



CONSERVED ANNUAL REPORT 2019-20 FOREVER





Dear Friends of the Finger Lakes,

As we continue dealing with unprecedented challenges, all of us at the Land Trust hope that you and your families are safe and healthy. We are reminded that our connection to the land—and all of its occupants—will help us find solace in times like these.


Thanks to your direct support of our mission, we continue conserving the lands and waters that make the Finger Lakes such a special place. The enclosed report offers highlights of our work from this past year and we hope you enjoy these pages filled with good news.

With your investment, the 24,000 acres we have protected so far will be protected forever. We very much look forward to the day we can gather to celebrate all that we are accomplishing together.

With gratitude,

Andrew Zepp
Executive Director

Dave Birchenough
Board President



CLEAN WATER

Overlooking Skaneateles Lake / Matt Champlin

Connecting Nature Preserves Overlooking Skaneateles Lake

The Land Trust purchased 75 acres in Onondaga and Cortland counties that connect its High Vista and Hinchcliff Family nature preserves, creating a 2.25 mile long corridor of conserved land overlooking the lake. Protecting these steeply sloping hillsides secures wildlife habitat, creates new opportunities for outdoor recreation, and helps protect the health of the lake—the source of drinking water for the city of Syracuse.



Protecting the Chemung River Valley

The Land Trust purchased approximately 211 acres in the Chemung River valley between Elmira and Corning. The property, which features open fields near the river and steep wooded slopes on Harris Hill, supports a diversity of wildlife including Bald Eagles and black bear. It will be conveyed to New York State as an addition to the newly created Big Flats Wildlife Management Area in the future.



Canandaigua Lake Preserve / Bill Hecht

Creating a Nature Preserve in Canandaigua

The FLLT acquired 90-acres in the town of Canandaigua, noteworthy for their wildlife habitats and stunning views of the lake, and plans to open a nature preserve. Hiking trails will provide access to open meadows, oak-hickory woods, and a portion of Barnes Gully. The Land Trust also protected nine adjacent acres with conservation easements that will buffer the preserve.



Honeoye Lake hikers / Bill Banaszewski

Linking Conservation Lands near Honeoye Lake

Two parcels totaling 25 acres were acquired near Honeoye Inlet Wildlife Management Area (WMA), adding to a 5,660-acre complex that also includes Harriet Hollister Spencer State Recreation Area, Cumming Nature Center, and the FLLT's Wesley Hill Nature Preserve. They will be conveyed as an addition to the WMA in the future.

Expanding Bahar Preserve on Skaneateles Lake

The FLLT added 1.5 acres featuring approximately 200 feet of Skaneateles shoreline and frontage on Bear Swamp Creek to its Bahar Nature Preserve, securing important fish and wildlife habitat while maintaining water quality.



Skaneateles Lake Watershed / Bill Hecht



LOCAL FOODS

Skaneateles Lake Watershed / Matt Champlin

Securing Over 600 Acres of Farmland in the Skaneateles Lake Watershed

Two conservation easements on 628 acres of Birdsall Farm, in both Onondaga and Cortland counties, will protect the area's rural character, ensuring the farm is not subdivided as residential development spreads south along Skaneateles Lake. The property contains the headwaters of Grout Brook, a principle tributary to the lake, and the Birdsalls have invested heavily in farming practices that meet water quality protection requirements.

Protecting Farmland Overlooking Seneca Lake

The FLLT secured 518 acres of pastures, woodlands, and crop fields at Barber Farm with conservation easements that prohibit development in environmentally-sensitive areas, helping to protect Seneca Lake water quality. The farm offers panoramic views of the lake and Watkins Glen, and its forested hillsides host multiple tributaries that flow into Queen Catharine Marsh.





