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The Thousand Islands Land Trust Reflections

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Breakthrough in Blind Bay: *TILT Officially Conserves Water's Edge Property*

TILT has officially purchased, from Blind Bay Associates, the 20.5 acre Blind Bay Property located along Waters Edge Lane in the Town of Orleans.

Combined with TILT's prior conservation investment of adjacent lands, the Blind Bay Preserve now includes approximately 36 acres of mixed hardwood forest and over 895 feet of undeveloped shoreline, consisting of pristine open water and emergent wetlands. The

protection of this parcel is a true triumph of community support for conservation in the Thousand Islands region.

TILT has long recognized the ecological significance of Blind Bay, conserving the initial 16.1 acres in 2016 with financial support from the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA). Federal funding through NAWCA is designed to increase bird populations and wetland habitats, while supporting local economies.

Wetlands protected under NAWCA provide valuable benefits such as flood control, reducing coastal erosion, and improving water quality. Earlier this year, US Customs & Border Protection (CPB) disclosed that it had identified Blind Bay as the preferred site for a new 55,000 square foot Border Patrol facility featuring year-round night illumination and multiple docks.

Save The River Executive Director, John Peach, said "Blind

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The Thousand Islands 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.



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Blind Bay is an ecological treasure and one of the most prolific breeding grounds for the muskellunge, the River’s apex predator. The Bay is also home to more than 52 other fish species including New York State (NYS) Species of Concern and Species of Conservation Need such as the American eel; blackchin, blacknose, and bridle shiner; Eastern musk turtle, and map turtle. The NYS endangered pugnose shiner has also been found in Blind Bay.” Peach continued, “While TILT’s acquisition expands critically sensitive protected habitat, it’s a move that could avoid the siting of the proposed Border Patrol facility in Blind Bay.”

While TILT is opposed to the siting of the proposed Border Patrol facility in and around Blind Bay,

This facility... would result in permanent ecological impacts that could not be mitigated.

staff have attempted to assist CBP with the environmental evaluation of alternative sites. With long-standing relationships with the River communities and deep knowledge of the region’s complex ecosystems, TILT is uniquely positioned to work with CBP to avoid other sites like Blind Bay that may be equally or more sensitive.

“Both TILT and Save The River recognize and support the important

role CBP plays in ensuring our safety and national security,” explained Jake Tibbles, TILT’s Executive Director. “But with respect to the concerns surrounding Blind Bay, we truly believe there is a path forward for CBP to achieve its goals all while avoiding irreversible impacts to our region. The cumulative environmental consequences of habitat fragmentation, edge encroachment, migration barriers such as perimeter fencing, noise and light pollution, and wetland degradation will have lasting impacts reaching far beyond the boundaries of the facility site being proposed.”

At the end of September, Blind

Bay Associates and TILT received a formal notice from US Customs & Border Protection outlining its continued interest

in Blind Bay. The notice further stated that within the next 90 days CBP anticipates seeking right of entry to Blind Bay through the US District Court under a Declaration of Taking and Complaint in Condemnation proceeding.

“CBP’s approach is shocking to say the least, especially on the heels of the Town of Alexandria’s Recreation Center proposal and a growing bipartisan push for Border



Patrol to find an alternative location,” stated Tibbles. “With available alternatives, there is simply no legitimate reason the River community should accept the siting in Blind Bay. TILT and Save The River staff had the opportunity to tour the new Wellesley Island Port of Entry constructed by Customs & Border Protection. While the Wellesley Island facility supports the necessary field operations and entry processing, this type of facility is in no way shape or form compatible with the Thousand Islands waterfront and if constructed in Blind Bay would result in permanent ecological

impacts that could not be mitigated.”

In an effort to draw further attention to this developing issue, earlier this fall, TILT and Save The River unveiled a new Save Blind Bay billboard along Route 12, Town of Orleans. The billboard links to the informative webpage, SaveBlindBay.com. The strong partnership of TILT, Save The River, Thousand Islands Park, Thousand Islands Association and several other organizations and municipalities is dedicated to protecting Blind Bay as an important environmental resource that both supports the local economy and our

way of life.

“In today’s world, there are very few issues that gain the attention and support of an entire community. There is no question that the River community is galvanized around its opposition of siting the proposed Border Patrol facility in Blind Bay,” stated Tibbles. “Moving forward, we are committed to protecting Blind Bay and defending it against eminent domain.”

For more information about Blind Bay and how you can help, visit the Save Blind Bay website at SaveBlindBay.com .



This fall, we teamed up with our friends at Save The River for a shoreline clean up of Blind Bay!

Using kayaks, tall rubber boots, waders, nets, and trash grabbers, we worked together to remove numerous 5-gallon buckets filled with a variety of garbage from the shoreline. Several metal pipes, a tire, construction debris, beverage cans, expanded polystyrene fragments, an Adirondack chair and single-use plastics were among the removed items. We even got to see muskie fry!

TILT and STR will continue essential stewardship efforts to ensure that environmentally significant areas like Blind Bay are protected for present and future generations.

