



CONSERVED FOREVER

ANNUAL REPORT 2021-22



Cover: Chris Ray; Above: Conklin Gully in High Tor, Nigel Kent



Dear Friends of the Finger Lakes,

Clean water, scenic vistas, local foods, and wild places – these words form the core of the Finger Lakes Land Trust's mission. We are delivering on it every day, providing free access to our nature preserves, protecting important habitats, and working with partners to advance conservation in the Finger Lakes.

We made a real impact during the past fiscal year by conserving an additional 2,300 acres and protecting over 7,000 feet of lakeshore in just twelve months. These critical land and water protection successes are in addition to the tremendous work of our volunteers and stewardship staff who care for our 52 miles of trails and more than 45 nature preserves.

These remarkable achievements are possible because of the support of our members. Thank you! Your commitment, along with the generosity of over 4,000 families across the region, will help us continue protecting the lands and waters we love long into the future.

We invite you to explore highlights of our work over the last year and encourage you reach out if you have questions or would like to get more involved.

With gratitude,

Andrew Zepp
Executive Director

Frederick Van Sickle
Board President



Otisco Lake, Bill Hecht

First New Onondaga County Park in More Than 20 Years

The 35-acre Otisco Shores Conservation Area protects 2,000 feet of lakeshore, providing habitat for waterfowl and Bald Eagles. Before transferring the land to Onondaga County, the FLLT planted hundreds of native trees and shrubs and developed a trail to the lake. The FLLT continues to hold and monitor a conservation easement on the property.



Tuffs Island, Bill Hecht

Protecting Islands in the Susquehanna River

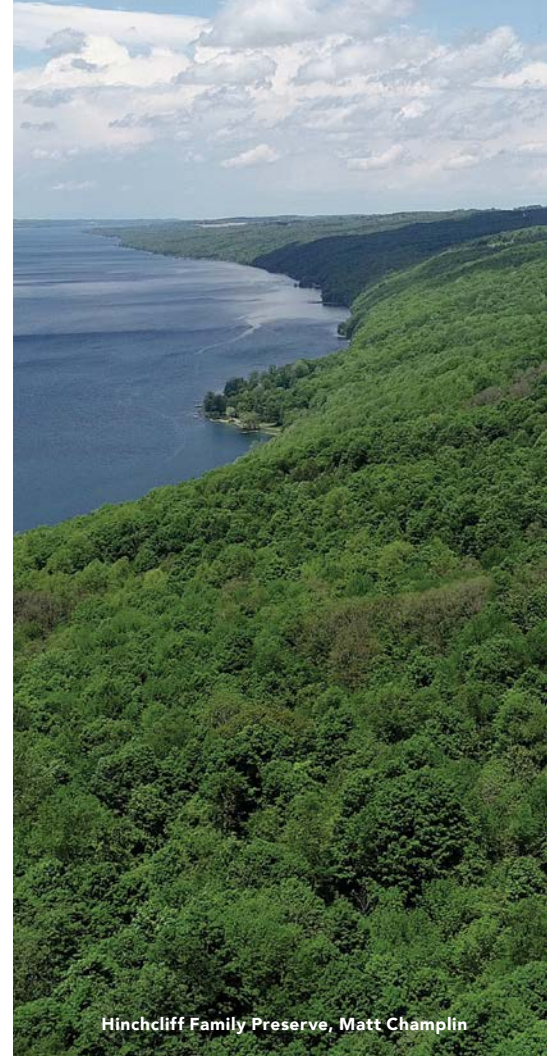
Totalling 41 acres, the two undeveloped islands are collectively known as Tuffs Island and serve as a destination for paddlers in the Southern Tier. The islands contain a mix of woodlands, open habitat, and floodplain forest, and host a variety of wildlife. The FLLT will own and manage the property as a conservation area to safeguard habitat and protect water quality in the Susquehanna River.



