

Greenway Ecological Standing Committee
Grantee Status Report

Status Report Date: 12/1/2014	
Project Title: Stella Niagara Preserve	
Organization: Western New York Land Conservancy	
Report Prepared By: Jajeon Rose-Burney	
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Project Start Date: March, 2013	Project Anticipated Completion Date: June, 2015

1. Describe what progress you have made toward each of your grant objectives since your last status report. Did you meet your goals for this period? Please be specific.

This is our first status report. The main objectives of this project include:

- Acquire the 29-acre parcel on the west side of Lower River Road in Lewiston, NY, currently owned by the Sisters of St. Francis.
- Enhance 18 acres of grassland / savannah habitat there.
- Open the property to low-impact public access.
- Steward the property in perpetuity.

The Land Conservancy submitted an application to the Habitat Enhancement and Restoration Fund (HERF) in March, 2013, and another application to the Greenway Ecological Fund (GEF) in June, 2013. Since that time, we have made significant progress towards meeting the project objectives.

- Fundraising: The project received a unanimous vote of consistency from the Greenway Commission in July 2013. We received more than \$2.3 million from HERF / GEF, all but \$70,000 of which was placed in escrow in October 2014. In addition, we received \$300,000 from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Joint Venture Habitat Restoration and Projection and an additional \$85,000 from individual donors and foundations. This includes a \$50,000 grant from the Gallogly Family Foundation in November 2014. We formed the "Friends of the Stella Niagara Preserve" in November 2014 to help with fundraising activities. A Wendt Foundation grant was submitted in November, 2014.
- Events: We hosted several public events at Stella to generate public support for the project, including a press event in September 2013 announcing HERF / GEF funding for the project, a birdwatching hike in June 2014, a fundraising hike in July 2014, a kayak launch in August 2014, and many more hikes for organized groups.
- Publicity: We had several press releases published in the Buffalo News and other local newspapers. The Stella Niagara Preserve was highlighted in a "2 The Outdoors" video on WGRZ Channel 2 in December 2013.
- Other: We finalized a purchase contract with the Sisters of St. Francis in July 2014, with a purchase date of June 1, 2015. The Sisters received approval for the subdivision of their property from the Lewiston Town Board in January 2014, conditioned upon the purchase of the 29 acres by the Western New York Land Conservancy.

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2. How did you measure your progress since your last status report? What kind of data have been collected to determine whether progress is being made or not being made? What results have been obtained since your last status report?

Since the first phase of this project, called The Planning Phase, is largely a fundraising effort, progress has been measured by the amount of funding received. Of the \$3.27 million project cost, we have raised \$2.73 million. The total funding gap is approximately \$540,000, with \$275,000 needed before we can purchase the property.

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3. What challenges have you encountered since your last status report? How are you addressing these challenges?

The most significant challenge to this project is the significant amount of fundraising needed to create the Stella Niagara Preserve. To address this challenge, our next steps include: send a fundraising letter to more than 300 neighbors of the preserve in Youngstown and Lewiston (early December 2014); present to the Lewiston Town Board as part of a request for their Greenway funding (December 2014); hold a fundraising event for major donors (January 2015); and continue applying for local foundation grants and requesting funds from other potential sources.

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4. Are you on schedule to complete your project in the proposed timeline? If not, please explain why you are ahead or behind schedule.

The project timeline from our original grant application to the HERF / GEF has a property acquisition date of December 2014. This date has been extended because of the fundraising process, and the new expected acquisition date is June 2015. We have a purchase contract with the Sisters that expires on June 1, 2015, and funding received from the USFWS must be spent on acquisition by June 2015.

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5. Please use the table below to report your expenditures since your last status report. Include in-kind support from other resources have you used since your last report below the table. Please explain any differences between anticipated and actual expenditures. Attach copies of any relevant receipts or invoices to this report.

Budget Categories	GESC-approved budget	Funds or in-kind support from other resources	Total expenses to date	Remaining balance
Salaries and Benefits	25,000	35,000	41,000	19,000
Travel				
Equipment				
Supplies				
Meetings				
Printed Material				
Consultants				
Other	2,318,487	350,000	0	2,668,487
Total Funds	2,343,487	385,000	41,000	2,687,487

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6. What progress toward your objectives do you expect to make before your next status report? Please be specific.

We expect to complete fundraising for acquisition and the stewardship fund, and purchase the property by June 1, 2015.

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7. Please include 1 to 2 photographs with dates and short descriptions taken since your last project report.



October 25, 2014 – The small white chapel at Stella Niagara, taken by a participant on a hike.



August 9, 2014 – Participants on a kayak paddle from Stella Niagara to Youngstown, led by Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper.

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