

field, forest & fen



Connecting People with the Land



C. Tedesco

Gibson Family's vision for the future.

Teamwork Secures Headwaters Farm

Rose Gibson fulfilled her family's dream recently by working with several partners to protect her 191-acre farm at the headwaters of Otsego Lake. The farm is located along the northern end of Shadow Brook in Herkimer County within the headwaters of Otsego Lake. Her son, Bill Gibson, led the effort by working with Otsego Land Trust who purchased the development rights on the farm with assistance from The Nature Conservancy.

This farm falls within the Route 20 Scenic Byway, which runs through a priority conservation area for grassland birds, as identified in the New York State Open Space Plan. With this project closed, Otsego Land Trust and our landowner partners have secured over 1,100 acres within the Otsego Lake watershed (after the Cook merger is approved). *continued on page 7*

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CONSERVATION SPOTLIGHT Brookwood Merger Engages Community

Headlines in local newspapers announced the pending merger of The Cook Foundation and Otsego Land Trust and the news continues to renew excitement about Brookwood Point throughout the community." Otsego Land Trust is on the cutting edge with this kind of merger—something we may be seeing more of between staffed organizations and all-volunteer groups across the region" noted Kevin Case,

Northeast Director of the Land Trust Alliance.

Under the terms of the merger agreement, The Cook Foundation will transfer all of its assets, including the 22-acre Brookwood property, to the Land Trust. According to The Cook Foundation president, Robert Poulson, "Otsego Land Trust has a professional staff and is in the business of conserving land throughout the Otsego region. We are pleased that they are willing to assume responsibility for this very important property." *continued on page 3*



Belted Galloway



Otsego Land Trust protects the distinctive rural character of the Otsego County area by securing lands and waters of significant scenic, historic, and ecological value, including forests and farmlands.

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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.



Volunteer photographer, Bruce Johnson

FIELD NOTES

Inspiring People

The field of conservation has been called a “crisis discipline” and practitioners tend to be innovative, resourceful and collaborative. As a matter of practice, Otsego Land Trust works with partners to extend our limited resources, solve problems and get the job done. Over the past several months, we are fortunate that so many inspiring people have joined our network of friends. Board and staff are grateful to all the people who worked behind the scenes to help us protect land, including...

- Friends at The Nature Conservancy who partnered with us for the first time to protect biologically diverse wetlands;
- Rob Besanceney, retired real estate attorney from Rochester, who volunteers his legal counsel on many of our conservation projects; and
- Pro-bono attorneys from Proskauer and the Lawyers Alliance in New York City who facilitated the recently announced merger.

Because of our long-term conservation obligations, we are beginning to be deliberate about involving people of all ages in our work, so that together we can instill and pass along a stewardship ethic to succeeding generations. We are especially grateful to the many people who enable us to get out,

connect, and reconnect people to the land, including...

- The many landowners that extend hospitality by opening lands they've protected for hikes and the volunteer naturalists and local historians that interpret them;
- Three recent college graduates, who cut trail along the Green Mile along the Susquehanna River;
- Scott Wells, from the Department of Environmental Conservation, who is working hard to line up labor and resources to develop public access at Compton Bridge; and
- The 17 children, the farmers, and other volunteers who teamed up with us to distribute 1,000 trees and win first place in the Springfield Independence Day Parade!

As we seek to better communicate the breadth and depth of the conservation efforts you make possible, we are grateful to the many people who are lending their creative talent, such as

- The volunteer photographers who capture the sense of place of the lands you are helping us conserve along with the enthusiasm of those involved;
- The pro-bono design team that developed our new recently launched website—www.otsego-land-trust.org; and
- The volunteers that help us fold, stamp, and seal letters.

The very talented and diverse array of people involved in our conservation efforts reflects that of the community. Your thought, generosity, and goodwill truly inspire. Thank you for opening your hearts and getting involved in protecting treasured lands and waters through-out the Upper Susquehanna Basin.

