

# Conservation News

Protecting Open Space on Long Island's North Shore

## NORTH SHORE LAND ALLIANCE

Volume 17, Issue 33

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Photo Credit: Jan Guga

*Eastern Bluebird perched on Bird house in the Quiet Meadow.*

## Protecting a Treasured Landscape

The Seminary of the Immaculate Conception is a beautiful and environmentally significant 200+- acre property in Lloyd Harbor. The Land Alliance, working with the Seminary's Board, the Trust for Public Land, the Village of Lloyd Harbor, the Town of Huntington and New York State (and we hope others who will join later), has begun laying the groundwork for a conservation transaction that would protect the beautiful forests, fields and wetlands contained within the property. The Seminary is listed as a priority project in the New York State Open Space Plan and the Suffolk County Open Space Plan. It also was ranked #1 in priority by the Town of Huntington's Environment and Open Space & Park Fund Review Advisory Committee. Its 150-acre forest and 40+ acres of open fields are like none other left in our North Shore community.

This former estate was owned by Roland Ray Conklin, a descendant of John Conklin (who settled Huntington c. 1640). In 1913, Conklin and his wife Mary MacFadden built their grand home at Rosemary Farm, which was designed by William Eyre. Mary had been an opera singer and wanted to create the perfect place for entertaining their friends, who were leading actors, conductors and singers of the day. The estate grounds also included an Olmsted designed open-air-theater. In 1917, Conklin held the

*(Continued on pg. 3)*



Dear Land Alliance Friends and Neighbors,

I am optimistic as I consider the future of our environment. For starters, the pandemic has led many to rediscover – or discover for the first time – the glories of our natural world. I am proud that the Land Alliance has played a critical role in ensuring that all members of our community have had access to our natural areas over the last year.

A significant opportunity that has emerged in recent months is the President's endorsement of the "30x30" goal, which reflects the scientific consensus that a minimum of 30% of our lands and waters must be conserved by 2030 to address today's biodiversity and climate change crises.

In New York State (NYS), Senator Todd Kaminsky (Long Beach) and Assembly member Patricia Fahy (Albany County) have introduced legislation that would codify a 30x30 goal in state law. Please note that Senator Kaminsky is the head of the State Environmental Conservation Committee. Also, our NYS elected officials have approved the placement of an Environmental Bond Act on the 2022 ballot. The official ballot description reads, "To address and combat the impact of climate change and damage to the environment, and authorize up to three billion dollars to fund environmental protection, natural restoration, resiliency, and clean energy projects..." If passed, the Bond Act would address flood risk reduction, climate change mitigation, water quality and environmental justice. It also would create an obligation to spend up to \$550 Million on land conservation and recreation.

These NYS actions are incredibly important now, as many of the federal programs require a dollar-for-dollar match. An example of the matching requirement is the vital Land and Water Conservation Fund, which was permanently authorized in 2019 and fully funded through the Great American Outdoors Act in 2020. 2022 will bring the reauthorization of the Farm Bill, which currently provides more dollars for land conservation than any other federal program. In the spirit of racing season, this feels like the triple crown for conservation funding!

Currently, approximately 12% of our US land mass is permanently protected and NYS has 19% of its land conserved. If one were to translate the 30x30 goal into acres, that would mean that the US needs to conserve an additional 400 Million acres by 2030.

At the national level (and perhaps even the state level) this will be a very difficult goal to reach through acquisition alone. Private land conservation will be essential and land trusts are the nation's primary drivers of private land conservation.

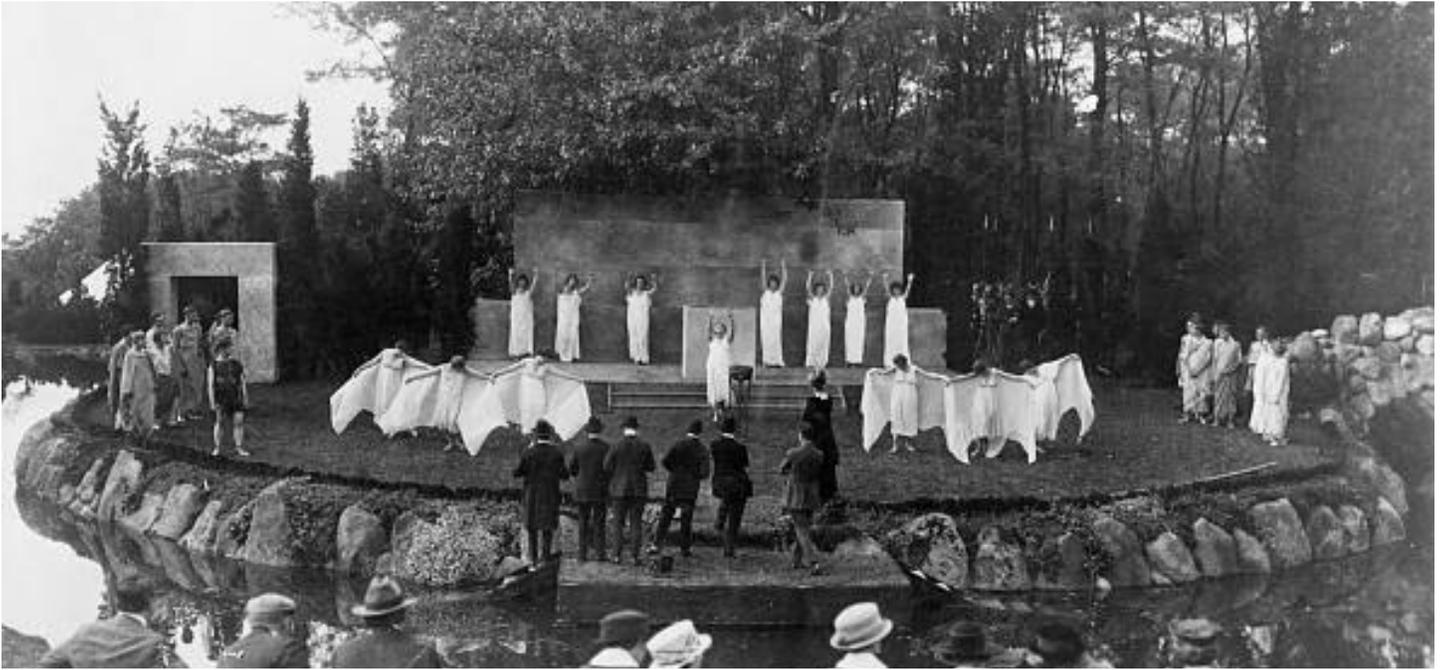
Land trusts have protected some 60 Million acres over the last 40 years. That is more than the total acreage of all the US National parks! Andrew Bowman, President of the Land Trust Alliance, has issued a challenge to land trusts to conserve an additional 60 Million acres by the end of this decade.

We at the Land Alliance are ready to accept that challenge, but we'll need your help. Please read more about our response process in the pages of this newsletter.

In some ways, this is our nation's 21st century moon shot. We clearly must solve the climate crisis. Land conservation can provide as much as 30% of the solution to combating climate change. So we must act now!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lisa W. Ott". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Lisa W. Ott,  
President & CEO



*National Red Cross Pageant at the Amphitheater*

National Red Cross Pageant at the theater, which raised \$50K and was considered among the most successful war benefits ever. The pageant consisted of episodes from the history of each of the Allied nations. The presentation of the case of each Ally before the bar of Truth, Justice, and Liberty was organized by actors and actresses of the American stage as their contribution to the American Red Cross. While the silent film is presumed lost, the cast included John, Lionel and Ethel Barrymore and Douglas Wood.

In the 1920's it became apparent that St. John's Seminary in Brooklyn could no longer train all the Roman Catholic priests needed for parishes in Nassau and Suffolk Counties, Brooklyn and Queens. Bishop Thomas E. Malloy decided that a new seminary should be built.

In 1924, after Mary's death, the Diocese of Brooklyn (which at that time served all Long Island) purchased Rosemary Farm. In 1930, amid the lush meadows and thick stands of trees, the Seminary was constructed. The Seminary took the form of a four-story, 320-room Mediterranean-style edifice filled with beautifully adorned chapels as well as a library, classrooms and accommodations for its students.

For about 80 years, the Seminary served as the home and educational center of Seminarians pursuing their vocation to the priesthood. In 2012, the Diocese of Rockville Centre joined with the Archdiocese of New York and the Brooklyn Diocese to consolidate the location of priestly formation into one location, St. Joseph's Seminary in Yonkers. The Seminary, which has been governed by its own Board of Governors, took on its new mission of service to the Catholic Church and to the community. Now, the major retreat house for the Metropolitan area, it also is the scene of formation for the deacons of the diocese, for priestly conferences, interreligious meetings, courses for a master's degree in theology and for the spiritual and social activities of the Friends of the Seminary.

With funds raised from a conservation transaction, the Seminary Board intends to make repairs to the facility and continue its mission to provide theological education and formation through retreats and academic and pastoral conferences.

This is a once in a lifetime opportunity. We must all dig deep and make every effort possible to ensure the permanent protection of this extraordinary, historically important property!

# Celebrating the 200th Anniversary of the Birth of Frederick Law Olmsted



In a career spanning half a century, Frederick Law Olmsted designed some of the most celebrated landmarks in the United States, ranging from Central Park in New York and the Emerald Necklace in Boston to the US Capitol Grounds in Washington, D.C., as well as the outdoor amphitheater at the Seminary and several local private gardens. He is remembered as the preeminent 19th-century landscape architect and founder of the profession.

Olmsted was born in Hartford, CT, where his family had lived for eight generations. His father, a successful dry-goods merchant, loved scenery and took Olmsted on regular trips through the countryside. Early on, he developed a great love of travel but showed little love for formal education. He was schooled largely by ministers and briefly attended Yale where illness caused him to withdraw after one semester. For the next 20 years he “gathered experiences”.

In 1850, Olmsted took a six-month walking tour across Europe that was to prove life changing. He paid a visit to Liverpool’s Birkenhead Park, a rare public park, open to all. There, he concluded that park access should be a right of all Americans. “I was struck,” he wrote, by this “democratic development of the highest significance. “He also took a year-long voyage in the China Trade, farmed on Staten Island, reported for the New York Daily Times, served as the head of what now is the American Red Cross and worked in a publishing firm and as managing editor of a literary and political journal.”

Thanks to powerful connections made through these pursuits, Olmsted was chosen as the superintendent of Central Park in 1857. A few months later, Calvert Vaux, a rising young architect from England, asked Olmsted to join him in preparing an entry for the Central Park design competition. Their plan beat 32 competitors and incorporated unique features like traversing sunken roads, so that travel through the park would not distract from the landscape or be dangerous. They also created a path system that subtly directed people’s movements. In so many ways, Central Park proved a testing ground for design principles incorporated into his later work.

In addition to his work with emblematic designed spaces, he was

also instrumental in preserving America’s national parks. In 1863, Olmsted moved to California to manage the Mariposa Estate and gold mines, just miles from Yosemite Valley. There he experienced a western landscape quite different from his previous life — and one threatened by private commercial interests. The federal government had just granted Yosemite to California, and Olmsted was asked to head a commission overseeing the Yosemite reservation. In August 1865, he released his Report on Yosemite to members of the Commission.

It would be many years before the birth of the national park system, but Olmsted’s report laid the foundation. In 1916, his son helped draft legislation creating the national park system. Olmsted’s thinking in Yosemite also informed his later international campaign to preserve Niagara Falls.

Frederick Law Olmsted retired in 1895, but his sons, John Charles and Frederick Jr., carried on, and ran their landscape practice for over 100 years with commissions for about 6,000 landscapes across North America. Please join us in paying tribute to one of America’s most significant conservationists.

Information for this article was gathered through [www.olmsted200.org](http://www.olmsted200.org).

## What is 30x30? (Recently Renamed America the Beautiful)



Until recently, the goal of conserving 30% of the world's lands and oceans by 2030 was a concept circulating mostly within the scientific and conservation communities. In a 2018 article in *Science Magazine*, "Space for nature," Jonathan Baillie (chief scientist at the National Geographic Society) and Ya-Ping Zhang (biologist with the Chinese Academy of Scientists) encouraged "governments to set minimum targets of 30% of the oceans and land protected by 2030, with a focus on areas of high biodiversity and/or productivity, and to aim to secure 50% by 2050."

