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The Thousand Islands Land Trust works to conserve the natural beauty, diverse wildlife habitats, water quality & outdoor recreation opportunities of the Thousand Islands region, for present and future generations.



UPCOMING EVENTS Save the Date

SATURDAY
MAR 8
2025

WINTER GATHERING

FRIDAY
JUNE 13
2025

**ZENDA COMMUNITY PICNIC
& VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION**

SATURDAY
JULY 19
2025

SUMMER GATHERING

THURSDAY
AUG 21
2025

ISLANDER EVENT

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

Crooked Creek Preserve © Chris Murray



Partner Spotlight Coughlin Printing

For over a decade, we've had the privilege of working with the Coughlin Printing Group, a trusted partner who consistently delivers high-quality printing solutions for our projects. Their attention to detail, professionalism, and commitment to excellence have been invaluable to our mission. We're grateful for their continued support and look forward to many more successful collaborations!

STRENGTH IN UNITY: FIGHTING TO SAVE BLIND BAY

A Year of Advocacy and Progress

With over 800 River community supporters uniting to protect this ecologically vital area, Blind Bay remained a key focus in 2024. Initially, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) announced they would not consider The Cloverleaf site near the Thousand Islands Bridge for their new Border Patrol station, citing limited waterfront access, visibility, and size constraints. However, following persistent advocacy and the leadership of Senator Chuck Schumer, CBP reversed course. As reported by the Watertown Daily Times, CBP has now agreed to include The Cloverleaf site in the Supplemental Environmental Assessment (SEA) and conduct environmental studies in 2025.

This progress demonstrates the power of collective action. Senator Schumer's unwavering commitment to the River Community has been pivotal in achieving this milestone. His leadership, combined with the efforts of TILT, Save The River (STR), the Blind Bay Coalition, and community members, has created meaningful momentum to protect Blind Bay. Your involvement—whether by voicing opposition, volunteering, or contributing to the legal defense fund—has been instrumental.

Despite this step forward, and strong support from leaders like Senator Schumer, Governor Hochul, and Congresswoman Tenney, Blind Bay and residential neighborhoods like Dockside Cottages remain at risk. We urge state and congressional leaders to ensure CBP fully evaluates The Cloverleaf site under the SEA and prioritizes its reduced environmental impact.

The Thousand Islands Land Trust remains steadfast in its mission to protect Blind Bay and uphold the values of conservation and responsible stewardship. This success shows what we can achieve together. Thank you for your continued support as we fight to Save Blind Bay!

Banner photo © Chris Murray Photography



Governor Hochul, Jake Tibbles, and Spencer Busler celebrate their collaborative efforts to protect vital shorelines and coastal wetlands, including Blind Bay and Garlock Bay. This partnership exemplifies the strong commitment to protecting the natural beauty of the North Country, and we are deeply grateful for the Governor's continued support of conservation initiatives across our region.

**Save Blind Bay - get
your t-shirt today!**

**Proceeds directly
support our
collective efforts.**

Available at the TILT Office.





Photo © Sid Quarrier

DUFF LEGACY

A True Steward of the Land

by Spencer Busler | Assistant Director

David Duff was a man of contemplation. A quiet life of meaningful reasoning, punctuated by strategic moments of kicking and yelling in the face of social and environmental injustices. He was not afraid to ask why, or why not. He was an ally.

With his wife, Susie Wood, and their pups at his side, David took each day as an opportunity to improve this world—this magnificent, temporary home. His mission was to make it more functional, practical, and beautiful—not only for those of us living today but for future generations, and for nature itself.

David gave his soul to his farm on South Woods Road, and worked harmoniously within its natural systems. He planted thousands of trees, managed ponds and watercourses, and maintained his pastures and meadows. Deep down, he knew that it was not truly his land; it was just his turn.

In clear focus, David understood the bigger picture. He understood that these lands carry meaning and value far beyond any human appraisal or assessment. The rolling forests and open fields in his backyard

played a larger role at the landscape scale. For thousands of years, those lands served as a highway for wildlife between the Adirondacks and the remote Canadian Shield. This narrow band of rugged forest between Redwood and Black Lake is a resilient wildway for species migration. And each year, that corridor grows narrower and more disjunct, threatening the existence of the wildlife that crossed David's farm year in and year out.

David endeavored to protect those things dearest to him. And as a final curtain call, before he passed this summer, he put his land into permanent conservation with the Thousand Islands Land Trust. In doing so, he found comfort in knowing that the farm he carefully stewarded for half a century would be safeguarded forever.

His land will become part of TILT's Many Oaks Preserve, bringing this diverse conservation property to nearly 400 contiguous acres at the bottleneck of the A2A Wildway. The lands will serve as a forever monument of David's passion. For all of us. For those to come after us. For nature.

"It was love at first sight when David first set foot on the 200 acres of land he had found in Macomb more than 50 years ago. The rocky, wooded uplands, the undulating meadows, the wetlands teeming with wildlife were everything he ever imagined in a place to call home. That love grew and deepened with every year he lived on and worked that land, and it nurtured and rewarded him in equal measure. Before he died, David contemplated the future of the place he loved, and he came to imagine a path to that future by working with TILT to preserve and protect it. I know he was grateful that he did."

