

field, forest & fen



Connecting People with the Healthy Lands and Clean Waters that Sustain Us.

CONSERVATION SPIRIT

Landowners Protect Wetlands, Farmlands, and Forests



PATRICIA GAMBITTA stands proudly on wetlands permanently conserved.

Ms. Gambitta protected her 51.69 acre property running along County Rt. 28 to Hoke Road in the Town of Otsego. The property includes a 26 acre natural area of beautiful and valuable wetlands that filter drinking water and provide lush habitat for birds and wildlife.



OPEN SPACE INSTITUTE'S Charlie Burgess and landowner, Orrin Higgins, enjoy the sunshine in front of an historic barn on Mr. Higgins protected property.

OLT worked in partnership with the Open Space Institute on an easement transfer from OSI to OLT. The 52 acre Armstrong Farm, owned by Orrin Higgins, encompasses farm fields, wetlands, and historical structures, and is bordered by Plainfield State Forest.



Dr. MARY ANNE WHELAN'S pristine land off Keys Road in Pierstown is 71 acres of fields, forests, and scenic views.

Dr. Whelan donated the Keys Road land to OLT to ensure the protection of this special place into perpetuity. Dr. Whelan's gift is especially generous because OLT will sell the land protected with an easement and use the funds to further our conservation mission.

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CONSERVATION SPOTLIGHT

Kids Connect with Conservation

The annual Brookwood Gardens clean up was a smashing success due in no small part to more than 50 enthusiastic volunteers. 10 of the dedicated volunteer crew were Cooperstown youth who donated most of their Saturday to tend to the lands of Brookwood Point.

Here, in their own words, is what they said about the experience:

Ginger Miller: "This area is so beautiful and needs to be conserved. The fact that so many people were willing to come and help today is amazing."

Ginny Aswad: "Giving back to the community is so important, I learned how much work goes into a place like Brookwood, so everyone can come and enjoy it."

Christine Noto: "The environment is really important and for us young people, for all people in general, to give back to the environment is just as important. If we can make a positive change on our ecological impact, that would be wonderful."

Joaquin Landry: "Community service projects like this one teach people how important it is to protect the earth. It is important for people to get together and feel like they're helping the earth."

Dan Ralston: "I learned how important it is to protect the environment. Like today, a lot of people coming together made a big difference, but even a small amount helps." ■

Cooperstown youth joined OLT for the annual Brookwood Gardens Clean Up.





Otsego Land Trust protects the distinctive rural character of the Otsego County area by securing lands and waters of significant scenic, historic, and ecological value, including forests and farmlands.

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Otsego Land Trust is partially funded by the New York Conservation Partnership Program administered by the Land Trust Alliance Northeast Program with support from the State of New York. A copy of Otsego Land Trust's annual financial report may be obtained upon request from our office or from the New York State's Attorney General's Charities Bureau. ATTN: FOIL Officer, 120 Broadway, New York, NY 10271.

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Living with a Conservation Ethic

The seasons have gone round. After the long, cold winter, we welcome spring and the coming summer. The land blossoms; the water sparkles. What was white and frozen is green and lush. We watch swollen streams and lakes and remember that these waters bless the land. And they bless us; clean water to drink and to live.

I realize as I do with every season, how beautiful, how special are the lands where we all live; where we grow food, where we work, where we play.

At Otsego Land Trust, we talk about connecting people to the lands and waters that sustain us. These words are about reciprocity—about understanding that without healthy lands and waters, we ourselves cannot be healthy. They're about remembering if we don't conserve and live intentionally in a conservation mind-set, the lands and waters that provide for our healthy lives now, won't be here for our kids, for our grandkids, or for theirs.

We face incredible environmental challenges—climate change, biodiversity decline, growing damage to our oceans, streams, and rivers. The list of problems can seem hopeless, insurmountable or



far away. But, just as we humans have caused so much of this damage by forgetting how we're connected to the land and water, we can remember, and we can act positively to make change.

In our newsletter, you'll read about the different ways OLT supporters like you connect to the land and water; how they live a conservation ethic; how they care.

I am grateful for them and for you, and all that the OLT community does to sustain the lands and waters that sustain us all.

Virginia Kennedy
Executive Director

Accreditation Announcement

Why would we spend hundreds of hours assessing our organization, reviewing policy and procedure, and refining our filing system? To become a nationally accredited land trust!

