



**For Immediate Release:**

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## Land Conservancy seeks donations to create Owens Falls Trails System

The Western New York Land Conservancy needs help from the community to complete a walking trail system at their newest preserve, The Owens Falls Sanctuary. The trail was designed by nationally-renowned firm, Tahawus Trails. With two beautiful waterfalls, a deep ravine, and acres of mature forest, the sanctuary is incredibly ecologically important. The Land Conservancy needs to raise at least another \$25,000 by November 15 to create the first section of the walking trail system so the preserve can be opened to the public as soon as possible.

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. At the end of August, the Land Conservancy held a public presentation to share Tahawus' sustainable, well-designed trail design with the community and to give the community an opportunity to participate in planning the preserve's future.

"We are excited to start building the trail system that Tahawus' designed for Owens Falls," said Executive Director, Nancy Smith. "We still need \$25,000 so we can construct an entrance on Center and the first section of the trail, which will take visitors from Center Street to the top of the waterfalls. If we are able to secure additional funding this fall, we hope to be able to open the preserve to the public next spring. The community's generosity protected this important place, and now we need the community to make the walking trail become a reality."

The Land Conservancy hopes to raise the additional \$25,000 needed by November 15, 2017. If you are interested in helping create the trail system at the Owens Falls Sanctuary, please contact the Land Conservancy at (716) 687-1225 or emailing [info@wnylc.org](mailto:info@wnylc.org). You can also donate now by sending a check with "Owens Falls" in the memo line to the Western New York Land Conservancy, P.O. Box 471, East Aurora, NY 14052, or by donating online at [www.wnyc.org](http://www.wnyc.org).

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.wnyc.org](http://www.wnyc.org).

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