



40 Years

1985



2025

# Reflections

FALL 2025 | THE THOUSAND ISLANDS LAND TRUST

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The Thousand Islands Land Trust works to conserve the natural beauty, diverse wildlife habitats, water quality and outdoor recreational opportunities of the Thousand Islands region, now and for future generations.



## State Leaders Honor TILT's 40 Years of Conservation

We are deeply honored to have received recognition from New York State leaders who share our commitment to protecting the Thousand Islands.



Earlier this summer, Governor Kathy Hochul sent a letter highlighting four decades of TILT's conservation achievements and the vital role of strong state programs—like the Environmental Protection Fund and the Land Trust Alliance's Conservation Partnership Program—in supporting projects across our communities. At our Zenda Community Picnic & Volunteer Recognition event in June, we were also presented with the 2025 Empire Award on behalf of Senator Mark Walczyk, honoring our ongoing work to safeguard the natural beauty, ecological health, and recreational spaces of the North Country.

These moments of recognition are more than milestones—they are reminders of the powerful partnerships, local passion, and shared vision that have carried our organization through 40 years. With gratitude for all who have been part of this journey, we look ahead with excitement to the conservation successes still to come.

## SAVE THE DATE! 2026 Events

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| <b>SATURDAY</b><br>March 7   | Winter Gathering                               |
| <b>FRIDAY</b><br>June 12     | Zenda Community Picnic & Volunteer Recognition |
| <b>SATURDAY</b><br>July 18   | Summer Gathering                               |
| <b>THURSDAY</b><br>August 20 | Islander Major Donor Appreciation              |

*The St. Lawrence River is central to the region's identity and economy, drawing visitors from around the world. Tourism, recreation, and the local economy all depend on the clean water and scenic vistas that conservation protects.*

*Every kayaker gliding across Eel Bay, every angler casting in its shallows, and every family enjoying a loon's call benefits from the foresight to safeguard these special places. Our efforts highlight the essential link between conservation and community.*



*The Robinson group from above, a crucial stopover for migratory birds along the Atlantic Flyway, providing rest and refuge during their long journey.*  
© Spencer Busler

## EEL BAY'S NEW CONSERVATION TRIUMPHS

### Safeguarding Beauty and Wildlife

by Spencer Busler | Assistant Director

Just 1,864 feet from the international border, Robinson Group's Big Island offers one of the most commanding views of the St. Lawrence River. It's a fitting echo of the 1,864 islands that form this remarkable region.

From its rocky pinnacle, the scenery unfolds in every direction. A clockwise scan yields the rosy quarries of Picton Island, the towering forests on the foot of Grindstone, and the shimmering Canadian Lake Fleet chain of islands. The view continues across the ancient hardwood canopy over Grand View Park, into the tropical hues of the Eel Bay shallows, and the pristine shorelines of Wellesley Island State Park's Minna Anthony Common Nature Center. The eye finally settles on the sheer bluffs of the familiar Murray Isle cut. Together, these vistas compose a natural panorama that could be described as one of the "Seven Wonders of the Thousand Islands."

This year, the Land Trust secured the permanent protection of Big Island. Thanks to critical support from the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI), the New York State

Department of Environmental Conservation's Water Quality Improvement Program (WQIP), and the generosity of the Kreckman and Rogers families, who conveyed the property through a bargain sale, the island will remain in its natural state for generations to come.

Although modest in size at just five acres, Big Island holds tremendous ecological and scenic value. Its 2,300 feet of shoreline provide essential habitat for a wide array of species. Each autumn, thousands of waterfowl—Long-tailed Ducks, Redheads, Canvasbacks, Greater and Lesser Scaup, Common Goldeneyes, and Common Loons—gather in the sheltered waters of Eel Bay. In summer, terns nest along its rocky edges, while migrating shorebirds feed across the shallow flats. This is an important stopover along the Atlantic Flyway, a vital corridor for migratory birds. Through its protection, we have conserved an irreplaceable resting and feeding ground within a much larger continental network of habitats.

"There are very few islands of this size and visibility that have remained untrammelled," noted Jake Tibbles, TILT's



*The view from atop the rocky cliffs of the Robinson Group's Big Island boasts a panorama of vast beauty. © Spencer Busler*

— *continued*

Executive Director. “Conserving natural rarities like this is a major victory for the Thousand Islands region.”

### **A Forest Steeped in Time, Now Protected**

Just a half-mile to the east, TILT reached another milestone this year with the permanent protection of the Buxton Tract. This 7.8-acre property, situated beneath the aged oaks, hickories, and maples of Grand View Park on Wellesley Island, features 230 feet of undeveloped shoreline and abuts Wellesley Island State Park. Made possible by Virginia Buxton through a bargain sale and supported with funding from NYSDEC, it expands the conservation footprint of one of the region’s most visited destinations while conserving a vulnerable parcel that might otherwise have been fragmented.

Ecologically, this property strengthens habitat connectivity and water quality in Eel Bay. Its mature forest and natural shoreline provide critical habitat for birds such as the Black-billed Cuckoo and Belted Kingfisher, while also serving as an important waystation for monarch butterflies.

Since monarchs travel thousands of miles during their migration, these rest stops help them survive the arduous journey. The conservation of this tract prevents shoreline disturbance and safeguards the riparian buffer vegetation that

filters runoff, reduces erosion, and maintains the health of the St. Lawrence River. Together, the protection of Big Island and the Buxton Tract represents a major step forward for conservation in Eel Bay. In a region where undeveloped islands and shorelines are increasingly rare, these properties will remain permanently conserved. Their protection is a lasting gift for the wildlife that depends on them, and the people who cherish the Thousand Islands for its beauty, recreation, and the unique character that makes this region so special.

Such victories remind us that conservation is both urgent and achievable. Development pressures continue to mount throughout the Thousand Islands, yet with the dedication of landowners, and the commitment of partners and organizations like TILT, critical properties can still be protected—striking a balance between conserving natural landscapes and supporting the communities that rely on them.

The Land Trust has long recognized that shoreline conservation is one of the most effective ways to protect the River. Healthy riparian buffers not only preserve natural beauty but also protect water quality, wildlife habitat, and public health. Eel Bay, with its sweeping views and rich wildlife, now holds two more forever-protected landmarks.

*The Buxton Tract nestled alongside Eel Bay’s shoreline supports wildlife, stabilizes soil, filters water, and sustains a healthy ecosystem. © Chris Murray Photography*



# 'Birds Rise Above It All' Launches to Honor Sherri Smith's Legacy

by Terra Bach | Director of Development and Communications

The Thousand Islands Land Trust and the Northern New York Community Foundation (NNYCF) are proud to announce the launch of Birds Rise Above It All, a permanent endowment inspired by the life and legacy of Sherri Smith, a cherished local birding expert and devoted advocate for the natural world.