The land trust accreditation program officially recognizes land conservation organizations that meet national quality standards for protecting natural places and working lands forever. Otsego Land Trust is pleased to announce we are applying for accreditation.

The Land Trust Accreditation Commission, an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance, will be conducting an extensive review of our policies and programs. We welcome any and all public comments.





Lush summer plants surround an old farm shed on the Higgins Property.



Juvenile Sharp Shinned Hawk spotted during a monitoring visit on the Gamitta property.

Conservation Spirit continued from page 1

Landowners like Pat Gambitta, Mary Anne Whelan, and Orrin Higgins who permanently protect their own properties with conservation easements make an invaluable contribution to the whole community. "I placed a conservation easement on my property because I wanted to make sure it would remain protected," states Ms. Gambitta, "Protecting my property helps all of us to avoid poorly planned development that negatively affects the environment and we maintain the health of the land for recreating, and for the animals and the community in general."

Ms. Gambitta's property connects to other OLT conservation easements creating a contiguous 800 acre tract running from the ridgeline of Bedbug Hill to Oaks Creek, a tributary of the Susquehanna River. These protected lands encompass wetlands, forests, farmlands and culturally significant historical structures.

Dr. Mary Anne Whelan generous donation to OLT of 71 acres in Pierstown off Keys Road will be protected by a conservation easement and sold to a conservation-minded buyer. Since, OLT will use the proceeds to further our

land protection mission, Dr. Whelan's donation goes twice as far. This property connects to lands owned the State University of New York at Oneonta Foundation Corp, managed by the Biological Field Station, and protected by Otsego Land Trust.

To establish a stronger presence in the Unadilla River region, OLT worked in partnership with the Open Space Institute (OSI) on an easement transfer from OSI to OLT. The 52 acre Armstrong Farm encompasses healthy farm fields, wetlands, and historical structures. Armstrong Farm is also bordered on three sides by Plainfield State Forest. The protection of the Farm along with the State Forest protection is integral to conserving clean water in the Upper Unadilla River watershed.

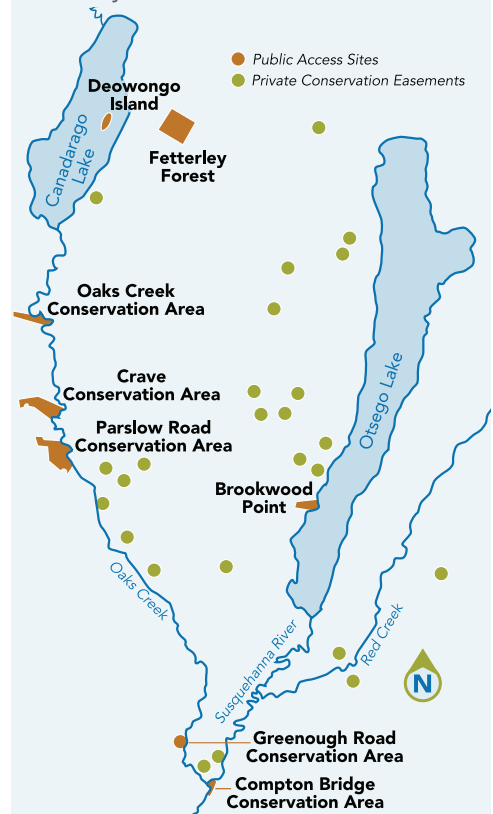
Armstrong Farm owner, Orrin Higgins, feels strongly that protecting his property is a service to the community. "My wife and I are happy to be working with Otsego Land Trust," he stated, "We firmly feel that land is a precious resource, and what there is, is what there is, and when it's gone, it's gone. So we need to protect what we have for everybody's sake." ■

OLT's Blueway

Spring and summer are seasons for enjoying the out of doors. Fishing, hiking, canoeing, kayaking, and bird and wildlife watching are great ways to have fun and to connect to the lands and waters where we live.

OLT's Blueway public access lands are great places to experience all these activities. Canoe over to Deowongo Island for a picnic, fish for the day at Parslow Road Conservation Area or at Compton Bridge. Stroll in the gardens of Brookwood or hike in Fetterley Forest.

OLT manages these lands for you to enjoy on your own or at one of our programs. So go on—get outside. We look forward to seeing you on the Blueway! ■



Parslow Road Conservation Area

Credit: Susan Rowland Photography.



Credit: S. Scheeren

Brookwood Gardens in late July of 2013.