—MARK SCARLETT,
LIFELONG FRIEND OF DAVID DUFF



David and Susie Duff at their Farm House.

A2A WILDWAY UPDATE

Collaboration sparks valuable discussions and provides results

by Natalie Gates | *Land Protection Specialist*

This past July, TILT welcomed conservation organizations for an engaging workshop held by Algonquin to Adirondacks (A2A) Collaborative. Recently the A2A Collaborative launched a mapping program in collaboration with Northeast Conservation Services as part of their Wildlife Corridor Mapping Project. This interactive map showcases protected lands and key migratory linkages, dynamically highlighting the interconnected networks across the entire A2A region. The overall goal is to refine the Geographic Information System (GIS) model through ground-truthing and local knowledge of barriers, protected areas and development sites. Ground-truthing is the process which involves going to a specific location to make sure the information gathered accurately represents the actual features present in that area. Once this intricate mapping tool is fully developed, it will help guide conservation efforts to safeguard these critical networks.

Since 2023, Kate Cleary, A2A Vice President, and a team of Clarkson University students have annually surveyed 12 miles of State Rt. 12 and Rt. 37, recording a total of 1,859 roadkills, with frogs comprising the highest mortality at 1,317. "The results of our study will identify where hotspots of wildlife-vehicle collisions are along these highways. We can combine this fine-scale information with our larger-scale mapping work that modeled travel paths for wildlife through the A2A region and then be able to pinpoint the most effective locations to build wildlife crossings in the future," said Kate Cleary. Camera traps were also placed on 25 culverts and bridges with known wildlife crossings to determine passability. This research was funded through the Pumpkin Hill Foundation, The Nature Conservancy and the National Park Service.



This A2A connectivity map demonstrates linkages between parcels of protected lands. The Evans Property lies near Butterfield Lake and TILT's South Hammond Preserve.

Conservation Continues on the Ground

In September, TILT worked with the Evans family to conserve their Redwood property. This 34-acre tract lies within the A2A bottleneck, and contains a portion of Jewett Creek. This biodiverse acquisition will enhance connectivity and protect water resources. Collaboration between conservation and research is essential for the A2A region, with TILT and the A2A Collaborative working together to build a holistic understanding that fosters healthier ecosystems and stronger communities.

TRAIL CAM SPOTLIGHT

Look who we caught on camera!

MEET THE BOBCAT

The Bobcat is a medium-sized wild cat, generally weighing 10-25 pounds. This feline has tufted ears, a short tail, a distinctive spotted coat, and lives in diverse habitats, from forests to deserts. Primarily solitary, they hunt at dawn and dusk, targeting rabbits, rodents, birds, deer and even an occasional porcupine. Their hunting strategy involves stealth, followed by a quick burst to capture their ideal meal in healthy habitats like Chippewa Bay Preserve.

One remarkable behavior of bobcats is their ability to adapt to changing environments, making them highly resilient. Bobcats can run up to 25 to 30 miles an hour and are skilled swimmers. This adaptability allows them to thrive in a variety of ecosystems, making them a fascinating species to observe in the wild.



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in the 1000 Islands

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- Angel Rock Waterfront Cottages & Vacation Homes
- Big Duck Bags
- Chris Murray Photography
- Clayton Island Tours
- EagleShoppe
- Gretchen Scott Designs
- Jodi Towne Photography
- Kara Dry Photography
- Kripalu Center
- Patagonia
- Porch & Paddle
- River Golf Adventures
- River Wellness Center
- River Yoga
- Riverbay Adventure Inn
- Silver Line Party Rentals
- Swan Bay Resort & Marina



TILT Expands Forever Wild Preserve in the A2A Corridor

In Theresa, NY, an exciting conservation partnership is underway between Ducks Unlimited (DU) and the Thousand Islands Land Trust. As part of their In-Lieu Fee wetland mitigation program, DU has installed water control structures and earthen berms in a former tile-drained hay field to establish five diverse wetland cells. An earthen berm is a raised barrier or mound made of a combination of natural materials such as soil, clay and sand. Often used in environmental management projects, berms can create natural habitats and protect sensitive areas like our precious wetlands. The goal of this project was to restore historic hydrology to increase plant diversity, in turn supporting local ecology while enhancing flood storage capacity. Construction of the wetlands was completed in 2021.

"The Eddy Road project not only restores critical ecosystems and their services but also fosters sustainable partnerships. The collaboration between TILT and Ducks Unlimited over the decades exemplifies how shared commitment can drive meaningful conservation efforts, benefiting both nature and communities alike."

— Dr. Patrick Raney, DU's Director of Conservation Programs - Mitigation



This fall, Ducks Unlimited donated the restored property to the Land Trust. DU will retain a conservation easement on the land, ensuring the wetlands remain protected, healthy and functional.

The 145-acre Eddy Road property supports a variety of wildlife from bats, to rare migratory birds and black bears. The effort to restore, conserve and maintain this property will benefit the Indian River watershed well into the future.



The 2024 Raffle Winner is ... Rick Tague!

Congratulations to Rick, winner of this year's prize—a stunning handcrafted hard maple and cedar table by Greg Coon, adorned with shed antlers and beaver-chewed branches from the Crooked Creek Watershed!

Thank you, Rick and all who purchased tickets. Your support helps to advance forest connectivity throughout the Thousand Islands region.