Through this partnership, a lasting fund dedicated to bird conservation, habitat restoration, and education in the Thousand Islands region has been established. The region lies within the ecologically significant Atlantic Flyway and the broader Algonquin to Adirondacks (A2A) Corridor, a vital migratory route for hundreds of bird species.

With \$25,000 already secured and matched through a private donation, contributions to the endowment will be matched dollar-for-dollar by NNYCF up to an additional \$25,000 giving donors a unique opportunity to double the impact of their support and fully realize the fund's potential. These resources will directly support bird-centric habitat restoration, land stewardship, and community engagement initiatives across more than 15,000 acres of conserved land. Efforts will focus on grasslands, wetlands, and other critical habitats, ensuring that nesting, migratory, and overwintering species continue to thrive.

Community involvement is central to the initiative. Volunteers and local residents can take part in hands-on stewardship projects, including nest box installations, habitat

restoration, and citizen science programs such as eBird, the Loon Census, and the Christmas Bird Count. Educational programming will engage students, families, and visitors, to foster environmental awareness, to inspire future conservation leaders, and deepen connections to Northern New York's natural heritage. At the same time, the fund supports eco-tourism and outdoor recreation, attracting birdwatchers from across the country and benefiting the local economy. By protecting critical habitats as migratory stopovers, the

endowment ensures that both wildlife and people can experience the region's natural richness for generations to come.

"The Northern New York Community Foundation is honored to steward this fund, ensuring Sherri's legacy endures through impactful, transparent, and locally driven conservation work," said Max DelSignore, NNYCF Vice President. "It is a wonderful example of perpetuating her affinity for local bird conservation and inspiring others to embrace and support the natural beauty of our region."

The Birds Rise Above It All Fund invites support from anyone who values the vital role birds play in our ecosystems. Contributions are currently being matched up to \$25,000. To learn more or make a gift in Sherri's memory, visit [tilandtrust.org](http://tilandtrust.org) or scan the QR code today.



*Always a familiar face at Zenda's picnics, Sherri loved sharing her passion for birds with people of all ages.*



*"Sherri's love for birds was more than a passion—it was a devotion. She believed birds reminded us to look up, to rise above. This fund will carry that vision forward, protecting and restoring the places that birds—and people—need to thrive."*

Jake Tibbles, TILT's Executive Director

*An aerial view of the Schmeer Preserve in Cape Vincent with Lake Ontario visible in the distance. The Preserve is part of the Atlantic Flyway, where grassland restoration exemplifies the kinds of conservation projects the Birds Rise Above It All Endowment will help sustain in honor of Sherri Smith.*

*"TILT gives me hope that the River's natural beauty will endure. Joining the Legacy Program is my way of giving back—and carrying my parents' vision forward."*

## Rachel Cole

### A Legacy Rooted in Murray Isle

For me, the River has always been home. I'm a fourth-generation Murray Islander, and my connection to this place runs deep—woven into childhood summers spent on the Island, racing in Escanaba Bay, and watching the mail boat pull in four times a day. My mother called the River her "emotional home," and I couldn't agree more. The River community has always been about family, tradition, and neighbors who become lifelong friends.

My path to TILT began early. My father served on both the Thousand Islands Land Trust and Save The River boards, and was close friends with Ken Deedy, whose vision for conservation left a lasting impression on me. In 2010, after my mother donated 60 acres on Murray Isle—a dream my father had first voiced years earlier—I saw firsthand how TILT could safeguard what we hold most dear. Over the years, I've also seen the threats: increasing development and signs of change appearing where natural beauty once stood. TILT's work gave me hope that the River's future could look different.

That's why I chose to join the Thousand Islands Forever Legacy Program. I believe in TILT's stability and stewardship, and I know the land I love will be protected long after I'm gone. For me, it's about honoring my parents' vision, giving back to a community that shaped me, and ensuring that Murray Isle and the River remain wild, beautiful, and shared for generations to come.

As I think about the future, my greatest hope is simple: that this place—engraved in my soul—retains its natural state, so that families yet to come can feel the same joy, connection, and belonging that I've been fortunate enough to know here all my life.

*Rachel Cole walks the Murray Isle trails taking in nature and knowing her choices will ensure that this land stays the same for generations to come.*

## Celebrating Our Thousand Islands Forever Legacy Members

We were thrilled to welcome new members of the Thousand Islands Forever Legacy Program to a special luncheon celebrating their vision, commitment, and impact on the future of the Thousand Islands. The event included an overview of current giving trends, along with valuable insights on recent legislative changes that could shape charitable giving in the years ahead. Heartfelt testimonies from members followed, sharing what the program means to them personally.

As a symbol of their commitment each member was presented with a Thousand Islands Forever Legacy pin—a small token of appreciation representing their enduring dedication to conservation, and love for this special region.

We would like to warmly thank luncheon hosts and Legacy members Molly and Darden MacWade for their generous support.

On behalf of everyone at TILT, we extend our sincere thanks to all who have joined the Legacy Program. Your generosity and foresight ensure that the beauty and spirit of the Thousand Islands will be preserved for generations to come.



### CREATE YOUR LEGACY.

### THOUSAND ISLANDS FOREVER

**Leaving a legacy is one of the most valuable, enduring gifts you can ever give.** For

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

Please visit [tilandtrust.org/planned-giving/](http://tilandtrust.org/planned-giving/) for more information or contact Terra Bach at 315-686-5345.



From above, the Hoover property along Jewett Creek reveals a mosaic of forests, meadows, and wetlands—forever protected as a safe haven for warblers and countless other wildlife. Photo Credit: Spencer Busler

# The Story of Three Warblers

## HOOVER PROPERTY ON JEWETT CREEK PROTECTED

by Spencer Busler | Assistant Director

Every spring, a trio of tiny travelers returns to our corner of the world. The Cerulean Warbler, with its brilliant sky-blue feathers, flits high in the treetops. The Golden-winged Warbler, with its striking mask and golden patches, sings from shrubby thickets. And the Prairie Warbler, with its bright yellow plumage and rising, buzzy song, weaves through sunlit meadows and forest edges.

These three warblers ask for very different habitats, but they share one important need: safe, healthy places to call home. That’s why we are thrilled to share the news of the acquisition of the Hoover property.

This stunning stretch of land along Jewett Creek, near Redwood, NY is now forever protected thanks to funding from the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) and our partnership with Ducks Unlimited.

Bordering TILT’s Evans property, the Hoover parcel adds another vital piece to the conservation puzzle in the Algonquin to Adirondacks (A2A)

corridor. Shrub wetlands, mature riparian forests, and open meadows flow seamlessly together here, creating the variety of habitats that make it a true birder’s paradise.

It’s not just the warblers who benefit—herons, thrushes, amphibians, deer, and countless other species will now have safe passage and a healthy place to thrive.

But for us, the story comes back to those three warblers. Their songs remind us of why we work so hard to protect places like Jewett Creek. The presence of the Cerulean, Golden-winged, and Prairie Warblers on this landscape represents the living results of conservation in action.

