



*Delano Property*

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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.



## UPCOMING EVENTS Save the Date

FRIDAY  
**MAR 8**  
2024

**WINTER GATHERING**  
Naples

FRIDAY  
**JUNE 14**  
2024

**ZENDA COMMUNITY PICNIC  
& VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION**

SATURDAY  
**JULY 20**  
2024

**SUMMER GATHERING**

THURSDAY  
**AUG 15**  
2024

**ISLANDER EVENT**

# Zenda Farms MAPLE SYRUP

Behind the silver Jamesway barns, nestled amongst the pines and oaks of Zenda Farms Preserve is a beautiful stand of sugar maples. For generations, this hillside has been bathed in light of the setting sun. These trees gracefully wave their colorful leaves in the fall and produce a beautiful full bodied rich sap each spring that is perfect for syrup. The result is our hand-crafted, 100% local Zenda Farms maple syrup. Bottled in bourbon-style, clear, glass bottles with a heavy base that showcases the syrup's dark rich hue.



Your purchase of Zenda Farms maple syrup directly supports TILT's continued stewardship, educational programming, and community involvement with its ecological diverse and culturally historic farm setting.

Bring a bottle home today! Enjoy it drizzled over pancakes, oatmeal, vanilla ice cream or even in your morning coffee.

**12.7 OZ (357ml): \$15**  
**25.5 OZ (750ml): \$22**

AVAILABLE IN CLAYTON AT THE  
TILT OFFICE, HUNNER'S MARKET &  
1000 ISLANDS RIVER RAT CHEESE!

# THE FIGHT FOR BLIND BAY PRESERVE CONTINUES

## TILT Works with River Community to Protect this Critical Habitat



From above the magnificence of this Preserve is displayed with a view of the diverse forest protecting the critical habitat of Blind Bay.  
© Chris Murray

### Local Treasure in Danger

Nestled in the heart of the River community, Blind Bay is at a crossroads. Its serene waters, vibrant coastal wetlands, and diverse wildlife are under threat. A sanctuary for humans and animals alike, it provides a refuge. It is home to secretive marsh birds and furbearers like the red fox and fisher.

Blind Bay is an example of nature's resilience and an essential part of the St. Lawrence River ecosystem. Its unique habitats play a critical role in maintaining the delicate balance between the natural environment and the built environment. This sheltered area protects its inhabitants. Now, the River community must come together to protect this bay.

U.S. Customs & Border Protection (CBP) has proposed building a new, industrial-scale Border Patrol facility that would permanently destroy Blind Bay. This location is being considered without thought to the environmental or economic impacts on our region.

The facility would be over 48,000 square feet of building space and include a detention center and canine facility. The surrounding area would be paved into a parking lot for up to 100 vehicles. It would need boat storage and docks, a car wash, and a fuel depot. Communication towers would rise over the bay. The whole construct would be surrounded by high fencing and bright lights.

### Negative Impacts

Construction would immediately displace most birds and mammals living in the area, many of which could fall victim to road mortality or starvation. High-intensity lighting in and around the facility would

make it impossible for wildlife to take refuge and significantly reduce the visibility of the night sky for several miles. CBP completed the new Port of Entry on Wellesley Island in 2022. Its high-intensity lighting has consumed the star-filled skies and likely pushed wildlife from adjacent natural areas.

Blind Bay would also need to be dredged. The shallow waters that make it a perfect home for muskies and other fish also make it impossible for large boats to navigate. Dredging could release legacy toxins like PCBs, mercury, and other heavy metals. In other dredged sites along the River, legacy toxins have been tied to a variety of long-term health risks and reproductive complications in wildlife and humans. All of this puts the region at risk.

Thanks to strong local support, TILT purchased the remaining 20.5 acres of undeveloped land in Blind Bay last November. Unfortunately, purchasing the land for the purpose of permanent land conservation isn't enough. While CBP is in the process of evaluating alternative sites, representatives of the agency continue to claim that this location is the preferred site. CBP could still take Blind Bay through eminent domain. This would require a costly court battle against a federal agency with significant resources.

The consequences of backing down are too significant to consider. TILT, Save The River and the members of the Save Blind Bay coalition are in this fight for the long term. Even if they don't take Blind Bay, CBP is investigating other sites along the shores of the St. Lawrence River. Each site would have its own problematic environmental and economic concerns.

### A Solution Proposed

In 2022, the Town of Alexandria offered to provide space for the facility at the Bonnie Castle Recreation Center located on Route 12 near I-81; off the shores of the River. This site satisfies virtually all of CBP's selection criteria. To date, CBP has made no attempt to evaluate the site for suitability. This shows a complete disregard for the environment, the economic fabric of our River community, and the very citizens that the agency has sworn to protect.

*Now is the time when the entire River community must stand together. With one voice, we must tell Customs & Border Protection NO to the shores of the St. Lawrence, and YES to the Bonnie Castle Recreation Center.*

Make your voice heard! Write to your local, state and federal elected officials. Complete the Save Blind Bay petition. Donate to help ensure Blind Bay is protected for future generations. Will you join us?

For more information, please visit [saveblindbay.com](https://www.saveblindbay.com).

# CONSERVING DELANO

## As Grasslands Disappear, TILT Steps in to Preserve Critical Meadows on Mullet Creek

*Mesmerizing.* The one word that fittingly describes the gentle waving dance of a rolling meadow in the midday breeze. One can't help but gaze in awe at this simple, breathtaking phenomenon. From a higher vantage, the swaying grasses seem to synchronize across the land, as if the entire ground is alive and rippling with life. That's because these hayfields are alive, and teeming with diverse and rare lifeforms, from the soil microbes and voles underfoot to the raptor-filled airspace above.

These beautiful and vibrant grasslands are one of the fastest disappearing habitats in the world. In the St. Lawrence River Valley, these grasslands have supported a bucolic way of life for well over a century. But as family-farms grow fewer, their hayfields, pastures and meadows are falling victim to fragmentation, residential development, conversion to large-scale solar farms, and simple abandonment (forest succession).