While the international conservation community has promoted the concept of 30x30 for several years, Congress has only recently indicated its support. A 30x30 resolution was introduced in the US Senate in October 2019 by Sen. Tom Udall (NM). As Sen. Udall shared in an opinion piece in the *High-Country News*, "If we fail to enact the kind of bold conservation framework my father [for-

mer Interior Secretary Stewart Udall] envisioned, we will forever lose millions of plant and animal species — the biodiversity critical to our rich natural inheritance and fundamental to our own survival. We will lose not just our way of life, but the planet as we know it." The language of the resolution he sponsored was simple and clear: "This resolution urges the federal government to establish a goal of conserving at least 30% of the land and 30% of the ocean within its territory by 2030." A similar House resolution was introduced in February of 2020 sponsored by Rep. Debra Haaland (NM) (currently serving as US Secretary of Interior), but neither passed out of committee. In his first few days of office, President Biden, in an executive order, committed to 30x30 as an official policy of the US federal government.

After years of research, scientists recognized that natural ecosystems are key to maintaining human prosperity in a warming world. Sir

David Attenborough in his 2020 documentary, "A Life on Our Planet," noted that "the loss of biodiversity and natural ecosystems and rising global temperatures due to greenhouse gas emissions are inextricably intertwined issues." In the Global Deal for Nature, a science-driven plan to protect biodiversity and address climate change, prominent scientists explained the link:

"Intact forests sequester twice as much carbon as planted monocultures. These findings make forest conservation a critical approach to combat global warming. Because about two-thirds of all species on Earth are found in natural forests, maintaining intact forest is vital to prevent mass extinction. However, carbon sequestration and storage extend far beyond rainforests: peatlands, tundra, mangroves, and ancient grasslands are also important carbon storehouses and conserve distinct assemblages of plants and animals. Further, the importance of intact habitats extends

to the freshwater and marine realms, with studies pointing to least disturbed wetlands and coastal habitats being superior in their ability to store carbon when compared with more disturbed sites.”

**Thus, the 30x30 plan offers two enormous benefits to humankind:** carbon storage and sequestration to combat climate change and the protection of the planet’s incredible biodiversity. According to a United Nations biodiversity report released in 2019, one million species could face extinction soon unless bold action is taken right away. In an opinion piece in The New York Times, renowned author and biologist E.O. Wilson noted that protecting 30% of Earth’s habitats could save roughly 75% of its remaining species. The synergy is clear: sustaining global diversity can contribute to mitigating climate change.

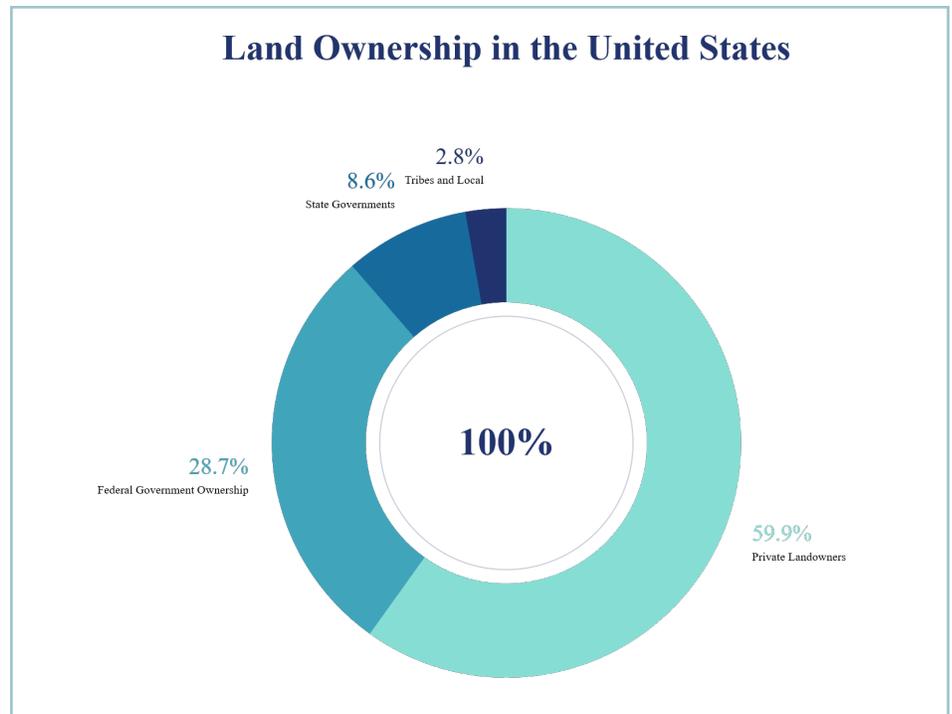
**While the path to achieving 30x30 will be challenging, we know we need to get there, and we know that a coordinated effort that includes the following is essential:**

1. action at the federal level
2. advancing conservation on private lands in key parts of the US
3. understanding and coordinating state and tribal variations in legal and policy protection measures
4. state involvement, particularly in marine conservation (due to significant gaps in federally managed coastal protections)

We hope you will join us in doing our part to achieve this goal locally.

## 30x30 in Acres

Approximately 60% of land in the continental US is in a “natural state,” however, every 30 seconds an amount equivalent to the size of a football field is lost (or 6,000 acres per day). Accomplishing the 30x30 goal will mean nearly tripling the 289 Million acres of US land that is currently protected. It is interesting to note that Alaska represents 150 Million of those already protected acres; if Alaska is excluded, the figure of land already protected drops from 12% to only 7%.



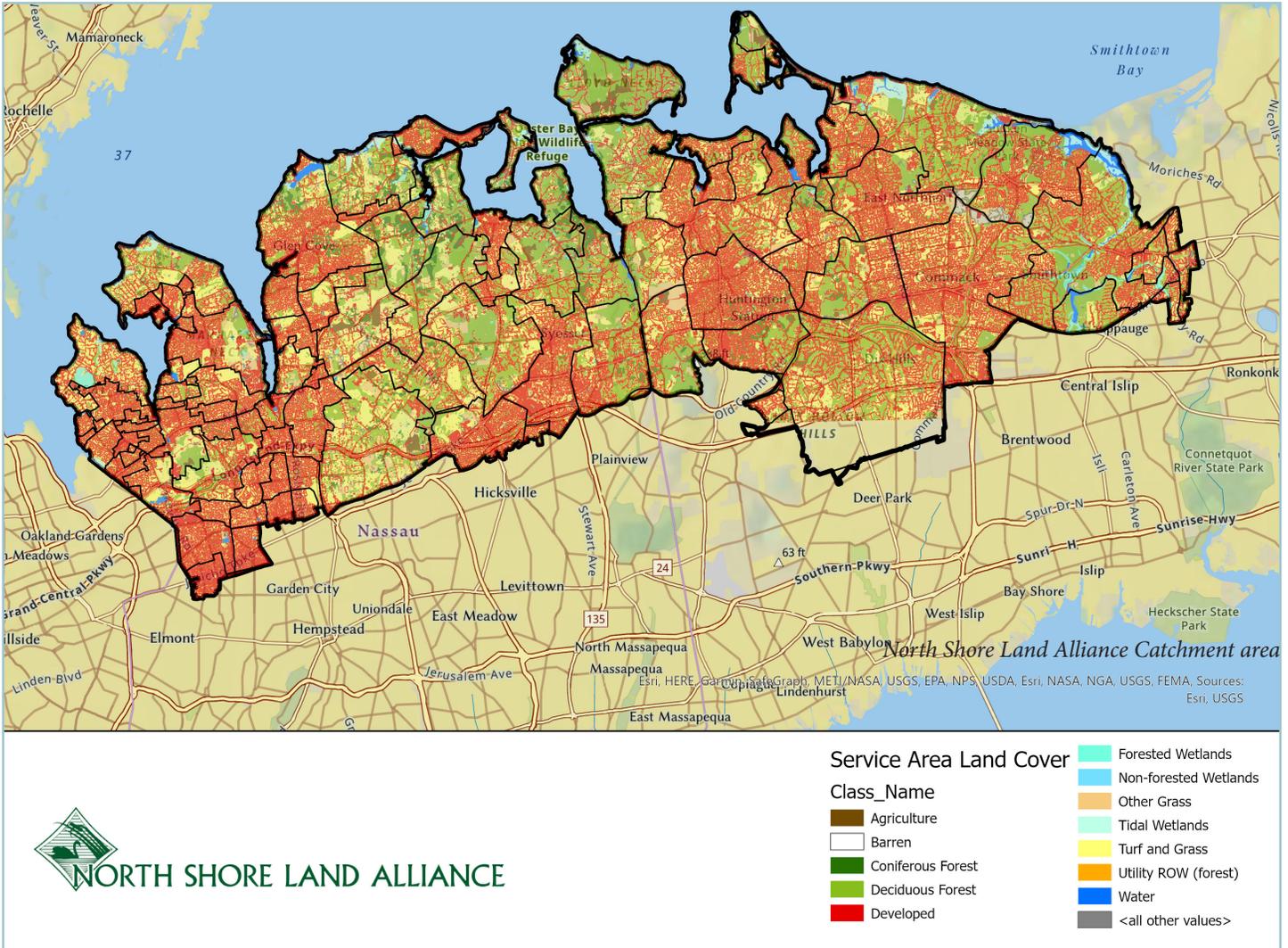
### Total Land Area of the 50 United States is 2.4 Billion acres (1.9 Billion acres in the continental US)

- 59.9% of the land is owned by private landowners
- 28.7% is owned by the federal government (640 Million acres)
- 8.6% by state governments, 2.5% tribal authorities and .3% towns and local governments

Farm, ranch and forest owners hold close to 95% of all privately held land. 80% of us live on 3% of US lands.

In 2017, according to the Land Report, the 100 largest landowners had holdings of 40.2 Million acres, equivalent in area to all of the New England states except Vermont.

# The Land Alliance 30x30 Conservation Plan



Every five years (or as new data becomes available), the Land Alliance updates its Community Open Space Plan. We have generally included the 12 to 14 Villages in our designated area where the most viable land conservation opportunities remain. The timing of this update turned out to be serendipitous this year in light of the recent “30x30” challenge that is gaining strength across the country and the world. In addition to identifying parcel location, the objective of our expanded plan will be to tell the story of open space preservation in

our North Shore community. We will be asking questions like how much land is currently preserved in each village, how much opportunity for future conservation exists in each village, and what are the best methods for conservation. This plan will provide the baseline we need to measure our quest for protecting 30% of our communities’ lands and waters by 2030.

The Land Alliance utilizes a program called geographic information system (GIS). GIS allows the user to input multiple layers of

information into geographically rooted analysis. In short, this is a fantastic tool to identify conservation opportunities based on many factors such as parcel size, location, wetlands, slope, and the list goes on. As helpful as the program is, every few years a portion of the information becomes out of date, often in the case of parcel subdivision or change in landowner. The updated maps offer the most up to date information provided by Nassau and Suffolk Counties.

This map above represents the

Land Alliance catchment area and offers detailed color coding of land cover. Scattered among the pockets of red (which represent highly developed areas) remains a considerable amount of green space where we will focus our primary conservation efforts.