Thanks to supporters like you, and to our partners in this project, their songs will echo here for generations to come.

*The Prairie Warbler joins other migrating warblers on their epic journey along the Atlantic Flyway, stopping to enjoy the rich habitats of the Thousand Islands.*



On the forest floor at TILT’s Hoover property, even the smallest mushrooms play a big role in keeping ecosystems healthy. © Spencer Busler



## In Honor of

**Wink Beadel**  
Sharye Skinner  
Josh & Anne Marie de Cesare

**Kate & Brian Breheny**  
David & Linda Twichell

**Alison Cassidy**  
Greta Feldman

**Rebecca Dahl**  
Patricia & Frank Dahl

**Rebecca Hopfinger**  
Candace & John Marsellus

**Nate Kalb's one year anniversary with the Foundation**  
France-Merrick Foundation

**Kim's birthday**  
Jean Regan

**Tim Maloney**  
Candace & John Marsellus

**The Rusho Family**  
Katie & Jonathan Oakleaf

**Elise Stefanik**  
Candace & John Marsellus

## In Memory of

**Shaner Graham Atkinson**  
John G. Foster

**Gordon Bonisteel**  
Hartley Bonisteel Schweitzer  
& Reginald Schweitzer

**Ronald Colin**  
Barbara & Patrick Farnan  
Christine Bourcy  
Kay Thiebault

**Jim Corey**  
Patricia Corey

**Anthony Costantino**  
James & Glorian Reinman

**Sissy Danforth**  
Monica Behan & Eric Purcell  
Dick & Charlotte Brooks  
Romer & Deming Holleran

**Sissy & Bill Danforth**  
Candace & John Marsellus

**Edith Davison**  
James Davison

**Ken Deedy**  
Jake Tibbles and Alicia Dewey  
Anna & Stephan von Muehlen  
Ted Mascott  
Joe & Millie Savarese

**Nancy Doyle**  
Jessica Doyle

**Patricia Farfaglia**  
Bob Farfaglia

**Jamie Gaffney**  
Kathleen Gaffney

**Rachel Goodrich**  
Elaine & Stephan Chase

**Richard Havranek**  
Mary Havranek

**Matthew D. Heineman**  
Deborah Heineman

**S. Gerald Ingerson**  
Terry Ierlan

**Phillip Johnson**  
Marion Johnson

**Scott Kempton**  
Kim Kempton  
Jake Tibbles and Alicia Dewey

**Carl Lamica Jr**  
Nancy & Michael Johnson

**Edward Lenhard**  
Rena Pine

**Sidney Manes**  
Chris & Linda Wood

**Chuck Mascott**  
Ted Mascott

**Mary Mascott**  
Cindy Bower  
Ted Mascott  
Jake Tibbles & Alicia Dewey

**Bill Munro**  
Rachel Cole  
Jake Tibbles & Alicia Dewey

**Dick Munro**  
Rachel Cole  
Jake Tibbles & Alicia Dewey

**John Murray**  
Jean Murray

**Robert Nelson**  
Jeffrey & Kimberly Deal

**Karen Inglese Rice**  
Lois & Sam Giamber

**Dr. Bruce Estes Rippeteau**  
Kevin & Jane Heffron

**Mary Ellen Rogers**  
James Barden

**Joseph W. Russell**  
Robin Russell

**My parents, Frank & Gini without whom I wouldn't know the Thousand Islands.**  
Ann Sweeten & Randy Yoder

**Barbara Thomas**  
Maria Mesires

**Barbara & Henry Vayo**  
Marie & Mark Greenbaum

**Stanley & June Ward**  
Gawaine Ward

**J.C. Wilson**  
Rachel Cole

**Tributes made from March 16-September 30, 2025**

## FAREWELLS

### Remembering Mary Mascott



For more than three decades, Mary McDonald Mascott and her husband, Ted, have been among the Thousand Islands Land Trust's most dedicated friends and champions. Their vision and generosity have shaped TILT's work and protected some of the region's most beloved landscapes, including Zenda Farms Preserve and Grindstone Island. In 2017, the Mary & Ted Mascott Welcome Center opened at Zenda Farms Preserve, a lasting tribute to their belief in the power of conservation, community, and environmental education.

The Mascott's leadership extended well beyond transformational gifts. They played critical roles in TILT's Mission Support Campaign and the Rivergate Trail Community Connection project, initiatives that created new opportunities for public access while safeguarding the lands and waters of the Thousand Islands.

Mary's support of TILT mirrored her lifelong dedication to service and community. Alongside her conservation work, she was deeply involved in projects that strengthened the region's cultural, health care, educational, and child advocacy institutions. Her generosity and leadership were often described as extraordinary, and her ability to see both the immediate needs and long-term potential of organizations left a lasting impact on the region.

While we mourn the loss of Mary, we celebrate her remarkable legacy. Her vision, generosity, and love for this place will continue to guide the Land Trust's mission and inspire all who walk the trails, fields, and riverfronts she helped protect. Her philanthropic spirit extended far beyond this organization, leaving an immeasurable mark across the North Country.

Mary lived a life of generosity, purpose, and enduring love for this place we call home.



Thank you for remembering your loved ones in this way!

# COMMON GROUND

## IN MY NATURE ERA

### A Full Circle Connection to the Thousand Islands

by Delaney McIlrath | Community Engagement Coordinator

Overcoming fear is what deepened my love for nature. As a child, falling while waterskiing was painful, embarrassing, and terrifying—especially when seaweed brushed my legs or my imagination convinced me a fish would pull me down. Over time, I tested my courage by plunging my feet into the deep, feeling the change in temperature, and proving to myself that there was nothing to fear. Having my best friend Morgan beside me made all the difference. We waterskied together, fell together, and laughed through it all. Her boldness—diving into chilly water, swimming through seaweed, walking barefoot across Round Island—inspired me to be braver. Those summers shaped my relationship with the River in ways I didn't yet realize.

Growing up in Cape Vincent was delightful. Much of my childhood was spent on my grandparents' fifth-generation farm, surrounded by cousins, climbing through the haymow, feeding cows and barn cats, riding four-wheelers, and sharing my Grandma's pie on the porch swing. My earliest memory was the day they sold their dairy cows, when neighbors and strangers filled the backroads, turning an ordinary farm morning into a moment that felt larger than life.

Even after the cows and all those people were gone, the land hummed with our laughter and adventures. The cornfield stretching between my house and my grandparents became our playground for hide-and-seek games. My cousins and I built 'corn forts' and played until my mom waved a cornstalk to call us in, giving away our hiding spots. I also learned patience—sometimes reluctantly—while bow-hunting with my dad, complaining about my heavy boots and usually scaring off wildlife long before spotting it.

