

# *field, forest & fen*



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



## Keeping working lands in working hands

### There are exciting new initiatives brewing behind our desks at OLT.

New York State recently announced a \$30 million funding opportunity in farmland protection focused specifically on dairy farms. This includes dairy farms that may be transitioning ownership, transitioning to another agricultural commodity, or transitioning in business plan and growth.

Protecting agricultural lands in perpetuity in this manner will ensure the long-term sustainability of the dairy industry in NYS, which happens to be the largest component of the state's agricultural economy.

OLT and its partners are in the process of gauging interest and eligibility for the funding of the program, with the goal of identifying one project to pursue.

For more information, please contact David Diaz, land protection manager, at 607-547-2366 x109 or david@otsego-land-trust.org.

## LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

### Happy Fall!

We had a busy summer here at OLT—thanks to your continued support, we accomplished much so far! From our paid internship program for college students and monitoring thousands of conservation easement acres, to maintaining and improving our Blueway Trail sites, to planning a plethora of outdoor programs for the community, you make these happen with your ongoing commitment.

I sincerely thank those who came out and supported OLT at our 30th Anniversary Gala Cocktail Party in tribute to Harry Levine's years of service in September. Because you supported this event, we were able to begin our Blueway Management Fund in Harry's honor. It was a great start to building support for the public access lands we own and manage for you, our community.

We were privileged to play host to a Land Trust Alliance (LTA) Roundtable on September 20th. We began with a tour of Brookwood Point, then hosted attendees at the Upland Interpretive Center, located on Thayer Farm, part of SUNY Oneonta's Biological Field Station (BFS). OLT also holds a conservation easement on this land—thank you to the BFS for allowing us to use the center for our meeting.

It was a pleasure to have Meme Hanley, Program Director, along with Katrina Howey, Grants Manager, both from LTA's New York office lead the conversations. Staff and board members from neighboring land trusts and conservation-minded organizations joined us for a discussion on new initiatives in our region, state and national policy updates, and what we can expect in grant funding from the New York State Conservation Partnership Program. We came away with a profound sense of comraderie that comes from sharing ideas, challenges, and stories together.

Land protection projects will be closing in the near future, and with them are stories that long to be shared. You will also hear more about our commitment to farmland protection and the agricultural viability of our region.

Enjoy the cooler, crisp days ahead.

*Patricia*

Patricia  
Executive Director





11,054  
Acres Conserved



102  
Conservation  
Easements



26 Protected Land in  
Communities

## 30 Years Never Looked So Good

From acreage to organizational capacity, OLT has grown into a conservation leader in our region.



7 Public  
Access Sites

8 Public  
Trails



12,493  
Feet of Protected  
Shoreline



From hikes and paddling to workshops and birding, we host a wide variety of outdoor educational events on both Blueway and easement properties.

**Check the back page for our upcoming events!**

137  
Volunteers



13 Board  
Members  
5 Staff  
Members



874  
Supporters



Serving  
7  
Counties

67  
Partners



188

Educational  
Events & Programming



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# One Wonderful Evening

A trio of commemorative milestones culminated in OLT's 30th Anniversary Gala Cocktail Party, hosted at Brookwood Point. Organizational board and staff, donors and friends, and community partners gathered in the gardens to celebrate the past 30 years and look to a promising future of land protection for the next 30 years and beyond.

Executive Director Pat Szarpa emphasized how much the organization has accomplished during its lifetime, making clear that OLT could not have done this important work without those in attendance that evening—those who believed in OLT's mission and gave by means of dollars and/or time.

The "Achievement in Conservation Award" was presented to Pam Lea, who had protected her 79 acres in perpetuity in December 2017. Pam encouraged others to donate conservation easements to the land trust, stating, "Knowing my property will be well taken care of by OLT when I'm long gone is something I'm glad for."

Harry Levine received a framed copy of the resolution passed by the Otsego Land Trust Board of Directors, recognizing his commitment to land conservation and dedicated 18 years of total service to OLT.

Harry referenced one of Thomas Cole's most famous quotes, comparing it to the natural beauty and wonder that living in our region brings to residents' minds.

