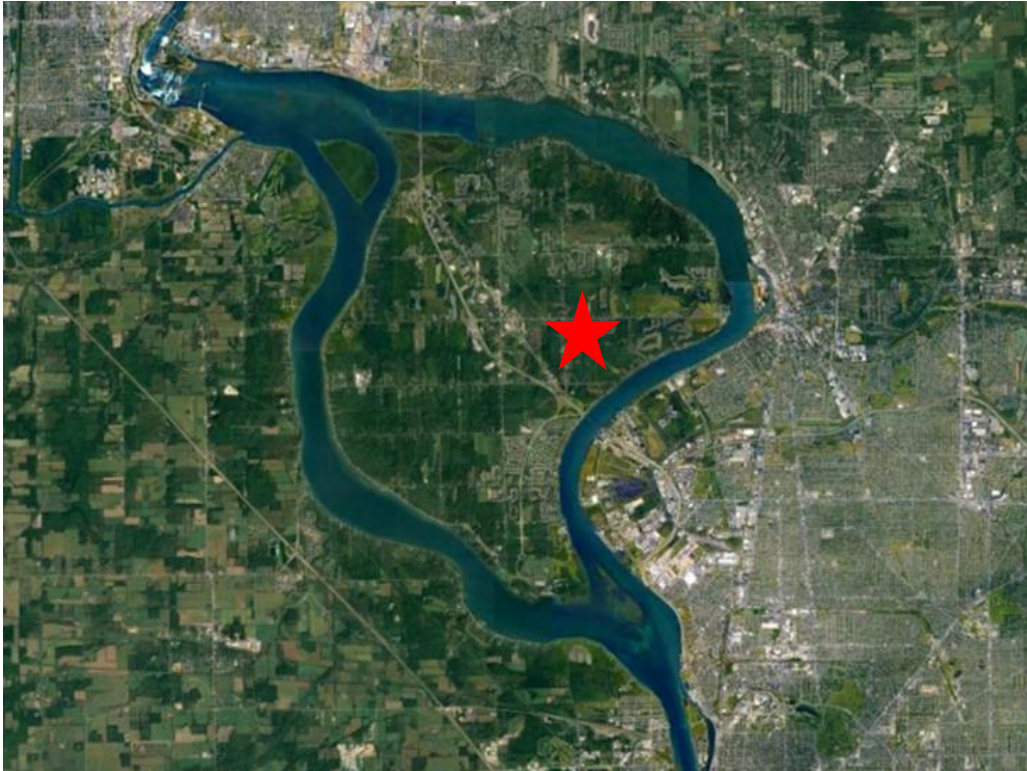


# CREATING MEADOWSWEET NATURE PRESERVE



**Prepared for:**

**NIAGARA RIVER GREENWAY COMMISSION**  
**Project Consultation and Review**

**Prepared by:**  
**Western New York Land Conservancy**  
**June 10, 2022**

## **Niagara River Greenway Commission Consultation and Review Form**

Date of Submittal:

June 13, 2022

Project Registration Number (*office use only*):

Type of Review Required (please check one):

☒ Mandatory Consultation for proposals seeking Greenway Funding

☐ Voluntary Review and/or Endorsement for proposals not seeking Greenway Funding

### **PROJECT SPONSOR INFORMATION**

Name:	Western New York Land Conservancy
Mailing Address:	P.O. Box 471, East Aurora
State:	New York
Zip Code:	14052
Federal ID#:	22-3160426
Charities Registration #:	05-27-68

### **PROJECT TYPE** (Please check only ONE)

☐ Trail Development / Improvement

☐ Interpretation / Cultural Monuments

☒ Ecosystem / Riparian Habitat Restoration

☐ Stewardship

☐ Niagara River Greenway Placemaking / Public Access / Wayfinding

### **FUNDING COMMITTEE**

☐ Host Community Standing Committee

☒ Ecological Standing Committee

☐ Buffalo and Erie County Standing Committee

☐ State Parks Standing Committee

☐ Unsure at this time / N/A

### **TOTAL AMOUNT REQUESTED**

\$439,218

### **ADDITIONAL FUNDING FROM OTHER SOURCES**

Source	Amount
Outside source to be secured	\$10,000

**PROJECT INFORMATION**

Project Name:	<u>Meadowsweet Nature Preserve</u>
Location (include GPS coordinates if possible):	1290 Whitehaven Rd, Grand Island, NY 14075
Project Site Address:	1290 Whitehaven Rd, Grand Island, NY 14075
State:	New York
Zip Code:	14075
Minor Civil Division(s):	Grand Island
County:	Erie
Project Proponent Property Interest (own, lease, easement or other):	Own. The Land Conservancy seeks to purchase the parcel.

**AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL**

Name:	Nancy R. Smith
Title:	Executive Director
Business Address:	P.O. Box 471, East Aurora
State:	New York
Zip Code:	14052
Work Number:	716-687-1225
Cell Number:	
E-Mail Address:	<a href="mailto:Nancyrs@wnylc.org">Nancyrs@wnylc.org</a>

**PROJECT POINT OF CONTACT**

Name:	Jajeon Rose-Burney
Title:	Deputy-Executive Director
Organization / Firm:	Western New York Land Conservancy
Business Address:	P.O. Box 471, East Aurora
State:	New York
Zip Code:	14052
Work Number:	716-687-1225
Cell Number:	
E-Mail Address:	<a href="mailto:Jaiean.rose@wnylc.org">Jaiean.rose@wnylc.org</a>

## **PROJECT NARRATIVE**

Please attach material which responds to the following six items in the order that they are presented.

