



# CONSERVED FOREVER

ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23







Dear Friends,

News from our Land Trust is always encouraging, and this year's report is no exception! We saved lakeshores, farms, and forests across the region that protect water quality, wildlife habitats, and outdoor recreation opportunities.

In fact, the past year's conservation projects pushed the Land Trust over a major milestone. Thanks to the dedication of FLLT members, partners, and volunteers, the organization has protected more than 30,000 acres! These acres include more than 5 miles of lakeshore, 19,800 acres of forest, 45 nature preserves, and 53 miles of trails.

We hope you enjoy exploring highlights from last year and encourage you to reach out if you have questions about our conservation projects or want to be more involved.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrew Zepp". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Andrew Zepp  
Executive Director

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fred Van Sickle". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Frederick Van Sickle  
Board President





Chris Ray

## **Great Hill Nature Preserve Addition**

The 58-acre property in the town of Middlesex is situated on a steep, forested ridge revered by the Onöndowa'ga:' (Seneca) as the birthplace of their people. Serving as a scenic backdrop to Canandaigua Lake, the ridge extends for more than three miles and goes by many names including Nundawao, Great Hill, South Hill, and the Whaleback.

The property will be managed as part of the nearby Great Hill Nature Preserve. This is the sixth project that the FLLT has completed here.



## High Vista Nature Preserve Addition

The FLLT has been steadily expanding the High Vista Preserve and the contiguous Hinchcliff Family Preserve in Spafford by securing adjacent properties. The organization just added a small, but critical, parcel to High Vista, expanding it to 153 acres.

Proactively protecting lands in this environmentally sensitive area is a priority for the FLLT because the steeply sloping hillsides are vital to the health of Skaneateles Lake, the source of drinking water for the city of Syracuse. As a result, the FLLT has already secured more than 2.25 miles of land extending along the wooded hills above the lake.



Bill Hecht

## **New Seneca Lake Preserve**

Located three miles south of Geneva, the new 30-acre Kriss Nature Preserve was an estate gift from the late Robert Kriss, a Geneva resident who enjoyed outdoor recreation and had deep concerns about the environment. The preserve features 1,080 feet of undeveloped Seneca Lake shoreline. Protecting lakeshore is one of the organization's top strategies for safeguarding water quality and providing public access to the Finger Lakes.



## Adding to the Goetchius Wetland Preserve

This latest addition to the Goetchius Wetland Preserve in the town of Richford protects 2,120 feet of streambank on the West Branch of the Owego Creek, one of the region's quality brook trout streams. Conserving this property expands water quality protections for the creek. The FLLT recently partnered with the Upper Susquehanna Coalition to reestablish a streamside forest and wetlands on an adjacent parcel. This is the 24th project the FLLT has completed in the Owego Creek watershed.





