

Spring Into Our Preserves

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YOU'VE HELPED PROTECT

.....

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[nature.org/cwnypreserves](https://www.nature.org/cwnypreserves)

MEMBER UPDATE

CENTRAL & WESTERN
NEW YORK CHAPTER



Connect. Explore. Give.



In Central and Western New York, we're fortunate to have 20 percent of the world's surface water—the Great Lakes—in our backyard. The Nature Conservancy believes we have an obligation to protect and steward our fresh water, not only for environmental reasons but for the competitive advantage water provides us in a thirsty world.

The Great Lakes have a cousin in Africa's Rift Lakes. Lake Tanganyika, Lake Victoria and Lake Malawi comprise 25 percent of the world's surface fresh water.

The Nature Conservancy is helping Africans protect Lake Tanganyika, the world's second-largest lake. Our Chapter is playing an important role with financial resources and technical assistance.

Lake Tanganyika is starting from a strong place. There are no invasive species, no water diversion threats, no major cities on the shoreline. Not yet. To help them, we are sharing the lessons we've learned in North America's Great Lakes.

We're also learning a lot from our African partners. At Lake Tanganyika, the linkage between people's well-being and a healthy environment is much more explicit. In the U.S., it's easy to forget how dependent we are on nature. This winter, we had the opportunity to take a group of Conservancy supporters to Lake Tanganyika to experience these connections first-hand. But you don't need to travel far to see how nature sustains people's health and happiness. You need only to walk outside.

This issue of our newsletter highlights some of the ways we can nurture our connections with nature right here in Central and Western New York. You'll read about:

- How a self-described "accidental conservationist" became one of our most dedicated members.
- Our new and improved guide to dozens of beautiful local Conservancy preserves.
- An array of opportunities to explore nature with us this spring and summer—from hikes, bird walks and work days, to collaborations with the Xerox Rochester International Jazz Festival and the George Eastman Museum.
- Two brand new preserves near Syracuse and Buffalo.
- A new drone that will help us better care for the places you've helped us protect.

There are so many ways to get involved with nature. Which path will you choose? Explore the places you've helped protect, volunteer with us, or give back to nature. We need you with us on this journey.

Susan van der Stricht
Board Chair

Jim Howe
Executive Director

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The Nature Conservancy meets all of the Standards for Charity Accountability established by the BBB Wise Giving Alliance. The BBB Wise Giving Alliance is a national charity watchdog affiliated with the Better Business Bureau.

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Celebrate Your Newest Trail

Rob's Trail Will Be Lake-to-Lake!
Save the Date: Saturday, September 24
Stay tuned for more information.



CONNECT WITH US

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TOP Rob's Trail © TNC (Mat Levine);
BOTTOM El Dorado Beach Preserve © Dr. Jim Corl

Spring: The ideal time to ENJOY NATURE

IN CENTRAL AND WESTERN NEW YORK

With clear skies, fresh breezes and budding trees, spring is the perfect season for exploring nature at The Nature Conservancy's preserves. In Central and Western New York, we boast wonderfully diverse preserves in every corner of the region. The only thing missing is you! Come see for yourself.