1. ***In a brief paragraph, describe the project and its purpose, how and when it will be accomplished, and why it is important.***

The Western New York Land Conservancy will purchase and permanently protect 25 ecologically important acres on Grand Island. We will then transform the land into the Meadowsweet Nature Preserve, which will be part of an emerging network of conserved lands on Grand Island. The land to be purchased is a portion of the property currently owned by Cornerstone Church, and they have decided they want the land protected and will sell it to the Land Conservancy. The land is one of the best examples of shrub wetlands and has some of the most exquisite and intact amphibian habitat on Grand Island. It is home to many rare and protected plants and animals. As a healthy wetland, the land prevents flooding in surrounding communities and cleans stormwater and its way to the Niagara River. Unfortunately, this property is threatened, and its protection now is important. If not protected by the Land Conservancy, the land could be sold for development. Without the Land Conservancy's stewardship, invasive plant species, like buckthorn, could continue to spread and degrade the ecosystem.

The property is primarily composed of Successional Shrubland, most of it wetlands. Small areas of Successional Old Field and Wet Meadow are embedded within this, as well as Vernal Pools and scattered trees. An old hedgerow along the southern edge of the property includes some large old oaks with spreading limbs. Once the Land Conservancy purchases the property, we will begin controlling invasive plant species there. We will also install a small parking area and a 100-ft ADA accessible boardwalk to a seating area for birdwatching. These initial habitat improvements and public access improvements are part of this project proposal. The Land Conservancy will complete the purchase in 2023, make public access improvements in 2024, treat invasive species on an ongoing basis, and monitor the property yearly.

This work is the result of the Land Conservancy's ongoing Greenway / Grand Island Land Protection Program, which began in 2018. This program was supported by the Niagara River Greenway Commission, and was funded by the Greenway Ecological Standing Committee, with additional support from the Town of Grand Island. The purpose of that program is to identify lands on Grand Island that have important wildlife habitat, including forests, meadows, wetlands, and streams, and to identify landowners who want to voluntarily protect their own land. The project being proposed in this application is the result of the first four years of that program.

2. ***Referring to the Niagara River Greenway Plan, clearly document and describe how the proposed project will advance the Niagara River Greenway vision including the goals, principles, and criteria that define that vision.***

The proposed project is perfectly aligned with the Niagara River Greenway Plan. It is a result of the Land Conservancy's Greenway Land Protection Program that was determined to be consistent with the Plan in 2017, and that was funded by the Greenway Ecological Standing Committee (GESC) in 2018. The project protects the ecological resources of the Greenway, connects people to those resources, and expands the "corridor of places, parks and landscapes" envisioned by the Greenway Plan. Land protection like this project is specifically recommended in the Greenway Plan.

Meadowsweet Nature Preserve builds on the Niagara River Greenway Principles in the following ways.

1. **Excellence:** It is the Land Conservancy's mission to permanently protect land with significant conservation value in Western New York. In our 31-year history we have helped protect more than 7,000 acres of land,

including farms, forests and scenic vistas on nearly 100 properties. Many of our protected lands are open to the public. The Land Conservancy is a nationally-accredited land trust. In all of our work, the Land Conservancy has adopted and strives to exceed the Standards and Practices set forth by the Land Trust Alliance, a national conservation organization that establishes best practices for land trusts.

2. **Sustainability:** The Land Conservancy will take measures to ensure that the property, its habitats, and the ecological services that it provides are protected into the future. The Land Conservancy will ensure the economic sustainability of protecting the property by contributing to a stewardship and legal defense fund to help cover ongoing costs.
3. **Accessibility:** At Meadowsweet Nature Preserve, the Land Conservancy will install an ADA accessible boardwalk to a bird watching area with seating. The preserve will be maintained as a publicly accessible nature preserve.
4. **Ecological Integrity:** This project protects important ecological communities and wildlife habitat. The parcel is predominantly Successional Shrubland and wetlands. The wetlands feed into Spicer Creek and the Niagara River. The project will help sustain rare plants and animals, and Species of Greatest Conservation Need.
5. **Public Well-being:** The project will help maintain the character of Grand Island and will provide outdoor recreation in nature. All of this will increase the quality of life of nearby communities, and will improve health outcomes for people of all ages. The project will also support the local economy. Outdoor recreation attracts visitors, creates jobs, and generates spending. Property values increase when they are adjacent to protected greenspaces. The property, in its natural state, helps clean our air and our fresh water, and reduces flooding. Protecting the property will help protect those important ecosystem services.
6. **Connectivity:** The project will connect people to the Greenway and to nature. Meadowsweet Nature Preserve is 2.4 miles from Spicer Creek Wildlife Management Area, 2.7 miles from Scenic Woods, 2.7 miles from the Gallogly Nature Sanctuary, 3.1 miles from Buckhorn Island State Park, and 3.8 miles from Beaver Island State Park. It is also only 600 feet from a Town-owned forest. The property is adjacent to a potential trail system identified in the Town's Comprehensive Plan.
7. **Restoration:** The Land Conservancy is committed to the enhancement and restoration of degraded landscapes. The Land Conservancy will control invasive species and restore wildlife habitat at Meadowsweet Nature Preserve.
8. **Authenticity:** The property is home to the iconic natural heritage of Grand Island. The project will preserve the sense-of-place that makes Grand Island a showcase for the entire Niagara River Greenway.
9. **Celebration:** By prioritizing and protecting land that most typifies the Greenway vision, we will promote the recognition, interpretation, and celebration of the "natural, cultural, recreational, and scenic...resources" that make this region unique.
10. **Partnerships:** The project is supported by Cornerstone Church's leadership and congregation, the Town of Grand Island, and many other elected officials. The property to be protected is the result of the Land Conservancy's Greenway Land Protection Program, a partnership between the Land Conservancy, the Niagara River Greenway Commission, and the Greenway Ecological Standing Committee that allowed the Land Conservancy to proactively identify and work with the landowner. The Land Conservancy will continue to work with stakeholders including elected officials, community leaders, and partner organizations.
11. **Community-based:** The concept for Meadowsweet Nature Preserve was made possible by the Greenway Land Protection Program. The Greenway Land Protection Program was inspired by community members themselves who have expressed concerns about rapid development that is taking place and the loss of valuable open spaces. The landowner of the property to be protected, Cornerstone Church, has chosen to work with the Land Conservancy. Cornerstone Church is one of Grand Island's largest church congregations. The Town of Grand Island supports this work.

