



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Antoine M. Thompson

Senator Antoine Thompson and Western New York Land Conservancy Executive Director Patricia Szarpa at the NYS Conservation Partnership Grant Awards event in Albany.

ANTOINE M THOMPSON October 28, 2009

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**Western New York Land Conservancy Receives Grant Support. "Environmental Protection Fund grant will provide Western New York Green Jobs."**

An important investment in New York's land trusts was announced on October 1st in Albany by the Department of Environmental Conservation and the Land Trust Alliance.

Department of Environmental Conservation Deputy Commissioner Stu Gruskin announced 65 grants totaling \$1,417,500 to 47 local land trusts across New York State, including a two-year Professional Development Grant awarded to the Western New York Land Conservancy.

This grant, totaling \$75,000, will enable the Land Conservancy to hire its first Development Coordinator, develop a major fundraising program and expand community outreach throughout Erie and Niagara Counties. By raising organizational and fundraising capacity, the Western New York Land Conservancy will be able to protect more land at a more rapid pace; provide more efficient stewardship of its currently protected parcels; engage a broader community in helping to preserve local lands; and increase funds for future conservation defense.

Land Conservancy Executive Director, Patricia Zarpa said, "We are extremely grateful for the leadership of Senator Antoine Thompson and the work of the Land Trust Alliance. Their relentless support for the Environmental Protection Fund helped bring these dollars to Western New York. She added that, "The funding will significantly expand our organization's capacity to protect natural resources in our region." Senator Thompson chairs the New York State Senate Environmental Conservation Committee and was a key speaker at the grant announcement event held in Albany.

Since 2002, the Conservation Partnership Program, administered by the Land Trust Alliance, has provided funding for more than 275 competitive grants to 67 different land trust organizations. To date, this program has leveraged over \$10 million in private funds and

helped protect more than 11,000 acres, including numerous areas prioritized in the New York State Open Space Plan. The Conservation Partnership Program is supported by New York State's Environmental Protection Fund, a dedicated trust fund created in 1993 to provide funding for open space, solid waste and parks, recreation and historic preservation.

The Western New York Land Conservancy, established in 1991, is a not-for-profit land trust that protects over 4,300 acres of land including scenic vistas, forested lands, wetlands, fragile natural ecosystems, lakefront shorelines and working farms in Western New York. For more information on upcoming events, volunteer opportunities, or the work of the Western New York Land Conservancy please contact the Land Conservancy at 716-687-1225 or visit

[www.wnylc.org](http://www.wnylc.org)