

# A FOOT IN THE FIELD



## A Resource for Conservation Landowners in the Finger Lakes Region

Winter 2021-22

Vol. 13 Issue 1

Time in the woods, enjoying the fresh air and natural surroundings. That's what I love most about deer hunting, hiking a trail, taking on a new FLLT nature preserve, or just exploring an unknown patch of forest. When I was in college, I had a voracious appetite for field ecology. I loved using field guides to learn new plants and animals, and even pressed plants and wrote about their natural history for a class. Working for land conservation organizations has allowed me opportunities to learn about and appreciate native species even more, and also the non-native species that have invaded our region.

No matter how much I learn, I always feel that I am just scratching the surface of knowledge about the incredible and complex natural world. I'm constantly impressed and humbled by other people who spend far more time than me carefully observing species and nature interactions (I'm thinking of you Betsy Darlington...). But I try not to get discouraged about how little I seem to know. It's really just a matter of making some time to observe quietly, look things up, and listen to others. Anyone can expand their knowledge and appreciation of nature, and it starts right outside your back door.

This issue of Afoot in the Field is devoted to resources for learning more about your natural surroundings, with a lot of good websites and apps suggestions provided by FLLT Conservation Easement Steward Hailey Nase. It is also a reminder to stop and appreciate just how incredible the wild world of nature is, whether on the plains of Africa, within the boundless ocean, or in a wetland in the Finger Lakes, and we give a heart-felt thanks to Katy Payne for her essay about that.

Chris Olney  
Director of Stewardship



# Connecting to the Land

*By: Hailey Nase*

Over the last two years, I've spent a lot more time at home. Specifically, I re-familiarized myself with the acre behind my parent's house in New Hampshire. Growing up, I spent the majority of my summers playing in the woods with my sister and neighbors. To this day, I haven't spent more collective hours anywhere else, and as a result, I know that spot better than any other place in the world. I know which branches to use when climbing the old trees and how to avoid getting sap all over my hands. I know how to navigate the rusty barbed wire fence and which rocks in the stone wall are loose.

I understood the basics of my backyard environment but did not know the names of each species. Thankfully by listening to others identify plants and animals my species vocabulary grew. After a carelessly barefoot run through the woods one day, my mom taught me how to identify poison ivy. After flipping through dozens of field guides from my uncle, I started to learn more about the organisms in my backyard. The old trees I climbed are eastern white pines and red maples. Downy Woodpeckers were responsible for drilling holes in the pines. After returning home from college I saw the granite stone wall and barbed wire fence in a different way. They were showing me the past agricultural uses on the land. After learning more about invasive species, I researched ways to fend off the invasive Japanese knotweed that lines the riverbank in front of my parent's house.

## Why should I learn about my land?

- Enhanced appreciation for nature
- Species identification
- Invasive species identification & management
- Contribute to citizen science
- Track environmental changes
- Know the history of your property
- Enhance the wildlife & native species
- Deeper connection with the organisms that live on the land
- FUN!

Photo By: Jill Ketchen



**Hailey Nase**

Conservation Easement Steward

When you know your land you can notice changes over time, such as the frost that never seems to come; how early black-eye-susans bloom; that a small patch of an invasive species is creeping into the neighborhood; or a new bird species in a tree. Such observations help you have a better understanding and connection to your land, and can help scientists better track changes in the environment. Building ecological knowledge takes time but is rewarding.

# Where to learn more:



The **Cornell Lab** of Ornithology [www.birds.cornell.edu/home](http://www.birds.cornell.edu/home)

Weekly Saturday morning bird walks & weekly webinars.



**Cayuga Nature Center - Paleontological  
Research Institutions - Museum of The Earth**

Did you find a rock in your backyard? Do you think it might be a fossil? Bring it to the Museum on Saturdays from 10 am – 5 pm for fossil ID.

## Nature Centers in the Finger Lakes:

GoFingerLakes.com provides a list of each nature center by county in the Finger Lakes. Find what Nature Center is closest to you!

Learn more about the history of your land  
and what humans first called it home:

@ [native-land.ca](http://native-land.ca)

## Finger Lakes PRISM:

This website provides information about invasive species in the area including species identification and management. Educational and outreach programs.



## Tips for Spotting Wildlife



### 1. **Safety First!**

Do not approach wildlife. Keep your distance and bring binoculars to see from further away.

### 2. **Slow down or Stop completely**

Slowing your movement lessens your noise impact, it allows you to hear more, and you are less likely to spook an animal. Sit down or lean against a tree, let the woods settle, and listen for the bird songs and chipmunk chatter.

