



# on the ground

A NEWSLETTER OF THE OPEN SPACE INSTITUTE

VOLUME 18 • FALL 2016

## ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS

Good land, good water, good beer



Megan Reilly picking hops at Indian Ladder Farm which was protected by OSI in 2003. Locally sourced ingredients — including water — are key in the craft beer industry.

**D**iscriminating beer drinkers know that quality ingredients are essential for any delicious glass of lager, pilsner, stout, porter, or ale. In fact, one of the main elements behind that perfect pint is land conservation.

OSI's preservation of forests and other natural lands is the key to water quality, and OSI-protected farmland is producing some of the best hops and barley in the country. So the next time you raise a glass of your favorite local brew, offer a toast to the conservation work of OSI and its land conservation partners.

For more than 40 years, OSI has protected some 13,000 acres in New York's Capital Region, including miles of Hudson River shoreline, public parks, historic sites, and working farms — such as Indian Ladder Farm in Altamont.

Five years ago, the fourth-generation farm embarked on an experiment: growing hops and barley for craft beer and harvesting the farm's prized apple orchard for cider. Today, Indian Ladder produces ingredients for craft breweries from Albany to Brooklyn,

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## Our Mission

The Open Space Institute protects scenic, natural, and historic landscapes to provide public enjoyment, conserve habitat and working lands, and sustain communities.

OSI conserves diverse landscapes including parks, preserves, working farms and forests, and utilizes climate science to identify critical landscapes for protection.

## ON THE GROUND

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COVER: ShawneeCraft brewery (Shawnee Inn)  
COVER LEFT: Megan Reilly picking hops at Indian Ladder Farmstead (Dietrich Gehring)  
BACK COVER: Virginia Lawrence  
PAGE 2: Daisies (Brett Cole)  
PAGE 3: Ascutney Mountain Community Forest (Jerry Monkman)  
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# THE LAND GIVES BACK

Kim Elliman, President and CEO

Each time a conservation project comes together we sign on the dotted line, write a news release, thank our partners, and alert friends and supporters of our accomplishment. After all, when a property poised to become a shopping center or the next planned housing development instead becomes parkland, protected forest, or even a bird sanctuary, there is much to celebrate.

In truth, land conservation doesn't just feel good — it does good.

We can all list the varied community benefits to our work: cleaner air and water, expanded access to recreational opportunities, protection of productive farmland, improved property values, and of course, general wellbeing.

In this issue of *On the Ground* we turn our attention to what the protected land gives back once it has been saved. The land we save repays us in spades.

Community forests pay a range of tangible dividends, while promoting a local sense of belonging. Cherished parcels are ultimately transformed into recreational destinations. The protection of critical watersheds ensures access to clean water — and delicious, thirst-quenching beer.

Ultimately the benefits of OSI's commitment to the land run even deeper than the here and now. Yes, we are building more livable communities for all of us, right now. But, in truth, conserving land is an

optimistic, long-term endeavor. It represents our hope for the future.

OSI's Community Forest Fund supports rural communities in the long-term protection of key forest lands. In return these communities reap the environmental, economic, recreational, and cultural benefits associated with the locally-based endeavors.

For every public park we save or enhance, we make outdoor recreation more welcoming. Yes — that is good for today's visitors, but also encourages more education and exploration of our natural environment, and it plants the seeds for the next generation of environmentalists and land stewards. Indeed, our commitment to parks and those who come to love them is, in the long run, a commitment to succession planning on our part!

And finally, by highlighting the connection between smart conservation and the artisanal craft beer movement, we are making the case that protecting natural resources not only makes key ingredients for delicious brews, it also promotes economic strength.

At OSI, we are dedicated to protecting, rejuvenating, and increasing access to the land. Though the land gives us more than we can ever repay, we work to make sure these gifts will continue. Thank you for your support; we hope you enjoy reading about what you have allowed us to accomplish.



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# A FOREST FOR ALL

Saving a tradition in New England



**A**s momentum for land conservation grows, a 17th century model for protecting forests is inspiring a modern-day movement. In rural New England, community forests are experiencing a revival with the help of OSI, whose Community Forest Fund has partnered to protect more than 30,000 acres — including these recently completed projects.

## A Vermont Ski Town Renewed

West Windsor had fallen on hard times since the Ascutney Mountain ski resort closed for good. Since establishing its own community forest in late 2015 with help from the Trust for Public Land, OSI, and other partners, this southern Vermont town has reclaimed some of its history, economy, and pride.

“Our way of life was in jeopardy,” said Jim Lyall, a 40-year resident of the area. “Losing the ski area directly affected property values

and caused local businesses to close.”