In an effort to protect one of the larger continuous grasslands in the region, TILT recently acquired and conserved the 317-acre Delano property on County Route 3, in the Towns of Orleans and Alexandria. Over 240-acres of this expansive property are in open field habitat, supporting rare grassland species such as savannah sparrow, vesper sparrow, bobolink, and northern harrier, as well as countless pollinators and small mammals. Notably, this single property contains almost two percent of the entire 26 square mile watershed drainage area of Mullet Creek! It features over half a mile of the meandering creek bed, which sustains a spectacular assortment of fish and other aquatic wildlife.

"The Delano tract is a real gem," said Tim Boycott, a graduate research assistant at Cornell University, studying grassland birds in working lands across the State. "Its broadness has a way of making you feel small on the landscape. It also falls within an important Grassland Bird Conservation Center." The 2022 NYSDEC Grassland Bird Strategy identifies Jefferson County as its largest Grassland Bird Conservation Center, accounting for over 60% of the critical grassland acreage identified in the entire state.

### Management and Mitigation

The Delano property's deep-rooted meadow acts as a sponge, absorbing rainwater while stabilizing the upland

soils and preventing erosion. The extensive root systems help bind soil particles together, preventing sediment from clouding the waters that flow into Fishers Landing. The riparian vegetation captures excess nutrients, such as nitrogen and phosphorus, which can lead to water pollution and harmful algal blooms. The grasses help filter out these nutrients, ultimately improving the water quality of Mullet Creek, but also the broader St. Lawrence River. The hayfields are also drought-tolerant, providing for sustainable agricultural production in the face of today's more variable climate.

In that light, the grasses store sizable quantities of carbon in the soil, helping to mitigate climate change by reducing greenhouse gas concentrations. Moving forward, the Land Trust will enroll the property in a rotational mowing regimen, with cutting occurring after August 1st to ensure successful fledging of the many grassland nesting species that breed on the Delano property. TILT's goal is to have this property serve as a safe-haven for those species that have been forced to relocate from the nearby fields that have recently been converted to large-scale solar. This management will help the North Country maintain its role as the leading producer of hay and silage in New York State.

TILT's conservation of the Delano property was supported by the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative's Joint Venture Habitat Restoration and Protection program, and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's Water Quality Improvement Project program. David Lucas, TILT Board President said, "Though these programs have different purposes, their common support speaks volumes to the Delano property's holistic and multi-functional nature. Now future generations will have the ability to enjoy its open space and wildlife for years to come."

*"Its broadness has a way of making you feel small on the landscape. It also falls within an important Grassland Bird Conservation Center."*

— TIM BOYCOTT, GRADUATE RESEARCH ASSISTANT, CORNELL UNIVERSITY





PRE-RESTORATION



POST-RESTORATION

## SOWING SEEDS OF CHANGE

### Native Grasslands Restored Near Tibbetts Point

by Spencer Busler | Assistant Director

This spring TILT acquired 209-acres on Fuller Bay in Cape Vincent creating the Edward and Marlene Schmeer Preserve. The team quickly undertook a restoration project to improve the ecological health and intrinsic qualities of the land. More specifically, about 160-acres of the property was in row crop production (soybean and corn). For decades, these lands were intensively farmed, with frequent tilling and fertilizer applications. Though these practices are important for improving crop yields, they unfortunately come with detrimental side effects to nearby wildlife and waterways. As part of TILT’s endeavor to properly steward our lands and improve the quality of life in the St. Lawrence River Valley, the organization saw this as an opportunity for natural rehabilitation.

#### Creating A Field of Dreams

The Land Trust also worked with the long-standing tenant farmer this spring to reseed the fields with a native upland meadow seed mix from Ernst Conservation Seeds. Funding assistance from the New York Sea Grant Small Grants Program was utilized for this seed. The mix, which contained a variety of attractive colorful forbs and deep-rooted perennial grasses.

Despite an abnormally dry June in Cape Vincent, the rains of late July and August helped these fields flourish. The cover crop has since been removed, and where there were once monotypic rows

of soybean now stand lush and buzzing fields of bluestem, switchgrass, partridge pea, black-eyed Susans and coreopsis.

In creating a waterfront Field of Dreams, so to speak, TILT relied on a “If you build it, they will come,” restoration strategy. That is, with guided course correction, grassland species composition, and informed adaptive management, the Edward and Marlene Schmeer Preserve is anticipated to become an ecological hotspot; even more so than it already is. Bees, butterflies and moths will flutter between nectar-filled flowers, carrying their precious pollens that will drive genetic diversity that the fields have long-lacked. The dense grasses will begin their work to improve soil structure and carbon content, while hosting voles and rare songbirds that will bring specialized owls and raptors come winter. Rotational, late season mowing will provide for the maximum level of in-field structure, helping to bolster overall diversity.

It’s important to consider, though, that good things take time, and that this new meadow is merely in its infancy. Years will pass before its operating at its peak capacity; but 2023 marked a shift in trajectory for the lands surrounding Fuller Bay. A shift that will soon pay dividends to all within the web of life.



*The Schmeer Preserve provides important habitat for the Bobolink (a male is pictured here), a grassland-dependent bird species.*

# EAT · PLAY · LIVE



## *in the 1000 Islands*

Please support these local businesses  
that support land conservation!