Tributes

April 20, 2022- October 13, 2022

*In memory of
Bruce & Elaine Brooks*

Janice & Dan McPhail
Jake Tibbles & Alicia Dewey

In honor of

*Jack Butts & Dominique Noel's
wedding*

Terra & Freddy Bach
Andrew & Abby Butts

In memory of Dot Carnegie

John & Kathy Carnegie

In memory of Don Crist

Donald & Barbara James

In memory of Robert Ward Daly

Sarah & Tom Baldy

Maureen Barros

Marcella Caramucci

Patricia De Angelis

Carolyn Fitzgerald

William Fitzpatrick

Aynne Kokas

David & Uli Larrabee

Betty & Paul Lee

Barbara Ostfeld

Anonymous via Legacy.com

John Richards

Madelyn & Skip Ross-Griffith

Sharon Royce

Judith Soble

Beth & Rick Steinberg

Caroline Stockdale

Wayne Waz

Anna Yager

Rui Zhong

In memory of Sissy & Bill Danforth

John & Candace Marsellus

In memory of Terry Davenport

Melissa & Ted Wiggins

In memory of Ken Deedy

Allan Newell

Jake Tibbles & Alicia Dewey

In memory of Matt "Papa" Deedy

Barbara Deedy

In memory of Lyle Green

Barbara Green

*In memory of Kingsley Lawrence
Greene*

Carolyn Eberly

In honor of

Alex Hammett's birthday

Larry & Diane Kingsley

In memory of Douglas Holbrook

Peggy Sue Barnett

Kevin Cleary

Anne Holbrook

Rick Keegan

Larry & Margot Kroll

Karen Parker

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To Inspire the Next Generation



With bittersweet pride, TILT announces the departure of one of its friendliest, hardest-working and longest-serving staff members, Stewardship Director, Brandon Hollis.

Since 2011, Brandon has served an integral role with TILT. While studying Environmental Science at SUNY Potsdam, Brandon began his journey with TILT as a Summer Land Steward, quickly advancing to Stewardship Assistant. For the past nine years Brandon has held the position of Stewardship Director and has deftly managed TILT's fee-owned Preserves, monitored conservation easements, collaborated with environmental partners on a variety of projects, and supervised our Summer Land Stewards and Land Managers.

Brandon's dedication to conservation in the Thousand Islands and protecting this beautiful place he calls home has benefitted TILT and the River community in innumerable

ways. From grassland restoration on Grindstone Island, planting hundreds of trees throughout the Region to maneuvering antique tractors for display during the Zenda Community Picnic, and helping teach children at our environmental education programs, Brandon has been a pillar of the TILT family and will be dearly missed.

Now in the fall of 2022, he's off on a new adventure: inspiring the next generation. This fall, Brandon will become Mr. Hollis at Alexandria Central School. With over a decade of professional experience in environmental conservation, his passion for the natural world and curiosity for learning will make Brandon's transition to teaching Earth Science a seamless and exciting endeavor.

There is no doubt that he will help his new students embrace the sciences and rise to the challenges the world may bring. The community is fortunate to have him fostering the future leaders of the River.

While it may be bittersweet, we are left with a grateful heart to have worked with you, and the incredible work ethic and accomplishments you made here at TILT. With that we say, goodbye, for now. We wish you the very best on your new adventure.

Fondly,
Jake, Terra, Spencer, Kate, April, & Shannon



The TILT Staff: (l-r) Spencer Busler, Terra Bach, Brandon Hollis, Kate Breheny, Jake Tibbles, Shannon Walter, April Frederick

Farewell

Sherri (Gerry) Smith

We are saddened by the loss of a dear friend, long-time member and volunteer, and our favorite, “Bird Nerd” **Sherri (Gerry) Smith**.



Sherri Smith visits with Doug Munro at the Zenda Community Picnic in 2015.

Sherri was a renowned ornithologist in the North Country and dedicated much of her time to helping the community care about and understand the importance of birds in our landscape. She had a real passion for grassland birds and was always excited to share this passion during our Zenda Community Picnic. Her work also contributed to numerous grassland and songbird inventories on TILT Preserves.

Sherry signed every email with “Birds rise above it all.” She will be very missed and, like her, these words will never be forgotten.

Will Salisbury

Most of the River community knew of **Will Salisbury**. If you didn’t, you most certainly recognize his landmark sculptures and one-of-a-kind fixtures sprinkled throughout the greater Thousand Islands. Whether it be the 3 Crows or the Breaching Muskie, Will’s spirit shall live on through his masterful art and his unforgettable love for the River.

Will’s legacy will also carry on through the lands he preserved with TILT on Grindstone Island. In the fall of 2020, Will’s generosity resulted in the protection of 13 acres on the Picton channel, ensuring that the lands he cherished the most would be kept natural, open and wild, forever. This righteous act exemplified Will’s character; one the River community will not soon forget.



The Salisbury Property on Grindstone Island protects the shoreline of the Picton Island channel for all to enjoy.

Tributes - cont.

James & Glorian Reinman
Jake Tibbles & Alicia Dewey

In memory of Elaine Turcotte Hill
Thomas & Kathryn Hill

In honor of George L. Grobe III
Jamie Saunders

In memory of Jasmine & Remy, the best dogs ever
Ann Sweeten & Randy Yoder

In memory of Heidi Altenfelder Loy
John & Francesca Loy

In memory of Carol MacDonald
Ron MacDonald

In memory of Michael Mead
The Mead Family

In memory of Herb & Rosemary Mossien
Carol & Dan Mossien

In honor of The Orvis Family
Stephanie Hickey

In memory of H. Webster Partlow III
Sandy Partlow

In memory of Skip Rawson
Al Kettell & Nicole Sarett

In honor of Elaina Robinson & Mitch Maffeo
Sara Graham

In memory of Sherri (Gerry) Smith
Susie Wood & David Duff
Jake Tibbles & Alicia Dewey

In memory of Stephen Storie
Wayne & Lana Storie

In honor of Elaine Tack & Kevin Whitehead's wedding

Robert & Margaret Fishman
Michael & Eileen George
Pamela & Kevin Hart
Amy & Robert Tait
Patti Wood & Jim Schnauber

