

# field, forest & fen



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

## CONSERVATION SPIRIT

### 2015 Starts with a Conservation Boom

*OLT protects more healthy land and clean water on our way to 10,000 acres protected!*

Thanks to conservation minded land-owners Gail Sondergaard, Marjorie Kellogg, Barbara Newman and Frank Novak, almost 300 additional acres of farm fields, wetlands, and forests in Otsego and Delaware Counties have been conserved forever.

Gail Sondergaard's property in Decatur has significant frontage on Decatur Creek, a healthy trout stream that empties into Schenevus Creek, and then into

the Susquehanna River. Protecting the creek contributes to clean drinking water in the region and for millions of people downstream on the Susquehanna.

Beautiful stands of northern hardwoods and hemlocks combined with working agricultural fields make the Sondergaard property—known as Basswood Farm—ecologically rich and important for regional wildlife.

*“It’s wonderful to be able to protect the land and water,” Gail affirms, “and also to be able to give the example to my granddaughter, so she knows we all need to participate in protecting the environment for future generations.”*

Marjorie Kellogg and Barbara Newman’s property in Franklin also protects important waterways that empty into the Susquehanna River. Marjorie and Barbara purchased the land over forty years ago to protect it from development. To ensure that the land remained protected forever, they partnered with OLT to place a conservation easement on the property.

Carrs Creek and two of its tributaries traverse the property’s lush agricultural

*continued on page 3*



Fields, pond and forests of Barbara Newman and Marjorie Kellogg’s protected property.

## CONSERVATION SPOTLIGHT

### We Love Winged Things – from birds to butterflies

**Oh, the things we do for our feathered and flutter-by friends!**

On Valentine’s Day, fourteen hardy bird-loving souls trudged through the thigh high snow at Brookwood Point. Binoculars at the ready, all ears listened intently for any sound resembling a chirp. By the end of the hike we had spotted seven different species of birds and recorded our findings with the Annual Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC).

This year, the GBBC worldwide garnered the best attendance ever. Participants all over the globe recorded sightings of almost every species of bird currently known. OLT is proud to participate in this global effort and contribute to vital

information about bird populations and migratory patterns.

Due to research and reports like the GBBC, we are well aware that viable aviary habitats are dwindling. And, we are not just concerned about birds. Other creatures take to the skies and migrate long distances each year, like Monarch butterflies. Monarch migrations and Monarch populations, like so many other species, are undergoing negative changes. Butterflies are a crucial part of our ecosystem in their important role as pollinators for our food and ornamental crops. Monarch butterfly populations have decreased drastically in the last 3 years

*continued on page 3*



SUNY students show their nesting box.





*Otsego Land Trust conserves our natural heritage of woodlands, farmlands, and waters that sustain rural communities, promote public health, support wildlife diversity and inspire the human spirit.*

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### MAKING CONNECTIONS

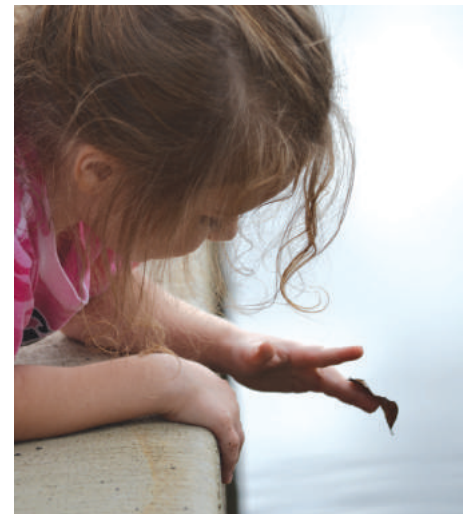
## Ecology, Community and Connections

The word "ecology" comes from the Greek word for "household." In 1913, New York State native, Victor Shelford, first defined ecology as "the science of communities." Shelford is credited with establishing the science of ecology as a distinct discipline in the field of natural sciences. After completing his doctoral work on the relationship between tiger beetles and their vegetation habitats, Shelford understood the importance of studying the interdependencies and interconnections of natural communities—the communities of which human beings are a part.

In this issue of our newsletter, you'll meet landowners who protected their lands. You'll read about OLT's efforts to support wood ducks, bluebirds, and butterflies. You'll learn about lemonade made from wood sorrel, and discover a novel about members of a New York State community learning to survive together in a world without easy access to technology.

The common denominator in all these stories is the concept of connection and the idea of community in the natural world, among beings, and between humans and all of the living beings with whom we share the planet.

