

field, forest & fen



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

The best medicine...is walking out your door

Over the last year, many of us made the outdoors our sanctuary and the best “safe” place to socialize with family and friends. Whether going for a walk, picnicking, or launching a canoe, access to the outdoors is essential for the health and well-being of just about everyone.

As noted by Richard Louv, a San Diego journalist who wrote *Last Child in the Woods*, “Nature is not only nice to have, but it’s a have-to-have for physical health and cognitive function.”

At OLT we live and breathe this statement through our work. Protection of the great outdoors and public access to it, are at the core of OLT’s mission.

Our publicly accessible lands, places like Fetterley Forest, Brookwood Point, and Lordsland Preserve, have had more visitors than ever this past year. They have served as a retreat from the day-to-day challenges and serious impacts of the COVID pandemic.

Time outdoors restores our spirit. Perhaps best said by Rachel Carson, “There is something infinitely healing in the repeated refrains of nature—the assurance that dawn comes after night, and spring after winter.”

Investing in land protection and public lands is what we do...

What we’ve learned from the COVID pandemic will influence OLT’s future work as we regionalize and grow our mission to protect private land, provide

access to OLT’s public lands, and steward protected land. Our success hinges upon a significant investment of staff time, our loyal volunteers (and there are many!) and the generous financial support of our donors, foundations, and in-kind contributions.

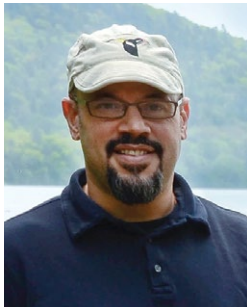
In 2020, we committed over \$300,000 of funds in staff and project costs to protect land through active stewardship, land acquisition, maintenance of our Blueway Trail properties, and working with private property owners to permanently protect their land. That’s 65% of our annual budget. Our work focuses on having the greatest impact and leaving a lasting legacy for current and future generations.

This investment in our region is paying off by connecting people to the land and making our communities healthier—we do this for you!

We invite and welcome you to bring your children, parents, other family members and friends to our Blueway sites. Get out, feel the grass under your feet or the crunch of a gravel trail. Smell flowers, hear the birds sing or the sound of lapping waves. **Your spirits will be lifted, we guarantee it.**

LIKE THE LAND—WE’RE ALWAYS GROWING AND CHANGING

Otsego Land Trust appoints Interim Executive Director, David Diaz



David Diaz, OLT’s Director of Land Protection, was appointed Interim Executive Director on February 20, 2021, after Executive Director Patricia Szarpa’s retirement. (See “Saying Goodbye to Executive Director Patricia Szarpa” on our website.)

David Diaz joined the OLT team in August of 2017, bringing with him more than 20 years of land acquisition and management experience. David holds degrees in Environmental Science from SUNY College

of Environmental Science and Forestry at Syracuse, and Viticulture and Wine Technology from Finger Lakes Community College.

As Director of Land Protection at OLT, David fostered relationships with landowners, as well as nonprofit and government agencies. While managing complex, multi-partner land protection projects, David also led OLT’s reaccreditation efforts and played a vital role in OLT’s educational projects.

David will be running the day-to-day operations while OLT conducts a national search for an executive director. He can be contacted at david@otsegolandtrust.org.

Pleased to meet you...



Mikal Sky-Shrewsberry Office Manager

Mikal Sky-Shrewsberry (pronounced Michael), our new Office Manager, is also tackling special projects.

Mikal has a long-standing appreciation for the value of protecting natural resources, spaces, wildlife and rural ways of life. She worked on cattle farms, studied ecology as an undergraduate, and pursued graduate degrees in the fields of museums and exhibit development. Mikal is particularly proud of serving on the Cooperstown School Board. She is very excited to come full circle and work at the Land Trust.



Anne Wilfer Public Lands Manager

Anne Wilfer has worked at Brookwood Gardens for the past two summers, focused on garden maintenance and preparation of a master plan.

Anne’s background in horticulture, landscape architecture, historic preservation and work with environmental groups, makes her well suited for oversight of maintenance and monitoring of OLT’s unique public properties. Drawing from her design and creative problem-solving skills, Anne will look for ways to make all the properties more accessible, safe and engaging to the greater community.



EXPLORE WITH US ONLINE

Otsego Land Trust launches new website

The Otsego Land Trust announces the launch of its new website at otsego-land-trust.org, designed to better serve the public while inspiring appreciation for the importance of land and natural resource conservation at a time of increasing climate uncertainty.

"OLT's mission is now more vital than ever," says Interim Executive Director David Diaz. "Our public access properties provide welcome open space, fresh air, and connections with nature..."

The new website will show you how to make use of our lands to easily and safely hike, kayak, bird-watch or just enjoy nature. Use it to keep yourself updated on our news and events, in-person or virtually.

Learn about *conservation easements* and *protecting land*. See what we're doing to save *local farms and wetlands*. Get to know our *Staff* and *Board*. We welcome you as a volunteer and to become part of an ever-growing community.

Support our work with a gift and *DONATE*. Your gift of service and support make it possible for Otsego



Land Trust to fulfill its mission: to conserve our natural heritage of woodlands, farmlands, and waters that sustain rural communities, promote public health, support wildlife diversity, and inspire the human spirit.

It's all here at otsego-land-trust.org.

2021 ANNUALS FOR BROOKWOOD POINT GARDENS

See what's blooming this year

Annuals occupy a distinctive position in the earliest annals of American horticultural history for these reasons:

- Seeds were easy to produce and transport.
- Flowers effectively fulfilled a demand for ornamentation in early landscapes.

In an effort to provide some longer-lasting visual interest for the historic gardens at Brookwood Point, annuals will be planted again this year. The intent of these plantings is to strategically supplement the existing perennial gardens, by filling in areas that are sparse or by placing them next to established plants that have a brief bloom time.

The annuals will also be planted in some of the containers that provide visual interest to areas that may not have any plantings at all. Examples of these spaces include the staircase landings and the seating area with tables and chairs next to the lake.

Visit otsego-land-trust.org to see the list of annuals >>





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 by David Diaz.

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Call us at 607-547-2366.

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

GIVE BACK TO THE LAND...

Be a Land Protection Hero!

Support Otsego Land Trust's work by donating today.
Donations in honor of a friend or family member make great birthday and holiday gifts, too!

Use the envelope inside this newsletter to send your gift of support, or visit otsegolandtrust.org.

OLT launches a national search for new Executive Director

OLT is excited to have selected EOS Transition Partners to recruit our next leader. Located in the northeast, EOS has conducted successful searches in the fields of environmental and historical conservation, education, and community development.

OLT is looking forward to continuing its steady growth as a regional land conservation leader.

Look for more information as our search unfolds at otsegolandtrust.org and eostransitions.com. Any potential referrals or candidates are welcome and can be emailed to John Tarvin at jtarvin@eostransitions.com.