## EAT LOCAL

- 24 Carrots Catering and Events
- 44 North Boutique Catering
- 1000 Islands Catering
- 1000 Islands River Rat Cheese
- DiPrinzio's Kitchen
- Eagle Beverage
- Foxy's Restaurant
- Hunner's Market
- Osprey Public House
- Price Chopper Golub Foundation
- Shurfine
- The Channelside
- The Clipper Inn
- Wood Boat Brewery

## LIVE LOCAL



- 1000 Islands Ready Mix
- Aubertine and Carrier
- Bach and Co.
- Barclay Damon LLP
- BCA Architects and Engineers
- Blue Line Engineering
- Cerow Agency, Inc.
- Clayton Dental Office
- Clayton Marina
- Community Bank N.A.
- Coughlin Printing
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- Echo Creek Appraisals and Review
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- F.X. Caprara
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- Hazlewood Mechanicals Inc.
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- Michael Mason Custom Builder, LLC
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- Northern Power & Light
- On The River Construction
- Phinney Charitable Foundation
- Putnam Seamless Gutters
- RBC Wealth Management
- Ridgeview Communications
- Royal Flush Rentals
- Rusty Johnson Masonry
- Spicer Marina Basin
- Taylored Architecture PLLC
- Thousand Islands Appraisals
- Thousand Islands Landscaping
- Thousand Islands Property Service
- Thousand Islands Sun
- W.D. Bach Excavation and Consulting
- Watertown Savings Bank
- Westelcom
- White's Lumber



## PLAY LOCAL

- 1000 Islands Harbor Hotel
- Angel Rock Waterfront Cottages
- Big Duck Bags
- Clayton Distillery
- Clayton Island Tours
- C-Way Resort
- Doug Drumm Creations
- EagleShopee
- Kripalu Center
- Patagonia
- Porch & Paddle
- Reinman's Dept Store
- River Day Spa and Salon
- River Golf Adventures
- River Wellness Center
- River Yoga
- Riverbay Adventure Inn
- Swan Bay Resort and Marina
- The Golden Cleat



# TILT Expands Forever Wild Preserve in the A2A Corridor

Earlier this summer, TILT added 70-acres to its Many Oaks property in Rossie and Macomb. The forested acreage is now permanently protected from fragmentation and unsustainable forestry operations, adding valuable conservation to the Algonquin to Adirondacks corridor (A2A). Project support was provided by the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, the Fields Pond Foundation, and the Northeast Wilderness Trust's Wildlands Partnership Program.

Impenetrable hardwood forests and steep, Precambrian outcrops intersperse with vernal pools and wetlands to create a diverse mosaic of habitats that supports a wide array of flora and fauna. "The conservation of this tract is incredibly important from a forest connectivity standpoint," said Spencer Busler, Assistant Director. "The property is only a stone's throw from Grindstone Bay on Black Lake, and is a magnet for some of the region's most stunning songbirds. Scarlet tanager, indigo bunting, and cerulean warbler have been ID'd on the property."

The newly-conserved property ranks high on climate resilience models, and its forests will carry on sequestering carbon in perpetuity.



*"The densely-wooded property exemplifies the Frontenac Arch."*

– SPENCER BUSLER, TILT ASSISTANT DIRECTOR



*Hericium (Lion's Mane) sighted while out on the Preserve.*



*An aerial view of Many Oaks shows the ideal forest habitat that is critical for safe passage for migrating animals in the A2A region.*  
© Spencer Busler/TILT



## And the 2023 Raffle Winner is...

### Jack Woodward of Fineview!

**Congratulations to Jack for holding the winning ticket for this year's prize, a beautiful wood duck carving handcrafted by Glenn Sweet of Thousand Islands Decoy Company!**

This one of a kind carving was handcrafted from white cedar and basswood and was signed and stamped by Glenn Sweet, a nationally recognized third generation Alexandria Bay decoy carver.

With over 950 tickets sold, proceeds will protect migratory bird habitat throughout the Thousand Islands and the A2A region. Thank you to all who purchased tickets.



**In honor of Mary Hannah Arnot's birthday**  
Robin Hoffman & Barry Jordan  
Bob & Lori Oster

**In memory of Barbara Babowicz**  
Rodney Babowicz

**In memory of Frank Beadel**  
Sharye Skinner

**In memory of Gerald A. Bearup**  
Mary Emerton  
James & Christine Emerton  
Rick & Janet Gregware  
Mary Ingerson-Mulchy  
Gordon & Ellen Stiefel

**In memory of Sherry L. Bearup**  
Stephen Castor  
Mary Emerton  
Terry Ierlan  
Kathleen and Russ Marceau

**In memory of Gordon Bonisteel**  
Ken & Meredith Nims

**In memory of Jim Bower**  
Jane Carver & Ron Cooper  
Mary & Ted Mascott  
Greg & Cindy McLean  
Joan & Skip Tolette  
Jake Tibbles & Alicia Dewey

**In memory of Don Brown**  
Allan Newell

**In memory of Billie Campbell**  
Edwina Kinchington

**In memory of Abbott & Margaret Chapman**  
Bill Munn & Elizabeth Chapman

**In memory of Beverly Cole**  
Mary & Bill Coffin  
Susan Dewey  
Jay & Vicky Gilbert  
Chad & Melissa Graves  
Shirley Hart  
Betty Howe  
Mary & Ted Mascott  
Jake Tibbles & Alicia Dewey

**In honor of William G. Dakin**  
Bob & Carol Dakin

**In memory of Sissy & Bill Danforth**  
John & Candace Marsellus

**In memory of Terry Davenport**  
Melissa & Ted Wiggins

**In memory of Ken Deedy**  
Barbara Deedy  
Veronica & James Dolan  
Anna & Stephan von Muehlen

**In memory of Kevin Deedy**  
Barbara Deedy

**In memory of Matt Deedy**  
Barbara Deedy

**In memory of Suzanne Dehm**  
Robb & Nancy Dehm

**In memory of Clara DeLeonardis**  
Greg & Cindy McLean

**In memory of Betsy & Don Estabrook**  
Todd Estabrook

**In memory of James Farrell**  
Robin Hoffman & Barry Jordan

**In memory of Dick Garlock**  
Edwina Kinchington

**In memory of Josephine & Roger Inglese**  
Lois & Sam Giamber

**In honor of Diane & Larry Kingsley**  
Elaine Tack & Kevin Whitehead

**In memory of Sean Hudson**  
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**In memory of H. Daniel McCollister**  
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Peter O'Shea

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Marcy & Chris Dembs  
Greg & Cindy McLean  
Jeremy Smith  
Sarah Ellen Smith & Curt Dundon  
Jake Tibbles & Alicia Dewey

