



The Stoddard Hollow String Band kicked off the evening with some great old-time tunes.

Landowner Appreciation

On a chilly afternoon in late September, Otsego Land Trust hosted a party at Cornfield Hall in Fly Creek to honor our conservation easement donors and property owners.

After the hiatus of the pandemic years, we were thrilled to gather our landowners once again to share food, drinks, music, and conversation. Most importantly, we were able to mark and celebrate their generosity in stewarding more than 11,000 acres of preserved field, forest, and stream that add to the beauty and quality of life of our region.

We are always pleased to honor our easement donors and property owners for setting Otsego Land Trust on the path toward climate and food resilience.

For my own part, I have walked every one of these properties, some of them year after year, and what I love most of all is the visible imprint of their owners. I've had so many memorable and touching conversations, as landowners describe their dreams for their land, their projects completed or conceived of, their struggles and victories, the stories of how they came to that particular place, of how they have made it their own.

Stewards who have poured their love and generosity and essence into these lands.

I've seen how landowners will linger a bit longer in a particular spot, place a hand on a wall, or pause along a path to take inventory of tasks yet to complete. At these intimate and fleeting moments, I get a glimpse of the people behind the pretty views: the stewards who have poured their love and generosity and essence into these lands. The legacy they leave is immeasurable.

The highlight of the evening was spending time with our amazing group of landowners.

Some were among the original conservation easement donors, others had purchased already-protected land during the last few years. And our easements come in all sizes. Some are as large as Earle, Cindy, and Jim Peterson's 1,100-acre Greenwoods Preserve, or as small as the 1.7-acre Heathcote property, owned and managed by Fynmere Partners, or the 2.7-acre park in the middle of the town of Worcester, donated by Larry Delong.



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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Otsego Land Trust

P.O. Box 173

Cooperstown, NY 13326

tel: 607-547-2366

OtsegoLandTrust.org

Front cover: Stoddard Hollow String Band
by G. Farmer.

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30x30

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Longer heat waves and more frequent wind and rain, that's what the future holds for our Otsego region.

New York State has joined with nations and states throughout the world to minimize the effects of climate change by holding the average global increase in temperature to 1.5 degrees centigrade. The most effective way to do that is to conserve 30% of the land area by 2030.

Statewide approximately 19% of the land in New York is currently conserved, while less than 6% of the land in the Otsego Region is protected from development. That means 94% of the landscape and natural resources we all enjoy are at risk.

Conservation is essential to bolster climate resiliency and enhance the quality of life in the Otsego Region. Our year-end funding campaign has an aggressive goal to help us to protect an additional 10,000 acres of land by 2030.

Your support today shows that Conservation Matters.

Gregory Farmer

Executive Director



M. Foster

FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

Delighting in Autumn's colorful display, we are reminded why we are devoted to Otsego Land Trust's goal of putting our *Trust in the Land* to preserve it in perpetuity.

This month we welcome two new members to the new Board of Directors to help guide us as we move forward.

Joan Fox of Oneonta is eager to advance the mission of Otsego Land Trust with her extensive expertise in real estate, environmental planning, conservation easements, and community leadership. As a real estate broker, Joan is alert to changing market conditions. With her imagination, energy, and leadership, Joan will be a valuable addition to our Board.

Dietrich Snell of New York City and Middlefield has a lifetime love of the Otsego region. His broad experience includes environmental law, civil rights, and antitrust regulation. Otsego Land Trust looks forward to the insights Dieter will bring to our founding mission — to preserve land in perpetuity.

Carla Hall

Board Chair

Something Fishy

TRIVIA CHALLENGE:

What is the northeast's most ferocious non-human mammalian predator?

Right off, you might think of a black bear or a bobcat, our most charismatic fauna. But no, you've got to go smaller. Try something in the weasel family, referred to as "mustelids."

Mustelids include some of the most agile and cunning mammals in the world, such as otters, martens, and wolverines.

One native species, the fisher (*martes pennanti*), has a reputation for being at the top of the weasel heap here in the northeast. Reaching nearly four feet long and up to

13 pounds, fishers commonly prey upon squirrels, frogs, cats, birds, other weasel species, and a myriad of other creatures.

They have been known to fight each other to the death for territory, mates, and food.

One such battle was witnessed and photographed by Otsego County native, Mike Reynolds.

He describes the brawl as violent and terrifyingly fascinating. "The two fishers rolled and tussled in



M. Reynolds.

the deep snow, savagely biting each other, then one grabbed the other by the mid-back area and bit down hard. The other fisher was immediately paralyzed, clearly with a broken back. The victor then sauntered off into the woods. At that moment, I was glad fishers aren't the size of dogs!"

BY DAVID DIAZ

EAGLE RESCUE at Brookwood Point

For several years now, visitors to the [Brookwood Point Conservation Area](#) have enjoyed watching the nesting pair of bald eagles that have settled in the area.



G. Farmer

Early one morning in August, Otsego Land Trust staff discovered the female eagle splayed on the ground, but with no visible injuries. Sgt. Michael Stalter, a raptor specialist at the Otsego County Sheriff's Office, helped to gently secure the eagle and transported her to Cornell University Hospital for Animals in Ithaca. The veterinary team operated on the eagle's broken femur and has been monitoring her recovery.