WILD PLACES

Shindagin Hollow State Forest / Chris Ray

Conserving Woods Adjacent to Shindagin Hollow State Forest

The Land Trust conserved 62 acres immediately adjacent to Shindagin Hollow State Forest, in the town of Caroline. The parcel adds to an extensive block of conserved woodlands, including the state forest and three properties secured through Land Trust easements. The 5,266 acre Shindagin Hollow State Forest hosts a segment of the Finger Lakes Trail as well as a 19-mile network of mountain bike trails.



Robinson Hollow State Forest / Scott Levine

Growing the Emerald Necklace

The FLLT acquired 139 acres almost entirely surrounded by Robinson Hollow State Forest, further expanding Ithaca's Emerald Necklace. The property is situated on a hilltop between two tributaries to the West Branch of Owego Creek and will be added to state lands in the future.

Adding to Public Lands near Ithaca

The Land Trust acquired 80 wooded acres adjacent to Danby State Forest, a conservation easement, and two parcels previously acquired by the organization, expanding wildlife habitat protection and outdoor recreation opportunities. The property will be added to the state forest.



Danby State Forest / FLLT



Expanding Logan Hill Nature Preserve

A 63-acre addition to Logan Hill Nature Preserve in Candor protects hilltop forest and steep slopes rising above the village of Candor. Protecting these hillsides safeguards water quality in Catatonk Creek, a tributary of the Susquehanna River that borders the preserve. Future plans for the site include extending the preserve's current trail system by utilizing remnant logging paths.

PROTECTED PLACES



Our nature trails are seeing record use and we are grateful people are finding solace and beauty in the outdoors. To help make everyone's nature experience safe and enjoyable, we improved public access at our East Shore, Wesley Hill, Sweedler, and Thayer nature preserves. Work is ongoing at our Steege Hill, Owasco Bluffs, and Botsford nature preserves. Find new places to explore at fllt.org/map.

Active habitat restoration and tree planting was a success at our Goetchius Wetland Preserve and Owasco Bluffs Nature Preserve. Our stewardship team, with the help of volunteers and partners, also managed fields for grassland birds, treated critical stands of hemlock trees against non-native, invasive pests, and worked tirelessly to keep our over 43 miles of trails open for everyone.



Protecting New York State's Only National Forest

The Land Trust acquired a small wooded parcel in the town of Hector, immediately adjacent to the Finger Lakes National Forest, to secure wildlife habitat connectivity and outdoor recreation opportunities.

Land Gifts Protect Habitat and Provide Conservation Funding

The Land Trust receives generous gifts of land donated with the understanding the properties will be sold subject to conservation easements and that the proceeds will support future conservation work. This year, the Land Trust received two of these land gifts.

The first, 93 acres in the town of Groton donated by the Estate of Katherine Sutphin, features productive agricultural fields, mature woodlands, and frontage on a tributary to the Owasco Inlet.

Cornelia "Nelly" Farnum and Jack Booker decided to give their land, including the home they shared for over 30 years, to the Land Trust. The property, already protected with a conservation easement, includes a steeply sloping forest with a cascading creek and a beautiful 19th century Greek Revival home surrounded by gardens. Proceeds from the sale of this land gift will help support the Land Trust's Opportunity Fund.

Two additional properties previously gifted to the Land Trust were sold this year subject to perpetual conservation easements, generating important conservation funds. One property, located in the town of Dix, Schuyler County, was donated by a couple that prefers to remain anonymous. The 41-acre property is located near the Great Lakes/Chesapeake Bay watershed divide in the hills between Watkins Glen and Corning.

183 acres in the town of Prattsburgh, Steuben County, was donated by the estate of Barbara Grace. The property includes over a mile of frontage on Tenmile Creek and connects wildlife habitat in the Bristol Hills with state forests north of Hammondsport.