Chris Ray

## **14th Addition to Lindsay-Parsons Biodiversity Preserve**

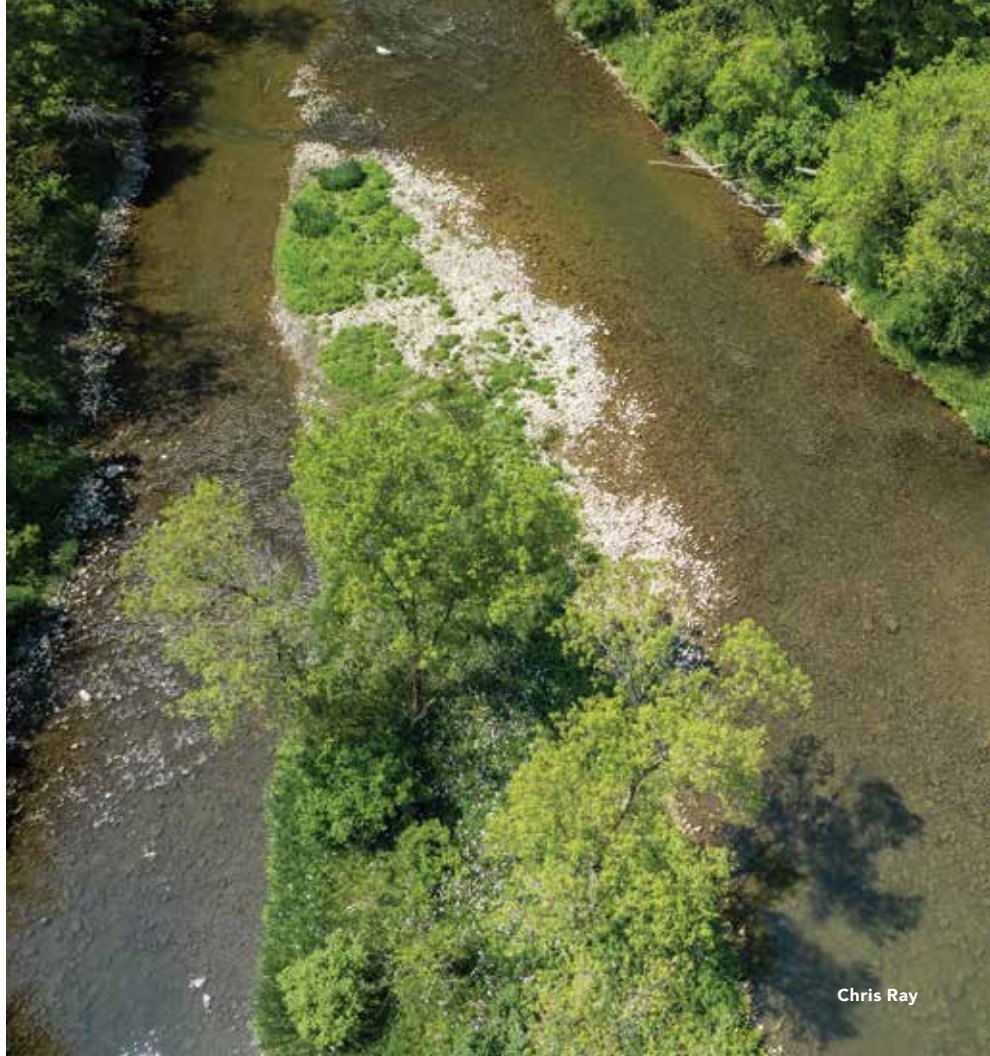
The FLLT has been steadily expanding Lindsay-Parsons since it was originally established in 1995 as the world's first temperate zone reserve for bioprospecting—the investigation of naturally occurring plant and animal compounds for their medicinal value. Initially only 36 acres, the preserve now spans more than 550 acres across the floodplain and up steep slopes in the Cayuga Inlet valley.

The mostly wooded, 8.5-acre addition features a small wetland and helps protect a tributary to the Cayuga Inlet which flows to Cayuga Lake.



## Protecting Fall Creek

Eleven acres that secure more than 3,100 feet of Fall Creek streambank in the town of Dryden were recently added to the FLLT's Etna Nature Preserve. The project safeguards fish and wildlife habitat and protects water quality within Fall Creek, the drinking water supply for Cornell University and a major tributary to Cayuga Lake.





Ryan Walters

## Skaneateles Highlands Conservation

The FLLT purchased a conservation easement to secure 234-acre Casa Farms in the town of Niles with grant support from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). The property features nearly 6,000 feet of frontage on Hooker Brook, which drains directly into Skaneateles Lake.

Casa Farms is located in the Skaneateles Highlands, an FLLT focus area that also includes its Bahar, High Vista, and Hinchcliff Family nature preserves. The property is also in proximity to Bear Swamp State Forest and Carpenter Falls State Unique Area. Funding for this project came from a larger FLLT grant from DEC's Water Quality Improvement Project Program (WQIP).





Matt Champlin

## Owasco Lake Farmland Conservation

A donated conservation easement on a 160-acre farm in Scipio will both ensure the land is not developed and protect Owasco Lake's water quality. Predominantly a mix of agricultural fields, a stream winds its way along the southern and eastern borders of the property and flows into the lake 4,000 feet downstream. FLLT staff and volunteers will plant native trees and shrubs to help further buffer the stream and increase water quality protections.



Bill Hecht

“It’s very important that we keep land in agricultural production so people know where their food comes from,”  
said Tim Christiansen

## Protecting a 3rd Generation Farm

Christiansen Farms is a third-generation, NOFA-NY-certified organic dairy and crop farm in the towns of Benton and Torrey. The FLLT purchased a conservation easement on the 421-acre farm, forever protecting it from development pressure. This is the seventh Yates County farm protected by the FLLT through New York State’s Farmland Protection Implementation Program.