In honor of TILT for all your hard work & dedication
The Mead Family

In memory of Ted & Bobbie Trimble
David & Lisa Trimble

In memory of Beverly Wood
Dennis & Sarah Baldwin

In memory of Capt. Richard T. Wright
Susie Wood & David Duff

Conserving and Restoring Irreplaceable Places



TILT's Wildlife Refuge Gains 300 Acres near Tibbetts Point

By Spencer Busler

It has been said that the eastern end of Lake Ontario boasts one of the best sunsets of the entire eastern United States. From the sandy dunes of Henderson in mid-October, the sun sets just shy of 6:30PM over 180 miles of uninterrupted water; the entire length of Lake Ontario. Cape Vincent's Tibbetts Point shares a similarly spectacular sunset, whose longest uninterrupted horizon spans 100 miles of open water. Needless to say, if you haven't experienced a sunset at the iconic Tibbetts Point Lighthouse, then be sure to add it to your list.

With the vastness of the Great Lakes to the west, it's no wonder why the eastern end of Lake Ontario is such a bird watcher's paradise. The diverse and varied habitats along the shores of Cape Vincent provide

respite and refueling for countless species that can't muster crossing such expanses of open water without a break during their annual migrations. It's here that the depths of Lake Ontario meet the confines of the mighty St. Lawrence and its sprinkling of islands. This region's impressive mosaic of grasslands, wetlands and forests interface with these bodies of open water to create a safe haven for raptors, shorebirds, waterfowl and songbirds. This is the primary leg of the Atlantic Flyway, and these birds hug the lake shore when flying over and through Jefferson County.

It's also not surprising that this area appeals to more than just our feathered friends. Over the previous decades, those stunning sunsets and natural waterscapes have propelled residential development along the delicate shores of Lake Ontario.

Additionally, the rich, low-lying plains off Lake Ontario support intensive agriculture, and denuded shorelines and monoculture crops now abound in many areas adjacent to the lake. The open bucolic aesthetic of simpler days is no longer. While these consumptive land uses are contributors to the local economy, it is more vital now than ever before to contemplate the values of a balanced and healthy environment. This could be for water quality, clean air, bird habitat, erosion protection, or any of the numerous ecosystem services that we often take for granted.

In protecting these natural assets, it's much simpler to preserve an intact and functional property before it's subject to degradation. Unfortunately, that's not always possible. In some circumstances, historic land use pressures have substantially impaired natural functions on irreplaceable landscapes. While the land itself hasn't disappeared, its ecosystem values may have. For truly irreplaceable properties, the land is often still worthy of preservation despite the impairment, but extra efforts must be undertaken to return it to its healthy, wild state. The lands on Cape Vincent's Tibbetts Point and Fuller Bay are shining examples of this. Irreplaceable, but in dire need of restoration.

Over the coming months, TILT will be doing just that. Working with several private landowners, TILT will be adding four new parcels to its existing wildlife refuge on Fuller Bay in Cape Vincent. These additions will bring the 53-acre Preserve to a new total of 361-acres. The new acquisitions include a 69-acre forest and shrubland parcel on the Preserve's northern boundary, a 27-acre grassland and forest tract on its western boundary closest to Tibbetts Point, a 210± acre cropland property on its eastern and southern bounds, and a 3± acre waterfront wetland parcel adjacent to Fuller Bay.

Once conserved, the diverse refuge will undergo a multi-year ecological restoration. More specifically, the 210± acre cropland property, which is currently subject to the intensive row crop practices of regular tilling, disking and fertilizing,

will be reseeded with a native conservation grassland seed mix and managed to promote grassland-dependent songbirds and raptors. In the coming years, TILT also anticipates conducting successional management on the 69-acre and 27-acre tracts. TILT's stewardship team plans to rehabilitate the lands, currently inundated with invasive woody shrubs and vines, for vibrant regrowth of native plants. In turn, it's expected that the cropland and invasive restoration efforts will promote greater biodiversity of flora and fauna, improve local water quality, rejuvenate soil health and provide a greater quality of life for those living in or visiting the Cape Vincent area.

Put simply, TILT endeavors to conserve this genuinely irreplaceable landscape, to restore its natural vigor and beauty, and to protect and maintain it that way, forever. So when you visit Tibbetts Point for that remarkable sunset, be sure to also soak up the jaunty trills of the sparrows, the colorful reflections of the clean water, and that fresh lake breeze.



From the Letterbox...



Wetlands on the Baxter Property are part of a tributary system that flows into Chippewa Bay.

Dear Thousand Islands Land Trust,

I would like to take time to thank you for preserving and nurturing such an awesome parcel of land.

Here in Chippewa Bay it is nice to see the preservation of nature. I know Tom Smith and the Baxter family would be ecstatic to see the healthy condition this piece of property remains in.

When Tom Smith and I would sit down and have a cup of coffee out by the Quonset hut, he would say that he never wanted to see this land developed. He told me that his worry was that the property would be parceled up and a bunch of trailers would be put out on the property ruining its beauty.

Luckily, the Baxter family who inherited the land continued Tom's vision of preserving the land. I'm so pleased that I was able to introduce Mr. Baxter to the Thousand Islands Land Trust.

I would like to take this time to thank you. When the land was purchased by TILT, the Baxter family wanted to ensure that my father-in-law Earl Dillon, my son Cooper Bennett, and myself were given permission to use this land for hunting.