While we have completed analysis of only twelve villages to date, some interesting trends are emerging. Golf courses account for most of the large swaths of open space, totaling 1,150 acres. Unfortunately, golf courses are vulnerable to large scale development and many on the North Shore are in questionable financial condition or others, such as Cedar Brook Club in Old

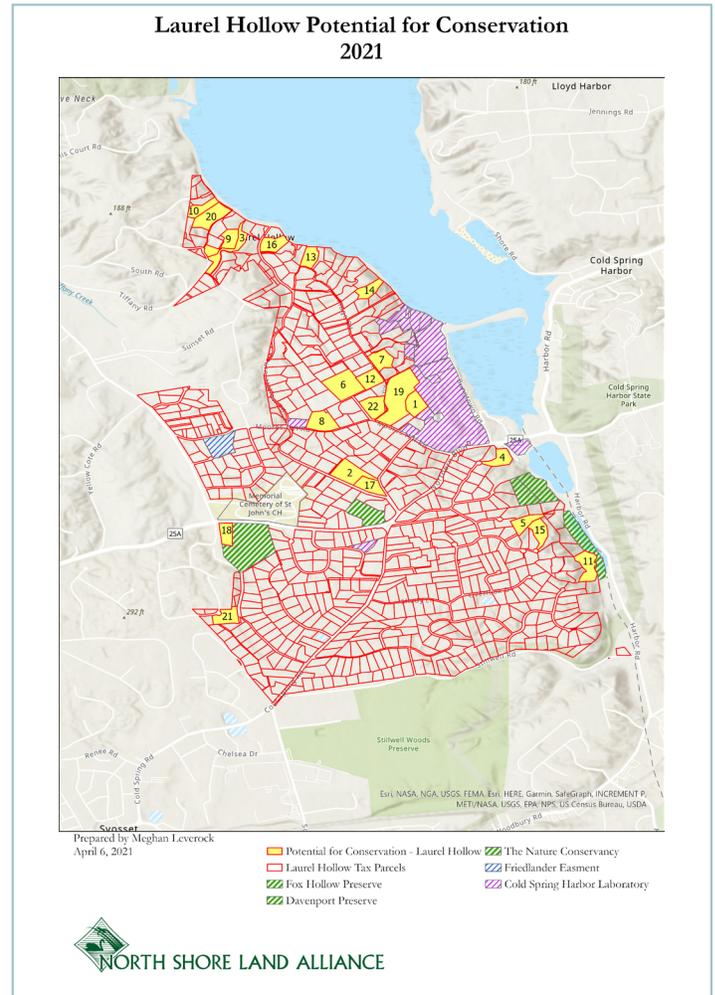
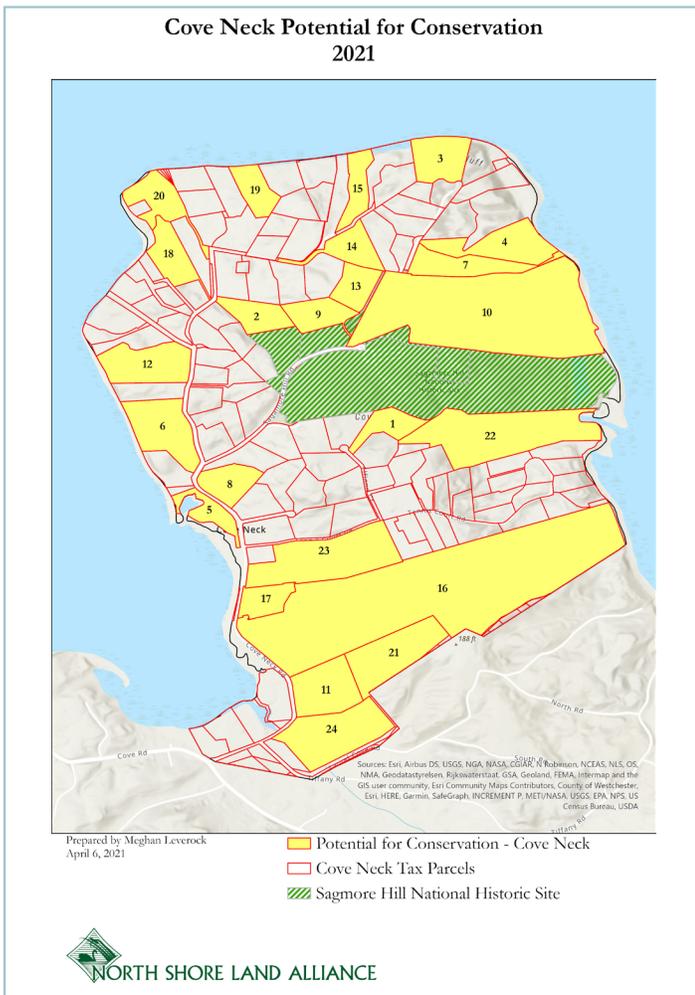
Brookville, have already been sold to developers.

These twelve villages include Brookville, Old Brookville, Upper Brookville, Centre Island, Cove Neck, Lattingtown, Laurel Hollow, Matinecock, Mill Neck, Oyster Bay Cove, Muttontown, and Old Westbury and comprise 27,759 acres. With a total of 2,544 acres already protected (or 9%), the Land Alliance has identified the potential to protect an additional 6,503 acres (21%). The potential protection area amounts to more than the total village area of Laurel Hollow and Matinecock combined! Each village, regardless of size, has extensive conservation

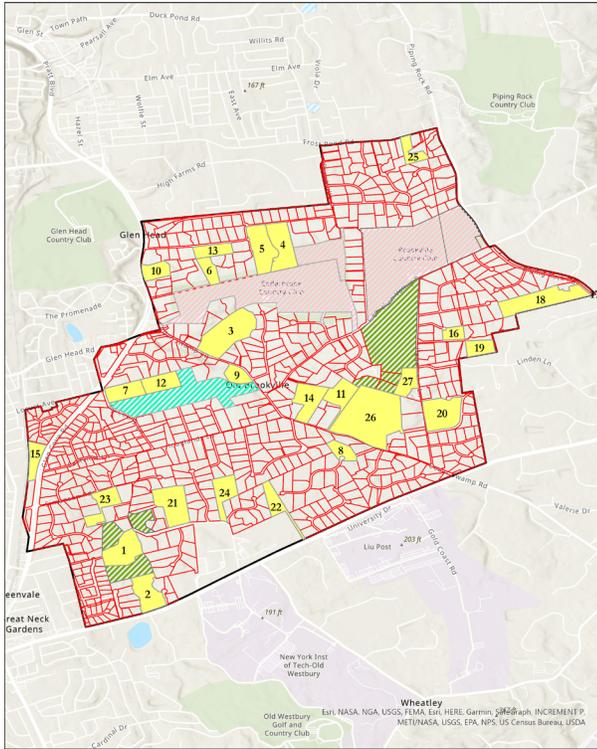
opportunities. Lots of interest are based on 2x the minimum zoning required by code for each village. These maps are for illustrative use by the Land Alliance and are very useful in the nuanced approach to identify conservation opportunities. Here are a few examples of what we have found.

The numbers behind the Village of Cove Neck offer some interesting perspective. Although it is the second smallest village by area at 819 acres, 361 acres have been identified to offer conservation potential. That amounts to 44% of the total Village area.

In stark contrast, neighboring



### Old Brookville Potential for Conservation 2021

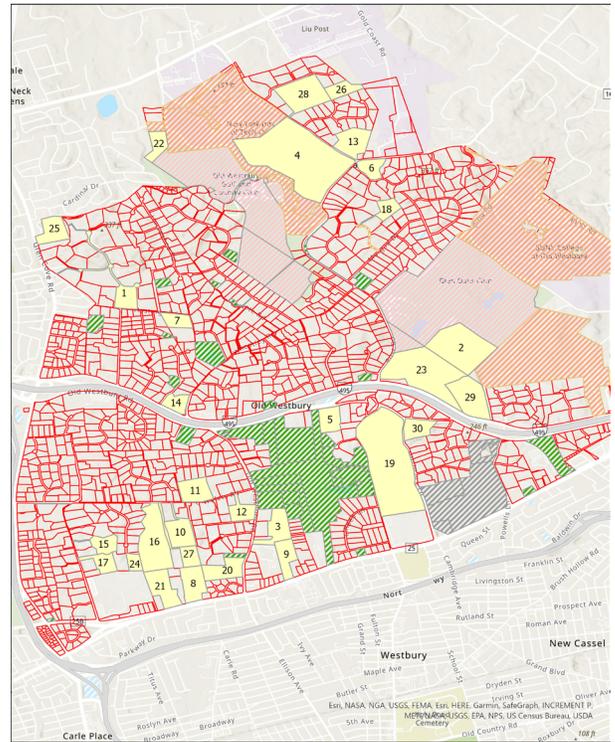


Prepared by Meghan Leverock  
April 6, 2021



- Potential Parcels for Conservation - Old Brookville
- Clark Sanctuary
- James Preserve
- Built Fields
- Rough Farm Lands (49.55 Acres)
- Brookville Country Club (108.48 Acres)
- Cedarbrook Country Club (124.75 Acres)
- Old Brookville Tax Parcels

### Old Westbury Potential for Conservation 2021



Prepared by Meghan Leverock  
May 11, 2021



- Potential for Conservation - Old Westbury
- Old Westbury Gardens (210 acres)
- NY State Owned Properties
- Nassau County Owned Properties
- Catholic Church Cemetery (96.4 acres)
- New York Institute of Technology
- SUNY Old Westbury
- Old Westbury Golf and Country Club (196.92 acres)
- Glen Oaks Club (248.6 acres)
- Old Westbury Tax Parcels

Laurel Hollow offers the least conservation potential of the villages mapped thus far. Out of the Village's 1,894 acres, 6% or 131 acres of conservation opportunity exist. Additionally, Laurel Hollow also has the smallest percentage of already protected land at 85 acres (or 5%) of Village total acreage.

Old Brookville mapping reveals interesting information. While the Village acreage is the third largest at 2,550 acres, only slightly over 2% or 63 acres are protected. Based on mapping information the Village offers one of the largest conservation opportunities, around 864 acres (which is 33% of the total Village area).

In terms of total conservation potential, Old Westbury has the most, by nearly 300 acres. Old Westbury is full of conservation potential, with 30+ properties that lend themselves to conservation. These properties total 1,149 acres (or 20%) of the total Village area.

We are proud to shed light on the detailed approach we take to advance conservation efforts in our community. Our members and friends invest in our work to keep our towns and villages beautiful and to steward the land in a sustainable manner for future generations. We have a 6,503- acre path forward (so far) and are up to the challenge! ARE YOU?

Many thanks to Meghan Leverock, Associate Director of Stewardship and GIS, for putting these wonderful and informative maps together. To be continued....



# Conservation Tools



The Land Alliance’s biannual newsletter serves as our progress report to the community. We aim to highlight the important conservation work taking place and educate our members and friends on the issues that affect the natural beauty and environmental health of our community. As we take on the 30x30 challenge, we find this a good opportunity to share the primary tools utilized in land conservation.

## Conservation Easements

A conservation easement is a voluntary agreement between a landowner and a land conservation organization, such as the North Shore Land Alliance, that is permanently binding on the land, no matter who owns it. The landowner retains all rights to own, sell and use the land according to the provisions of the easement. All conservation easements must provide at least one public benefit (and multiple are better) such as water quality, farmland preservation, scenic views, wildlife habitat, outdoor recreation and historic preservation. If the easement is restrictive enough so that the property is diminished in value, this reduction in value may qualify for treatment as a tax-deductible federal charitable contribution.

The Land Alliance does not provide tax or legal advice, but below is an example of a theoretical qualifying Federal tax deduction scenario.

### The Federal Tax Deduction

Donors have up to 16 years to take their income tax deduction (including the year of the gift) and can deduct up to 50% of their adjusted gross income in each of those years up to the value of the donation.

**Example:** Susan Doe donates a conservation easement valued at \$400K. Her annual income is \$80K. She can deduct 50% of her annual income or \$40K the first year for donating the easement. She can make that deduction for the following 15 years or until the value of the easement is reached. In the first year, she deducts \$40K from her income and pays taxes on \$40K. She does that for the next 10 years until she will have deducted the full \$400K.

*Please Note: There is a New York State tax-credit possibility, but it is currently complicated by the SALT cap deduction.*

## Gifts of Land

Donating land for conservation purposes is one of the finest legacies a person can leave for future generations. A donation of land to a qualified conservation organization releases the donor from the responsibility of managing the land and has the potential to provide substantial income tax deductions and estate tax benefits, while also avoiding any capital gain taxes that can result from a sale of the property.

## Bargain Sale

Bargain sales of land combine the income-producing benefit of a sale with the charitable incentives of a donation. This blending of conservation tools enables organizations like the North Shore Land Alliance to do more conservation work and find creative ways to achieve landowners' goals and financial needs. A bargain sale is the sale of land (fee title) or a conservation easement (partial interest) to a qualified organization at less than fair market value. This not only makes it more affordable for the conservation buyer but offers several benefits to a landowner.

