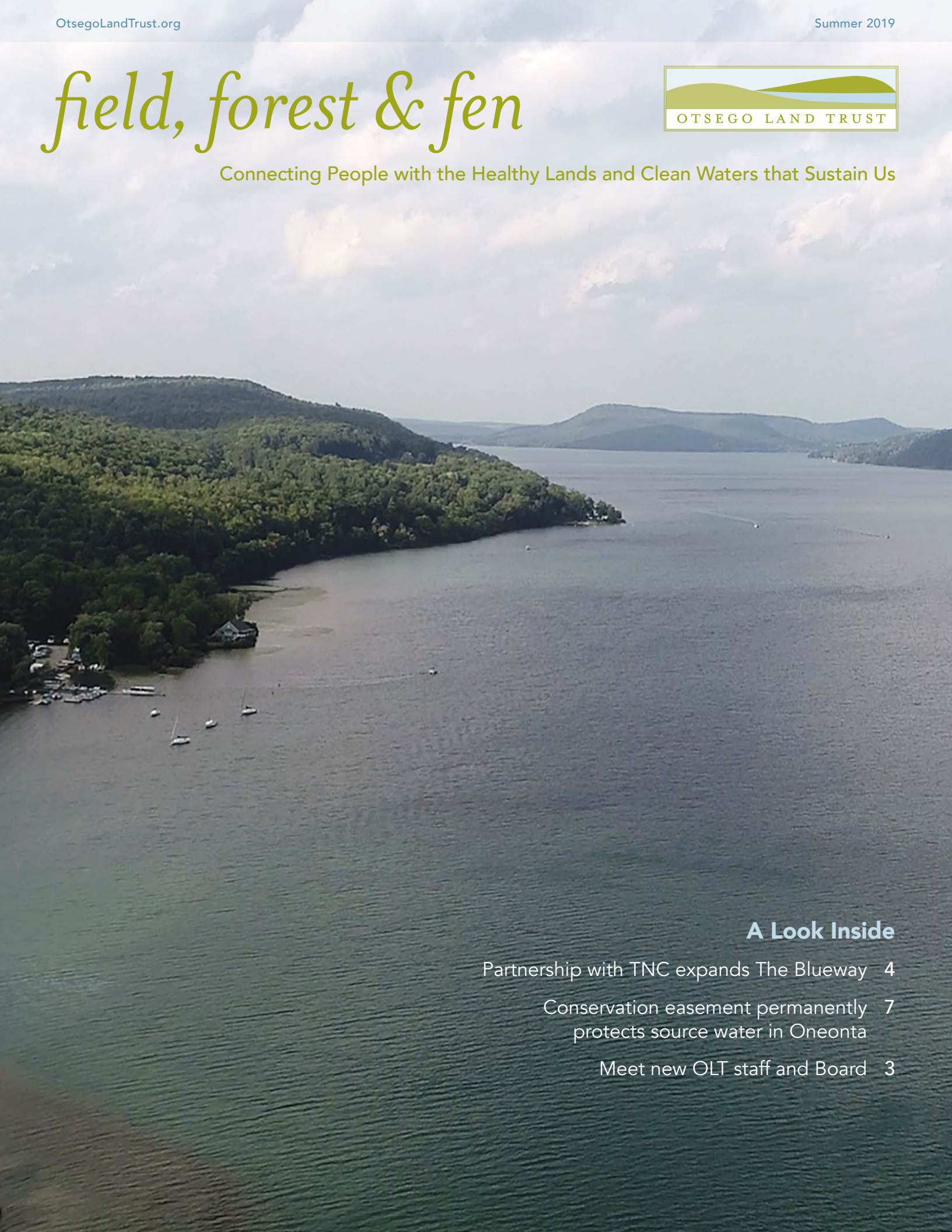


# *field, forest & fen*



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



## **A Look Inside**

Partnership with TNC expands The Blueway 4

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## LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**Pura Vida, or Pure Life, is the Costa Rican National Motto and a state of mind to the “Ticos,” the residents of Costa Rica. My new rally call—especially when it seems at times there are no real solutions to the many environmental issues we face.**

While we were under the quiet blanket of winter back in February, I had the opportunity to take part in an EarthWatch volunteer research project at Las Cruces Biological Field Station, located near the city of San Vito in the Coto Brus region of Costa Rica. I saw first-hand how the impacts of habitat fragmentation and loss are being addressed in other places.

The purpose of this EarthWatch project is to understand the positive impact humans **can** have on the environment when they are growing and maintaining fruiting trees and bushes on their land. By demonstrating the ecological benefits of these fruiting trees, our volunteer team could eventually help to inform policies that support local communities and stress the importance of private land conservation, much like what

we do here in our area to inform private landowners on best management practices and habitat restoration.