## Keep The Blueway Open

In honor of Harry, OLT launched The Blueway Management Fund



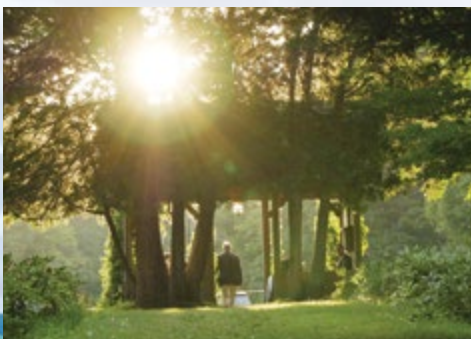
*Former Board Chair Harry Levine discusses the importance of protecting the natural resources: clean water, fresh air, prime agricultural soils, and hardwood forests that make this region a beautiful place to live.*



*Pam Lea receives the Achievement in Conservation award for donating a conservation easement on her 79 acre property to OLT.*

to support the routine annual maintenance and management of OLT's Blueway properties. These nitty-gritty, "boots-on-the-ground" tasks vary from re-mulching a trail to keeping up with mowing, plowing, trail markers, signage, and other behind the scenes care to ensure the properties are safe, enjoyable, and spic and span for your visit.

The fund is off to a good start, but its continued growth depends on you, OLT's community, who also value and utilize these lands. When you visit Brookwood Point, Fetterley Forest, Parslow Road, or our other Blueway properties, please consider how imperative it is for OLT to keep these properties open and make a donation to the Blueway Management Fund.



*"Scenes of solitude from which the hands of nature have never been lifted, affect the mind with a more deep-toned emotion than aught which the hand of man has touched."*

– Thomas Cole

# THE FIRST 30 YEARS



Greenwoods Conservancy protects a wide variety of habitat, including open fields, forests, and wetlands. Additionally, it serves as an outdoor classroom for a range of research projects.



Compton Bridge Conservation Area was the first property OLT owned and opened for public access. At the confluence of Oaks Creek and Susquehanna River, it is a great location to fish, paddle, or walk a short wetland trail.



As OLT's most trafficked Blueway Trail property, Brookwood Point offers a little bit of everything for everyone: historic gardens, wetlands, and woodland trails. It features an ADA accessible trail and public access paddling.

**November 1988**  
 Otsego Land Trust was **incorporated** as a charitable corporation, with Snell, Barwick, and Cooper as the organization's initial directors

## Winter 1987-88

An idea to **conserve the healthy lands and waters** of Otsego County was born from a small group of people, including George Snell, Kent Barwick, and Henry Cooper



George Snell Dr. Earle Peterson Lin Vincent

*Through the leadership of Lin Vincent, George Snell, and Earle Peterson, who served as succeeding presidents, Otsego Land Trust better defined its mission.*

## 1990

Under the leadership of Lin Vincent, OLT's first president, Dorothy Campbell became the **first conservation easement** donor, protecting in perpetuity Leatherstocking Falls and nearly 100 acres of property overlooking Otsego Lake

## 1993

Peterson Family Charitable Trust, led by Dr. Earle Peterson donated the **second conservation easement**, 706 acres, to protect Cranberry Bog. The Peterson family went on to protect nearly 1,200 acres, today known as Greenwoods Conservancy

## 2000

**1,946 acres** protected in perpetuity

## 2001

OLT published its **first newsletter**

## 2002

The **first full-time staff member** was hired

OLT moved to its current location in **Pioneer Alley** in Cooperstown

## 2008

OLT released its **conservation blueprint**, a strategic plan outlining threats to the Otsego region and where the focus was on land protection in those areas

OLT purchased the first Blueway Conservation Area Property: **Compton Bridge**

## 2011

OLT added to The Blueway: **Fetterley Forest & Brookwood Point**

## 2010

**6,507 acres** protected in perpetuity

## 2012

OLT added to The Blueway: **Parslow Road Conservation Area, Deowongo Island, Oaks Creek/ Crave Conservation Areas**

## 2015

**10,000 acres** protected in perpetuity

## 2016

OLT became an **accredited land trust** through Land Trust Alliance

## 2018

**30 years** of land protection and over **11,000 acres** protected in perpetuity



*Land trust accreditation is a mark of distinction, showing that a land trust meets high standards for land conservation.*



*Leatherstocking Falls is part of the historic Leatherstocking Farm north of Cooperstown. Also known as "Panther's Leap," these legendary falls are where, in James Fenimore Cooper's Leatherstocking Tales, Leatherstocking saves the life of an Indian maiden.*

FENIMORE ART MUSEUM, COOPERSTOWN, NEW YORK, GIFT OF ARTHUR J. TELFER, SMITH & TELFER COLLECTION, 5-07829.

