

field, forest & fen



Connecting People with the Land



Birding on Oaks Creek

Connecting Land and People along Oaks Creek

Thanks to the collaboration of several landowners and a few key partner organizations, a Blueway Trail along Oaks Creek is rapidly becoming a reality as new conservation lands join in to form an extensive network of protected properties along this major Susquehanna River tributary. Beginning with a recently completed public access on Greenough Road, the Blueway Trail will connect a growing number of sites along Oaks Creek that are open to the community for fishing, birdwatching, hiking, canoeing and kayaking.

Oaks Creek meanders south from Canadarago Lake through the center of the Otsego County and the Upper Susquehanna Basin to the Susquehanna River near Phoenix Mills. The flows of Oaks Creek, which often exceed those of the upper Susquehanna River, support an expansive and biologically diverse wetlands complex at the base of Panther Mountain. *continued on page 7*

CONSERVATION SPOTLIGHT

Extensive Ridgeline Forest Protected

A dramatic forested ridgeline overlooking the Susquehanna River near Portlandville was recently conserved thanks to the foresight—and retirement plan—of Hank and Beth Adams. Hank and Beth have long been best friends. Meeting in high school, Beth ended up working to help Hank finish his engineering degree in upstate New York. While Hank pursued his engineering career, they married and raised four daughters. In recent years, as their nest emptied and they thought about retirement, the Adams sought a place where it would be “nice to slow down” and searched for property back in beautiful upstate New York where they shared fond memories. *continued on page 3*

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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.



Panoramic vista from Panther Mountain

C. Tedesco

FIELD NOTES

A Place for You

You're driving along with your eyes on the road and your mind on the details of your day. Suddenly, as you turn a particular corner or crest that hill, the view causes you to catch your breath and forget everything. The Otsego region has long cast her spell on all who visit. Many have shared with me their stories about how they relocated here because it felt like home.

For this reason, sixty some individuals and families have partnered with Otsego Land Trust to protect the places they call home, places like working farms and forests, freshwater streams and other important natural areas. Now we are beginning to acquire places for you, places along Oaks Creek and the Susquehanna River, thanks to growing support within the community. In fact, many are getting involved in helping us protect places for you, including—

- A sister and brother, who are donating a forested tract on Panther Mountain to establish a working forest preserve with panoramic vistas of Canadarago Lake;

- An anonymous supporter, who provided us with funding to purchase an Oaks Creek site south of Schuyler Lake, where brilliant red cardinal flowers thrive;
- The Birches, who developed access across their land to Oaks Creek for fishing; and
- The many people who are helping us conserve Brookwood Point and its commanding north-south views of Otsego Lake.

And a growing number of people are providing us with leads on opportunities to conserve places they treasure, and many more are getting involved in our community-based conservation efforts. We are grateful to our many supporters and the thoughtful ways that so many of you shape our conservation efforts. If you are not already active, get involved and find your place. We have a place waiting for you.

Peter Hujik
Executive Director

Ridgeline continued from page 1

Hank and Beth discovered their paradise near Portlandville, in the Town of Milford. Their 259-acre property spans a scenic ridgeline that overlooks the Susquehanna Valley and includes over 8,000 feet frontage along Spring Brook, a designated trout spawning stream and tributary to the Susquehanna River. Their expansive property is dominated by for-



Beth and Hank Adams

C. Tedesco

est and includes an uncommon chestnut-oak community. Continuing the momentum developed by Phoenix Mills landowners, who protected a green mile in the past few years, the Adams conservation efforts will hopefully encourage neighboring landowners in the Portlandville area to take similar action and secure more of the forested ridgelines along the Susquehanna River, long a conservation priority for Otsego Land Trust.

One of their goals for retirement was to protect this property for future generations, so the Adams placed a conservation easement on the property in partnership with Otsego Land Trust. The conservation easement restricts this scenic ridgeline and working forest from all future development—residential, commercial and industrial. Future plans include a retirement home and guest house, Christmas trees and apple orchards, beekeeping and bluebird houses, a barn for animal rescue, a few trails in the woods, and sustainable timber management. We are glad to

welcome Hank and Beth to our community and applaud them for their foresight in protecting an important Susquehanna River ridgeline. ■

Bicentennial Farm Protected in Cherry Valley

The 120-acre Scramlin farm has been in the family for over 200 years, and Robert Scramlin wanted to make sure that it would be protected for future generations by securing a conservation easement with Otsego Land Trust.

