

2021 NEW YORK Land Conservation Conference

May 2021



The Land Trust Alliance invites you to the 2021 New York Land Conservation Conference. Offerings cover everything—from nuts-and-bolts conservation content to best practices on sustaining operations while adapting to today’s changing conditions. Plus, tools to lead on climate change and time to investigate the intersections of land conservation and environmental justice. Join professionals, volunteers, agency staff and conservation advocates from a spectrum of land, water and community conservation organizations across the state for this exciting event.

Conference Highlights

**Wednesday, May 5 –
Friday, May 7**

Welcome remarks from the Land Trust Alliance
Educational workshops
Networking opportunities

**Monday, May 10 –
Wednesday, May 26**

Educational workshops continue
Networking opportunities

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Program Committee

This committee is made up of conservation professionals who volunteered their time to help us deliver an outstanding conference. We extend our appreciation to:

Marissa Codey, *Columbia Land Conservancy*
Lori Ensinger, *Westchester Land Trust*
Kevin Farrell, *Genesee Land Trust*
Benjamin Gajewski, *Genesee Valley Conservancy*
Linda Garrett, *Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust*
Jeff Jones, *Jeff Jones Strategies*
Zoraida Lopez-Diago, *Scenic Hudson*

Michelle Pleim, *Westchester Land Trust*
Jake Tibbles, *Thousand Islands Land Trust*
Kathy Woughter, *Adirondack Land Trust*
Lindsay Blair, *Land Trust Alliance*
Meme Hanley, *Land Trust Alliance*
Katrina Howey, *Land Trust Alliance*

Choose sessions from these timely tracks:

- Addressing Climate Change
- Emerging Issues and Engaging Community
- Land Conservation and Stewardship
- Organizational Development

Congratulations to all the New York land trusts which have achieved or are working toward land trust accreditation! For a full list of accredited land trusts, please visit landtrustaccreditation.org.

Schedule of Events

Wednesday, May 5

9:30 – 10 a.m.

WELCOME REMARKS

by Land Trust Alliance

Join friends and colleagues for virtual remarks as we kick off the New York Conference!

10:30 a.m. – noon

A01. Not Just Taking Land off the Tax Rolls: Exploring the Economic Value of Conservation

Is your land trust looking for ways to demonstrate the value you provide to your community? In this session, presenters will highlight a recent case study that demonstrates the economic benefits of conservation and showcases the ongoing work of a local land trust to shift the narrative about its conservation efforts in upstate New York. A key component of the process involves leveraging information about the economic value of open space protection to the community. An economist from The Trust for Public Land will provide an overview of economic benefits and leadership from 1,000 Islands Land Trust will explain how the land trust is successfully using this information to make the case for conservation to community leaders. (Emerging Issues and Engaging Community | Basic)

Jessica Sargent, Conservation Economics Research Director, The Trust for Public Land (ME)

Jake Tibbles, Executive Director, Thousand Islands Land Trust (NY)

1 – 2:30 p.m.

A02. Applications of Aerial and Satellite Imagery

The session will have three presentations to provide an overview of remote monitoring options in New York State and to provide attendees with an understanding of the imagery, products and applications available. Presentations will provide perspectives from staff from three organizations throughout NY and will discuss aerial imagery for conservation easement and fee land monitoring, as well as the applied use of drone-based remote sensing in land management. We will discuss the use of LightHawk flights and adjustments made for the Covid-19 pandemic, and provide an overview of commercial vendors, such as Nearmap. Additionally, we will discuss other commercial options as well as provide pointers for organizations looking to start aerial monitoring. Lastly, we will discuss the use of drones for invasive species detection and mapping, and how this technology compares to ground-based survey techniques. Following the presentations, we will have time for discussion and questions. (Land Conservation and Stewardship | Intermediate)

Julia Rogers, Stewardship Coordinator, Hudson Highlands Land Trust (NY)

Jonathan J. "JJ" Schell, Associate Director, Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust (NY)

Zachary Simek, Conservation and GIS Analyst, The Nature Conservancy, Adirondack Chapter (NY)

3 – 4:30 p.m.