**In memory of Judy Munro**  
Andy & Carolyn Anderson  
Rick & Janet Gregware

**In memory of Tom Nims**  
David & Carole Nims

**In memory of Sue Smith**  
Rick & Janet Gregware  
Don & Cici Sauda

**In memory of Tom Tinney**  
Robin Hoffman & Barry Jordan  
Phillip & Brooke Kerzner  
Jake Tibbles & Alicia Dewey

**In memory of Lynn Veary**  
James Veary

**In memory of T. Urling Walker**  
Rick & Janet Gregware

**In memory of Ted & Louise White**  
Marie & Dan Ebbing

**In honor of Richard Withington**  
Nancy Del Borgo

**In memory of Henry Tyke Wood**  
Robin Hoffman & Barry Jordan  
Jake Tibbles & Alicia Dewey

**In memory of Wilson W. Wright**  
Kent Zaiser

**In honor of The Mohawk Tribes Of the Iroquois—the True Indigenous Peoples Of This Area** \*Save Blind Bay  
Lori Marra

**In honor of 2023 St. Lawrence River Scavenger Hunt**  
\*Save Blind Bay  
Team A-Bay Watch  
Team O Sea D



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

Tributes made from March 14, 2023 - September 30, 2023

## FAREWELLS

### Remembering Tom Tinney

Tom Tinney was passionate when it came to taking care of the land in the Thousand Islands, especially Grindstone. His dedication and tireless efforts in maintaining the Middle Road for many years were not just an embodiment of his character, but also a vital lifeline connecting the Island.

When Tom set his mind to something, he made sure it happened. He was indeed known by many people as the hardest working man that they have ever had the privilege of knowing. His stewardship of the Grindstone Island Nature Trail was top notch.

He was also very passionate about helping protect the majestic loons of the St. Lawrence River. Deemed the “Loon Whisperer”, Tom worked to protect the Common loon for over 20 years. Alongside his wife Julie, they built floating nest boxes for the loons, which serve as a safe haven for returning loons to this day. His enthusiastic efforts resulted in an increase in the loon population on his beloved St. Lawrence River.

His generosity shined through by his support of many non-profits and community groups on the River. Tom Tinney supported the Land Trust for 33 years and served on the TILT Board for 12 years. TILT is forever grateful for Tom’s unwavering commitment to the stewardship of Grindstone Island.

His smile and devotion to the Thousand Islands and the Grindstone Island community will be deeply missed.



Tom Tinney celebrates at the TILT Islander event in 2019 at the Grindstone Island Winery.





## Remembering Dege Price

A longtime resident of Wellesley Island, Donald “Dege” Price had a love of antique boats and the deep-rooted and unique culture of boating here in the Thousand Islands. He loved the River most and valued its importance.



*Dege Price celebrates at Zenda Farms with Tricia Tague.*

Dege was very passionate about permanent conservation efforts across the Thousand Islands and in Colorado where he placed his horse and cattle ranch under conservation easement.

Here in the Thousand Islands, he donated a 65 acre conservation easement on Country Mile Road in 1990 and then in 1995 donated in-fee the 98-acre Barnett Marsh. Both of these donations helped form the foundation for what is known today as the Wellesley Island Preserve.

He was also very generous when it came to opening up the historic Boldt Back Farm for TILT’s Annual Summer Gathering fundraiser. Not once or twice, but three times he hosted the Summer Gathering (2006, 2017 & 2022). The memories created in this historical and special place with the community will be forever cherished.

As a supporter of the Land Trust for 34 years, his smile and devotion to the Thousand Islands will be missed. He was known to leave an impression on almost everyone who knew him. And he most certainly has left an indelible mark on the future of conservation in the Thousand Islands.

## Remembering Jim Bower

Jim cared deeply about the River and the conservation of the Thousand Islands. He had a gift when it came to understanding what was important today but more importantly tomorrow.

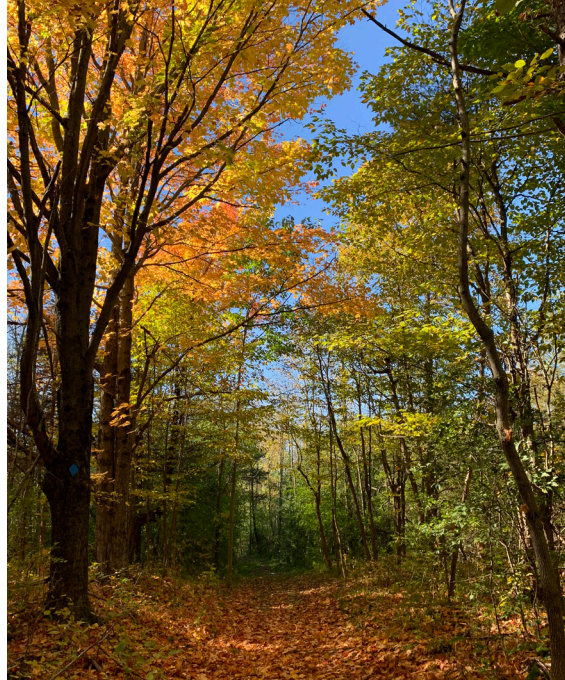
In 2015, with Jim and Cindy Bower’s generous support, TILT was able to protect the headwaters of Cranberry Creek and one of the last remaining mature hemlock forests on the US side of the Thousand Islands. This pristine property is just over 184 acres of shrubland, wetland and forest habitat. Jim loved trees but especially old growth, the most powerful and beneficial to our health and the planet’s future. One could say that this love was matched by his larger than life persona.

He and Cindy most generously supported the Rivergate Trail Community Connection Project. He knew this project was going to have an impact on our communities for generations to come. It would improve our quality of life. And the day he left us, we were planting trees on this trail and he was with us in spirit. Jim also believed that the Discovery Center is the key to bringing TILT to the next level. He believed that this project is of utmost importance as it will elevate TILT’s message to impact future generations.



*Jim and Cindy Bower smile in front of the newly installed Jim & Cindy Bower Trailhead sign at the S. Gerald Ingerson Preserve.*

His legacy here in the Thousand Islands is remarkable. In the thirteen years as a member of the TILT family, Jim made a tremendous impact. With each project he was involved in, he made sure his support advanced our mission. Jim cared about the communities he lived in. We are beyond grateful his path led him here to the River, and we are honored he chose to be a part of the Land Trust.



