farmland, forest, and wetlands protected in Fall Creek watershed

Prince Farm in Tompkins County is located on both sides of State Route 13 near its intersection with Ringwood Road, a prime location for development. In addition to open space used for farming, the 324-acre property contains approximately two-thirds of the Etna Swamp, a wetland designated by Tompkins County as a Unique Natural Area. It also features wooded hills that provide spectacular views of the surrounding countryside. By preventing development, the conservation easements will add to the protection of Fall Creek's water

quality and ensure that the land remains in agriculture. Both the Town of Dryden and Tompkins County provided funding to help cover the transaction costs of the conservation easements and provide for long-term stewardship.



WILD PLACES

Eberhard Nature Preserve, Bill Hecht

143 acre gift in Tompkins County strengthens Emerald Necklace

The FLLT received a generous 143-acre gift of land that features extensive frontage on Coddington Road, steeply sloping woodlands, and is adjacent to three parcels recently acquired by the FLLT as additions to Danby State Forest. The property is located in a Tompkins County-designated Unique Natural Area and within the Emerald Necklace, an ambitious effort to link 50,000 acres of existing public open space that extends in an arc around Ithaca. In the coming year, the FLLT will work with volunteers to create public access to the site and with the Finger Lakes Trail Conference to reroute part of the trail through what will become a new public nature preserve opening in 2022.



SCENIC VISTAS

View from Bare Hill, Niguel Kent

Eighth protection project on Bare Hill

The FLLT acquired 20 wooded acres on Bare Hill—the iconic promontory overlooking Canandaigua Lake’s eastern shore that is well known in the region for its scenic views and its cultural significance to the Seneca Nation. The property, which represents the organization’s eighth project in the area, provides an important connection between state lands on Bare Hill and two other parcels previously acquired by the FLLT. When public funds are available, all three parcels will be transferred to the DEC as additions to state land.

New nature preserve in Keuka Lake watershed

Located just north of Branchport, the new 26-acre Botsford Nature Preserve features streamside woodlands, open meadows, and a hiking trail that leads visitors to Big Gully Creek. In summer, a short walk up the gully reveals scenic waterfalls, towering shale cliffs, and mature hemlock trees.

Owasco Bluffs nature preserve opening

The FLLT opened a new 74-acre nature preserve with 1,100 feet of undeveloped shoreline overlooking Owasco Lake. The preserve features a one-mile trail that winds its way across meadows and through woods, ending at a scenic overlook

that offers spectacular views of the lake. This is only the third publicly accessible park or conservation area on the lake itself and it is the sixth conservation project completed by the FLLT within the Owasco Lake watershed.

Adding to the emerald necklace near Connecticut Hill

A 66-acre acquisition directly adjacent to Connecticut Hill Wildlife Management Area will prevent future subdivision, maintain wildlife habitat connectivity, and expand recreational opportunities in Tompkins County. The recently protected property features a mix of fields and forests, wetlands, and extensive road frontage. Connecticut



Owasco Bluffs Nature Preserve, Bill Hecht



Hill is the largest wildlife management area in the state and is a popular destination for outdoor recreation. It is also an important component of the Emerald Necklace – an ongoing effort to link existing public open space that extends in an arc around Ithaca. The FLLT intends to transfer the land to the state as an addition to Connecticut Hill when funds become available.

Enhanced public access at Steege Hill Nature Preserve

Visit our biggest nature preserve! With help from Greater Southern Tier BOCES, the Town of Big Flats Highway Department, Chemung County Soil and Water Conservation District, and many volunteers,

the FLLT built a new parking area, trailhead, interpretive kiosk, and entry trail at our largest nature preserve. A grant from the New York State Conservation Partnership Program administered by the Land Trust Alliance in coordination with the DEC made this important public access project possible.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION AT THE FLLT