- 1 CHAUMONT BARRENS**
Discover one of the last and finest examples of alvar grasslands in the world. The bedrock found throughout Chaumont Barrens is about 450 million years old. Scientists say that at that time, Chaumont was at the bottom of a shallow tropical sea near the equator. If you look closely, you can find the remains of primitive marine animals, such as cephalopods, that lived in the ocean. In late May, visitors can enjoy a diverse succession of native wildflowers in bloom, especially prairie smoke, which can be seen nowhere else in the Northeast.
- 2 EL DORADO BEACH**
The forces of nature shaped El Dorado's beautiful shoreline. It all began about 12,000 years ago when the one-mile thick ice sheet that covered most of New York State began to melt. Migratory birds are the specialty here. From July through September every year, shorebirds stop at El Dorado on their journey between James Bay in Canada and wintering grounds in Central and South America.
- 3 LAKE JULIA**
Study nature in this rich mosaic of forests, streams and lakes. Lake Julia Preserve is nestled in the foothills of the western Adirondack Mountains, in the Town of Remsen within Oneida County. The preserve features a rich mosaic of mature northern hardwood forest interspersed with streams, a spruce-fir swamp, a northern sphagnum bog, pine plantations and man-made lakes.
- 4 O.D. VON ENGELN AT MALLORYVILLE**
Discover wetlands, carnivorous plants and songbirds. At the O.D. von Engeln Preserve at Malloryville, more than a mile of eskers – ancient river beds that once ran through glaciers – wind through a pocket of forest adjacent to Fall Creek. Many distinct plant communities thrive on the preserve's bogs, swamps, marshes and fens. Look for the pitcher plant, which lives in a nutrient-poor environment and traps insects to obtain nitrogen.
- 5 ELDRIDGE WILDERNESS**
Explore a diversity of forest communities. The trail at Eldridge Wilderness follows the side of a gorge through a mature mixed forest with red and chestnut oak, beech, sugar maple and a grove of large hemlocks. Come and enjoy the tranquil beauty of this fascinating 87-acre preserve in Tompkins County. Look for birds such as pileated woodpecker, wood thrush, ovenbird, scarlet tanager and red-eyed vireo.
- 6 FRENCHMAN'S BLUFF**
Explore open meadows, wildlife ponds, shale cliffs and talus slopes. Frenchman's Bluff Preserve features over nine miles of trails, some of which offer bird's eye views of the Chemung River 700 feet below. Ravens, ospreys and eagles and are often seen soaring from the steep slopes and scenic vistas that overlook the Chemung River. Some visitors may have the extraordinary opportunity to spot an Eastern timber rattlesnake on the preserve.
- 7 WEST HILL**
Watch a forest grow up. More than 125 years ago, farming was incrementally phased out on this property, allowing the abandoned fields to mature at their own pace. Today, visitors can ramble through many different stages of natural succession and imagine what West Hill will look like when the field and shrublands eventually return to Appalachian oak hickory forest. The main branch of the trail system at West Hill is a popular section of the Bristol Hills Spur of the Finger Lakes Trail.
- 8 THOUSAND ACRE SWAMP**
Explore one of the region's largest swamps. Located in the Town of Penfield, just outside of Rochester, Thousand Acre Swamp is one of Monroe County's largest wetland systems, and plays a vital role in maintaining water quality for Lake Ontario. Ten trails on the property show you a world of wildflowers, animals, birds and other natural wonders. As you walk the trails, look for red and white trillium, jack-in-the-pulpits, tiger swallowtail butterflies, leopard frogs and swamp milkweed.
- 9 ROB'S TRAIL**
A lake-to-lake trail in the Finger Lakes. Rob's Trail, a 170-acre preserve in Ontario County, is nestled among the high ridges and rolling hills of the Finger Lakes. Completed in 2008, the original trail was built to connect two undeveloped lakeshore properties between Hemlock and Canadice Lakes—properties conserved to protect drinking water. You can hike the existing trail all the way to Canadice Lake, and work is underway to extend the trail to reach the shoreline of Hemlock Lake.
- 10 MOSS LAKE**
A National Natural Landmark. The most outstanding feature of Moss Lake Preserve is its 15-acre bog lake. A boardwalk over the mat enables visitors to enjoy the bog's unusual flora: bog laurel, carnivorous round-leaved and spatulate-leaved sundew and pitcher plants, leatherleaf, cranberries and bog club moss. Bladderwort can be seen in full yellow bloom in July.