## SIGNATURE PRESERVE HIGHLIGHT

# CHIPPEWA BAY PRESERVE

This 60+ acre parcel found along Chippewa Creek has both forested and wetland habitats.



Located along Chippewa Creek, this Preserve includes important wetland habitat, which protects land for wildlife and their movement. Part of a wildlife corridor that extends from the Adirondack mountains northward across the St. Lawrence and into Algonquin Park, the Preserve helps to provide safe passage as well as excellent habitat for breeding, nesting and feeding. This corridor is known as the Frontenac Arch.

## PRESERVE ECOLOGY

Chippewa Bay is a shallow embayment at the downstream extent of the Thousand Islands. It has a muck bottom punctuated with many shoals and islands, making it ideal habitat for wildlife of all types. It is bounded by two Class 1 wetland complexes, Crooked Creek at the upstream end and Chippewa Creek at the downstream end, which both contribute to its incomparable fishing and birding opportunities.

Hardwoods mix with conifers in this upland terrain as the natural succession transforms farmland back to woodland. Sugar maples and red oak are interspersed with red cedar along the ridge, and white pine towers over the lowland adjacent to the marsh. Keep an eye out for shagbark hickory which looks like it sounds and for eastern hophornbeam, commonly called ironwood. Its fruit looks like hops.

## HIKING THE PRESERVE

The Chippewa Bay Trail meanders for one mile along an old road through a mixed forest. An observation deck overlooking a marsh at the mouth of Chippewa Creek provides an opportunity to see birds of prey, colonial waterbirds, and the iconic great blue heron.

## HOW TO GET THERE

The Preserve is located at the end of New Road in Chippewa Bay. If you are using GPS to find it, look for River Bay Adventure Inn at 97 New Road. Once you reach River Bay Adventure Inn, go straight past the cabins, up a slight rise into the woods. There is a small parking area about a quarter mile further ahead on the left.

*Photo credits:*

*Top row: © Jake Tibbles/TILT; © Terra Bach/TILT; © TILT*

*Middle row: © TILT; © Sharon Campbell; © TILT*

*Bottom photo: © Chris Murray Photography*

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

## FUN FACTS



**Geocaching:** Using a GPS device or your smart phone, navigate to specific coordinates and see if you can find the geocache. Once you do, sign the log book in the container and return it to its original location for someone else to find. TILT has geocaches on several preserves, including the Chippewa Bay Preserve.



Once part of a larger farm, the preserve is located along a ridge that defines the northern boundary of the Hammond Plain. Settled by Scottish immigrants, the Town of Hammond included sheep farms in addition to dairy, in its agricultural heyday. Chippewa Bay was an early port. All produce from the town, including iron ore from mines in Rossie, was loaded onto barges here for transportation to market.



The Frontenac Arch, where Chippewa Bay Preserve is located, is home to an extraordinary diversity of wildlife. Conservation of this unique region is a priority for TILT. Many species found here are rare, threatened or endangered.

by Kenneth Nims | Stewardship Director

## Grant Funds Trail Work in St. Lawrence County

Earlier this spring, TILT was awarded grant funding from the St. Lawrence County Industrial Development Agency (SLC IDA). The mission of the SLC IDA is to promote, encourage, attract and develop job opportunities and economically sound commerce and industry in St. Lawrence County. Funding is distributed through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). TILT's funding was awarded under the Travel, Tourism, and Hospitality Promotion category.

With both the Macsherry Trail and Chippewa Bay Preserve being located in St. Lawrence County, TILT is able to use this funding for material upgrades which will benefit the neighboring communities and out of town visitors alike. Upgrades can be seen in the form of new footbridges, a wildlife viewing platform, and updated trail guides. These upgrades will further facilitate the many recreational opportunities offered at these preserves. Opportunities for hiking, biking, fishing, and cross-country skiing drive tourism, which supports the vitality of our local economy.

The Land Trust applauds the work of the SLC IDA and is proud to be included as a recipient of this funding. Throughout the year, the organization hosts annual TILTreks, KidsTreks, and TILTKids Day Camps at many of our Signature Preserves. These programs promote living, learning, and conserving in the Thousand Islands. Thanks to the generous funding from the SLC IDA, TILT is able to continue offering these outdoor recreational opportunities and providing access to over 21 miles of trails that are open to the public, year-round.

## Community Builds New Zenda Woods Trail



Ken Nims, Stewardship Director works with a group of young TILT volunteers to build the new Zenda Woods Trail.

Springtime in the Thousand Islands is an exciting time. Snow storms, blustery weather, and downright frigid conditions make way for budding flowers, verdant trees, and an overall feeling of rejuvenation! This year, TILT staff and volunteers rolled up their sleeves and brought something fresh and exciting to Zenda Farms in the form of a new woods trail.

In the northeast corner of the Zenda Farms Preserve, this trail provides a new way to experience the beauty of this iconic property. With an abundance of flora and fauna, as well as beautiful vistas, visitors can explore their way through the nearly one-mile loop. The Zenda Woods Trail is an ideal location to enjoy a relaxing walk through the forest while day dreaming of warm summer days ahead.

Once again, this project has shined a light on one of TILT's most important resources: our volunteers. We greatly value our volunteers and are most fortunate to have the help and support of so many dedicated people. Our volunteers are the backbone of our organization and provide us with much needed assistance in our mission to conserve the place we love.



Dean Smith and Randy Truesdell (Land Managers) take measurements while building a new catwalk on the Chippewa Bay Preserve for year-round public enjoyment. Check out the trail today!

# Zenda Farms Comes Baaack to Life

by Terra Bach | *Director of Development & Communications* and Madison Timerman | *Community Outreach Assistant*

In its heyday, Zenda Farms was a working farm teeming with people, animals and activity. For close to 75 years animals have not roamed the rolling fields of this iconic farm. The only sounds surrounding the silver barns were the sweet melodies of the songbirds in the grasslands, the owls in the woodlands and peepers in the vernal potholes. In the late 1940's the dairy herd was sold off and by the mid-1960's the beef cattle were moved to other pastures.