A03. The 6 Superpowers of the Small Shop Fundraiser

Do you find yourself constantly juggling your fundraising responsibilities with 64 other tasks for your mission? Raising money in a small nonprofit can feel overwhelming sometimes, but the truth is you have 6 superpowers that fundraisers in bigger organizations would LOVE to have! You just need to recognize and unleash them — even when it means you break some commonly held fundraising “rules.” Uncover your superpowers and learn how to avoid the small shop fundraisers’ kryptonite. (Organizational Development | All Levels)

Sarah Brooks, Associate Director, Methow Conservancy (WA)

Thursday, May 6

9 – 10:30 a.m.

B01. Essentials of Fundraising

Back to Basics. Focus on the Fundamentals. If it’s one thing that the 2020 pandemic has taught us, it’s that the fundamentals of raising money remain relevant, even as we struggle to distance, travel and gather. But what are those “fundamentals?” In this introductory session, we’ll strip away all the jargon and assumptions and revisit the most basic

tenets of fundraising. Along the way, we will examine — and dismantle — some of fundraising's most persistent myths and fake news as well. And we'll keep it light and fun — appropriate for staff and volunteers who are brand new to fundraising, those who may have a little more experience, and perhaps even those NOT inexperienced or terrified. (Emerging Issues and Engaging Community | Basic)

David Allen, Principal Consultant, Development for Conservation, LLC (WI)

11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

B02. Therapeutic Programming Possibilities for Land Trusts

Grassroots Gardens WNY started two initiatives in 2019 to respond to access, community mental health and wellness needs that could be met through our community garden network. Through an innovative partnership with local mental health agencies and the University at Buffalo School of Social Work, we've been able to research, plan and implement several kinds of therapeutic programming. Our staff and gardeners will share their research and programming on therapeutic gardening with lessons and ideas for other land trusts to consider implementing nature-based therapeutic activities within their land trust models. Our programs include a focus on adaptive grieving and response to community violence and pilot sites for expressly therapeutic gardens sited at a foster care agency, our county's youth detention center, a domestic violence shelter and a day habilitation program for adults with mental illness. We'll also share about our Gardening for All program focused on universal redesign of our garden spaces. A case study will also be presented by Access Nature (AN); a project of the Lewisboro Land Trust that creates outdoor nature programs for disadvantaged and disabled populations. (Emerging Issues and Engaging Community | Basic)

Jeanette Koncickowski, Executive Director, Grassroots Gardens Western New York (NY)

Nicole Capozziello, Therapeutic Gardens Coordinator, Grassroots Gardens Western New York (NY)

Gerldine Wilson, Accessibility Task Force Coordinator, Grassroots Gardens Western New York (NY)

Bonnie Robins, Access Nature Director, Lewisboro Land Trust (NY)

Deanna Novak, Access Nature Environmental Educator, Lewisboro Land Trust (NY)

1:30 – 3 p.m.

B03. Land Acquisition Funding for Source Water Protection

Protecting public drinking water supplies is a high priority for New York State. Land acquisition is a great tool an organization or the community can utilize to protect their drinking water source. During this session, we will discuss the importance of source water protection, how land acquisition and land trusts can aid with protecting public drinking water supplies and a state funding program that is available to land trusts to help with land acquisition and associated costs—the Water Quality Improvement Project (WQIP) Program. (Land Conservation and Stewardship | Basic)

Kristin Martinez, Environmental Program Specialist, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (NY)

3:30 – 4:30 p.m.