## Protecting Six Mile Creek Headwaters

The FLLT protected 51 acres set within a scenic landscape of forested hills and open farmland in the town of Caroline. The property is in the headwaters of Six Mile Creek, a public drinking water source for the city of Ithaca. It also includes 1,300 feet of frontage on the Thomas Road Wetlands, a Tompkins County-designated Unique Natural Area. The donated conservation easement includes special zone that safeguards the wetland and provides critical protection to the creek.



# FLLT BY THE NUMBERS



53.5

miles of hiking trails  
*ready to explore*

26,418



feet of protected  
*lakeshore*

1000+

acres  
preserved  
*each year*



177

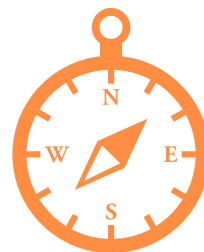
conservation  
easements

signature

4,000 members



200 volunteers



30,152  
acres  
protected  
*forever*



# STEWARDSHIP, RESTORATION, AND PUBLIC ACCESS

A big THANK YOU goes to the hundreds of volunteers who collectively worked well over 750 hours helping our stewardship team this year! Volunteers are in the woods and fields helping staff build trails, manage invasive species, and keep our nature preserves in top condition.

Enhancing and restoring habitats continues to be a FLLT priority. Highlights from our restoration work this year include, major grassland bird habitat expansion at our Lindsay-Parsons Biodiversity Preserve, meadow enhancement at Canandaigua Vista Preserve, and American chestnut tree planting at our Owasco Bluffs Preserve, and additional tree plantings at VanRiper Conservation Area and other sites. Also, our Bahar Preserve was

recognized by the Old Growth Forest Network!

And, of course, we opened new trails and created better access to nature. We officially opened our new parking area at the Tapan Mitra Preserve in Tompkins County, which now provides safe access to a popular section of the Finger Lakes Trail and connects to Robert H. Treman State Park and our preserves at Lick Brook. We dedicated the Eberhard Nature Preserve, which also features the Finger Lakes Trail.

Work is ongoing at our Sims-Jennings Nature Preserve and we plan to open it in spring 2024.

**EXPLORE AT [FLLT.ORG/MAP](https://fllt.org/map)**





Volunteers at Plymouth Woods by Jason Gorman



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND EDUCATION

The FLLT held over 15 Talks and Treks on our nature preserves over the last year, offering free outdoor education to people of all ages. We also invited groups of children from the Learning Web, Greater Ithaca Activities Center, Tompkins Learning Partners, and Open Doors English into the woods to learn about nature. For the second summer, we partnered with both the Finger Lakes Museum and the Canandaigua

Lake Watershed Association to offer additional unique programming, including guided paddles and a storytelling session with interpreters from Ganondagan State Historic Site. We also hosted learning sessions online, to educate on topics like invasive species and threats to water quality. As always, our programming is free and open to everyone.





## Skaneateles Lake Protection

A 23-acre property facing significant development pressure on the west side of Skaneateles Lake will be forever protected with a conservation easement. The property, which borders a public boat launch managed by the NYS DEC, features meadows and young forest dominated by birch trees which provide erosion protection on the slopes leading down to the lake.



“We’re excited to announce our support for the Finger Lakes Land Trust’s hard work in protecting the Skaneateles Lake watershed,” said landowner Pat Danial.

**Matt Champlin**

**Protecting  
Shotwell Brook**

With grant support from the NYS DEC, the FLLT purchased a conservation easement on the 86-acre Fox Run Farm in the Skaneateles Lake watershed. Securing the property protects 2,070 feet along Shotwell Brook, which drains to Skaneateles Lake, as well as 1,430 feet along an unnamed tributary. The easement includes an environmental protection zone that will buffer the two streams and filter potential contaminants from entering the lake.





## **Partnership Protects Cayuga Inlet**

The FLLT acquired 43 acres featuring more than 5,000 feet of undeveloped frontage on the Cayuga Inlet in Tompkins County using a portion of a NYS Water Quality Improvement Project grant. Following closing, the property was conveyed to The Wetland Trust with a deed restriction that permanently limits use of the land, protecting water quality in the inlet.

Protecting this property helps prevent development that would disrupt critical buffers along the inlet that filter and absorb pollutants from stormwater.





Bill Hecht

## **Glen Haven Road Conservation Project**

In an ongoing effort to secure steep slopes above Skaneateles Lake's southern shores, the FLLT has protected an additional 15 acres on Glen Haven Road in the town of Niles. Located above the southwestern shore of Skaneateles Lake, the property is adjacent to lands already protected by the FLLT.

