

field, forest & fen



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

“It was a great pleasure working with OLT’s staff to conserve my property for future generations,” said Sondra. “I am comforted knowing that OLT will always be there into the future to make sure that this land along Ouleout Creek will be stewarded with care for all the wildlife, like the trout, bear and otter, I am so lucky to enjoy this special place with.”

CONSERVATION SPIRIT

From Cherry Valley to Franklin

Two recently completed projects cap off OLT’s second most successful year of land conservation in its 28 year history.

OLT recently completed the second largest project in its history, conserving the 533 acre Graves Farm property in Cherry Valley. The project was second only to one of OLT’s very first conservation easements, over 20 years ago. Graves Farm encompasses over 14,000 feet of frontage along an unnamed tributary to the Cherry Valley Creek as well as forest and agricultural land, which are in active production with a local farm family.

The project also conserved the open space, wildlife habitat, numerous wetlands and clean water it

provides to the Cherry Valley Creek. Hundreds of acres of forest on the property are providing large migratory corridors and habitat for local wildlife.

OLT also worked with local artist and landowner Sondra Freckelton to protect her 108 acre property in Franklin in Delaware County. Sondra’s land is

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Sondra’s magical place along the Ouleout Creek.



CONSERVATION SPOTLIGHT

OLT Achieves National Accreditation

We are so excited to announce we have received accreditation from the Land Trust Alliance—a mark of distinction in land conservation. The Land Trust Accreditation Commission, an independent program of the Alliance, awarded OLT accredi-

tation after a comprehensive review process, signifying its confidence that OLT lands will be protected forever.

Accredited land trusts across the country have permanently conserved more than 15 million acres of farms, forests and natural areas that are vital to healthy, vibrant communities.

Sara Scheeren, Outreach and Education coordinator, who managed the accreditation process for OLT said, “The accreditation process brought the Staff and Board of Directors even closer together. We worked as an efficient team, and with help and support from the Land Trust Accreditation Commission

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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 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.

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Greetings From Behind the Desk

Hello! In the spirit of the Executive Directors before me I will use this space to extend my greeting to the OLT family. I come to OLT after a seven year stint as ED of the Woodstock Land Conservancy. I've also worked in corporate social responsibility, community development for the US government, and as researcher and writer on sustainability issues. I'm married and have a teenage daughter.

I join OLT at an exciting time. The big news is that we are now accredited by the Land Trust Alliance, our national governing body. This means landowners interested in protecting their property can be assured that OLT operates with the highest standards of quality and professionalism. We are very pleased (and a bit proud!) about this distinction. I thank the Staff and my predecessors for their leadership and guidance in making this happen.

The other big news is that we passed the 10,000 acre milestone for land protected

late last year. With close to 1,600 acres protected in four counties, 2015 was our 2nd biggest year yet. And there's lots more to come. We anticipate protecting another 1,000 acres this year.

Of course, land conservation is not just about the numbers. We continue to reach out to you to get you outside and recreating on our 7 public conservation areas, fondly referred to collectively as the Blueway, because all the properties are on water or have a great view of water. We invite you to visit. We also have a number of exciting outings planned for the spring and summer (visit the website for details—OtsegoLandTrust.org.)

Come join us.



John Winter
Executive Director

Henry Cooper, Jr. & George Snell Memoriam

Otsego Land Trust lost two of its greatest champions this winter. George Snell and Henry Cooper were founders of the organization and set it on course both inspirationally and institutionally.

By day Henry Cooper, a descendant of James Fenimore Cooper, was a journalist best known for his books and chronicles in the *New Yorker Magazine* on man's exploration of space. After hours and on weekends Henry became deeply involved in warding off threats to the landscape he loved as head of Otsego 2000 and under his leadership there Otsego Land Trust was launched.

Henry stuck with the land trust as an active director from our first donated easement on Leatherstocking Farm in 1990 to this year when the wonderful news that there are now over 10,000 acres protected in perpetuity, even protecting his family's own properties in Middlefield.

George Snell had helped the land trust from the very beginning. An accomplished and much beloved New York lawyer, George had grown up in Herkimer County and before going off to war and eventually law school he had become steeped in the history and landscapes of the Mohawk Valley.

George had previously worked with the Vermont Land Trust, one of the foremost in the nation and set out to guide us in their successful footprints. Through his hard work, he raised the bar in organizational development for the land trust. He was instrumental in molding OLT into the professionally staffed conservation organization it is today and continued to be a true champion of the land trust's mission over the past 28 years.

We wouldn't be where we are today without Henry and George.

Conservation Spirit – continued from page 1

rich with diverse wildlife habitat and contains a managed forest that has been sustainably harvested over the years. The property has approximately 6,000 feet of frontage along the Ouleout



Sondra Freckelton and OLT's Ethan Rubenstein.