My son Cooper and I have maintained seven wood duck boxes here on the property and though we've tried a couple of mallard nesting tubes, we never seem to have much luck.

This year we have seen green and blue wing teal, wood ducks, pintails, mallards, and of course geese. There continues to be quite the amount of minnows inside the pond, several hawks, and a new family of beavers have moved into the area.

We have always strived to keep this land a sanctuary and all of the work that you have done has increased its beauty.

Cooper is taking environmental science courses at Potsdam State and I want to say that this parcel of land is part of the reason he loves nature and the outdoors as much as he does.

Once again I'd like to take this time to thank you. My father-in-law has since passed away but if anything is ever needed, please reach out to Cooper and I—we will continue to watch over this land as it has been part of my family's love for Chippewa Bay for over 25 years.

Tom Bennett

We thank you, Tom, for taking the time to share your thoughts with us. We truly appreciate your kind words and your continued love of the land. Your words reflect your family's dedication to conservation and we are honored to work alongside you.

In 2013 TILT purchased the 62-acre Baxter Property in Hammond as part of its Chippewa Bay Conservation Initiative with funding through the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA). Comprised of diverse forest stands and an expansive emergent wetlands that feed Chippewa Bay, the beautifully situated Baxter Property in Hammond

provides important wildlife habitat and contributes clean water to Chippewa Bay.

Land conservation in the Thousand Islands begins with willing landowners who are interested in preserving the natural beauty, diverse wildlife habitats, water quality and outdoor recreation opportunities of the Thousand Islands region. TILT offers various conservation options to meet the goals of the landowner and to provide the right conservation option for you.

We love hearing your stories! Please share them with us by mail or email.

YOU MADE HISTORY IN THE THOUSAND ISLANDS

On Saturday, July 30th, 2022 the Thousand Islands Land Trust (TILT) was overwhelmingly joined by the River community to commemorate the opening of the newly restored trestle bridge on the S. Gerald Ingerson Preserve.

The ceremony marked the end of three years of renovations on the Rivergate Trail and the historic trestle bridge. Together, TILT and the community raised over \$845,000.

Long ago, people began arriving on the trains that crossed this magnificent trestle.

Families settled in and deep roots were planted. These generations helped build and shape our community into what it is today. We have come so far thanks to the visions of S. Gerald Ingerson, the Ingerson Family, Mike Geiss, Sissy Danforth, and Dan and Lauran Throop. And we couldn't have done it without all of you!

As a community, we made this happen. TILT is beyond proud of this accomplishment and shares its success with you. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts, for joining us to make history!

YOUR TRESTLE.



YOUR COMMUNITY.



YOUR TRAIL.



The Rivergate Trail provides access to scenic beauty, clean water, diverse wildlife, and outdoor recreation opportunities. Seven miles of trail connecting Clayton to LaFargeville for hiking, biking, cross-country skiing, and more. This special place provides permanent access to some of the region's most precious and beautiful wetlands, creeks, grasslands and forests. Our community members and tourists will benefit from access to the outdoors, improving the quality of life for generations to come.



20 Years of Community at the Zenda Community Picnic



This year TILT celebrated a special milestone, the 20th Annual Zenda Community Picnic. Guests were treated to over 20 exhibits from local partners, interactive games, face painting and stations for the kids, animals, and even a double rainbow over the hayfields.

TILT's network of volunteers were specially honored during the event. Volunteer awards were presented: John and Margie Hart of Blind Bay, in Hammond, received the Distinguished Service Award for their efforts with the Blind Bay wetland restoration project, Janet Burrows of Clayton received the Volunteer Leadership Award for her steadfast service through numerous TILTreks and events, and local artist, John Miller III received the Stewardship Society Award for his dedication to the Annual Loon Census.



THANKS TO ALL WHO PURCHASED TICKETS!

AND THE RAFFLE WINNERS ARE...

Vici and Steve Diehl! Congratulations to the Diehls who held the winning ticket for this stunning handcrafted table made by Greg Coon of Redwood, NY. The table is built of black walnut and cedar and is adorned with shed antlers and beaver-chewed branches collected on TILT preserves.

Over 900 tickets were sold to support the essential stewardship and protection of Zenda Farms Preserve, home to over 2.5 miles of trails and 107 acres of open space. This preserve is a treasure for all to enjoy year round.

We have something very special planned for our 2023 raffle, so be sure to watch the mail for your raffle tickets this winter! Please stay tuned.



Preserves Are Official NYS Birding Destinations



Designated Preserves feature an official placard denoting its designation and are listed on the DEC's NYS Birding Trail website.



Otter Creek Preserve in Alexandria Bay provides all birders with a variety of species to observe throughout the year.



TILT's Preserves are home to numerous wetland and marsh habitat birds, including the Green Heron. Photo by Bill Munro.

Six of TILT's Signature Preserves have been included in the New York State Birding Trail, Adirondack-North Country region.

Along with 35 additional locations in the region, TILT's Chippewa Bay, Crooked Creek, Foster-Blake Woods, S. Gerald Ingerson, Otter Creek, and Zenda Farms Preserves were nominated based on the diverse populations of birds throughout the year and ease of public accessibility.

Each Preserve kiosk or sign has an official placard denoting its designation and is listed on the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's (NYSDEC) NYS Birding Trail website. Each kiosk has a link to the TILT website, which describes the Preserve's profile, notable species, and amenities.

