



FALL/WINTER 2022 NEWSLETTER

**I want my grandchildren and
great grandchildren to live
the kind of farm life I lived.**

– Bill Chase



The joy of saying “YES” with you

In 1989 my very good friend told me about “this land trust thing” she was involved in. As she described the small group of passionate people volunteering to protect local land and water, I was happy to sign up. Little did I know - that saying “yes” would become a defining moment in my life, leading to deep friendships, great adventures, tough challenges, and inspiring successes.

For almost 25 years it has been my honor to serve the community as executive director of Genesee Land Trust. Together we have grown and evolved - but our mission to protect land and create access to the outdoors for future generations endures.

When I think back, the many opportunities to say YES shine brightest. Some of my favorites pushed us to do new things:

- Can we buy Corbett’s Glen, launching Save the Glen and Beyond? This makes us very nervous, but yes, let’s!
- A playground at Conkey Corner Park? Never thought we’d do that, but sure!
- The next generation of environmental leaders could be Rochester youth? Ok, let’s get a program started!
- Yes! We can step up to raise the funds to protect Alasa Farms, Cornwall Preserve, Salmon Creek Nature Preserve, Deer Creek Woods, and other special places!

Together we have said yes to different and new challenges to protect important wildlife habitats, family farms, and local treasures; to create new programs and get to know new communities, making a difference across the region.

In the beginning, a love of land got me involved in this start-up called Genesee Land Trust. But it has been you -- you all -- that have inspired me over the years. And you continue to bring me so much joy.

As I prepare to retire at the end of January, I know Genesee Land Trust is in excellent hands. I will be assisting through the transition to a new executive director and I’m so excited to see what you say YES! to next.

With gratitude,



Gay Mills,
Executive Director





Photo by Adam Montoya

Protecting the heart of a farming community

Bill Chase rallied friends and neighbors to save 558 acres in Rush, NY

Since high school Bill Chase has been growing Chase Farm Partnership while watching suburban development consume prime farmland across the region, worrying as it slowly and steadily reached the farms in Rush.

The Chases have been farming in Rush since settling there in 1801. Often four generations worked side by side. Today Bill runs the farm with his son, Dan. Bill's wife, Kathy, manages their popular Gray Barn Farm Market on Rush-Scottsville Road. At one busy season or another everyone in the family lends a hand.

"I want my grandchildren and great grandchildren to live the kind of farm life I lived, and at least experience some of the way I was brought up," Bill says.

In 2017, Bill's father Selden passed away. Around the same time, some farmland close to Bill's was sold for development. The two events made him worry about the future for his farm, his family, and his community. Protecting the agricultural heart of Rush became a top priority.

It's time to call the neighbors

Bill started talking to his friends and neighbors. One of his first calls was to Ruth Laraby, who lives across the street and rents her land to the Chases. Ruth grew up on a dairy farm that was developed into the MCC campus in Henrietta. She moved to Rush 40 years ago because it was a farming community.

"You know, I see land around me with houses and it just makes me kind of sad because all this wonderful farmland is being built up with housing developments," Ruth said. "I think farmland is becoming a priority. We need good farmers."

It just makes me kind of sad because all this wonderful farmland is being built up.

— Ruth Laraby

Saving an entire block of farmland

Ultimately, 13 landowners joined Bill and Dan in conversations with Genesee Land Trust to learn how to apply for funding to protect their 8 parcels of land as farms forever.

It's taken more than 4 years and a lot of patience, but this community of neighbors stuck together. If anyone had backed out, the entire deal could have fallen through.

Thanks to members providing year after year support for Genesee Land Trust, the farmland protection team has worked tirelessly to pull together all the transaction details and legal requirements for these complicated conservation easement agreements. We're on track to complete the Chase project and permanently protect 558 acres – an entire block of farmland - by the end of the year!

Gaining ground to keep growing

Bill and Dan own and rent about 1,500 acres across Rush, Avon, Henrietta, and Mendon. Their business includes soybeans, wheat, corn, hay, straw, vegetables, cattle, and chickens.

