

field, forest & fen



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



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© PAT SZARPA

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Where do you find yourself when the world was not going your way, when stress was eating away at your peace of mind, or when you needed to release burdens? I know where I always go—to the woods.

When I was a teenager, I unconsciously sought solace in there, not realizing at first how often I retreated to the trees. From the stresses of high school and college, to raising a family and juggling career responsibilities, I always sought the nearby woodland trails.

There, I experienced time ticking away by the seasons and watched the trees grow up large and strong, some beginning to sag and decay with age. The seasons of my life became as much a part of the seasons of change in our local woods.

Today, our woods, forests, and backyard trees are as much a part of a community's wellbeing as they are an individual's emotional comfort. As we continue to prepare for the effects climate change and implement alternatives in energy, the health of our lands and waters is essential to our lives. Thoughtful land use planning and permanent land protection are more important than ever before to our communities.

I am grateful those same woods and trails are still outside of the city of Buffalo for me to go back "home" to. Decisions were made to protect land and wildlife habitat in perpetuity as part of their community planning. OLT's Blueway conservation areas and preserves are a part of that planning for our region. We have much more work to do, and with your help, we will get there.

Let's go for a walk in the woods together.

Patricia

Patricia Szarpa
Executive Director



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OLT Trees: Where are They Now?

If you have attended the Springfield 4th of July Parade over the past ten years, you know that OLT tosses trees instead of candy.

Over 10,000 evergreens have found their way to new homes, and in the process have contributed to increased air and water quality, biodiversity, economic opportunities, personal wellbeing, and climate change mitigation. But on the individual level, these trees have grown alongside your family, and OLT wants to see where they are today!

Have you hung a bird feeder off a branch? Do your kids try to climb to the top? Do you decorate your treasured tree for the holiday season? Send us your photos, and we'll share them on social media! Photos can be emailed to info@otsegoandtrust.org.

Their Memory Lives in the Land

For the first 21 years of my life, a street sign, pummeled into the ground, welcomed me each time I ventured into my parents' backyard in Sherrill, New York, a small city in between Syracuse and Utica. It read "Panther Mountain," a place in Richfield Springs I saw every summer when my dad and grandpa pointed out a ridgeline rising above the east side of Canadarago Lake as we drove down Route 28 on the way to visit relatives.

Panther Mountain held a special place in my grandpa's heart. Grandpa Don, grew up in Wileytown (another street sign in the backyard...), met my grandma in Cooperstown, and traversed the trails of Panther Mountain.

Today, I've been able to do the same because Otsego Land Trust worked with the Fetterley family to forever protect Fetterley Forest, opening up a small portion of the ridgeline for the community to explore in trails and an inspiring vista of the lake.

Both my dad and grandpa are gone, but when I visit Fetterley, I remember them eagerly pointing out of the car window: "That's Panther Mountain!" I stand on this ground and think, "They loved this place. And now I'm here."

OLT has recently purchased a parcel on Roses Hill Road from

Otsego County, adjacent to Fetterley Forest. The additional acreage will nearly double the amount of protected continuous forest block on Panther Mountain.

This Land is My Land, This Land is Their Land

Increased protection from becoming overdeveloped will support wildlife habitat and natural resources, and swaths of healthy forestland play a key role in providing clean drinking water and reducing the effects of climate change, challenges we face ahead.

OLT's intention is to retain at least a majority of the property for public access, where the community would benefit from longer trails to hike with more scenic vistas of Canadarago Lake and Deowongo Island. In the

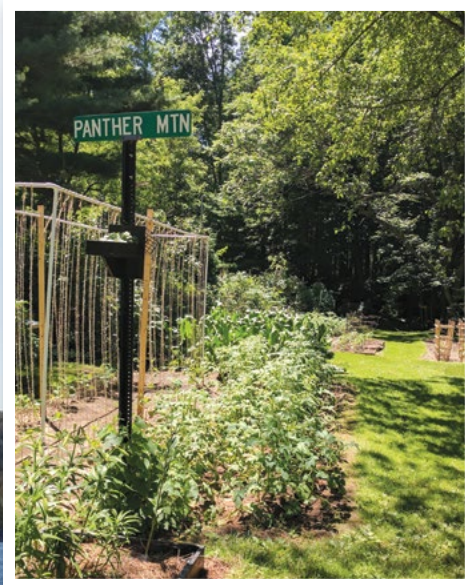
future, a section of the property may be protected forever with a conservation easement.

In the years to come, when I visit Otsego County with my grandchildren, I will point out a swath of trees above an island in a lake. I will say, "That's Panther Mountain!" and tell them of their great- and great-great-grandpas.

Because of Otsego Land Trust, I will take them to Fetterley Forest and the new parcel on Roses Hill Road, and we will explore trails, spot wildlife, and have our breaths taken away at awe-inspiring views.

We are connected to the land in the form of stories. When we protect the land for the next generation, we ensure the stories continue as well.

By Becky Talbot, past Communications and Outreach Manager



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Take a Walk on the North Side

The Brookwood Point that many people know and cherish includes a leisurely stroll from the kiosk down towards the Garden House and garden beds filled with a rainbow of perfumed flowers. It includes an ADA accessible path where canoes and kayaks are plunged into Otsego Lake and a short walk down the Wetland Trail to the point where one can admire vast north and south vistas of Otsego Lake. Brookwood Creek meanders its way through the center, bisecting the property into north and south sections.