## Fun at Zenda

Everything changed this past June, when Mary Ann Duffy arrived with a few furry friends and her flock. The goal was simple, bring life back to Zenda. One could say that the farm went “back to her roots” as the sheep became the pinnacle of the Zenda experience. This is the first time since the 1960's that domestic animals are living on the land on the north side of Zenda Farms.

Sheepdog trials (also known as sheep herding) is a game of strategy and inter-species communication. It has captivated many farming communities around the world for centuries. Mary Ann is a nationally recognized sheepdog herding enthusiast and is now a treasured Thousand Islands Land Trust (TILT) volunteer at Zenda Farms Preserve. Her border collies, Gwen and Bonnie, are award winning sheepdogs that often place in the Kingston Sheepdog Trials for their agility and tact. Their journey brought them to Zenda, to teach the community about this dynamic sport, and an amazing dog breed, while boosting energy in the fields.

Before Mary Ann arrived with her sheep, TILT stewardship staff got to work. The incoming tenants required some minor upgrades of the dairy barn to be able to sleep comfortably and roam safely. Fencing was installed that allowed the sheep to freely cross over the Zenda Spur Trail into a pasture overlooking the rolling grasslands on the north side of the Preserve.

Using her skills and knowledge of the dog breed, sheep, and training practices, Mary Ann hosted weekly training sessions open to the community every Friday during the sheeps' summer getaway. Well-attended, these trials brought people to the farm to enjoy watching the cleverness of the collie dogs hard at work. People left overjoyed by what they experienced at Zenda.

## A Growing Flock

Seventeen community volunteers known as the “Zenda Shepherds” tended to the flock's daily needs. “When I was asked if I'd be interested in helping with sheep at Zenda, I was an immediate YES. I wasn't sure what I was getting myself into, but I knew I wanted to be part of such a unique opportunity to help bring life back to Zenda. What's really great is that when people visited the sheep, they smiled. It was good for the soul,” said Tony Augliano, Zenda Shepherd. Volunteers worked to keep the sheep comfortable during their 8-week long stay to ensure their safety. Every morning the sheep were led out to pasture and every evening put back in the barn.

Although the sheep have left for the winter, everyone had fun at Zenda this summer. TILT's family grew by more than a flock and we look forward to seeing everyone *wooly* soon again next season.

*Mary Ann Duffy and Gwen, her sheepdog herd the flock at Zenda on a beautiful August day. Zenda's flock spent two happy months at their new summer home on Zenda Farms Preserve.*



## Welcoming Our Newest Trustee – Mary Langan

We are pleased to welcome Mary Langan to TILT’s Board of Trustees. Mary has lifelong connections to the Thousand Islands and is a 3rd generation River Rat who enjoys spending her summers in TI Park.

“I love all that TILT has to offer, including its countless trails, coves, beaches, and preserves. My dog and I especially enjoy hiking the Grindstone Island Nature Trail and spending time at Potters Beach Preserve, and we are looking forward to exploring the Rivergate Trail. Needless to say, I’m honored to join TILT in its mission to conserve the places we all love.” shares Mary.

An attorney in Syracuse, Mary earned her bachelor’s degree from the University of Buffalo and her law degree from Albany Law School of Union University. She has more than a decade of experience as a litigator in both state and federal courts and brings an impressive amount of experience to the Board. Her attention to detail, compassion and common-sense approach will help advance the organization’s conservation mission.

Mary sits on the Board of Directors of the Onondaga County Bar Association and is a member of the New York State Bar Association, Central New York Women’s Bar Association and the Northern District of New York Federal Court Bar Association.

“Mary is a terrific addition to our board,” adds Dave Lucas, TILT’s Board President. “Her expertise and love of the Thousand Islands lend themselves very well to furthering the Land Trust’s conservation mission. We all look forward to working alongside Mary.”



Mary Langan.

## Thank You for your Service, Jeff Burt

After serving for over 23 years on the TILT Board of Trustees, Jeff Burt gracefully stepped down this August. Jeff has an ability to always provide sound and insightful knowledge in all aspects of life. He was a long-term member of the organization’s Easement & Property Acquisition Committee where he helped to conserve thousands of acres of land over the years. During his time, he was instrumental in guiding the Land Trust’s ability to leverage grant funding through private foundations. This impact continues to be seen today with the generous support of TILT’s environmental education programs.

Jeff played a leadership role in helping make TILT’s Otter Creek Preserve & Nature Trail and the Rivergate Trail Community Connection Project possible. His devotion to conservation is personified as a conservation easement landowner.

His contribution as a Trustee was above and beyond. Jeff’s assuring smile and wit will be missed on the Board but we know that we will still get to see this River Rat from time to time. On behalf of the Board of Trustees and Staff, we extend our deepest gratitude for his service as a Board member and more so his positive impact on the Thousand Islands.



Jeff Burt accepts a custom print made by Doug Drumm Creations from TILT Executive Director Jake Tibbles in honor of his service on the TILT Board.

# CREATE YOUR LEGACY.

THOUSAND ISLANDS  
*FOREVER*

*Crooked Creek Preserve © Chris Murray*

## DO YOU HAVE A PLAN FOR THE FUTURE?

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

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

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

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

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

## JOIN OUR TEAM! COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST

The Communications Specialist is responsible for development and implementation of multi-channel communication strategies that adhere to TILT's current Strategic Framework and the Standards and Practices of the Land Trust Alliance. Working through social media, treks & events, press outlets and other innovative approaches, the Communications Specialist's primary responsibility is to broaden the organization's overall reach and to deepen its community engagement.

SCAN HERE TO



APPLY ONLINE

**Apply today and help make a real difference by advancing land conservation and environmental education in the Thousand Islands.**



# TILT Merch

SHOP WITH A PURPOSE

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



## TILT 1/4 Zips

This easy-to-layer ¼ zip pullover is everything you want in a sweatshirt – it is stylish, practical and the perfect layering piece to wear on cool River mornings or by the campfire in the evenings. You'll look your very best every time you wear it!