Peter Hujik
Executive Director



C. Tedesco

Lake view from Brookwood Point

Brookwood continued from page 1

Otsego Land Trust Chairman, Harry Levine, said that this merger is an important step for both Otsego Land

“Otsego Land Trust is on the cutting edge with this kind of merger—something we may be seeing more of between staffed organizations and all-volunteer groups across the region”

— KEVIN CASE
LAND TRUST ALLIANCE

Trust and The Cook Foundation as they cooperate to protect a very valuable lakefront property. Mr. Levine said, “Assuming the merger is approved by the Attorney General and the court, we will establish a clear set of objectives for the property, a budget to meet these objectives, and a sustainable business model. Any such model will

be dependent upon the public’s ability to provide both financial support and volunteer time.”

“We will be asking for public input in looking at the potential for the property,” Mr. Levine said. Land Trust board member, Francis Nolan, will be chairing a committee to address the opportunities and obligations of the property. This committee will include members of the public and will be charged with advising the Land Trust board about Brookwood. ■

Brookwood Committee

- Francis Nolan, Chair
- Martha Frey, Co-chair
- Matt Albright
- John Davis
- Meg Kiernan
- Amanda Mahoney
- Wayne Mellor
- Bill Oliver
- Karen Sullivan
- Lucy Townsend
- Doug Willies

BOARD & STAFF NEWS

Chesapeake Bay Initiative

Officials from the Chesapeake Bay Program teamed up with Otsego Land Trust to make a presentation about the benefits of conservation planning at the National Land Conservation Conference in Hartford, Connecticut in October. ■

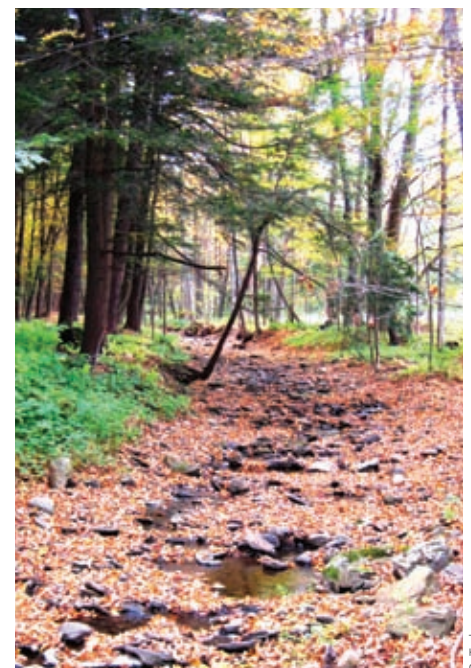
Board Meets Challenge

Otsego Land Trust board recently received special recognition for 100% participation in the Land Trust Alliance, a national non-profit organization that sets professional standards and provides technical assistance for the land trust community. ■

Fire Draws Attention

Peter Hujik recently received a partnership award from the California Department of Forestry & Fire Protection for his role in establishing a fire management program in collaboration with a ranching community in northern California during his extensive tenure with The Nature Conservancy. ■

Read more at www.otsegostrandtrust.org



C. Tedesco

Brookwood



Bruce Johnson Photography, Cooperstown



“Thanks for the trees—what a great tradition!”

— SPRINGFIELD PARADE BYSTANDER



Bruce Johnson Photography, Cooperstown



Bruce Johnson Photography, Cooperstown



Bruce Johnson Photography, Cooperstown



“The egg-toss was my favorite. I had lots of fun!”

— EZRA ANDRES
AGE 5

Children Earn Blue Ribbon!

Thanks to the efforts of 17 children that handed out 1,000 tree seedlings, Otsego Land Trust took top honors in the float division with our entry “United We Stand, Protecting the Land” in the annual Independence Day Parade in Springfield. Over 30 volunteers helped design the float, package evergreen seedlings, and hand them out at this ever popular event. Go team!

Winter in July

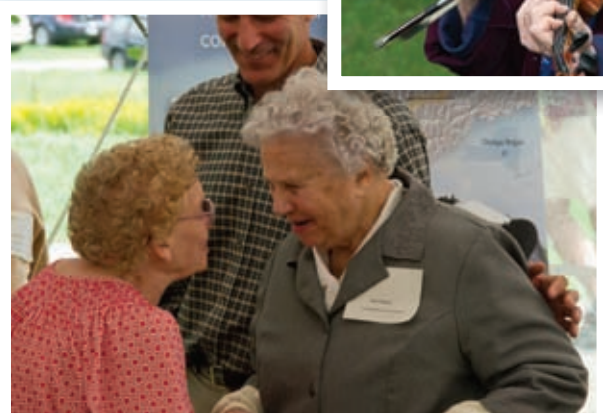
Susan Burdsall, who protected her portion of Mount Otsego, graciously hosted a joint Otsego Land Trust/ Adirondack Mountain Club walk on July 12. Barbara Mulhern shared her experiences and photographs of this historic ski slope with the group.



