



# Reflections

SPRING 2023 | THE THOUSAND ISLANDS LAND TRUST



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The Thousand Island Land Trust works to conserve the natural beauty, diverse wildlife habitats, water quality & outdoor recreational opportunities of the Thousand Islands Region, now and for future generations.

# CREATE YOUR LEGACY.

THOUSAND ISLANDS

*FOREVER*

*Crooked Creek Preserve © Chris Murray*

## DO YOU HAVE A PLAN FOR THE FUTURE?

Land conservation is an investment in our future. Leaving a legacy is one of the most valuable, enduring gifts you can ever give.

For this reason we invite you to join others by including TILT in your estate plan and become a recognized member of **Thousand Islands Forever Legacy Program**.

Members represent a group of individuals who have made a lasting commitment to the conservation of the land in the Thousand Islands. This legacy will ensure that our most cherished open spaces are protected for present and future generations.

**TOGETHER, WE ARE CONSERVING THE PLACE YOU LOVE.**

*"We live our lives with a lot of gratitude. We're grateful for being able to experience the River as we have. In revisiting our estate plan, we felt we needed to include a vehicle to help protect what is so important to us and to many others.*

*As we learned more about TILT, we knew that the organization could help us in our desire to protect a truly unique area that is so special to us. We realize how unique the area is and we are proud to support TILT in their efforts to keep it in its current pristine state."*



— Nicole and Kyle Blumin,  
Wellesley Island

To add the Thousand Islands Land Trust to your estate plan today, please visit [tilandtrust.plannedgiving.org](http://tilandtrust.plannedgiving.org) for more information or contact Terra Bach at 315-686-5345.

# BLIND BAY CONSERVATION INITIATIVE UPDATE



Blind Bay © Chris Murray

## Local Efforts to Save Blind Bay

Last year, the River community took urgent action to protect a special place in danger of being changed forever. After learning of Customs & Border Protection's (CBP) plan to construct a new Border Patrol facility in the heart of the Thousand Islands the River community stepped in to help prevent what could only be described as an unprecedented loss to our St. Lawrence River ecosystem. Galvanized around the issue, countless elected officials, regional agencies, and non-profit environmental organizations voiced opposition to the proposal. In addition, over a thousand members of the River community submitted public comments encouraging CBP to seek alternative sites.

In November, the Land Trust officially acquired the Blind Bay property in Clayton. A true environmental treasure, Blind Bay is not only a historic breeding ground for muskellunge and 53 additional fish species, it is also home to numerous mammal and bird species that are characteristic of the Thousand Islands. "Save The River (STR) applauds TILT's bold initiative in protecting this critical habitat that is essential to support biodiversity in the River and along its shorelines," commented John Peach, STR's Executive Director. "TILT's commitment to conserving critical environmental habitat combined with STR's advocacy on behalf of the River has made the protection of Blind Bay possible."

## Coalition Steps Up

Since the acquisition was finalized, the focus has been on developing a long-term conservation plan for Blind Bay. Recently, the organizations hosted a group of Scouts from Fort Drum. As part of the Blind Bay Stewardship Day, the group installed wood duck boxes and a variety of songbird nest boxes.

For the last several months, the Blind Bay Coalition has been working with elected officials and community leaders to help identify alternative sites for the proposed Border Patrol facility. "While the Blind Bay Coalition is opposed to CBP siting the new facility in and around Blind Bay, it understands the important role the Agency plays when it comes to homeland security and protecting our nation's borders," explained Jake Tibbles, TILT's Executive Director. "That's one of the reasons why we've offered to assist CBP with the environmental evaluation of alternative sites."

A proposal by the Town of Alexandria to locate a new Border Patrol facility at the former Bonnie Castle Recreation Center was sent to CBP last year. "As highlighted in recent news articles, the Bonnie Castle Recreation Center offered by the Town of Alexandria seems to address Customs & Border Protection's needs while avoiding negatively impacting the environmentally sensitive Blind Bay," stated Phil Reed, Jefferson County Legislator. "This proposal looks to have the support of the local community and many of our elected officials."

Jefferson County Legislator. "This proposal looks to have the support of the local community and many of our elected officials."

## Moving Forward

The Blind Bay Coalition plans to keep the River community informed on any developments pertaining to CBP's proposal. It also plans to continue working with elected officials and proactively engaging CBP. "Considering our long-standing relationships with the River

communities and deep knowledge of the region's complex ecosystems, Coalition partners are uniquely positioned to work with CBP to avoid other sites that may be equally or more sensitive than Blind Bay," described Peach.

Following the structure of STR's Trash Free River program, last year staff filled contractor bags full with a variety of polystyrene fragments and single-use plastics in Blind Bay. This spring, a shoreline clean-up for the shallow waters of Blind Bay has again been scheduled. Teams will work on the water and the land to remove trash and debris from the shoreline and adjacent wetlands and woods.

This summer TILT and Save The River plan to hold additional environmental education programs and support the Thousand Islands Biological Station's Muskellunge Population Restoration Program. The two organizations also plan to host a community gathering to raise funds for the long-term conservation and defense of Blind Bay.

For more information regarding the coalition and efforts to protect Blind Bay, visit [saveblindbay.com](http://saveblindbay.com).

*"Blind Bay is an important community project for STR and TILT, and we want children to get out on the Preserve so that they can learn the importance of protecting our region's most important natural resources."*

— SHANNON WALTER, TILT EDUCATION & OUTREACH COORDINATOR



# CONSERVING GARLOCK BAY

## TILT Project Protects Water Quality, Rare Habitats

by Jake Tibbles | *Executive Director* and Spencer Busler | *Assistant Director*

Nestled quietly between Point Vivian and St. Lawrence Park, a flock of gadwalls and bufflehead escape the typical bustle of the American Narrows. Countless lakers, landing crafts and pleasure boats pass under the Thousand Islands Bridge just a mile upstream.

Garlock Bay is the perfect hideaway whether you arrive by feather or fin. The restored coastal wetlands and thousands of feet of undeveloped shoreline here provide a rare year-round retreat and stronghold for the region's wildlife, while also helping maintain the clean waters that many enjoy along the shore of the St. Lawrence River.

### A Brief History

Though not officially labeled as Garlock Bay on navigation charts or USGS topo maps, the scenic embayment behind buoy "205" claims its name from decades of ownership and diligent stewardship by the Garlock family of Alexandria Bay. The late Richard Garlock, a renowned outdoorsman and local businessman, bequeathed this over 80-acre tract to his three daughters, Jennifer Garlock-Hebert, Marcia Slocum and Deirdre Beers in 2021. Plans to develop the shoreline have come and gone over the decades, but fortunately the land has been able to avoid that fate over the years.

With their shared vision for the land and love for a greater Thousand Islands, the Garlock sisters worked with TILT to ensure that Dick's legacy of stewardship lives on. "Our Dad truly loved the River and this property," reflected Jennifer

Garlock. "It's hard to describe how much this opportunity means to us. He'd be happy to know that it will stay forever wild, helping protect habitat for the fish and the ducks."

The Land Trust purchased the property in April with assistance from the United State Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) Fish Enhancement, Mitigation and Restoration Fund (FEMRF) and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's (NYSDEC). One of the largest stretches of natural riverfront in mainland Jefferson County is now permanently protected.

Notably, Hebert, Slocum and Beers were recently contacted by United States Customs and Border Protection, which was interested in conducting bat surveys as part of its efforts to identify a site for the new Border Patrol operations facility. "While TILT and the River community recognize the importance of border security, we believe Custom & Border Protection (CBP) is able to advance its mission at the same time avoid negatively impacting our region's most sensitive ecological areas," stated Jake Tibbles, TILT's Executive Director.

### Restoration Investments

"Garlock Bay is a shallow aquatic ecosystem with submerged vegetation that provides critical spawning, rearing and foraging habitat for many fish species, including the muskellunge – or muskie," explained Ian Drew, Field Supervisor, USFWS. "Muskie populations in the St. Lawrence River have



The protection of the Garlock property is a high-impact conservation achievement worth celebrating. © Spencer Busler/TILT

*"Our Dad truly loved the River and this property. It's hard to describe how much this opportunity means to us. He'd be happy to know that it will stay forever wild, helping protect habitat for the fish and the ducks."*



— JENNIFER GARLOCK

experienced a significant and recent decline due to reduced spawning and nursery habitat; as well as losses attributed to a disease known as viral hemorrhagic septicemia (VHS). Maintenance of high-quality spawning and nursery habitat is critical to ensuring population recovery and sustainability.”

