



Bill Ulfelder © Jonathan Grassi

### From Our Executive Director

As we enter the fall, I feel hopeful. In June, New York State passed climate legislation that will reduce carbon pollution 85% by 2050 and make us the first net zero emissions state. The Nature Conservancy played a big role alongside elected officials and our partners in getting that across the finish line. We also worked to get congestion pricing passed for NYC, another national first, which will reduce carbon pollution and provide much needed funding for public transportation. And we recently closed on a \$250 million land transaction in the Appalachians that will conserve 260,000 acres in the heart of coal country. Our team is more committed than ever to our mission, and I'm energized by the support you provide to help us address the most urgent challenge—climate change—our planet faces.

Thank you!

Bill Ulfelder, Executive Director

#### DONATIONS

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Mashmack © Lynn Savarese

## A Billion Dollar Idea for Nature

20 years, \$1.2 billion and more than 10,000 acres later, we celebrate the Community Preservation Fund (CPF). The CPF is a program that protects land and water to preserve the integrity of communities on the East End of Long Island. It's funded by a 2% tax paid by real estate purchasers, and over the course of its 20-year history, it has generated more than \$1.2 billion. How did it come about? In the 1990s, members of the Long Island community noticed the environment was under siege. When the CPF was first proposed, a coalition formed focused on gaining support for the bill, especially in the sectors that were initially opposed to it. The best part? The coalition really worked. The team gained support from local realtors and builders, as well as from farmers, after adding CPF language prioritizing farmland protection.

Next, they had to convince the voters. The Nature Conservancy stepped in. Team members worked tirelessly to execute on-the-ground, local campaigns.

They were met with heavy opposition but were able to connect with community members and demonstrate how this was not only good for nature but good for their communities too. In 1998, voters approved the bill, and in April of 1999, the CPF went into effect. In 2016, the Conservancy led a campaign resulting in overwhelming voter approval of an amendment allowing funds to be used for water quality improvement projects. Plus a majority voted to extend the CPF to 2050.

While the CPF has seen great success, we can't stop here. East End bays and harbors are suffering from nitrogen pollution, which also threatens our drinking water supply. Additional investments are necessary, and we must move quickly. But we have faith—the story of the CPF demonstrates what is possible when diverse members of a community come together to protect the lands and waters they love.

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Clockwise, left to right: Enjoying the sunset; Nancy Kelley; Montauk Bluffs. All photos © Anthony Graziano

## Envisioning a Healthy Long Island Meet Long Island Director, Nancy Kelley

**Where and when did your interest in nature begin?** Growing up on Long Island, my life has been framed by water. My front yard was a bay, my back door led to a harbor, and the ocean was a 15-minute bike ride away. That's where my interest in nature began: waters where I learned to swim, sail and snorkel, where I dug clams and fished for blowfish. Today, these are the same waters we're working to restore, after decades of pollution and unsustainable development, which has been further exacerbated by the effects of climate change.

**What does a healthy Long Island look like to you and how does the CPF help achieve that vision?** A healthy Long Island has nature and people inextricably linked. We must give back to nature so nature can give back to us. The CPF acknowledges our vital connection with nature. To date, this landmark government program has protected more than 10,000 acres of forests, farmland, wetlands and coastlines. Now, it's helping to restore waters across the East End. These kinds of actions are more important than ever as we experience the reality of climate change through sea level rise and warming waters. As successful as the effort has been, additional investments are needed if we are to safeguard our environment for nature and people.

**What do you enjoy most about your work?** Whether on the land or in the water, experiencing the wonder of the outdoors with others gives me great pleasure, especially when I can so easily point to the significant role the Conservancy has played in protecting and restoring our environment. I also value exchanging ideas and lessons on tackling our most challenging environmental challenges with Conservancy teammates around the world, from the Caribbean to Africa. Often, the best solutions emerge from bringing together diverse and contrasting voices—that's when the magic happens.

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**100%**  
emissions-free power in  
New York by 2040 under  
the new climate bill



Building green roofs © Noemi Gonzalo-Bilbao/TNC

### Landmark Climate Protection in New York

This year, our New York policy team pulled out all the stops, working tirelessly with partners and lawmakers for months to craft a new law to combat climate change. The result was historic. In the final few days of legislative session, New York State passed the most aggressive climate legislation in the United States. It requires net zero carbon emissions by 2050, 70% renewable energy by 2030 and 100% emissions-free power by 2040. This bill will drastically reduce pollution, create a low-carbon economy, and provide funding to frontline communities disproportionately affected by pollution or at high-risk from the effects of climate change. This bill sets a precedent for the rest of the nation and will play a critical role in helping the United States meet its emissions reductions goals. This will create a cleaner, safer and more equitable New York for generations to come.