"We need to protect as much open space as possible, as soon as possible," Bill says, but they're competing with developers and rising land prices. "I want to buy more land and grow on it and protect it with the land trust. Anybody that has put their life into a farm, that worked the land and sweated on it, wants to keep it farmland."

Our special thanks and congratulations to the landowners:

William Chase, Daniel Chase, Robert Kraus, Fran Ward, James Nolen, Stephan and Paula P. Hoh, Ruth B. Laraby, Michelle R. Laraby, Kimberly L. Agar, Gregory J. Laraby, Harry DeWald, John N. and Brenda J. Schouten, Donald A. Sweet





Five Fast Facts About Conservation Easements

Conserving your land – for farmland or wildlife habitat - is always a big decision. That is why landowners who do so have some things in common – they love their land, they think of it as part of their legacy, and they have a commitment to the future of their community. Are you interested in exploring land conservation for you or someone you know? Here are some important points to consider:

1. **Ownership Retained:** You retain your private property rights and can sell, lease, or pass your land on to your family.
2. **Tax Benefits:** If you donate at least part of your conservation easement, there can be both federal and state tax benefits.
3. **Tailored to You:** All conservation easements are unique to the land it conserves and to your vision for your property.
4. **Voluntary:** Farming or wildlife conservation easements are voluntary and do not require public access.
5. **Estate Planning Benefits:** Conserving your land can help with your estate planning, reduce your estate taxes, and can help with a transition to the next generation.

Interested in learning more?

Please visit tinyurl.com/GLTconserveland or reach out to Lorna Wright at lwright@geneseelandtrust.org.



Teens for the Earth – Leaders in the making

Meet the next generation of conservationists

Have you met our youth staff? Our workforce and leadership development program is now called Teens for the Earth, and includes more hands-on training, leadership experience, and community engagement.

Thanks to the generous support of Genesee Land Trust members and program sponsors, the 2022 class has been learning about environmental issues and career opportunities, working on the land, and exploring the outdoors.

More than just a first job

“The very top goal of the program is to create future stewards of the environment,” says Carter Remy, our new Youth Educator. “We also hope to equip students with leadership and work skills that are transferable to any and all careers.” Yamina Sharif says Teens for the Earth has taught her responsibility and how to make the right decisions as a young professional.

“Before I got this job, I didn’t really know what it was like to get up every morning for work. I didn’t know what it was like to receive a paycheck every two weeks,” she says. “This is a development job, and you don’t have to come and be perfect.”

A year of growth

The current class of youth started in February 2022 with a year-long commitment. During school they spend 10 hours per week meeting after classes and on Saturdays. Then, for 10 weeks this summer, the Teens for the Earth worked Monday – Friday for about 30 hours per week.

The youth led a Flower City Feeling Good walk along the Thomas R. Frey Trail at El Camino, tended different sections of the 2.2-mile trail and Conkey Corner Park, and trained in CPR and first aid. They assisted 540 West Main with landscaping a new park project, worked in community gardens, and helped at many Genesee Land Trust events. The end of summer culminated in an overnight camping trip to Stony Brook State Park, a first for many of the youth. In December the teens will complete end-of-year projects for a symposium. Some of them will return for the 2023 class.



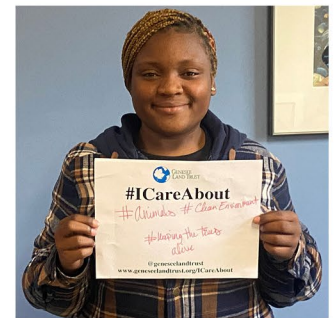
To learn more about Teens for the Earth, or invite a RCSD student to apply, visit geneseeandtrust.org/teensfortheearth.

Staff photos



Erica Dukes, 15, Edison Career and Technology High School - Erica joined just looking for something to do in her first job, but Teens for the Earth turned into a source of new opportunities and learning experiences. "We did some fun stuff like horseback riding and kayaking that got me hooked. I'm here for life now," she says. The program also taught Erica about teamwork, responsibility, and professionalism, she says, as well as environmental issues. "It's fun to learn about new stuff, like invasive species. I didn't even know what that word meant before this. They don't belong here and you've gotta get them out." Erica, the youngest of 8, used her earnings to save up for a phone and back to school clothes.

