

BY Christina Soto

Two Sites Receive Special Designations



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The U.S. side of the Niagara River is now a Ramsar site: a Wetland of International Importance.

And still, the work is not over. Even with Ramsar, the river faces threats and more conservation is needed.”

According to Rose-Burney, “The Ramsar designation does not protect the Niagara River. The designation is voluntary and non-regulatory. Instead, Ramsar changes the perception of the river. It says it is one of the most irreplaceable natural places in the world. It says the river is worth protecting. Now it’s on us all to do so.”

The Western New York Land Conservancy is part of an international, multi-organizational effort to celebrate and protect the river. See <https://wnylc.org/conservation/current-projects/niagara-river-corridor-ramsar-site>.

Last July another site received global recognition. The World Heritage Committee inscribed *The 20th-Century Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright*, which includes Fallingwater and seven other major works spanning 54 years of Frank Lloyd Wright’s career, to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage List.

Wright is widely considered the greatest American architect of the 20th century. The eight Wright-designed sites in this serial nomination are located in six states across the United States.

There are more than 1,000 World Heritage sites around the world, and the group of Wright houses is now among only 24 in the United States. Fallingwater is one of only two locations in Pennsylvania on the World Heritage List.

UNESCO considers “Outstanding Universal Value” as a criteria for the World Heritage List. The Wright series demonstrated three attributes in the nomination.

In October 2019, Jajeen Rose-Burney spoke at a ceremony attended by hundreds of people at Niagara Falls. “We celebrated together as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service designated the U.S. side of the Niagara River a Ramsar site: a Wetland of International Importance,” Rose-Burney says.

As the crowd witnessed the massive Niagara River disappear into the gorge below, Rose-Burney reflected on how this day was many years in the making, with the accredited Western New York Land Conservancy helping to lead the way.

Rose-Burney, who is deputy executive director for the conservancy, says that “for decades people have seen the Niagara region in a negative light: A rust belt community. Abandoned factories and neighborhoods. Contaminated land and water. But the river is incredibly important. The Great Lakes contain 21% of the world’s surface freshwater and most of that flows over Niagara Falls, one of Earth’s natural wonders. The

river is home to hundreds of rare plants and animals, old growth forests, great migrations of birds and massive fish.”

Now, he says, the river is healthier than it has been in generations. “There’s cleaner water. Greener shorelines. Bike trails that were once expressways. People now swim, boat and fish in the river. This recovery is the result of the dedication of many people—and Ramsar helps celebrate that turnaround.”

To get to this day, Rose-Burney says, “took many people, organizations and elected officials. It took a catalyst grant from the Land Trust Alliance’s New York Conservation Partnership Program.

First, it is an architecture responsive to functional and emotional needs, achieved through geometric abstraction and spatial manipulation. Second, the design of the buildings in this series is fundamentally rooted in nature's forms and principles. Third, the series represents an architecture conceived to be responsive to the evolving American experience, but which is universal in its appeal.

The nomination effort was spearheaded by Director Emerita of Fallingwater

Lynda Waggoner, who is also a founding board member of the Frank Lloyd Wright Building Conservancy, an organization dedicated to the preservation of Wright's remaining built works and the coordinating entity for the World Heritage nomination.

Fallingwater, which is also designated as a National Historic Landmark and Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Treasure, is owned, operated and preserved by the accredited Western Pennsylvania

Conservancy and has been open to the public as a museum since 1964.

"This recognition is a tremendous honor, one reserved for the world's most treasured places," says Vice President of WPC and Director of Fallingwater Justin Gunther. "I offer our sincerest thanks to the Frank Lloyd Wright Building Conservancy, National Park Service, partner sites and elected officials for all their efforts throughout the nomination process."

See Fallingwater.org for details. •

A Program for Trees and People

Conratulations to the Forest Legacy Program (FLP), which is turning 30.

FLP, created in 1990, is administered by the U.S. Forest Service in partnership with state agencies to encourage the protection of privately owned forest lands through conservation easements or land purchases. Protection of private forests through FLP provides a multitude of benefits to the public, including opportunities to hunt, fish and camp; clean and abundant drinking water; habitat for fish and wildlife; and timber, fuel wood and other forest products.

By providing economic incentives to landowners to keep their forests as forests, FLP encourages sustainable forest management and supports strong markets for forest products.

Since its creation, FLP has conserved over 2.6 million acres of forest land and expanded across the country to 53 states and territories. Explore the places and projects Forest Legacy has conserved through the Forest Legacy Interactive Map, linked to from the main page at www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/private-land/forest-legacy. •

Ear to the Ground

Happy Birthday to **Earth Day**, which is turning 50 this year.

Several land trusts are celebrating anniversaries in 2020, including **North Florida Land Trust*** (20th), **Great Land Trust*** (25th) and **Jackson Hole Land Trust*** (40th).

The Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests* has a new leader, **Jack Savage**, as the organization's fifth president. Savage succeeds Jane Difley and has served as the Forest Society's vice president of communications/outreach since 2005.

Laurie Andrews, former leader of the Jackson Hole Land Trust and former board member of the Land Trust Alliance, is now president of the Community Foundation of Jackson Hole.

In December, **Prickly Pear Land Trust*** Executive Director **Mary Hollow** accompanied Montana's Adjutant

General Quinn and Colonel Hesterberg to the Pentagon's Hall of Heroes to receive a 2019 Army Community Partnership Award, only given to a handful of partnerships nationwide to highlight examples of exceptional cooperation and diligence between Army facilities and community programs. The Montana Army National Guard (MTARNG) and PPLT were recognized for the "Peaks to Creeks" initiative, which allowed MTARNG to reduce encroachment threats to Fort Harrison while creating public access for veterans and civilians alike to 558 acres along the banks of the Tenmile Creek and Sevenmile Creek waterways. The partnership has also resulted in the addition of 90 acres of open space to the Mount Helena City Park, creating new public access to recreational opportunities along the LeGrande Cannon Trail. 🌿

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