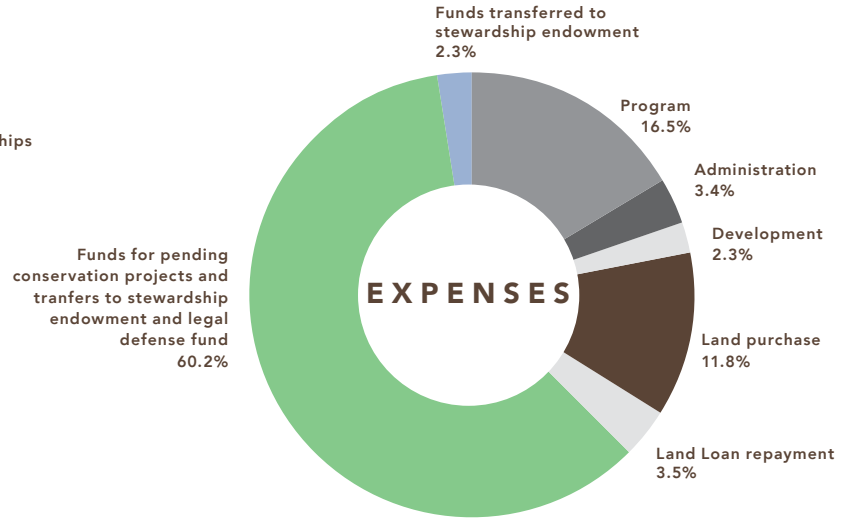
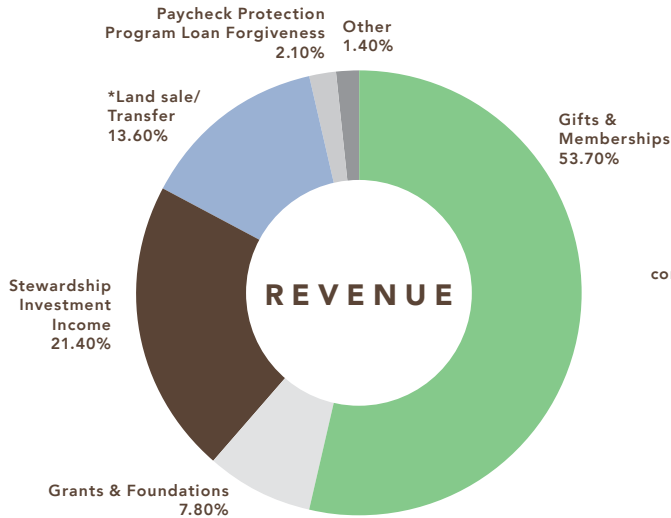


The Finger Lakes Land Trust is committed to building community by promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion among our many constituents. We have embarked on a journey of discovery that promises to strengthen the organization, advance our enduring conservation mission, and allow us to better meet the diverse needs of our region. Highlights of our public engagement to date include:

- Co-sponsoring a presentation by Dr. Carolyn Finney titled “2020 Vision: A Black Walden & Other Musings” with partner organizations
- Creating an Indigenous Lands Acknowledgement Statement and attending a cultural sensitivity training facilitated by representatives of the Haudenosaunee Environmental Task Force
- Awarding over \$50,000 in grants to six Rochester non-profits that connect inner city youth to nature
- Completing an organizational assessment developed by the Michigan Non-Profit Association
- Participating in Latino Conservation week by hosting two events in partnership with the Latino Civic Association

To learn more about the FLLT’s commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, please visit fllt.org/DEI.

FINANCIALS 2020-2021



Gifts & Memberships	\$4,682,726.08
Grants & Foundations	\$684,799.86
Stewardship Investment Income	\$1,869,532.89
Land sale/Transfer	\$1,187,000.00
Paycheck Protection Program Loan Forgiveness	\$187,237.00
Other	\$116,901.07
Total	\$8,728,196.90

*lands added to public holdings or sold subject to a perpetual conservation easement per prior agreement with donor.

Unaudited financials for fiscal year ending June 30, 2020. Does not include the value of donated land and conservation easements.

Program	\$1,442,604.72
Administration	\$299,582.24
Development	\$203,330.00
Land purchase	\$1,027,846.61
Land Loan repayment	\$301,000.00
Funds for pending conservation projects and transfers to stewardship endowment and legal defense fund	\$5,253,833.33
Funds transferred to stewardship endowment	\$200,000.00
Total	\$8,728,196.90





TO CONSERVE FOREVER THE LANDS AND WATERS
OF THE FINGER LAKES REGION, ENSURING
SCENIC VISTAS, LOCAL FOODS, CLEAN WATER,
AND WILD PLACES FOR EVERYONE.