### 3. **Location**

Find a spot that is frequented by wildlife. Look for animal trails, food sources like fruit trees, thick cover (ex. bushes), and water sources.

### 4. **Timing**

Many animals are most active during the early morning and twilight hours.

### 5. **Set up a trail camera**

Sometimes the best way to see wildlife is to set up a motion-sensor camera at a stream crossing or on a trail. This is a less intrusive way to see wildlife and you can share your images with your neighbors and FLLT!

# Knowledge is at your fingertips!

Just with your phone, you can have access to the world of species identification. You can identify and report most species, without having to lug lots of field guides into the woods.

## **iMapInvasive:**

Helps detect and share information about the location of invasive species. Visit [nyimapinvasives.org](http://nyimapinvasives.org) for trainings & events.

## **Merlin Bird ID & Audubon:**

Bird identification apps help ID the bird by answering questions about size, color, tail & wing shape, etc.

## **Shroomify Mushroom:**

Helps you identify fungi with questions about shape, size, color, gills, etc. Provides a list each month of common seasonal fungi.

## **LeafSnap:**

Snap a photo of the plant's leaf, flowers, fruit, or bark, and the app will help you identify the plant and give you an overview.

## **Nature's Notebook:**

Contribute to citizen science and track seasonal changes in plants and animals.

## **New York Natural Heritage Program:**

Allows you to learn about rare animal, plants, and ecological communities in NY.

## **Avenza Maps:**

Want to be able to view your property boundaries and see your GPS location? Email Hailey @ [haileynase@flt.org](mailto:haileynase@flt.org) and she can send you a digital map with your property boundary.

## **Seek & iNaturalist:**

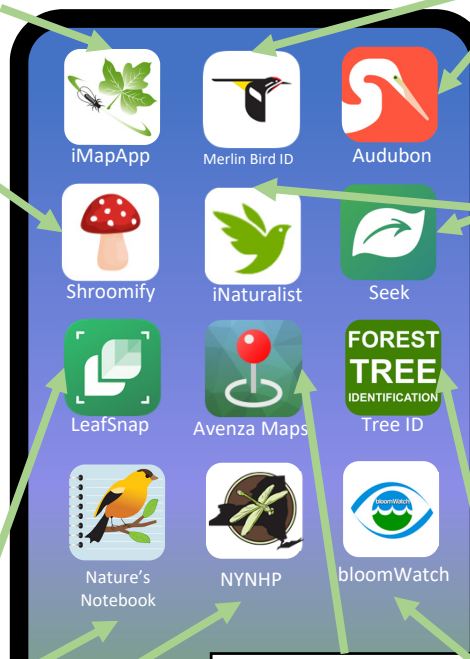
ID and report everything from plants, fungi, insects, and mammals. Take a photo and the app helps ID the species, and shows you other similar species.

## **Forest Tree ID:**

Helps you identify trees with questions about leaf type, arrangement, size, and shape. Provides a description once identified.

## **EPA Bloom Watch:**

Trains you on how to identify a potential dangerous algal bloom and allows you to contribute your findings as a citizen scientist.



SCAN to access Apps & Websites referenced

# UNWANTED

## Spotted Lanternfly *Lycorma delicatula*



Photos: Cornell CALS & NYSIPM



**Origin:** Plants from Asia, first identified in Pennsylvania in 2014.

**Description:** The adult spotted lanternfly has red hind wings with black spots, a black head, and a yellow abdomen. The young nymphs are black with white spots and wingless, and as they mature their black bodies turn red.

**Crimes:** Their piercing-sucking mouthparts allow them to puncture leaves, stems, and trunks to feed on sugary sap. Negative effects on grapes, hops, apples, blueberries, and stone fruits. They excrete a sappy liquid called honeydew that makes everything sticky and promotes fungus growth.

**Reward:** If you believe you've seen this insect, (1) take a photo, (2) collect a sample & place it in a freezer or in a jar with rubbing alcohol or hand sanitizer, and (3) scan QR code or go to [agriculture.ny.gov/spottedlanternfly](http://agriculture.ny.gov/spottedlanternfly) to report sighting. The increase of spotted lanternflies will have a significant impact on NY's grapes, apples, and other crops. Help protect our vineyards and orchards.



**Last Seen:** Current infestations are mainly located in Pennsylvania; however spotted lanternfly has been found in Tompkins County.

**Allies:** Usually first seen on Tree-of-Heaven.

### Learn More About Invasive Species



*Uninvited* is a documentary sponsored by the NYSDEC that explores the threat of invasive species on New York's environment and economy. The documentary explains the current threats and work to mitigate the risks.