Stay tuned, we have something exciting in store for the 2025 raffle. Watch your mailbox this winter—your raffle tickets are on the way!



In memory of Tim Arnold
Donald and Barbara James

In memory of Rodney M. Babowicz
Linda Burke
Marti and Peter Macarthur
Barb and Ed Paparella

In memory of Frank Cole
Jake Tibbles and Alicia Dewey

In memory of Mary Elaine Costantino
Stephanie Costantino

In honor of Robert and Carol Dakin
Bill Dakin and Jeanne Richards

In memory of Sissy and Bill Danforth
John and Candace Marsellus

In memory of Terry Davenport
Melissa and Ted Wiggins

In memory of Ken Deedy
Barbara Deedy
Jake Tibbles and Alicia Dewey

In memory of Dr. Anne K. Del Borgo
Nancy Del Borgo

In memory of David Duff
Bonnie Wilkinson Mark and Charles Mark
Jake Tibbles and Alicia Dewey

In memory of Carol Fratta
Richard Fratta

In memory of Jamie Gaffney
Jake Tibbles and Alicia Dewey

In memory of Alyssa Geiger
David and Carole Nims

In memory of Richard Havranek
Mary Havranek

In memory of Kay Heineman
Sandra Boriskin

In honor of Mike Herbert, For His Military Service To Our Country
Steve and Meg Hart

In memory of Adele P. Jacobs
Georges Péron

In memory of Scott Kempton
Jonathan and Heather White
Jake Tibbles and Alicia Dewey

In memory of Maureen Lamb
Joann Schwalm

In honor of Arthur Mack
Stephanie Mack

In memory of Mary & Dick Macsherry
Jake Tibbles and Alicia Dewey

In memory of Edward F. Martelle, Jr.
Gretchen Martelle

In honor of Greg McLean
Community Foundation of Herkimer and Oneida Counties

In memory of Dick Munro
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Shirley Carpenter
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In memory of Bruce Rippeteau
Jake Tibbles and Alicia Dewey

In memory of Robert A. Rowland
Ross and Karen Rowland

In honor of The Rusho Family
Katie and Jonathan Oakleaf

In honor of Susie Smith
Stephen and Nancy Friot

In honor of Spring Spawners
Daniel Corbett

In memory of E. Zell Steever V
Tom and Robyn Davison
Paul and Laura Escobosa
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Peter and Margaret Raisbeck
Sandra Rennie and Nicholas Yost
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Howard and Lorraine Veisz
Roy and Peggy White

In memory of Jean Dora Canney Tague
Donald and Barbara James

In memory of Arly Tolette
Mark and Mary Lou Tolette

In honor of Thousand Islands Land Trust
Token Open Golf Tournament

In memory of Aaron Vogel
Bob and Janet Quinn

In memory of Wilson W. Wright
Kent Zaiser

FAREWELLS

Remembering Dick Munro



To say that Dick Munro had an immeasurable impact on the Thousand Islands region would be an understatement. Throughout his life, he spent summers, and often longer, on his beloved River. He was dedicated to his family, the communities he lived in, and was undoubtedly “a man of the people.”

Dick was known by many as a humble hero —whether helping young students achieve their dreams through hockey connections, advocating for public radio, or contributing his time as a dedicated member of the Thousand Islands Land Trust (TILT), volunteering was something he found most fulfilling.

For over 36 years, alongside his loving wife Carol, Dick supported the Land Trust with fervor and heart. Empowering youth was one of Dick’s greatest gifts and a legacy he chose to leave behind. In this light, together, they helped establish several endowments, including the Kenneth Deedy Environmental Internship Fund.

TILT’s mission truly matters to the Munros. They have generously supported initiatives like the Conserving The Place You Love Mission Support Campaign, Save Blind Bay, the TILT Discovery Center, and so much more. Dick and Carol also have opened their homes to host countless events in support of the organization.

Dick was generous, humble, incredibly smart, a profound advice-giver, and simply one of the best. The world is certainly a better place because of his devotion to helping others. His legacy of service to the Thousand Islands communities and its conservation will be felt for generations, a testament to a life lived with resounding purpose and gratitude.



Thank you for remembering
your loved ones in this way!

Tributes made from March 16,
2024 - September 30, 2024

Environmental Education in the Thousand Islands

by Kelly Picunas | Community Outreach Assistant

“We have such a brief opportunity to pass on to our children the love for this Earth, and to tell our stories. These are the moments when the world is made whole. In my children’s memories, the adventures we’ve had together in nature will always exist.” - Richard Louv. This sentiment perfectly captures the essence of my journey this summer. The land I once explored with wide-eyed wonder as a child is now where I educate my own children, and other children about the importance of forging a connection to nature.



This past summer at the Thousand Islands Land Trust was nothing short of an adventure, taking me on an unforgettable journey back to my roots. Growing up in the Thousand Islands was more than just a childhood—it’s a love story with a place that shaped who I am today. Now, watching my own children grow up, I realize how fortunate I am to watch them blossom in this breathtaking environment that is so special to me.

From a young age, I knew I wanted to do something positive with my life—to make a difference in the world. My parents taught us to love and respect this unique region, emphasizing the importance of giving back to our community. My mother, now a retired science teacher, has been a significant influence on my commitment to the Thousand Islands and my passion for educating others about it. Through her volunteer work with organizations like TILT and STR, she has taught me the value of civic engagement and the difference we can make.