In 2012, Ducks Unlimited undertook an extensive wetland restoration project in the upper Garlock Bay complex. The restoration effort was funded by a USFWS Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) grant administered through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. “The restoration work aimed to enhance the marsh ecosystem and fish spawning habitat,” described Sarah Fleming, DU Director of Conservation Programs. “The wetlands were opened up through the use of specialized long-front excavators, and channels and potholes were created in dense stands of cattail. Excavated material was either removed from the site or piled as habitat mounds that support native plants, such as sedges and rushes, providing great sources of food for waterfowl.” Additionally, a second wetland restoration project took place on the property’s interior as part of the St. Lawrence River Valley Phase I Standard NAWCA grant. This program provided for the expansion of a historic emergent wetland that had been partially ditched and drained decades ago. “There has been significant federal investment into the site, and transfer to TILT will ensure long-term protection of the restored resources.”

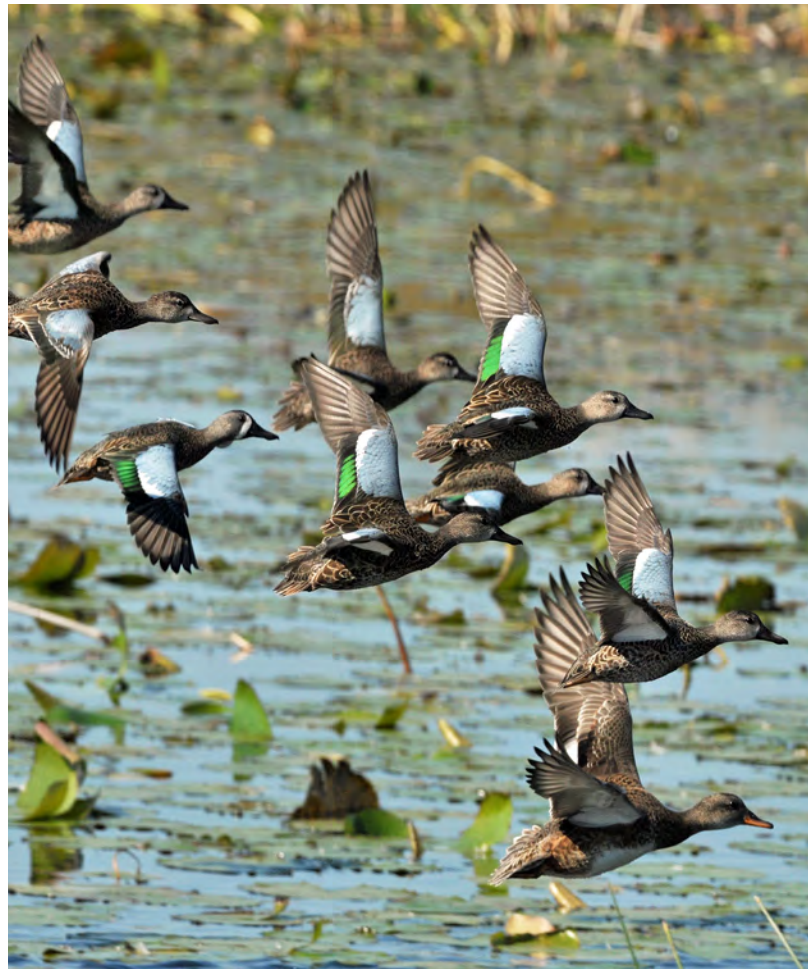
### Benefits Abound

When coupled with TILT’s permanent protection of the Garlock Property, the natural spaces in and around Point Vivian and Garlock Bay will serve as long-term spawning and nursery areas for fish that require marsh habitat, such as northern pike. The potholes will also create isolation areas for waterfowl broods and habitat for other marsh species such as Blanding’s turtles, Virginia rails, and least bitterns.

In addition to the ecological benefits, by conserving parcels like the Garlock Property, TILT helps ensure a healthy balance between natural open space and responsible riverfront development. The Trust for Public Land’s economic study, peer reviewed by Clarkson University, concluded that preserves, trails, and conserved open spaces attract visitors to the region, enhance property values, provide recreational opportunities and boost responsible economic development.

For the scenic beauty enjoyed by those in St. Lawrence Park and Point Vivian or the fishing guides targeting the toothy northern pike and to all River-enthusiasts yet to come, the protection of the Garlock Property is a high-impact conservation achievement worth celebrating.

Over the coming months, TILT intends to conduct a comprehensive natural resources inventory on the property. This will assist with the development of a long-term management plan which will guide the property’s use and care moving forward.



*The Garlock Property provides abundant habitat for blue-winged teal and numerous other waterfowl that benefit from the vibrant ecosystems of the Thousand Islands region. © Martin Zonnenberg*



# TILT COLLABORATES WITH NORTHEAST WILDERNESS TRUST, FURTHER PROTECTING LANDS IN A2A AS FOREVER WILD

Easements on properties like Crooked Creek (pictured) create a foundation for lands to eventually become old growth forests. © Spencer Busler/TILT

by Spencer Busler | Assistant Director

As a central pillar of its mission, TILT has delivered perpetual land protection throughout the St. Lawrence River Valley for nearly 40 years.

These measures primarily come in one of two forms: voluntary conservation easements placed on privately-owned lands (e.g. TILT's protection of Picton Island), or Preserve lands that are fully owned by TILT (e.g. TILT's Crooked Creek and Otter Creek Preserves). Each of these practices provide unique safeguards for the land and its natural values and ecosystem services. An important distinction is that conservation easements are legally enforceable and bound to the land forever, regardless of who owns the land.

It's when these two practices are married that the greatest level of security is provided. That is, when a land trust owns a property, and another third-party conservation organization oversees a legally-binding conservation easement on that land. Some refer to this as the "belt and suspenders" approach, wherein the land trust's ownership of the property provides a certain level of protective assurances (the belt), and the third-party conservation easement provides an additional layer of legal protection and oversight in favor of nature (the suspenders).

## A Shared Vision

In February of 2023, TILT entered into a partnership with the Northeast Wilderness Trust (NEWT), a non-profit land trust of Montpelier, VT, in applying this "belt and suspenders" approach of land protection to some of the properties that it owns in the St. Lawrence River Valley. More specifically, TILT conveyed Forever Wild Conservation Easements on four of its preserves in the heart of the Algonquin to Adirondack (A2A) wildlife corridor.

These conservation easements include portions of TILT's Crooked Creek, South Hammond, Many Oaks and Payne Lake Preserves. The easements restrict timber harvest and motorized recreation, setting the foundation for the lands to eventually become old growth forests. These properties were strategically selected by TILT's staff and board as being compatible with a hands-off management approach.

"Right in the back yard of the Thousand Islands, the A2A Wildway provides the same remote and rugged aesthetic as the deep Adirondacks. The underlying geology is nearly identical to that found in the Adirondack Park or Canadian shield of the Algonquin Provincial Park," said Kenneth Nims, TILT's Director of Stewardship. "We're thrilled to be part of the Wildlands Partnership with NEWT."

The lands that TILT enrolled into the Partnership are now under the additional layer of protection provided by the forever wild easements held by NEWT, and will serve as baselines for future research by serving as a comparison to our managed landscapes. Notably, the conservation easements only apply to a portion of TILT's land holdings, and the organization intends to continue active management of its other lands to create a mosaic of diverse habitats across the St. Lawrence River Valley. In tandem with the newly-eased forests, TILT's conservation properties will stand to support the greatest level of biodiversity and resilience; bolstering an accolade that the Thousand Islands region is already renowned for.

"Forever-wild conservation is among the most cost-efficient and immediate actions we can take to confront rapid climate change and mass species loss. Old growth forests provide us with countless benefits to the environment, from wildlife habitat, to water quality protection, and carbon sequestration," said Sophie Ehrhardt, Wild Carbon Specialist for NEWT. The Northeast Wilderness Trust focuses on establishing wilderness. NEWT distinguishes lands as forever-wild as being "ruled by the laws of nature rather than people". Their efforts, spanning from New York to Maine, work to achieve the goal set forth by the Harvard University/Harvard Forest Wildlands & Woodlands initiative to conserve at least 10% (3± million acres) of New England's forestland as wilderness by 2060.

TILT looks forward to continuing this new partnership with NEWT with the addition of new forever wild conservation properties in the A2A. The alignment and synergy of the two organizations stands to have lasting impacts that will reach far beyond their respective bounds.