Summers often brought me to Grindstone Island, where my mom's family lived. I once believed my connection to the island was only through her, until I discovered my dad's grandmother, Genevieve Delaney—my namesake—was born there. The Delaney family owned what is now Canoe Point along with



Inspiring the next generation of stewards, Delaney leads curious young explorers on a Conservation Connections adventure at Otter Creek Preserve.

adjacent farmland, deeply grounding us in Grindstone's history. What once felt like a vacation spot had become a place of ancestral connection for me.

The River is woven into nearly every part of who I am. It has been both playground and teacher, shaping resilience, patience, and joy. Being a River Rat is

*"The River is woven into nearly every part of who I am. It has been both playground and teacher, shaping resilience, patience, and joy. Being a River Rat is more than geography—it's an identity."*



The summer Morgan and I learned to waterski together—a year I'll never forget.

more than geography—it's an identity. My parents taught me that nature heals; "Go outside" was a consistent answer when I complained of frustration, sadness, or boredom. That lesson stayed with me, shaping both my personal life and my work. As the Community Engagement Coordinator at TILT, each day is different: I might plan events, hike with students, or clean up Potters Beach. Each moment deepens my connection to the land and to the community, reminding me of the summers I spent exploring these same fields and forests as a child.

Today, as I reflect on my life, I see a circle: childhood summers on the River, exploring fields and forests, and now dedicating my work to preserving the places that shaped me. I hope future generations will have the same freedom to run through cornfields, swim through seaweed, and listen to the lessons this extraordinary place has in store for them.



## 40 YEARS STRONG

### Stewardship on Grindstone Island

by Ken Nims | Stewardship Director

This summer, the stewardship crew completed vital projects on Grindstone Island—work that carries special meaning as we celebrate 40 years of conservation.

Our story began on Grindstone in 1985, and the Island continues to be at the heart of our conservation mission. Its mix of forests, wetlands, and open fields supports a remarkable diversity of wildlife and plant communities.

The team completed much-needed road repairs, ditching, and culvert improvements, ensuring safe access and reducing erosion across several key properties. These efforts protect infrastructure while safeguarding sensitive habitats from unnecessary disturbance.

In addition, through a partnership with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the crew carried out grassland mowing to create and maintain upland habitat. This important management technique prevents fields from transitioning into forest too quickly, sustaining areas that provide critical food, cover, and water resources for wildlife. By maintaining these open grasslands, we restore and conserve rare or declining native communities while supporting species that rely on upland habitats during parts of their life cycle.

From infrastructure care to habitat restoration, this season's work on Grindstone reflects the values that launched TILT four decades ago—protecting land, water, and wildlife for generations to come.

*Above Left: Stewardship Director Ken Nims and Land Manager Chris Balk repair roads on Grindstone Island.*

*Above: After months of wet conditions and severe erosion, TILT's stewardship team repaired the roads, safeguarding both the land and access for future use.*



*A Snowy Owl rests in a wintery field—a visitor that benefits from ongoing habitat restoration and management, the type of stopover that could also occur on Grindstone Island.*



### PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

#### RJ Marine Associates, LTD

TILT's work on Grindstone Island wouldn't be possible without the support of RJ Marine Associates LTD of Clayton, NY. Their team provides safe, professional transport of our equipment, ensuring that stewardship work such as road repairs and habitat management can be carried out effectively.

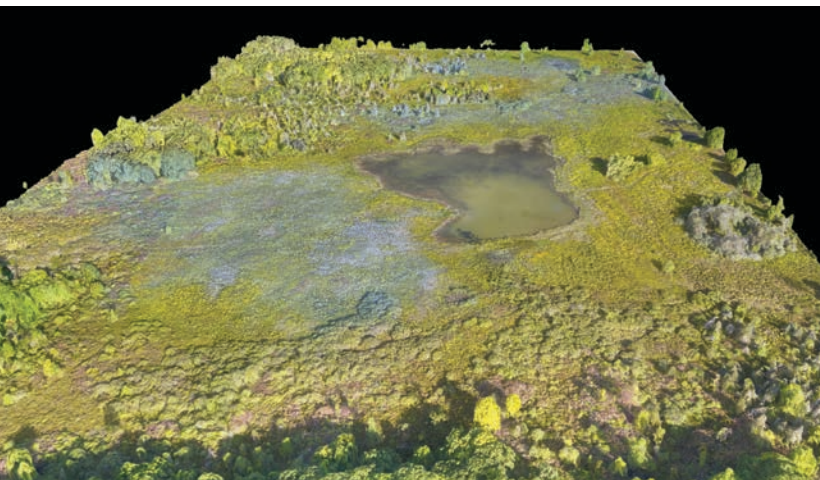
For years, they have been a trusted partner, and we are grateful for their reliability, and commitment to helping us protect and care for Grindstone Island.



## RESTORATION WORK ON GRINDSTONE PRESERVES

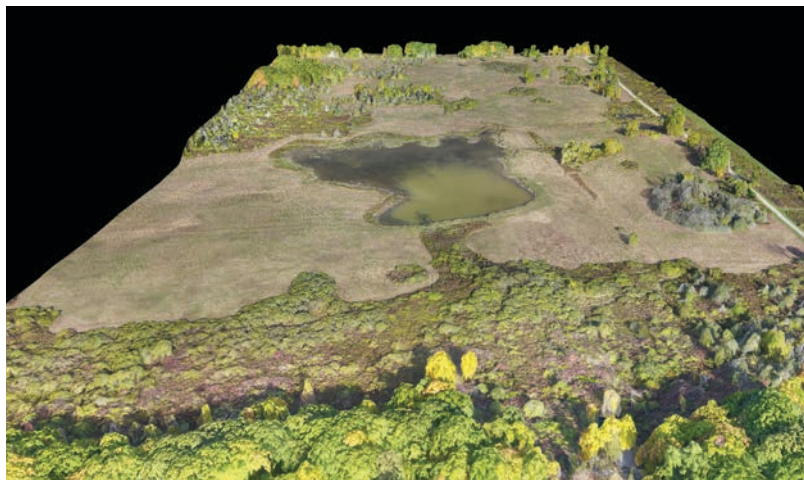
This autumn, our Land Managers mowed the Heineman Songbird Forest at the foot of Grindstone. By resetting succession and creating a mosaic of varying vegetation height, we are ensuring that the property remains a stronghold for a wide array of native passerines.

**BEFORE** →



*DroneDeploy 3D Model, Howard Smith Preserve before mowing*

**AFTER** →



*DroneDeploy 3D Model, Howard Smith Preserve after mowing*

A closer look at conservation: before and after, our grassland restoration efforts are making a real difference on the Howard Smith Preserve—helping native plants thrive and creating habitat for pollinators, birds, and other wildlife through thoughtful grassland maintenance.



## Signature Preserve Highlight

### **OTTER CREEK PRESERVE**

The Otter Creek Preserve is a 115-acre haven of wetlands, forest, and trails in Alexandria Bay, offering year-round recreation and vital wildlife habitat in the heart of the Thousand Islands.