The proposed Meadowsweet Nature Preserve achieves all of the goals of the Niagara River Greenway Plan:

1. **Improve Access:** The proposed project will create a new publicly accessible nature preserve that supports low-impact outdoor recreation. The boardwalk installed on the property will be ADA accessible, increasing access to nature for people with disabilities. Protecting this property will provide access to important habitat for wildlife in the Niagara River Greenway.
2. **Make Connections:** The project will contribute to the Greenway's landscape-scale ecosystem connectivity by creating a new protected area. Meadowsweet Nature Preserve is 2.4 miles from Spicer Creek Wildlife Management Area, 2.7 miles from Scenic Woods, 2.7 miles from the Gallogly Nature Sanctuary, 3.1 miles from Buckhorn Island State Park, and 3.8 miles from Beaver Island State Park. It is also only 600 feet from a Town-owned forest. The property is adjacent to a potential trail system identified in the Town's Comprehensive Plan.
3. **Protect and Restore Environmental Systems:** The project will protect unique and threatened ecological resources including Successional Shrubland, most of it wet, with interspersed vernal pools and scattered trees. The land drains into Spicer Creek, which is only 600 feet to the south. These habitats support rare and protected plants and animals and Species of Greatest Conservation Need. The Land Conservancy will restore wildlife habitat by controlling invasive plant species and adding native plants.
4. **Spark Revitalization and Renewal:** The project will strengthen an awareness of the importance of our natural heritage for the growing recreation and tourism economy on Grand Island.
5. **Promote Long Term Sustainability:** The basic goal of this project is the protection of irreplaceable resources that provide long-term ecosystem services including flood control, water quality benefits, and wildlife habitat. The property will be protected in perpetuity.
6. **Extend Olmsted's Legacy:** This project will protect a property in the Greenway, and thus will help strengthen Olmsted's vision of a necklace of open spaces along the length of the Niagara River.
7. **Celebrate History and Heritage:** The project will protect a property that is emblematic of our unique natural heritage. The protected property will provide a living testament of the unique history and heritage of the Greenway corridor. As a publicly accessible nature preserve, the property will offer opportunities for interpretive programming.

And lastly, the project measures well in relation to the evaluative criteria established in the Niagara River Greenway Action Plan.

1. **Consistency with Principles:** The project is guided by the same 11 principles that guide the Niagara River Greenway Plan and will extend and strengthen those principles and outcomes.
2. **Priority Status:** This project mirrors the very same priorities designated in the Niagara River Greenway Plan. The newly protected natural area can be part of an "integrated trail and park system." Protecting land will be part of the "restoration of the Niagara River ecosystem." A new nature preserve will allow for "interpretation and education about the region's cultural, natural and historic resources."
3. **Focus Areas:** The project is all within the Niagara River Greenway boundary, and is very near the Greenway Focus Area.
4. **Environmental Soundness:** Environmental conservation is at the core of the project. The property to be protected has important plants and animals, and provides ecosystem services that positively impact the Niagara River and Greenway communities.
5. **Implementable:** The Land Conservancy has a strong track record of protecting land, creating new trails, and restoring wildlife habitat. The project has landowner support and Town support. The project does not require review under the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA).
6. **Economic viability:** The project budget is based on appraisals for property value and the Land Conservancy's previous experience with similar projects.
7. **Local Sponsor or Partner:** The Land Conservancy will be responsible for the project. We will own and operate Meadowsweet Nature Preserve, where we will conduct habitat restoration and public access improvements.
8. **Matching or Leveraged Funds:** The project will have an approximate total of \$10,000 of Non-Greenway, leveraged resources. This includes approximately \$2,000 of in-kind volunteer work to remove invasive

species and promote the growth of native species, and \$8,000 for invasive species control and native plantings to be sought from outside sources.

We will seek additional non-Greenway resources for the project. The Land Conservancy has secured hundreds of thousands of dollars of non-Greenway funds for similar projects in the past from individual donors and other grants.

9. **Consideration of Other Planning Efforts:**

- The Town of Grand Island's Comprehensive plan highlights the islands' natural resources as its biggest asset. The town aims to capitalize on its natural resources through trails and greenways (pg 33, 2018 Master Plan). The plan states that the Town's natural assets have a significant impact on economic development and overall quality of life, including open spaces and trails. Conserving open spaces was one of the top priorities discussed by town residents during the creation of the Comprehensive Plan. The Town of Grand Island's Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan states that "...open space offers aesthetic values through scenic corridors and vistas, agricultural lands, woodlots, waterways and similar spaces. Lands set aside to protect environmentally sensitive features such as wetlands, floodplains, unique sites or stormwater retention and detention areas likewise contribute to the quality of life of the community." The property falls outside of the Town of Grand Island's Local Waterfront Revitalization Program boundary, but this project is aligned with the conservation and recreation policies of the plan.
- The NYS Open Space Conservation Plan recommends protecting ecological corridors, exceptional forests, significant wetlands, and land in the Niagara River Greenway. It prioritizes the protection of the Niagara River watershed.
- The draft work plan for the NYS DEC's Great Lakes Action Agenda includes a goal to "Expand/enhance habitat and connectivity for fish, birds and other wildlife". It includes an action to "Permanently protect important habitats to connect existing protected lands, especially along ecological corridors including our lakes, rivers, streams and escarpments", and the Niagara River Greenway ecological corridor is specifically referenced.
- By protecting wetlands, the program advances the Niagara River Remedial Action Plan (RAP) and will contribute to the de-listing of two Beneficial Use Impairments of the Niagara River Area of Concern: loss of fish and wildlife habitat and degradation of fish and wildlife populations.
- Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper's 2015 Niagara River Greenway Habitat Conservation Strategy prioritizes protecting and connecting natural areas in the Greenway. Land on Grand Island is called out in the plan.