It’s in these moments—when a child spots a bird for the first time or a family shares a quiet moment on a trail—that the impact of our work becomes clear.

In my role as the Community Outreach Assistant, I had the opportunity to deepen my connection with this incredible place. It was an experience that allowed me to weave my personal values



into meaningful work and directly contribute to the conservation mission. I led numerous TILTreks, engaging both year-round and seasonal residents in exploring the land and learning about conservation. Through these interactions, we’re not just teaching about conservation; we’re instilling a lasting respect for nature in this special place we call home.

In every role—whether as a teacher, parent, or leader—our intention is to make a difference, and empower younger generations to shape their world. Nurturing a sense of place in children involves helping them develop a deep connection and appreciation for their surroundings, which include their local community, natural environment, and cultural heritage. With this gained knowledge and understanding, children can grow into conservation-minded individuals that will support and participate in protecting natural spaces. Through engaging children in environmental education and community service here in the Thousand Islands, together we will foster a legacy of love and hope, ensuring the beauty of this area endures for future generations.



Kelly and daughters Ella and Grace pose on a beautiful summer's day.



SIGNATURE PRESERVE HIGHLIGHT

CROOKED CREEK PRESERVE

The Crooked Creek Preserve consists of over 2,100 acres of class 1 wetlands, uplands, and forest.



It is one of the most significant wetlands on the St. Lawrence, providing habitat for countless species. Bald eagles regularly fly overhead and the creek meanders for miles—perfect for a quiet paddle in this wildlife haven.

PRESERVE ECOLOGY

Wetlands, like those found at Crooked Creek Preserve, provide areas for water to collect and currents to slow down in times of flooding, helping to prevent erosion. Acting as natural filters, aquatic plants and their natural chemical processes remove harmful pollutants from the water, improving the water quality.

Boasting the largest Class 1 wetlands complex in the Thousand Islands, it is a perfect place to paddle and see wildlife. These habitats provide ideal nesting grounds for waterfowl and songbirds including ducks, geese, and blackbirds. Rarities such as Common Terns, American and Least Bitterns, Black Terns, and Pied-billed Grebes utilize the marsh for feeding and breeding.

A forever wild easement protects the carbon-rich forests that are dominated by red and white oak and towering white pine. Contiguous uplands provide essential habitat for nesting songbirds and other woodland wildlife, while also serving as wildlife corridors. These larger tracts enable animals to move freely between northern and southern areas, such as Ontario's Algonquin Provincial Park and the Adirondack Park in NY.

HIKING THE PRESERVE

The Macsherry Trail consists of a short loop of about 1.5 miles, and a long loop of nearly 3 miles. The mosaic of wetland and forest plant communities found here provide habitat for abundant fish, mammal, reptile, amphibian, and invertebrate species.

Roughly three miles long, the Macsherry Trail begins at a trailhead off of Indian Point Road in Hammond. Passing beaver ponds and meandering through woods, it leads to Crooked Creek itself with a wonderful view of Chippewa Bay at the "Old Boy Scout Camp," before circling back to the trailhead.

HOW TO GET THERE

The Preserve is located off State Route 12 on the border between Jefferson and St. Lawrence County (6.1 miles east of Alexandria Bay). Turn north toward Kring Point State Park, then turn immediately right onto Indian Point Road (a dirt road). This road is marked private, but visitors to the Macsherry Trail are welcome. Travel approximately 3/4 mile to the parking area on the right.

Photo credits:

Top row: © Bill Munro © Chris Murray Photography; © Alex S. Maclean

Middle row: © Terra Bach, © Steven Daniel, © Terra Bach

Bottom photo: © Chris Murray Photography

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

FUN FACTS



Alice the Moose actually traversed this Preserve during her iconic migration from the Adirondack Park to the Algonquin Park solidifying this critical wildlife corridor.



Keep watch for chewed off stumps and narrow trails leading off the path, especially as you near the pond - a sure sign that beavers have been here! Beavers use wood for food (the inner bark of willow and birch are favorites), to trim their teeth and to build their dams. A viewing platform and bench constructed by TILT's Stewardship Staff is available to enjoy the view of the impressive beaver dam!



Bedrock in the Thousand Islands region has a distinct look. This area is part of what is called the Frontenac Arch, which links the Canadian shield to the Adirondacks. The pink colored rock of the Frontenac Arch is approximately 600 million years older than the sandstone (gritty and reddish colored) and limestone (gray layered rocks) that are found in most of this area.

Volunteers Lead Battle Against Pale Swallow-wort on Carleton Island

by Kenneth Nims | *Stewardship Director*

Mike and Eileen Comerford have shown unwavering commitment in their decade-long, hands-on fight against pale swallow-wort (*Vincetoxicum rossicum*) on Carleton Island. This invasive plant continues to spread aggressively, overrunning and displacing native plants, disrupting ecosystems, and hindering reforestation efforts. Recognizing the urgent need to protect the Island's biodiversity, they have taken a proactive approach, employing a combination of mechanical, chemical, and biological methods.

