

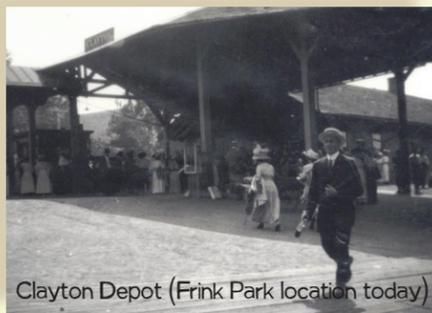
The S. Gerald Ingerson Preserve

The magic of the woods with access to over seven miles of hiking, biking, cross-country skiing and more.



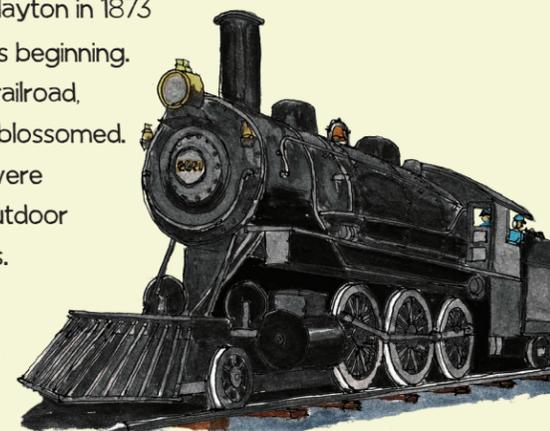
The Sissy Danforth Rivergate Trail

The last passenger trains of the New York Central Railroad came into Clayton in 1951. The last freight train came in 1972 and the rails were taken up shortly afterward. In 1986, funding for Rails-to-Trails projects became available. TILT's former Director Sissy Danforth began the work to create the Rivergate Trail from the old railroad beds. The trail was named in honor of her exceptional efforts in re-connecting it.



The Railroad Comes to the River

The railroad came to Clayton in 1873 as the Guided Age was beginning. With the arrival of the railroad, the region's popularity blossomed. The Thousand Islands were being discovered by outdoor enthusiasts and tourists.



Splendid hotels and cottage communities were built on both the mainland and the islands. Passengers arriving in Clayton could board

steamers at the waterfront depot and travel on to resorts throughout the Thousand Islands, or further afield with destinations like Kingston, and Toronto in Ontario or west into the Great Lakes.

1.1 miles - NYS Rt. 12 Trailhead to County Route 3 Trailhead

.85 miles - TILT Office to NYS Rt. 12 Trailhead

5.5 miles - County Route 3 Trailhead to LaFargeville Agway
7.5 miles - TILT Office in Clayton to LaFargeville Agway

Why is it called Rivergate?



The railroad spur that came into Clayton left the main Watertown-to-Ogdensburg line at a small settlement called River Gate in the Town of Theresa. There was a building for the switch operator, where passengers would board. With no road access to the building, passengers had to walk a half mile across a field to get to it.



© Photography by Chris Murray

Historic Trestle

Built in 1870, the trestle is 160 feet long and stands 60 feet above McCarn Creek. For decades it was closed and presented an obstacle to enjoyment of the Rivergate Trail. In 2022, the entire River community joined forces to restore the trestle bridge for hiking, biking and skiing. It is a half mile from the Cty. Rt. 3 (East Line Road) Trailhead.



Directions to the Preserve's Cty Rte 3 Trailhead: By car, head south on Rt. 12 toward Watertown. Turn left at The Victorian gas station, onto East Line Road. Trailhead is on the right, 3/4 of a mile down the road.



PO Box 238 Clayton, NY 13624 P: 315.686.5345
info@TILandTrust.org TILandTrust.org



The Rivergate Trail on the S. Gerald Ingerson Preserve

TRAIL GUIDE
INGERSON PRESERVE



Walking Directions

TILT's trail access begins in the Village of Clayton at the NYS Rt 12 trailhead, between Community Bank and the Clayton Country Club, about 3/4 of a mile from the TILT office. Follow signs along this trail to County Route 3 (East Line Road) and another trailhead there.

S. Gerald Ingerson Preserve & Rivergate Trail Brochure
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Front cover photo
© Photography by Chris Murray
All Illustrations by Robert McNamara of The Art of Wilderness

The Thousand Islands Land Trust (TILT) is...

Working to conserve the natural beauty, diverse wildlife habitats, water quality and outdoor recreation opportunities of the Thousand Islands region, for present and future generations!

The S. Gerald Ingerson Preserve

In 2011, the Ingerson Family was inspired to conserve this place for their patriarch, S. Gerald Ingerson who introduced them to the wonders of nature. Mr. Ingerson spent many days in the woods with his children and grandchildren, exploring, discovering and appreciating the outdoors. This 140 acre preserve protects McCarn Creek, a tributary of French Creek which is an important spawning habitat for a variety of fish species and serves as a filter for the water that flows into the St. Lawrence River.



Live. Learn. Conserve.

TILandTrust.org

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The Thousand Islands Land Trust (TILT) is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization created in 1985 to conserve the natural beauty, diverse wildlife habitats, water quality and outdoor recreation opportunities of the Thousand Islands region, for present and future generations!

TILT is supported by donations from people who care about the Thousand Islands region of the St. Lawrence River. Our conservation work is only possible through the generosity of our supporters.