## Land Acquisition

Under unique circumstances, the Land Alliance might purchase a property outright. For example, the Humes Preserve was created through an outright purchase. These situations are rare and require tremendous donor support as the Land Alliance does not, at this time, have a land acquisition war chest.

We're happy to answer any questions regarding the conservation tools available to landowners. Additionally, we can guide you through the process of executing your conservation objective.

**Example:** A property or conservation easement is valued at \$150,000 and the owners sell it to a qualified conservation organization for \$100,000. The \$50,000 difference is counted as a charitable contribution.

## Consider a Future Gift to Our Community Today

Providing for the Land Alliance in your estate plans by naming the North Shore Land Alliance as a beneficiary in your will or as the beneficiary of a life insurance policy, retirement plan or donor-advised fund helps the Land Alliance to protect critical natural areas for future generations.

A bequest, one of the simplest ways to provide for the Land Alliance's future, can take different forms and be easily modified to address your changing needs. Bequests can be unrestricted, allowing the Land Alliance to apply the gift where the need is greatest. They may also be earmarked for special purposes such as land acquisition, stewardship, education or operations.

Gifts of all types help to preserve our community's extraordinary natural areas and can provide you with many benefits as well. For more information about ways to give, please contact Nina Muller at 516-922-1028 or [nina@northshorelandalliance.org](mailto:nina@northshorelandalliance.org). It's always a good idea to consult your tax, legal and accounting advisors before initiating any of the above gifts.

## Nature Play is Good for Children (and Adults Too!)



Studies show that spending time in nature provides children with a wide range of health and cognitive benefits. Nature play improves children's love of learning, academic performance, focus and behavior. Unstructured outside play, specifically, builds confidence, promotes creativity and imagination, activates multiple senses and reduces stress and fatigue. "Green exercise" has greater physical and mental health benefits than physical activity indoors.

A 2019 study by the Outdoor Foundation found that adults and children are playing outside less than they did a decade ago. Unfortunately, this is not a new finding. In 2005, Richard Louv, author of *Last Child in the Woods*, coined the phrase "nature deficit disorder" to define the human costs of alienation from nature.

In a recent New York Times article, Louv stated "Ironically, the 2020 coronavirus pandemic, as tragic as it is, has dramatically increased public awareness of the deep human need for nature connection, and is adding a greater sense of urgency to the movement to connect children, families and communities to nature."

Providing access to natural areas is central to the Land Alliance's mission. Even before the pandemic a children's nature play area appeared on our "wish list" alongside new trails, meadow restoration and public access improvements.

Through the generous support of Randi and David Hoyt, Milena and DR Holmes and an anonymous donor, the Land Alliance was able to work with a children's nature play designer to develop plans to transform what had once been a dilapidated caretaker's cottage into a nature play area. Unlike a traditional playground (made from metal and plastic), nature play areas are made from materials found in nature, with many sourced from the property itself, like bamboo from the John P. Humes Japanese Stroll Garden and wooden seats from nearby fallen trees. Site preparation began in late winter and installation of the hardscape and plantings was completed in April. The nature play components will be installed this summer. Do stop by and bring your children and grandchildren!

## Here are some resources to help you learn more about nature play.



Tree stumps, bamboo stalks, pinecones, leaves and twigs are the toys of nature that spark collaboration, creativity, imagination, inventiveness and problem-solving. When children are given the space and time to play freely outdoors, the whole child benefits.

- **Children and Nature Network** - [www.childrenandnature.org](http://www.childrenandnature.org)
- **Richard Louv** - [www.richardlouv.com](http://www.richardlouv.com)
- **National Wildlife Federation** - [www.nwf.org/Home/Kids-and-Family/Connecting-Kids-and-Nature/Nature-Play-Spaces](http://www.nwf.org/Home/Kids-and-Family/Connecting-Kids-and-Nature/Nature-Play-Spaces)
- **Natural Learning Initiative** [www.naturallearning.org](http://www.naturallearning.org)

## Cushman Woods to Feature a 5-Acre Meadow

While most of Cushman Woods is, indeed, woodland, a five-acre area in the northwest part of the property (bisected by a utility line) is open to sunshine. With encouragement from neighbors who have witnessed transformative habitat restoration at other Land Alliance preserves (including the Humes meadow in Mill Neck), we have decided to rehabilitate this sunny area (formerly overtaken by invasive shrubs and vines) as a meadow.

In fall 2020, we secured an estimate for meadow establishment from an expert with whom we have worked on several projects. There were at that time fallen telephone wires on the ground, which Verizon raised just in time to start clearing the site. Because of the density of invasive growth, we realized we needed to start from scratch and decided to use a forestry mulcher to cut, grind and clear the area that had been covered by Japanese honeysuckle, multiflora rose, bush honeysuckle and Japanese angelica tree, among other invasive plants. The next step will be to remove the rubbish and some woody debris that would obstruct mowing in the future. We also will manage the regrowth of weeds over the coming months. Site design finalization, including selection of a variety of native meadow species, will occur over the summer, with the intent of seeding grasses punctuated by wildflower drifts next spring.

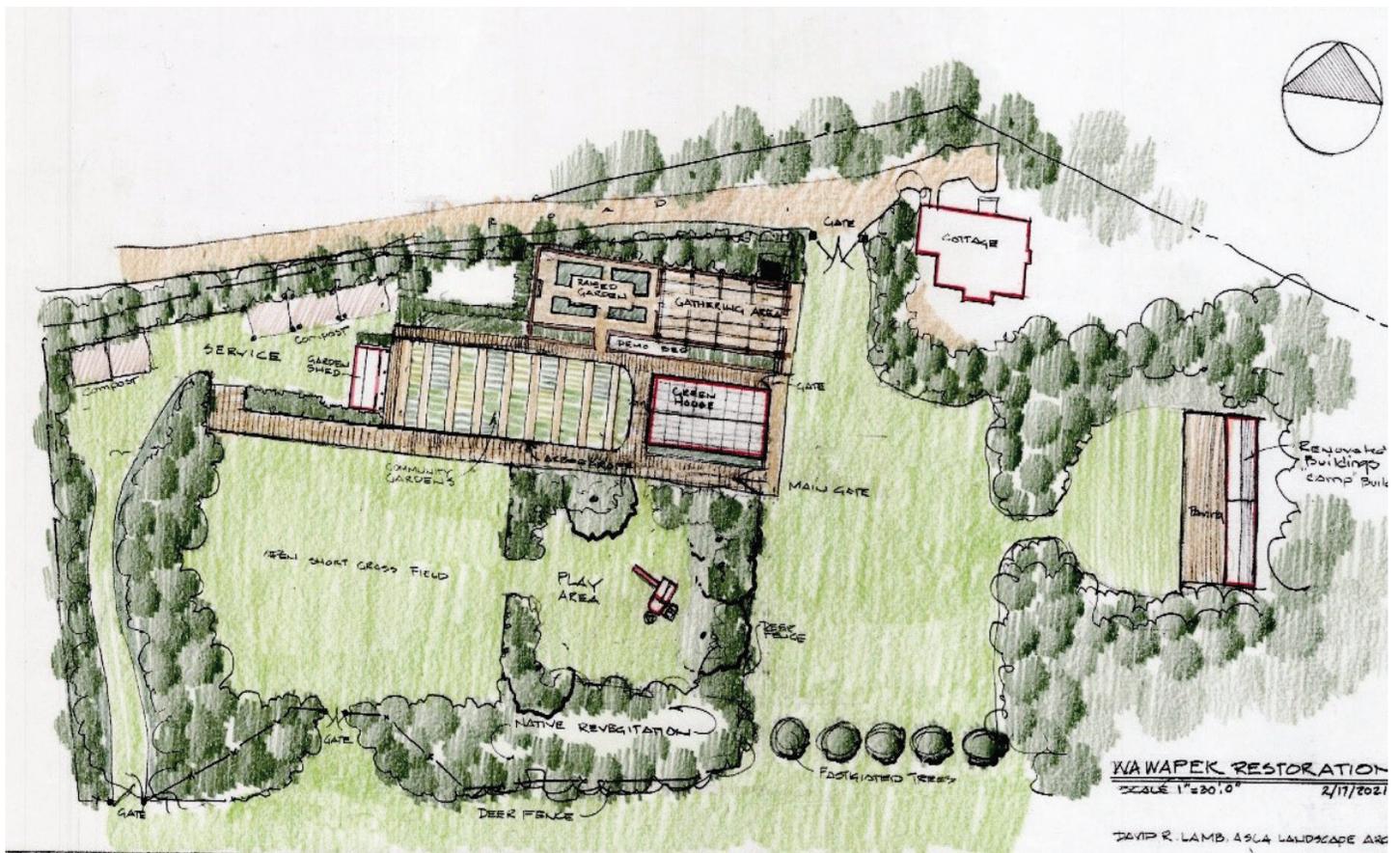
Replacing invasive plants with native ones will provide better habitat for a variety of wildlife, particularly for birds using the meadow as a migration stopover area. Native plants, which are more nutritious than invasive plants, support insects, on which nearly all terrestrial birds depend to feed their young. Their seeds provide a critical food source come fall, winter and early spring.

Invasive plants have negative impacts on both breeding and nutrition. For example, Japanese honeysuckle, like many invasive plants, leafs out before most native species do. It entices birds to nest in it earlier than they would in native species, exposing them to predators who have come to recognize this plant as a source of prey. Studies have indicated that Northern Cardinals experience decreased reproductive success in areas infested with the species.

Plain and simple, meadows are beautiful too! We are grateful to the Nassau County Soil and Water Conservation District for its support of the meadow project.

Many thanks to The Oliver R. Grace Charitable Foundation for their \$60K gift to restore and improve the forest at Cushman Woods.

# Wawapek Master Plan and Ralf Lange Greenhouse Garden



A landscape master plan is an important first step in designing the future use of a property. It requires early thought about end uses, how the project meets community needs and stewardship requirements. It also serves as a roadmap to project implementation. A well-designed master plan breaks a large project down into manageable smaller projects that can be implemented in phases over time.

We are pleased to report that the master plan for the 3-acre greenhouse/cottage parcel at Wawapek was completed by landscape architect David Lamb in April. The detailed design of the Ralf Lange Greenhouse Garden already is underway. This work was made possible through the generous support of Pat Petersen, Chairman of the Board and President of Daniel Gale Sotheby's International Realty, who established a \$30,000 dollar-for-dollar matching gift challenge to create the garden in memory of her longtime partner.

Our goal is to begin work on the Ralf Lange Greenhouse Garden in early summer.

Future projects outlined in the master plan include a community garden, the reuse of the existing Hitchings & Co. greenhouse, a children's nature play area and a native grass area that offers an environmentally beneficial alternative to a traditional mowed lawn. There will be garden beds where the Land Alliance can propagate native plants for Wawapek, Shore Road and our other preserves.

Thank you to those who have already made a gift towards the greenhouse garden match. If you would like to learn more about the greenhouse garden project or donate towards the match, please contact Nina Muller at [nina@northshorelandalliance.org](mailto:nina@northshorelandalliance.org) or 516-922-1028.

## MacDonald Property Plan

In 2017, the MacDonald family, owners of M&A Landscaping (a Locust Valley tradition) donated a 2-3/4-acre Matinecock property to the Land Alliance. They had used the site for nursery stock and vegetable gardening for a number of years. Its tree-filled buffer along Underhill Road invites uses by wildlife and its open interior area holds limitless possibilities for worthy community activity.

We are starting the year with a spring cleaning, working with Land Alliance volunteers including youth from the Grenville Baker Boys and Girls Club during Earth Week. Additional cleanup will result in the consolidation of woodchips and compost piles for later use on site.