Bruce Johnson Photography, Cooperstown

“The awards brought tears to my eyes. Conservation is all about the people, what great people you honored.”

**— KATE JOHNSON
TOWN OF OTSEGO**



Bruce Johnson Photography, Cooperstown



“Our family is excited to go canoeing at the new Compton Bridge site next year. We don’t have many places to go canoeing, so this is great news.”

**— GEORGE MITCHELL
TOWN OF HARTWICK**



Currie Marr



Currie Marr

Celebrating another Season

A record crowd of over 200 people enjoyed live music, farm walks, a delicious picnic, conservation awards and updates, and outdoor games for children at Thayer Farm on Labor Day weekend. Lucy’s apple-pear pies and local ice cream from the Tunnicliff Creamery were a big hit. A good time was had by all!

Hike in Phoenix Mills

After enjoying a trip here this spring, Mary Dunkle collaborated with Otsego Land Trust to host a second hike along the Susquehanna River “Green Mile” on September 21 for the Adirondack Mountain Club. Ron Jennings, local historian, and Joe Homburger, naturalist, led another engaging walk and talk at the confluence of Oaks Creek in the Phoenix Mills area. Thank you Mary, Ron and Joe for sharing your enthusiasm!



Bill Gibson with his mother Rose

PEOPLE BEHIND THE SCENES Blazing a New Trail

The 2010 Trailblazer Award was presented to Bill Gibson this year at our Annual Picnic. Bill received the award for advancing farmland protection efforts in the Otsego Lake watershed. Additionally, Bill helped us secure the 192-acre farm owned by his mother in southern Herkimer County.

This conservation project resulted in a number of breakthroughs for Otsego Land Trust. This pioneering effort entailed purchasing the development rights of the farm, the first such purchase for Otsego Land Trust along the Route 20 Scenic Byway. The project also enabled Otsego Land Trust to partner with The Nature Conservancy for the first time to protect land.

Bill has long supported conservation in the Otsego region both as a partner with Otsego Land Trust and as Executive Director with the Farm Service Agency for over 30 years. Earlier this year, Bill worked with another landowner in collaboration with Otsego Land Trust to improve water quality on a trout-spawning stream that flows through a protected farm in the Upper Otego Creek watershed.

We can't thank Bill enough for advancing local farmland conservation efforts with these breakthroughs. The entire community will benefit for years to come from Bill's foresight, innovative spirit, and commitment to farming.

OUR STORY On-the-ground Conservation

Eric and Marina Bravin walk their conservation talk, and they are involved with Otsego Land Trust on several levels. Because they both work at Bassett, they have enjoyed the views of the growing network of conservation lands along Red Creek on the hills east of Cooperstown, which is visible from the clinic and the hospital, and now exceeds 1,000 acres.

"We know that our gift contributes to tangible on-the-ground results."

— DR. ERIC BRAVIN

Eric bikes to work the majority of the time, even throughout the winter months; Marina walks almost daily with all three of their daughters, all under the age of three. With the joy they take in being outside, they appreciate the protected lands which can be explored through an expanding schedule of outings. The Bravins also rely on local food as much as possible, and in fact, they raise a couple of pigs. Because they value local meat and produce, they are committed to helping protect area farms.

And despite their growing family—or perhaps because of it—the Bravins support our conservation efforts with a generous financial contribution every year. In fact, a couple of years ago, Eric mentioned "The check we send to Otsego Land Trust is our favorite one, because we know that it contributes to tangible, on-the-ground results." What would we do without people, like the Bravins, with their abiding passion for the land and thorough commitment to protecting the places we all cherish? ■

Wish List

| | |
|-------------------------------|---------|
| Fireproof filing cabinet | \$2,000 |
| Tree Seedlings (1,000) | \$750 |
| Operations computer | \$1,000 |
| Indesign graphics software | \$700 |
| Digital SLR Camera | \$750 |
| Stand for Xerox Phaser Copier | \$500 |
| GPS Unit | \$400 |
| Signs for Events (3) | \$125 |

Contributing any items above will further local conservation efforts and connect more people with the land. Please contact us for details and specifications.