# TILT Builds Upon Mullet Creek Watershed Preserve at Fishers Landing

In 2019, TILT's Strategic Planning process reinforced the organization's overarching goal to protect the ecological and environmental integrity of the Thousand Islands region, helping ensure resilience to climate change. Through the implementation of regional and landscape-scale conservation and restoration projects, TILT endeavors to identify and preserve the lands and waters that provide the most ecosystem services and that are most sensitive to disruption; safeguarding the region's natural capital, so to speak.

## Protecting Critical Wetland Habitat and Water Quality

TILT put that goal to action this spring with the purchase of the 116± acre Snyder property on Ledges Road near Fishers Landing. With nearly 20-acres of wetlands, over 65-acres of mature mixed forest and 3,500 feet of frontage on the Mullet Creek, the Snyder property exemplifies the River community's shared conservation strategy. The tract abuts the organization's existing lands along the Creek, which feeds the St. Lawrence just a mile and half downstream in Fishers Landing. It's home to a number of rare and threatened species, from northern harrier and Blanding's turtles to rare shiners and bats.

"We've enjoyed watching the wildlife on the property for many years and it's a relief to know that the land will be protected moving forward," said Gene and Brenda Snyder, who sold the property to TILT.



With nearly 20-acres of wetlands, over 65-acres of mature mixed forest and 3,500 feet of frontage on the Mullet Creek, the Snyder property exemplifies TILT's conservation strategy. © Spencer Busler/TILT

"Maintaining the Snyder property in its natural state will allow Mullet Creek to continue serving as a fish spawning habitat while providing clean water to the River," said Nathan Helmuth, TILT's Land Protection Specialist.

The Land Trust acquired the property with assistance from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI), and the USFWS Fish Enhancement, Mitigation and Restoration Fund (FEMRF).



## TILT'S 2023 RAFFLE

Benefitting wetland habitat restoration

With excitement, TILT unveiled a beautiful wood duck carved by Glenn Sweet of Thousand Islands Decoy Company in Alexandria Bay for this year's raffle. Funds raised will protect migratory bird habitat throughout the Thousand Islands and the A2A including wooded wetland areas found on the S. Gerald Ingerson Preserve, Grindstone Island Preserves, Crooked Creek and Blind Bay.

Standing approximately 13" tall and 15" long, the wood duck is carved from white cedar and basswood.

This one-of-a-kind carving is signed and stamped by Glenn, who is a nationally recognized third generation Alexandria Bay wood carver.

### Price & Drawing

Raffle tickets are available for \$5 each, or five for \$20, and are available at the TILT office and online.

The drawing will be held on Friday, August 25, 2023. You do not have to be present to win.

### How to Purchase Tickets

Call TILT at (315) 686-5345 or visit TILT's website to download a sheet of tickets and mail payment to TILT PO Box 238 Clayton, NY 13624.

**In honor of Robert W Allen's 60th Birthday**  
Bruce & Margaret Howe

**In memory of Randy Arnot**  
Bowie & Susan Arnot

**In memory of Shaner Graham Atkinson**  
John G. Foster

**In memory of Gordon Bonisteel**  
Rhonda Cabrinha  
Marcy & Chris Dembs  
Carol Hills  
Ken & Meredith Nims  
Peter & Laurie Pike  
Brent & Gail Richardson  
Emily & Phillip Sprague  
Justin & Deb Taylor  
John & Sara Treadwell  
Tom Walker

**In memory of Wm. Bruce Borwegen**  
Gail Siesfeld

**In memory of Don Brown**  
Allan Newell

**In memory of Wellington Elmer Calhoun**  
Kenneth Calhoun Jr.

**In memory of John Carter, Sr.**  
Judy Carter

**In honor of Jane Carver**  
Derek Gamble

**In honor of James & Leslie Cheney**  
Caylin Cheney

**In memory of Frank Cole**  
Karen & Bruce Harrison

**In memory of Dorothy Cosselman**  
Robert & Tori Cosselman

**In memory of Sissy & Bill Danforth**  
William Briggs  
Dave & Caroline Munro

**In memory of Jack C. Day**  
Tim & Pattie Day

**In memory of Ken Deedy**  
Steve & Vici Diehl  
Daniel Dolan

**In memory of Kevin, Matt & Ken Deedy**  
Barbara Deedy

**In memory of the Dodenhoff Family**  
Susan & Howard Charbonneau

**In memory of Rett Foster**  
Judy Foster & John Glick

**In memory of Dick Fulton**  
Michael Fulton

**In memory of Terry Davenport**  
Bonnie Davenport

**In honor of Claire Gefell**  
Henry Nichols

**In memory of Marilynn & Larry Gould**  
Michael & Alison Carter

**In memory of Lyle Green**  
Barbara Green

**In memory of Kingsley L. Greene**  
Lawren Stevens

**In memory of Patricia King Griffith**  
Madelyn & Skip Ross-Griffith

**In memory of Hunter Grimes**  
Martha Grimes

**In memory of Patti Hendler**  
Jim Hendler

**In memory of Bill Kaiser**  
Braddock Bay Bird  
Observatory, Inc.  
Linda Lannin  
Gary & Diane Shirley

**In memory of Zell & Jim Kerr**  
Carrie Kerr & Dick Warner  
Meg Kerr & Bob Vanderslice

**In honor of Fran & Peggy Lisewski**  
Kevin Lisewski

**In honor of Art Mack & Mary Jo Champion**  
Leslie Cobb  
Tracie Tucci

**In honor of Molly & Darden MacWade**  
Stewart Macsherry & Beth Rumble

**In memory of Jeffery Marra**  
John Marra

**In memory of Arthur J. Meredith**  
Ken & Laurie Guarino

**In memory of Brett McGowan**  
Nicole Khan

**In honor of Dennis McGraw**  
Don Persett

**In honor of Cindy McLean**  
Penny Partlow

**In memory of Patrick Moore**  
Juliana Eames

**In honor of Mossien Family**  
Carol & Dan Mossien

**In memory of Judy Munro**  
William & Diana Grater  
Bill Munro  
Carter & Nan Strickland

**In memory of Donald & Joan Nickason**  
Constance Peters

**In honor of Bob & Lori Oster**  
Bessie Oster & Jason Gay

**In memory of Susan Drumheller Page**  
Charles Hudak

**In honor of Jake Tibbles & Thumper Peach**  
Molly & Darden MacWade

**In memory of Joan Perconti**  
Michael Cooke

**In memory of Jim Rendall**  
Margot Rendall & George Gardner

## FAREWELLS

### Remembering Judy Munro



Judy and Bill Munro display their joy as volunteers during the 2014 Zenda Community Picnic. © Sarah Ellen Smith

A nature-enthusiast, Judy absolutely loved spending time outdoors and watching wildlife, especially birds. Together, Judy and Bill loved photography and documenting the River's wildlife. Capturing hundreds of pristine moments, they produced beautiful greeting cards for all to enjoy. Bill would take the photos and Judy would carefully name each one offering a glimpse into the moment the photo was captured.

Judy was a strong supporter of many environmental causes, including TILT. Every year, she loved volunteering at the Zenda Community Picnic and the Annual Loon Census. She was particularly adept at spotting loons and her data contributed to numerous surveys. As a volunteer of the Common Tern Program and with net in hand, Judy would watch vigilantly for any young chick 'jumpers' and protectively scoop them up out of the water safely delivering them back to their nests.

Whether it was an early morning paddle with her grandkids to pick up the River's flotsam, monitoring the common terns on Tidd Island with Bill, or enjoying a sunset cruise surrounded by family, Judy absolutely loved spending time on the River. Their cottage on Murray Isle was home and she loved sharing their love of the Thousand Islands with family and friends. Her beautiful smile, zest for life and love of nature will be missed but not forgotten.





## Remembering Sue Smith

Sue Smith was a beloved member of the Grindstone community and a force of good her entire life. Her love of life and the River was felt by everyone who was lucky enough to know her.

A true River Rat, Sue grew up on Occident Island by Fisher's Landing. Sue and her husband Dave celebrated 59 years together, having spent many on Grindstone at their cottage on Swiftwater Point. Both Sue and Dave became an integral part of the Island community. She was always the first to help; a strong supporter of the Church, volunteer at the annual turkey dinner, a Board Member of the Grindstone Island Heritage Center, and active in fundraisers and coffees.

Sue was a strong supporter of TILT. She was a fixture as a volunteer at the Zenda Community Picnic and Volunteer Recognition every year. The Smiths also supported TILT's conservation efforts on Grindstone. Their unwavering financial support helped make projects like the Grindstone Island Nature Trail and Rusho Farm Grassland Restoration possible. Sue's love for Grindstone Island and its people never waned. Her contributions, smile, kind words and helping hands will forever be remembered.