ONLINE

Explore our new and improved guide to local preserves at nature.org/cwnypreserves

YOUR GUIDE FOR CONSERVANCY PRESERVES

At its preserves, the Conservancy welcomes:

- HIKING
- BIRDING
- CANOEING AND KAYAKING in designated areas.
- NATURE STUDY
- CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING in designated areas

Please note:

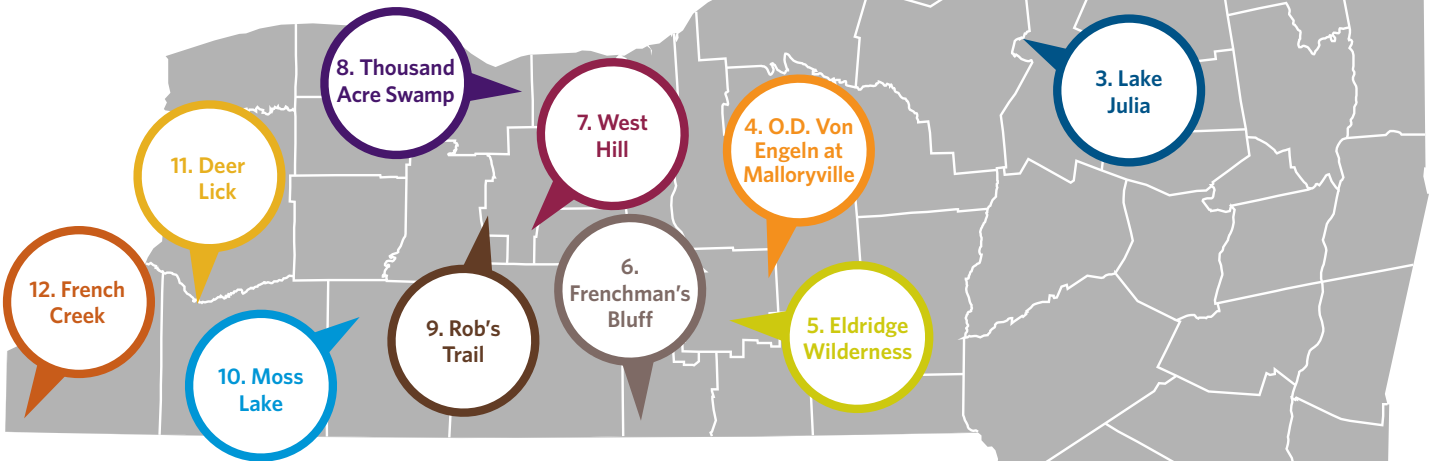
Preserves are open from dawn to dusk, unless otherwise noted onsite.

To learn more about preserve guidelines and enjoyment of our preserves, please contact Conservation Land Manager Mat Levine at mlevine@tnc.org.



ONLINE

For more information about these preserves and the other places we protect, visit: nature.org/cwnypreserves



11

DEER LICK

Find forests, streams and cliffs in this steep-walled valley.

Long ago, Cattaraugus Creek carved the Zoar Valley gorge through shale formations. Known to some as the “Letchworth of Lake Erie,” the steep-walled valley features hemlock-hardwood forests, coldwater streams, fens and towering cliffs that reach as high as 400 feet from the gorge floor.

12

FRENCH CREEK

A key piece of the Northeast’s most biologically diverse aquatic system.

French Creek contains five times more species than the average New York stream. Thirteen globally rare species inhabit the creek, including the Tippecanoe darter, found nowhere else except the upper Allegheny River Basin. Many of these species have disappeared from American waterways, but French Creek continues to provide them precious refuge.



LEFT TO RIGHT Rob’s Trail, American chestnuts at Deer Lick Preserve, Monitoring conservation easements on Grenadier Island © TNC (Mat Levine)

Connect with NATURE

This spring and summer, get outside and explore the places you've helped protect!