B04. Riparian Conservation for Flood Resilience: Strategies You Can Use

Freshwater flooding is a growing threat to water quality and human communities in NY State, as climate change increases the frequency and intensity of major storms. Strategic land protection is an important strategy to build local and regional flood resilience, reducing long-term costs while providing a suite of benefits for people and nature. This session will introduce a range of approaches land trusts are employing to protect floodplains and reduce harmful flood impacts and offer an in-depth look at the Streamside Acquisition Program, a public/private partnership between NY City's Department of Environmental Protection and the Catskill Center for Conservation and Development. Participants will be invited to join the conversation and share their experiences through online tools. This session is ideal for practitioners interested in learning about data and approaches to harness land protection more effectively for flood resilience. (Addressing Climate Change | Intermediate)

Lee Alexander, Streamside Acquisition Program Manager, The Catskill Center (NY)

Hallie Schwab, Conservation Planning Coordinator, Open Space Institute (NY)

Friday, May 7

10 – 11:30 a.m.

C01. Tackling Torts: Reducing the Risk of Liability Exposure from Recreational Users

Given the increased preserve visitation in the wake of the COVID pandemic, concerns have been raised across the NYS conservation community about potential tort liability. This session will provide a general overview of tort liability arising from recreational uses, including the scope of protection under NY General Obligations Law section 9-103, certain precautionary measures that courts have found to be sufficient to avoid liability, and a focused discussion on swimming. This session will also address liability in the context of easement properties and stewardship agreements, including important provisions to reduce risk. Lastly, this session will also briefly explain the importance of having commercial general liability insurance. (Land Conservation and Stewardship | Intermediate)

Phillip Oswald, Attorney, Rupp Baase Pfalzgraf Cunningham LLC (NY)

Jill Yonkers, Litigation Attorney, Rupp Baase Pfalzgraf Cunningham (NY)

Andy Zepp, Executive Director, Finger Lakes Land Trust (NY)

Monday, May 10

1 – 2:30 p.m.

C02. Cultivating Meaningful Inclusion through Community Engagement

Is your land trust interested in deepening its community engagement? Many land trusts understand that efforts to gather feedback about conservation projects are necessary, yet community engagement for such projects is often used to affirm existing assumptions rather than an opportunity to gain new perspectives. As a result, workshops and surveys often barely scrape the surface of meaningful inclusion and engagement, resulting in feedback that is unintentionally biased and incomplete, and perpetuate the exclusion of certain communities in conservation and the outdoors. This interactive workshop will detail the community engagement process undertaken by the Penn Trails Team for a large-scale trail master plan in upstate New York, including a community engagement process designed to include input of non-traditional, or potential trail user communities. Stakeholder feedback is being used to address issues of inclusion and access in the trail system and enhance community relationships. Learn about how your land trust can design a similar process, including the values that established the project design, methods of listening more deeply, and how feedback can be integrated into trail designs. This workshop will also explore limitations and lessons learned to allow your land trust to explore what is appropriate for you. (Emerging Issues and Engaging Community | Intermediate)

Sarah Walter, Manager for Planning and Design, Penn Trails (PA)

Karen Strong, Principal, Strong Outcomes LLC (NY)

Laura Kipper, Palmertown Coordinator, Open Space Institute and Saratoga P.L.A.N. (NY)

4 – 5 p.m.

Networking Event

Small Shop Development Roundtable

During this interactive networking session, you will join small group discussions with peers to share knowledge and ask questions related to organizational development and fundraising in a collaborative learning environment. Our presenters will kick off the session with initial thoughts on each topic, then attendees will move to breakout rooms for small group discussions on their chosen topic. Attendees will have the opportunity to join three 15-minute breakout groups moderated by the presenters. Topics include database management, engaging and enlisting your board, donor incentives, communications and marketing, virtual events, and cultivating your preserve and easement neighbors. Participants are encouraged to bring questions and lessons learned around their organizations' need to pivot because of restrictions from COVID-19.

Michelle Culbert, Development Manager, Westchester Land Trust (NY)

Sophie Neumann, Development and Communications Manager, Greenwich Land Trust (CT)

Michele Vidarte, Community Engagement and Events Manager, Lake George Land Conservancy (NY)

Friday, May 14

10 – 11:30 a.m.