Standing in the lower parking lot on the south side of the property one can take a glance towards the other side. But only a glance. Because there, on a dilapidated bridge, a sign screams to anyone that comes near: "Keep Out." OLT plans to switch out that sign with one that promises "Coming Soon" because what you may not realize is that when you visit Brookwood, you are only experiencing half of it.

Connecting the Sides: Bridges, Trails, and Signage

The north side of the creek is indeed part of Brookwood Point Conservation Area, but has been closed due to safety concerns. OLT is working to change that.

As part of the Brookwood Point North Side project, OLT envisions the entire 22-acre property being open for public access. Within the next few years, you will be welcomed across the creek on a fresh

walking trail that will begin at the kiosk and wind its way to a new bridge.

It will take you beside the site of the former estate and what was once the driveway to the house. While the estate house was torn down, the inspiration behind its foundation will be brought back to life,

why it was built on this side, in a meadow overlooking incredible vistas of Otsego Lake. As you walk along the trail and through the woods, you will hear the creek rippling across the stone, learn about the history, plants, and animals on the property through interpretive signage, and pass through mature woods in an

upland habitat very different from the manicured lawns and gardens on the south side of the creek.

This is part of the future of Brookwood Point, the only free, public waterfront access to Otsego Lake. OLT is close to getting there, thanks to generous

JOIN US!

Informational meetings on the North Side Project will be held throughout the winter and early spring 2020.

Dates to be announced shortly!



Brookwood Point North Side Improvement Plan designed with Chazen Companies.

support from private foundations and individual donors, but we need your help to carry out this vision for you and the community. It is a single undertaking with several phases: stream bank restoration to prevent erosion and protect water quality for Otsego Lake, installing new bridges and signs, and constructing trails. But its completion will mean the entirety of Brookwood will open for the public to enjoy.



Eastern Bridge



Western Bridge

Be sure to visit OLT's other public access properties in the county!

Visit OtsegoLandTrust.org to find a property near you. For you snow enthusiasts, Parslow Road in Fly Creek is open all year-round for snowshoeing and XC-skiing.

Coming Home

Frank Novak closed on the Whelan property in February 2015. That didn't stop him from trudging through a blanket of snow with a portable heater up to a cabin on the property. He memorialized his purchase with mountain views, considering all the possibilities this land held for the future.

The property was originally donated two years prior by Mary Anne Whelan to Otsego Land Trust, with the intention that OLT would retain ownership temporarily until selling it with a conservation easement.

While she originally purchased the land to build on it, over the years her appreciation of the natural landscape broadened and she felt that the best thing she could do with the property would be to give it to OLT "rather than dotting it with one more house taking up one more piece of somebody's else world."

In a stroke of fate, Frank was looking for acreage, a place for quiet reflection.

Private Lands. Working Lands. Protected Forever Lands.

Located in the Town of Otsego, the 72-acre property mainly consists of northern hardwood forests, old fields and shrublands, and wetlands. There is a small stream that runs through the southeastern corner of the property that carves out a steep ravine as it flows south. The property is close to seven other parcels that are protected with conservation easements, creating a cluster of natural resource protection in a strategic area.

Frank admitted to feeling nervous about the phrase 'conservation easement' at first, thinking that people would be allowed on the land and he wouldn't have any flexibility. He was happy to learn that this was not the case. OLT walked Frank through the entire easement, showing him what it means to be a part of the land trust community.

Working with OLT helped him understand the process, that yes, there are certain things that can't be done to protect the health of the land, but sustainable logging and agriculture are permitted, and often, encouraged in specific areas.

The restrictions and procedures in place make sense for the property, which would be owned by Frank and not OLT.

Another influence behind purchasing the Whelan property is Frank's heritage. He is the fourth generation to live in the region, and his family originally settled in Pierstown after coming across the ocean from Ireland. Even after his grandparents moved into the village proper,

and Frank grew up in Cooperstown, Pierstown held a special place in his family's legacy.

To be able to return to the area was a special reunion for his family. He had returned home, in a way, to a land that brings him peace.





*"I saw this property. And I walked it,
and fell in love with it immediately."*

– Frank

Aerial footage of the property, taken by Vecc Videography.

BOTH PHOTOGRAPHS BY © VECC VIDEOGRAPHY



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 of Milkweed by Robert Eklund.

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Post Office Box 173
Cooperstown, NY 13326

Call us at 607-547-2366.



join us...

SUN., NOV 3

Brookwood Point Fall Cleanup

Brookwood Point
6000 State Route 80
Cooperstown • 1-4pm

FRI., NOV 8

Adaptations in Wildlife Walk & Talk

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

*In case of inclement weather,
event will be held at OLT's office.*

Have an idea for an event?

Share your suggestions by phone at 607-547-2366 or by email to info@otsegolandtrust.org.

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



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

Looking for a gift this holiday season?

Give the gift of conservation! Consider making a donation in memory of or in honor of someone special before the end of the calendar year. Call 607-547-2366 to make your gift today.