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**For more information:**

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## Public Presentation of Trail Plans for Owens Falls

The public is invited to a presentation about a proposed walking trail system at the Western New York Land Conservancy's newest preserve, The Owens Falls Sanctuary. The trail is being designed by a nationally renowned firm, Tahawus Trails. The sanctuary is incredibly ecologically important, and with two waterfalls and mature forests, it is beautiful. The presentation about the proposed trail system will take place on Thursday, August 31, from 6:30 to 8:00 PM at the East Aurora Senior Center at 101 King Street in East Aurora. This will be an opportunity for the community to provide thoughts on the planned walking trail system.

Staff from Tahawus will participate in the presentation on August 31. Dave Spiering, Conservation Project Manager for the Land Conservancy, will also discuss landscaping practices and native plants that can be used and grown around people's homes to improve habitat for birds, pollinators, and other wildlife.

In 2016, the community helped protect the 57-acre property now known as The Owens Falls Sanctuary located between Center Street and Hubbard Road in Aurora near Major's Park. Its previous owners were descendants of Roycrofters, and Elbert Hubbard likely visited during his lifetime. The land provides important habitat for wildlife, including migratory birds and breeding frogs and salamanders. It is a headwater forest of the Niagara River, and serves as a filter that improves water quality for thousands of people downstream. The Land Conservancy now owns the property and will manage it as a publicly accessible nature preserve.

The Owens Falls Sanctuary is not yet open to the public. After purchasing the property last December, the Land Conservancy began a planning process to determine how best to make the preserve accessible while also protecting sensitive wildlife habitats.

"We are excited to bring Tahawus' expertise to The Owens Falls Sanctuary to create a sustainable, well-designed trail system that provides safe access for visitors and protects what makes the preserve special," said Executive Director, Nancy Smith. "We welcome this opportunity for members of our community to participate in planning the preserve's future."

Although there is no cost to attend the presentation, space is limited. Attendees are asked to register online by August 28<sup>th</sup> at [owensfallsmeeting.eventbrite.com](http://owensfallsmeeting.eventbrite.com) or by calling the Land Conservancy offices at (716) 687-1225.

The Western New York Land Conservancy is a regional, not-for-profit land trust that permanently protects land with significant conservation value in Western New York for future generations. The Land Conservancy envisions a future in which meadows, forests, farmlands, wildlife habitat, and scenic beauty are cherished and protected as part of the landscape and character of Western New York. The Land Conservancy is accredited by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission and is one of 1,700 land trusts nationwide, including 90 in New York State. Land trusts have protected 40 million acres over the last 20 years. For more information on upcoming events, volunteer opportunities, or the mission of the Western New York Land Conservancy, please call (716) 687-1225 or visit [www.wnylc.org](http://www.wnylc.org).

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