



VOLUME 17 ISSUE 1

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Afoot in the Field

RESOURCE FOR CONSERVATION LANDOWNERS



PARK PRESERVE; CHRIS RAY

I LOVE a good surprise when it's my birthday, but not when it comes to an annual monitoring visit of a property subject to a conservation easement. Arriving at a property and discovering a major change that we were not notified about in advance is a bad feeling, as we quickly try to assess the situation and determine if the change was permitted or not by the terms of the easement. We never want our conservation easement landowners to run afoul of the legal limitations that apply to their property, and advance communication is the key to ensuring that your plans are permissible before you invest time and money!

FLLT conservation easement stewardship staff strive to form and maintain good relationships with our conservation easement landowners. Yes, we have a responsibility to enforce the terms of every easement, but we also want to be a resource and partner, helping landowners manage and enjoy their land within the limits of the agreement.

We have a dedicated stewardship team, and Hailey, Margaret, and I stand ready to have conversations, answer questions, and provide assistance where we can.

Chris Olney
Director of Stewardship



Partnership with FLLT

JOINING THE FINGER LAKES LAND TRUST (FLLT) as a conservation easement landowner is a long-term relationship. The FLLT's responsibility is to ensure compliance with the terms of the conservation easement deed. As a conservation easement landowner, one of your

responsibilities is to communicate with FLLT any potential future plans you have for the property.

WHEN TO COMMUNICATE WITH FLLT?

Contact FLLT before selling your property, or establishing a family trust or LLC. Before you build on your conservation property, check with FLLT, as each easement has different limits on allowed structures, so we can ensure your building plans are permitted.

If your property permits timber harvesting or other tree cutting, it will likely require a Forest Management Plan prepared by a forester that is reviewed and approved by FLLT. Let us know when you plan to conduct forestry work, as we can assist you in finding a forester and in reviewing the plan to ensure the health of the forest is preserved.



From top: Chris Olney with CE landowner; Margaret Royall. CE landowner at cut large oak tree; Margaret Royall.

If you're considering changing your agricultural activities, such as grazing livestock or establishing a vineyard, check with FLLT first. It's important to confirm that your property allows for these activities, to check the permitted location for agriculture, and to determine if an agricultural management plan is necessary.

Whenever you have questions or are uncertain about what your conservation easement permits or limits, don't hesitate to reach out to us.

NEW ACTIVITIES/REQUESTS

Communicating with FLLT during the planning or dreaming phase can help you avoid future complications. Our role is to review what is permitted and prohibited by the conservation easement document, so contact us first. We may ask you some of the following questions:

- What is your expected timeline?
- Where on the property will this project be located?
- What size will it be?
- What is the purpose of the project?

We will do our best to review your requests promptly. The time it takes for us to respond will depend on the complexity of your request and whether we have encountered a similar request before.



DANAKA OLSEN

THANK YOU!

One of the many reasons I enjoy my job is the opportunity to work with so many landowners. I value learning about your land and working together to find the best ways to be effective stewards.

I would like to thank all the landowners who have proactively reached out with questions about their properties. I truly appreciate your commitment to understanding the conservation easement and ensuring compliance with its terms. Your efforts are invaluable, and I look forward to continuing to develop and strengthen relationships with all of our conservation easement landowners.

If you have any questions, email me at haileynase@fllt.org.



Hailey Nase
Conservation
Easement
Stewardship
Manager

Resources and Tools

WE VALUE OUR PARTNERSHIP with conservation easement landowners and want you to feel supported by FLLT staff. Our stewardship staff is here for you, and we encourage you to make the most of the resources and tools FLLT can offer.



GPS RECEIVER IN USE; HAILEY NASE

GPS RECEIVER

In late summer of 2025, FLLT purchased a Trimble DA2 GNSS receiver. This device allows us to use a Trimble Catalyst subscription to increase our geo-spatial accuracy. Depending on the subscription we are using, we can get within 1-2ft of accuracy.

Boundaries

- This is helpful for flagging, marking, and installing signs along boundary lines between neighbors, or along zone boundaries if your property has them.
- If you are unsure about the location of a boundary line, let FLLT know, and we can bring the GPS receiver on the next property visit.