Located just south of Cherry Valley, this property lies in the Lindesay Patent Rural Historic District and includes active farmland, a working forest, and an expansive wetland complex. Also protected are a floodplain and stream-side buffer along Cherry Valley Creek, a designated trout stream.

The original settler of the farm was Scramlin's ancestor James Willson, a Scotsman, who came to Cherry Valley in 1738 as one of the surveyors of the Lindesay Patent. The present house was built in the 1790's after the family returned following the Cherry Valley massacre in 1778. In the late 1800's and early 1900's, hops were the primary crop.

Later the Scramlins became dairy farmers and Robert Scramlin was awarded a national Bicentennial Farm Award for continuous family ownership in 1990 by the USDA Farm Service Agency, one of only three farms so honored in the county. Today corn and hay are still grown on the property by a neighboring farmer.

After signing a gas lease in 2006, Bob Scramlin became concerned as information became available about the potential risks to the water, soil and air. He wanted to make sure this couldn't happen to the farm that had been in his family for generations and with persistence, he was able to cancel his lease.

The Scramlin property is within 5 miles of 4 other properties protected by conservation easements for a total of over 600 acres near Cherry Valley. Peter Hujik, Otsego Land Trust's Executive Director, stated "Bob translated his connection with the past into a vision for the future. Working with Bob is an honor. His forefathers would be proud of his commitment to the land and to the community." ■



C. Tedesco

Farming Legacy



TAKE A HIKE



Auchinbreck Divide

On Sunday, May 22nd, there was a large turn-out for a hike at Auchinbreck, a Cherry Valley landmark. Geologist Dr. Les Hasbargen and Auchinbreck owner Kent Barwick led the walk which wound across the 218-acre farm and ancestral home of the Campbell family, early settlers of Cherry Valley. Views of the Adirondacks to the north and the Susquehanna Valley to the south could be seen from the hilltop where the Mohawk and Susquehanna River watersheds divide. Participants enjoyed a first-hand look at spring wildflowers, unique rock formations, freshwater springs, an engaging Cherry Valley history lesson, and, after-

wards, refreshments on the veranda. Thank you, Les and Kent, for a thoroughly wonderful afternoon.

Leatherstocking Falls and Brookwood

On May 24th, Otsego Land Trust and the Adirondack Mountain Club, Susquehanna Chapter, partnered to visit two Otsego Lake area landmarks—the historic Leatherstocking Falls on Leatherstocking Farm, and the 22-acre Brookwood Point on Otsego Lake. At Leatherstocking Falls, owner Stephen Gotwald greeted hikers and relayed some of the rich history of the farm and falls. At Brookwood Point, C. R. Jones gave a brief history of the site, allowing participants to tour the historic structures and enjoy lunch on the grounds. Many thanks to supporter Mary Dunkle for coordinating this popular outing. ■

Top left: Hike to Leatherstocking Falls. Photo: © Bruce Johnson Photography

Top right: Bubbling spring at Auchinbreck. Photo: C. Tedesco

Center left: Kent Barwick and view to Cherry Valley. Photo: C. Tedesco

Bottom right: Leatherstocking Falls. Photo: © Bruce Johnson Photography

“Really had a nice experience yesterday on the hike at Auchinbreck that was so rich with history—both geologic and cultural.”

— MAUREEN MURRAY

Photos Page 5:

Left: Huge white ash at Whig Corners. Photo: C. Tedesco

Center: 2010 Photo Contest Winner—Amateur Division. Photo: Laura Kilty

Right: Joe Peterson and big elm in Fly Creek. Photo: J. Peterson



GET (and bring a camera and measuring tape!) OUTDOORS

Champion Trees— The Search Goes On!