Our task was to count the number of birds and other wildlife eating the fruit we could see around us over a 10 minute period. We collected data on 16 different private farm parcels, or “fincas.” Led by trained field ecologists, we traversed the amazing mountainous landscape, spent time in mysterious cloud and rain forest habitats, and shared farm fields with cows, horses, and chickens.

In between observations, our project leaders would take time to show us other wonders of the tropical forest, such as vampire bats roosting in the hollow of a tree and the amazing siting of a common potoo chick sitting



perfectly still at the top of a dead tree, waiting for its parents to return. As a birder, I was thrilled to add another 39 bird species to my life list!

I came back from Costa Rica encouraged on the positive results being observed so far, and that private land conservation will continue to play a significant role in counteracting the inevitable changes happening to our climate and our planet's health. Together, we can make a difference right here in our region.

Pura Vida!

*Patricia*

Patricia Szarpa  
Executive Director

## Brookwood Event Rentals

**Brookwood Point is a melting pot for wildlife, with its diversified ecosystem of meadows, woods, shorelines, wetlands, and gardens.**

It's the perfect location for OLT to offer a slew of educational and recreational events. And did you know that you can host your own events on the property?

The summer schedule is filling up fast, but Brookwood Point may be the ideal venue for your next private or business event—birthday parties, corporate dinners, office retreats, family reunions, or intimate weddings.

The property's historic gardens, stone walls, fantastic lake and rolling hillside views, and charming arts-and-crafts style garden house make it a wonderful place to gather and celebrate with family and friends, and to capture timeless photographs with your loved ones.



Contact Becky Talbot at 607-547-2366 x108 to inquire about available dates.



## Strong in Staff

Last year, we said goodbye to long-time staff member Sara Scheeren. We thanked her for five years of dedication to OLT and wished her well in her future endeavors at Farm Credit East.

Now there's a new face at OLT, whose smile and lighthearted demeanor are sure to rub off on anyone who comes through our front door. **Shannon LaBruzzo** is our new Finance and Office Manager and took the position by the horns from day one. She has worked in several different roles and organizations, including the United States Navy.

Originally from Southern California, Shannon moved to the area nine years ago. She enjoys this region's rolling hills and farmland, tight knit communities, and the changing of seasons. There's certainly no snow to be found in Southern Cali!

Shannon loves the outdoors and is passionate about the opportunity to play a part in protecting the lands and waters for future generations to enjoy. Come stop by the office and help us give a warm welcome to Shannon.



**David Diaz, Patricia Szarpa, Becky Talbot, Marcie Foster, May Leinhart, and Shannon LaBruzzo.**

Additionally, OLT has brought on Mississippi native **May Leinhart**, who recently moved to Fly Creek with her family. She is assisting with annual stewardship tasks in a seasonal, part-time capacity.

May brings more than a decade of professional experience in land and water conservation and is excited to raise her children amid the region's fresh air and clean water.

## Our Growing Board of Directors



### Mary Earl

Mary began working at NBT Bank in 2006 and is currently Branch Manager. During her tenure, she has been honored as "Bank Manager of the Year," and demonstrates additional leadership as a Bank Officer and Bank Team Trainer.

Mary excels at and enjoys the business-community relations that are established through banking, an industry she has worked in for 30 years. Prior to NBT, she spent 17 years with the Sidney Federal Credit Union as a Loan Officer and Assistant Manager.

Mary is a member of Cooperstown Rotary Club and has served on its board and committees, most recently as club president. Mary, her husband, and two sons reside in Cherry Valley.



### Richard O'Keefe, MD

Rick is a family physician who works at Columbia Health on the Morningside Campus of Columbia University in New York City. He has been a part-time resident of the Butternut Valley Watershed since 2005.

He and his husband, John, are current OLT conservation easement owners in Maple Grove, a hamlet in Morris, and are enthusiastic ambassadors of the responsibilities of environmental stewardship as private landowners.

Rick is a long time member of the Butternut Valley Alliance and currently serves as the organization's treasurer. Rick is also a bee-keeper and a practicing community builder.

# Land, Partnership, and Vision

It began with a phone call between OLT and The Nature Conservancy (TNC), and ended a year later in five new properties and 187 acres under our belt.

How? We were in the midst of brainstorming how to fundraise for protecting a riverfront parcel spanning the Towns of Milford and Middlefield, an awesome one at that. TNC also realized the untapped potential of this parcel and hopped on the bandwagon. Yes, this property's conservation values are *that* inspiring.

TNC helped us purchase the parcel from Ed and Mary Greenaker, providing 97% of the purchase costs. A full project suite blossomed out of the

two organizations' partnership and coordination to conserve new lands and transfer some already protected lands within the Upper Susquehanna Watershed Region to OLT from TNC. The partnership was critical in tying everything together. TNC contributed \$185,000 in total towards acquisition costs and our future management of these lands.

They're in our hands now, so what's next for these parcels?

## The Blueway Spreads its Wings

We're adding two new places for you and your families to explore! That's right, The Blueway is branching out to provide more public access opportunities across the region.