### What's next?

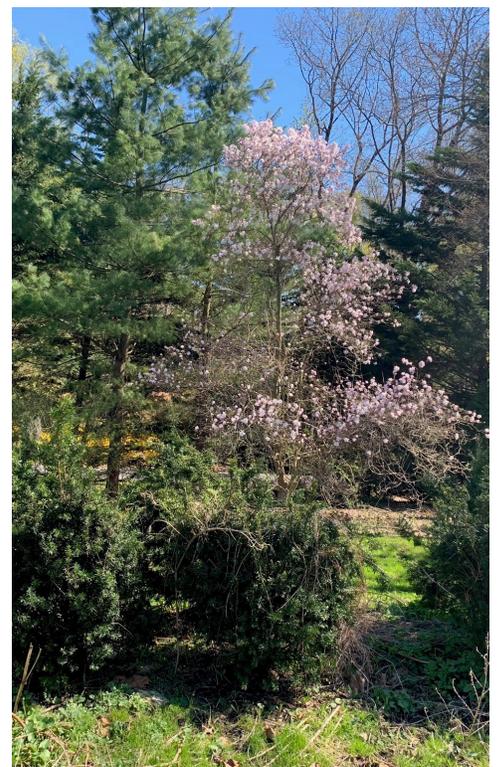
To pay tribute to the property's past uses of both growing food and providing habitat, we intend to utilize the space as a learning landscape by incorporating an approach to land management and philosophy called permaculture.

Permaculture encompasses the harmonious integration of landscape and people – providing their food and other material and non-material needs in a sustainable way. The MacDonald property and its users (both human and wildlife) would benefit from the design, both scenically and ecologically.

One potentially key ingredient contemplated in the design is the use of a native understory tree called the pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*), whose fruit is the largest of any tree native to North America. It is popular with both people and wildlife (opossum, foxes, birds, pollinating beetles).

### The property's permaculture design will include:

- planting beds for growing food concentrated in the center (where the MacDonalds' vegetable garden was)
- fruiting shrubs and trees closer to and in the woodland edge
- pathways connecting all areas
- educational programming and/or signage



# The Fourth Season at the Roosevelt Community Garden!

The Roosevelt Community Garden celebrated its fourth year on April 1st. The Garden has become more than just a place to grow organic fruits, vegetables and herbs; it also is a place for gardeners to come together, to share and learn from each other.

Situated in the hamlet of Roosevelt on a 10,000 square foot lot, the Garden boasts 49 raised garden beds, a garden library, picnic tables and two tool sheds. It's open from sunrise until sunset April until November. During the growing season, gardeners and volunteers join forces to plant, weed, water and grow a variety of crops. They share in the bountiful harvest and grow food to share with community members in need.

During these difficult times, the Garden is also helping to fight food insecurity. This was the original idea for the garden, but that notion became much more critical throughout the weeks and months of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Garden has created a sense of

community. Neighbors are working together, getting to know one another, caring for each other, building new kinds of relationships and creating a more unified community.

Many thanks to Nassau County for making this opportunity available to the community. Special thanks to the volunteer Master Gardeners from Cornell Cooperative Extension of Nassau County for leading many of our educational programs in person or online. Their lifelong love of gardening and agricultural expertise continues to be an invaluable resource for the Garden and its members.

To volunteer or for more information about the Garden, please contact Andrea Millwood at [andrea@northshorelandalliance.org](mailto:andrea@northshorelandalliance.org). More information about the Garden can be found online at [www.northshorelandalliance.org/rcg](http://www.northshorelandalliance.org/rcg).

## Annual Spring Cleanup and Earth Day Celebration in April



## Square Foot Gardening Demonstration, Planting Day and Tree Distribution in May



*Square Foot Gardening Demonstration led by Certified Instructor and Cornell Cooperative Extension Master Gardener, Reese Michaels*



*Tree Seedlings Donated by Bartlett Tree Experts*



*Plants Donated by Atlantic Nursery and Garden Shop in Freeport.*



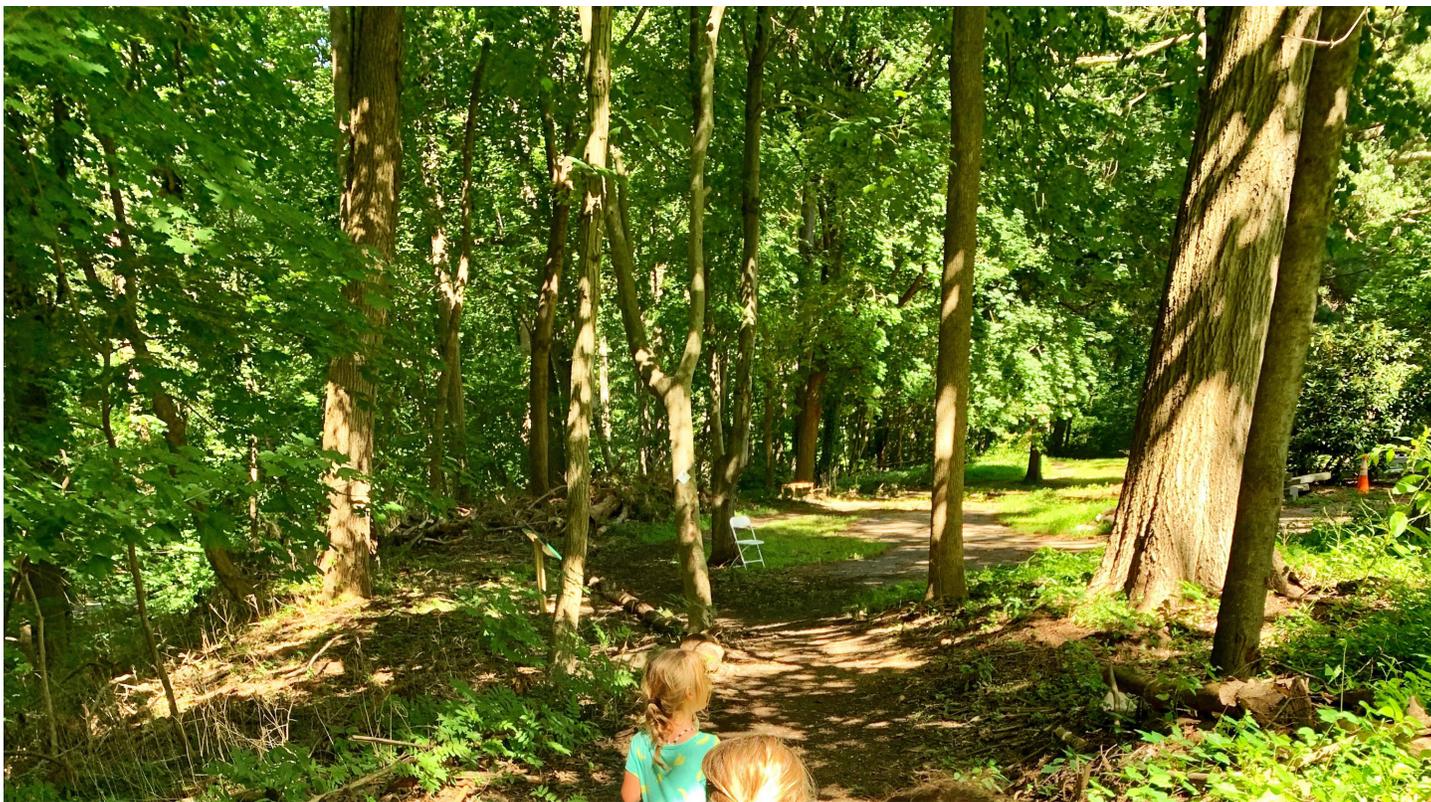
## Special Thanks to Edrington Brands for Their Generous Donation



We are most grateful to Marc Bromfeld and Edrington Brands for their generous \$10,000 donation to help enhance our Garden and ensure that it is sustainable for another year. This spring, a wooden gazebo with aluminum roof was installed to create a more comfortable seating area for Garden members and volunteers to socialize and for educational programs. The gazebo will also bring warmth and character to the garden and provide shade for those working in the summer heat. A portion of the proceeds will also be set aside for programs in 2022. We hope the community finds great enjoyment in the space provided.

Special thanks to Jill DeGroff, one of the first individuals to sign up to volunteer at the Garden in 2018, for spearheading this donation. We are most appreciative and grateful for her support.

## Explore The Trails at these Five Nature Preserves This Summer



The Land Alliance is thrilled to offer a variety of trail systems at our ten public preserves. Trails offer opportunities to explore new places, connect with nature, relax and reflect and even get some exercise. The five trails wind through scenic meadows, woodland, white pine forests and more. Dogs are welcome; just make sure to keep them on leashes. We feature five preserves here worthy of exploration.

### Humes Preserve

#### Oyster Bay Road, Locust Valley

This two-mile trail system wraps around a glorious meadow and winds through a hilly, deciduous forest. Take a stroll there this summer and you may spot Monarch butterflies or downy woodpeckers. The Land Alliance recently installed six bluebird boxes in the meadow. These native birds are cavity-nesting creatures and need safe, secure locations to raise their young. The trail at Humes was constructed by the Land Alliance for public enjoyment. A fitness station was installed last summer, and an all-natural children's play area will

be added later this year. The wooded portion of the trail was named the Overlook Trail and was dedicated to Board Chairman Hoyle C. Jones for his tireless commitment to the protection of this historic property. A serene pine woodland path connects the meadow to the nature play area!

### Cushman Woods

#### Still Road, Matinecock

Restored carriage roads comprise most of the 1.3-mile trail system at this unique woodland preserve. But transportation by horse-drawn carriage was not this trail system's only use over the years. In the 19th century, people like Theodore Roosevelt and his brother, Elliot, barreled down these trails on horseback as participants in the popular Meadowbrook fox hunt. Paul Cravath, a prominent New York City lawyer, used the trail system for hunting in the 1920s. Meadow restoration has just begun in a sunny 5-acre northwest portion of the preserve.

## Hope Goddard Iselin Preserve Chicken Valley Road, Upper Brookville

The trail system at this preserve is a little over a mile long and winds through a glorious meadow, hardwood forest, successional woodland and white pine plantation. 13 interpretive signs may be found along the trail that detail the rich history and variety of ecological communities found there.

## Red Cote Preserve Yellow Cote Road, Oyster Bay Cove

Take a walk down the scenic 1.5- mile trail system and you'll see four mature red cedar trees towering over the meadow closer to the parking area. During late summer and early fall, the two meadows here are centers of activity as the blooming wildflowers, dominated by various goldenrod species, attract an array of pollinating insects. As you venture into the woodland note the spectacular umbrella magnolia trees that boast leaves over a foot in length

## Wawapek Mowbray Lane, Cold Spring Harbor

This is the perfect preserve to visit if you are looking for a place to picnic and go for a walk. The half-mile trail system starts and finishes at the entrance to a remnant of the estate, a sprawling lawn now punctuated by a pollinator garden and restored trellis, along with specimen beech and sourwood trees. The trail departs the lawn to enter the majestic hardwood woodland, where dramatic sloped areas drop almost as far down as Cold Spring Harbor. While here you may catch a glimpse of a great horned owl, fox or state-protected box turtle. The Augusta Reese Donohue trail at Wawapek was named after Land Alliance Trustee Augusta Reese Donohue as a very special gift from her parents.

ENJOY!

For more trails, please visit our website at [www.northshorelandalliance.org](http://www.northshorelandalliance.org).



## 2021 Walks in the Woods and Other Cool Things to Do Outside



This year's outdoor programs calendar is filled with new locations, partners and activities. As we begin to adapt to a new state of normalcy, participants are enthusiastic about spending more and more time outdoors. While the first part of this year has taken us to the following places, it feels like we are really just getting started!

### North Fork Preserve, Northville

For this program, in partnership with the Long Island Botanical Society, LIBS President Eric Lamont and his equally talented wife Mary-Laura Lamont led a group through the snow to explore a diversity of fascinating ecological communities, including old growth forest in the Harbor Hill Moraine.

### East Meadow Farm, East Meadow

Cornell Cooperative Extension – Nassau County two-acre East Meadow Farm is chockablock with a

diversity of farming beds, pollinator gardens and now a thriving arboretum. On a brisk March morning, EMF Garden/Farm Coordinator Mary Callanan and master gardeners Eileen Rogers, Phyllis Ginsberg, Stephanie Gladowski and Patricia Oliver delivered a spirited tour of the property that included a very instructive pruning demonstration.

### Fox Hollow Preserve, Laurel Hollow

Signs of wildlife that make Fox Hollow their home were the order of the day during a delightful walk led by Dave Taft, Jamaica Bay Unit Coordinator for the National Park Service and illustrative naturalist, on a balmy spring Saturday. A squirrel's jaw in a Great horned owl pellet was among the day's finds. Favorite activity? Whistling through an acorn shell!