Jhy'Asia Jackson, 15, Edison Career and Technology High School - Jhy'Asia has always wanted to learn to garden but couldn't until she joined Teens for the Earth. "The environment I live in you can't really plant stuff," she says. "I like getting my hands dirty and handy work. Being able to plant stuff is real fun."



Camping and hiking have been some of Jhy'Asia's favorite experiences, and she went fishing for the first time. The program, which she says has taken her to many new places around the city, has been eye opening. "It makes me look at the world different now. I feel like the environment is getting worse by the day and we need to do more."



Syd Ferree, 17, School Without Walls Commencement Academy - Teens for the Earth has set a new standard for jobs Syd will do. "If I have to work at an Office Max after this, I don't think I could make it." They say the steady work routine and weekend activities have "done wonders for my mental health. I really love going out and exploring."

"One thing that I really enjoy about this program is getting to engage with the community and impact the environments that people live in in a positive way," Syd says. "A lot of times when people think about conservation of the earth they tend to think about national parks or places way far away from cities and urban areas. But there's actually a lot of good you can do for your environment right in your neighborhood."

Yamina Sharif, 15, Northeast College Preparatory High School - Yamina has always enjoyed playing outside but didn't know all the ways she could experience nature. She joined Teens for the Earth because the activities caught her eye and she could earn money while being outdoors. She says the program takes commitment, and teens that are afraid of bugs and getting dirty are going to have a problem.



"It was my first time camping, and we had to set up the tents in the rain. But it wasn't even annoying – it was actually fun. We told stories before we went to bed. We made breakfast outside. We showered with the spiders. We got to know each other for who we really are, and we really bonded as if we were family."

INVESTING IN THE FUTURE

Identifying additional and consistent year-to-year support is critical to ensure Teens for the Earth will continue developing Rochester youth into the next generation of environmental leaders. Please reach out to Executive Director Gay Mills, gmills@genseelandtrust.org or **585.256.2130** to discuss your interest in supporting the program on an annual basis or as a planned gift.

Walk the Genesee River this winter

There's nothing like the crunch of snow under your boots and the sparkle of icicles hanging from bare tree branches on a winter's day. And did you know being in cold air can help reduce stress by increasing endorphins (mood-boosting hormones) in your body? Dress for the weather, pack a thermos or water bottle, and take your friends and family for a winter walk along the Genesee River at these special places. To learn more about the free audio tours along the river by Tour Blend – a member of the Genesee River Alliance - visit tourblend.com. The app is available for iPhone and Android.

Genesee Valley Park

131 Elmwood Ave, Rochester

The Genesee Riverway Trail is an easy flat trail with many routes through the park. Designed by famed landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, who also designed Central Park in New York City, Genesee Valley Park is perfect for exploring, cross country skiing, and more.

The park highlights three intersecting waterways: Red Creek, Genesee River, and the Erie Canal. Park near the Sports Complex and follow the River to the Waldo J. Nelson Bridge. Cross the river, follow the Erie Canal Heritage Trail and then loop by the pavilions and back over the River.

Learn more in Tour Blend at "All Along the Genesee River" tinyurl.com/GVPtour.

EcoLoop at High Falls

262 State Street, Rochester

From the High Falls Garage, walk to the Pont de Rennes Bridge. You can also take RTS Lake Avenue Bus #22 to Platt St. Then follow the 1.3-mile walk and audio tour co-created by Greentopia, available in Tour Blend at tinyurl.com/ecoloop.

You'll get spectacular views of High Falls from two different bridges as you walk through Rochester's historic original industrial district. Learn about the world's first marshmallow factory and recycling programs in Rochester from more than 100 years ago. Look out over the gorge where a new state park is proposed to be built over the next few years.

Have ideas about the proposed park? You can email Helen Dumas, Genesee River Alliance Coordinator, at hdumas@geneseeandtrust.org.