The Comerford's instrumental work has been bolstered by support from the Land Trust and the St. Lawrence Eastern Lake Ontario Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (SLELO PRISM). These organizations provided resources, expertise, and manpower, helping to ensure the effectiveness of the partnership's initiatives. SLELO contributed critical knowledge on best management practices for invasive species, while TILT's dedication to land conservation in the region has facilitated labor support and access to broader conservation networks.

"Fighting invasive species is a constant challenge, but every plant we remove feels like a small victory for the environment. It's rewarding to know we're making a real difference in preserving our native ecosystems," said Eileen Comerford, Carleton Island resident and dedicated volunteer. Together, the Comerfords, SLELO, and TILT are making a meaningful impact on Carleton Island, demonstrating the power of collaboration in the fight against invasive species. Their ongoing efforts stand as a testament to the importance of community-driven conservation and the collective responsibility to protect natural landscapes.

TILT Launches Ecosystem Restoration at Tibbetts Point



An aerial view captures the Stewardship Team operating the FECON mulcher at Tibbetts Point Preserve, actively working on native grassland restoration.

This past September, TILT's Stewardship Team embarked on a restoration project at its Tibbetts Point Preserve. Supported in part by funding from SLELO PRISM, this initiative is aimed at revitalizing this ecologically vibrant property.

Tibbetts Point, like many areas in the region, has been impacted by invasive species. Buckthorn and honeysuckle, two particularly aggressive woody shrubs, have created conditions that allow pale swallow-wort, an invasive vine, to spread rapidly. To a large extent, these invasive species have altered the landscape, threatening native plant communities and the wildlife that depends on them.

TILT's immediate focus was reclaiming these overgrown areas. The team deployed a skid steer-mounted forestry mulcher to clear the invasive brush down to the ground. This major first step will make it easier to treat the persistent pale swallow-wort, setting the stage for future restoration efforts.

Once the invasive species are under control, TILT will begin transforming the cleared areas into thriving native grasslands. Using a carefully selected native meadow seed mix, the reseeded areas will begin in late spring 2025. Soon, grassland nesting birds and wintering raptors will return and help to restore the natural balance of the ecosystem. By removing invasive species and restoring native habitats, the Land Trust is ensuring that Tibbetts Point becomes a thriving environment for both wildlife and the community.



Eileen Comerford and TILT Summer Land Stewards, Finn O'Neill and Jack Gates, remove swallow-wort, an aggressive invasive from a grassland on Carleton Island. Photo © Mike Comerford



REBIRTH AT ZENDA FARMS

A Summer of Renewal and Connection

by Bridgett McCann | *Communications Specialist*

Once upon a time, Zenda Farms was a bustling haven of agricultural life, and alive with the sounds of mooing cows and rhythmic clucking of chickens. But for nearly 75 years, the rolling hills of this iconic Farm have remained silent, serenaded only by songbirds, hooting owls, and the croaks of spring peepers. The dairy herd departed Zenda Farms in the late 1940's, followed by the beef cattle in the mid-1960's, moving on to greener pastures.

Everything changed in June 2023, when Mary Ann Duffy, a TILT volunteer and herding expert, arrived with her flock of sheep and award-winning Border Collies, breathing new life into Zenda Farms. The Border Collies, renowned for their herding prowess, respond to commands like “comebye” (move clockwise), “away to me” (move counter clockwise), and “that will do” (calling them off the sheep). Their intense “eye” and intelligence set them apart from other herding breeds, helping them to move stock with precision and grace.

In preparation for the sheep's return this June, TILT Stewardship Director, Ken Nims, along with TILT's Land Managers, Wyatt Lipinski and Robb Myers, built an upgraded pen with a 7-acre fenced area and a new runway from the Dairy Barn. This space allowed ample grazing and a designated area for dog training sessions, preserving Zenda's heritage while enhancing its ecological value.

This summer, Zenda welcomed full-time shepherdess, Kat Hammond, who brought her herding expertise to lead weekly public demonstrations and daily lessons. The Farm's revival also included new lambs, Indian Runner ducks, and chickens, creating a lively atmosphere. Once again, Zenda Farms came alive with the sight and sound of sheep, delighting the community with their return.

TILT Merch

SHOP WITH A PURPOSE

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



Zenda Farms Sheep Gear

Zenda Farms Preserve shirts & hoodies will keep you warm and stylish all year long.

Unisex sizing: S – 2XL

T-shirts \$25 | Hoodies \$60



Stickers

Decorate and personalize your water bottle, laptop, cooler, and more with a TILT sticker. Currently available: Zenda Farms Preserve, Disco Sheep, and Classic TILT Logo.

Help protect land and celebrate our work by sharing and wearing TILT products and gear!

Available at the TILT office. Stop in to peruse our offerings, or give us a call (315) 686-5435. We're happy to ship items as well!

WELCOME DELANEY MCILRATH & ROBB MYERS

Delaney McIlrath, Community Engagement Coordinator



Delaney McIlrath.

Delaney McIlrath joined TILT this September as the new Community Engagement Coordinator.

In her new role, she will be responsible for developing and implementing educational and outreach programs, organizing community events, and creating volunteer opportunities to foster support for land conservation.

Director of Development and Communications, Terra Bach, said, “Delaney’s enthusiasm for engaging with the community and her dedication to connecting people with the land make her an excellent fit for TILT. We’re excited to see the energy and fresh ideas she will bring to our programs, and we’re confident that she will deepen our community connections.”