As part of a statewide environmental recreation initiative, the New York State Birding Trail was officially launched by the NYSDEC in October 2021 with the first designated trails located in and around New York City. The NYS Birding Trail encompasses nine zones across the state, showcasing

“the state's diverse variety of habitats and landscapes and the more than 450 species of birds found here,” NYSDEC Commissioner Basil Seggos said. “The completion of the trail map is just the beginning. We look forward to working with our many birding partners for years to come to help residents and visitors enjoy the unique and special opportunities for birding found only here in New York State.”

TILT Preserves and Treks programs offer participants of all ages unique and exciting opportunities to get out on the land and learn.

From the iconic Bald Eagle to the numerous subtropical songbirds that migrate through the Thousand Islands each spring and fall, TILT's Signature Preserves offer visitors endless opportunities to experience the beauty of the Thousand Islands region and witness our feathered friends all year round. Shannon Walter, TILT's Education & Outreach Coordinator, stated, “From an ornithological standpoint,

the Thousand Islands Land Trust is uniquely located at the heart of the Atlantic Flyway and Algonquin to Adirondack migratory path. TILT is so honored to be part of the New York Birding Trail and to share the numerous opportunities for bird watching and year-round outdoor recreation in the Thousand Islands and St. Lawrence River Valley.”

TILT's Signature Preserves offer over 22 miles of public trails. In addition, they are home to the Zenda Community Garden, which provides fresh, locally grown produce for participating families, the historic and newly refurbished McCarn Creek Trestle Bridge on the Rivergate Trail, Potters Beach Preserve, one of the only naturally occurring sand beaches in the Thousand Islands, miles of pristine creeks for kayaking, interesting geologic formations, and numerous shade trees which are perfect for relaxing or picnicking beneath.

TILT Preserves are free and open to the public throughout the year and their robust Treks programs offer participants of all ages unique and exciting opportunities to get out on the land and learn.

Heart Carvings and Eagle's Wings



Janice Brooks McPhail at the 2008 Zenda Community Picnic with TILT Founder, Ken Deedy

By Terra Bach

Whether you experience years of intimate contact with nature, or a cherished golden afternoon of unsupervised play in the woods, it's clear that exploration of the natural world creates lasting effects on an individual. It often inspires the legacy they leave behind. We hear this about the Thousand Islands; that it leaves its mark on people, carving rich stories on their hearts. Each island holds a special place in someone's heart and as we zoom in on the magic of Grindstone Island, these stories unfold and the heritage behind these legacies shines.

Our surroundings often resonate with the wonder of what we are leaving behind. From the family photos hanging on the cottage walls, to an enchanting glimpse of a doe and her fawn, to a yellow halo of butterflies gracing a shoreline christening, the River is filled with memory and those who are working to keep the heritage alive. We recently spent

an afternoon with one such memory keeper on Grindstone Island.

As we sat on the very porch that her Grandfather, Father and Uncle built with their bare hands so many years ago, the past revealed itself through stories and shared laughter. Wonderment at the world of days gone by and inspiration found in the natural world colored our afternoon.

A misty rain drifted in, hiding the sun's rays as they peeked through the clouds. Suddenly, a faint rainbow appeared and stretched out over the River. Songbirds flitted about from tree to tree; their soft twittering floating down from the branches. It was one of those profound magical moments that captivated our senses and made our connection to nature certain.

Janice McPhail's heritage, and her powerful family legacy is centered on Grindstone Island. This Island is carved on her heart and unforgettable moments in nature have made her and her family's

lives life richer. With each ray of sunshine and songbird sighting, to a peaceful breeze through the trees, these moments are reminiscent of the past and provide hope for a healthy future for the land and River that continue to shape our days.

At the end of WWII, Janice's grandfather Haskell bought a farm outside Rochester, raised livestock and plowed the fields. From an early age, Janice loved being out on the land, in the company of animals and running free through the green fields of her grandparent's farm. She remembers loving to ride on his lap on the tractor, "I was his shadow on that farm," said Janice. She reminisced about holding and caring for baby pigs, picking corn, baling hay, and picking flower blossoms to hold "hollyhock weddings" on the farm. With acres of land, a creek and a pond with visiting waterfowl, her days were wonder-filled in the outdoors. Every season included outdoor play whether it be skating, sledding or going to a local park.

Though Janice described her childhood as "idyllic," looking back at memories of summers at



Janice McPhail and her parents, Bruce and Elaine Brooks at the 2015 dedication of the Brooks Building on Grindstone Island

Janice is one of the regular guides for the Grindstone Island Mule Tour, a favorite TILTrek.



that a profound change occurred in the environment while growing up. “The fish were around but I remember talking about mercury in the water,” said Janice. She never saw a blue heron, kingfisher, turkey, Baltimore oriole, goose, eagle, or osprey during the time she was about 7 to 12 years old. The late 60’s and early 70’s was “the DDT era and only ducks and deer were really around.”

Following a successful career in academic administration, Janice returned to the Thousand Islands and bought the family cottage from her grandparents. Almost immediately she experienced an abundance of bird species that she didn’t remember seeing during her childhood. “I saw songbirds, black and gray squirrels, raptors and the connection was made: pollution leads to an unhealthy landscape resulting in an unhealthy River. And that was what was happening around here, we were destroying the River,” said Janice.

It was during this time that her parents, Bruce and Elaine Brooks, were active members of TILT and when Janice met Ken Deedy. His message of saving the habitat and conserving the land in order to keep it healthy resonated with her. “All of a sudden it’s my thing to

make sure our environment is healthy,” she said.