**Saturday June 19th (Juneteenth!) 11:00 a.m.**

**Red Cote Preserve, Oyster Bay Cove**

*Led by Meghan Leverock.* In honor of NYS Invasive Species Awareness Week, come out and explore Red Cote Preserve, where you will learn about invasive plants common on Long Island and how you can help prevent their spread.

**Saturday, July 17, 10:00 a.m.**

**Sisters of St. Joseph, Brentwood**

*Led by Amanda Furcall.* If you've never visited the Sisters' sprawling and thriving campus you are in for a treat! Amanda, landscape ecologist, will show us the grounds and introduce us to some of its inhabitants.

**Tuesday, August 24, 9:30 a.m.**

**Caumsett State Park, Lloyd Neck**

*Led by Virginia Dankel.* Virginia's literary walk will highlight lots of inspirational readings in addition to nature (of course!).

**Saturday, August 28, 10:00 a.m.**

**John P. Humes Japanese Stroll Garden and Shu Swamp, Mill Neck**

*Led by Ann Lotowycz and Mary Schmutz.* Learn all about iconic cardinal flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*), its value to wildlife and a research project when its striking bloom marks its presence.

**Friday, September 24, 7:00 p.m.**

**Wawapek, Cold Spring Harbor**

*Led by Stella Miller.* Stella does the best Eastern Screech Owl call around and has a knack for enticing other owl species.

**Saturday, October 23, 10:00 a.m.**

**Joint with Long Island Mycological Club  
Cranberry Bog Preserve, Riverhead**

*Led by Andy Greller.* Join us at this magnificent preserve when mushrooms, cranberries in the bog and fall color make it the most beguiling time of year.

**Saturday, November 6, 11:00 a.m.**

**Roosevelt Preserve, Roosevelt**

*Led by Jane Jackson, Michael Kliger and Leslie Pieters.* This is arguably the most beautiful time of year to explore Meadow Brook and Roosevelt Preserve. Take it all in as we learn about foraging and recognize the October 27 birthday of Teddy Roosevelt.

**Sunday, December 5, 11:00 a.m.**

**Cushman Woods, Matinecock**

*Led by Richard Weir.* Richard will lead us through this majestic tucked-away woodland and introduce us to its diverse plant community as we make our way up and down its extensive hilly trails.

**And two kayak trips led by naturalist extraordinaire Peter Martin:**



**Wednesday, July 14, 5:00 p.m.**

**Shore Road, Cold Spring Harbor**

**Saturday, September 12, 2:00 p.m.**

**Hempstead Harbor, Port Washington**

While many of this year's walks and kayak trips are already fully registered, our waiting list registrants often make it onto the walks, so do check out the remaining walks and kayak trips on our website. Registration is required.

## Join Us for Our Young Explorers Activities



The Young Explorers Group is a unique fun filled program designed to introduce our youngest community members and their families to the great outdoors. These programs, for children ages 4-11, will begin with a nature themed walk through a Land Alliance preserve and end with a family fun activity. At the end of each session participants will be awarded a badge to show off their new nature knowledge to their families and friends!

**Thursday, July 8, 10:00 a.m.**  
**Hope Goddard Iselin Preserve, Upper Brookville**

A nature scavenger hunt highlighting the three unique ecological communities of Iselin Preserve!

**Saturday, July 17, 10:00 a.m.**  
**Shore Road Sanctuary, Cold Spring Harbor**

A nature scavenger hunt exploring the grassland, wet meadow, and beach.

**Thursday August 5, 2:00 p.m.**  
**Humes Preserve, Locust Valley**  
A nature scavenger hunt traversing the woodland trail.

**Saturday, August 14, 10:00 a.m.**  
**Wawapek, Cold Spring Harbor**  
An exploration of the forest highlighting the critters that call these woods their home.

**Saturday, September 11, 10:00 a.m.**  
**Humes Preserve, Locust Valley**

A meandering through the meadow while documenting the number of butterflies present.

Registration is required! Program dates, times and locations are subject to change. Please check our website for updates. For more information, about our Young Explorers Group, please contact Meghan Leverock at 516-922-1028 or [meghan@northshorelandalliance.org](mailto:meghan@northshorelandalliance.org).

*“Time in nature is not leisure time;  
it’s an essential investment in our children’s  
health (and also, by the way, in our own).”*

*~ Richard Louv~*

# Long Island Water Quality Improvement Program Update

On Long Island, nitrogen pollution from outdated septic systems has been named the number one cause of harmful algal blooms, fish kills, thick mats of seaweed, and the overall decline of the shellfish industry. It is also the primary reason our beaches are closed in the days after it rains.

Conventional septic systems were never designed to remove nitrogen. In fact, the average residential septic system discharges more than 40 pounds of nitrogen into groundwater each year. Nitrogen-reducing, clean-water septic systems are incredibly effective and can remove up to 90% of nitrogen from wastewater. Swapping conventional septic systems with clean-water technology is the solution to protecting and restoring our water.

Since October of 2020, the North Shore Land Alliance's Water Quality Improvement Program has made substantial strides in addressing this critical issue. We have been providing support to homeowners through the entire clean-water septic system upgrade process,

from assisting with grant applications to being on site for installation and working with local government to simplify building permit applications.

## Interested in Learning More?

This summer the North Shore Land Alliance will be hosting a Clean-Water Vendor Day at Fireman's Field in Oyster Bay. Attendees will have the opportunity to preview the clean-water technology firsthand and ask questions from distributors and septic experts on Long Island. You are also invited to tune into the event via Zoom.

For dates and times, visit our website at [www.northshorelandalliance.org/water-quality-improvement-program](http://www.northshorelandalliance.org/water-quality-improvement-program).

Call us for a consultation to learn about how to install a clean-water system in your own yard. The Land Alliance is committed to ensuring clean water for our community and Long Island at large.



## Grant Program for Septic Upgrades Announced



On April 27, Nassau County Executive Laura Curran announced the establishment of Nassau's Septic Environmental Program to Improve Cleanliness (S.E.P.T.I.C.). Homeowners and small business owners are now eligible to apply for grants for as much as \$10,000 to replace outdated and failing septic systems with nitrogen-reducing clean-water septic technology. In addition, New York State announced Suffolk

County's Septic Improvement Program, called Reclaim our Water, will be receiving more than \$20 Million to supply homeowners with clean-water septic system upgrades. New funding opportunities for Nassau and Suffolk Counties will provide Long Islanders with the clean-water technology needed to ensure a healthier future.

### Long Island Clean-Water Vendor Day

Wednesday, July 14, 2021 from 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Fireman's Field, Oyster Bay (Corner of Shore Avenue and Maxwell Avenue)



Did you know nitrogen pollution from outdated septic systems is the number one cause of harmful algal blooms and fish kills on Long Island? Want to know more about how you can help reduce nitrogen pollution?

Join us at our first ever Long Island Clean-Water Vendor Day to learn about clean-water septic systems that can remove up to 90% of nitrogen from wastewater. Long Islanders will have the opportunity to tour and ask questions with clean-water technology experts themselves!

**For more information, visit [www.northshorelandalliance.org/events](http://www.northshorelandalliance.org/events)**

## Wildlife Sightings: How Investments in Clean Water Can Restore Ecosystems

In March, after a long year of social distancing and cold, cloudy weather, two dolphins were spotted swimming up the East River in New York City. This atypical pair provided a much-needed sign of hope and recovery for City dwellers.

Even more surprisingly, tiny seahorses can now be found clinging to oyster cages and other submerged objects in the lower Hudson River. These little seahorses, known as the Lined Seahorse, are one of many aquatic species that now make up a diverse and thriving ecosystem in the Hudson River estuary.

For decades, the Hudson River was severely polluted after PCBs, oil, heavy metals and solvents were all dumped into the river by factories producing cars and paper. At one point, local fishermen could tell what color General Motors was painting cars based on the color of the river that day!

In 1972, Congress passed the Clean Water Act to restrict “point sources” such as factories and power plants from discharging contamination into US waterways. Over the nearly 50 years that have passed

since then, NYC has invested more than \$12 Billion to upgrade wastewater treatment to improve the health of the Hudson’s delicate, aquatic ecosystems. And, it has worked.

A 2017 report by the NYC Department of Environmental Protection found that the Hudson River is the cleanest it has been in over a century as evidenced by the presence of the Lined Seahorse that would not be found in the Hudson River without these extraordinary cleanup efforts.

Efforts such as these give us hope that if we take measures now our ecosystems can, indeed, be restored. We must also remember to stay vigilant in protecting our waters to ensure healthy ecosystems for future generations.

*“Plans to protect air and water, wilderness and wildlife are in fact plans to protect man.”  
~ Stewart Udall ~*



*Photo Credit: Tina Walsh for Hudson River Park*

## Download These Nature Apps to Enhance Your Outdoor Adventures



When it comes to spending time outside usually the best app is NO app. However, some apps can enhance your outdoor adventures. Here are some of our favorites, which are free.

**All Trails:** This easy-to-use app helps you locate nearby trails for your next adventure. It also includes location, length of trail, information on whether a property is dog or kid friendly and photos! You can find many of our nature preserves on this app.

**Seek:** Have you ever come across a flower or tree that you wish you could identify? Well, this app uses your camera to identify the plants and animals around you. This app is kid-friendly and is great for families who want to explore nature together!

**iMap:** Invasives allows you to collect observations of invasive species and upload them to an online database that is then used by New York State DEC, NY Natural Heritage Program and other organizations to track

invasives and identify ways to manage these species that are threatening our ecosystems.

**Audubon Birds:** Learn how to identify the birds in your backyard or in our nature preserves. Here is a field guide to over 800 bird species in North America that fits right in your pocket!

**eBird:** Want to help scientists and organizations document bird distribution? This citizen science-based app allows you to enter bird observations from anywhere in the world into a database managed by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

**iNaturalist:** This citizen science-based app helps you to identify the plants and animals around you and connects you with a community of over 750,000 scientists and naturalists who can help you learn about nature. Sharing your observations helps create quality data for scientists working to better understand and protect nature.

## Five Native Plants to Consider Planting



cardinal flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*)



New England aster (*Symphyotrichum novae-angliae*)

Did you know that for the first time ever April was designated National Native Plant Month by the United States Senate?

Native plants play an indispensable role in supporting resilient ecosystems like stabilizing soil, filtering water, cleaning air and supporting wildlife. Once these plants become established, they require less watering and need no chemical fertilizers or pesticides to thrive. They also preserve the natural history of the flora and fauna of the American landscape. There are more than 17,000 native

plant species across the US, which include trees, shrubs, vines, grasses and wildflowers. Here on the North Shore of Long Island, we have many beautiful native species.

Pictured here are five native wildflower and shrub options you might consider planting that are lovely to look at and help with pollination and the sustainability of our ecosystem.

When buying, look for straight species (non-cultivars) locally sourced.



swamp milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*)



wild columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*)



winterberry (*Ilex verticillata*)

## The Cicadas Are Coming!

If you were around in 2004, you probably remember the loud songs of the cicada emanating from most of the trees on your property. You probably had a cicada or two clinging to your clothes or swatted a few away as they haphazardly flew around. If you have never met a cicada, there's nothing to worry about, just another wonder of nature to behold. These lumbering creatures do not sting or bite or cause disease. They burst forth from underground with all the confidence and energy of teenagers and must accomplish in a very short time what it takes us decades to do.