Teamwork continued from page 1

Partners Collaborate

A couple of years ago, the Gibson family worked with the Natural Resource Conservation Service to protect some of the wetlands on the property. By partnering with Otsego Land Trust, the Gibsons were able to conserve the entire farm—including additional wetlands and the fields and forest surrounding them.

Mark King, Director of Land Protection at The Nature Conservancy, remarked, “We are very pleased that the Gibson family was able to preserve their family farm and create a family legacy of conservation. The work and vision of the Otsego Land Trust was critical to this success.”



Rose and Bud on the farm in 1977

Family Memories Preserved

The Gibson family has a special attachment to this property. Rose and her late husband Bud began searching for a farm to buy in the Otsego region on their honeymoon in 1958, and one of Rose’s sons began his married life on land his parents purchased. Though Rose now lives in an assisted care facility, the family continues to celebrate special occasions there. And the place where many family memories were formed is now preserved for the future. ■

“We are very pleased that the Gibson family was able to preserve their family farm and create a family legacy of conservation.”

— MARK KING
THE NATURE CONSERVANCY

THE NATURE OF CONSERVATION Cedar Swamps

Cedar swamps rank high among the unique ecological features of northern Otsego County and southern Herkimer County; estimates indicate that over 75% have been eliminated around the world. Named for the northern white cedar (*Thuja occidentalis*), cedar swamps are often fed by springs or enriched by cold, mineral-rich groundwater seepage that results in a stable water table and continually saturated soils, often abundant in calcium.

Some of the rarest plants in the Otsego region have been found in cedar swamps, including ram’s head lady’s-slipper, spreading globeflower, and pink wintergreen, to name a few. In fact, the globeflower hasn’t been locally recorded for over 80 years and may now be extirpated. Many of

these rare plants were collected by some of New York’s earliest and foremost botanists who routinely stopped in the swamps as they travelled Route 20, now a designated scenic byway.

White cedars usually associate with other conifers and hardwoods, including red maple, hemlock, balsam fir, tamarack, yellow birch, black ash, white pine, and black spruce. Their sparse shrub layer is characterized by species such as dwarf raspberry, red osier dogwood, swamp fly honey-suckle, and high-bush blueberry.

Hummocks formed by decaying, downed trees characterize these wetlands. On and in between the hummocks grow gold thread, star-flower, bunchberry, Canada mayflower, golden ragwort, and several types of sedges. Some typical ferns include marsh fern, oak fern, cinnamon fern and royal fern.

Wildlife such as deer, rabbits, and birds take refuge in cedar swamps. Typical birds associated with cedar swamps include northern water thrush, winter wren, white-throated sparrow, and golden-crowned kinglet. Birds of special conservation significance include least bittern and northern harrier.

Cedar swamps face several threats and have been drained and filled extensively. The naturally decay-resistant cedar makes valuable timber, and often cedars are harvested in an unsustainable manner. Those swamps that remain often are degraded by dams, pollution, and the introduction of invasive species. ■



Cedar swamp conservation in Herkimer County



Post Office Box 173
Cooperstown, New York 13326

Tree Huggers Unite!

Photography Contest

The "People and Trees" photo contest continues through October 31, 2010. This gives you plenty of opportunities to take those wonderful fall foliage shots! Categories include professional, amateur, and youth, with prizes for the selected favorites. Enjoy the great outdoors- and keep your camera handy!



Sugar Maple



Group hug

Tom Sato

Champion Tree Search

Reports of the largest trees in the Otsego Region continue to arrive daily, so the Champion Tree Search for the Otsego region will be extended until December 31. Over 20 species of large trees have been reported so far, and the largest are probably yet to be claimed. The 2010 champions will be listed at year's end and all

participants will be recognized. Help us recognize the grandest trees in the upper Susquehanna!

Contest rules can be found on our website www.otsegoLandtrust.org or call (607) 547-2366 or email info@otsegoLandtrust.org for further information. ■