D01. Responsibility at a Crossroads: Climate Gentrification and the Dilemma of Long-Term Resilience

Grappling with the reality of climate change means addressing both the technical problems and broader socio-economic impacts. Community Land Trusts (CLT) – an innovative framework for land ownership and management – should be an integral part of a broad sustainability agenda. Climate gentrification exists at the intersection of environmental and socio-cultural pressure. The ways in which we conceptualize and confront this issue will have wide implications on how we plan and organize the built environment. Cities are the epicenter of this intersection and as urban areas continue to grow, gentrification and displacement become increasingly prevalent social and environmental considerations. Community Land Trusts afford an opportunity to address these concerns. Orienting the composition of communities toward long-term sustainable and climatically appropriate growth and establishing a shared responsibility of investment into community well-being and sustainability. Balancing for-profit development and the municipal regulatory environment, levelling the playing field of new and old stakeholders. (Addressing Climate Change | All Levels)

Blaine Stand, Co-founder, Project Abigail (NY)

Peter Stand, Principal, Project Abigail (NY)

Brian Sahd, Special Advisor, Project Abigail (NY)

Monday, May 17

1 – 2:30 p.m.

D02. A Culture of Care: Building Organizations that Invest in Staff

Land protection is about relationships. As we pledge to build these relationships with our community and landowners, the continuity of our staff and volunteers is central to our long-term effectiveness. Yet how do we help to create organizations that invest in staff and build strong organizational culture that leads to success? This workshop will focus on a variety of retention strategies ranging from organizational culture, to benefits, retirement contributions, and life-work-balance expectations. Travis Custer, executive director of the Montezuma Land Conservancy (MLC) in Southwest Colorado, and Judy Anderson of Community Consultants will explore ways MLC has built their culture as well as other examples from around the country. At a time when the land trust community is focusing on inclusive conservation, diversity and building resilient organizations, the tips and strategies will help your land trust no matter the size and budget. (Organizational Development | Basic)

Travis Custer, Executive Director, Montezuma Land Conservancy (CO)

Judy Anderson, Principal, Community Consultants (NY)

4 – 5 p.m.

Networking Event

Heart Beats Brain: Building Your Brand with Video

Every organization wants to inspire and inform its constituents about their mission. But how can you get people to pay attention to your message? Authentic and emotionally compelling video can be key in a competitive marketing and fundraising environment. We will discuss the many ways video may be used and share tips on how to integrate video into an ongoing communications strategy. The session includes an actual case study of a land trust's initial experience with video and the ongoing evolution and inclusion of video as a powerful communications and development tool. No matter what size your organization is, find out how you can't afford NOT to consider video. (All Levels)

G. Steve Jordan, Founder, G. Steve Jordan Films (NY)

Matt Soper, Director of Philanthropy and Engagement, Northwest Connecticut Land Conservancy (CT)

Friday, May 21

10 – 11:30 a.m.

E01. Forest Restoration on Protected Lands

This session will present three case studies focused on small-scale forest restoration in the Hudson Valley region of New York. Nicole Wooten will begin by discussing deer and invasive species management at Hudson Highland Land Trust's Granite Mountain Preserve. John Zeiger will follow with a presentation on an extensive reforestation effort at Westchester Land Trust's Otter Creek Preserve. The session will conclude with a presentation by Nate Nardi-Cyrus on the newly published handbook, "Creating and Maintaining Hudson River Views," and an associated demonstration site that showcases best practices in forest restoration after a new view has been created. (Land Conservation and Stewardship | Intermediate)

Nate Nardi-Cyrus, Conservation and Land Use Specialist, NYSDEC Hudson River Estuary Program (NY)

Nicole Wooten, Director of Natural Resources, Hudson Highlands Land Trust (NY)

John Zeiger, Preserve Manager, Westchester Land Trust (NY)

Monday, May 24

4 – 5 p.m.