Creek, an important trout spawning stream. Sondra has spotted everything from black bears and their cubs to river otter traveling the Ouleout Creek corridor on her property.

A barn on the property was the site where Jack Beal, Sondra's late husband, painted perhaps his most famous work. He was commissioned by the U.S. Department of Labor to paint a series of four 12-by-12-foot murals for the department's new building in Washington, D.C., which were installed and dedicated on Labor Day 1976 as part of the national celebration of the American Revolution Bicentennial.

Ethan Rubenstein, OLT's Land Protection Project Manager, added, "Sondra's land is our second protected property along the Ouleout Creek, an important tributary to the Susquehanna and the source of drinking water of millions of people downstream. We hope to partner with other conservation minded landowners throughout our region who want to protect their land for future generations." ■



Conservation Spotlight – continued from page 1

we were able to successfully navigate the rigorous accreditation process."

OLT just completed its second most successful year in land conservation, protecting 1,600 acres in partnership with ten private land owners in Otsego, Delaware, Herkimer and Schoharie counties. The organization also reached the prestigious 10,000 acres conserved landmark in 2015 and is looking to protect another 1,000 acres this year. In addition, OLT continues to improve access to its Blueway conservation areas including Parslow Road, Fetterley Forest, and Brookwood Point and is in the midst of an exciting slate of free and fun educational programming .

"It is exciting to recognize OLT with this distinction," said Tammara Van Ryn, Executive Director of the Commission. "Together, accredited land trusts stand united behind strong national standards ensuring the places people love will be conserved forever."

OLT was among 37 land trusts across the United States to achieve accreditation or to have their five-year accreditation terms renewed in February. OLT joins the 342 land trusts nationally that demonstrate their commitment to professional excellence through accreditation, helping to maintain the public's trust in their work.

John Winter, OLT's Executive Director commented, "We are pleased that area landowners can now be even more

confident that their property will be permanently protected."

Each accredited land trusts meets extensive documentation requirements and undergoes a comprehensive review as part of its accreditation application. The process is rigorous and strengthens land trusts with standards, policies, and systems that help landowners and communities achieve their goals. ■

BAREFOOT AT BROOKWOOD

Scenic Byway Construction to Begin

We are pleased to announce that shovels will be breaking ground at Brookwood in the first half of this year to begin the Scenic Byways construction and will conclude before summer's end! As owners and stewards of this amazing and beautiful property, it is our job to take the best possible care of the land and to make sure the site is safely accessible to all those who seek to enjoy it. These site improvements will help to ensure that Brookwood will be a place to make memories long into the future.

Please keep in mind that while construction is active, the site will be closed to the public. Stay tuned for an announcement about the grand re-opening. For immediate updates please go to our website and sign up for the e-newsletter on our homepage. ■

Excelsior Conservation Corps students volunteering at Brookwood Point.



BACKYARD INCREDIBLE EDIBLES

ETHAN RUBENSTEIN – Land Protection Project Manager

Wild Leek Pesto

An upstate NY spring ritual: the harvest of wild leeks! Ramps (*Allium tricoccum*), or wild leeks, have a sharp flavor that is described as a combination of garlic and onions. Both the leaves and the bulbs of leeks can be eaten.

Leeks can be found in rich, moist soil high in organic matter and low in pH, which makes mountain hardwood forests a perfect habitat. They are usually ready to harvest by mid to late April and only last a month or so before wilting and disappearing.

RECIPE

Ingredients:

- 1 large bunch wild leeks (about 20)
- ½ cup pine nuts
- 2 cloves garlic
- 3 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- ¼ tsp. sea salt, or more to taste
- Juice of one lemon, zest about half
- 1/3 cup parmesan or pecorino cheese



Directions:

- 1) Separate the bulbs from the leaves of the wild leeks
- 2) Coarsely chop both the leaves and the bulbs
- 3) Sauté the bulbs and chopped garlic on medium heat with one tablespoon olive oil until the bulbs become slightly translucent
- 4) Add the leaves to the pan and continue to sauté until leaves are limp
- 5) Transfer to food processor and add pine nuts, cheese, sea salt, lemon juice, zest, and remaining olive oil; process together until slightly chunky or smooth depending on preference
- 6) Add more salt to taste.

Parslow Road Conservation Area Restoration Work Planned for 2016

MARCIE FOSTER – Stewardship Manager

Parslow Road Conservation Area, located at 127 Parslow Road, Town of Otsego, is a unique property with a range of interesting habitats. Thanks to the gift from an anonymous donor, OLT purchased the Parslow Road property in 2012 for the purpose of opening it for fishing, paddling, and hiking, while also protecting and enhancing its unique ecological features

The 86 acres encompass a highly mixed habitat, with approximately 2,700 feet of frontage on Oaks Creek, emergent marshes, beaver ponds, secondary-growth upland forest, and northern white cedar swamps.