A native of Cape Vincent, NY, Delaney holds a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) degree in Political Science and History from the State University of New York at Potsdam. Spending her summers on Grindstone Island instilled her love for the St. Lawrence River, fueled her passion for community involvement, and inspired her to help others discover the benefits of connecting with nature. In her new role, Delaney aims to create experiences that encourage respect for the environment and establish the importance of conservation.

Outside of work, Delaney enjoys teaching yoga, exploring the river, and spending time in nature with her dogs. She looks forward to sharing her passion for the Thousand Islands and connecting people to the land and water that make this region so special.

Robb Myers, Conservation Lands Manager



Robb Myers.

Robb Myers joined the Land Trust in May of 2024, bringing a wealth of experience and dedication to land stewardship. In his new role as the Conservation Lands Manager, Robb is responsible for overseeing TILT’s land management operations, ensuring our preserves and easements continue to be cared for to the highest professional standards.

Working closely with Stewardship Director, Ken Nims, Robb plays an essential role in maintaining the ecological integrity of the lands under our protection. Ken expressed his enthusiasm about Robb’s addition to the full-time team, stating, “Robb’s extensive background in environmental management and his passion for the North Country make him an invaluable addition to our stewardship efforts. His commitment to conserving the unique landscapes of the Thousand Islands aligns perfectly with our mission, and we are excited to see the positive impact he will bring to our preserves and easements.”

Originally from Ligonier, PA, Robb holds a Master of Science (M.S.) degree in Environmental Policy and Management from the American Military University. Before joining TILT, he served as a Field Artillery Officer in the U.S. Army, holding multiple leadership roles, including most recently with the 10th Mountain Division at Fort Drum.

Now settled in Clayton, NY, Robb and his family own and operate a small hobby farm where they enjoy the rural lifestyle and beauty of the River. In addition to his work at the Land Trust, Robb is actively involved in the community as a youth hockey coach. He enjoys spending time outdoors with his family, exploring the North Country.

WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST TRUSTEES

Basil Seggos

We are pleased to welcome Basil Seggos to TILT's Board of Trustees. Basil brings a wealth of experience in environmental policy, climate action, and conservation leadership, having recently completed his tenure as the longest-serving Commissioner of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC).



Basil Seggos.

"I am honored to join TILT's Board and support their vital work in conserving the lands and waters of the Thousand Islands region, a place that is so special to me and my family," said Seggos. "This is an area of immense natural beauty and ecological significance and so many vibrant communities. I look forward to contributing to its conservation for future generations."

As DEC Commissioner from 2015 to 2024, Seggos led major initiatives to protect New York State's natural resources and combat climate change, including the passage of the landmark Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act. He also spearheaded the \$5.5 billion Clean Water Infrastructure Act, set some of the nation's most protective water quality standards, and embedded equity into agency operations. Seggos also co-chaired the Lake Ontario-St. Lawrence River Resiliency and Economic Development Initiative (REDI) which directed \$300 million to shoreline restoration projects, served as a Chief Investigator and Attorney for Riverkeeper, worked at the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) and served as an officer in the U.S. Army Reserve.

"Basil's extensive background in environmental protection and climate resiliency will be a tremendous asset to our mission," said Dave Lucas, President of TILT. "His proven leadership at the state level, particularly his work in restoring water infrastructure and safeguarding water quality, aligns perfectly with TILT's goals of protecting the Thousand Islands' unique ecosystems."

Eric Gregware

We are pleased to welcome Eric Gregware to our Board of Trustees. With deep roots in the Thousand Islands region and a lifetime of community involvement, Eric brings invaluable experience and a passion for conservation to the board.



Eric Gregware.

"I am thrilled to join the TILT Board of Trustees and give back to a region that has been so significant to me," said Eric. "Conserving the beauty and resources of the Thousand Islands is incredibly important, especially as I involve my children in lessons of environmental stewardship and conservation."

Growing up in Alexandria Bay and spending summers on Grindstone Island, Eric's commitment to the local community was instilled in him early on. Inspired by his parents, Eric began volunteering with the Land Trust as a youth.

After graduating from St. Lawrence University, Eric built a distinguished career in New York City, holding key roles in high-net-worth estate planning and investment banking with Goldman Sachs. Currently, he serves as the Global Head of Business Management for Enterprise Solutions at S&P Global where he has worked since 2010. Eric also holds a Master's Degree in Business Analytics from New York University (NYU).

Now residing full-time on Bartlett Point in Clayton with his wife Sarah, and their three children, Avery, Everly, and Brooks, Eric remains deeply engaged in the River community. He is an active member of TILT, the Clayton Yacht Club, and Save The River.

Dave Lucas, President of TILT, expressed his enthusiasm for Eric's appointment, stating, "Eric's lifelong connection to the region and his professional expertise make him a valuable addition to our board. We're excited to welcome him and look forward to his contributions to furthering TILT's conservation efforts."

Cindy Bower

This past summer, Cindy Bower retired from the TILT board after 11 years of service. As a dedicated trustee, she leaves behind a wholesome legacy that embodies the Land Trust's mission, from conservation and stewardship to community outreach and environmental education, and beyond.