*Sue Smith was a beloved member of the Grindstone community seen here with her friends, Joan Tolette, Peggy White and Janet Gregware. Photo provided by Janet Gregware.*

## Remembering Tom Walker



*Tom Walker and Jake Tibbles, TILT's Executive Director, stand in front of the newly completed stone bench at Otter Creek.*

Tom and his wife Mabel were legendary. Tom served two terms as mayor of Watertown and they were active, influential and generous members of our region. While Tom and Mabel spent much of their time in Watertown, they had a home on the River in Cape Vincent, and were strong supporters of TILT's conservation work. There truly wasn't a part of the North Country community that went untouched by their hard work and unwavering generosity.

The Walkers were among the first to support the development of the Otter Creek Preserve & Nature Trail in Alexandria Bay. The popular Otter Creek Suspension Bridge was dedicated in their honor.

Tom had an insatiable curiosity about the world, loved to share his knowledge and wisdom, and always took a personal interest in the people he interacted with. There is no doubt that Tom's legacy will live on through all of the positive change he helped make possible.

### *In memory of Walter & Louise Rice*

Florence Lewis Rice & Leroy Lewis

### *In memory of Bob Rowland*

Ross & Karen Rowland

### *In honor of Gary & Vera Rushmer*

Elizabeth Tolla

### *In memory of Patricia Schwarz*

Ken Schwarz & Linda Watson

### *In memory of Riggs Smith*

Nan Smith

### *In memory of Sue Smith*

Tom & Robyn Davison  
Janet Lamb-Ennis  
Don & Pat Pickworth  
Jake Tibbles & Alicia Dewey  
Roy & Peggy White  
Susie Wood & David Duff

### *In memory of Scott T. Struwing*

Julia Oliver  
The MAP (Magnusson  
Architecture and Planning)  
Family  
Matt Scheer  
Michael Solana

### *In honor of Elaine Tack & Kevin Whitehead for the Rivergate Trail Project*

Marty Yenawine

### *In thanksgiving for the TILT Staff*

Molly & Darden MacWade

### *In memory of Don & Phoebe Tritton*

Bob & Brooke Runo

### *In memory of Joanne Truman*

Josh Truman

### *In honor of Josh Truman*

Robin Lane

### *In memory of T. Urling Walker*

Kevin & Jane Heffron  
Jake Tibbles & Alicia Dewey

### *In memory of Evan Lee Weissman*

Jim Vermuelen

### *In memory of Beverly Wood*

Chris & Linda Wood

Tributes made from October 14, 2022 - March 13, 2023



**Thank you for remembering your loved ones in this way!**



## Blind Bay Stewardship Day

by Ken Nims | Stewardship Director

Over the past 38 years, the Thousand Islands Land Trust (TILT) has been dedicated to preserving and protecting the natural beauty, habitats, and landscape qualities of the Thousand Islands region. During that time, TILT has received unwavering support from its many dedicated volunteers, both in the TILT office and out on the land. With over 12,000 acres of land to steward, TILT recognizes the importance of volunteers in its efforts to properly steward these lands.

This past February was a prime example of the sheer dedication and grit that our volunteer base shows. On a cold, damp, and blustery day, over 20 volunteers came out in force to take part in the first annual Blind Bay Stewardship Day. With our partners at Save the River, TILT staff led a local Boy Scout group through the installation of 14 birdhouses and wood duck nest boxes throughout the newly expanded Preserve. The Scouts learned about the importance of conservation and had a fun time in the process. With over 100 species of fish, mammals, and birds utilizing this property throughout the year, our collective efforts were fruitful in safeguarding the natural resources of Blind Bay.

On the heels of a successful shoreline cleanup day last Fall, the first annual Blind Bay Stewardship Day proved to be a solid building block for future stewardship efforts in Blind Bay. Volunteer land stewards are essential to TILT's sustained success in preserving land within our service area. TILT celebrates those who are committed to keeping conservation alive in the Thousand Islands.

*Pictured left: Rachel Zalewski, Aiden Trickey, and Nathan Helmuth - TILT's Land Protection Specialist, install birdhouses as part of the first annual Blind Bay Stewardship day. © Terra Bach/TILT*



## Summer Gathering

**Saturday, July 15, 2023**

**Thousand Islands Park Pavilion**

**6-9pm**

**Tickets: \$125 per person**

**All proceeds to benefit the essential conservation and stewardship of Blind Bay.**

Please RSVP by July 7 by mail, phone 315-686-5345, or email [events@tilandtrust.org](mailto:events@tilandtrust.org).



# WISP Program Continues for Fourth Season

by Shannon Walter | Education & Outreach Coordinator

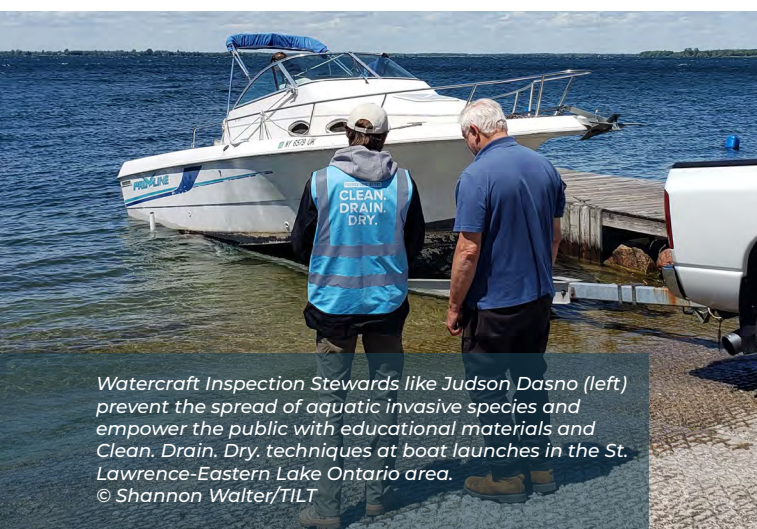
For the fourth consecutive season, the Thousand Islands Land Trust (TILT) has partnered with the St. Lawrence Eastern Lake Ontario Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (SLELO PRISM) to administer the Watercraft Inspection Stewardship Program (WISP). WISP Stewards will work to educate the public on actionable ways that boaters and anglers can help prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species (AIS).

Additionally, the program collects survey data that is used to both track the spread of AIS and inform invasive species management decisions throughout the nation.

Since 2020, TILT's watercraft inspection stewards have completed more than 32,350 surveys and reached over 78,000 people. An average of 95% of boaters and anglers approached by WISP stewards agreed to an inspection meaning that over 30,000 people learned how to inspect their vessel and equipment for AIS. During these surveys, over 2,775 individual AIS specimens were intercepted and removed from boats and equipment, preventing the spread of these organisms to other water bodies. And of those surveyed, 19% resided outside of New York, representing 43 US States and Canadian Provinces.

The scope of these interactions shows just how valuable a program like WISP is to protecting our land and waters in the Thousand Islands and beyond. From water quality to biodiversity, and even safeguarding our River way of life, it's clear that stewardship is essential.

As we begin another WISP season, we are grateful for our partnership with SLELO PRISM and the hard work of all of our stewards. We wish to remind boaters and anglers to Clean-Drain-Dry their vessels and equipment and help stop the spread of aquatic invasive species wherever the summer boating season takes them.



Watercraft Inspection Stewards like Judson Dasno (left) prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species and empower the public with educational materials and Clean, Drain, Dry, techniques at boat launches in the St. Lawrence-Eastern Lake Ontario area.  
© Shannon Walter/TILT

# Kids are Getting WILD Outdoors on Wednesdays with TILT

by Terra Bach | Director of Development & Communications

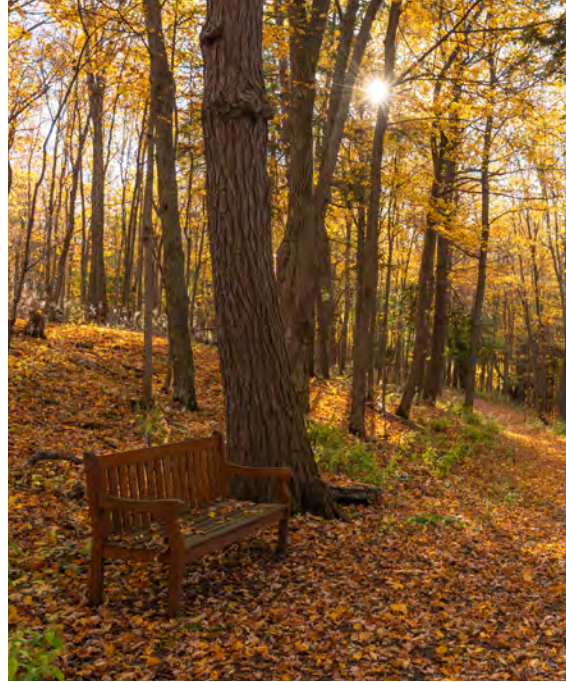


TILTKids enjoyed a magical hike through the fluffy snow at IRLC's Redwood Hill Preserve at TILT's Wild Wednesday Winter Adaptation Investigation this past December, special winter break event. © Terra Bach/TILT

Families continue to embrace the outdoors in the Thousand Islands and show us how important time spent in nature truly is. Once again during the school year our vibrant environmental education program, Wild Wednesdays, provided the opportunity for families to join TILT for an afterschool adventure out on the land. Designed for the entire family, these programs act as recreational gateways that connect people to the land and highlight the many ways that everyone can enjoy free access to the outdoors right in their own neighborhood.