The property, generously donated by the Karen and Chet Seibert, is dominated by sugar maples and features multiple creeks that flow directly into the lake.



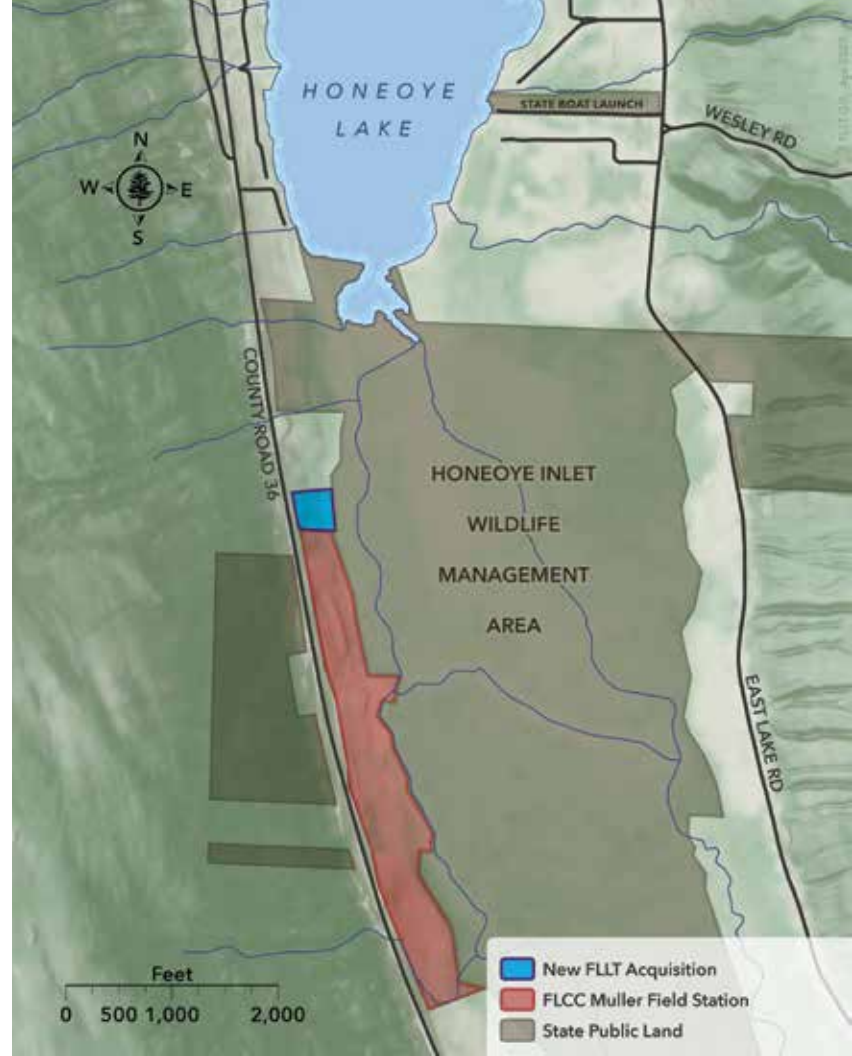
## **A Small Chemung River Project with a Big Impact**

By purchasing a key, 2-acre property, the FLLT protected 190 feet of Chemung riverbank and connected 211 previously conserved acres with the river. The FLLT intends to convey both properties to the NYS DEC as an addition to the Big Flats Wildlife Management Area.

Protecting these properties improves outdoor recreation opportunities, protects water quality, and safeguards scenic views. This is the FLLT's 18th project in the Chemung River watershed. Other protected lands nearby include the FLLT's Steege Hill, Plymouth, and Kehoe nature preserves and the Nature Conservancy's Frenchman's Bluff Preserve.

## Adding to Honeoye Inlet Wildlife Management Area

At the request of NYS DEC, the FLLT acquired a three-acre property bordering the Honeoye Inlet Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and Muller Field Station, an educational facility owned and managed by Finger Lakes Community College. Protecting this parcel enhances public access, prevents development, and adds to a growing network of conservation lands that also include the Harriet Hollister Spencer Recreation Area, the Cumming Nature Center, and the FLLT's Wesley Hill Nature Preserve. This will be the FLLT's fourth addition to the Honeoye Inlet Wildlife Management Area.