Barefoot at Brookwood

For nearly 100 years, Brookwood Garden has shaken off the snow and put on a lustrous spring and summer show. It is that time again!

The snow and ice have retreated, leaving the earth bare for new growth to spread and flourish. The Hellebores, crocus and grape hyacinth have emerged and their heads bob and nod in the warm spring sunshine. The grass is greening, and the birds are chirping.

Visit Brookwood Gardens through the spring and summer. Don't miss this miracle of nature tended by loving human hands. Or better still, become a garden volunteer. Experience with gardening is great. But all are welcome. Just bring a willingness to enjoy the flowers and dig in the dirt. ■

Scenic Byways Update

In October of 2013, thanks to community members, the Scriven Foundation and the Royal Bank of Canada's Blue Waters Fund, Otsego Land Trust successfully completed a capital campaign to raise the match for a National Scenic Byways grant to fund safety and access enhancements to Brookwood Point. As the summer approaches, OLT is ready to begin the construction that will make it easier and safer for the community to enjoy Brookwood.

Enhancements include a wider entrance from Route 80, with better and safer sightlines entering and exiting the Brookwood access road. Along with being safer, the entrance will be prettier; designed to reflect the historic character of the site. The access road will be graded and widened, and increased space for parking will be made available. The lower parking lot will be graveled and prepared for the canoe/kayak infrastructure that will be developed when additional funding becomes available. ■



Incredible Edibles Right in our Backyards

STAWBERRY KNOTWEED CRUMBLE

Emily Monahan – Volunteer Extraordinaire

"And what is a weed? A plant whose virtues have not yet been discovered." Ralph Waldo Emerson

Weeding may not be the most rewarding gardening task, but what about foraging for your next meal in your own backyard? No vegetables or fruits? No Problem! Find some Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia Japonica*). Chances are you have a little of it... or A LOT.

Japanese Knotweed is a resilient opportunist and highly invasive species. And it's completely edible. So instead of ripping it out and worrying that it may not compost completely, make a meal of it instead. It definitely won't come back after it has gone through your body's "composting" system. In early spring, harvest 6" to 12" young

shoots, resembling reddish asparagus stalks. Just be sure that harvesting does not result in its spread. Visit <http://www.uri.edu/cels/ceoc/documents/japaneseKnotweed.pdf> to learn proper removal of Knotweed.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 pints strawberries
- 2 cups knotweed shoots (strip leaves, peel stalk, cut 1/4" thick)
- 2 tablespoons quick-cooking tapioca
- 3/4 cup sugar divided
- 1 1/2 tablespoons honey
- 1/3 cup whole grain pastry flour
- Pinch of salt
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1/2 cup rolled oats
- 1/4 cup wheat germ
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon, divided

DIRECTIONS

1. In a 9 x 9 dish combine strawberries, knotweed, tapioca, 1/2 cup sugar, and 1/4 teaspoon of cinnamon. Spread level and let stand for 20 minutes.
2. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In medium bowl stir together flour, salt, and the remaining 1/4 cup sugar and 3/4 teaspoon cinnamon. Cut in the butter. Stir in oats and wheat germ. Drizzle honey on top and stir until mixture is crumbly. Spread over fruit in an even layer.
3. Bake for 40 minutes, or until golden brown on top.



Summer is a Time for Fun...and Stewardship!

BY MARCIE FOSTER

The warmer weather of summer rapidly approaches. We are all gearing up for a busy season of swimming, kayaking, biking, and hiking.

Summer also begins the busiest time of year for OLT. During the summer months, OLT is responsible for monitoring over 9,000 acres of lands we have protected throughout the Otsego Region.

I am Marcie Foster, OLT's new Stewardship Manager. I am excited to begin my first season partnering with landowners to steward their lands protected by conservation easements. I also manage OLT's Blueway public access sites.

Every year, OLT's stewardship manager, intern, and volunteers visit with each of our landowners who have conservation easements on their properties. We monitor these lands to ensure that conservation values are being sustained. We answer landowner questions and provide resources to assist landowners in caring for their lands.

Our stewardship team also manages the public access lands of OLT's Blueway. Blueway lands start with Deowongo Island and Fetterley Forest at Canadarago Lake, extend down Oaks Creek, and include Brookwood Point on Otsego Lake and Compton Bridge on the Susquehanna. We manage these lands to provide fishing, canoe/kayak access, hiking, bird watching and outdoor recreation and education programs.