Throughout the summer, the male eagle and the juvenile could be heard calling out for her return. We are pleased to report that the eagle had regained her health and was released at Brookwood Point at the end of October.



G. Farmer

continued from front cover –

When everyone had full plates in front of them, Gregory Farmer, Otsego Land Trust's executive director, laid out the Conservation Challenge: the State of New York has tasked organizations like ours to help protect 30% of the land area in the state by 2030. That is the minimum required in order to blunt the worst effects of climate change, safeguard clean air and water, and maintain enough arable land to feed our region. Currently, in Otsego County, only 5.6% of the land is protected. Rising real estate prices make purchasing land unaffordable, so conservation easements on private land are the best and most efficient tool available.

Ellen Pope from Otsego 2000 and Dr. Cindy Falk, SUNY Oneonta professor and local historic preservation expert, joined us at the event to share information and set up appointments with landowners. Ms. Pope explained New York State's new barn tax credit, and Dr. Falk displayed historic county atlases while answering landowners' questions about structures on their properties.

The excellent fare included flowers from Art Farm Flowers, tacos from Greenane Farm, homemade hand pies from Pam Diliberto, and beverages from local purveyors.

Cornfield Hall, a charming dance and social event spot built in 1928, is managed by the Cornfield Hall Society, Inc., and was made available through Amy Kukenberger. Many equally lovely and historic buildings, barns, and agricultural structures remain throughout the county, and Otsego Land Trust is working to help landowners find resources to maintain or restore them.

BY MAY LEINHART

Conservation Easement Landowners

Our most essential partners are the conservation easement donors and landowners who have entrusted us with long-term stewardship. We are eternally grateful to every one.

🌿 *Original donors of the respective easements*

Burlington

Peterson Family Charitable Trust 🌿

Butternuts

Susan Freyermuth and Harry Tripp

Lynn S. Tanner 🌿

Town of New Berlin 🌿

Cherry Valley

June and Kent Barwick 🌿

Glensfoot Farms LLC 🌿

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James Stowell

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and Molly Cooper 🌿

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Fynmere Limited Partnership 🌿

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Peter and Elaine Velsko 🌿

The top challenge facing beginning farmers today is access to land, according to the National Young Farmers Coalition. The cost of that land is the main impediment. More farmers are relying on leasing land as a way to get started, but secure land tenure is critical to creating a viable business.

The **Center for Agricultural Development and Entrepreneurship (CADE)**, a nonprofit farm and food business incubator based in Oneonta, is looking to match beginning farmers with local landowners willing to lease their land under long-term or low-cost agreements.

For a landowner, whether you're an active farmer or have no agricultural experience, CADE can help you understand if your goals for the land are compatible with young farmers' needs.

If you already lease your land to a farmer, but do not have a written

lease, CADE can support referrals to Pace University Food and Beverage Law Clinic for pro bono legal support. Pace determines need based on a variety of factors, including client income and existing caseload.

Since 1991, CADE has offered business development services to farmers through workshops, online courses, and technical assistance on a range of topics.

From access to capital, to marketing and sales, CADE's areas of service have adapted to meet the needs of farmers as they grow and change. All of CADE's

services are completely free for clients, though donations are gratefully accepted.

To schedule a consultation, contact Rhiannon Wright, program coordinator, at rhiannon@cadefarms.org.

SAVE THE DATE

Land Leasing Basics, a free online webinar hosted by CADE and featuring Farm Commons — a legal support nonprofit. Staff attorneys from Farm Commons will discuss the importance of a written lease, talking terms with your tenant, and common pitfalls to avoid.

The webinar is scheduled for **Tuesday, Dec. 13, 6:00-7:00 pm**. Register at cadefarms.org/workshops-and-webinars

PAINT THE POINT! Capturing the Beauty of Brookwood Point

The call to artists was simple: Come spend an August weekend painting *en plein air*.

Some twenty-five artists came to capture Brookwood Point's gardens and lake views in a variety of media and styles. The artworks were reviewed by guest judges and many of the pieces were then exhibited at the Cooperstown Art Association.

"Paint the Point" was made possible by an Otsego County Community Events grant. Many thanks to the Cooperstown Art

Association for valuable insights and the use of their exhibit space. L.M. Townsend Catering and Stagecoach Coffee kept the artists happy and well fed. Discount coupons for Canoe & Kayak Rentals and art materials donated by Golden Paints were among the perks for participants.

Make plans to join us next year!

BY ANNE WILFER





Blooming Brookwood (1) Double Peony, (2) Star of Persia, (3) Allium canadense

A SEASON AT BROOKWOOD

Once heard a returning visitor confess that she wanted to keep Brookwood a secret — for herself. Others have shared the sentiment and sometimes I can't help but feel the same way!