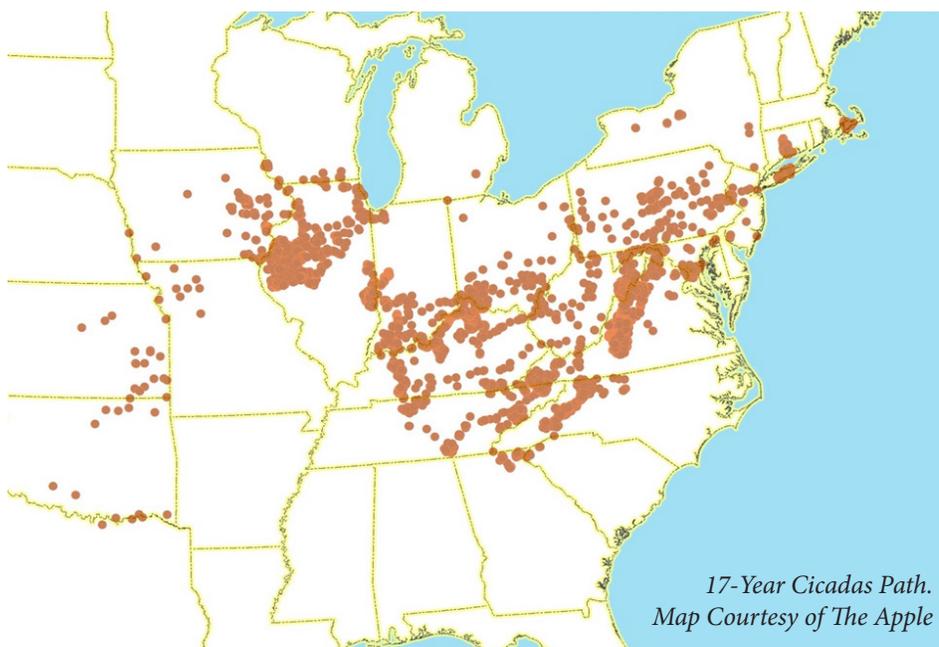
The periodical cicada spends most of its life underground, emerging after 13 or 17 years (depending on the species) to transform, reproduce and ultimately die over the space of just a few days. Huge populations of these insects have synced up to emerge within the same window of time to give them the best chance of successfully finding a mate and producing young before they are eaten by predators or expire naturally. These populations are called broods, and one of the largest—Brood X—is set to emerge in late May or early June this year.

Once the soil reaches about 64 degrees Fahrenheit at a depth of 12-18 inches, the emergence of the cicadas will

be triggered. Male cicadas will emerge first, followed by females a few days later. Females can be identified by their pointed abdomen and sheathed ovipositor, the organ they use to lay eggs.

Once they leave the ground, the cicadas will shed their shells and develop wings, allowing them to fly around and locate fresh hardwood trees and shrubs. After they've found their spot, the cicadas will mate and lay eggs at the end of branches. Newly hatched cicadas will then chew through the branch tips, causing them to fall off, carrying the nymphs (young insects) back down into the soil where they burrow 6- 18 inches down and will spend the next 17 years. Brood X will next emerge in 2038.

Scientists are interested in determining if climate change has impacted the cicada. Will warmer temperatures cause them to arrive sooner than expected? Will there be as many of them as in years past? You can help to answer these questions by engaging in a little citizen science. Phone apps like Cicada Safari and iNaturalist, can be used to share your observations. The data collected will help to populate a map which can guide scientists in answering the questions posed above.



## “Wicked Little Puddles”

*Guest author John L. Turner, a Conservation Policy Advocate for the Seatuck Environmental Association, a leader in Seatuck’s Vernal Pool Assessment Project and a Land Alliance Advisory Board member.*



*Vernal pool spotted salamander. Photo by Alex Roukis*

They are quite easy to overlook. Most are small, some are tiny, a mere five times the size of your bathtub. Or maybe no bigger than the size of the bathroom in which the tub is located. They’re typically dry by the time summer’s heat reaches full blast so if you’re not trained to look at a shallow depression of water-stained leaves you may not know you’re looking at a dynamic ecosystem that sustains scores of species. These habitats - known as vernal pools, or as a key researcher from the Vernal Pool Association likes to call them, “wicked little puddles” - are fascinating small-scale ecosystems filled with wonder and discovery.

Vernal pools gain their name because they are generally most filled

with water in the Spring, around the vernal equinox. Amphibians are the stars in the vernal pool show, taking advantage of these fishless environments to breed. Three of the more common amphibians that utilize vernal pools are wood frogs, spring peepers and spotted salamanders. Beginning in the middle of March these species emerge from their upland overwintering sites and migrate to the pools to make the next generation. If you visit a pool on a spring night, it would not be unusual to hear the deafening peeps of the peepers (living up to their name) and the vocalizations of wood frogs (a cross between the quack of a duck and the barking of a dog). Shine a flashlight on the water and you might see the tail swish of a beautiful, yellow-

dotted spotted salamander moving through the leaves lining the pond’s bottom or cork like creatures in the form of mating pairs of wood frogs in amplexus - she releasing dozens to more than a hundred eggs into the water quickly followed by the clasping male releasing a cloud of sperm. Soon, the gelatinous egg mass swells with water, forming fist size clusters, anchored to submerged stems. Spotted salamander egg masses look similar. But in their case, fertilization is internal, with the female taking up sperm capsules (called spermatophores) male salamanders have deposited on the pool bottom. Spring peepers, a species of treefrog, don’t lay egg clusters but rather deposit individual eggs.



*Easter Tiger Salamander. Photo by Alex Roukis*



*Eastern Red-spotted Newt. Photo by Alex Roukis*



*Wood Frog Photo by Alex Roukis*

Other amphibians known to use vernal pools include cousins to the spotted salamander: Marbled, Blue-spotted and Eastern Tiger Salamanders (a New York State endangered species), Red-spotted Newts, Eastern Spadefoots, Gray Treefrogs and Pickerel Frogs.

Many other forms of life thrive in these “wicked little puddles”. One fascinating species are fairy shrimp, small krill-like crustaceans that swim about the water column “upside down” with females carrying egg clusters in their tail appendage. This species is quite adept at surviving dry periods even when vernal pools remain dry for several consecutive years, such as during a drought. How does a fairy shrimp survive prolonged dry periods? Fairy shrimp eggs are cyst like and can tolerate complete desiccation, extreme cold, harsh UV exposure and other extreme environmental conditions and come out of it no worse for the wear. They are the definition of tough! The eggs are even known to travel through the digestive system of ducks (several species of waterfowl routinely feed on fairy shrimp),

unscathed by the bird’s digestive acids. It is thought this pathway explains how shrimp colonize new pools.

Many other invertebrates frequent vernal pools, including water bugs and beetles, midges, mites, and mosquitoes, dragonflies and damselflies, worms, snails and clams, and copepods. They are all tied together with amphibians and other vertebrates in a complex food web of “eat and be eaten”.

For many vernal pool inhabitants, including amphibians, there is a clock always ticking. Animals speed to complete stages of their life cycle before the pools dry up, which is certain death for tadpoles that have not yet completed metamorphosis. Some eggs hatch as quickly as a couple of days. But it may take tadpoles a few weeks to undergo the miracle of metamorphosis. Some grow more rapidly by dining on the aforementioned fairy shrimp, a plentiful source of protein in the pool.

For these vernal pool inhabitants to survive it is not enough to protect

the pool and pool basin. Wood Frogs, Spotted Salamanders and many other amphibians migrate from the pools once breeding is done to spend the summer and winter in upland habitat around the pools. “Around” is a relative term as it may involve distances of several hundred feet to a thousand feet from the pool. Thus, protecting upland habitats around vernal pools is vital. Protecting upland areas between pools is ideal!

The Seatuck Environmental Association, through funding from the Long Island Community Foundation, has begun an effort to locate and characterize all the vernal pools situated on Long Island. This project is well underway. In a second phase, we hope to provide a series of recommendations for public and private property owners to better manage and protect their vernal pools and the species that utilize them.

Vernal pools are fascinating places to explore – little microcosms of ecosystems. They are truly “wicked little puddles” but possessed with so much more.

# Discovering the Carolina Mantis in Matheson Meadows

Guest author Lisa deGuzman, Matheson Meadows Neighbor



An egg case of the Carolina Mantis

Walking through Matheson Meadows two winters ago, shortly after the Land Alliance took over their management, I observed that there were many pale brown praying mantis egg cases visible on the bare stems of milkweed, goldenrod and other native wildflowers. More accurately these are called ootheca. I also noticed another type of ootheca that was smoother, flatter and elongated. It had a sequence of lighter and darker brown stripes and sported a fairly bright chartreuse green stripe down the middle.

Later that winter, during a lecture at the Brooklyn Botanical Garden, I learned that there are several different species of praying mantis. The invasive and non-native Chinese mantis (*Tenodera sinensis*) and the European mantis (*Mantis religiosa*) are the two most prevalent mantis species found in this area. The Carolina mantis is native to the United States but not commonly found in New York. The mysterious striped cocoon I found in Matheson Meadows belonged to our native Carolina mantis (*Stagmomantis carolina*)!

The invasive species outcompete the Carolina mantis for food sources and even enjoy the Carolina mantis as a meal. It is recommended to keep the invasive mantis populations in check by disposing of their egg cases before they hatch. The invasive mantis egg cases can be crushed or cut open and submerged in water. They also make a tasty snack for chickens and pet reptiles such as lizards and snakes. If you find the native Carolina mantis ootheca, do not disturb the egg case so the mantis

nymphs may overwinter and hatch in the spring.

Armed with this information, my family tagged Carolina mantis ootheca in three or four locations within the Matheson Meadows to prevent them from being harmed during the annual spring mowing. We also removed and destroyed over two hundred of the invasive variety. This year with the help of neighbors we were able to tag the Carolina ootheca in over twenty locations and removed one hundred of the invasive variety.

The Matheson Meadows are a continual source of delight. The fields and sky change color almost by the minute. There is always something new to see, observe and wonder about. We see bluebirds, mockingbirds, tree swallows. Oftentimes red-tailed hawks circle overhead, and white-tailed deer go bounding by. It has been a joyful experience to learn about and help perpetuate the Carolina mantis and to join the ranks of citizen scientists everywhere doing their part to help wildlife near their homes.

- A female mantis will lay her eggs in fall around September and October. She covers her eggs with a foamy substance, which hardens similar to the texture of Styrofoam.
- Depending on the species, an egg mass can come in many different shapes and contain hundreds of eggs, although only a small portion of these nymphs will survive into adulthood.
- The invasive mantis consumes pests, but they also consume a large number of beneficial pollinators such as butterflies, native bees, small birds and other native insects including the Carolina mantis.
- The large Chinese mantis has also been known to feed on small reptiles, amphibians and even the occasional small hummingbird.

The Land Alliance is grateful to the deGuzman family for their important work and the care they have taken in stewarding this wonderful neighborhood preserve. Please give us a call if you would like to get involved in a preserve project near you.

# The Joyce C. and William C. O’Neil Stewards Program Update

We are excited to announce that we have received applications from many qualified candidates and from those chosen three interns for the summer 2021 class. They will begin their internship the first week of June. The O’Neil Stewards Program is designed to provide college-age students a well-rounded experience, providing a glimpse of what the world of environmental non-profits is like, along with hands-on stewardship experience on Land Alliance properties. This summer, these students will conduct plant surveys and wildlife

inventories, maintain trails, manage invasive species, learn to monitor conservation easements and lead environmental programs for children. This most valuable program gives the Land Alliance additional capacity to not only maintain but improve our preserved lands for the benefit of the public and for our ecosystems.

With thanks to the William C. and Joyce C. O’Neil Charitable Trust for funding this critical program.

**With the help of these talented interns, we look forward to a productive and fun-filled summer!**



**Danielle Moore** - Danielle is currently a senior Sustainability Studies major at Stony Brook University. Last summer she worked in Colorado with the Rocky Mountain Conservancy and the US Forest Service performing trail maintenance, removing invasive species and building new trails. Danielle is passionate about conservation and protecting our natural resources. When she is not working, she loves to go to the beach, hike and try new foods!



**Emily Power** - Emily Power is a native New Yorker and a rising junior studying Conservation Biology at Middlebury College. She joins the Land Alliance with experience in environmental activism, natural sciences, farming, and education. After recently completing an internship focused on limiting greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture in her college town, Emily is thrilled to follow her passion for protecting natural spaces and wildlife while continuing to develop her skills with the North Shore Land Alliance!



**Kaitlyn Cunningham** - Born and raised on Long Island, Kaitlyn Cunningham is a rising senior at Vassar College currently studying Chemistry and Earth Science. Kaitlyn has taken various environmental courses and worked with EcoLeaders to remove invasive vines and establish a pollinator garden on campus. She is particularly interested in water systems and their protection. Kaitlyn enjoys spending time outside surrounded by plants and rocks to identify, swimming or reading.