A community treasure, the Otter Creek Preserve offers year-round opportunities to hike, ski, snowshoe, or simply enjoy the beauty of the Thousand Islands. From its iconic suspension bridge to its accessible wildlife observation tower, the Preserve blends ecological importance with memorable outdoor experiences.

## PRESERVE ECOLOGY

Wetlands are the heart of Otter Creek Preserve, where northern pike spawn, and panfish like bluegill and pumpkinseed thrive in its quiet sheltered waters. Migratory warblers, kingfishers, and Scarlet Tanagers find refuge in the surrounding woods and waterways, making the Preserve a vital sanctuary for life.

In this ecologically rich corridor, otters slip through shaded pools, herons patrol marshy edges, and Golden-winged Warblers demonstrate the importance of habitat restoration. A mosaic of wetlands, floodplain forest, and upland hardwoods supports amphibians, mammals, raptors and songbirds, sustaining a connected ecosystem for generations to enjoy.

These healthy forests not only sequester carbon but also provide critical green space for the community. Part of the Frontenac Arch—an ancient ridge of granite linking the Adirondacks to the Canadian Shield—the Preserve holds unique geology and biodiversity. Its connected landscapes allow species to move across large ranges, an essential function in the face of climate change.

## HIKING THE PRESERVE

Otter Creek offers 1.9 miles of trails, including an ADA-accessible section that leads to the Fitzsimmons Observation Tower which overlooks restored Golden-winged Warbler habitat. The trail system also features the Walker Suspension Bridge—a favorite spot for hikers to pause and take in picturesque views of Lynch Creek.

## HOW TO GET THERE

The Preserve is located just outside Alexandria Bay, within walking distance of the village and the Alexandria Central School District. Parking is available at the trailhead entrance, where visitors can pick up trail maps at the kiosk.

To get there: from Route 12, turn south on State Route 26 (Church Street); the Preserve entrance is a half mile down on the right.

*Photo credits:*

*Top row: © Chris Murray Photography; © Steve Sturtz; © Bridgett McCann/TILT*

*Middle row: © Terra Bach/TILT; © Chris Murray Photography; © Bill Munro*

*Bottom: © Feather in Flight Photography*

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

## Fun Facts



Otter Creek Preserve's story began in 1999 when the Butts family donated the first of two islands to protect the natural beauty of the Thousand Islands. In 2011, TILT worked with the Sweet family to add over 80 acres, sparking momentum for further conservation. By 2015, thanks to collaborations with local families and support from a NAWCA grant, the Preserve was transformed into a cherished public resource for all to enjoy.



The Preserve's forests burst with color each fall, with vibrant reds, oranges, and golds. Step beneath the towering hemlocks and feel the temperature drop, as moss and lichen flourish in their shaded microclimate.



Paddle in from the River to the Preserve, where a kayak landing sits just below the lookout point. Once ashore, explore scenic trails and enjoy the beauty of the wetlands and forests.



Golden-winged Warblers rely on shrublands and young forests within a mosaic of mature trees. Home to New York State's largest population, this declining species finds refuge and breeding grounds here in the St. Lawrence River Valley, supporting its long-term survival.



# THE CALL OF CONSERVATION

## Protecting Loons on the St. Lawrence River

by Delaney McIlrath | Community Engagement Coordinator

For all those connected to the St. Lawrence River, the iconic call of a loon is a cherished hallmark of the summer season. These elegant birds are not only visually striking but also serve as vital indicators of a healthy aquatic ecosystem.

Since 2006, the Thousand Islands Land Trust has partnered with the Adirondack Center for Loon Conservation (ACLC) to support the continued presence and well-being of loons throughout the region's waterways.

ACLC's mission is to inspire care for loons and their habitats through research, conservation, and education. Since launching the annual loon census in 2001, participation has grown from 255 volunteers on 130 lakes to over 700 on 350

lakes. This long-term data helps researchers track the health of New York's loon population.

### Collaborative Conservation for a Healthier River

This partnership began with a clear objective: to enhance loon population monitoring along the St. Lawrence River. From the outset, both TILT and ACLC recognized that improved data collection and increased community involvement were essential to advancing loon conservation across the River system.

Over the years, hundreds of volunteers and staff from both organizations have contributed to ongoing efforts to monitor loon populations and protect critical habitats. What began



### Quick Loon Facts

- Loons dive up to **200 feet** to catch fish.
- They can **live 20–30 years** in the wild.
- Their **red eyes** help them see underwater.
- Their **distinctive calls** can carry over a mile across water.
- Loons usually lay **1–2 eggs** per year.
- They are **monogamous** and often return to the same territory each year.
- Loons have **solid bones**, unlike most birds, which helps them dive.
- Their diet is mostly **fish**, but they also eat crustaceans and insects.

as a targeted data-gathering initiative has since evolved into a long-term collaboration grounded in science, local ecological knowledge, and a shared commitment to conserving this extraordinary species and landscape.

Today, TILT staff and volunteers actively support ACLC by conducting loon surveys, counting chicks, and collecting key ecological data. This hands-on engagement strengthens our understanding of loon populations.

“Hearing a loon’s call on the St. Lawrence is like hearing the River speak. Our work with the ACLC helps ensure that these calls aren’t just memories but part of our everyday summers, fostering a deeper connection between the community and the River ecosystem,” shared Delaney McIlrath, TILT’s Community Engagement Coordinator.

### A New Chapter: Geospatial Analysis

The next phase of our collaboration marks an exciting step forward. We will apply Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to analyze historical and current loon census data to determine location patterns.

Though still in the early stages, this work is expected to provide important insights into loon habitat preferences, population dynamics, and regions that may require enhanced protection measures.

This innovative approach underscores the evolving nature of our partnership and highlights how science and collaboration can be integrated to inform and advance conservation strategies.

“I am very excited to see where this project can go,” said Griffin Archambault, research biologist at ACLC. “Data collected through the loon census can tell us a lot about loon



*Each summer, “Team Looner” carries on a beloved River tradition — joining the annual Loon Census around Picton Island and Eel Bay to help monitor one of our most iconic species and keep community science alive.*

population dynamics in specific areas and where we should direct conservation efforts.”

### Ensuring the Future of the Loon’s Call

Looking ahead, TILT and ACLC remain committed to protecting the distinctive calls of loons on the St. Lawrence for generations. Community members can get involved by volunteering and supporting the organization’s broader conservation missions. Every contribution, big or small, plays a role in safeguarding the lands and waters that make the Thousand Islands region so ecologically and culturally significant.

Thank you for supporting this vital work—and for helping to ensure that the call of the loon continues to echo across the River each summer. More exciting updates to come!

## Show Your Support with a Save Blind Bay Hat

**Our limited-edition Save Blind Bay hats have been turning heads since their debut this summer, and we still have a handful left!**

Available in both classic and trucker styles, they’re a great way to wear your support for protecting one of the Thousand Islands’ most important habitats.

Each hat is \$40, with every dollar directly supporting the fight to Save Blind Bay. Get yours before they’re gone!