The science of ecology teaches us about interconnections in the environment. At OLT, we do our best to focus on being responsible to each other and to the ecological communities that generate our sustenance and so much of the natural beauty we enjoy in this region. When we work with conservation-minded



Credit: M. Chapman

F. MARLING connecting with our natural community.

landowners like Gail Sondergaard, Marjorie Kellogg, Barbara Newman, and Frank Novak to protect their lands with conservation easements, we understand that they haven't conserved the land just for themselves. Their forests filter ground and stream water for all of us. Their conserved farmlands will always be farmlands that can provide food for whole communities. Their protected wildlife habitats will help wildlife thrive all over the region.

This spring and summer, we hope you'll join us at one of our programs. We hope we'll run into you enjoying a walk, a picnic, or a paddle at one of our Blueway sites. We hope you and your family will be outside connecting to the communities of the natural world, the communities that sustain us, keep us healthy, and fill our world with beauty and inspiration.

Virginia Kennedy  
Executive Director

### Accreditation Announcement

Otsego Land Trust is excited to announce that on April 9, 2015 we submitted our application for accreditation to the Land Trust Accreditation Commission. The application process took two years of effort from the entire OLT staff and board. The land trust will be notified of our accreditation status by October 2015.



**A Simple Way to Support OLT Like us on Facebook!**

We want to see 1,000 Facebook followers by the end of the year!

*Conservation Spirit — continued from page 1*

fields and hardwood and hemlocks stands. A beaver dam and its associated pond and wetlands have created a site rich with wildlife habitat. The DEC has been using the site as part of a statewide effort to monitor fisher populations. "Having finalized the easement gave me a much greater thrill of relief and satisfaction than I expected," explains Ms. Kellogg. "It's like a connection to the future — when I can no longer do it, OLT will be there looking out for the health and welfare of this piece of land I've loved since the moment I set eyes on it forty years ago."

On Keys Road in the town of Otsego, OLT has protected land previously donated by Dr. Mary Anne Whelan. Cooperstown resident, Frank Novak, fell in love with the same sense of peace and beauty that Dr. Whelan enjoyed on the property. He purchased the property, conserved with an easement. "The first time I walked the



GAIL SONDERGAARD enjoying Basswood Farm.

property," Mr. Novak explains, "I spent 3 hours exploring and walking the boundary. It seemed to be what I was looking for so I stayed for the sunset and it was then as the sun went down that I fell in love with property and realized it was exactly what I've been looking for, for all these years." The Novak land consists of farm fields and forestlands and is adjacent to nearly 300 acres of property already protected by conservation easements, creating a contiguous and scenic corridor of protected open space.



EASTERN PAINTED TURTLE in Carr's Creek.

2015 is off to a great start here at Otsego Land Trust. We are honored and grateful to partner with folks like Gail, Marjorie, Barbara, and Frank, all dedicated to protecting healthy land and clean waters now and for the future. Stay tuned for more great land protection stories as we move swiftly toward the 10,000 acres protected landmark. ■

*Conservation Spotlight — continued from page 1*

At OLT, our mission to protect healthy land and clean water includes contributing to the health of the living beings that share our planet and that are vital to the healthy ecology of our region.

Through a generous grant from the Gimbel Foundation, OLT has acquired funding to improve bird and butterfly habitats in our region. We will establish these habitats on our Blueway public access sites.



STUDENTS, Bill and Ethan, hard at work.

The first part of the habitat restoration process occurred in March. After participating in our GBBC birding hike in February, some Wildlife Management students from SUNY Cobleskill sprung into action. During a workshop hosted by OLT and held on campus, 12 students built 20 bluebird and 10 wood duck nesting boxes.

The students will partner with OLT staff to install the nesting boxes on our Blueway properties. OLT's summer interns will monitor them weekly to make sure the boxes remain healthy and safe for the species that will make their homes there.

Our efforts don't end at the birds. Butterflies are also on our list. So OLT, with the help of the Clark Sports Center Adventure Camp kids, will establish and maintain butterfly gardens at five of our Blueway public access sites. We will plant monarch favorites like swamp milkweed, blue vervain, purple coneflower and New York aster. We will construct butterfly houses and post them in the gardens at Brookwood.



*"Seven white butterflies  
delicate in a hurry look  
how they bang the pages  
of their wings as they fly  
to the fields of mustard yellow  
and orange and plain gold  
all eternity is in the moment"*

From *Seven White Butterflies*,  
by Mary Oliver

If you would like to be part of the effort this summer, please let us know.