Many believe the greatest legacy anyone can leave behind is to positively impact the lives of others. “I get my greatest inspiration from people,” said Janice. She went on to say that it is “their energy,

ideas, and insights that give me so much satisfaction.” Her years of volunteer service with TILT “were so fun to work together towards a common goal and to help effect positive change.” Janice has served as a Trustee for the past seven years and is a member of the *Thousand Islands Forever Legacy Program*. Her impact on present and future generations through her time given to TILT’s mission goes beyond words and TILT is ever grateful.

“Being a part of TILT has given me an opportunity to be a part of helping something that is bigger and greater than I am,” said Janice. Today, Janice believes her parents would be very excited about the accomplishments TILT has made and how we have

“TILT has given me an opportunity to be a part of helping something that is bigger and greater than I am.”

situated the organization in a positive direction for the future. “My parents would love that we are doing strategic planning. I learned about setting goals at the

dinner table and positioning myself for opportunities and what TILT is doing now mirrored my parent’s morals,” Janice said.

Her family’s legacy is reflected in and lives on through her own choices. Janice recently had the opportunity to give back to the nonprofit organizations on Grindstone that are “dear to her heart.” By acknowledging those carvings on her heart, she found a way to make a difference. Janice “wanted the sale of her parent’s cottage to do some good for the greater community.” She expressed how this was her way to say thank you for the experience that her family gave her in the Thousand Islands. “This Island is part of my heritage, and my legacy and this gift was my opportunity to show my gratitude to the organizations that are on the Island making a difference,” she said.

Grindstone Island is a step back in time. Its legacy has been maintained through the preservation of its ancestral way of life and its natural beauty. Knowing our stories, where we come from and protecting these legacies is important to people. As a member of the *Thousand Islands Forever Legacy Program* Janice’s support helps TILT reach its conservation goals, and her guidance drives TILT to keep reaching for the stars. The land conserved is forever protected and through this program’s dedicated members like Janice, this special place will be healthy and beautiful for all that live, work, and play here, especially our children, our children’s children and forevermore.

In 2021, at her Dad’s celebration of life, Janice stood at a pulpit on the front lawn – it had



Janice McPhail at the Red Schoolhouse on Grindstone Island.

been built in 1952 for her Mom’s birthday. While reading a prayer, she looked up to see a beautiful bald eagle fly by. The crowd followed her gaze. The eagle was so very close that you could see its golden eyes. It swooped and

came back by the gathering twice more and then was gone. The songbirds were naturally on its tail and everyone had a look of pure amazement. And at that moment, “we all knew that it was a sign from my Dad, and there was my Mom pecking at his feet. It was one of the most special moments in all my life. I have never seen an eagle that close,” said Janice. When magic is that strong, nature is almost always involved.

From farm to River, Janice’s childhood spent outdoors shaped her into who she is today. Summers on Grindstone were filled with getting “mucked up in the swamp, making cattail root tea, fishing

and just running the rocks”. That is what made her love of nature grow and flourish. Two different experiences, both so deeply rooted in nature which made it the perfect combination for the development of a strong connection to the land and all it has to offer for a lifetime.

Today she continues to spend her summers at the cottage on Grindstone making memories with her husband Dan and two pups, Murphy and Brody. After 20 years of hosting the annual Chili Cook off, they have passed this tradition on but enjoy showing the magic of Grindstone to all who desire to know it.



THOUSAND ISLANDS FOREVER

CREATE YOUR LEGACY

Please consider joining the Thousand Islands Forever Legacy Program to make a difference in the place you love, and protect the Thousand Islands, Forever.



Create and strengthen your family legacy.



Have a positive impact on future generations.



Care for the land, Forever.

To add the Thousand Islands Land Trust to your estate plan today, please visit www.TILandTrust.org for more information or contact Terra Bach at 315-686-5345.

The tax identification number of the Thousand Islands Land Trust is 22-2629183.

Thank you for being there for nature today and tomorrow.

Discovering Connectedness through the Environmental Community:

The 2022 Kenneth Deedy Environmental Steward Shares her Journey

By Sara Lantier

Like most college graduates, shortly after commencement, I began to get *the* question. “What’s next?” After months of searching, I found the Kenneth Deedy Environmental Internship Program. This internship seemed like a perfect fit: a true environmental internship in the Thousand Islands. I would learn how to look at the world around us through the lens of nonprofits and environmental advocates in the beautiful place where I grew up.

When I received the call from TILT, I was beyond excited! As the Deedy Steward, I would spend time at three different nonprofits based in the Thousand Islands in an effort to follow in the footsteps of the program’s namesake, Kenneth Deedy. TILT Founding member and long-term President of the Board of Trustees, Ken Deedy worked closely to connect TILT, Save The River, and Friends of the Minna Anthony Nature Center (MACNC). He helped foster relationships between these organizations because he recognized that while each of these nonprofits have different niches, the goal of conserving and protecting the Thousand Islands is upheld by all.

I began the program at Save The River (STR). Growing up as a Junior Riverkeeper, I was the most familiar with this organization. I knew that STR worked to protect and preserve the St. Lawrence River through initiatives like their Trash Free River clean-ups, but I learned so much more. From

teaching classes, designing resources and educational program materials, participating in site visits with property owners about how to best establish a natural shoreline on their property and assisting with common tern research, my time at STR showed me that the organization works to protect and preserve the River through

many different avenues. Education, monitoring water quality and tern populations, and advocating with both public and private parties are ways that STR works to protect the St. Lawrence River.

After three all too short weeks, I moved across the street to the organization that made this internship possible, TILT. I had been to the Zenda Community

In order to protect something, you must first care for it deeply.