10. **Clear Benefits:** Protecting this property ensures that it will remain in its natural state, and create a new publicly accessible nature preserve. The parcel includes wetlands that filter and improve water quality, while also preventing flooding of neighboring property. Meadowsweet Nature Preserve's habitat supports Species of Greatest Conservation Need.

3. **Define the budget for the total proposed project and include costs for the following:**

Sources of Funds	Total
Greenway Ecological Standing Committee (to be requested)	\$439,218
Leveraged Funds (to be secured)	\$10,000
<b>Total Sources of Funds</b>	<b>\$449,218</b>
Uses of Funds	
Planning	\$1,500
Construction	\$102,500
Acquisition	\$174,896
Administration	\$21,134
Operations/Maintenance	\$127,796
Contingency (5%)	\$21,392
<b>Total Uses of Funds</b>	<b>\$449,218</b>

**Project Budget (Uses of Funds):**

- **Planning:** \$1,500 – the development of a management plan by Land Conservancy staff.
- **Construction:** \$102,500 – Build an ADA compliant boardwalk to a birdwatching seating area (\$40,000); invasive species control and restoration (\$40,000); create a parking area (\$10,000); create a welcome sign with property information and map (\$5,000); staff time to manage community engagement, public access improvements, and habitat restoration (\$7,500).
- **Acquisition:** \$174,896 – Land purchase price (\$133,000); attorney's fees (\$9,000); title search (\$750), title insurance (\$688); phase one environmental assessment (\$1,800); recording fees (\$200); boundary description (\$350); baseline documentation report (\$2,750); appraisals (\$3,500); survey and mark boundaries (\$5,000); Boundary signs (\$26); Legal defense fund contribution (\$5,000); Land Conservancy staff time (\$12,832).
- **Administration:** \$21,134 – indirect / overhead costs (15% of all costs except for the purchase price, stewardship fund contribution, and legal defense fund contribution).
- **Operations and Maintenance:** \$127,796 – stewardship fund contribution for long-term preserve management (funds are invested, and are calculated by dividing annual costs of \$5,112 by 4%, an estimated annual rate of return). The preserve will be monitored yearly and the stewardship fund will pay for necessary improvements and invasive species treatments as needed.
- **Contingency:** \$21,392 – Estimated to be 5% of all of the costs above.

**Project Budget (Sources of Funds):**

- \$439,218 from the Greenway Ecological Standing Committee. This will pay for all of the Planning, Acquisition, Administrative costs, Operation and Maintenance costs (Land Conservancy stewardship fund), and Contingency costs. It will pay for most of the Construction costs (except for a portion of the invasive species control and native plantings).
- \$10,000 of Leveraged Funds. This includes approximately \$8,000 for invasive species control and native plantings to be sought from outside sources, and \$2,000 of in-kind volunteer work for native plantings.

Operations and Maintenance - The Land Conservancy will create a management plan for the preserve. The preserve will be managed for wildlife habitat protection and for low-impact public access. The Land Conservancy will employ its own stewardship staff, volunteers and outside contractors for long-term management tasks. The Land Conservancy will contribute to a stewardship and legal defense fund to help cover ongoing costs.



4. ***Describe the measures taken at the local level to gain community and government support for this project (hearings, petitions, public surveys, resolutions of support or other methods). If this project has been cited or described in a local planning document or some equivalent thereof, attach copies of that documentation highlighting the sections that are relevant to the proposed project. Describe the role of municipal agencies, stakeholder groups, consultants, volunteers or others who will be involved in the proposed project.***

The project has support from the Town of Grand Island, the Erie County Legislator and several other elected officials, as evidenced in the attached letters of support. The project has support from the landowner, as evidenced by the letter of support that is also attached. The project is aligned with statewide, regional, and local planning documents, as described earlier in this application. The Land Conservancy also emailed information about the project to the GESC representatives from the Tonawanda Seneca Nation and the Tuscarora Nation.

The Land Conservancy will be responsible for the project and we will conduct habitat restoration and public access improvements. The Land Conservancy will own the property and manage it as a publicly accessible nature preserve.

The Land Conservancy has worked with the GESC and the Town of Grand Island to successfully complete similar projects. With funding from the GESC and a private donor, the Land Conservancy purchased a property surrounding the Assumption Cemetery on Whitehaven Road in 2018. This is now called the Margery Gallogly Nature Sanctuary. With funding from that private donor and from the Buffalo and Erie County Greenway Fund Standing Committee (BECGFSC), we constructed a new trail system there. The Gallogly Sanctuary project has already created a lot of public support for land conservation on Grand Island. In 2021, the Land Conservancy purchased and permanently protected two additional parcels on Grand Island, and hopes to close on a third this year. In total, these three parcels will total 90+ acres of protected natural lands.

5. ***Describe and document the environmental setting and existing conditions at the proposed project site. If you are not the owner of the property include a letter(s) or resolution(s) evidencing support for the project by the owner. Provide photographs, conceptual plans and drawings that show the site as it presently exists and how the site will change with the addition of the proposed project. Describe how your project will comply with the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA). The existence of wetlands, significant upland and aquatic habitats, and plant or animal species that are classified as rare, threatened, or endangered should be noted. Explain how such natural resources will be protected and/or enhanced. Cite any relevant project-related studies.***

The 25-acre Meadowsweet Nature Preserve is almost entirely Successional Shrubland, most of it wetlands. Small areas of Successional Old Field and Wet Meadow are embedded within this, as well as Vernal Pools and scattered trees. An old hedgerow along the southern edge of the property includes some large old oaks with spreading limbs. The property drains into Spicer Creek only 600 feet to the south.

