



A River of Great Possibilities

All over the country, from Texas to Maine, land trusts like Genesee Land Trust are working with their respective communities to determine how to make once forgotten or disparaged urban rivers prominent, positive features in their areas. As Jane Calvin, ED of Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust in Lowell, Massachusetts said, “The River, and the River Walk, is a major part of our identity, our wildlife habitat, our recreational assets – and our economy.”

In Sheridan, Wyoming, the Tongue River also runs through the center of the city and is on its way to becoming a similar beacon of transformation. There, Sheridan Community Land Trust and the community, including the business sector and area landowners, are working to make an old, often forgotten, urban river a community feature.

The Heart of the City

Now imagine a revitalization of the Genesee River. This winter and spring, Genesee Land Trust will collaborate with residents who live along the river in the city and other partners to continue public discussions with those interested in enhancing the Genesee River. The river flows for 13 miles through many Rochester neighborhoods before exiting into Lake Ontario.



As a major city feature, the river is a potential source of recreation such as paddling and biking, and its waterfalls and gorges provide stunning beauty. It’s also an important water source for the lake.

Mary Beth Popp, Genesee Brewery’s Director of Corporate Relations attended a community workshop this summer on the topic, and commented that “We see this as central to Rochester continuing to attract local businesses, tourists, and job opportunities. It could be a terrific economic driver in our area – and a great way to combine water and wildlife conservation with recreation.”

Like other urban rivers, there can be opportunities to address existing challenges such as a lack of public access and past pollution to create an amazing place in collaboration with local business, families and landowners, neighborhood groups, and area funders.

Would you like to be part of these discussions? We’d love to hear from you. Please sign up for our electronic newsletter at geneseeandtrust.org and we’ll keep you posted.



Looking for a Great Place to Take a Walk?



Misty Mornings Over Lake Ontario

The new Cornwall Preserve is going to be a special place once all the trails are complete, but don’t let that deter you from visiting now.

This fall, thanks to generous community members, it’s already a lovely place to experience the lake’s mist or the sight of majestic bald eagles scouting for breakfast over the water, birds like mergansers off-shore, or tiny songbirds as they fly south.

There aren’t many conserved places like this one, so bring your binoculars and snack and explore.

Surprises of The Riverway Trail

Where can you find waterfalls, scenic overlooks, quiet stretches, and miles of walking and biking trails right in the middle of the city? The Genesee Riverway Trail can take you across Rochester to Lake Ontario with history, wildlife, and grandeur included.

Whether all in one bike ride, or walks one section at a time, the trail has surprises to share. The city’s Turning Point Park is an all-season delight, fun for all ages – with stunning views of the Genesee River.

Check cityofrochester.gov to learn more.



Close and Yet So Far

Looking for some peace and quiet far from the crowd, the Christine Sevilla Wetlands Preserve is for you; it feels like a world away.

A country ride about half hour south of Rochester brings you to this unique wetlands preserve. Hiking its half mile of trails with boardwalks across varied wetlands can relieve the stress of a busy world. Christine Sevilla loved to experience the junction of land and water – and to photograph wetlands and their reflections. The half mile of hiking trails with boardwalks into the wetlands were made possible by the gift of Christine’s estate.

The entrance can be a little tricky to find, so please check our website for details.



We invite you to visit the Protected Places page of geneseeandtrust.org for directions and information about Genesee Land Trust’s places to walk.



Outdoor Experiences Shape a Summer

It’s hard to find a summer job – let alone one that builds leadership skills and a vision for what is possible in the future.

But thanks to the support of individuals like you, and the city of Rochester, this past summer Genesee Land Trust hosted ten urban 14-15 year-olds in the apprenticeship program where they are paid a modest stipend as they learn leadership skills and self-confidence, teamwork, problem-solving strategies, landscaping, and caring for the land.

Many urban youth don’t have the opportunities to experience the wonders of nature and agriculture. Occasionally uncomfortable hanging out in nature, they are often unaware of professions related to land and water conservation as well as opportunities to work outside.