## Welcome to the Board of Trustees

### Marcy Robinson Dembs

We are delighted to welcome Marcy Robinson Dembs to the Board of Trustees and look forward to leadership and passion for our mission. A native of northern New York, Marcy spent her childhood summers on Lake Ontario and her adult life on Wellesley Island, and later, Hill Island. Reflecting on her River connection, she shares, “I am continuously amazed by the beauty and diversity of the River. You can be on your paddle board in the mist in the morning and watching for whales in the gulf of the St. Lawrence in the afternoon.”



Marcy recently retired as a partner at Barclay Damon LLP, where she specialized in estates, trusts, and estate tax planning. With over four decades of legal expertise, her professional experience in guiding families through the stewardship and preservation of assets—including River properties—aligns closely with the Land Trust’s mission to protect the natural beauty, heritage, and ecological integrity of the Thousand Islands. Dedicated to advancing thoughtful conservation, Marcy is interested in ensuring that the River’s diverse landscapes benefit both the community and future generations.

Educated at Northfield Mt. Hermon School, Middlebury College, and Syracuse University College of Law, she has also served on the boards of numerous charities and nonprofits, including Samaritan Medical Center, the Antique Boat Museum, Planned Parenthood of Central New York, the Onondaga County Bar Association Foundation, and the United Way of Central New York.

“We are honored to welcome Marcy to the Board of Trustees,” said David Lucas, Board President. “Her ties to the River, extensive legal expertise, and nonprofit leadership will be invaluable as we continue working to protect the lands and waters of the Thousand Islands.”

### Alec Johnson

We are pleased to welcome Alec Johnson, editor and publisher of the *Watertown Daily Times*, to the Board of Trustees.



Raised in Watertown, Alec is a graduate of Phillips Exeter Academy in New Hampshire, Dickinson College in Pennsylvania, and the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism. For over a decade, he worked as an award-winning reporter and editor in Connecticut, where his work was recognized by New England newspaper associations for investigative reporting that forced transparency in local government and contributed to changing interstate cooperation in New England for repeat DWI offenders.

In 2018, Alec returned to the North Country. He and his wife, Gabrielle West Johnson, live in Clayton with their two children, Claire and Tadhg. Alec is also the great-grandson of naturalist Minna Anthony Common, namesake of the Nature Center on Wellesley Island, whose conservation legacy continues to inspire Alec’s commitment to preserving the Thousand Islands for future generations.

“We are thrilled to welcome Alec to the Board of Trustees,” said David Lucas, Board President. “His deep local roots, professional expertise, and family legacy of conservation make him an outstanding addition to our leadership team. We look forward to working with him to further TILT’s mission of protecting the lands and waters of the Thousand Islands.”

# Thank You for Your Service

## Janice McPhail

For her entire life, Janice McPhail has carried the spirit of Grindstone Island in her heart—honoring her family’s legacy as a fifth-generation islander while shaping her own through a deep commitment to TILT.

Janice has been a long-time member of the Easement & Property Stewardship Committee, Chair of the Community Engagement Committee (formerly Events), and an active member of the Grindstone Island Preserve Advisory Committee. Through her 10 years as a Trustee and her ever-present volunteerism—whether guiding mule tours, pitching in at picnics, or adding her signature humor to every event—she has strengthened our mission and inspired all who work alongside her. Long before she joined the Board, Janice was already a passionate advocate for Grindstone Island and an avid volunteer.

She truly cares about TILT’s programs and environmental education, understanding how deeply they connect people of all ages to the land and River. A fabulous storyteller, Janice brings the history of Grindstone and the Thousand Islands to life with warmth and wit. Her infectious smile could light up every gathering, and her generosity of spirit touches everyone she encounters.

Janice’s wisdom, energy, and devotion to this community have left a lasting mark on the Land Trust, ensuring that the River and its islands will remain healthy and vibrant for generations to come. On behalf of the Board of Trustees and Staff, we extend our deepest gratitude to Janice for her leadership, friendship, and unwavering support.



## Ben Walldroff

Since joining the Board in 2015, LaFargeville native Ben Walldroff has been a steady force behind TILT’s growth and success. Stepping in as Finance Committee Chair, he filled big shoes and helped keep TILT’s portfolio strong, ensuring the organization remained well-positioned to protect land and water for future generations.

Rooted in his deep farming background and guided by an entrepreneurial spirit, Ben brought innovation, energy, and practicality to every role he embraced. Over the years, he contributed to multiple committees—including Finance, Audit, Building, and the Zenda Farms Preserve Advisory Committee, offering insight that blended both business savvy and a genuine passion for conservation. He was also a key player on the Building Committee for the office renovation, devoting significant time and energy to ensure the project’s success. In 2021, he joined the Executive Committee and later served as Audit Chair in 2024, providing guidance on critical organizational priorities.

Beyond the numbers, Ben energized TILT’s work. His creativity and commitment to the land helped shape meaningful programs at Zenda Farms, and his perspective enriched discussions across committees, always pointing toward long-term sustainability.

As he retires from the Board, Ben leaves behind a legacy of dedication, innovative thinking, and heartfelt commitment to TILT’s mission. On behalf of the Board of Trustees and Staff, we extend our gratitude for his leadership, time, and the lasting impact he has had on the organization and the River community it serves.



# Eat • Play • Live

## IN THE 1000 ISLANDS

Please support these local businesses  
that support land conservation!



### Live Local



### Eat Local

- 24 Carrots Catering and Events
- 1000 Islands Artisans and Bett's Bagels
- 1000 Islands River Rat Cheese
- DiPrinzio's
- Eagle Beverage
- Eastons Eatery & Market
- Foxy's Restaurant
- Hops Spot
- Koffee Kove
- Lake & River Roasters
- O'Brien's Restaurant & Bar
- Shurfine
- The Boat Yard at French Bay
- The Channelside
- The Clipper Inn
- The Lyric
- The Wellesley Hotel
- Wood Boat Brewery



- All Seasons Landscaping & Garden
- Atwood Morgan Architecture
- Aubertine and Currier
- Aubertine Excavation and Construction
- Bach & Co.
- Barclay Damon LLP
- Bill Elliot & Sons
- Cerow Agency, Inc.
- Charles Garlock & Sons/Garlock Hardware
- Clayton Marina
- Community Bank N.A.
- Coughlin Printing
- Cross Island Farms
- DeLuke's Garden Center & Northern Flow Vineyards
- Erin V Johnson Hairstylist
- FMI Sand & Gravel
- F.X. Caprara
- Frontenac Crystal Springs
- Hazlewood Mechanicals Inc.
- Jade Stone Engineering
- LaFave, White and McGivern LS PC
- Marshall and Sterling Upstate, Inc.
- Mercer General Contracting
- Morgia Masonry, Inc.
- Nik and the Nice Guys
- Northern Frontier Farms
- Olive & Hope Skincare Boutique
- On The River Construction
- OVIA Insurance Agencies
- Phinney Charitable Foundation
- Price Chopper Golub Foundation
- RBC Wealth Management
- Rupp Pfalzgraf LLC
- Spicer Marine Basin
- St. Lawrence Federal Credit Union
- St. Lawrence Restoration
- Taylored Architecture PLLC
- The Prop Shop @ Northern Marine
- The Victorian
- Thousand Islands Appraisals
- Thousand Islands Sun
- UBS Financial Services – Jonathan Kendall
- Watertown Savings Bank
- Westelcom and SLICFiber
- YesterYear's Vintage Doors & Milwork, LLC