The Land Conservancy has not yet conducted in-depth ecological surveys of the flora and fauna of this property. However, the property was selected for protection because of its ecological conditions that were evident on-site visits. Many rare and protected plants and animals likely exist on the property to be protected.

During an initial on-site visit, our stewardship coordinator noted that compositionally, the northern half of this shrubland is very high-quality, consisting of native shrubs like Gray Dogwood, Silky Dogwood, White Meadowsweet, Arrow-wood Viburnum, Nannyberry, and various Hawthorns. Virginia Mountain-Mint is abundant in the herb layer of open areas, and a few more open, higher and drier spots have Poverty Oatgrass/Crustose Lichen soil cover. The southern half is more uniformly dominated by Glossy Buckthorn. Common Buckthorn, Gray Willow, Teasel, Purple Loosestrife and other common invasive species were seen

sporadically throughout, and much of the grass may be Reed Canary Grass. No Phragmites was seen, however. An old hedgerow along the southern edge of the property includes some large old oaks with spreading limbs.

In recent years someone has been clearing and pushing aside brush to create wide paths and clearings for ATV use and hunting. Interestingly, the cleared areas have regenerated heavily in native grasses, sedges and rushes. This suggests that the site retains a well-established seedbank of desirable native species that can be reestablished simply by removing woody vegetation and disturbing the soil surface. This suggests great restoration potential for the areas of Glossy Buckthorn in the southern portion of the site. The many pools seen in old vehicle tracks have surprisingly well-developed communities of aquatic plant species. The vehicle ruts and gouges function as pools that are now surrounded by this vegetation, providing ideal habitat for Western Chorus Frogs. Lots of Chorus Frog breeding activity was observed during the visit.

There are at least 21 species of reptiles and amphibians likely to occur on Grand Island according to the NYS Herp Atlas. This includes one NYS threatened species (Blanding's Turtle) and two NYS special concern species (Jefferson Salamander and Blue-spotted Salamander). Two of these species are considered high priority Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) according to the NYS Wildlife Action Plan (Blue-spotted Salamander and Blanding's Turtle), and four species are considered SGCN (Common Mudpuppy, Western Chorus Frog, Common Map Turtle, and Common Snapping Turtle). Many of the 21 species likely occur on the property to be protected, including Jefferson Salamander and Blue-spotted Salamander. We spotted Western Chorus Frog on the property in numerous vernal pools, as well as American Toad eggs.

There are at least 135 bird species likely to occur in the forests and open areas of Grand Island, and all of these 135 species likely occur on the property to be protected. The number of bird species likely to be present is based on eBird data from woodland and open habitats on Grand Island. The list of 135 species excludes aquatic bird species likely to be only found on the Niagara River off-shore from Grand Island.

- Ten of these bird species are listed in New York State, including one listed as endangered (Peregrine Falcon), two listed as threatened (Northern Harrier, Bald Eagle), and seven listed as special concern (Osprey, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Common Nighthawk, Red-headed Woodpecker, Golden-winged Warbler).
- Nine of these bird species are identified as high priority SGCN by the 2015 New York State Wildlife Action Plan (Common Nighthawk, Red-headed Woodpecker, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Brown Thrasher, Golden-winged Warbler, Cape May Warbler, Bay-breasted Warbler, Canada Warbler, Rusty Blackbird), and fifteen are identified as SGCN (Great Egret, Snowy Egret, Black-crowned Night Heron, Northern Harrier, Bald Eagle, Red-shouldered Hawk, American Woodcock, Black-billed Cuckoo, American Kestrel, Peregrine Falcon, Wood Thrush, Blue-winged Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Prairie Warbler, Scarlet Tanager).
- Many of the protected and SGCN birds likely nest at this property, including American Woodcock, Black-billed Cuckoo, Brown Thrasher, and Blue-winged Warbler.
- The entire Niagara River Corridor is internationally designated as a globally Important Bird Area (IBA), primarily for its role as a bird migration corridor and its congregations of winter waterfowl and gulls. According to the Great Lakes Migratory Bird Portal, many of Grand Island's open spaces rank highly as a migratory stopover site for songbirds.

SEQRA: This project will not require SEQRA.

Proposed Conceptual Plan: We will also install a small parking area and a 100-ft ADA accessible boardwalk to a seating area for birdwatching. A plan for these public access improvements will be developed later.

Property Owner Support: The current property owners provided a letter of support, attached.

6. ***Please attach the proposed project timeline, identify any relevant milestones, and provide an estimated date for project completion/opening. If funded, it is expected that the project sponsor or point of contact will notify the Commission of the project opening date as it nears completion. (Note: This addition to the application was made September 2018.)***

Fall 2022 through Fall 2023

- Purchase the property (title search, full appraisal, phase one environmental review, boundary survey, closing)

Fall 2023 through Fall 2024

- Install public access improvements including a parking lot, an ADA accessible boardwalk to a birdwatching seating area, place boundary signs on perimeter, and place an entry kiosk. Complete the first round of invasive species treatments and restoration.

Fall 2024 through Fall 2025

- Continue controlling invasive plant species

## **ATTACHMENTS**

1. LETTERS OF SUPPORT
2. MAPS
3. PHOTOS
4. TAX EXEMPT STATUS

## 1. LETTERS OF SUPPORT

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May 24, 2022

Gregory D. Stevens  
Niagara River Greenway Commission  
PO Box 1132  
Niagara Falls NY 14303

And

Kerrie Gallo and Ken Baginski  
Co-Chairs, Greenway Ecological Standing Committee  
New York Power Authority  
123 Main Street  
White Plains, NY 10601

Dear Greg, Kerrie, and Ken,

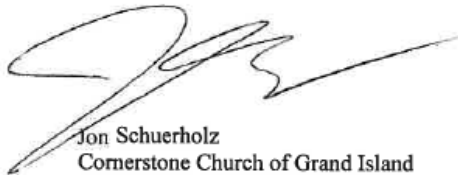
The Cornerstone Church of Grand Island is pleased to sell 25 acres to the Western New York Land Conservancy for permanent protection. Our congregation unanimously voted in favor of selling the parcel and we are pleased to welcome the Land Conservancy as our new neighbor.