Picnic when I was younger, but this was the first time I truly got a sense of the depth of TILT’s efforts. TILT’s primary goal is land conservation with an emphasis placed on conserving land that has been identified as highly impactful to the environmental landscape. I learned that conserving land is not all that TILT strives for. The organization works to



At the Minna Anthony Common Nature Center, Sara lead environmental education programs for visitors of all ages.

rehabilitate the land, restore it so that ecosystems can thrive upon it, and they also work to make land accessible to the public. I worked on outreach and graphic design projects to promote public use of TILT’s trails and engage trail users by providing access to our social media platforms, website and more. I connected with the community through treks and events by helping with event planning and preparation, and I interacted with the diverse group of members, local business partners and guests that make up the River communities.

I learned about the balancing act of protecting land while also still running a successful and thriving nonprofit. The scale of TILT’s conservation efforts is extensive, and they are able to accomplish so much with such a small team. This is largely due to the hard work and dedication of each and every employee. My experience at TILT



Sara Lantier holds a Common Tern chick while surveying nesting colonies with Save The River.

provided me with a new set of skills that will continue to serve me on my career path.

One month later, I was on the move again; the final rotation of the internship program brought me to the Minna Anthony Common Nature Center (MACNC) at Wellesley Island State Park. As a former Parks lifeguard, I was looking forward to experiencing a new perspective. While at MACNC, I led and designed environmental education programs, learned about captive animal care, and witnessed how nonprofits collaborate with the government. The relationship between the New York State Parks system and the Friends of the MACNC is what allows the organization to flourish and reinforces the organization's message of environmental protection and education through accessible resources. Seeing how much the public gained from having access to this land and the exhibits was an impactful and hopeful way to end my internship.

The goal of the Kenneth Deedy Environmental Internship Program was to provide a well-rounded introduction to environmental

nonprofits in the Thousand Islands. I gained a broader experience than I expected and learned that each organization had commonalities but interacted differently with the environment and River community.

At Save The River, research, advocacy, and education are the avenues in which their staff chose to work most closely with the environment. At the Thousand Islands Land Trust, conservation and community outreach are their core tools for protecting the environment. TILT is able to conserve and rehabilitate ecologically significant lands throughout the region, establish trails on Preserves and provide the community access to make a connection with the land. Meanwhile, at the Minna Anthony Common Nature Center, the focus is primarily on public-use and outreach. The interactive exhibits and programs provide visitors with an

I am grateful that Kenneth Deedy cared deeply enough about this area to walk an uncharted path, one filled with passionate people and enthusiastic partnerships.

easy way to get out in nature and become passionate about this area.

I watched three incredible organizations work their hardest to make the largest impact they possibly could. These organizations and their staff are working every minute of every day, pouring their heart and souls into their work, protecting and preserving the beauty of the St. Lawrence River. What they do behind the scenes, after hours, and off the clock for their community and the

Thousand Islands is nothing short of extraordinary.

Before this internship experience, if I had been asked what the differences between these three organizations were, my answer would be very different than it is today. After seeing all of the work that is put in behind the scenes, I can truly appreciate the impact these organizations have and the ways in which they work together. Each organization is tackling environmental conservation, education, and stewardship in the Thousand Islands differently, while working together to inspire present and future generations of environmental stewards. I wish everyone could see what I had the privilege to witness over the last few months.

In order to protect something, you must first care for it deeply. I believe that there are two components to inspiring environmental consciousness: a love for the natural world, and the knowledge of what we are doing to our planet. Save The River, the Thousand Islands Land Trust, and the Friends of the Minna Anthony Common Nature Center work tirelessly to spark that love and spread that knowledge. I am grateful that Kenneth Deedy cared deeply enough about this area to walk an uncharted path, one filled with passionate people and enthusiastic partnerships. And I am thankful that this year, I was fortunate to walk in his shoes.



Sara Lantier works at TILT's annual Summer Gathering fundraiser.

Our Education & Outreach Intern Reflects



Madeline Timerman with Sara Lantier, Deedy Intern.

By Madeline Timerman

Like many Gen Z students, I left for university feeling that I had outgrown the North Country. The grass was greener elsewhere. “Where are you from?” became a complicated question. “North of Syracuse... Along the Canadian border... East of Buffalo... No, I’m not from New York City!” is how the conversation typically went.

I began my internship with the Thousand Islands Land Trust thinking that I would be returning to old stomping grounds. The street names were the same, but I was shocked to discover how little I knew about my own hometown. Over the summer, I gained numerous skills but the biggest lesson has been the realization that “100 miles north of Syracuse” is the least important thing I could say about life in the Thousand Islands.

As a nonprofit focusing on environmental conservation, TILT staffers spend a fair share of their days outdoors. We are “plant nerds,” and every community hike is a chance to discover new mushrooms for foraging. We are also bird nerds, and fish nerds, and oc-

asionally rescue-the-turtle-before-somebody-hits-it-with-their-car nerds. TILT’s full-time staff are not casual observers or summer tourists. Every minute they spend outdoors, they are observing the world in motion. As a team, they identify how the natural world is changing, the consequences of those changes, and what role humans play in the evolving ecosystem.

At this summer’s “Harmony with the Land” TILTKids Camp, we taught children that humans play a huge role in determining the health of their surrounding landscape. “Harmony with the Land” is a way of living, and the countless hours dedicated by

*We are “plant nerds.”
We are also bird nerds,
and fish nerds, and
occasionally rescue-
the-turtle-before-
somebody-hits-it-with-
their-car nerds.*

the TILT office to grant writing, education and outreach, community projects, and land preservation are all spent with the goal of moving Northern New York closer to a sustainable future. TILT knows that in a world where some people grow up having never seen the stars, the River is a gift that cannot be taken



Madeline Timerman and Shannon Walter, Education & Outreach Coordinator, harvest invasive water chestnuts in Heuvelton.

for granted.