Finger Lakes National Forest / Tom Reimers



Conservation Easement Property / Edie Jodz



CONNECTING TO LAND



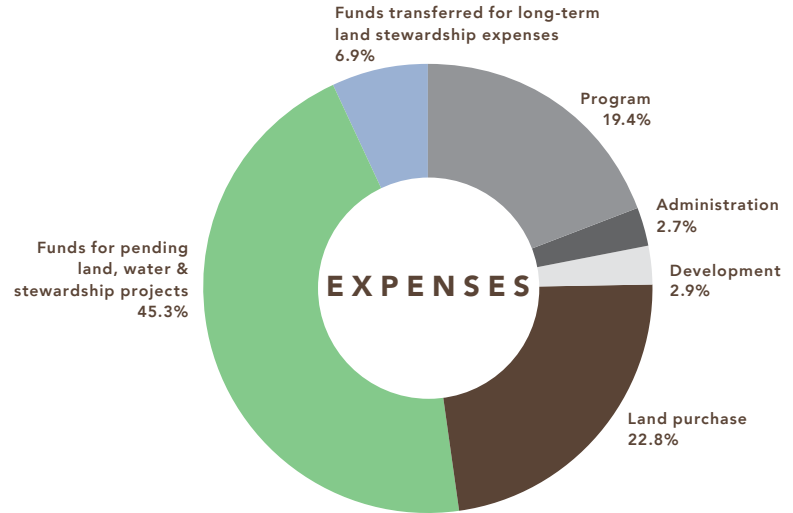
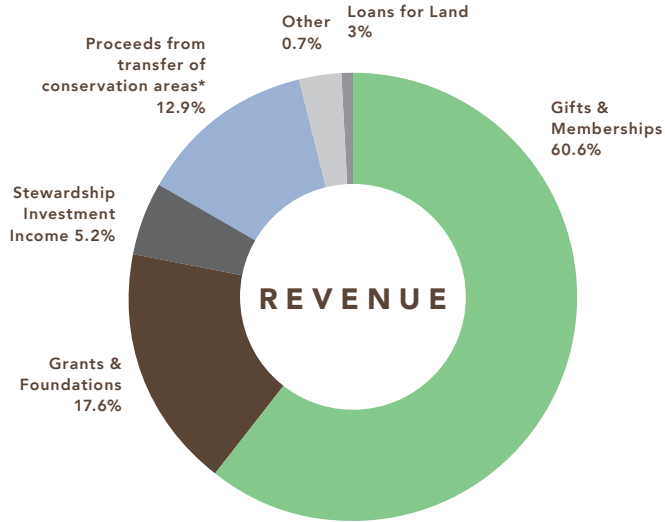
The FLLT held outdoor education events on our nature preserves, including guided hikes in celebration of our 30th Anniversary. In the interest of public health, we shifted our attention to online events in the spring and summer. Additionally, staff gave presentations on land and water conservation across the region. As always, our events were offered free of charge.

We had a special opportunity

to award \$58,584 in grant funds to six organizations connecting inner-city Rochester youth to nature this year. The funding came from an anonymous family who donated their 200-acre property with the understanding it would be sold subject to a conservation easement. The donor requested that some of the proceeds generated from the sale benefit inner-city Rochester youth by fostering their connection with nature.



FINANCIALS 2019-2020



Gifts & Memberships	\$4,775,715.86
Grants & Foundations	\$1,386,574.60
Stewardship Investment Income	\$413,083.39
Proceeds from transfer of conservation areas*	\$1,014,208.00
Loans for Land	\$239,000.00
Other	\$55,444.81
Total	\$7,884,026.66

Program	\$1,529,447.07
Administration	\$217,772.74
Development	\$226,158.42
Land purchase	\$1,795,435.07
Funds for pending land & water protection and land stewardship expenses	\$3,569,996.54
Funds transferred for long-term land stewardship expenses	\$545,216.81
Total	\$7,884,026.66

*lands added to public holdings or sold subject to a perpetual conservation easement per prior agreement with donor. Stewardship Investment Proceeds from Income 3.8% transfer of conservation areas.

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





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