Field Trips That Open the Eyes and Mind



For some, like Janaiya Burnett, it’s a chance to slow down and break away from technology. Janaiya recalls a field trip experience, “When we were canoeing at Hemlock Lake we were asked by our instructor to sit quietly for two minutes and listen to our surroundings. I never took the time to listen before. The city is pretty loud.”

“This experience allows them to reimagine themselves...”

– Tonya Stevens, Apprentice Program Director

The apprentice program uses the care and maintenance of the El Camino trail as its focal point, while field trips to places like Niagara Falls, Hemlock Lake, and Broccoli Tree and Lawn Care expand participants’ experiences and enthusiasm for the land in our region. Speakers on geothermal power, solar panels, and more, offered a window into other ways homeowners and communities can work to enhance the neighborhoods.

Tonya Stevens, one of this year’s program directors, said, “The summer program is a great opportunity for the youth to experience something new. This experience allows them to reimagine themselves in the workforce and consider non-traditional employment, maybe something in conservation.”

For conservation to last generations, more of our youth will need to experience it firsthand in a way that makes memories and becomes part of their lives. This summer, ten Rochester youth found a new connection to nature and the outdoors as well as an understanding of the workforce.

A Tiny Backpack That's Changing Conservation

Across the world, and throughout our region, habitat loss and extreme weather is stressful to local and migratory birds. Land around Lake Ontario has special significance as birds prepare to cross the Lake to fly from South America to Canada and back each year. But it is still uncertain where birds rest and find food before, during, and after their long flights.

To help address the mystery of bird movements and how we can all help birds survive in our changing world, Genesee Land Trust and Braddock Bay Bird Observatory (BBBO) maintain a long-standing partnership.

BBBO's Kaiser-Manitou Beach Research Station is located on a Genesee Land Trust nature preserve in the town of Greece, NY. For more than 20 years, volunteers have banded birds to learn about those that have stopped at the preserve during migration.

Thinking Globally, Acting Locally

Over the past several years, technology has improved enough so that researchers across the world have been able to gently outfit songbirds with tiny backpacks that weigh less than 0.29 grams. The batteries last up to a year

and the signal can be detected whenever birds come close to a tracking tower, allowing an individual bird's movements to be followed showing when it rests and where it travels.

As the digital data accumulates from towers placed at the Research Station, across the country and world, BBBO and Genesee Land Trust will share with local families, landowners, and community members the lands that are particularly important. The data is shared with other conservation groups working in Canada to South America to protect important lands there as well.

While we work together to conserve nearby lands that matter for birds, these same lands are equally important for other wildlife and provide beautiful places for family walks and community trails.

And as Andrea Patterson, President of BBBO, puts it, "The birds provide urgency to conserve the lands that so many of us already know and love; the difference is that their lives may be at stake." Now, thanks to this partnership, and other work by organizations like National Audubon Society, we are gaining insights before it is too late.



Is land conservation right for you?

Would you, or someone you know, like to explore the idea of land conservation? Perhaps you want to ensure your land will always be available for farming? Or maybe you care deeply about wildlife and their need to always have a place to call home. Once the land is gone, it's gone for good – and you don't want that to happen.

Conserving your land can also provide significant income and estate tax benefits. For more information please contact Lorna Wright, Director of Conservation Programs, at 585-256-2130 or lwright@geneeselandtrust.org. All conversations are confidential to protect your privacy. We are able to work with local families to help them conserve their land thanks to the generosity of our members and supporters.

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The Preserve

You're Invited!

Veteran's Day Hike, Friday, November 10, 2017
2-4pm, Corbett's Glen Nature Park, Brighton

Winter Wonder Land Dinner, Saturday, March 3, 2018
6pm, The Rabbit Room at the Lower Mill, Honeoye Falls

5k Walk at El Camino, Saturday, June 2, 2018
10am-1pm, El Camino, City of Rochester

Check geneeselandtrust.org or call us at 585-256-2130 for details and more activities.

We invite you to sign up for our e-news and electronic updates on the home page of our website or by an email to info@geneeselandtrust.org.



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