Last fall, participants took a stroll along the Otter Creek Trail to investigate what's *Boo* and what's false about some of Halloween's most misunderstood creepy creatures! Then at the Winter Adaptation Exploration Walk, participants trudged along a snowy trail at the Redwood Hill Preserve to learn all about the ways that animals are the winter survival champions.

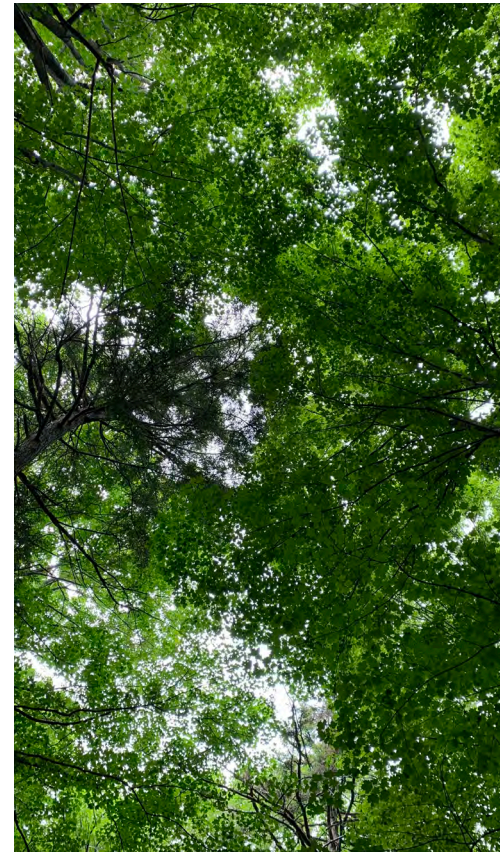
These free programs are made possible by the support of the Ferguson Foundation, the Fresh Sound Foundation, and the RBC Foundation - USA. With much needed interaction with the natural world, Wild Wednesdays foster the discovery of the mysteries of nature and work to ensure that conservation of open space remains a valuable message and objective for the land stewards of tomorrow. Contact us today to register for the May Wild Wednesday Program!



## SIGNATURE PRESERVE HIGHLIGHT

# FOSTER-BLAKE WOODS PRESERVE

A hiking and cross country skiing trail along the dramatic shoreline area known as the Palisades.



The Foster-Blake Woods Preserve is exceptionally beautiful, with its shoreline cliffs and mature Northern Hardwood Forest. It features a hiking and cross-country skiing trail that takes advantage of the variety of habitats as well as the river front view that the property has to offer.

### PRESERVE ECOLOGY

A mature Northern Hardwood Forest provides views from rocky bluffs overlooking the St. Lawrence River, while pockets of mixed shrubland are scattered across the property. This provides excellent bird habitat for both nesting and foraging, as well as providing ample cover for small mammals and upland game birds.

With species like Sugar Maple and American Beech, as well as White Pine and Eastern Hemlock, the mature northern forest typically has regrown from early timbering or agricultural efforts. It is renowned for beautiful fall color, and is an inviting passage for wildlife that move through the area.

The Foster-Blake Woods are especially lovely in the fall and winter, and provide important access to large animals traveling between the Adirondacks in northern New York and Algonquin Park in Northwestern Ontario.

### HIKING THE PRESERVE

The Foster-Blake Woods Trail is a 1 mile round-trip, looped trail that winds through shrubland and forest land along the shores of the St. Lawrence in an area called the Palisades, because of its high bluffs and rugged geology.

### HOW TO GET THERE

Foster-Blake Woods Preserve is located off Rt. 12E. From the intersection of Rt. 12 and Rt. 12E in Clayton, head west on Rt. 12E toward Cape Vincent for 3.7 miles. The parking area is on the right (river side), opposite Pelo Road.

*Foster-Blake Woods Preserve offers abundant beauty in all seasons!*

*Photo credits: top middle © Chris Murray. Left middle © Shannon Walter/TILT. All other photos ©Terra Bach/TILT.*

*Illustration credit: top right Robert McNamara of The Art of Wilderness*

## FUN FACTS



**The Palisades:** This shoreline of the Foster-Blake Woods Preserve is made of sedimentary rock. The layers, carved by glaciers and erosion to leave a sheer surface, are clearly visible from the water.



Foster-Blake Woods Preserve is named for two Clayton men who were committed to conservation of the Thousand Islands region and were outstanding stewards of the land: Rett Foster & Joseph Blake.



From the St. Lawrence shoreline at the end of the Bench Overlook Trail, you can see a red-roofed former lighthouse which marks the foot of the Canadian Wolfe Island, the largest island in the River.



Gray Catbirds hang out in thickets and shrubland along the edges of the Foster-Blake Woods. Their call sounds like a mewling cat.

## ORGANIZATIONAL UPDATES

# Join TILT in Welcoming Three New Staff Members!



### Ken Nims, Stewardship Director

As the Stewardship Director, Ken Nims is responsible for managing all of TILT's Preserves, monitoring conservation easements, collaborating with environmental partners on various projects, as well as supervising Summer Land Stewards and Land Managers.

Ken holds a B.S. in both Marketing and Finance from Syracuse University and comes to TILT with diverse professional experiences ranging from project management to portfolio development. Ken also shares a passion for community involvement and volunteers his time helping to coach youth lacrosse. A former athlete, he is happy to connect school children with team sports and share the life-lessons he has learned on the field.

Originally from Watertown, he is a true River Rat at heart having spent his childhood summers exploring the shores of Grenell Island. His family has called the Island home for five generations. In his spare time, Ken enjoys hiking, boating on the River, biking, and spending time with family and friends. He and his wife Meredith reside in the village of Clayton and both look forward to helping TILT continue its mission of conservation in the Thousand Islands.



### Madison Shammass, Community Outreach Assistant

As the Community Outreach Assistant, Madison assists with Treks and Events, supports membership and fundraising activities, and is the friendly face greeting visitors at the TILT Office.

A native of LaFargeville, Madison holds a B.S in Biology, with a concentration in Evolution and Ecology from SUNY Potsdam. While at school she created the first TikTok for the WISER Center Greenhouse drawing students both into the center and the college itself which resulted in her winning the Ram L. Chugh Public Service Award. Through effective social media marketing strategies, she helped to increase community involvement on campus. Along with these skills, she brings a passion for nature and making a difference in the world.

She shares in TILT's belief that educational, recreational, and outreach experiences are beneficial to our community. She will work to help people find connections to the land here in the Thousand Islands. When not working, Madison can be found kayaking, hiking, traveling or camping with her boyfriend.



### WELCOME BACK SEASONAL STAFF!

Zenda Farms Preserve is coming alive with the arrival of our seasonal staff this month. Whether you're walking the trails, checking out the historic barns, or visiting the garden, stop in to say *hi* to Gary, Dean and Randy!

## Nathan Helmuth, Land Protection Specialist



As the Land Protection Specialist, Nathan works to uphold land protection policies, provide landowner outreach, and offer support to easement and property acquisitions and stewardship activities.

TILT's Assistant Director Spencer Busler stated, "Over the last decade, TILT's land conservation program has seen steady growth, helping the organization protect some

of the most ecologically sensitive and life-sustaining lands in the St. Lawrence River Valley. TILT's addition of a Land Protection Specialist position will accelerate this meaningful work. Nathan's past experience and passion for the natural world make him well-suited for the role, and we're thrilled to bring him onto the team."