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF VECC VIDEOGRAPHY.

# STUDENTS TODAY... CONSERVATIONISTS TOMORROW

By Becky Talbot, Communications and Outreach Manager

Have you ever heard of Vitamin N?  
It's the nature vitamin, and while it's not a recognized vitamin, it's gaining quite a bit of attention in terms of real mental and physical well-being, especially for youth.



According to The Nature and Children Network, access to the outdoors during the school day improves students' academic performance and behavior, helps them focus on learning, and increases their enthusiasm for learning.

### #GetOutside

OLT's Environmental Study Team (EST) program began as a one-day enrichment program for at-risk middle and high school students to get outside. It has since evolved into a full-week watershed ecology curriculum with Schoharie River Center, spanning Blueway properties and conservation easement lands.

This summer, I accompanied students from Morris and Worcester/Schenevus Schools as they slipped through mud, caught critters, and blazed through brambles. The overarching theme: Why do we care about improving the quality of our local environment?

The week began with the basics, but by Friday, students became scientists. They tested creek samples for PH, dissolved oxygen, and nitrates on their own; and identified macroinvertebrates that live there.

Students also sampled in their hometowns: Butternut Creek in Morris and Decatur Creek in Worcester. I watched lightbulbs flicker in their eyes, bridging their local watersheds to the Upper Susquehanna River Watershed.

### Not Just for Kids

The good news for adults is that nature's inspiration knows no age.

Parker Sheldon, a 2018 Worcester graduate who participated in EST last summer, returned and guided current students, spurring the critical and creative thinking necessary to make informed decisions about the environment.

**"I love watching the students lead the learning. They are excited about the content and eager to ask questions."**

— Jillian Hahn, a science teacher at Worcester in the creek with her students

From playing in Otsego Lake at Brookwood Point and skipping black caps at Fetterley Forest, to planting pollinator plants at Parslow Road Conservation Area, we all, child and adult alike, got a dose of Vitamin N.

For me, being a part of the students' growth was transformative—I learned as much, if not more, than them. And I don't think I've romped through the woods since I was a child.

I discovered that little girl again as I crossed the Butternut Creek in a pair of worn out sneakers, where I 'got my feet wet' with nature. I've since invested in waterproof boots, but am still diving head first into new outdoor adventures and embracing my inner kid.

Consider bringing your child or grandchild to a nearby Blueway property and see how nature and fun go hand in hand. You might end up in the mud too, but don't worry—I promise you won't melt!





*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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Front cover photograph ©Monte Loomis.

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 Attorney General's Charities Bureau. ATTN: FOIL Officer, 120 Broadway, New York, NY 10271.

Post Office Box 173  
Cooperstown, NY 13326

# join us...

**SAT., NOV. 3**

## Brookwood Fall Cleanup

Brookwood Point  
6000 State Route 80  
Cooperstown • 9am-Noon

**FRI., NOV. 9**

## Brookwood Point: Walk & Talk with Ed Rowley

Brookwood Point  
6000 State Route 80  
Cooperstown • 3:30-4:30pm

**THUR. & FRI., NOV. 8 & 9**

## Volunteer Appeal Letter Stuffing

Otsego Land Trust Office  
101 Main Street, Cooperstown  
10am-2pm

**WED., DEC. 12**

## Fly Tying Workshop

Otsego Land Trust Office  
101 Main Street, Cooperstown  
5:30-7:30pm

## Have an idea for an event?

Share your suggestions by phone at 607-547-2366 x108  
or by email to [becky@otsegoandtrust.org](mailto:becky@otsegoandtrust.org)

You can receive news and event updates directly  
to your email by signing up on our website.



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