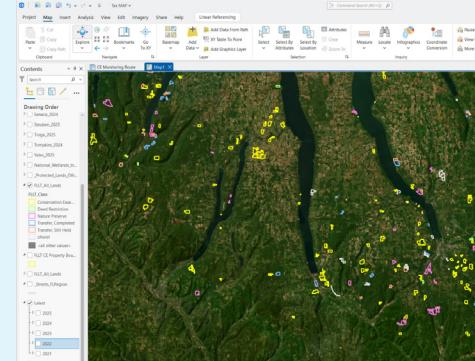


FINDING IRON SURVEY PIN; MARGARET ROYALL

METAL DETECTOR

Finding Iron Survey Pins

- Searching for a buried iron survey pin at a property corner or along a boundary is significantly easier with a metal detector. FLLT has a metal detector, and if the iron survey pin is there, we can usually find it.
- FLLT's staff are not licensed surveyors, and we cannot set or reset pins. If a pin is missing, a licensed surveyor would need to be hired to reset the survey pin.



FLLT PROPERTIES IN ARCGIS; HAILEY NASE

GIS MAPPING

FLLT's stewardship staff are proficient in using ArcGIS mapping software.

Overview of your property

About every 3 years, we receive new aerial imagery. Each area of the Finger Lakes region differs slightly in the timeframe for new images. Interested in seeing an aerial map of your property? Send us an email.

Planning

We can help visualize your plan by putting it on a map.

Management Plans

If your conservation easement needs an agricultural management plan, we can assist in creating a map of your farming activities.



BUFFER PLANTING; KATE RILEY

RESOURCES

- Knowledge on invasive species and tips for management. Over the years, you might have seen *Afoot In the Field* issues about non-native invasive species. We can share our experience in removing and treating invasive species.

- Opportunities for landowners, such as programs that provide free or reduced-price trees and shrubs.

Avenza Maps App

A free app that allows you to track trails on your property, and see the property boundary location, zone boundaries or other features. FLLT can send you a georeferenced map of your property to use in the app.

How FLLT can help

Still unsure how FLLT can assist you on your property? Here are a few examples of recent work from the FLLT stewardship team.

EXAMPLE 1: THINKING OF BUILDING A BARN

Tools: GIS mapping

A conservation easement landowner inquired about building a barn. Their conservation easement stipulates that structures must be located within the Residential/Active Use Zone. FLLT staff created a map indicating two potential locations for a 40x60-foot barn, both situated near a field and a maintained driveway.



From top: Map of possible barn location; Hailey Nase. EPZ sign on post along zone boundary; Margaret Royall.

EXAMPLE 3: FARM PLANNING

Tools: Avenza Map

A conservation easement landowner wanted to modify some of their farming activities. FLLT staff met with the landowner to walk through the zone boundaries to verify where agricultural structures are and are not permitted. They discussed how to create an agricultural management plan that outlines the farming activities for the next 5 to 10 years.



EXAMPLE 2: MARKING A ZONE BOUNDARY

Tools: GPS Receiver, iPad, & Avenza Map

A conservation easement property with a long Environmental Protection Zone (EPZ) boundary is located adjacent to several agricultural fields. FLLT staff utilized a GPS receiver, a 200ft tape measure, and an iPad with a geo-referenced survey map to install signs to mark the boundary. This clearly indicates to both the landowner and the leasing farmer where the EPZ boundary is located.

EXAMPLE 4: PROPERTY BOUNDARY WALKS

Tools: Avenza Map

A conservation easement property was purchased by a new landowner. The new landowner was unsure about the location of the property boundaries. FLLT staff met with the new landowner to walk the boundaries together. This provided an excellent opportunity for the landowner to become familiar with their new property, learn about native and non-native trees species, inquire about past land uses and get to know FLLT staff.



From top: Hoop houses on CE property; Hailey Nase. Margaret standing on boundary to show neighbor boundary location; Hailey

When Should I Call FLLT?



Contact us anytime with questions about your conservation easement property. Some activities will require the FLLT's input or approval. It is always better to ask before starting your project! Specifically, please contact us...



Before **selling** your property



Before **building** on your property



Before **cutting trees** or harvesting timber



Anytime you have a **question** or are unsure what your conservation easement allows

You can call the FLLT office at (607) 275-9487, or email us:

Chris Olney, Director of Stewardship, chrisolney@fllt.org

Hailey Nase, Conservation Easement Stewardship Manager, haileynase@fllt.org

Margaret Royall, Conservation Easement Steward, margaretroyall@fllt.org

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.

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."



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