

The New York Woodland Steward

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The Woodland Stewards Collaborative

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The Woodland Stewards Collaborative – A New Program Partnership Between NYFOA and the Winnakee Land Trust

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In March 2026, the NYFOA state board approved developing a program partnership with the Winnakee Land Trust (WLT) which is called The Woodland Stewards Collaborative. The Collaborative seeks to connect two organizations with a common cause: supporting

the private landowners who are essential to the future of NY's forests, watersheds, and climate resilience by collaborating on educational programs and hands-on experience in woodlot management. We wanted to provide NYFOA members with additional information about this exciting

development and highlight some very successful recent results. On May 16th, NYFOA and WLT co-sponsored a legacy planning seminar as part of the NYFOA Annual Member's Meeting at the SUNY College of Environmental Forestry (ESF). Among the featured speakers were



Bob Davis and Uri Perrin of the Winnakee Land Trust and Ed Neuhauser and Stacey Kazacos of NYFOA.



Bob Davis, Ed Neuhauser, and Stacey Kazacos on Ed's property in Groton, NY.

NYFOA's Treasurer, CPA/Certified Financial Planner Nick Jensen and WLT's CEO Bob Davis. This event touched on many of the questions landowners face when trying to decide how best to leave their land for future generations – keeping the forest as forest, legal and financial concerns, and more. On May 21st we saw the kickoff of a series of six co-sponsored webinars planned for 2026. The inaugural session was entitled, "From Forest to Meadows: Supporting Pollinators Across Your Land," which included speakers from the Xerces Society, The Pollinator Partnership, and NYFOA. The number of attendees at each co-sponsored event was really good. We had 45 people at the in-person ESF legacy planning seminar and 150 registrants for the pollinator webinar. As part of NYFOA's two-day seminar program at the late February 2026 NYS Farm Show, WLT CEO Bob Davis presented a well-received session on important roles a land trust can play in a private woodlot owner's legacy planning. NYFOA President Ed Neuhauser and Executive Committee member Stacey Kazacos presented

an overview of NYFOA to the WLT board on April 22nd. SUNY ESF Professor David Newman serves on the Executive Committee of NYFOA and the WLT board. Senior WLT officers Bob Davis and Uri Perrin have addressed the NYFOA state board to discuss the potential of shared programming efforts. The more we discussed these possibilities at the board level, the more it made sense to establish the Woodland Stewards Collaborative.

How the Collaborative Began

The Collaborative grew out of several joint conferences and programs, where the consistent message Winnakee and NYFOA kept hearing from landowners was a desire for more programming around wildlife, water quality, aesthetics, and long-term stewardship.

Those are exactly the conversations Winnakee was already having about our work," said Uri Perrin, Senior Director of External Affairs at Winnakee Land Trust. "Active management of the lands we protect is central to our mission, and this Collaborative is a natural extension of that commitment. After piloting

programs with NYFOA in 2025 with strong responses, it was clear there is a real audience of landowners looking for trusted, conservation-forward guidance. The Woodland Stewards Collaborative is our way of answering that call, and we are thrilled to partner with the New York Forest Owners Association to connect with a broader community of committed landowners."

For NYFOA, the partnership deepens its commitment to the family woodland owners at the heart of its membership while expanding the range of programming available to them.

"The Woodland Stewards Collaborative reflects exactly the kind of partnership NYFOA has been looking for," said Edward Neuhauser, President of the New York Forest Owners Association.

"Winnakee shares our deep respect for family woodlands and the people who have nurtured them, and they bring a hands-on, practical approach to education that our members have been asking for."

What the Collaborative Offers

Programming through The Woodland Stewards Collaborative focuses on land management topics surveyed directly from landowners interests: wildlife habitat, water quality, forest regeneration, aesthetics and quality of life, and long-term conservation legacy. Content is delivered through statewide webinars as well as on-site demonstrations on Winnakee and NYFOA member properties, making it accessible to landowners wherever they are in New York.

Whether someone is just beginning to think about the future of their land or is deep into a long-term management plan, the Collaborative is designed to meet them where they are. The aim is to serve as a trusted, conservation-first based resource for landowners at every stage of their stewardship journey.

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*“Private landowners are New York’s largest stewards of forested land, and our goal is to help them become its strongest ones,” said **Bob Davis, CEO of Winnakee Land Trust.** “In partnership with NYFOA, we intend to provide resources that landowners can use to actively manage their lands, so they can feel confident that the land they’ve cared for will leave a lasting legacy for generations to come.”*

The Way Ahead

NYFOA’s experience with WLT has been very positive from the start. WLT brings experience in various high-tech, digital communication channels which are clearly important to reach the up-and-coming landowners with strong environmental interests that both associations seek to support. The co-sponsored webinar series is a prime example of the benefits this partnership brings to the

table, and high registration rates have helped validate landowners’ interest in these programs. WLT is different from most land trusts in NY State because of their integrated approach of managing forested land for the lands they protect. CEO Davis has an advanced degree in forestry and deep professional experience working at the NY Department of Environmental Conservation and later at SUNY-ESF. Bob has made it his mission to ensure that best forest management practices are employed in all of the WLT wooded parcels.

Going forward, NYFOA welcomes feedback from members on the selection, accessibility, delivery, and overall effectiveness of the 2026 co-sponsored webinar series and recommendations for other in-person events that would be of interest. We ask that our chapters promote the co-sponsored events as a complement

to local programs, thus expanding the array of offerings to our members. We are confident that NYFOA’s collaboration with Winnakee Land Trust will yield positive results for both organizations that exceed what each could attain separately — doing this in a way that Winnakee Land Trust and NYFOA maintain our respective core values to serve our members and supporters effectively.

For more information on upcoming Woodland Stewards Collaborative programs, shared resources from past programs, or to recommend program topics please visit: <https://www.winnakee.org/the-woodland-stewards-collaborative/>. 

Stacey Kazacos, NYFOA Executive Committee Member, Uri Perrin, Senior Director of External Affairs at Winnakee Land Trust, and Ed Neuhauser, President of NYFOA.