Photo by Nigel P. Kent

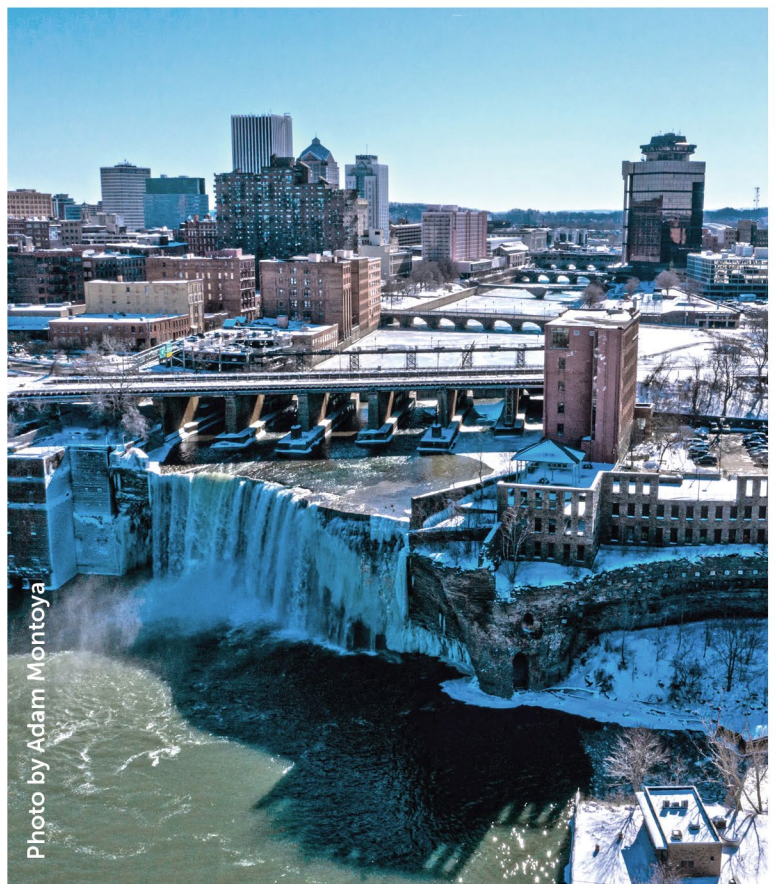


Photo by Adam Montoya

For even more winter walk options visit tinyurl.com/ROCwinterwalks



Photo by Adam Montoya

Deer Creek Woods protected! What comes next?

More than 300 people generously contributed to the “Save Deer Creek Woods” fundraising effort, and Genesee Land Trust was recently able to purchase the land to keep it safe from development - forever! Thank you to all who helped support this important project, and special thanks to John Creatura, the landowner who gave us the time and opportunity to make it possible.

To all our members and volunteers - thank you for being champions for local water and land with your donations of time and resources. You make all the work of Genesee Land Trust possible, and there’s much work ahead at Deer Creek Woods!



Acquiring the land was just the beginning. The property currently does not have trails, boardwalks, bridges over Deer Creek, or an existing entrance. It will take at least 2- 3 years, additional funding, and your ongoing support to create a new nature preserve from scratch.

In the meantime, and long into the future, Deer Creek Woods will continue as a natural solution that helps address climate change. The vital woodlands store carbon and provide homes for wildlife. The wetlands filter water before getting to Lake Ontario and minimize storm flooding.



Staff photos

As climate change impacts the planet, saving places like Deer Creek Woods is vital for our future. I’m proud to support Genesee Land Trust’s efforts to help people and wildlife by protecting our woods and streams.

– Georgia Stevens

Accessibility and the new Salmon Creek Nature Preserve

Carol Cobia loves exploring the outdoors with her husband. A few years ago Carol had to start relying on a scooter to get around and has a special van to transport it. She lives in Hilton and often struggles to find local natural places that meet her mobility needs.

So when Carol heard about the September opening of the new Salmon Creek Nature Preserve, she got excited. At the opening celebration she smiled throughout a bird walk. Carol's scooter easily navigated the wide grassy trails. "They're a little bumpy, but I managed just fine."