Originally from Athens, Pennsylvania, Nathan holds a B.S from Houghton University in both Environmental Biology and International Development. His professional background has involved implementing eco-tourism projects in Sierra Leone, mapping waterfowl habitat on the Mississippi River, netting Honeycreepers in Hawaiian rainforests, managing wildlife on Florida beaches, studying warbler populations in Michigan pine forests, and protecting forest and farmland in New York. Most recently, Nathan served as the Land Protection Manager for the Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust where he focused on easement acquisitions and monitoring, land management, and landowner relations.

He shares a love for bucolic River communities and feels right at home in Clayton. In his spare time, Nathan escapes to the Adirondack Park where bouldering, traditional, and sport climbing are his favorite pastimes. He is also an avid trail runner, hiker, and Sasquatch investigator.



**INTERESTED IN  
JOINING OUR TEAM?**

**Visit our website  
in January  
for career  
opportunities  
with TILT!**

# TILT Merch

**SHOP WITH A PURPOSE**

Every dollar you spend helps support land conservation in the Thousand Islands.



### Note Card Bundles

In addition to picking up a jar of Zenda Farms honey, a TILT water bottle or denim shirt be sure to take home your very own bundle of original greeting cards created by Bill and Judy Munro.

These greeting cards include original wildlife photos taken by Bill and artfully named by Judy. Bundles of 5 are \$10, individual cards are \$2. All of the proceeds benefit TILT.



### TILT Hats

Show your love for TILT with a new hat! By wearing one of our hats, or any of our offerings, you are supporting the conservation of the Thousand Islands.

We have something for everyone. TILT hats are available in three styles: dad hats, trucker style and winter beanies.

Stop in to the TILT office or give us a call, (315) 686-5345.



# My Wonderful Journey

by Kate Breheny | Membership Coordinator

Each one of us is on our own journey through life, and not one path is the same. In my short 50 years, mine has led me down some pretty awesome sideroads, detours and trails. Along the way, it has been quite fulfilling, thanks to a personal motto of 'saying yes to life'.

My own began as a baby in Chicago, then in childhood on Long Island and Massachusetts. I went south to Maryland for college, and even further south to Costa Rica for one year. I spent almost a decade in San Francisco, did a brief jaunt here in the Thousand Islands, moved back to California for a moment, and now I'm here in the Thousand Islands, once more.

In addition to 'saying yes to life' and its opportunities, I also believe wanderlust is the foundation of all great things. Nature cultivates curiosity, growth and so many other fulfilling emotions. For me, this has helped create relationships, bind friendships together, start careers and provide incredible experiences.

We all know some of our earliest childhood memories help shape who we are as adults and can define our likes and dislikes. Growing up, my family loved traveling all over the country, visiting friends and relatives, exploring our National Parks and discovering new places. From an early age camping, exploring and hiking were woven into my heart. Still to this day, they provide my mind and spirit time to rest and fulfill my need for discovery and growth.

Whether I was hiking along the Great Falls Billy Goat Trail, through the rugged Marin County coastal countryside, up and down Mount Monadnock countless times, or along the Macsherry Trail on TILT's Crooked Creek Preserve, I have always loved my time in the outdoors.

## Nature's wisdom has the power to soften our hearts naturally.

After all, when we stand in the middle of something so much bigger than ourselves, it is a lot more difficult to focus on anything else. And when we allow our senses to completely take over - whether it's the aromatic scents that come from pine trees, the feel of warm sand beneath your toes, or the sweet taste of clover honey while laying on the grass - we tend to lose interest in the trivial elements and let our minds reset. So, for me, I love connecting with nature, and what I connect to, I care about.

TILT has been a part of my Thousand Island life from the very beginning. As a volunteer and now as the Membership Coordinator.

When we lived here the first time, Brian and I were Macsherry Trail Steward Volunteers. It was awesome. Our "job" was to hike the trail on a fairly regular basis, report any significant damage and make small trail improvements. Along with our young chocolate lab



Kate and family camping in the '80s.



Brian, Kate and Emmylou hiking the Macsherry Trail.



Brian and Emmylou as a puppy setting out to steward the Macsherry Trail in 2007.





Brian and Kate snowshoeing Otter Creek Trail.

Emmylou, we would head to the trail on the weekends with tools in hand, and together move logs, pick up garbage and clear sticks. We loved every minute of it. Hiking cleared my mind, and time on the trail helped us hit reset, reconnect us to nature, and bring out the best in ourselves. Although it was always the same trail, no two hikes were ever the same.

### **Our time living here was extremely impactful.**

We found a community, met wonderful friends and fell in love with this tiny corner of New York. After four amazing years living here, Brian's Coast Guard career led us back to California, but all the while there we would travel to the Thousand Islands for our vacations to visit dear friends and spend much needed time surrounded by the River's reenergizing spirit. This special place had settled into our hearts and it just wouldn't let go.

With Brian's retirement from the Coast Guard on the horizon, it was time to pick where to live. Two roads diverged and we took the one that led us to being outside all the time. We chose the Thousand Islands. But this time the road trip wasn't a wandering meander, it was more like a mad sprint - to our favorite place on earth. I was so excited to move back and couldn't wait to begin our next chapter.

Nearly 13 years later, our roots are now planted with a circle of extended friends and co-workers who are now family, a meaningful career that makes a positive impact in our community and the environment, and daily opportunities to embrace new adventures in this beautiful place.

### **I love my role at TILT as the Membership Coordinator.**

I love making personal connections with our members. I love the meaningful work we do and the best part is knowing we are helping connect people to this great landscape around us. I am personally enriched by it. In many ways, I like the fact that TILT's Signature Preserves and open spaces act as launch pads for many to discover nature, to create their own wanderlust and establish relationships with others and this beautiful natural setting.

When I reflect on how my wonderful journey to the Thousand Islands came to be, it can be defined by the multitude of 'say yes to life' moments along the way - from incredible hikes, fun camping trips with family and friends, living abroad, new skills learned from volunteering, all the while prioritizing time outdoors, these all solidify who I am today.

We all know spending time in nature - even just 5 minutes - can yield amazing benefits such as stress reduction, mood improvement, increased concentration, and a boost in overall wellbeing. And you don't have to go to any extremes to reap said benefits either, you can simply go for a walk outside, maybe spend time on the trails, or by the River. The only requirement is that you visit the peace and serenity of a natural setting. So, let's all give ourselves the space and grace to wander, and say yes to new opportunities. With prioritizing time outside, I hope your own path will be guided in an incredible direction. And if you need some ideas, I'm here for you.

Fondly,

Kate Breheny



I remember packing up my little VW Jetta with Emmylou in the backseat smushed between houseplants and winter clothes, ready for the next adventure.



Kate welcoming guests at the 2021 TILT Summer Gathering.

# Thousand Islands Land Trust

## 2023 Events

Please register in advance for Treks and Events by visiting our website [TILandTrust.org](http://TILandTrust.org), emailing [treks@tilandtrust.org](mailto:treks@tilandtrust.org), or calling the office at (315) 686-5345.

Saturday, April 29 | 10 AM

### 11th Annual "For the Trees" Arbor Day Celebration

📍 *Sissy Danforth Rivergate Trail-S. Gerald Ingerson Preserve, Clayton*

Sunday, May 7 | 7:30 AM - 10:30 AM

### Smith Memorial Bird-a-Palooza with Master Naturalist Dan Miller

Warbler Walk: 7:30 AM - 9 AM

Bird is the Word Hike: 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM

📍 *Otter Creek Preserve & Nature Trail*

Saturday, May 20 | 10 AM

### Spring Stewardship Day

📍 *Zenda Farms Preserve, Clayton*

Friday, June 9 | 5:30 PM - 7:30 PM

### Community Picnic & Volunteer Recognition

📍 *Zenda Farms Preserve, Clayton*

Thursday, June 15 | 10 AM

### Rivergate Ride

📍 *S. Gerald Ingerson Preserve -Rivergate Trail, Clayton*

Wednesday, June 21 | 10 AM

### Summer Solstice Walking Meditation

📍 *Foster-Blake Preserve, Clayton*

Tuesday, July 6 | 10 AM

### Summer Yoga

📍 *Zenda Farms Preserve, Clayton*

Saturday, July 15 | 8 AM - 9 AM

### Annual Loon Census with Adirondack Center for Loon Conservation

📍 *Various locations, chosen by participants*

Saturday, July 15 | 6 PM - 9 PM

### Annual Summer Gathering

📍 *TI Park Pavilion, Wellesley Island*

Thursday, July 20 | 10 AM

### French Creek Kayak Paddle

📍 *French Creek WMA car-top launch on 12E/Zenda South*

Tuesday, July 25 | 10 AM - 12 PM

### 6th Annual Mutt Strutt

📍 *TI Park, Wellesley Island*



## SCAN

with your phone's camera to  
learn more & register online.