### PLAY LOCAL

- 1000 Islands Harbor Hotel
- Angel Rock Waterfront Cottages & Vacation Homes
- Belle Epoque
- Big Duck Bags
- Bonnie Castle Resort
- Buoy's Boutique
- Cape Liquors
- Captain Spicer's Fine Gifts & Gallery
- Chateau
- Chris Murray Photography
- Clayton Island Tours
- Clayton Wine and Spirits
- Cup of Joy
- EagleShoppe
- Good Dog Charlies
- Grindstone Island Winery
- Hilda's Place
- Gretchen Scott Designs
- Madymae on Broadway
- Porch & Paddle
- Reinman's Decorating Center
- Reinman's Dept Store
- River Wellness Center
- River Yoga
- St. Lawrence Gallery
- Silver Line Party Rentals
- Swan Bay Resort & Marina
- The Golden Cleat
- Thousand Islands Country Club
- Whitecaps Market – Cape Vincent



# THOUSAND ISLANDS LAND TRUST DISCOVERY CENTER



## Have You Visited the Discovery Center Yet?

**The TILT Discovery Center: The Gateway to the Outdoors officially opened at the end of October along the scenic Clayton Riverwalk!**

This interactive, hands-on space connects people of all ages with the land, water, and cultural heritage of the Thousand Islands region.

Community members got a first look at the Discovery Center during the Clayton Chamber of Commerce Business with a Twist event on Thursday, October 30th, enjoying a sneak peek at exhibits.

The Center has transformed TILT's office into a welcoming community hub, filled with engaging exhibits that showcase the unique ecology of the St. Lawrence River, the importance of conservation, and the stories of local residents. Visitors can explore TILT's Preserves & Trails, learn about local habitats and wildlife, and leave inspired to protect and enjoy the natural world.

"This project is about creating a space where conservation and community meet," said Terra Bach, TILT's Director of Development and Communications. "The Discovery Center is already taking shape as a gateway—not just to our preserves and trails, but to a deeper connection with the land, water and our community members that define the Thousand Islands."

**Don't miss your chance to experience the Discovery Center firsthand—it's your gateway to adventure, learning, and inspiration in the Thousand Islands!**



## TILT Merch

### SHOP WITH A PURPOSE

The holidays are just around the corner, and TILT has some wonderful gift ideas to make the season merry and bright!

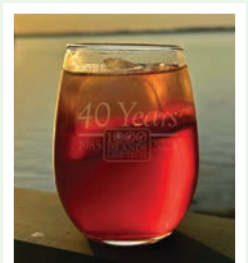
Stop by our office to pick up cozy, unisex apparel in a variety of sizes, delicious Zenda Farms honey, fun stickers, books and more.



**Sock hat, toque, beanie, woolly, winter hat...** whatever you call it, we have one made especially for the outdoorsy TILT supporter.

### Sip, savor, and celebrate!

TILT's 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary stemless wine glasses are made for sunsets, sparkling sips, and good company.



**Celebrate the season with purpose.** Every purchase supports conservation and shares the gift of nature's magic for generations to come!

**Can't make it in? No problem, we ship!** Call us at 315-686-5345 to place your order today.



# The Balance Between Conservation & Hunting

by Jim Farrell | Kenneth Deedy Environmental Intern

Looking out across the River in Clayton recently, I couldn't help but notice how much has changed. Though not old enough to claim long-time residence, I remember a quieter era—when the TI Inn sign shone from its metal roof, the Clayton Bait Shop was open, and the village felt more like a quiet stop than the vibrant hub it is today. Now, the village bustles with shops, restaurants, and visitors, yet the River and its islands remain timeless, holding memories of the past for those who know where to look.

## A River Through Time

Growing up in a family of biologists, the River was never just a vacation spot—it was a living classroom. My father worked here “ice out to ice in,” and our conversations often circled back to wildlife, wetlands, and the future of this place we loved. Though our family never moved to Clayton permanently, those early years shaped me. They taught me to see the River not just for its beauty, but for its complexity, and gave me an appreciation for how people and nature interact. That perspective is what first drew me to the Thousand Islands Land Trust.

As a young hunter, my first experiences on Grindstone Island were exciting and humbling. Success in the field wasn't guaranteed, but the pull of the River and my love for hunting kept me coming back season after season. Over time, I realized what makes the Thousand Islands so special: it is a place where conservation and hunting work to balance one another. Protected habitat ensures that deer, waterfowl, and countless other species thrive, and hunters remain part of the natural cycle, engaged with and responsible for the stewardship of the land.

During one early season, I had the chance to sit with Ken Deedy, one of TILT's founders, on his porch, coffee in hand, overlooking the River. What had my attention was his vision:

*“These moments shape traditions, link generations, and remind us why conservation is essential; without preserved landscapes, they could slip away, but with them, they remain timeless.”*



conserving land on the islands wasn't only about protecting scenery or rare species—it was about ensuring that traditions like hunting, fishing, and outdoor family gatherings could continue long into the future. Though my hunt that day was unsuccessful, the conversation with Ken gave me a deeper respect for the land and why protecting it matters.

Since then, I've returned to Grindstone each fall. Hunting is about more than pursuing game; it is immersion—the long sits under towering oaks, the sudden flush of mallards lifting off a back bay, the quiet awe of a sunrise spilling across the River. What strikes me most is how Grindstone holds steady—the old cheese factory standing, schoolhouses marking the past, and wild woods stretching as they always have—while Clayton grows and evolves with new buildings and ideas, a contrast that makes this region so remarkable.

Working as the Kenneth Deedy Environmental Intern gave me a deeper appreciation for all of this. I was proud to hold a position created in Ken's legacy, carrying forward the vision he set in motion over forty years ago. My love of Grindstone, my respect for conservation, and my belief in the balance between preservation and tradition are rooted in the work Ken and TILT began.

## Preserving a Legacy

Thanks to the Land Trust, the wild places of the Thousand Islands will endure—not only for hunters like me, but for anyone seeking connection to the River, whether through hiking, paddling, birding, or simply being present. For me, this place is more than a hunting ground; it is where tradition, conservation, and community come together. It reminds me that the future of this region depends on how well we honor its past and gives hope that generations to come will feel the same pull of the River that has shaped my life.