In the next couple years, depending on funding, we have plans for a hardpacked stone dust trail across the meadow and a boardwalk around the pond that will make it accessible during the wet seasons. We've also budgeted for snow plowing the parking lot to make it easier to visit and look for birds, snowshoe, and cross-country ski.

"I was really impressed that you were making a real effort to be handicap accessible," Carol said. And with it so close to home, she plans to return as often as weather allows. "It's so beautiful here. I can't wait to come back!"

PLEASE SHARE YOUR FEEDBACK

We welcome and encourage you to visit from dawn until dusk year-round. After you go, please let us know: What would make Salmon Creek Nature Preserve more accessible for you? What would be a fun or important addition so you would come back and recommend it to your friends?

To get a current trail map and share your comments, please visit tinyurl.com/SalmonCreekNP.



Ways to give...gifts that make a difference!

A GIFT OF MEMBERSHIP

At gift-giving season, let us help you honor someone who cares about protecting land and water as much as you do. Robert and Pat Kraus, founding members since 1989, recently gave a Genesee Land Trust membership to a long-time friend. "This person is a tireless champion for local natural resources, and on their own has accomplished a heck of a lot for their community."

"Our gift membership supports Genesee Land Trust, highlights to others the incredibly important work of this organization, and honors our friend's own accomplishments!" Robert says. "This was the first time we've done this, but it's not likely to be the last!" To make a gift membership, visit geneseeandtrust.org/donate

A LEGACY GIFT: PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

One of the easiest ways to make a planned gift is to make Genesee Land Trust a beneficiary of one of your retirement, life insurance, or other accounts. Just ask for a Change of Beneficiary form from your company representative.

You can also make a difference by listing Genesee Land Trust in your will, which could reduce any tax burden for your heirs. You can choose either a specific dollar amount or percentage of your estate. Making a simple change to an existing will can be easy and inexpensive to achieve.

A GIFT FROM YOUR IRA: A SMART WAY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

You can strengthen Genesee Land Trust's work while improving your financial outcomes! If you are 70.5 years old or older, you can make a tax-free gift from your IRA called a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD).

"We believe in Genesee Land Trust's mission and are happy to support it any way we can," say Jeanne and Tom Verhulst. "The QCD makes it even easier to both combine a gift and save a little on taxes. A win-win for all!"

For more information about planned giving or QCDs, please visit geneseeandtrust.org/donate or contact Whitney Brice, Director of Development, at wbrice@geneseeandtrust.org or 585-450-3939.

Planned Giving Educational Session

Interested in learning what others are doing to meet their charitable goals, minimize taxes and help with their own needs and plans? Learn about some smart planned giving techniques at an educational session in early 2023 with experts on financial and estate planning. Open for people of all ages with legacies of all sizes, this free session can help you plan meaningful gifts for land conservation and all you care about. To be added to the session mailing list, go to geneseeandtrust.org/planned-giving.



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YOU'RE INVITED TO THESE UPCOMING EVENTS!

BLACK FRIDAY BIRD WALK

Friday, November 25, 2022 – 10am

Salmon Creek Nature Preserve, Hilton. "Opt Outside" on the day after Thanksgiving with birders Neal Reilly and Amy Kahn from the Rochester Birding Association. Wear boots and bring binoculars if you have them.

WINTER SOLSTICE WALK

Wednesday, December 21 – 7 am

Wild Hill Farm, 2176 Elton Rd in Bloomfield. Farmer Erin Bullock will lead a walk on her farm as we greet the sunrise on the shortest day of the year.

NATIVE ALTERNATIVES TO COMMON INVASIVE PLANTS

Wednesday, February 8 – 11:30-12:30, online via Zoom

Join a "lunch-n-learn" presentation to plan ahead for spring planting and learn how to have a healthy backyard by choosing native species.

Please register at geneseeandtrust.org/all-events

We invite you to sign up for our Enews at geneseeandtrust.org to receive event updates as well as conservation news and stories.



Don't forget to follow us on social media for more news!