Wednesday, August 2 | 10 AM - 12:30 PM

### "Ichthyologist (Fish Scientist) for a Day" TILTKids Trek with TIBS

📍 *Thousand Islands Biological Station (TIBS), Governor's Island*

Friday, August 11 | 10 AM - 12:30 PM

### "Music in Nature" TILTKids Trek

📍 *TI Park, Wellesley Island*

Monday, August 14 | 10 AM

### Crooked Creek Kayak in Partnership with Riverbay Adventure Inn

📍 *Crooked Creek Preserve*

Thursday, August 17 | 5 PM - 7 PM

### Islander Event

📍 *Larry & Jo Ann Golden's home on Wellesley Island (limited attendance)*

Tuesday, August 22 | 9 AM

### Common Tern Nesting Grid Removal

📍 *Eagle Wing Shoals & Tidd Island*

Thursday, August 24 | 5:30 PM

### Annual Birkhead Lecture

📍 *Zenda Farms Preserve*

Friday, September 1 | 7:30 PM - 9:30 PM

### Family Movie Night

📍 *Zenda Farms Preserve, Clayton — \$10/family donation suggested*

Saturday, September 16 | 10 AM - 1 PM

### Natural Dyeing Day in partnership with the Traditional Arts of Upstate New York (TAUNY)

📍 *Zenda Farms Preserve, Clayton*

Saturday, September 23 | 10 AM

### Fall Stewardship Day

📍 *Potters Beach Preserve*

Friday, October 11 | 10 AM

### Mushrooms & Mosses Trek

📍 *Macsherry Trail on the Crooked Creek Preserve*

Friday, November 3 | 5:30 PM

### Campfire Stories Night

📍 *Zenda Farms Preserve, Clayton*

# DONATE, MATCH, AND DOUBLE YOUR IMPACT

TILT is an organization with individual donors at all levels who make a big difference. *Did you know there may be ways to double, even triple your impact?*

Many companies offer gift matching programs to support the philanthropic interests of their employees, board members, retirees and spouses.

When you double your impact, your support of the conservation of the Thousand Islands goes twice as far.

Contact your company's human resources department today to find out what offerings are available. Matching gift forms may be mailed to TILT, PO Box 238, Clayton, NY 13624. TILT's EIN Number is 22-2629183.

**Meet Lynn and Dan Miller who are loyal members of our Trailblazer Monthly Giving Program. By donating monthly, they help TILT year-round.**

In addition, their support is matched by Lynn's company doubling its impact on conservation and education!

**Thank you Lynn and Dan for being champions of the health and beauty of the Thousand Islands.**

"It was easy becoming a member. We already utilized the Preserves so we bought a family level membership, then we started to attend the Treks, and got more involved by attending the events. We feel we are a part of the organization, first as Family members, now as larger members and of the community."

— Dan & Lynn Miller



## ZENDA FARMS HONEY

After a busy summer of foraging on the rolling hills of Zenda's conserved grasslands, the bees have produced pure golden goodness!

**8oz: \$9.50 | 1lb: \$13.50 | 2lb: \$22 | 5lb: \$52**

PACKAGED IN VINTAGE INSPIRED GLASS QUEENLINE™ JARS TO SHOWCASE THE RICH AMBER HUE.

Stop by either store or the TILT Office to pick up a jar of raw, local honey.

Not at the River? We offer a pretty sweet option for shipping. Contact us today.



NOW AVAILABLE AT  
HUNNER'S MARKET &  
1000 ISLANDS  
RIVER RAT CHEESE!



## ZENDA COMMUNITY PICNIC & VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION

**Friday, June 9th 2023**

Zenda Farms Preserve, Clayton, NY

5:30 - 7:30 pm

**Tickets: \$20 Kids under 12 FREE**

Available in advance ONLINE and AT-THE-DOOR

**Classic Picnic Fare & Drinks**

Live Music · Games · Exhibits · Animals and MORE!

Please RSVP by June 2nd to 315-686-5345  
or [events@tilandtrust.org](mailto:events@tilandtrust.org)



# *Annual Report* 2022

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



As we move forward, the momentum for conserving this region only seems to grow. Upon reflection of our shared mission, the song ‘Big Yellow Taxi’ (Joni Mitchell, 1970, Siquomb Publishing Corp) comes to mind. Her lyrics, “Don’t it always seem to go, that you don’t know what you got ‘til it’s gone? They paved paradise and put up a parking lot,” continue to resonate fifty-three years later. This message speaks volumes about not taking the natural world for granted. We are forever grateful that the River community understands what we’ve got here in the Thousand Islands.

On behalf of the Thousand Islands Land Trust (TILT) Board and Staff, I express whole-heartedly how much we appreciate your generous support, time and dedication to making a real difference in the health and beauty of the Thousand Islands region. In 2022, the region was met with unique challenges. From unprecedented environmental pressures, like drought and invasive species, to development plans threatening critical wetlands and historic muskie spawning areas. Despite these challenges, you proved that conservation in the Thousand Islands matters. With gratitude we share the accomplishments that you helped make possible.

## **We conserved critical habitats from one end of our region to the other.**

Together, we have conserved over 12,400 acres of land. TILT secured grant funds to acquire and permanently protect the 217-acre RAPOM property near Grass Lake in the Town of Rossie. Located in the Algonquin to Adirondacks (A2A) wildlife corridor this property's diverse habitats host a number of rare and threatened species. Its forests provide sanctuary to countless waterfowl and migratory songbirds and wetlands help filter the water that flows into the St. Lawrence River. The undeveloped terrain provides safe passage and resources for mammals. These crucial attributes work to help combat the impacts of climate change.

With overwhelming community support, TILT purchased a unique 20-acre parcel in the Town of Orleans. This property borders 16-acres that were conserved in 2016 with federal funding through the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA). The Blind Bay Preserve now includes approximately 36 acres of mixed hardwood forest and over 895 feet of pristine shoreline. The sensitive habitats of the property are now protected, forever. Its shallow aquatic ecosystem with submersed vegetation will always provide essential spawning, rearing and foraging for many fish species including the iconic muskellunge. This is a conservation success that promotes connectivity, environmental sustainability and positively impacts our local economy.

And where the Lake meets the River, TILT launched the Tibbetts Point Conservation Initiative in Cape Vincent. Adding four new parcels totaling 300+ acres, together we are growing a wildlife refuge on Fuller Bay that will soon be restored as a migratory bird sanctuary, supporting one of the largest raptor migrations in the Eastern United States.

## **We ensured the building blocks for healthy ecosystems are cared for through perpetual stewardship.**

Enhancing the health of land on the foot of Grindstone Island, TILT Staff restored early successional shrubland, providing vital grassland habitat for migrating songbirds and raptors. Our stewardship team worked tirelessly to maintain TILT's 21 plus miles of trails, parking areas and recreational amenities for the public to enjoy year-round. And we continued our fight against invasive species through the Watercraft Inspection Steward Program.

## **We connected communities in honor of family, conservation, and the heritage of our region.**

We made history together. With your help we raised over \$845,000 to complete the Rivergate Trail Community Connection Project. This included the restoration of the McCarn Creek trestle bridge on the S. Gerald Ingerson Preserve and the connection of seven miles of the Sissy Danforth Rail Trail from downtown Clayton to LaFargeville.

## **We made a local impact, with a global significance.**

Conscious of reducing our carbon footprint to mitigate the effects of global climate change, last year TILT's roof-top solar panels cut over 10 tons of carbon emissions in 2022. This is equivalent to planting over 150 trees. Through conservation, restoration and mitigation, TILT is committed to playing a proactive role in the fight against climate change.

## **We invested in our community through deepened relationships, expanded recreational opportunities and positive experiences out on the land.**

Through our environmental education initiative, TILTreks and Wild Wednesday Programs, we connected 500+ people with our mission while out on the land. This core investment in our future generations will continue to play a critical role in protecting the very foundation of our overall quality of life.

In 2022, you leaned into the connection that healthy land equals a healthy River. You showed your support through memberships and donations. You wrote letters of support to officials and representatives. You attended Treks, Volunteer Days, and Events. You shared our work with friends and family and invited newcomers to discover our Signature Preserves. And by doing so, you told the world that you support land conservation in the Thousand Islands.

Here's looking forward to more shared accomplishments in 2023 and protecting our paradise.

