



## Finger Lakes Land Trust

202 East Court Street

Ithaca, NY 14850

Tel: (607) 275-9487 / Fax: (607) 275-0037

*...working to protect the natural integrity of the Finger Lakes Region.*

To: Town Supervisor, Mark Witmer; Councilmembers John Fracchia, Cal Snow, Irene Weiser and Tim Murray

From: Kris West, [kriswest@fllt.org](mailto:kriswest@fllt.org)

RE: Proposed Thomas Farm Wetlands Conservation Area

Date: May 26, 2020

Dear Mr. Supervisor and Councilmembers,

In furtherance of the goals stated in the town of Caroline's 2006 Comprehensive Plan, relative to protection of open space and water resources to support the quality of life, the Finger Lakes Land Trust (FLLT) proposes a partnership with the Town of Caroline in which FLLT purchases approximately 57 contiguous acres of wetland and upland east of Thomas Road and subsequently transfers the land to the Town of Caroline for ownership and management as a public conservation area subject to a conservation easement. The proposed partnership will leverage the limited resources of both FLLT and the Town for the benefit of area residents and the natural environment.

Two landowners (the Belisle family and the Schneider family) have offered to sell approximately 57 acres of contiguous wetlands and upland buffer to FLLT. FLLT proposes to acquire the lands, in fee simple, and then donate the property to the Town of Caroline for management as a conservation area. At the time of transfer to the Town, FLLT and the Town would establish a conservation easement held by FLLT which would allow for appropriate use of the land while ensuring its significant natural features are protected in perpetuity. I have attached a draft conservation easement, which will also require DEC approval, for your consideration which includes the following elements:

- restrictions on subdivision and conveyance of the property;
- limits on use of the property to those compatible with water quality protection, habitat management/restoration, an allowance of a dry hydrant to allow water withdrawal for emergency fire-fighting purposes and allowance of appropriate public access for nature study;
- limits on the number, type and placement of any structures;
- prohibitions of residential, agricultural or industrial use; sale of the property; commercial timber harvest; storage and dumping; and exploration and development of mineral, oil and gas resources.

Project funding will be provided by grant monies already received by FLLT from the New York State Water Quality Improvement Project Grant Program. Matching funds will be requested from other sources.

We request a commitment from the town board to accept ownership of the property with the understanding that the Land Trust, the Town and NYS DEC will finalize the conservation easement terms in the coming months. Upon receiving confirmation of the town's commitment, FLLT is prepared to move forward to formalize purchase and sale agreements with the Schneiders and Belises.

I would be happy to meet with you to discuss this proposal in further detail. However, your earliest reply would be much appreciated because the landowners wish to complete their conveyance of land by the end of summer. I am happy to receive questions or comments by e-mail at [kriswest@flt.org](mailto:kriswest@flt.org) or by phone at (607) 377-4026.

With warmest regards,



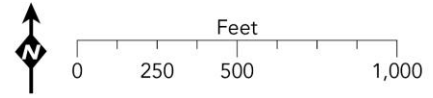
Kris West, Senior Field Representative  
Finger Lakes Land Trust  
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Cell: (607) 377-4026

# Proposed Thomas Farm Wetlands Conservation Area

Note – The exact size and configuration of the two excluded areas has not yet been determined.



**FINGER LAKES LAND TRUST**  
Purchase and sale - 56.8 acres  
Part of parcels #1.-1-21.22; .25; and .26  
Tompkins Co, Town of Caroline, Thomas Rd  
Current owners: Glenn Schneider and Belisle Properties, LLC



2018 imagery  
Finger Lakes Land Trust GIS  
5/20/2020