Spring Bird Walks

(members only) with
Chapter Director Jim Howe

- **Seneca River Preserve, Baldwinsville**
Wed., May 11, 7:30 - 9:30 am
- **Forest Lawn Cemetery, Buffalo**
Thurs., May 12, 7:30 - 9:30 am
- **O.D. von Engeln, Malloryville**
Thurs., May 19, 7:30 - 9:30 am
- **Cobbs Hill Park, Rochester**
Fri., May 20, 7:30 - 9:30 am



LEAF interns © TNC (Mat Levine)



Walks & Hikes

- **Extreme Ecology, Chaumont**
Sat., May 14, 10 am - 1 pm
- **Discover Rob's Trail West, Springwater**
Sat., May 14, 10 am - 1 pm
- **Mystery Plants, Ithaca**
Sun., May 22, 10 am - 12 pm
- **Where Wildflowers Bloom, Penfield**
Sat., June 11, 10 am - 12 pm
- **Rebuilding a Wetland, Honeoye Lake**
Sat., June 18, 10 am - 12 pm
- **Pollinator Picnic, Penfield**
Sat., June 25, 10 am - 12 pm
- **Moss Lake: A Glacial Ice Cube, Caneadea**
Fri., July 22, 10 am - 12 pm
- **Paddle Hemlock Lake**
Sat., July 30, 9 am - 1 pm

Volunteer Opportunities

- **Lake Julia, Remsen**
Sat., May 25, 10 am - 1pm



SIGN UP ONLINE

New programs will be added throughout the season. For more information and to register, visit: nature.org/cwneyvents



Ansel Adams (American, 1902-1984). Noon clouds, Glacier Park, Montana, 1942. Gelatin silver print, printed 1950. George Eastman Museum, gift of the photographer. © Estate of Ansel Adams

National Treasures

Celebrating a Century of America's Parks at the George Eastman Museum

To celebrate the 100th anniversary of the formation of the National Park Service, the George Eastman Museum presents *Photography and America's National Parks*, June 4–October 2. The Nature Conservancy and its members have been invaluable partners in the protection and expansion of national parks. See how we're celebrating the centennial with the Eastman Museum at nature.org/cwny.

Love Music? Love Water!

Learn about where your water comes from and help save our most precious resource.

**Visit our booth at
The Xerox Rochester
International Jazz Fest**
June 24–July 2, 2016

Details at
nature.org/cwny

The Nature Conservancy 

Protecting nature. Preserving life.



© TNC and Kent Mason

Discover NEW PLACES

Thanks to your generous support, we've added two new protected areas near Buffalo and Syracuse to the conserved lands across Central and Western New York. Get out and explore these special places for yourself!



Eighteenmile Creek Preserve

- **3 partners**—The Nature Conservancy, Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper and Erie County Department of Parks and Recreation—worked together to protect Eighteenmile Creek.
- **1,000 acres of forest** at the headwaters of Eighteenmile Creek—one of Lake Erie's major tributaries—were connected through this project for the benefit of people and nature.
- Individual donations helped leverage **over \$170,000** in grant funds from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Great Lakes Restoration Initiative to make this project possible.
- **90 percent** of the residents of Erie County get their drinking water from Lake Erie and the Niagara River.
- Just **30 miles** from Buffalo, these protected forests will play a crucial role in keeping water clean and plentiful for area residents.

LEFT TO RIGHT Photographer at Eighteenmile Creek © *Craig Lending*, Eighteenmile Creek © *Tom Bonner Photography*, Painted turtles © *Stephen G. Maka*, Volunteer © TNC (*Erika Nortemann*), Blue-gray gnatcatcher © *Kelly Colgan Azar* via a Flickr Creative Commons license, Hemlock Lake © TNC (*Mat Levine*)

Seneca River Preserve

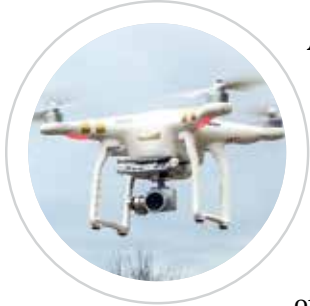
- **222 acres** representing one of the Seneca River's healthiest remaining stretches of floodplains and wetlands were donated to The Nature Conservancy by Pooler Enterprises.
- **100 fish species** were once found in the Seneca River—including Atlantic salmon and American eel—both of which migrated up the river to spend important parts of their life cycles in the upper watershed.
- **16 pairs** of blue-gray gnatcatcher—along with pairs of several other bird species on the decline elsewhere in New York—call Seneca River Preserve home.
- Just **14 miles** from Syracuse, these lands help protect people and property by absorbing floodwater during storms. Large and intact floodplain lands like those found at Seneca River Preserve are rare this close to metropolitan areas.