As the resort diminished, Lyall and his organization, Sport Trails of Ascutney Basin, steadily built a 30-mile trail network in and around the old ski tracks. These trails are now a centerpiece of the new West Windsor Community Forest, whose nearly 1,600 acres knit together one of the largest conserved forest blocks in the region.

“OSI’s grant was a real milestone,” Lyall said. “The positive momentum continues to build since this project came through.”

## A Maine Community Rallies

Louis Cataldo is one of 88 year-round residents of the town of Grand Lake Stream, where livelihoods hinge on seasonal infusions of hunters, anglers, and outdoor enthusiasts. So when a massive sell-off of the area’s precious woods and streams was announced 15 years ago, Cataldo and other locals were stunned.

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# and matters

## A Safe Landing for the Painted Bunting

A 104-acre barrier island in Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge is OSI's latest conservation success in South Carolina. OSI purchased and protected the property — known as Pappa's Island — in March, ending a years-long legal battle that began when the owners sought to develop the property. Pappa's Island is the largest undeveloped inholding in the refuge, whose intricate coastal waterways harbor hundreds of at-risk and endangered species. In summer the island is a stopover for painted buntings, a "highest-priority species" in the state's wildlife action plan. Since 2014, OSI has protected nearly 8,000 acres of South Carolina land — all of which is or will be open to the public.

As a new addition to South Carolina's Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge, Pappa's Island is home to many at-risk and endangered species such as the painted bunting.



Painted Buntings (Skip Vetter)

## OSI Celebrates Stonewall Inn National Monument Designation



Stonewall National Monument (Andre Becker)

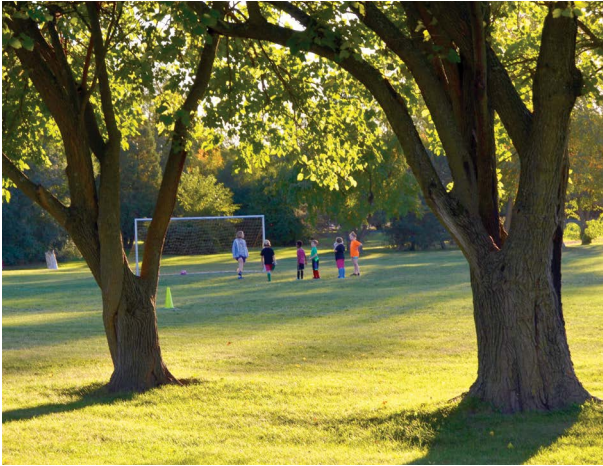
This past summer, before a rainbow-clad crowd of officials, reporters, and conservationists in New York City's Greenwich Village, the National Park Service made history by announcing President Obama's designation of the Stonewall Inn and adjacent Christopher Park as the Stonewall National Monument. As longstanding supporters of the park, OSI and its Citizen Action group the Christopher Park Alliance (CPA) were among those cheering loudest.

Created in the 1830s, Christopher Park became the center of national news in 1969, when a spontaneous riot spilled out of the Stonewall Inn and into the park across the street. The riot lasted for six nights. The uprising is seen by many as the start of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) rights movement.

Founded in 2001, CPA was experiencing flagging membership before joining Citizen Action in 2013. In years since, the alliance has raised funds to beautify the park with new plants and an irrigation system.

"We treasure the support OSI provides in helping us build our community profile, and raise funds to revitalize and maintain our historic park — now the centerpiece of America's newest national monument," said CPA's Andre Becker.

## Paying It Forward



Soccer fields at Schuyler Flatts (Spear Design)

In 2016, in an effort to share its commitment to conservation, OSI donated five properties totaling 350 acres and worth \$3.1 million to municipalities throughout New York. These properties, which were acquired by OSI, have strong community ties to the towns — Greenburgh, Bethlehem, Colonie, Johnsbury, and Mamakating — that have grown to cherish them.

“Although owned by OSI, each of these properties became well-loved local parks in their respective communities,” said Kim Elliman. “From rail trails to playgrounds to ballparks, we felt it was time to donate them into capable local hands.”

The properties include the 52-acre Mamakating O&W Rail Trail, which runs along the former tracks of the O&W Railroad line. The Open Space Institute’s donation of the land increases the town’s parkland by almost 50 percent.

“This addition is a major step forward for Mamakating,” said William Hermann, the town’s Supervisor. “The land’s beautiful scenery and recreation possibilities hold great future potential. On behalf of the town and the Town Board, I wish to thank OSI for this generous donation.”

Another of the properties is Schuyler Flatts in Colonie. Now home to ballparks and bike trails, the land had been threatened by industrial development before OSI’s intervention. Once the family home of Elizabeth Schuyler, wife of Alexander Hamilton, the property’s 23 acres continue to reveal artifacts from 6,000 years of human history, from native peoples to the remains of former slaves who also inhabited the land.