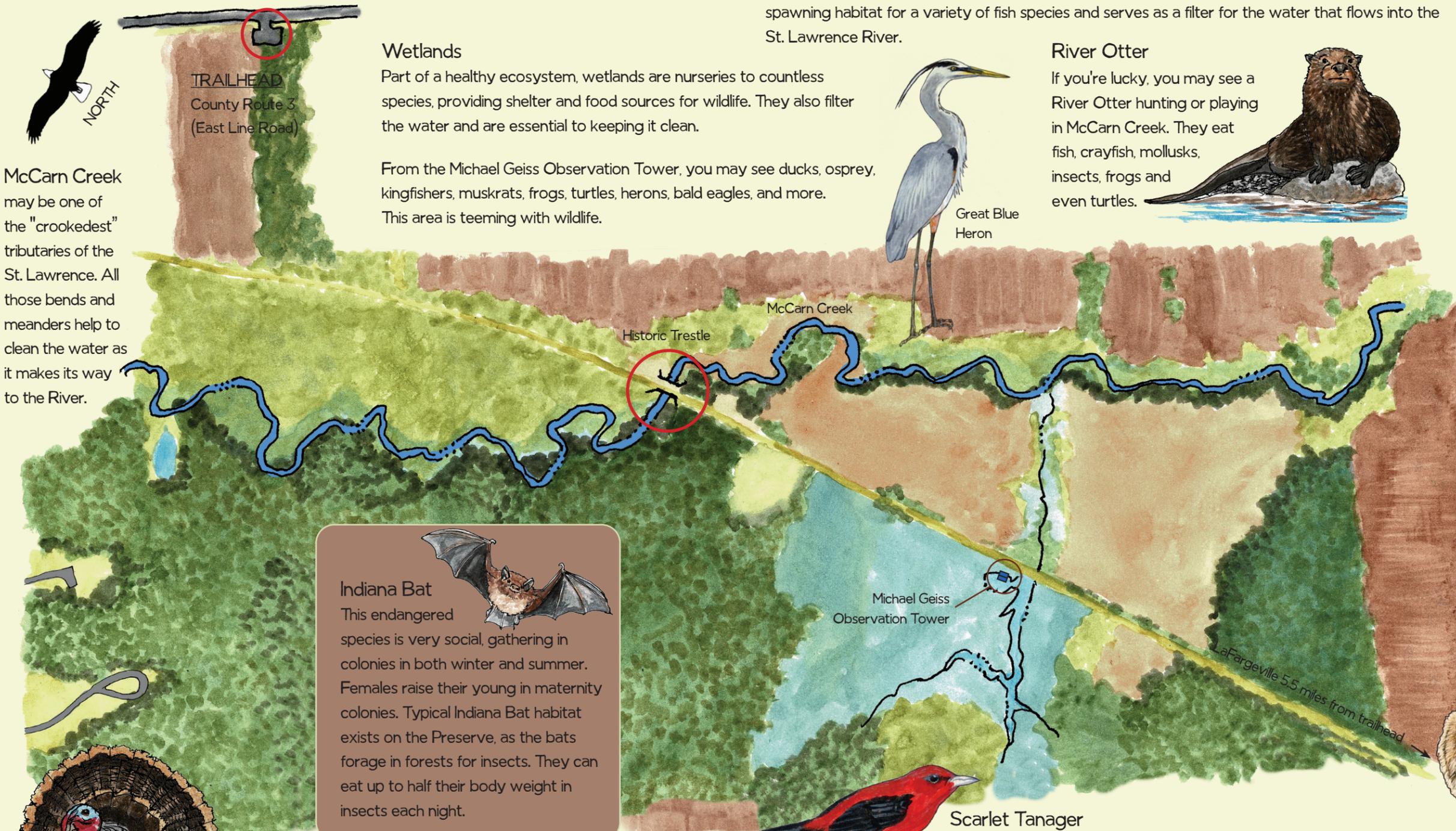
Donations of land, conservation easements, and financial resources to TILT are tax deductible under provisions of the Internal Revenue code. To find out more about donating land, creating a conservation easement, or including TILT in your will, please call us at 315-686-5345.



Donate today!



McCarn Creek may be one of the "crookedest" tributaries of the St. Lawrence. All those bends and meanders help to clean the water as it makes its way to the River.



Wetlands

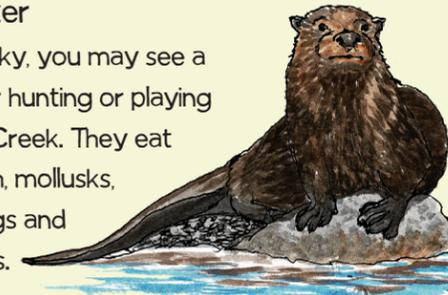
Part of a healthy ecosystem, wetlands are nurseries to countless species, providing shelter and food sources for wildlife. They also filter the water and are essential to keeping it clean.

From the Michael Geiss Observation Tower, you may see ducks, osprey, kingfishers, muskrats, frogs, turtles, herons, bald eagles, and more.

This area is teeming with wildlife.

River Otter

If you're lucky, you may see a River Otter hunting or playing in McCarn Creek. They eat fish, crayfish, mollusks, insects, frogs and even turtles.



Great Blue Heron

Indiana Bat
This endangered species is very social, gathering in colonies in both winter and summer. Females raise their young in maternity colonies. Typical Indiana Bat habitat exists on the Preserve, as the bats forage in forests for insects. They can eat up to half their body weight in insects each night.



Scarlet Tanager

This bright red bird with black wings and tail "skulks" amongst tree canopies making it hard to see. It is sensitive to habitat fragmentation and thrives in larger undisturbed tracts of forest.



Eastern Coyote

Often misunderstood, these opportunistic eaters help maintain the balance of biodiversity in the landscape. The Eastern Coyote has a mixed ancestry of coyote, wolf, and dog.



Preserve Rules: Preserve open sunrise to sunset • Stay on trail • No motorized vehicles

• No camping, dumping, fires, or collecting flora & fauna • Keep pets on a leash • No trapping or hunting