Hinchcliff Family Preserve, Chris Ray

Expanding Conservation Corridor Above Skaneateles Lake

28 acres were acquired and added to the Hinchcliff Family Preserve, expanding it to over 300 acres perched above Skaneateles Lake. The new addition secures steep slopes susceptible to erosion, prevents runoff to the lake, and buffers a new hiking trail connecting the preserve with the FLLT's High Vista Nature Preserve.



Hinchcliff Family Preserve, Matt Champlin

Creating the Sims-Jennings Preserve

The FLLT acquired 200 acres with 4,000 feet of cliff lakeshore on the east side of Cayuga Lake in the town of Lansing and protected an additional 43 adjacent acres with a conservation easement. The diverse property features meadows, woodlands, gorges, waterfalls, and lake views. Conserving the site—located directly across from Taughannock Falls State Park—safeguards an important viewshed for the region and helps protect the lake's water quality. The FLLT is busy preparing the 200 acres it acquired for public access in 2023.



Buffering High Tor Wildlife Management Area

The 63-acre property contains a small meadow and mixed hardwood forest directly adjacent to the 6,800-acre wildlife management area. Protecting this property with a conservation easement helps maintain the integrity of Canandaigua Lake's watershed by securing steep slopes that are highly susceptible to erosion.



Protecting Clark Gully

The FLLT purchased a small but critical parcel near the south end of Canandaigua Lake that is surrounded by High Tor Wildlife Management Area and contains the mouth of Clark Gully, a popular local gorge. The 3.4-acre parcel is situated on Great Hill, also known as Nundawao. Great Hill is of special significance to the Seneca Nation and the Seneca are known as "Great Hill People" or Onöndowa'ga:' in their language.



Clark Gully, Nigel Kent



Safeguarding Rochester's Drinking Water Supply

A new conservation easement protects 55 wooded acres in the town of Springwater and is contiguous with the 1,550-acre Harriet Hollister Spencer State Recreation Area. The property is in the Hemlock Lake watershed, a source of drinking water for the city of Rochester. The property features forested frontage on Reynolds Gully Creek, a tributary of Hemlock Lake and a New York State classified trout stream.



Securing a Popular Trailhead in Ithaca

A key, seven-acre property was just added to the Tapan Mitra Preserve. The site includes an informal parking area and trailhead for the Finger Lakes Trail with nearby access to Lick Brook Gorge and Robert H. Treman State Park. The acquisition ensures the property remains a natural buffer to the Finger Lakes Trail and the nearby Cayuga Inlet and Enfield Creek. Public improvements are underway, including installing wayfinding and safer parking.

FLLT BY THE NUMBERS



52.7

miles of hiking trails
ready to explore

25,546



feet of protected
lakeshore



1000+
acres
preserved
each year

630 miles of



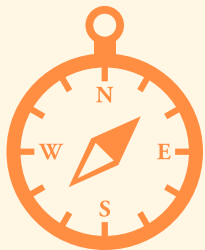
4,000 members



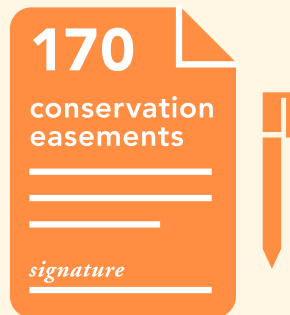
200 volunteers



384
parcels conserved
permanently



29,017
acres
protected
forever



nature preserves
with deer-hunting by permit

we work in



across 12 counties

we've spent



protecting lands & waters



Hammond Hill, Michael Ludgate

Securing Lands Bordering Hammond Hill State Forest

Newly protected with a conservation easement, the 64-acre property is nestled in a small valley on the southern side of Hammond Hill State Forest. The property includes woodlands bordering state lands, fields maintained for wildlife habitat, and the headwaters of the west branch of Owego Creek, a high-quality brook trout stream. The easement protects the property against subdivision and safeguards a recently restored stream corridor, improving water quality in Owego Creek and further downstream in the Susquehanna River watershed.