## Friends Academy Students

Many thanks to Friends Academy students Ella Barry, Zander Byers and Carleigh Zelman for choosing the Land Alliance for their year-end internship placement. Their valuable assistance and “can do” spirit are very helpful and give us hope about the future stewardship of our natural areas.



## Volunteers Enhance and Optimize Our Land Protection Efforts



*Michael Veracka*



*Kathy Gaffney and Audrey Thomas*



*Hal Johnson*



*Daniel Nyohaku Soergel*



*Mary Shimono and her daughter Rose*



*Karen De Mauro*

For a recent Board meeting our volunteer coordinator, Peter Markotsis, analyzed the work contributed by volunteers during the first quarter of 2021 and revealed that 37 volunteers had contributed 350 hours of their time to the Land Alliance in three short winter months. Throughout the Land Alliance's lifetime, we've had hundreds of dedicated individuals donating their time to enhance and optimize our land protection efforts. Several volunteers join us week after week, year after year. Others sign up for a summer. Still others were part of a group, like a high school environmental club or a local boys and girls club, working to accomplish a specific task at one of our preserves. We are very grateful to all of them for their many contributions. Our volunteers work in the field and in the office, educating others about land conservation, helping to maintain a nature preserve or preparing for a fundraising event.

### **In this issue of *Conservation News*, we would like to highlight a few of our volunteers:**

While photography is not the only activity Jan Guga contributes to the Land Alliance, it is the one with

the most lasting legacy. Jan has spent countless hours documenting the beauty of our preserves in all seasons, the wildlife that occupy them and the stewardship activities taking place there. We have used many of his photos in our newsletters and on our website, and at the end of each year look forward to the calendar holiday gifts he makes for staff.

Since its opening three years ago, the Roosevelt Community Garden has benefited from generous contributions of time and expertise from Cornell Cooperative Extension – Nassau County and the Master Gardeners who volunteer at nearby East Meadow Farm. The work of two gardeners in particular, Kathy Gaffney and Audrey Thomas, merits special attention. Their many hours of garden maintenance and teaching other gardeners are invaluable to the Garden's success.

As mentioned earlier, we have a number of volunteers we consider tried and true for their MANY hours of stewardship over time. Peter O'Connor, who joined us just last fall, has joined the tried and true. There is nary



*Eastern Bluebird Photo by Jan Guga*



*Peter O'Connor*

a scheduled volunteer day in which he does not take part, or a preserve he hasn't helped maintain. Peter also has exceptional talent for helping new volunteers acclimate to our varied preserves and volunteer work and has taken on a well-earned and particularly caring leadership role.

And in this year after the John P. Humes Japanese Stroll Garden's busiest year yet, we would like to recognize a few of the volunteers who have, in the years since the Land Alliance has owned the Garden (and in some cases many years prior to that time!) contributed to programming during the season from May through October when the Garden holds open hours. Daniel Nyohaku Soergel has eloquently provided the haunting sounds of shakuhachi flute and educated Garden visitors for countless Saturdays. Mary Shimono helps with both Garden stewardship and program assistance (and has recently begun, with her daughter, Rose, working in our other preserves). Karen De Mauro and Hal Johnson have donated their expertise in the form of storytelling and bonsai displays for years. And long-

time Stroll Garden supporter Michael Veracka has educated dozens of visitors about some of the Garden's most asked-about species: bamboo.

Thank you all for your dedication and caring, and kudos to our growing volunteer family. To learn more about our Volunteers for Open Space Program, visit us online at [www.northshorelandalliance.org](http://www.northshorelandalliance.org) or send an email to [volunteers@northshorelandalliance.org](mailto:volunteers@northshorelandalliance.org).

### **Remembrance from JF Purell**

You know you enjoy something when three hours seems like two.... When I walked down to the water, a bird I hadn't heard before chirped at me. When I looked across the water I was amazed at the tranquility that came over me. When I looked down and saw a shining rock saying: "Pick me up...", I did. You know you are in the right place and state of mind, per above. I said to myself: "JF, you may not have a million dollar home, but you just had a million dollar experience!" That's why I'm volunteering for the North Shore Land Alliance!



### **Botsy's Bridge at the Humes Preserve**

Users of the woodland path and Botsy's Bridge at Humes know how muddy the trail can get approaching the bridge from the west. We would like to express our appreciation to volunteers Ken Krumenacker, who nimbly used materials on the property to quickly alleviate the problem last fall, and Tim Hanes who then, over the winter, constructed and installed a bog bridge at the site.

## Barbara Ernst Prey Print Sale in Support of the Land Alliance



*Barbara Ernst Prey, Osprey Nest, 2020, watercolor on paper 29.75 in. x 41.25 in.*

Artist Barbara Ernst Prey is generously donating 50% of the proceeds from the sale of select limited edition prints to the North Shore Land Alliance. A naturalist and Long Island native, Prey has painted powerful vibrant views of our landscape for over 40 years. In these deeply personal works she explores the delicacy, complexity and interconnectedness that exist within the natural world. As she prefers to paint on site, open

spaces have visibly played a central role in her paintings.

Visit [www.barbaraprey.com/new-digital-prints](http://www.barbaraprey.com/new-digital-prints) to view the works available for sale. By purchasing one or more of these beautiful prints, you will be helping the Land Alliance preserve the natural areas that protect our waters and provide so much inspiration for artists.



### Bluebird Boxes

We were delighted to accept the donation of three bluebird boxes from Wild Birds Unlimited of Syosset and an additional three boxes from Ann Lotowycz following observations of bluebirds in the Suzy and Carter Bales meadow at Humes. These generous gifts are enriching meadow habitat while contributing to visitors' education about the importance of local wildlife. Some of the boxes, installed in March by a small group of volunteers led by Marty Wenz, already have occupants. We ask that both man and beast observe from afar so as not to disturb this very important cycle of life.

## 2020 Annual Donor Report

Thank you to our members and friends for your financial support last year. Your donations are critical to our ability to protect and steward open space, provide on-going educational programs and connect more people to nature.



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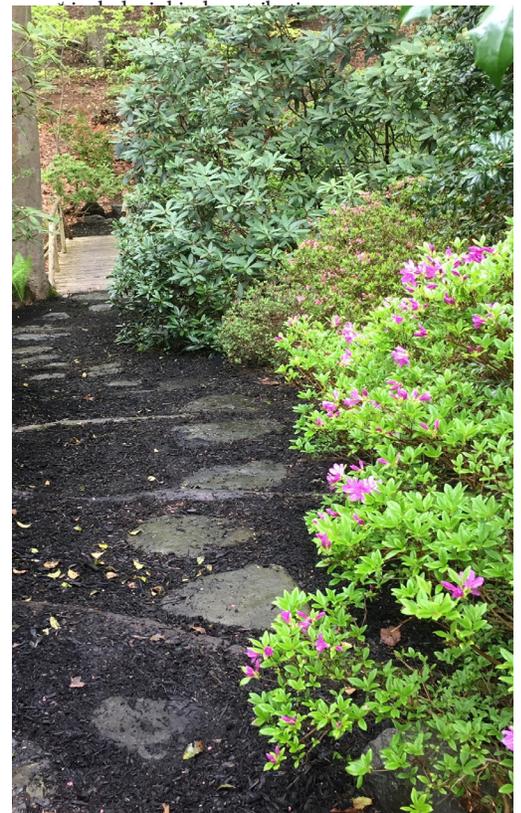
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## Planning Has Begun for a New Headquarters at Humes



SOUTH WEST VIEW



NORTH WEST VIEW



SOUTH EAST VIEW



NORTH EAST VIEW



### **Golf and Tennis Outing**

Tuesday, May 25, Piping Rock Club, Locust Valley

### **Heritage Committee Summer Soiree**

Saturday, July 10, Humes Preserve, Locust Valley

### **Open Space Society Dinner**

Saturday, June 19, Private Residence, Locust Valley

### **Wine Auction & Dinner**

Saturday, October 2, Location to Be Announced

### **Annual Members Meeting**

Saturday, November 6

Land Alliance Planting Fields Office, Oyster Bay

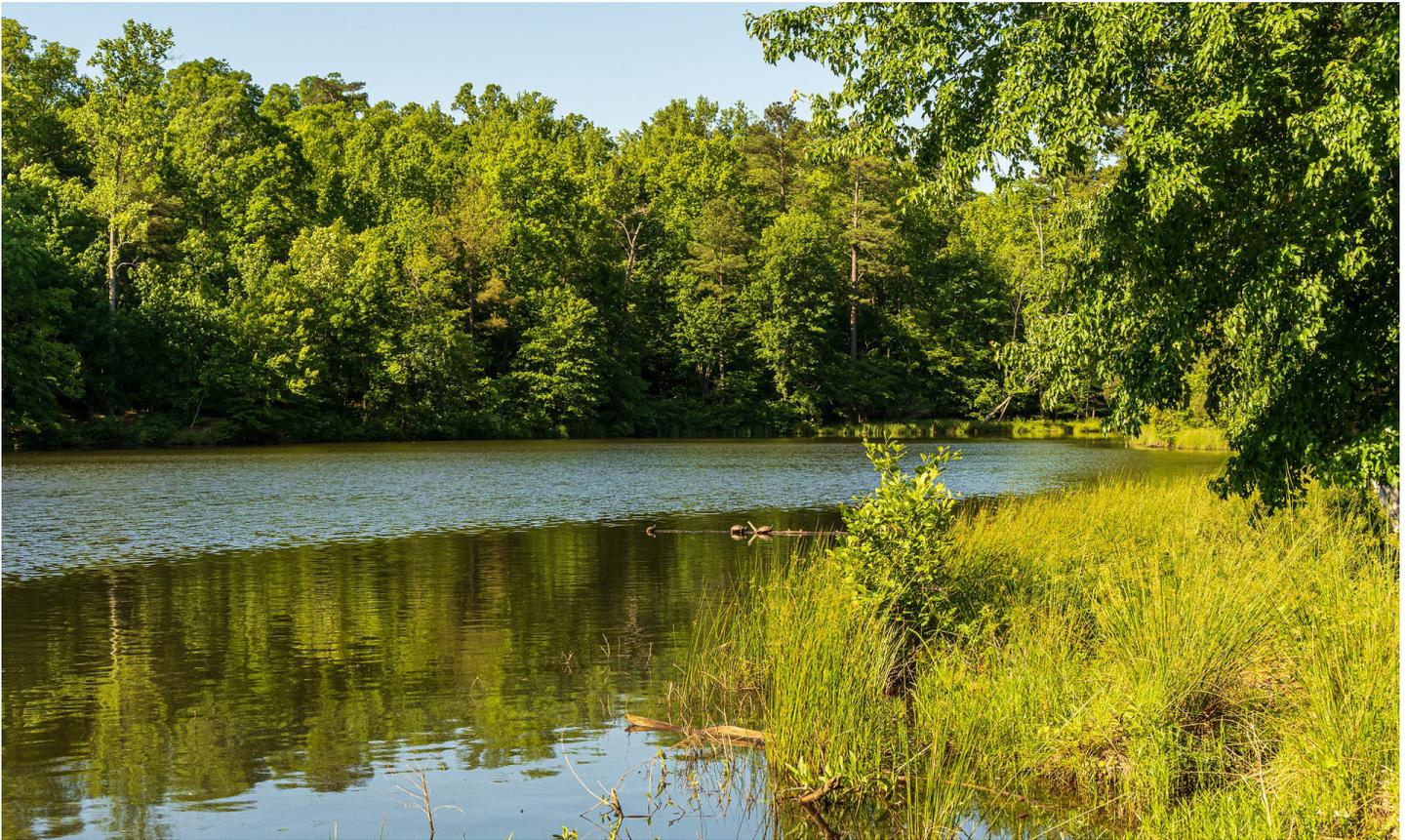


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The North Shore Land Alliance is a nationally accredited, 501(C) (3) non-profit land trust formed to protect and preserve, in perpetuity, the green spaces, farmlands, wetlands, groundwater and historical sites of Long Island's north shore for the enhancement of quality of life and benefit of future generations.



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