This year, OLT is introducing two new programs to enhance our stewardship capabilities and resources for landowners and the public:

- This spring we launched a Volunteer Stewardship Program to train qualified volunteers to assist with monitoring conservation easement properties and OLT's public access Blueway sites.

- This fall, we will launch the publication of "Landlines," our biannual newsletter devoted to helpful information for conservation easement land owners. "Landlines" will focus on topics like invasive species identification and control, timber harvest and management, events and programs geared specifically towards landowners with conservation easements, and much more.

We also have some exciting projects and programs in the works at our Blueway public access sites:

- Re-opening of Compton Bridge Conservation Area at the 11 C Bridge
- Opening Parslow Road Conservation Area
- Deowongo Island Summer Ceremony on June 21
- Working with the Clark Sports Center Adventure Staff to improve parking and trails Fetterley Forest
- Improving the safety and access at Brookwood Point through funding from the Scenic Byway Grant
- Sponsoring two interns from the Biological Field Station to do wetland and flora and fauna surveys on OLT's Blueway public access sites.

For more information on these programs and on OLT's Blueway, visit our website, send me an email at Marcie@otsegoLandTrust.org, or give me a call at (607) 547-2366.

Happy paddling, fishing, and hiking this summer! ■



Stewardship manager Marcie Foster in the field taking GPS points.

A SIGHTING RARE & BEAUTIFUL

A Golden Eagle, affectionately named Greg, has been spotted at Greenwoods Conservancy, owned by the Peterson Family Charitable Trust and protected by OLT with conservation easements. Greg has been travelling all over the county and has recently been sighted in New Lisbon and Burlington.

Protected lands, like Greenwoods Conservancy, help to sustain habitats for Greg and all the other beautiful beings with whom we share the Earth. ■



Credit: S. Green

CLARK SPORTS CENTER JOINS OLT OUT ON THE LAND

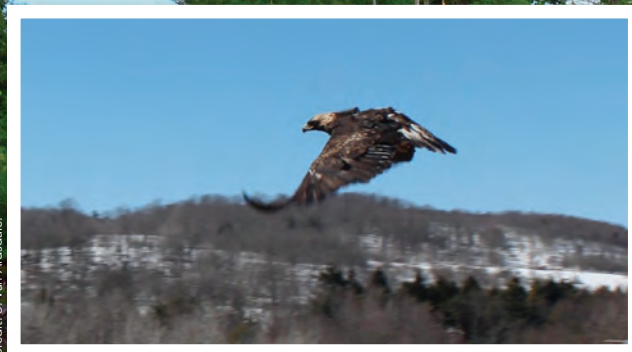
OLT and the Clark Sports Center have a common goal — getting kids out on the land and the water. Now we are working together.

OLT and CSC will partner throughout the year to provide educational and recreational activities for kids of all ages. Each program will be held at an OLT public access site.

Our first partnership event, Earth Day 2014, was a great success. Clark Sports Center adult and kid participants joined OLT to clean up the Greenough Road Conservation area.

Fran Hodgins from the Clark Sports Center Adventure Department was enthusiastic:

“This was a great opportunity for the kids to connect with the local area, take responsibility for the land and have some fun! It was also great for them to discover this local public access site that is easily accessible to them for future exploration and enjoyment” ■



Credit: S. Van Arsdale



Credit: M. Foster

The ‘green thumb’ volunteers from the Clark Sports Center.

CONSERVATION CORNER LIBRARY & STAFF RECOMMENDED READING

OLT in partnership with Otsgeo 2000, with whom we share our office building, announces the opening of our Conservation Corner Library. Pop by our offices, say “Hi!”, and check out a great read from our library. We have over 100 books covering topics like climate change, organic gardening and sustainable living.

Have a mind to cultivate young conservationists? Bring your kids, too! We’ve got children’s picture books about changing seasons, flora and fauna, wetlands and forests, and how to grow up green.

Many thanks to John and Florence Carnahan, Virginia Kennedy, Ellen Pope, and Rob and Sue Besanceney for their generous donations of the books in this library.

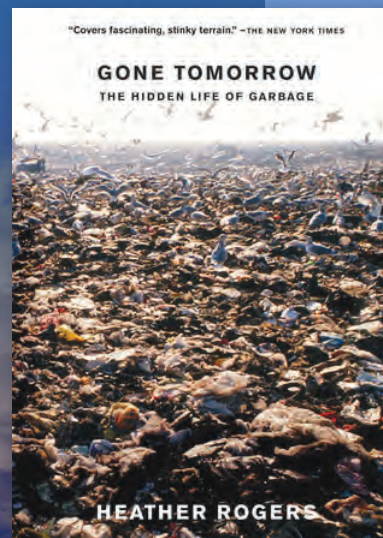
And if you have conservation-themed books to donate, bring them on over. We’ll give them a good home!