## **Addition to Bell Station on Cayuga Lake**

The FLLT acquired 110 acres of woodlands and meadows overlooking Cayuga Lake in Tompkins County. Once home to a nine-hole golf course, the property shares its southern boundary with the Bell Station parcel which the FLLT acquired in 2022. The FLLT is working with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to enhance grassland habitat for migratory songbirds such as Bobolinks, Savannah Sparrows, and Eastern Meadowlarks.

The FLLT intends to sell the property, along with the lakeshore portion of Bell Station, to the NYS DEC ensuring long-term habitat protection and outdoor recreation opportunities.

“Ganondagan is a site of both national and local historical importance and is particularly cherished by the Haudenosaunee people,” said Michael Galban, Ganondagan’s Historic Site Manager.

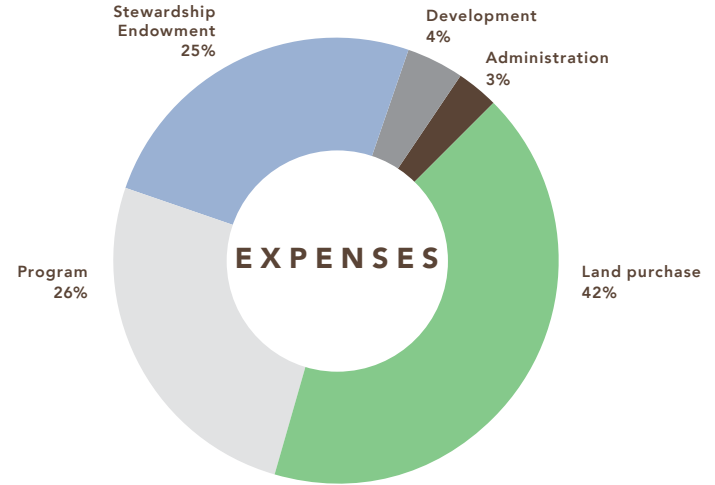
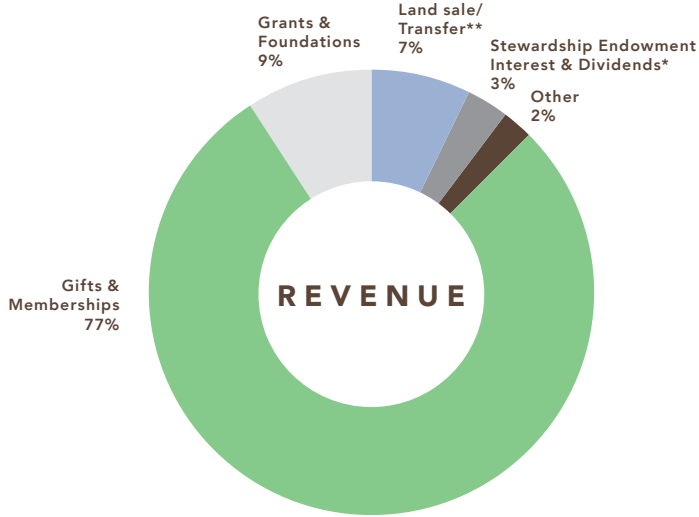


Edie Jodz

## Partnership with Ganondagan

In partnership with Ganondagan State Historic Site and NYS Parks, the FLLT acquired 15 acres directly across from the visitor’s entrance. The property features meadows and a pond which provide habitat for grassland birds in an area that is facing significant development pressure. The parcel will eventually be transferred to New York State as an addition to Ganondagan.

# FINANCIALS 2022-2023



Gifts & Memberships	\$4,840,402
Grants & Foundations	\$590,817
Stewardship Endowment Interest and Dividends*	\$214,470
Land sale/Transfer**	\$464,000
Other	\$149,808
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$6,259,497</b>


Program	\$1,622,394
Administration	\$183,455
Development	\$236,400
Land purchase	\$2,633,297
Funds for pending conservation projects and transfers to stewardship endowment	\$1,583,951
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$6,259,497</b>

\*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.

Unaudited financials for fiscal year ending June 30, 2023. Does not include the value of donated land and conservation easements.



A night landscape photograph. The sky is a deep, dark blue with some light clouds. In the foreground, a field of tall grasses is illuminated by numerous bright yellow-green fireflies. In the middle ground, a dark, forested hillside rises. In the background, a range of mountains is visible under the night sky. The right side of the image is partially obscured by the dark, silhouetted branches of a tree.

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.



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