Passionate about creating positive change, she was a long-term member of TILT's Development, Finance, and Zenda Farms Preserve Advisory Committees. During her term, she also served on the Marketing & Outreach, Executive, TILT Alumni Group, Building and Strategic Plan Committees. As a member of the Thousand Islands Forever Legacy Program, Cindy and her late husband Jim chose to make gifts during their lifetime, so they could witness the positive influence firsthand. In 2015, with their generous support, TILT was able to protect the headwaters of Cranberry Creek and one of the last remaining mature hemlock forests on the U.S. side of the Thousand Islands. And thanks to their support and dedication to the mission, the Rivergate Trail Community Connection Project was a success.

Cindy believes TILT's lifeblood is its membership. With generous support of the TILT Discovery Center: The Gateway of the Outdoors, she envisions this interpretive center to be the future. It stands to engage more people in conservation, nurture the next generation of stewards, and elevate the organization's message to a global level.

Her contribution as a TILT Trustee made a remarkable difference in every aspect of the health and beauty of this region she loves so much. Her joyful smile will be missed on the board. On behalf of the TILT Board of Trustees and Staff, we extend our deepest gratitude to Cindy for her service and more so her lasting impact on the Thousand Islands for generations to come.



Happiest out on the land, Cindy attended an archaeological dig event in 2015 at the Fort Haldimand Preserve on Carleton Island.

Mike Phelps

Following 12 years on the TILT Board of Trustees, Mike Phelps retired this fall. He was a long-time member of the Easement & Property Acquisition Committee, Finance Committee, and the Chair of the Audit Committee. Mike also served on various committees including the Executive, Nominating, Building, Development, Strategic Plan, TILT Alumni Group, Zenda Farms Preserve, and Wellesley Island Preserve Advisory Committees.

As Chair of the Finance Committee and later Board President, Mike provided critical oversight and strategic direction that ensured TILT's financial stability. His expertise in financial management helped optimize budgeting, fundraising, and investment strategies, resulting in sustainable growth for the organization. Under his leadership, the Land Trust successfully navigated economic challenges, establishing long-term financial health and expanding its conservation efforts. As a member of the Thousand Islands Forever Legacy program, he believes that this program is vital to ensure long-term support of the mission, providing the financial and structural stability needed to conserve and steward lands for future generations.

His contribution went beyond securing a strong financial foundation. Mike and Amy Phelps graciously hosted the annual Winter Gathering celebration many times. While serving on the Development Committee, Mike led this team by engaging with people and fostering a sense of shared responsibility, inspiring individuals to support and become advocates for the cause.

Mike's warm smile has been a constant presence at signature events like the annual Zenda Community Picnic, and we know we'll continue to see him at the River. On behalf of the TILT Board of Trustees and Staff, we extend our deepest gratitude to Mike for his service and indelible impact on the Thousand Islands for generations to come.



As a dedicated volunteer, Mike enjoyed engaging with people at many events and sharing TILT's mission with the River communities and beyond.

2024 TILT VOLUNTEER AWARDS

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

Chris Murray

Chris, an artist behind the lens, has made indispensable contributions to TILT's mission through his volunteer work. His stunning photographs of TILT's Signature Preserves and other breathtaking conservation projects have been featured in the organization's promotional materials, helping to raise awareness and attract new supporters. These images resonate with our mission, ignite inspiration and foster a deeper connection with nature.



VOLUNTEER LEADERSHIP AWARD

Eric Gregware

For many years, Eric has actively participated in our annual For the Trees Arbor Day event and Stewardship Days. Today, his commitment takes on added significance as he brings his kids into the fold - imparting important lessons in environmental stewardship and conservation. Eric's impact extends beyond stewardship events - he created and manages the River Rats Opposed to The Blind Bay Border Patrol Facility Facebook page - to help keep community members informed about this crucial River issue, and to advocate to Save Blind Bay. His commitment to volunteerism, mentorship, and community advocacy aligns perfectly with TILT's mission.



STEWARDSHIP SOCIETY AWARD

Bill Connor

Be it winter, spring, summer, or fall, Bill Connor remains steadfast in his commitment to better the world around us. You'll likely find him planting trees at our annual For the Trees Arbor Day event, picking up litter and debris during our volunteer Stewardship Days, and helping string cables during the Tern Grid Installation. His dedication extends beyond tasks, embracing leisurely paddles up Chippewa Creek, or hitting the trails by snowshoe in February. Bill has become a familiar face when help is needed. We are grateful for his love of the outdoors and his willingness to rise to the occasion.



MERLE YOUNGS CONSERVATION AWARD

Sarah Ellen Smith

Behind a camera capturing joy at the Zenda Picnic, to her hands-on work of building the Zenda Woods Trail, Sarah has left an indelible mark on Zenda Farms Preserve. Not only does her exquisite artwork from St. Lawrence Pottery stand as a sought-after symbol of the Preserve's beauty, but her unwavering service on the Zenda Farms Preserve Advisory Committee (ZPAC) epitomizes her deep commitment to this iconic landmark. Sarah's volunteer work exemplifies the enduring values of Merle Youngs and no doubt a piece of her heart belongs to Zenda, always.



GOOD SHEPHERD AWARD

Nicole Hirt

Nicole is a driving force in the wintering, lambing, and growing of the Zenda sheep flock. A good shepherd loves, leads, and guides. Nicole embodies these qualities with a generous spirit to bring life to Zenda Farms Preserve.