*Funding for nesting boxes and butterfly gardens was provided by the S.L. Gimbel Foundation Advised Fund at the Community Foundation— Inland Southern California* ■

## BAREFOOT AT BROOKWOOD

SARA SCHEEREN – Outreach Coordinator

### OLT Welcomes Brookwood Garden Intern

Birds are singing early morning spring songs. Deer are munching on the newly uncovered grass. The deep earth tones of winter are becoming more vibrant and will turn a bright emerald green.

Spring is definitely something to celebrate at Brookwood. And, so is the hiring of our 2015 garden intern, Gina Profetto, an environmental biology major at Hartwick College.

Gina comes to us with a conservation ethic in her heart and hard-working hands that aren't afraid to get dirty. She will concentrate on invasive plant eradication and native species implementation, and she'll bring the Barefoot at Brookwood blog back to life.

Swing by Brookwood any Monday, Wednesday or Friday, June through August to meet Gina, welcome her to the OLT family, and enjoy the fruits of her labor at beautiful Brookwood! ■



BROOKWOOD POINT KIOSK draped in hops.



GBBC hikers brave the cold.

### Scenic Byways Update

After much hard work planning and working through the complex world of state and federal permitting, it looks like we are on track to get to work at Brookwood. If all moves forward as expected, the site enhancements to the entrance and driveway funded by Scenic Byways grant and the construction of the universally accessible canoe/kayak access funded by the National Park Service will happen over the course of this summer and fall. We look forward to the beautifying of Brookwood, and we once again thank the Scriven Foundation and all the members of the community who have contributed to helping us move these enhancements forward.

## BACKYARD INCREDIBLE EDIBLES

EMILY MONAHAN – Administrative Assistant

### Wood Sorrel “Lemonade”: A Refreshingly Tangy Delight

Wood sorrel (genus *Oxalis*) can be found growing abundantly in garden beds, yards, or along the trail. The plant is considered to have cooling properties. This makes it an ideal treat and thirst quencher while hiking or working in the garden. My favorite way to eat wood sorrel is straight out of the ground as I come across it while weeding.

There's no wasting of this plant. The leaves, flowers, immature green seed pods and roots are all edible. And they have a mild tangy flavor that resembles lemons, but in a cool non-bitter way. The genus name *Oxalis* literally means “sour.” Though the plant appears dainty and delicate, its taste is distinctive and

unmistakable. Sorrel can be added to soups and salads, made into sauce or used as seasoning, and mixed with water to make a beverage.

Wood sorrel leaves resemble a shamrock so it is often confused with clover. The distinguishing feature is wood sorrel's has three heart-shaped leaflets. Clover has three oval-shaped leaflets. The wood sorrel flower is yellow and has five petals. It can be found blooming from May to October.



### WOOD SORREL “LEMONADE” RECIPE

- Gather a bunch of wood sorrel
- Trim off the roots and rinse thoroughly
- Add 1 heaping TBSP of fresh sorrel per 1 cup of water (or to your preferred taste)
- Steep 10 minutes or longer in hot water
- Strain out the plant, chill, and sweeten to taste with honey, sugar, maple syrup or your favorite sweetener

You can also dry the plant, grind to a powder, blend with sugar and store in an air-tight container as a sorrel tea powder.

# Climate Change and the Next Seven Generations

VIRGINIA KENNEDY – Executive Director

“When we walk upon Mother Earth, we always plant our feet carefully because we know the faces of our future generations are looking up at us from beneath the ground. We never forget them.”

– Oren Lyons, Faithkeeper of the Turtle Clan, Onondaga Council of Chiefs of the Haudenosaunee

When OLT protects land with a conservation easement, we explain that the easement protects the land into perpetuity. Perpetuity is forever—indeed, a very long time. Perpetuity, of course, brings to mind the future, our children and grandchildren and the generations not yet born depending on us to care for the land and water they will need for healthy lives.

In a recent gathering at OLT of fourteen women landowners who have protected their land with conservation easements, the conversation turned to the future and to climate change. Landowners, Connie Young, Marion Karl, Cat Gareth, and Marjorie Kellogg all explained that they connected the responsibility to their own land to responsibility to care for the planet as a whole. As Marjorie affirmed, “in the

face of such a huge thing like global warming, the easement was one small thing I could do.” Landowner, Lynn Tanner, stated that climate change is “at the forefront of my mind all the time. I’m not just worried about my own land. I’m very sad about what we are doing to the whole earth.”