The congregation believes that the best use for the land is as a nature preserve so that it can be managed for the benefit of the community now and for future generations.

This 25-acre parcel is composed of successional shrubland and wetlands that are valuable for the flora and fauna of Grand Island. Each spring we can hear a chorus of frogs singing there. Colorful birds nest there throughout the summer. Wildflowers there support bees and butterflies. The Land Conservancy will manage the land to maintain and improve its wildlife habitat. The Land Conservancy will also allow low-impact public access. This new nature preserve will help generate ecotourism to Grand Island, bolstering our economy and benefiting our community.

The Land Conservancy's work across Grand Island in past years has been transformative. On behalf of the leadership of Cornerstone Church and our congregation, I am happy to support the Land Conservancy's application for funding to protect this parcel.

Sincerely,



Jon Schuerholz  
Cornerstone Church of Grand Island

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**Insert Letter of Support from Town of Grand Island Supervisor (in the mail)**

**CHAIR**  
Libraries  
**COMMITTEES**  
Commerce, Economic Development  
and Small Business  
Education  
Health  
Housing, Construction and  
Community Development  
Labor

**THE SENATE  
STATE OF NEW YORK**



**SENATOR  
SEAN M. RYAN  
60<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT**

**ALBANY OFFICE:**  
944 Legislative Office Bldg.  
Albany, New York 12247  
Phone: (518) 455-3240  
Fax: (518) 426-6738

**DISTRICT OFFICE:**  
40 La Riviere Dr., Ste. 121  
Buffalo, NY 14202  
Phone: (716) 854-8705  
Fax: (716) 854-3051

**EMAIL:** ryan@nysenate.gov

May 23, 2022

Greg Stevens  
Executive Director  
Niagara River Greenway Commission  
PO Box 1132  
Niagara Falls, NY 14303

Kerrie Gallo and Ken Baginski  
Greenway Ecological Standing Committee  
New York Power Authority  
123 Main Street  
White Plains, NY 10601

Dear Greg, Kerrie, and Ken,

As the NYS Senator for Grand Island and the rest of the 60<sup>th</sup> Senate District, I am writing to support the Western New York Land Conservancy's efforts to protect important natural areas on Grand Island.

With your support, the Land Conservancy has already had a significant positive impact on the Niagara River Greenway. Further north, they created the Stella Niagara Preserve on the Niagara River in Lewiston. That preserve now has publicly accessible trails and a kayak launch. Right on Grand Island, they created the Margery Gallogly Nature Sanctuary. They opened the trails two years ago, and connected the trails to adjacent Town park. At the Niagara Gorge, the Land Conservancy is restoring wildlife habitat. This work along the gorge will be seen by hundreds of thousands of visitors every year. Last year, the Land Conservancy purchased two additional properties on Grand Island, and will protect a third this year with a conservation easement. All of that work has been supported by the local municipalities and the landowners.

The Land Conservancy would like to protect an additional property on Grand Island. The 25-acre parcel is owned by Cornerstone Church, and the sale of the property to the Land Conservancy is unanimously supported by the congregation members. The new preserve features a unique wetland habitat.

Protecting the new property has the support of the Town of Grand Island. I also support this work. Please consider approving this funding request from the Land Conservancy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sean M. Ryan".

Sean M. Ryan  
New York State Senator, District 60

## ERIE COUNTY LEGISLATURE

HON. JOHN A. BARGNESI, JR.  
4TH DISTRICT LEGISLATOR



X 2165 Sheridan Dr.  
Tonawanda, NY 14223  
716/871-5905  
FAX: 716/871-4122

□ Old County Hall  
92 Franklin St., 4th Fl.  
Buffalo, NY 14202  
716/858-1530  
FAX: 716/858-8895

May 24, 2022

Greg Stevens  
Niagara River Greenway Commission  
PO Box 1132  
Niagara Falls, NY 14303

And

Kerrie Gallo and Ken Baginski  
Co-Chairs, Greenway Ecological Standing Committee  
New York Power Authority  
123 Main Street  
White Plains, NY 10601

Dear Greg, Kerrie, and Ken,

It is my pleasure to voice my strong support for the Western New York Land Conservancy's application to the Greenway Commission and the Greenway Ecological Standing Committee.

The 25-acre property on Whitehaven Road under consideration for funding is a stunning example of the unique ecosystems found on Grand Island. Protecting and opening the preserve to low impact public access is a priority for my community. The Town of Grand Island is also in support of this project. I can't think of a better organization to help make that happen than the Land Conservancy.

Over the past three years, by analyzing land on the island to determine conservation value, the Land Conservancy has played a vital role in Grand Island's efforts to protect and sustain our island for future generations. This includes their recent preservation of the Margery Gallogly Nature Sanctuary, a 145-acre publicly accessible nature preserve. The Land Conservancy protected two new properties on Grand Island in 2021, and will protect a third this year. All of this work is voluntary, done with support from the landowners, and comes with support from the Grand Island Town government.

Their efforts have been instrumental in providing the island, and its residents, tangible benefits in the form of recreational opportunities they will be able to enjoy for years to come. I couldn't be more pleased to support the preservation of an additional property on Grand Island.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John A. Bargnesi, Jr.", is written over a horizontal line.