Partner Spotlight

Friends of Rock Ridges Nature Trail



Educating the next generation and their families has been a highlight of our TILTreks and KidsTreks Environmental Education Programs. Our partnership with the Friends of Rock Ridges Nature Trail in Thousand Island Park has been an outstanding experience for TILT and our amazing community. This educational partner offers The Treehouse, a unique outdoor classroom where students and visitors can immerse themselves in nature. The diverse ecosystem of Wellesley Island combined with Rock Ridges' beautifully maintained trails, create the perfect environment for hands-on learning about local wildlife, geology, water quality and conservation. Through guided hikes and interactive programs, together we inspire a deeper appreciation for nature, making this partnership a transformative resource for environmental education in our community.



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From the Letterbox

MEMBERSHIP SPOTLIGHT

Dana Ulrich Haymes, Morrisville, PA



Hi Kate,

We walked on the Rivergate Trail for the first time today - all the frogs were singing - it was amazing! You've done a great job with the bridge and viewing platform - thank you for providing a wonderful way to view and experience nature.

I thought you might like this photo too - me and my husband David and daughter Ashlyn with my dad Bert Ulrich, taken in April 2024 on the Michael Geiss Observation Tower of the Rivergate Trail. It's such a nice easy trail, even a 90-year-old can hike it! :D

Thank you,

Dana Haymes

We love to hear from our TILT Members!

Thank you, Dana! Your kind words of encouragement mean so much to all of us. For nearly 30 years you and your family have had a positive impact on land conservation in the Thousand Islands and we're so grateful for your continued encouragement and membership support.

Dana is a former TILT intern who worked alongside Sissy Danforth in the mid '90's on the acquisition of the Rivergate Trail. A lifelong River Rat who spends summers with her family on Snake-All Island in Chippewa Bay, she has been a dedicated TILT member since 1995.

If you have a favorite memory or experience out on the land that you would like to share, please contact Kate Breheny via email at kbreheny@tilandtrust.org.

A Summer of Stewardship and Learning at the Land Trust

Today, many students are drawn to land trusts because of their passion for protecting natural spaces, climate change issues, and preserving biodiversity. Internships allow them to actively contribute to environmental conservation efforts and make real impacts. This summer, four TILT interns —Jack Gates, Cole Munro, Finn O’Neill and Taylor Towne—each connected uniquely with the land, the River, and the community, gaining invaluable experiences.

Cole returned for his second summer as the Education and Outreach Intern (EOI), with a passion to deepen his connection, both with the land and the people. He assisted in organizing TILTreks and events. “One of the most enjoyable aspects of my role was the opportunity to engage with the many people who visited the TILT office. Whether they were long-time supporters of TILT or first-time visitors, I found

Finn O’Neill also spent his summer working on the Stewardship team as a Summer Land Steward. He said, “As an intern with the Land Trust, I saw how necessary stewardship is in protecting our natural landscapes. I learned that managing the land for its long-term health and involving the community in conservation not only helps protect these ecosystems but also inspires others. I was proud to be part of this essential work.”

Taylor Towne, the Kenneth Deedy Environmental Steward, found her perspective on the region evolving throughout the summer. “I thought I knew all I needed to about the area...but I discovered that the River holds so much more,” she reflected.

Taylor’s work at the Minna Anthony Common Nature Center and Save The River deepened her understanding



TAYLOR TOWNE



JACK GATES



FINN O'NEILL



COLE MUNRO

it incredibly rewarding to share our mission and hear their stories about their connections to the Thousand Islands.” These conversations not only broadened Cole’s understanding of the community’s passion for conservation but reinforced his belief in the importance of conserving the region.

Jack Gates, a Summer Land Steward, found his role to be a hands-on immersion in land management and community building. “Being a Summer Land Steward is important work. It involves taking care of the trails and preserves so that they are nice for the community.” From invasive species removal on Carleton Island to contributing to the restoration of Tibbett’s Point, Jack got a firsthand look at the real-world impact of conservation efforts. But it wasn’t just the physical labor that made an impression on him. Working at events such as the Zenda Community Picnic & Volunteer Recognition and Summer Gathering enabled him to connect with people in a way that enhanced his appreciation for those who support TILT’s mission. Jack reflected that “this blend of outdoor stewardship and community involvement helped me to see how conservation work brings people together in meaningful ways.”

of the River’s ecosystems and environmental threats it faces. While at TILT, she saw the importance of building community connections with the land. “Just as the River connects to the land around it, there is an interconnectedness between the River and those who care for it,” said Taylor.

Together, these interns’ experiences highlighted that conservation is about more than just the land—it’s about building lasting connections that ensure the future of the Thousand Islands for generations to come.

Thanks to the generosity of the Ellen & Stuart Burt Summer Stewardship Fund and the Ames Family Stewardship Fund, TILT offers enriching internship programs that provide hands-on experience in conservation and stewardship.



**Interested in joining our team?
Visit our website in January for
TILT intern career opportunities!**



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NEW TILT MERCH!

Did you know TILT has brand-new merchandise?

Check out this fun video we unveiled over the summer and swing by the TILT Office to shop.

The holidays are right around the corner!



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