MARION KARL enjoys the camp on her property.



M. Quakenbush.

FAITH MARLING feels nature with bare feet and bare hands.

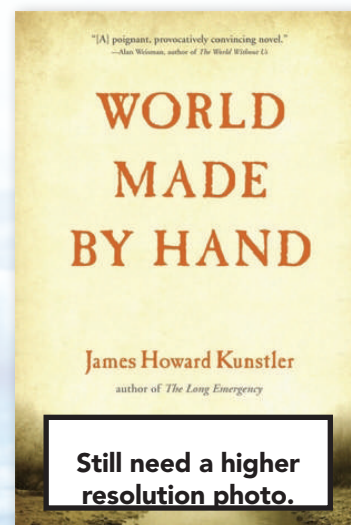
Protecting land with conservation easements contributes to mitigating climate change in a variety of important ways including sustaining forests that sequester carbon and providing habitat for species that are migrating due to changing climate patterns. In the face of a big conservation challenge like climate change, these women, along with other women at the gathering, felt empowered by their conservation easements. They connected protecting their land to protecting our unique and beautiful region and the planet overall, now and for future generations. ■

## STAFF RECOMMENDED READING

### World Made by Hand: James Howard Kunstler

ETHAN RUBENSTEIN – Land Protection Project Manager

The story is set in southern Washington county NY (where Sara and I grew up!) in the fictitious town of Union Grove. Author James Kunstler spins a captivating tale of New York State after drastic events cut off the flow of oil, information, and any contact beyond word of mouth. In a world dramatically altered by climate change and its impacts on people and places globally, the people of Union Grove, NY must figure out how to get along, farm, govern themselves, and survive. The town is challenged by a murder and the absence of laws and authority and groups competing for control of resources. While most post-apocalypse/dystopian tales seem to focus on an immediate disaster, this story focuses on the years after and explores how a community reforms and gets by focusing on local resources and community ethics. In the end, the characters begin to understand the importance of self-sufficiency and living with what they grow and create themselves. ■





**FROM THE FIELD**

## Stewardship is a Field Day!

MARCIE FOSTER – Stewardship Manager

### Enjoy walking outdoors?

Looking for opportunities to promote conservation in our special region?

Interested in getting exercise for you while providing a service to the whole community?

If the answer is yes to any or all of these questions, come on aboard and join Otsego Land Trust's team of dedicated volunteer stewards! OLT is happy to be entering our second year of the Volunteer Stewardship Program. As OLT approaches nearly 10,000 acres of protected private and public lands, we need volunteers now more than ever.

Volunteers help conduct annual monitoring visits of 90 conservation easement properties that cover approximately 8,500 acres, and they help

maintain OLT's public conservation areas along the Blueway Trail.

Our volunteers have the opportunity to walk our beautiful conservation easement properties and participate in the construction and maintenance of our public access hiking trails, all while doing our community a world of good and reaping the benefits of being outdoors in our unique region.

We will kick off our field season on May 9 at Brookwood Point where we'll improve the wetland trail and get the gardens ready for the summer season. For the rest of the summer, OLT will host Tuesday Trail Days.

Tuesday Trail Days will be held on one of our public conservation areas almost every Tuesday evening from 4-7, May-September. We will focus on improving



DELINEATING A WETLAND on the Blueway.

trails, posting boundaries, and general maintenance to keep trails safe and looking good. On specified Tuesdays, we will coordinate great training opportunities, such as invasive species identification and riparian buffer management.

The schedule for Tuesday Trail Days will be posted on the OLT website monthly. Join the Volunteer Stewardship email list to get updates via email.

Please contact Marcie if you are interested in joining our mailing list and/or becoming a volunteer – [marcie@otsego-land-trust.org](mailto:marcie@otsego-land-trust.org) or call (607) 547-2366

Happy field season everyone! ■



VOLUNTEER stewards and OLT board members cleaning up Parslow Road Conservation Area.

2014 INTERNS, Sandy and Dee, with steward Ryan Fagan, on Oaks Creek.



T. Claiborne



WALKER CLAIBORNE in action.

## Nature Reels Him In

SARA SCHEEREN – Outreach Coordinator

Our annual photo contest is one of our staffs’ favorite programs. Not only are we privileged to be the recipients of hundreds of beautiful photographs of our region, but we also hear great stories from our talented local photographers.