John A. Bargnesi, Jr.  
Erie County Legislator representing Grand Island

Website: [www.erie.gov/bargnesi](http://www.erie.gov/bargnesi) • E-Mail: [John.BargnesiJr@erie.gov](mailto:John.BargnesiJr@erie.gov)





ANGELO J. MORINELLO  
Assemblyman 145<sup>th</sup> District

THE ASSEMBLY  
STATE OF NEW YORK  
ALBANY

RANKING MINORITY MEMBER  
Veterans' Affairs Committee

COMMITTEES

Codes  
Housing  
Judiciary  
Labor  
Tourism, Parks, Arts and  
Sports Development

May 23, 2022

Greg Stevens  
Niagara River Greenway Commission  
PO Box 1132  
Niagara Falls, NY 14303  
And  
Kerrie Gallo and Ken Baginski  
Co-Chairs, Greenway Ecological Standing Committee  
New York Power Authority  
123 Main Street  
White Plains, NY 10601

Dear Greg, Kerrie, and Ken,

I am writing to offer my support of the Land Conservancy's efforts to protect 25 acres of natural land on Grand Island. The Land Conservancy is working with the owner, Cornerstone Church. The congregation unanimously supports selling the parcel and the parcel is located in a community that supports work by the Land Conservancy. This project is perfectly aligned with the Niagara River Greenway's purpose.

The Niagara River, its islands, shorelines, and surrounding forests define my district. Residents of and visitors to my district boat, fish, and hunt in these natural places. These places shape the cities and towns that I love. Protecting these places will help us protect our important heritage, and will help maintain the high quality of life that our families enjoy today.

The Land Conservancy's work throughout my district in past years has been transformative. In Lewiston, their Stella Niagara Preserve celebrates our history and connects people to the Niagara River. In the Niagara Gorge, they are restoring wildlife habitat so future generations can experience our unique plants and animals. On Grand Island, their recent purchase of the Assumption Cemetery forest, now called the Margery Gallogly Nature Sanctuary, is a model for creating public access to nature.

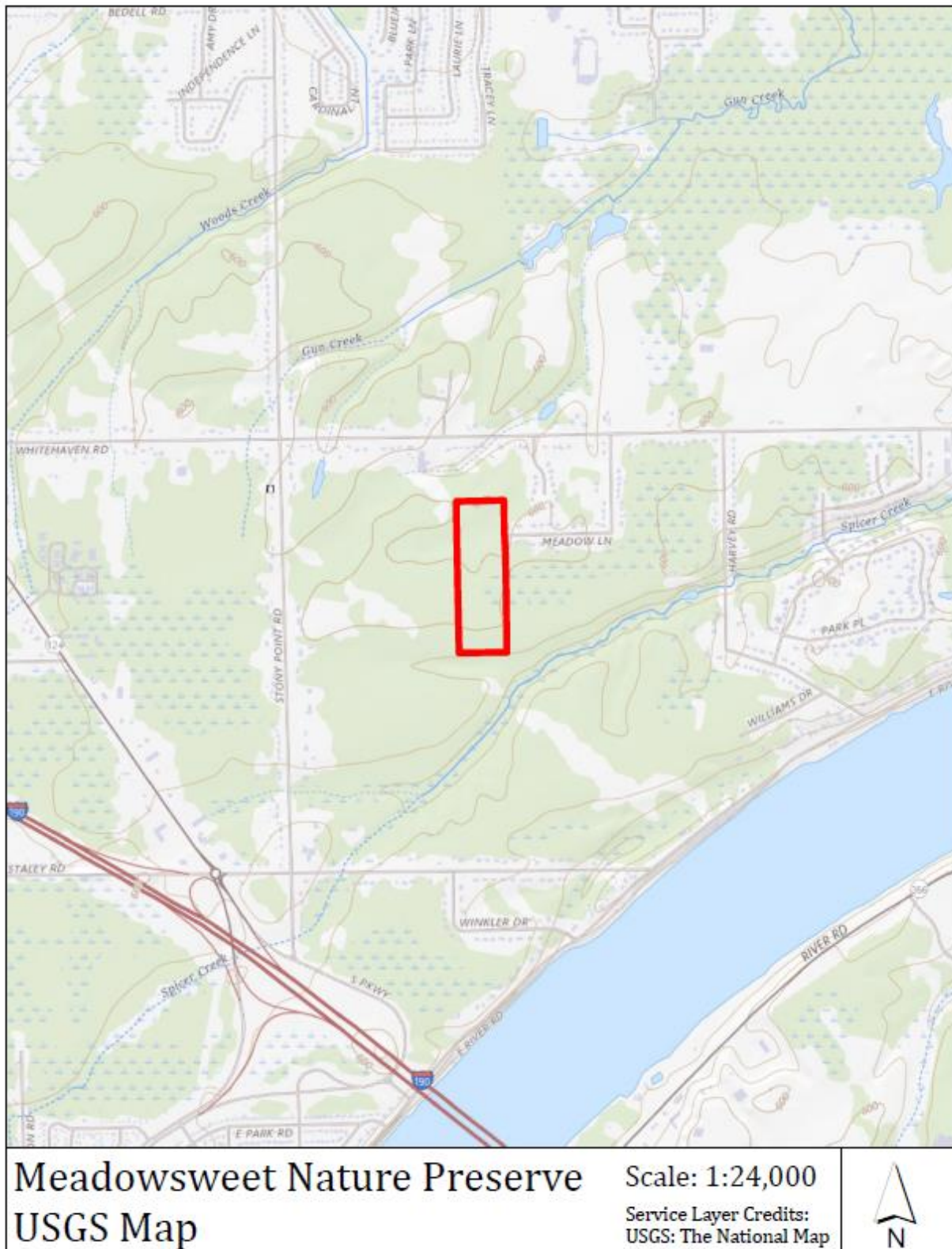
I am proud of the work of the Land Conservancy, and I am grateful to Cornerstone Church and the congregation members who have decided to work with them to protect their land.