Conservationists of Color Happy Hour

Come out and grab a 'virtual' drink with Conservationists of Color! BIPOC conservationists are welcome to join us for an informal happy hour and evening of connecting and sharing stories to build community. Come meet, network and celebrate with fellow conservationists of color across the state. We hope to see you online! Contact conservationistsofcolor@gmail.com to learn more.

Zoraida Lopez-Diago, River Cities Program Manager, Scenic Hudson, Inc. (NY)

About Conservationists of Color

Conservationists of Color (CoC) is a national affinity group that was established to change the face of leadership of the environmental movement so that it represents the diversity and richness of the communities we serve and to increase the number of culturally responsible people of color who succeed professionally and positively impact the community. We work to fulfill this mission by leading national and regional workshops to build understanding in the conservation community around the issues and developments that affect the careers of BIPOC practitioners. More importantly, CoC provides a platform and critical space for people of color who work within the environmental movement to build community and connections that support their professional wellbeing and careers in a sector where oftentimes voices of BIPOCs are relegated to the margins.

Wednesday, May 26

10 – 11:30 a.m.

Closing Session: Pathways to Land Justice: Indigenous Tenure and Access

Indigenous People are the original and continuing stewards of the lands we now call New York. Ties to place run deep, and include ceremonial access for medicines and berries, and for fishing and hunting as cultural lifeways that recognizes the agency of living communities. Such relationships, moreover, continue today as guaranteed by federal Treaty law (upheld in court in numerous cases). In this session, we look at Treaty provisions as they pertain to public agencies, land trusts and to all citizens of NY as part of a set of larger obligations to protect the self-determination of Indigenous Peoples. Next, we cite examples of consultation, and the need to recognize Native sovereignty and customary use. We close by providing examples of land trusts that have taken such steps, and by listing resources and recommendations for those who wish to move forward on this important land justice opportunity. (All Levels)

Neil Patterson, Assistant Director, SUNY ESF Center for Native Peoples and the Environment (NY)

Curtis Berkey, Partner, Berkey Williams LLP (CA)

Catherine Landis, Post-Doctoral Associate, SUNY ESF Center for Native Peoples and the Environment (NY)

Alexandra Page, Partner, Berkey Williams LLP (DC)

Registration Information

Go paperless! Please [register online](#) (preferred).

Registrations will be processed on a first-come, first-served basis. Registration questions? Email registration@lta.org or call (202) 800-2225.

To reduce potential delays in registration processing, we ask those that do not wish to register online to contact Regan Grimmatt at (202) 800-2225 for processing over the phone. A credit card payment can be taken over the phone directly at that time, or an invoice will be emailed if you would rather pay by check.

Conference registration fees

Conference registration includes access to all virtual events and available recordings, including workshops, plenaries and any virtual tours.

Basic registration (*April 20 – May 26*)

- Alliance Land Trust Members and Affiliates: **\$185** (*staff and board of dues-paying land trusts and Affiliates*)
- Full-Time Student/Current AmeriCorps Volunteer Registration: **\$100**
- General Admission: **\$235** (*all other individuals*)

Want a discount on your conference registration?

Join the Land Trust Alliance! Land trust members: If you are a board member, volunteer or staff of an Alliance member land trust, you receive the reduced fees noted on the registration form.

Questions about membership or the Affiliate program?

Please contact Jorge Astorga at (202) 347-7475 or [via email](#) for questions about joining as an [land trust member](#) or [Affiliate](#), or to review the status of your membership.

Standard cancellation policy

The Land Trust Alliance will not be offering refunds for the virtual New York Land Conservation Conference. All sales are final and will be non-transferable to any other Land Trust Alliance offerings or events. If you wish to add to your registration, or transfer to a different person, please submit a request to registration@lta.org.

*Please note all virtual sessions will be recorded. Any audio, chat, and other information sent through the sessions' Zoom accounts may be discoverable in a legal matter. By joining these sessions, you automatically consent to these recordings.