In 2015, Patrick Raney, wetland biologist with the Upper Susquehanna Coalition (USC) mapped the ecological communities (See Map 1) on the property and prepared a Restoration Management Plan for Parslow Road to rehabilitate areas of the land that were negatively impacted by human use in the past and improve habitat by removing nuisance invasive species.

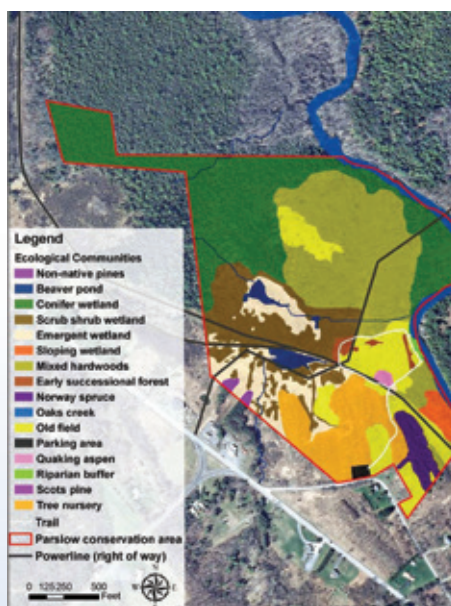
The restoration that will be carried out this year by USC will involve re-establishing two wetland areas that were

previously drained and filled as well as enhancing the meadow area by removing invasive species and planting warm-season grass plantings (See Map 2). OLT will also be eradicating a small patch of a non-native common reed (*Phragmites australis*).

In conjunction with the ecological rehab, OLT will also be coordinating a bird survey of the property, and will continue to partner with the Biological

Field Station and SUNY Cobleskill to collect data on the plants, animals, insects, fish, and many other types of wildlife on the property.

The restoration work will take place towards the end of the summer or early fall. Parslow Road will likely be closed during the brief construction, so please visit our website at OtsegoLandTrust.org for up-to-date information. ■



Map 1



Map 2

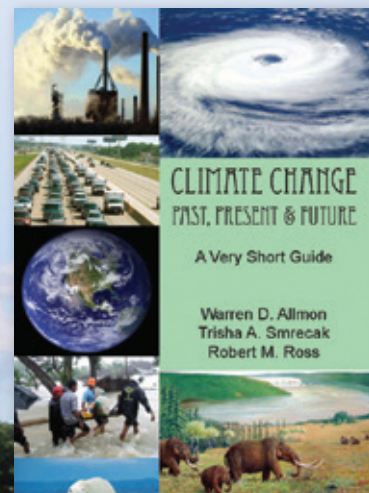
STAFF RECOMMENDED READING

AVERIE SHAUGHNESSY – Administrative Assistant

Climate Change — Past, Present, and Future: a Very Short Guide

AUTHORS: WARREN D. ALLMON; TRISHA A. SMRECAK, ROBERT M. ROSS

Climate change is one of the major environmental, economic, and social issues of the 21st century. Natural indicators show us that climate change is occurring: temperature changes, ice sheets melting, and biodiversity loss. Ultimately, a changing climate can be confusing to understand. This short guide is a fantastic handbook that addresses the major features of climate change, the future of climate change and what we can do as stewards of the Earth. The book tries to answer: Is the Earth’s climate changing: By how much? What are the causes of these changes and how will these changes affect human beings? ■



“Science tells us what we can do, not what we should do.”

FROM THE FIELD

We Want You in the Field

MARCIE FOSTER – Stewardship Manager

Otsego Land Trust (OLT) works with landowners and communities to protect our region’s healthy lands, clean waters, and rural culture and history now and for future generations.

OLT’s Blueway Conservation Areas are open to the public and provide a place for year-round recreation and educational opportunities. So how do we protect over 10,000 acres, maintain 7 Blueway Conservation Areas and conduct over 20 free events each year?

VOLUNTEERS!

Connect with us at info@otsegoLandtrust.org or call 607-547-2366 to learn more about how you can help us conserve this amazing region.



STEWARDSHIP

Blueway Bird Trail

Steward our bluebird and wood duck nesting boxes along the Blueway.

Blueway Trail Blazer

Join a group of your neighbors, friends, and other community members to do trail maintenance projects.



Adopt a Blueway Conservation Area

Call one of our Blueway properties yours! Walk the trails, pick up trash, check the kiosks and registration boxes, and light duty trail maintenance with hand tools.



Conservation Area Steward

Like adopting a Blueway site, but a little more involved. Walk the property boundaries once a year and heavier duty maintenance if necessary.

Brookwood Garden

Let’s get your fingers in the dirt or play around in a 100 year old garden right on Otsego Lake. Come dig, weed, prune, fertilize and water with us.