Drone monitoring Honeoye Lake restoration site © TNC (Mat Levine)

Meet Our NEW DRONE



Annual monitoring of our preserves is no small task. With more than 30,000 acres of land owned in Central & Western New York, The Nature Conservancy’s stewardship staff need to work as efficiently as possible to monitor boundaries and assess the health of habitats. Recent articles in *WIRED* and other outlets have highlighted the use of

Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs)—aka drones—in

the Conservancy’s work worldwide. To that end, The Nature Conservancy’s Central and Western New York Chapter is now the proud owner of a drone. While some of our lands will require monitoring and assessment from the ground, our largest and hardest-to-access properties—Tug Hill and Zoar Valley, for example—could each be monitored in a single site visit by operating a drone along its borders. Live streaming of video will allow our staff to see conditions in real time, and high-definition video and images record data for reporting and further analysis.

Employing a drone with an HD video camera gives The Nature Conservancy the ability to gather more information, cover more geography and see our preserves from an aerial perspective. Drones also will play a role in marketing and philanthropy. Capturing inspiring videos and HD images of the places and people our work benefits will be important to our success, and we’re eager to employ this new tool to inspire support for our mission.



TOP Blue lupine © Kerry Wixted via a Flickr Creative Commons License
BOTTOM © TNC

MEET PHYLLIS BENTLEY:

An Accidental Conservationist

Phyllis Bentley, a dedicated member of The Nature Conservancy for more than 40 years, describes herself as a “non-deliberate” nature lover. “As a child, I was sometimes reluctant to participate in my family’s forays around Upstate New York,” Phyllis says. But growing up during the Depression, a hike through the Bristol Hills or closer to home at Ellison or Cobbs Hill Parks was an economical form of recreation, so she went along. “I didn’t realize at the time how much I was learning from my father about nature. His enthusiasm just spilled over. After I graduated from college and settled in New England as a social worker, friends invited me to join them on a bird walk, and I was surprised at how many species I recognized.”

Turns out, environmentalism ran deep in her father’s family before there was even a word for it. When her Aunt Janet Bentley learned that the massive Eastern hemlocks and white pines were slated to be felled in her beloved woods, she acted to protect them. Years later she donated these incredible woods to The Nature Conservancy, and many of the “giants” still stand today. You can see them today at our Bentley Woods Preserve in Victor.

Since returning home to Rochester for retirement, Phyllis takes every chance she can to explore The Nature Conservancy’s preserves in the region. She believes in the power of programs like LEAF (Leaders in Environmental Action for the Future) that give young people meaningful experiences in nature, but also thinks families should do more to seek out nature’s classrooms, in less formal ways.

“Look at me,” she says. “I often didn’t want to go on a hike with my family, but once we were out there hiking through the forests and streams it transformed my view of the world. That’s how people become environmental stewards.”



Retired social worker Phyllis Bentley has been a member of The Nature Conservancy for more than 40 years. © TNC (Jan Miller)



Thousand Acre Swamp © TNC (Mat Levine)



Take Action

Plan 2014 will help restore 64,000 acres of wetlands, boost hydropower and increase the resilience of hundreds of miles of shoreline.

Visit **SupportPlan2014.org** to voice your support and stay up-to-date on the latest news and progress.

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SPRING/SUMMER 2016



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GLOBE intern Larissa Lopez at Thousand Acre Swamp © TNC (Mat Levine)