The Champion Tree Search for the Otsego Region will continue in 2011. "We received reports from all over Otsego and neighboring counties", according to Land Trust Operations Coordinator, Connie Tedesco, who added "but there are still many more magnificent trees out there".

A list of the 2010 Champion Trees can be found on the Otsego Land Trust website, www.otsegoLandtrust.org. If you are interested in submitting a Champion Tree, please check out the website for instructions and forms. For additional information and assistance, contact connie@otsegoLandtrust.org or at (607) 547-2366. ■

"On the Farm, In the Garden" Photography Contest

Otsego Land Trust and the Cooperstown Farmers' Market are jointly sponsoring a photo contest for 2011 entitled "On the Farm, In the Garden". The contest is open to all residents within a 50-mile radius of Cooperstown. Photos should depict scenes from the many farms and gardens in the region, including livestock and other farm animals, crops, flowers and vegetables, and the farmers and gardeners themselves as they plant, tend, and harvest nature's bounty.

This is the second year that Otsego Land Trust has sponsored a photo contest, following the popular "People and Trees" photo contest in 2010. To receive contest guidelines and entry forms, check out www.otsegoLandtrust.org or call (607) 547-2366. ■

"The lake was still warm, and when I saw these boys enjoying the rope swing, I knew I had to try to capture the moment."

— LAURA KILTY
2010 PHOTO CONTEST WINNER
(AMATEUR DIVISION)

Many Hands Make Light Work

As Otsego Land Trust acquires new properties for public access, we need a cadre of volunteers for making and maintaining trails, putting up signs gardening, and conducting other stewardship activities. Are you willing to lend a hand? Please contact us at (607) 547-2366 or connie@otsegoLandtrust.org to volunteer as a land steward. ■



BOARD AND STAFF NEWS

Spring Migrations

Earle Peterson recently received a letter of special recognition from Land Trust Alliance President, Rand Wentworth, as Earle stepped down from



Earle Peterson

C. Tedesco

serving on our board. The letter, presented by Harry Levine, expressed gratitude for Earle’s many years of leadership to the land trust community on the local, state and national levels. We are indebted to Earle for his 19 years of service on our board, including 7 years as President. While staying involved with our conservation efforts as Director Emeritus, Earle is sharing more time with his family and on their conservation easement protected lands in the Town of Burlington.

Best wishes in retirement to **Keith Additon**, our long time stewardship monitor. Keith was invaluable as our contact with conservation easement



Keith Additon

C. Tedesco

owners as he visited dozens of sites each year. As our first representative dedicated to stewarding conservation easements, Keith played an important role in launching our stewardship program. Keith plans to spend more time doing the things he loves—pursuing outdoor adventures and traveling with his wife, Laura. Thanks, Keith; we already miss you!

Joseph Homburger, who served as Field Representative for the past several years, recently retired (again). He migrated from the staff team to the Board of Directors, where he now serves as a director and chairman of the newly formed Oaks Creek Blueway Advisory Committee. Joe contin-



Joe Homburger

C. Tedesco

ues to generously volunteer his assistance with stewardship issues and has been working with his former employer, the New York Department of Environmental Conservation, in developing public access sites along Oaks Creek from Canadarago Lake to the Susquehanna River.

Emerging Leaders

Executive Director **Peter Hujik** and Otsego Land Trust were recently invited by the Land Trust Alliance to participate in a national leadership initiative with 20 executive directors and

lands trusts from around the country. Renee Kivikko, Director for Education for the Land Trust Alliance, explained, “We selected a group of land trust participants with high potential for high conservation impact for the two-year initiative.” The leadership initiative entails in-person workshops, on-line discussion groups, and mini-grants to strengthen participating organizations and community-based conservation efforts.