EVENT & EDUCATION

Native Evergreen Seedling Team

Every 4th of July we give out 1,500 native evergreen seedlings at the Springfield Fourth of July Parade. Help us get the seedlings ready for their new homes!

OLT Event Prep

We need a few more hands on deck to make our events and programming go smoothly. We are seeking help with site prep and set-up, parking cars, signing in people, setting up refreshments and information tables, photography and event clean up.

OFFICE PARTY CREW

Office Operations

Protecting land creates a lot of office work. We always need help with filing and scanning documents, organizing records and making copies. All good rainy day tasks.

Fold, Stuff, Stamp & Seal

We send out a few large mailings during the year and do all the processing work ourselves. We would love for you to join us to fold the letters, stuff and seal the envelopes and ship them out the door!





Green Lodging Partnership Program

SARA SCHEEREN – Outreach Coordinator

Our region’s scenic beauty and historic landscapes, unique ecotourism opportunities, recreational resources, farms and forests, and clean waterways form a large part of what makes this region truly unique. Since 1988, Otsego Land Trust has been contributing to sustainable local economies through protecting the healthy lands and waters that attract and promote ecotourism and outdoor recreation.



Our Green Lodging Partnership partners local lodgings and their guests with Otsego Land Trust to facilitate a material investment in protecting the lands, waters, and sustainable economies of our region. Here’s how it works: OLT provides the promotional/educational materials on the Partner

ship to partner lodgings. The lodgings provide information on the program to guests. The guests donate \$2.00 per stay to Otsego Land Trust’s land protection mission.

These \$2.00 donations help provide sustainable income that will greatly enhance our ability to continue achieving success in protecting healthy lands and clean water in the region and support our mission to connect people directly to the land. The partnership also showcases local lodgings that engage in responsible environmental behavior and participate in locally sustainable economies like ecotourism and outdoor recreation.

Inn at Cooperstown owners Marc and Sherrie Kingsley affirm that, “As local business owners it is just as important to us as it is to our guests that we do our very best to protect and preserve the beauty of Otsego County’s land and water.” ■

“What keeps many visitors coming back time and time again is the enchanting beauty of the landscape that surrounds this area and opportunities to enjoy paddling and fishing our waters and hiking our lands. Our guests will now have the opportunity to actively support the sustainable land protection and public access efforts of OLT simply by staying with us. It’s a partnership for a more sustainable future for everyone. It’s a win-win!” commented Owl’s Landing Bed and Breakfast owners, Darryl and Pat Szarpa.

Let’s Go Paperless

Please help us use less of our precious natural resources. In an effort to begin going paperless, we make this newsletter available electronically. To sign up for the e-newsletter please contact sara@otsegoLandTrust.org with your name and USPS mailing address, she will take you off the mailing list and add you to the list of electronic recipients. Thank you!

Wish List

Conserving more land means we need more supplies to do our job efficiently and effectively. We are currently seeking:

- small truck or van
- two or four drawer fire proof filing cabinet



Post Office Box 173
Cooperstown, New York 13326

Ways to Donate

Your support makes our conservation work possible. Your generosity makes the difference.

- Watch for OLT's summer appeal letter in the mail; reply with a donation.
- Hit the "donate" button on our website; donating online is safe and easy.
- Become a monthly donor for less than a cup of coffee a day.
- Become a legacy leader; remember OLT in your estate planning.
- Please let us know if you have included OLT in your will so we can thank you publicly.



Mike Reynolds and his catch at Parslow Road Conservation Area.

OUR NATURAL COMMUNITY

Here Fishy, Fishy, Fishy...

The water is warming up – time to cast a line along our Blueway! OLT's Ethan, who frequently fishes after work and Marcie's husband, Mike, will tell you Oaks Creek is FULL of fish. So I went straight to expert Timothy Pokorny, DEC Coldwater Aquatic Biologist, to follow up on their fish tales.

He totally backed them up. He said fishermen and women would be most excited about the large brown trout that can grow to sizes larger than 18 inches and the rare but definitely present 14"+ brook trout, both of which can be caught at Greenough Road Conservation Area.

Also swimming around in the creek are small mouth bass who have the potential to reach sizes north of 14 inches. Now's the time to try for them as they migrate up Oaks Creek from the Susquehanna River to spawn during the spring months. These aquatic vertebrates can be found along the fishing access at Parslow Road Conservation Area.

And the last fish Tim chose to point out were the variety of minnows that one is likely to catch at both conservation areas. He highlighted fallfish, which are fun to fight and reel in, but a little too boney to eat. If you've got a youngster with you who is just learning, there's a plethora of sunfish and rock bass for them to try to hook.

If you venture out and catch something, shoot us a picture on our Facebook page. Fish on! ■



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