Partnership with Town of Big Flats Protects Chemung River

The FLLT acquired and then conveyed to the Town of Big Flats a six-acre floodplain forest with 1,000 feet of frontage on the Chemung River. The parcel borders State Route 352 and provides important wildlife habitat for a diversity of songbirds, raptors, and waterfowl. The town will manage the property as a conservation area with public access for kayaking and canoeing and the FLLT will hold a conservation easement to ensure the integrity of forests bordering the river.



**Neighbors Work
Together to Conserve
250 Acres Near Greek
Peak Mountain Ski
Resort**

Three adjacent conservation easements protect 250 privately owned acres in the town of Virgil. The easements were granted by a group of landowners and friends who manage their lands collectively. Located within the Susquehanna River watershed and adjacent to James Kennedy State Forest, the properties are primarily forested with smaller areas of fields and meadows. Over the years, the neighbors worked together to manage the properties for wildlife habitat. Protection of these lands creates a buffer to the state forest as well as a section of the Finger Lakes Trail which runs to the south.



Conserving Over 200 Acres in the Cayuga Lake Watershed

Located between the Finger Lakes National Forest and Connecticut Hill Wildlife Management Area in the town of Hector, a new conservation easement protects a 208-acre property almost entirely situated within the Taughannock Creek and Cayuga Lake watersheds. The property features a mosaic of woodlands and scenic meadows which support a diversity of wildlife including bobcat, fox, and Wild Turkey.



Stid Hill, Bill Hecht

Canandaigua Lake Watershed Project to Expand Stid Hill

The 70-acre property shares its western boundary with Stid Hill Wildlife Management Area and contains 5,365 feet of streambank on two tributaries to Canandaigua Lake. A mixed hardwood forest defines the landscape here, set amongst the rolling Bristol Hills—a priority project of the New York State Open Space Plan. The FLLT purchased the property and intends to transfer it to the state as an addition to Stid Hill when funding is available.

CONSERVATION SPOTLIGHT: SAVING BELL STATION



The FLLT successfully purchased the 480-acre Bell Station property from NYSEG after years of effort to protect this very special place. Thanks to the efforts of Governor Hochul, local elected officials, and concerned citizens, NYSEG agreed to sell the property to the FLLT. Bell Station was the largest privately owned parcel of shoreline remaining in the Finger Lakes region.

Located on the eastern shore of Cayuga Lake in the town of Lansing, Bell Station features wooded hillsides, open fields, and streams with cascading waterfalls. Acquisition of the site for conservation greatly enhances public access to Cayuga Lake and helps safeguard the lake's water quality.

Funding for the purchase came from a \$2 million dollar loan from the Park Foundation, \$500,000 raised from individual donors, and an internal loan from the FLLT's Opportunity Fund. The FLLT plans to sell the lakeshore portion of the property to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to be managed for outdoor recreation. In partnership with the Town of Lansing, the FLLT is exploring utilizing part of the property for solar energy production.

To learn more and get directions to the site, please visit fllt.org/savebellstation.

Village of Odessa Rail Trail Project

The FLLT helped the Village of Odessa acquire two and a half miles of rail trail in Schuyler County by providing technical guidance and a \$17,500 grant, half of the funds needed to purchase the trail corridor. The 43.8-acre corridor passes through hardwood forests extending from the village of Odessa to the town of Montour. The village intends to manage the corridor as a multi-use trail, accommodating public access for pedestrians, cyclists, and horseback riders. Expanding trail offerings in this area will provide recreational opportunities and improve the quality of life for the surrounding rural community.



Chris Ray

Conserving Waterfalls and Woodlands on Cayuga Lake's Western Shore

A new conservation easement in the town of Covert permanently protects 45 acres between the western shore of Cayuga Lake and State Route 89. The property contains woodlands, waterfalls, and 1,825 feet of streambank along Hogback Creek, a tributary to the lake. A former orchard with heirloom apples, shrublands, and a manmade pond on the property provide habitat for a diversity of birds and other wildlife.