National Accreditation

In preparation for national land trust accreditation, Governance Committee Chairman **Paul Kidder**, along with Operations Coordinator **Connie Tedesco**, attended a day-long workshop on May 13 that explained accreditation application guidelines at the Ashokan Center in Olivebridge, New York. The workshop sponsor, the Land Trust Alliance, launched a national accreditation program for land trusts in 2006. An independent subsidiary, the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, manages the program that recognizes land trusts with strong ethical practices, a commitment to sound transactions and the long-term stewardship of land and conservation easements. Midway through the rigorous preparation process, Otsego Land Trust plans to apply for accreditation in late 2012. ■



Earl takes off

C. Tedesco

Connecting Land continued from page 1

Beginning at the boat launch on the west side of Canadarago Lake, canoers and kayakers now have three locations to explore along the approximately 15-mile passage to the Susquehanna River. The first stop is just below the hamlet of Schuyler Lake, where Otsego Land Trust purchased a 29-acre parcel and is developing a wetlands preserve that features a half mile of creek frontage and floodplain forest rich with cardinal flower and an interesting array of birds. A creek-side trail is being mapped out for hikers and birders.

Further downstream, paddlers will pass two other privately owned conservation easements that total 83 acres near Oakville and protect nearly a half mile of additional shoreline. Next stop south is along Greenough Road where Bob and Marcy Birch recently protected 17 acres on Oaks



Oaks Creek Blueway Trail



A great catch

C. Tedesco

Creek with a conservation easement with Otsego Land Trust, which collaborated with The Nature Conservancy and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). The Birch family also entered in a DEC cooperative agreement to develop and provide fishing access at the site.

The final stop is at the confluence, where Oaks Creek joins the Susquehanna River. Otsego Land Trust owns three acres at Compton Bridge and is collaborating with DEC to develop the site for public fishing and canoe and kayak access. The Land Trust is also developing a management plan for the site that includes a hiking trail. Two other privately owned conservation easements adjacent to the Compton Bridge site form a "green mile" along the confluence of the Susquehanna and Oaks Creek.

Interested in helping out with the Blueway Trail? Here's how: volunteer for workdays at our Blueway preserves; partner with us to conserve your Oaks Creek and Susquehanna River properties; or provide financial support to Otsego Land Trust and our efforts to provide water access. ■



Ready to paddle

C. Tedesco

PEOPLE BEHIND THE SCENES
Alex & Ika Restaurant

Alex Webster, executive chef and co-owner of Alex & Ika Restaurant in Cooperstown, believes that local food is critical to his family and the community. He regularly shops at the Cooperstown Farmers Market. "Fresh, locally grown food is one of the many things that make our community such a great place to live" stated Alex. Fresh produce is no doubt one of the reasons that Alex & Ika Restaurant has received rave reviews from people, like Rachel Ray, who appreciate fine cuisine.

"It makes me very happy to do something to give back to the community"

— ALEX WEBSTER
ALEX & IKA RESTAURANT

Last winter, Alex & Ika's launched "Well Spent Wednesdays" where a portion of beverage proceeds benefit local charities. Otsego Land Trust was one of the first organizations to benefit from their generosity. "Alex & Ika's is always a great meeting place, and their initiative provides an added incentive for people to gather with friends, and raise a glass to their favorite cause," remarked Peter Hujik, Executive Director.

Proceeds from "Well Spent Wednesdays" in February went to support Brookwood Point, a prominent 22-acre estate and garden on Otsego Lake. We are grateful to Alex and Ika for their sizeable contribution that, along with other donations, has enabled us to raise over \$28,000 in private funding to launch this exciting new project. ■



Post Office Box 173
Cooperstown, New York 13326

UPCOMING EVENTS

- | | |
|-------------|------------------------------|
| July 10 | Middlefield Days |
| August 4 | Brookwood Public Meeting |
| September 3 | Annual Picnic |
| October 4 | Hike in partnership with ADK |



Cardinal Flower



Oaks Creek floodplain

C. Tedesco

THE NATURE OF CONSERVATION Cardinal Flower

One of our favorite native wildflowers is the Cardinal Flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*), with bright red spikes, sometimes a meter tall, that brighten the shores of Canadarago Lake and Oaks Creek in mid to late summer. The common name alludes to the bright red robes worn by

Roman Catholic cardinals. Since most insects find it difficult to navigate the long tubular flowers, the primary pollinators of Cardinal Flower are Ruby-Throated Hummingbirds and various Swallowtail butterflies. Habitats include lightly shaded floodplain forests, swampy meadows, and borders of lakes and streams. ■