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For more information:

Rachel Chrostowski

(716) 687-1225

rachelc@wnylc.org

Marisa Riggi joins Western New York Land Conservancy as Land Protection Director

The Western New York Land Conservancy welcomed Marisa Riggi as the newest member of their staff in December. As Land Protection Director, Marisa will play a key role in achieving the Land Conservancy's conservation goals by identifying and protecting natural lands, preserving some of the most productive farmland in New York State, and ensuring that the Land Conservancy's work enhances the biodiversity and climate resiliency in our region.

Marisa was born in Rochester and grew up in Williamsville. She realized her love of the outdoors when she was young. She spent her days exploring the woods behind her family's house. Marisa has a bachelor's degree from SUNY Geneseo and a Master of Science degree in Natural Resources from the University of Vermont. After graduating, Marisa worked at the Northeast Wilderness Trust for over five years in the Northern Forest region. As Conservation Director, Marisa successfully completed 14 projects, protecting nearly 6,000 acres in Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, New York, and Connecticut.

Being from Western New York, Marisa is happy to be moving her family back to the area from Vermont. "Since starting my work in conservation, I have always hoped to be able to return home to protect the special places we have in Western New York," said Marisa. "The great work of the Land Conservancy to protect natural areas, working farms, wildlife habitat, and scenic beauty speaks to an inclusive land ethic that I am proud to be part of."

Nancy Smith, Executive Director of the Western New York Land Conservancy, believes that "Marisa's passion for our mission and her experience in successfully completing conservation projects will move us forward as we embrace our third decade of permanent land protection."

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 open spaces, working lands, wildlife habitat and scenic beauty are cherished and protected as part of the landscape and character of Western New York. The Land Conservancy 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.

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