Bare Hill, Bill Hecht

Announcing a 65-Acre Addition to Bare Hill Unique Area

The FLLT conveyed 65 acres in Middlesex to New York State as an addition to Bare Hill Unique Area. The property includes significant frontage on East Lake Road and more than 2,000 feet of common boundary with Bare Hill. The FLLT also recently acquired an additional 27 forested acres on Bare Hill, the organization's ninth project in the area. Both projects further protect Bare Hill and ensure the integrity of the steep slopes above Canandaigua Lake.



Over 500 Acres of Farmland in Skaneateles Lake Watershed Conserved

Two new conservation easements permanently protect 508 acres of farmland at Valley View Farm, located in Cortland and Onondaga counties, in an area of increasing residential development. Wholly located within the Skaneateles Lake watershed, the farm primarily contains crop fields, but also features portions of Grout Brook as well as meadows, woodlands, and grasslands that provide habitat for a diversity of wildlife. Funds for the project came from the state's Farmland Protection Implementation Grants Program (FPIG), administered by the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets.



Gift of Historic Stone House and Land

Tompkins County resident Margaret Bald left her 200-year-old fieldstone home and more than 140 acres bordering Robert H. Treman State Park to the FLLT when she passed away in 2020. The property, which has been in the Bald family since 1950, features a mix of fields and forest which contain many high-quality sugar maples and hickories. In partnership with Historic Ithaca, the home is listed for sale along with a 3.5-acre lot. Deed restrictions will be placed on the property at the time of sale to ensure that the character of this local landmark is maintained. Over the course of the next year, the Land Trust will develop a long-term plan for conserving the additional lands.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & OUTREACH

Outdoor, in-person programming returned this summer! The FLLT held over 15 outdoor education events on our nature preserves, including partnership offerings with the Finger Lakes Museum and Canandaigua Lake Watershed Association. Programs include a wildlife tracking walk, a full moon hike, and our second BioBlitz weekend. We also hosted two events for Latino Conservation Week, several online education programs, and landowner outreach sessions. As always, our programming is offered free of charge.

This year, we hired an intern in partnership with the Finger Lakes Museum. The intern split their time between the museum, where they led public kayak programs and conducted fieldwork, and with the FLLT, where they met with stakeholders and landowners on Keuka Lake's Bluff Point and in the town of Jerusalem.

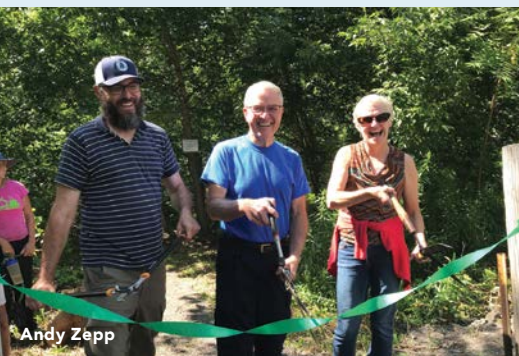
The Finger Lakes Land Trust recognizes that our nature preserves exist on the homeland of the Haudenosaunee. We hope to honor indigenous peoples' ongoing relationship with the land by conserving wild places forever.



Chris Ray



Edie Jodz



STEWARDSHIP & PUBLIC ACCESS

Nearly 200 volunteers collectively worked over 450 hours helping our stewardship team this year – THANK YOU! Staff and volunteers managed fields for grassland birds, worked to control non-native, invasive species, and kept our 52 miles of trails open for everyone.

We are grateful to see so many people out on our trails enjoying free access to nature. To help make our preserves and trails more enjoyable, we improved public access to our Canandaigua Highlands Overlook and Parker Nature Preserve, built a new trail connecting our Hinchcliff Family and High Vista nature preserves, and opened both Bell Station and the new Canandaigua Vista Nature Preserve. We invite you to explore at fllt.org/map.

Five New Locations on GoFingerLakes.org

There are five new locations to explore on GoFingerLakes.org, the FLLT's outdoor recreation web site. Go Finger Lakes is offered as a free public service to help residents and visitors discover the best locations in the region for hiking, mountain biking, kayaking, canoeing, cross-country skiing, and other outdoor activities. See the sites at gofingerlakes.org.