Together, we are conserving the place you love,



*Larry Kingsley, President*

# Financial Overview

For the fiscal year that ended December 31, 2022, TILT’s membership income was \$332,110, up 11.70% from 2021. Operating expenses were \$790,804, up approximately 14% from 2021.

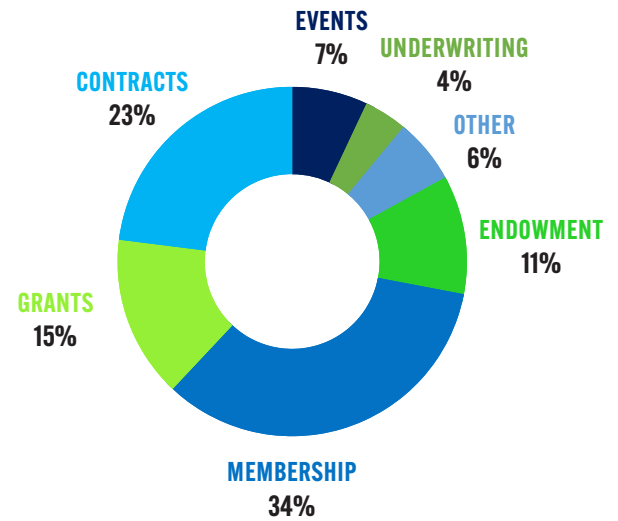
TILT’s Board of Trustees oversees an investment portfolio that is managed by an outside investment management firm, under the guidance of TILT’s Finance Committee. In addition, TILT has several agency funds that have been established at the Northern New York Community Foundation.

The firm of Stackel & Navarra was secured to perform TILT’s annual independent financial audit.

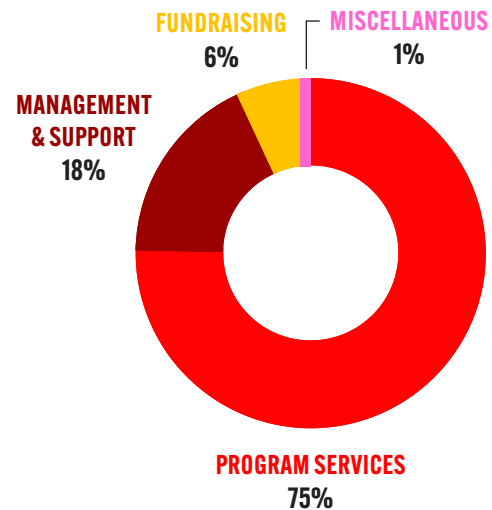
## Statement of Financial Position as of December 31, 2022

|                                     |              |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| Cash & Investments.....             | \$2,445,505  |
| Other Assets.....                   | \$14,774,609 |
| Total Assets.....                   | \$17,220,114 |
| <br>                                |              |
| Liabilities.....                    | \$82,604     |
| Net Assets.....                     | \$17,137,510 |
| Total Liabilities & Net Assets..... | \$17,220,114 |

## INCOME



## EXPENSES



# TILT *by the* NUMBERS



**7,294**

acres preserved by  
TILT ownership



**5,386**

acres protected under  
conservation easement



**458**

people attended 22 treks  
(avg. 20 people per Trek)



**976**

people attended  
4 events



**10**

Signature Preserves  
open to the public



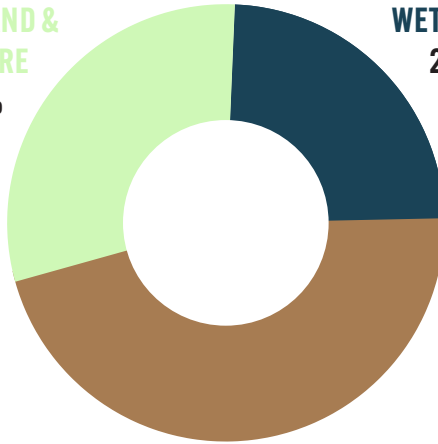
**22**

miles of  
biking trails

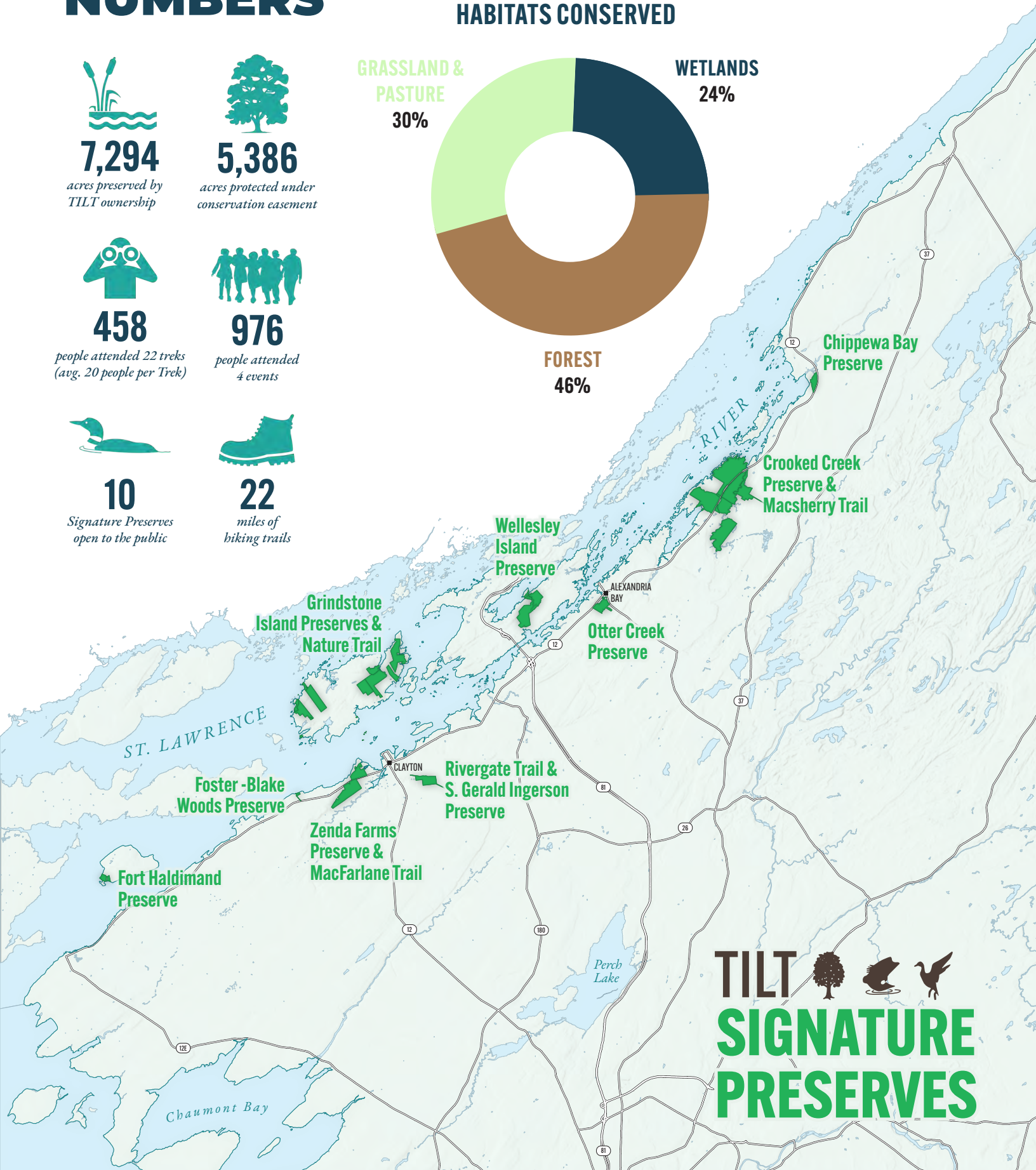
## HABITATS CONSERVED

GRASSLAND &  
PASTURE  
30%

WETLANDS  
24%



FOREST  
46%



**TILT**   
**SIGNATURE  
PRESERVES**



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**An Accredited Land Trust &  
Member of the Land Trust Alliance**



## Have you seen the Rivergate Trail Community Connection video yet?

Check it out and see the transformation of the trestle as it's bought back to life for our River communities to enjoy!



**SCAN**  
with your phone's camera  
to watch the video now.

*Photo: View from the Michael J. Geiss Wildlife Observation Tower of the headwater wetlands of the McCarn Creek.  
© Terra Bach/TILT*



**Cover Photo:** Aerial photo of the recently conserved Garlock Property.  
© Spencer Busler/TILT

Printed on Recycled Paper

Graphic Design & Cartography  
by Wayfinder Studio

## STAY CONNECTED