# Landowner Profile



Photo By: Jamie Huynh

## Katharine "Katy" Boynton Payne

Biologists, Researcher, Author, &  
Conservation Easement Landowner

Katy is a retired bioacoustics researcher from the Laboratory of Ornithology at Cornell University. She spent many years researching whale songs and the use of "infrasound" by elephants. Katy is the founder of the Elephant Listening Project. She also donated a conservation easement to FLLT in 1990.

## Thoughts from Katy

Way back when the Finger Lakes Land Trust was in its infancy, my easement was one of the first. It was and is still one of the smallest – only fourteen acres – but what a piece of land! A north-south valley runs through it: if the glaciers that melted in this area twenty and ten thousand years ago had sunk their teeth a little deeper they would have left another finger lake here. But in place of a lake we have a shallow swamp. A swamp alive with peepers, green frogs and bullfrogs, wood ducks, great blue herons, red-wing blackbirds, beavers, weasels, otters, and fishers, coming and going among each other and raising their families among the cattails, phragmites, and an ever-changing array of alders. Every year a different assemblage of voices, displays, migrations and mysteries.

A stream runs through the swamp. This headwater of Cascadilla Creek delivers its contents into Cayuga Lake and thence into the Delaware Bay, but the hills flanking the swamp on the north deliver into the St. Lawrence seaway. So my land lies on a watershed divide.

And within the swamp there's another divide, for just upstream from here we find a double-ended pond. Water flowing over a beaver dam on one side flows into Cascadilla, while on the other side a different beaver dam leads into Six-Mile Creek. What have we here? An ancient divide created by glaciers and a fresh one created by beavers.



Photo By: Hannah George

The agreement I worked out with Carl Leopold and Betsy Darlington in the precious early days of my presence here was utterly simple. I wished to limit human intrusions into the sequence of natural happenings as much as possible. We left a few acres near the house out of the agreement, in case I, or those who succeed me, might want to do a little farming. But so far, the most significant intrusion I have made has been to deepen a small pond between my house and the swamp for swimming and skating. I used to be a whale scientist, recording and listening to the songs of whales. This little pond is now my Atlantic and Pacific oceans and the peepers are my whales. The sun and the moon rise over the pond and reflect in it in every season. They reflect my commitment and desires for all the wild inhabitants of this place, while I am here and after I am gone.

Downstream from my land, Cascadilla Creek runs beside a few fields, then through the campus of Cornell University, by which time it has become a sizable gorge containing a mile-long sequence of romping waterfalls. After dropping more than 400 feet, the stream reaches the flats that support most of Ithaca, and finally pours into Cayuga Lake. I am writing this note in the aftermath of a period of lots and lots of rain. Enlarged by the recent deluge, the falls are leaping as they transport water from my land over the ancient rock bed in their passage to the lake, where they will mingle again with their sister waters from Six Mile.

As Cascadilla gallops along she is singing a song, to which Gerard Manley Hopkins gave the following words (in his poem "Inversnaid"):

### **Inversnaid**

**By: Gerard Manley Hopkins**

**This darksome burn, horseback brown,  
His rollrock highroad roaring down,  
In coop and in comb the fleece of his foam  
Flutes and low to the lake falls home.**

**A windpuff-bonnet of fáawn-fróth  
Turns and twindles over the froth  
Of a pool so pitchblack, féll-frówning,  
It rounds and rounds Despair to drowning.**

**Degged with dew, dappled with dew,  
Are the groins of the braes that the brook runs through,  
Wiry heathpacks, flitches of fern,  
And the beadbonny ash that sits over the burn.**

**What would the world be, once bereft  
Of wet and of wildness? Let them be left,  
O let them be left, wildness and wet;  
Long live the weeds and the wilderness yet.**

Photo By: Katy Payne

I dedicate my thoughts of this morning to Carl, and to all those who keep up his beautiful work. Thank you every day for the Finger Lakes Land Trust. - KP

# PAYNE CONSERVATION EASEMENT PHOTOS



Photo By: Allison Bennett



Photo By: Hannah George

The Finger Lakes Land Trust is a member supported non-profit conservation organization that works cooperatively with landowners and local communities to conserve forever the lands and waters of the Finger Lakes region, ensuring scenic vistas, local foods, clean water, and wild places for everyone.

Afoot in the Field is provided for landowners in the Finger Lakes region who own conservation easement properties, or who are otherwise committed to land conservation and wildlife habitat protection. For questions regarding your conservation easement, please contact Chris Olney (607) 275-9487 or email [chrisolney@flt.org](mailto:chrisolney@flt.org).



Finger Lakes Land Trust  
202 East Court Street, Ithaca, NY 14850  
(607) 275-9487  
[www.flt.org](http://www.flt.org)

Cover photo by Hailey Nase