Staff Pics

Marcie Recommends:

“*Gone Tomorrow: The Hidden Life of Garbage*” by Heather Rogers

Every day a phantasmagoric rush of spent, used, and broken riches flows through our homes, offices, and cars. The United States is the planet’s number-one producer of trash; each American discards over 2,600 pounds annually. But where does all that garbage go? ■





Credit: Bruce Johnson Photography.

For the Love of Land and Water 2014 Photo Contest

OLT, in partnership with the Canadarago Lake Improvement Association, is excited to announce its 5th Annual Photo Contest.

This year's theme is, "**For the Love of Land and Water.**" We are focused on photographs of people engaged with the lands and waters of the Upper Susquehanna region.

Entries could capture images of people relaxing, recreating, or reflecting in nature. Or they could depict people who work the land, make a living from the land or water, or tend it in loving ways big and small.

Three categories are as follows: Professional, Amateur and Youth.

Great prizes will be awarded to the winner of each category.

Congratulations to the 2013 "All Things Small in Nature" photo contest winners:

Professional: **Milo Stewart Jr.**
Amateur: **Jack Schleup**
Youth: **Matthew Hulse**



Credit: L. Steele.

Curious to see the over 150 entries from 2013? We will be sending out information about a gallery showing in the fall in the Butternut Valley region.

For more information and for submission forms please visit our website, www.otsegoLandtrust.org, call Sara at 607-547-2366 or email her at sara@otsegoLandtrust.org. ■



Credit: A. Stack.

In Memory of Jack Howell

Otsego Land Trust honors and remembers with fondness and gratitude one our original founders, Mr. John I. Howell Sr., known as "Jack."

"Jack was a man of great character and bravery," states Earle Peterson, another of OLT's founders, "just as he unselfishly served the nation, he understood early on the need to protect the environment for the future."

OLT is grateful for Mr. Howell's spirit of service to community and to country and for his contributions to founding the land trust, now in our 26th year of protecting lands and water in the Otsego region. ■



John Howell.

A Simple Way to Support OLT



Like us on Facebook! We want to see 1,000 Facebook followers by the New Year!

WAYS TO DONATE

Your support makes our conservation work possible. Your generosity makes the difference.

Here are some great ways to donate and contribute to sustaining the lands and waters that sustain us:

- Watch for OLT's spring appeal letter in the mail; reply with a generous donation.
- Hit the "donate" button on our website; donating online is safe and easy.
- Become a monthly donor; for less than a cup of coffee a day, you can donate \$15 or \$20 a month and support OLT all year long.
- Become a legacy leader; remember OLT in your estate planning. Call us for more information.



Post Office Box 173
Cooperstown, New York 13326

Would you like to receive the newsletter by email instead of mail? In an effort to save paper and trees, please call us at (607) 547-2366 or email info@otsegolandtrust.org to request electronic copies only.



UPCOMING EVENTS

May 24 at 10AM – Wildflower hike with OCCA at Greenwoods Conservancy, 800 Zachow Rd. Burlington

June 21 at 10AM – Deowongo Island Summer Celebration, Canadarago Lake, Richfield Springs

June 29 at 1PM – Fly Casting Workshop with Craig Buckbee, Brookwood Point, 6000 Rte 80 Cooperstown

July 18 at 5PM – Photography “Walking” Workshop, Fetterley Forest, 302 Roses Hill Rd. Town of Springfield

Visit OtsegoLandTrust.org for more information.

OUR NATURAL COMMUNITY

Trillium

On your next spring hike through the woods, make sure to glance at the ground occasionally...chances are, under a large evergreen you will find a trillium.

Trillium are native in NY and are usually found at higher elevations in moist acidic soils. They flourish in full to part shade and bloom in mid-spring.

These specimens are near impossible to transplant and will test any green thumb’s patience, as they can take up to seven years from germination to flowering.

For two reasons, it is also recommended that you do not pick or harvest Trilliums. One, they are poisonous if ingested and two, they may be a protected species in your area. ■



Credit: Richard Walker Photography.

Trillium erectum found on an OLT easement property.