Sincerely,

Assemblyman Angelo J. Morinello 145<sup>th</sup> District

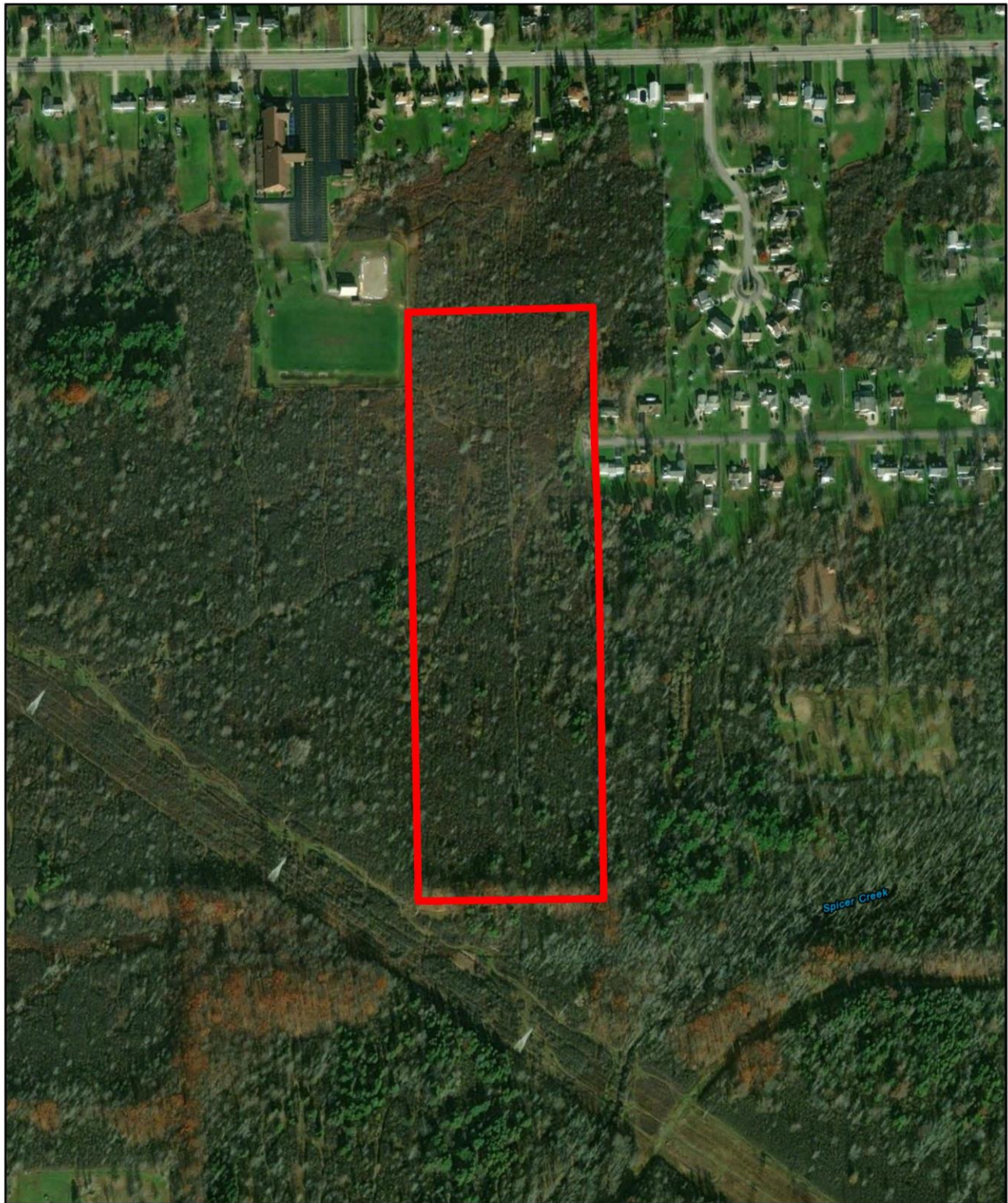
DISTRICT OFFICE: 800 Main Street, Suite 2C, Niagara Falls, New York 14301 • 716-282-6062, FAX: 716-282-4226  
ALBANY OFFICE: Room 721, Legislative Office Building, Albany, New York 12248 • 518-455-5284, FAX: 518-455-5634  
EMAIL: morinelloa@nyassembly.gov

## 2. MAP









Meadowsweet Nature Preserve  
Imagery Map

Scale: 1:6,500  
Service Layer Credits:  
ESRI: World Imagery





### 3. PHOTOS













**TAX EXEMPT STATUS**



CINCINNATI OH 45999-0038

In reply refer to: 0248421964  
June 11, 2013 LTR 4168C 0  
22-3160426 000000 00  
00019936  
BODC: TE

WESTERN NEW YORK LAND CONSERVANCY  
INC  
PO BOX 471  
EAST AURORA NY 14052

024975

Employer Identification Number: 22-3160426  
Person to Contact: Ms. L Mitchell  
Toll Free Telephone Number: 1-877-829-5500

Dear Taxpayer:

This is in response to your May 31, 2020, request for information regarding your tax-exempt status.

Our records indicate that you were recognized as exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code in a determination letter issued in April 1992.

Our records also indicate that you are not a private foundation within the meaning of section 509(a) of the Code because you are described in section(s) 509(a)(1) and 170(b)(1)(A)(vi).

Donors may deduct contributions to you as provided in section 170 of the Code. Bequests, legacies, devises, transfers, or gifts to you or for your use are deductible for Federal estate and gift tax purposes if they meet the applicable provisions of sections 2055, 2106, and 2522 of the Code.

Please refer to our website [www.irs.gov/eo](http://www.irs.gov/eo) for information regarding filing requirements. Specifically, section 6033(j) of the Code provides that failure to file an annual information return for three consecutive years results in revocation of tax-exempt status as of the filing due date of the third return for organizations required to file. We will publish a list of organizations whose tax-exempt status was revoked under section 6033(j) of the Code on our website beginning in early 2011.