When I look at the Thousand Islands now, part of me sees familiar old scenes: a loon bobbing on the waters, wildflowers lining walking trails, and kids on vacation jumping off the docks at cottages. Another part of me fears losing these moments. Where do the birds go when the wetlands they depend on no longer exist? What happens when the summers grow too hot for native ferns? But the newest part of me—the part that spent the summer months working side by side with TILT, its partner organizations, and the River community, sees the people keeping life in the Thousand Islands going. I see the volunteers who planted trees at the Zenda Farms Preserve, and the families that spent their weekends picking up trash on Potters Beach. I see the beauty of a landscape as strong as the people behind it, and I know that the Thousand Islands is a place you can never outgrow.



Madeline supervises the Spring Walking Meditation TILTKek.

Out on the Land in 2022



Save these dates in 2023



Friday
June 9, 2023

**Zenda Community Picnic &
Volunteer Recognition**

5:30 - 7:30pm

Saturday
July 15, 2023

Summer Gathering

6:00 - 9:00pm

Thursday
August 17, 2023

Islander Event

6:00 - 9:00pm

JOIN US FOR A WINTER OR SPRING TILTREK!

Saturday, December 10, 2022

Winter Woods Hike

Foster-Blake Woods Preserve, 10:00 - 11:00am. Embrace the start of winter along the St. Lawrence River and enjoy beautiful woodland views as we discover what Mother Nature has in store for the deep freeze to come.

Wednesday, Dec 28, 2022

Wild Wednesdays - Adaptation Investigation

Location TBD, 1:00 - 3:00pm

Wednesday, January 25, 2023

Wild Wednesdays - Winter Weather Watchers

Macsherry Trail, Crooked Creek Preserve, 3:30 - 5:00pm. Become a winter weather watcher as we visit the Macsherry trail to learn how snowflakes are formed, what types of clouds are in the sky, what causes frost and so much more!

Friday, January 27, 2023

Toddies on the Trail

Rivergate Trail, S. Gerald Ingerson Preserve, 5:00 - 6:30pm. Enjoy an evening winter hike along the beautiful Rivergate Trail with friends. Remember to BYOT! (Bring your own Thermos)

Saturday, February 18, 2023

Snowshoe Trek

Macsherry Trail, Crooked Creek Preserve, 10:00 - 11:30am. Enjoy time on the trail exploring the wonders of winter weather. Bundle up, strap on your snowshoes and take in the winter air and sunshine!

Wednesday, February 22, 2023

Wild Wednesdays - Snow Hike

Otter Creek Preserve, 3:30 - 5:00pm. Are those Yeti tracks?! Join us for a fun snow hike as we look for animal tracks and other signs of winter activities along the Otter Creek Trail.

Wednesday, March 29, 2023

Wild Wednesdays - Migration Mania

Rivergate Trail, S. Gerald Ingerson Preserve, 3:30 - 5:00pm. Discover who makes the longest journey, why animals travel for the winter, and uncover some surprising participants in the migration mania during this interactive walk along the Rivergate Trail.

Wednesday, April 19, 2023

Common Tern Grid Installation

Tidd Island & Eagle Wings Shoals, 10:00am - 2:00pm
Help install nesting boxes and gull exclusion grids on Eagle Wings Shoal and Tidd Island to help protect nesting sites of Common Tern, a NY State threatened species.

Wednesday April 26, 2023

Wild Wednesdays - Signs of Spring

Macsherry Trail, Crooked Creek Preserve, 3:30 - 5:00pm. How many signs can you find? Join us on this fun guided scavenger hunt as we look for traces of spring along the Macsherry Trail.

Saturday, April 29, 2023

10th Annual "For the Trees" Arbor Day Celebration

Location: TBD, Time: 10:00am. Over the past 9 years volunteers have planted over 700 trees along our preserve trails. Bring the whole family to help celebrate our 10th anniversary.

Sunday, May 7, 2022

Smith Memorial Bird-a-Palooza: To honor our favorite Bird Nerd Sherri (Gerry) Smith

Otter Creek Preserve:

Adult's *Warbler Walk*, 7:30 - 9:00am

Kid's *Bird Is The Word Walk*, 9:30am - 11:00am

Saturday, May 20, 2023

Spring Stewardship Day

Location: TBD, 10:00am - 2:00pm

Help TILT prepare its preserves and trails for the busy summer season! Lunch is provided.

Wednesday, May 31, 2023

Wild Wednesday - Pollinator Palooza

Otter Creek Preserve, 3:30 - 5:00pm

Explore the ways that flowers and their pollinators are perfectly suited to one another on this interactive walk at Otter Creek Preserve.

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Stay Connected with TILT!



A new tradition took flight at Zenda Farms Preserve this summer with the help of 100,000 sets of wings.

Honeybee hives, managed by Yessi's Bees and Honey of Redwood, NY, were placed in early June and extracted just after Labor Day.

After a beautiful summer of foraging on Zenda's conserved grasslands, the honeybees have produced liquid gold. We are so excited to share the fruits of their labor with you!

Available in two sizes, 1lb (\$12) and 2lb (\$20), and packaged in vintage inspired glass queenline jars to showcase the golden amber hue, honey can be purchased directly at the TILT office or learn about shipping options by emailing info@tilandtrust.org.

How Sweet It Is!



Take home a taste of summer on the River today!