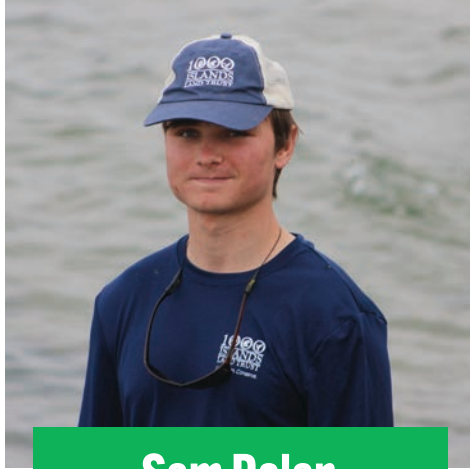
# Learning Through Land, Water, and Community

by Bridgett McCann | *Communications Specialist*

**Each summer, TILT welcomes a new group of interns who bring fresh perspectives and energy to conservation. This season, three interns—Cooper Bennett, Jim Farrell, and Sam Dolan—spent their summer gaining hands-on experience and contributing to TILT's mission.**



**Cooper Bennett**



**Sam Dolan**



**Jim Farrell**

For Sam, serving as a Summer Land Steward was a reminder of responsibility. “I learned all about environmental conservation—the what’s, the how’s, and most importantly, the why’s. What stood out most was realizing that TILT doesn’t just have a job to do; it has a responsibility, one that is shared with the community.” His time on the Preserves and Trails, along with conversations with local residents, deepened his understanding that conservation is a collective effort, powered by people who care about the River.

Fellow Summer Land Steward Cooper, described his internship as a chance to strengthen both technical skills and teamwork. From trail maintenance at Zenda Farms to rebuilding a collapsed footbridge on the Chippewa Trail, he experienced the variety and unpredictability of stewardship. “Unexpected challenges required quick adjustments and collaborative problem solving,” Cooper reflected. Through it all, he valued the mentorship and camaraderie that helped him grow as both a Land Steward and a teammate.

As the Kenneth Deedy Environmental Steward, Jim explored conservation through a variety of lenses—moving between advocacy, education, and outreach. At Minna Anthony Common Nature Center, he discovered the impact of introducing children to wild places and the role education plays in shaping lifelong conservation values. “By introducing kids to natural things and wild places, they are more likely to value them when they grow up,” Jim reflected. Time with Save The River gave him a new perspective on how visitors and newcomers view the Thousand Islands, reinforcing the

importance of advocacy when it comes to national issues like Blind Bay. “When people understand and value the River, they are more likely to fight to protect it.” At TILT, Jim helped with programs like KidsTreks and TILTreks, while gaining new experiences in writing and outreach. “I came to appreciate how written communication is as important as fieldwork in conservation,” he added. These experiences reminded him that conservation can take many forms, from pulling invasive plants to writing stories that connect people to the River.

Though each intern’s path was different, all were united by a common theme: conservation is more than land management—it’s about people who steward the trails, teach the next generation, and come together to protect the Thousand Islands for the future.

Thanks to the Ellen & Stuart Burt Summer Stewardship Fund, Ames Family Stewardship Fund, and Kenneth Deedy Environmental Steward Fund, TILT provides enriching internship opportunities that leave a lasting impact on both the interns and the River, helping to ensure its protection for generations to come.



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

# 2025 TILT VOLUNTEER AWARDS

## DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

is presented annually to a volunteer in recognition of outstanding contribution to the work of TILT.

### Skip Tolette

This Awardee's dedication speaks volumes. From mowing trails on Grindstone to greeting guests at Zenda and selling raffle tickets with a smile, Skip has given generously of his time and heart. A former board member for 8 years and steadfast volunteer, Skip embodies the spirit of service. His deep commitment to stewardship is rooted in his agricultural background—having grown up working the land, he understands firsthand the value of caring for it. That connection shines through in everything he does for TILT. His good humor, reliability, and endless drive to share the magic of Grindstone Island over the years, have made him an invaluable part of the TILT family.



## STEWARDSHIP SOCIETY AWARD

honors a TILT volunteer who carries on the tradition of public service activity. This recipient typically volunteers on trail work, conservation, or other stewardship projects.

### Lori Arnot

This Awardee embodies the spirit of stewardship through her unwavering dedication to conservation and a healthy planet. Lori has been getting her hands dirty for years, from helping to establish the Community Garden at Zenda Farms to volunteering annually to plant trees, directly contributing to the restoration and resilience of our landscapes. She continues to inspire others by encouraging countless community members—especially her daughters—to embrace a life of environmental stewardship. We're deeply grateful for her leadership, dedication, and hands-on commitment to creating a healthier, more sustainable world.



## VOLUNTEER LEADERSHIP AWARD

recognizes TILT's outstanding volunteer leaders who demonstrate the desire to share their time and expertise in the pursuit of TILT's recreation, conservation, and education mission.

### Fred Schmitt

This Awardee's generous gift of time perfectly reflects our recreation, conservation, and education mission. Fred leads our annual Jam and Jelly series, teaching community members the art of preserving at Zenda Farms—passing down skills that connect people to nature and tradition. He also lends his care and expertise to pruning the grapevines and helped build raised beds in the Community Garden, helping to steward this cherished landscape. Fred leads by example, inspiring others to engage, learn, and give back through hands-on conservation and community education, making a lasting impact, and we are grateful for all he does.



1000 ISLANDS  
LAND TRUST

# Naples

Winter Gathering at the home of  
Marlene & Cyril Mouaikel

**Saturday, March 7, 2026**

Benefiting the essential conservation  
of the Thousand Islands, A2A Corridor,  
and greater Atlantic Flyway

Learn details by visiting [tilandtrust.org](https://tilandtrust.org)  
or scanning the QR Code



## And the 2025 Raffle Winner is...

### John Slattery!

Big congratulations to John Slattery, the lucky winner of this year's raffle — a gorgeous Ruffed Grouse carving, handcrafted by Glenn Sweet of Thousand Islands Decoy Co. A special thanks to his daughter, Nancy Slattery, for standing in for the photo and sharing the spotlight.

Every ticket purchased helps to conserve the Thousand Islands — protecting the region to include the A2A Wildway and Atlantic Flyway for birds, wildlife, and people alike. In these young forests, where thickets meet tall trees, the Ruffed Grouse makes its home and drums out its wild woodland beat. Many thanks to all who purchased tickets — your support makes a real difference.

Stay tuned for something exciting in the 2026 raffle. Watch your mailboxes this winter — your tickets are on the way!



Nancy Slattery



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## DISCOVER the Thousand Islands Forever Legacy Program!

Leaving a legacy is one of the most meaningful gifts you can give. Join others in supporting land conservation through your estate plan and become a recognized member of the Legacy Program.

Check it out today at [tilandtrust.org](http://tilandtrust.org)!



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camera to learn more.



**Cover Photo:** A tranquil morning sunrise along the shoreline of Eel Bay, where quiet waters reflect the day's first light and the enduring beauty of a protected landscape.  
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