### Lordsland Preserve

With ownership now transferred from TNC to OLT, Lordsland Preserve is now part of our Blueway public access properties. Located in the Town of Roseboom, you can visit and walk along 1.4 miles of walking trails through forests, wetlands, meadows, and steep slopes.

While you're out, keep your eyes peeled for Jacob's Ladder, a flowering plant that blooms in early spring to early summer with a ladder-like arrangement of leaves and numerous nodding flowers on top.

According to the New York Natural Heritage Program, Lordsland is one of the best locations for finding this beauty, but please be considerate and practice the "take only pictures, leave only footprints" mantra that allows our Blueway properties to remain healthy and beautiful for all visitors.

Contact us for specific directions to Lordsland, and if you come across Jacob's Ladder, share your photos with us on social media!

### The Riverfront Parcel

The one that spawned this entire project—isn't ready for your adventures just yet, but don't fret! It will be well worth the wait, and in the meantime, get your hiking shoes, canoes, and kayaks ready because once it is open, you will want to take full advantage





of its mowed trails and 7,200 feet of frontage on the Susquehanna River and Cherry Valley Creek.

Situated at the confluence of these two waterways, and just minutes away from the Village of Milford, it will be the perfect location to launch and enjoy an afternoon.

You might be thinking, "This is great, but what is this awesome place called?" We're working on it, and will announce its name soon. If you have a fun idea, let us know!

## Preserving Rare Habitats



The other three properties, while not envisioned for public access, all comprise of Northern white cedar swamp, a rare habitat in New York State. These types of swamps are typically home to an array of uncommon plant species, including wildflowers and mosses, and two of the properties have significant frontage along Summit Lake. One of the three parcels is protected with a conservation easement and remains privately owned.

Down the road, OLT may utilize the two parcels we now own for educational and scientific research endeavors or targeted, staff-led walks. But their truest value lies in the protecting the natural resources and scenic value of sensitive habitats and species for generations to come.



*Troy Weldy and Matt Levy (from TNC) and David Diaz and Patricia Szarpa (from OLT).*



# Thank you!

Your support made a difference over the past year. Because of generous donations made by individuals, households, businesses, and grantors, Otsego Land Trust has conserved new lands and worked to open new properties for public access.

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# Buying Land to Protect Land: Success in Oneonta

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### Green Lodging Partnership Program

Inn At Cooperstown  
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### 2018 4<sup>TH</sup> of July Tree Appeal Sponsors

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Paperkite Creative  
PDQ Service and Supplies LLC  
Sanguine Family Counseling  
and Consultation Services  
Tip Top Clean

Last December, Linda Wilcox, encouraged by her husband Jim Johnson, donated a conservation easement on 133 acres of beautiful forests, hills, farmland, and wetlands, a piece of land they've fondly named Hilltop Woods, located in the Town of Oneonta.

Protection of this property will help reduce land fragmentation in this rural area near the City of Oneonta.

Seeing that there was a very clear present development threat in the area, the landowners chose to purchase and protect the property in order to conserve its farmland, forests, diverse wildlife habitats, stream and wetland buffers, and natural area corridors.

Future generations will benefit from the protection of land that impacts drinking water for both the Town and City of Oneonta.

The conservation easement also protects important soils suitable for future agricultural endeavors and nearly 60 acres of forest land, which may help reduce erosion, improve water quality, and mitigate the effects of climate change through carbon sequestration and sound management of working lands.

"We are encouraged by Linda's commitment to conservation and congratulate her for permanently protecting land to limit sprawl. There is slow but continuing development in this area, as the property is in close proximity to the City of Oneonta. Increased development could threaten the quality of the drinking water supply of the City and other municipalities."

– Patricia Szarpa, Executive Director of OLT



**Patricia Szarpa, Jim Johnson, Linda Wilcox, and David Diaz**







*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 taken of the  
2018 General Clinton Canoe Regatta out  
of Brookwood Point by Vecc Videography.

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

Call us at 607-547-2366.



# join us...

## MON., JUNE 17

**Pollinator Planting w/ NYSEG**  
Parslow Road Conservation Area  
127 Parslow Road  
Hartwick • 6-7:30pm

## FRI., JUNE 21

**Summer Solstice Sunset Stroll  
w/ CLIA**  
Fetterley Forest  
302 Roses Hill Road  
Richfield Springs • 7:30-9pm

## THUR., JULY 4

**Springfield 4<sup>th</sup> of July Parade**  
Smith Road  
Springfield Center • 10:15am

## FRI., JULY 5

**Fireworks Viewing**  
Brookwood Point  
600 State Highway 80  
Cooperstown • 7pm to dusk



## SUN., AUGUST 4

**Picnic at the Point**  
Brookwood • 11:30am-4pm  
All are welcome to join this family friendly afternoon down by Otsego Lake, featuring food, activities, and the **Glimmerglass Young Artists at 2pm**. More information will come soon, so stay tuned!



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