RESTORATION

The FLLT worked on several restoration and tree planting projects this year. The stream restoration project at VanRiper Conservation Area is worthy of highlighting. This project was a partnership between the FLLT, US Fish & Wildlife Service, and Seneca County Soil & Water Conservation District and will reduce sediments and nutrients flowing into Cayuga Lake.

Meadow restoration work is ongoing at our Lindsay-Parsons Biodiversity Preserve and we are thrilled to report that the bobolinks are back! Thanks to volunteers, and especially to John Smith, for countless hours spent removing invasive honeysuckle and mowing the fields to encourage native grasses and restore important bird habitat.

Accreditation Renewal Success

The FLLT achieved its land trust accreditation renewal—joining over 450 accredited land trusts across the nation committed to professional excellence. The FLLT provided extensive documentation and was subject to a comprehensive third-party evaluation prior to achieving this distinction.

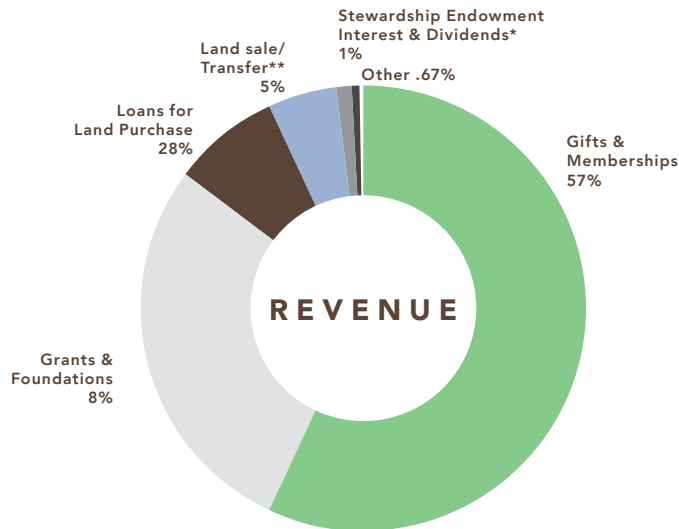


Bobolink, Mark Chao



Chris Ray

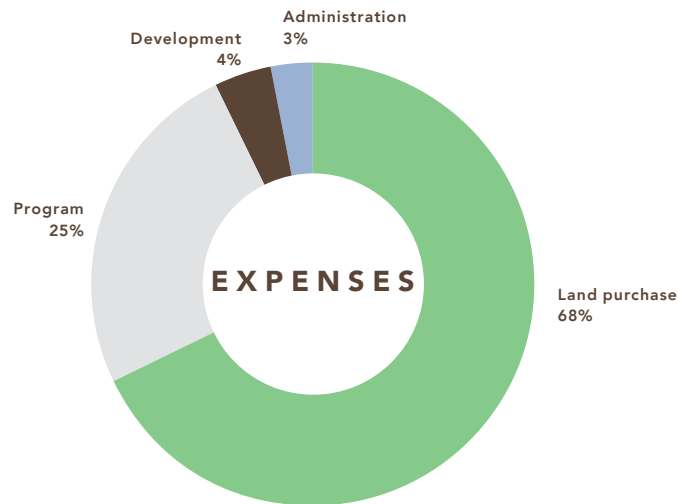
FINANCIALS 2021-2022



Gifts & Memberships	\$4,116,923.29
Grants & Foundations	\$608,939.57
Stewardship Endowment Interest and Dividends*	\$55,896.15
Land sale/Transfer**	\$358,931.50
Loans for Land Purchase	\$2,000,000.00
Other	\$48,171.83
Total	\$7,188,862.34

*Previously included unrealized gain, now only represents interest and dividends made from these investments.

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



Program	\$1,701,233.93
Administration	\$231,045.55
Development	\$274,551.25
Land purchase	\$4,620,169.60
Land Loan repayment	\$0
Funds for pending conservation projects and transfers to stewardship endowment	\$361,862.01
Total	\$7,188,862.34

Unaudited financials for fiscal year ending June 30, 2022. Does not include the value of donated land and conservation easements.



Owasco Lake, Matt Champlin



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