Unisex sizing offered S – XL: \$50



## Zenda Farms® Honey

Zenda Farms honey is local and has a delicious and delicate flavor. Our honey's golden color comes from the annual wildflowers and grasses of Zenda Farms Preserve.

In addition to being easy to spread on toast and drizzle on yogurt, it also provides allergy relief and boosts the immune system.

Available at the TILT office, Hunner's Market and 1000 Islands River Rat Cheese.

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

# 2023 TILT VOLUNTEER AWARDS



## STEWARDSHIP SOCIETY AWARD

### Silke Ernisse

For many years Silke has been an integral part of our annual Common Tern Grid Installation and Removal. Her dedication to volunteering shows how much she cares about this threatened species and the environment as a whole. Hardworking and always smiling, whether it is a freezing cold day in April or a balmy day in August, we can always count on her to help!



## VOLUNTEER LEADERSHIP AWARD

### Michelle Youngs

A fixture at the Zenda Community Picnic for many years, you have likely seen her running around on task. Michelle is always there to make sure everyone is well fed. Her family connection to Zenda is a special one. Her commitment to volunteering every year demonstrates her love for our community.



## DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

### Schendera Family

Heather, Tom, Lily, Ada and Owen love the outdoors. This family caught our eye through their stewardship of the Potters Beach Preserve. Lily and Ada are devoted to keeping this beach clean and have recently upgraded to their very own grabbers. It is the example set by these future conservationists that is beyond inspiring. From the bottom of TILT's heart, we are grateful for their collective contribution to the health and beauty of the Thousand Islands.



## MERLE YOUNGS CONSERVATION AWARD

### Charlene Greene

At the helm of the Zenda Community Garden, Charlene embodies the meaning of community by bringing people together. Her contribution to the cultivation of this special asset exhibits the positive values of Merle Youngs, including innovativeness, industry, and high standards. From sun up to sun down, she is devoted to making sure Zenda Farms continues to grow.



# Conservation Connections



by Madison Timerman | *Community Outreach Assistant*

This year, the Thousand Islands Land Trust (TILT) launched a unique educational program called Conservation Connections. The program includes KidsTreks, in-school lessons, and field trips curated to teach local youth about the importance of conservation.

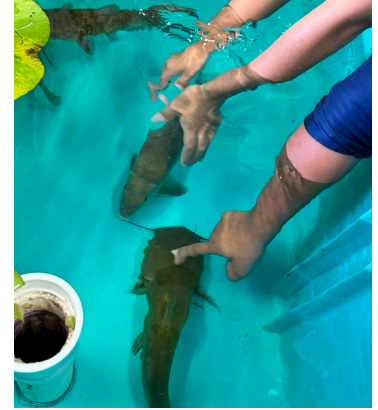
## Field Trip Highlight

On June 15th, 32 students from the first-grade class at Alexandria Central Elementary School joined TILT for a morning of adventure on the Zenda Farms Preserve. Split into two groups, the students participated in a hands-on activity by building birdhouses. While on a hike to the new Zenda Woods Trail, students paused at the stone bench for a lesson on how to use binoculars as they peered at songbirds flying about. This provided an opportunity to focus on the songbirds found in the grasslands of the Preserve. Rounding off the experience, the groups used their observation skills while walking the new woods trail to learn about the importance of time spent out on the land.



## KidsTrek Highlight

One of TILT's most popular KidsTreks continues to be Ichthyologist for a Day on Governors Island with 40 people in attendance this year. Participants learned how to be a fish scientist (ichthyologist) with the help of the staff at the SUNY ESF Thousand Islands Biological Station (TIBS). On this beautiful August morning, the ichthyologists in training were able to fish, learn about native and invasive fish species in the Thousand Islands, who and what lives in a wetland habitat, and see some of these species firsthand in the wet lab. This KidsTrek always has a wait list, so sign up early in 2024!



## Give a Gift Towards Stewardship of the Land!

The **Butts Family Conservation Fund** was created to support the perpetual conservation and stewardship of the Otter Creek Preserve & Nature Trail. This Fund allows the River communities and all nature lovers visiting the Thousand Islands to enjoy the Preserve and its important wildlife and landscapes.

The Otter Creek Preserve & Nature Trail is both a community favorite and close to the hearts of the Butts family. From its winding trails through vibrant habitats to the mesmerizing views of Lynch and Otter Creeks this property does not disappoint. This land will always be here for the community but together we need to ensure its health and vitality for the future. This past August the Butts family helped to raise essential stewardship funds for this TILT Signature Preserve.

We hope this family's dedication to our community inspires you to join us in taking care of the land for generations to come.

To learn more please visit [tilandtrust.org](http://tilandtrust.org).

"We are very lucky to live, work, and play in one of the most beautiful places in the world. Greenspace that is accessible to everyone is very important to every community. We are so happy that the Otter Creek Preserve will always be a protected place for the people in our community to come and experience nature and realize why we call this place home."

— JACK BUTTS



# TILT INTERN EXPERIENCES | 2023

## Alex Couch, Summer Land Steward

In the social media age, it's so easy to lose your appreciation for the moment you're living in. Staying grounded and present can be incredibly difficult when so many of the experiences we have are digital. I didn't realize how much of an effect it had on me, until I was reminded of the way I used to see the world.

After years of online classes and Zoom meetings in a dress shirt and pajama pants, I knew I couldn't spend my summer in an office job. I thought that working outside would help my vitamin D levels and I could even leave with a tan, but what I got with TILT was worth infinitely more.

As a little kid, I spent summers bouncing between T.I. Park and Henderson Harbor, fishing and sailing, exploring islands and jumping from the high rocks. My concerns were limited to whatever trouble my cousins and I were currently causing. My interests were almost completely confined to what was in front of my eyes. Returning to the River this summer reminded me of that way of living, and gave me a chance to hold onto that childish and wonderful perspective.