This year’s story comes from our 2014 youth winner, Walker Claiborne. Ten year old Walker lives in Michigan, but spends his summers here in Fly Creek with his grandparents. He has participated in the last few contests and spends all year trying to capture the perfect image that is sure to get him the win. Well, this year, his persistence paid off. He won with a selfie titled, “River Monster,” taken in front of waterfall.

We caught up with his grandma, Scottie Baker, at our photo exhibit in March. She explained, “Walker asked me to attend the exhibit to accept his award for him and to take photos of the event, but I would have stopped by no matter what. These contests are wonderful community programs and it’s so nice to see all the photos displayed.”

Mrs. Baker went on to say that she bought Walker a camera a couple years ago and it seems to be permanently attached to his hand; he takes it everywhere he goes.

Then she pulled something out of her purse—a photo book Walker put together for her as a Christmas gift. She leafed through the book, showing us his photos (all taken outdoors) and the captions that accompanied each picture.

We reached the last page. There was no photo, just a simple quote from Walker: “I really love nature, it just reels me in like a fish.” What a joy for us conservationists at OLT to see a ten year express his attachment to nature with such a great and appropriate image. We have our eyes on Walker and look forward to seeing his nature photography develop.

OLT would like to extend a warm thank you to Canadarago Lake Improvement Association for partnering with us on the 2014 photo contest and to Richfield Springs Community Center for supplying a wonderful facility for our photo exhibit. ■

### PHOTO TOUR

## Dorothy Kerper Monnelly

In 2013, sisters Dorothy Kerper Monnelly and Mary Clare Kerper LaDine, daughters of local physician Dr. Edmund Kerper, created a special legacy for their father by protecting the property he loved with a conservation easement.

Dorothy Kerper Monnelly is an accomplished nature photographer and credits her father with cultivating her love for nature photography. Dorothy is currently participating in *Fragile Waters*, a show that includes Dorothy’s black and white photos along with the the black and white photography of Ansel Adams and Ernest H. Brooks II.

Learn more at <http://photokunst.com/launching-fragile-waters/>. ■



D. Monnelly

Go Through My Child – Boardwalk and Clouds by Dorothy Kerper Monnelly



KITTY playing peek-a-boo.

## 2015 Photo Contest: “Focus on Our Furry Friends”

We are excited to welcome our 6<sup>th</sup> annual photo contest partner, **Susquehanna Animal Shelter**. This year’s contest theme is “Focus on Our Furry Friends.” We seek pictures of your pets enjoying and exploring the great outdoors.

But we don’t want to limit it to just those with fur... if your pet has scales, fins, a shell, hair, or feathers, send us the photos, we want to see them all!

Check out our website for more information, guidelines and submission forms.



Post Office Box 173  
Cooperstown, New York 13326

**Would you like to receive the newsletter by email instead of mail?**

To save paper and trees, please call us at (607) 547-2366 or email [info@otsegoLandTrust.org](mailto:info@otsegoLandTrust.org) to request electronic copies only.



**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**Sat. May 23 – Parslow Road Grand Opening**

*Parslow Road Conservation Area*  
Pancake breakfast, guided hikes and more!

**Sat. June 6 – Deowongo Day**

*Deowongo Island, Canadarago Lake*  
Picnic, workshops, hikes and film viewing.

**Sat. July 4 – Brookwood 100 Year Birthday Bash and Fireworks**

*Brookwood Point*  
Celebrate Brookwood Garden’s 100th birthday and view Fourth of July Fireworks from the point.

**Sat. August 29 – OLT Annual Picnic and Silent Auction**

*Greenwoods Conservancy*  
Catered BBQ, hikes, family activities, music and silent auction.

Visit [OtsegoLandTrust.org](http://OtsegoLandTrust.org) for more information.

**OUR NATURAL COMMUNITY**

**Wood Ducks (*Aix sponsa*)**

The wood ducks are back! Wood ducks generally return to their breeding range in March. The ideal nesting site is a cavity in a tree or a nesting box close to water, making our Blueway lands perfect places for wood ducks to settle in for summer. After hatching, ducklings jump down from their nest box and make their way to water. Ducklings can jump from heights of over 50 feet without injury. However, it is recommended that nest boxes be installed at 4 to 6 feet above ground or water.

When you visit our Blueway public access sites in late spring, keep your eyes peeled; you might be lucky enough to see the ducklings make their way to water for the first time. For information on how to construct and install your own wood duck nesting boxes go to: [www.nwf.org/pdf/Wildlife](http://www.nwf.org/pdf/Wildlife). ■



Male wood duck