As a fan of fantasy and daydreaming, I was drawn to my internship at the Brookwood Point Conservation Area partly by its “secret garden” aesthetic. This is due not only to the site’s location — nestled against knoll, lake, creek, forest, and wetland — but also to its clever planting. In July and August, what mossy, old stone walls can’t accomplish, eight-foot-tall stands of plume poppies and silphium make up for, completing the feelings of seclusion and privacy. I think Anne of Green Gables would say that Brookwood “provides scope for the imagination,” and I have to agree. After all, another common name for the snakeroot that grows so brilliantly at Brookwood is “fairy candle.”

Brookwood is full of delights.

No matter where you are on the property, there’s always a great view, without exception for weather, season, or time of day. Brookwood offers a little bit of everything: at least two willows that stretch out onto the lake; cleome that bloom continuously, and start to resemble long-necked dinosaurs; conical hydrangea flowers that look like sugary gumdrops; and the chance to see Cooperstown and the hills on the far side of Glimmerglass disappear in oncoming rain clouds.



There is beauty everywhere, even down to the roots of the weeds.

And then there are all the moments of joy and learning: the difference between single and double peonies; the four species of allium I’ve seen bloom sequentially since May; meeting self-taught moss enthusiasts; and especially, the fear that a very large bee is approaching which gives way to elation as you discover that it’s actually a hummingbird, and for the first time ever you’ve just seen one perch in a nearby tree. Even the algal bloom was interesting to research and watch for.

I’ve been lucky enough to have experienced the property across a wide variety of situations this summer, and despite often wishing I could enjoy it on my own, unobserved and undisturbed, I also hope other people get to experience and appreciate Brookwood — and indeed the other natural spaces around us — as thoroughly as I have.

Rather than the usual fifteen minute visit on a random summer day, I wish more people the chance to witness each of Brookwood’s vaults and slopes, from sprout to bloom to seeding. There is beauty everywhere, even down to the roots of the weeds.

PHOTOS AND STORY BY KATE O’HANDLEY

BLAZING NEW TRAILS

This month Otsego Land Trust bids farewell to two well-known and dedicated staff members. “Marcie and May have been the friendly face of Otsego Land Trust, meeting with property owners, hosting special events, and devoting their considerable skills to spreading the message of land conservation,” said Executive Director Gregory Farmer.



Marcie Foster, a lifelong Cooperstown resident, joined Otsego Land Trust in 2009 and has most recently served as Director of Public Lands and Partnerships. Marcie’s long, productive tenure has helped to keep the organization focused and on track as the world continues to change.

“After 13 years at Otsego Land Trust, I’m moving on to a new chapter to explore and pursue other adventures,” says Foster. “I plan to stay in Cooperstown, help my husband with the bike shop, go on adventures with my daughter, and pursue interests that have been put on the back burner for many years.”



May Leinhart came to Otsego Land Trust in 2019 to help with documentation and monitoring of the 111 private properties that are protected under conservation easements. As the Conservation Easement Manager, Leinhart has logged countless miles throughout the region in all kinds of weather.

“I have enjoyed every minute of my time out crisscrossing this area’s hills and valleys, exploring hidden corners, chatting in friendly kitchens, and hearing landowners’ hopes, dreams and plans for their land,” says Leinhart. “This job has inspired a deep affection for our fields, forests, and the people who steward them. My hope is now to continue advancing local land conservation as a community member and in other professional realms.”

Both Foster and Leinhart hope to remain connected with the many staff, board members, landowners, and partners whom they have worked with over time. Both are scheduled to leave their positions in November and plan to continue supporting the valuable work of Otsego Land Trust.

Foster’s involvement with Otsego Land Trust began soon after she graduated from SUNY New Paltz. “I’ll be forever grateful to Otsego Land Trust for investing in me fresh out of college, first as a volunteer, and eventually guiding my professional growth in the land management and conservation field. I am proud to have been a part of so many conservation projects that will ensure that the scenic, ecological, and agricultural landscapes that I have treasured my entire life will remain protected for my daughter and future generations. I look forward to continuing to hike and enjoy Otsego Land Trust’s Blueway properties that provide access to wonderful natural places.”

In contrast, Leinhart came to Cooperstown after working for land trusts in other areas. “I moved to this region after spending time in rapidly suburbanizing areas of the Southeast and West,” she says. “I know that what we have here is special, and doesn’t happen without intention and foresight. I’ve been honored to work with and learn from the landowners, board and staff members who have helped protect this beautiful region — for now and for the future.”

The Board of Directors at their October meeting were visibly saddened to hear that Otsego Land Trust would be losing two such talented people. In a unanimous resolution the nine-member board chose to recognize and applaud the skills and dedication of Marcie Foster and May Leinhart in advancing the mission and goals of Otsego Land Trust. On behalf of the entire community, we give them our deepest thanks and wish them both well as they advance in their careers.

THINK ABOUT IT:

We all know someone who will still be alive in 2100.

What will the world look like by then?

Will our own Otsego region still have clean air, clean water, and opportunities to experience nature directly?



P.O. Box 173
Cooperstown, NY 13326

Call us at 607-547-2366.

 A simple way to show support...**Like us on Facebook!**



J. Schliep

Join our call to "be a good ancestor." Your contribution to Otsego Land Trust will ensure a lasting legacy of healthy farms, healthy forests, and healthy waters.