This summer at TILT, each day had the potential to go one of a thousand ways. I might be helping to prepare Zenda Farms for the Community Picnic or fighting swallow-wort on Carleton Island. Or I might be building a new observation deck on the Macsherry Trail, or shepherding a flock of sheep! Just like growing up on the River, I found that most days held something unexpected and exciting. The task at hand was the only concern, and I never worried about what was next.

The only thing that I knew I'd do each day was work with incredible coworkers and an amazing community. The staff at TILT, and everyone that volunteers their time have put in so much effort to help maintain and regain the beautiful landscape we all love. This experience reminded me just how important it is to look around and appreciate what we have right in front of our eyes.

## Hannah Johnson, Summer Land Steward

This summer I spent my time working for TILT as a Summer Land Steward. This opportunity originally sparked

my interest because of my passion for both environmental conservation and the Thousand Islands. The River has always been one of my favorite places on earth. When I was given the opportunity to learn about a field I am passionate about in a place that I love I had to take it. Spending this summer in the Thousand Islands and being able to make a positive impact in such a beautiful place was such an amazing experience.

Being a Summer Land Steward was very hands-on and I was able to experience so many different aspects of conservation ecology and land stewardship. I was given the opportunity to learn about invasive species and preventative measures, building different structures, landscaping so preserves could be enjoyed by the public, and maintaining the community garden.

One of the bigger projects I assisted with this summer was the addition of the sheep to Zenda Farms. Working with the animals was very rewarding and it really brought the community together. I am eager to apply what I've learned as a Summer Land Steward during my college career and into the future. Following my time as a cadet in the Army ROTC, I will be engaged in a leadership role working under the government. I feel that my experience with this organization has been very transformative in both my leadership style and my view of conservation.

## Cole Munro, Education & Outreach Intern

"We don't do things for recognition. We do them because we enjoy them." This quote from my grandfather has been at the forefront of my mind during my internship this summer. My family has much respect and admiration for TILT and I was excited to have the opportunity to be a part of it and work closely with a truly dedicated and driven group of people.

Growing up in Syracuse and coming to the River each summer, my family and I have witnessed the natural and seasonal beauty of the region year-round. Since the Thousand Islands hold such a special place in my heart, to work for TILT as a Summer Intern was an incredible opportunity.



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

with others. This was made possible by connecting with my coworkers, trustees, volunteers and the community. During the “Ichthyologist for a Day” KidsTrek, I loved engaging in discussions about the different fish and aquatic plants and fishing on the St. Lawrence. Simple connections like these made us all understand and appreciate the uniqueness of the Thousand Islands and the importance of its protection.

What my grandfather shared with me held true throughout the summer. At events including the Zenda Picnic, Summer Gathering, and Blind Bay Benefit, it became clear that TILT does not concern itself with “the recognition.” Rather, these

events helped to strengthen the community and increase awareness of the importance of conservation in the Thousand Islands. It was an eye opening to see how many share a similar respect and appreciation just as I do. Thanks to my opportunity at TILT I plan to carry the lessons that I have learned both professionally and personally forward and into my future.



### Louisa Reitzel, Education & Outreach Intern

I have loved nature for as long as I can remember. My love for nature developed beyond the confines of the city I grew up in. Growing up in Syracuse, my love for plants and animals set me apart from my peers, as they had not experienced nature in the same ways that I had. I spent many summers in the Thousand Islands with my grandparents. Experiencing the River and surrounding wildlife in the area shaped me into the environmentalist I am today.

My internship with TILT provided me with opportunities that helped me understand why environmental organizations are so important.

Somewhere between hiking the organization’s iconic Signature Preserves, teaching local youth about the environment, and learning about Blind Bay, my dreams of becoming an environmental lawyer were solidified.

TILT’s motto is Live. Learn. Conserve. Live and coexist with nature. Learn why nature needs to be protected. Conserve resources that help both humans and wildlife thrive together in harmony. After all, we only have one Earth.



The Land Trust has a very important job in conserving the Thousand Islands and making sure that the place we all love can stay healthy forever. TILT’s work in conservation of the Thousand Islands is helping the ecosystem stay healthy so we can all enjoy it for future years to come.

Being part of an organization with such an important mission gave me the opportunity to help change the world. I cannot thank TILT enough for providing me with an unforgettable summer.

### Skylar Schmit, Deedy Intern

The Thousand Islands region is filled with diverse ecosystems, communities and organizations. I was unaware of this until coming here this summer as the Kenneth Deedy Environmental Steward.

My journey started at the Minna Anthony Common Nature Center when the Director stated that we need to be “all in”. Those two words really stuck with me. While at the Nature Center, I enjoyed engaging with the public through exciting environmental education programs. My favorite part at TILT was the amount of people I was able to meet. Whether it was at the front desk, a TILTrek, or an outreach event, I learned that at the Land Trust, you need to be “all in” in order to stay organized and active in the community. And being at Save The River made

me realize you have to be ready for anything. From getting your hands dirty with invasive species management to water quality testing in a kayak, this work keeps the community engaged.

One main commonality these three organizations share is that they are “all in” for everything that they do. From educating people about the region’s environmental treasures, working to keep the water healthy to making sure the land is accessible for everyone to enjoy; they do it all. The goal of this internship was to learn about environmental advocacy, education and conservation, but also to form relationships with people whether that be coworkers, volunteers, or community members. Being the Deedy Steward showed me that conservation is about collaboration, knowing those who came before you, and working to be better for those who will come after. I am extremely grateful for my experiences this summer and for the opportunity to continue the legacy of Ken Deedy.





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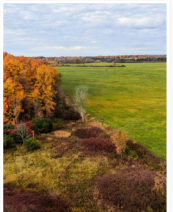
**Get outside and hit the trails with  
our new series of Trail Guides!**

We've recently finished creating Trail Guides for several of our Signature Preserves. These pocket-sized guides include a trail map, ecological information, site history, and beautiful illustrations.



**SCAN**  
with your phone's camera to  
check out the trail guides!

*Photo: Grindstone Island Nature Trail © Chris Murray and a  
preview of the Grindstone Island Trail Guide*



Cover Photo: Aerial photo of the Delano Property.  
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**STAY CONNECTED**