“With this gift, OSI has helped ensure that Schuyler Flatts will continue to be a vibrant historical resource for our residents,” said Colonie Supervisor Paula Mahan.

## A FOREST FOR ALL

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3)



Milan, New Hampshire (Morrie Gasser)

“We knew access to the land was critical to keeping businesses going,” said Cataldo. “We were worried an outside buyer might turn it into a kingdom for themselves.”

The town rallied around a years-long fundraising campaign and founded its own nonprofit. This July, with financial support from OSI and other partners, the Downeast Lakes Land Trust announced creation of the West Grand Lake Community Forest, permanently protecting more than 17 miles of lakeshore and 90 miles of stream shore.

“It was a breakthrough for us, getting the funds from OSI,” Cataldo said. “It breathed new life into our work, and now the land has been saved forever.”

## A Say in Their Future

After the decline of local paper mills and the sale of forests that had supported Milan for decades, the small town in northern New Hampshire wanted more say in its own future, explained resident George Pozzuto.

That’s how the idea for a community forest took root. In 2012, Milan received a small grant from OSI. “With that seed money in hand, we brought the OSI brochure on community forests to town meetings to sell the idea, and people loved it,” he said.

Four years later, with a second grant from OSI, Milan purchased its first parcel for the community forest, which it plans to expand. “We have joined together to save a tradition. People here, they grew up in the woods, and their parents, grandparents all worked in the woods,” Pozzuto said. “It feels like coming home.”





Catskill Brewery (Greg Lofaro)

## BEER (CONTINUED FROM THE COVER)

and the word is spreading about its crisp cider.

“Our farm story is a big part of why breweries want to work with us,” said Dietrich Gehring, owner of Indian Ladder Farmstead Cidery & Brewery. “People know this land is conserved, and it’s forever a farm. And they like that the ingredients are all coming from one place.”

### Protected Land as Nature’s Water Filter

Southeast of Altamont, in the Catskills’ Beaverkill region, OSI has conserved nearly 20,600 acres of untouched forests

“OSI has helped to protect some of the world’s best water. Without OSI, there’s a good chance the water would have been compromised by development.”

—Ramsay Adams, Catskill, New York

and natural lands. Catskill Brewery owner Ramsay Adams said the abundance of pristine water filtered by preserved land was one reason he chose to open his brewery here four years ago.

Today, Catskill Brewery is an official craft beer of the New York Yankees and enjoys fans from Albany to Coney Island and throughout the Hudson Valley.

“OSI has helped to protect some of the world’s best water,” Adams said. “Without OSI, there’s a good chance the

water would have been compromised by development.”

Also flowing through the Catskills region is part of the mighty Delaware River, on its 419-mile journey to the Delaware Bay and the Atlantic Ocean. OSI’s Delaware River Watershed Protection Fund, with a \$13.2 million grant from the William Penn Foundation, is critical not only for the region’s drinking water but also for its 120 craft breweries.

ShawneeCraft Brewery, located just downriver of the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, is one small business applauding clean water.

“OSI’s work through the Delaware River Watershed initiative helps protect a key part of our business model,” said Jason Startari, the brewery’s marketing manager. “Most breweries use municipal water and pay extra to carbon-filter it, where we only need to filter for sediments.”

Conserved land isn’t just a boon for water used by the brewery along the riverbank. “Having people come and see the scenery, it makes the beer taste better — it becomes part of the experience,” said Startari.



James Roe and Stuart Morris harvesting hops at Indian Ladder Farmstead Brewery and Cidery (Dietrich Gehring)

## in conversation




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**PAUL HUNT**

Environmental Manager  
Portland Maine Water District

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Paul Hunt (Mark Hunt)

**A**s environmental manager of the Portland Water District, the local government authority in charge of protecting drinking water resources for more than 200,000 Maine residents and businesses, Paul Hunt spearheads an innovative national program. By partnering with OSI and other organizations to protect forests in the watershed, Hunt and the water district are promoting the connection between clean water and land conservation.

### How is land conservation important for water protection?

The forest is the most effective and inexpensive form of water treatment. It works for us even while we sleep, and never takes a day off.

Conserving land meets the needs and goals of basically everyone. Just picture for a moment a 500-acre forested parcel protected by a conservation easement that permits sustainable harvesting of trees and low-impact public access. That conserved property benefits the town it is in and all of its residents, and also cleans water for fish, boaters, and public consumption — all from one 500-acre easement.

### How does the work of land conservation organizations like OSI help you with your job?

We are a water and wastewater utility. Land conservation involves fundraising, landowner outreach, easement negotiation, and many other processes and responsibilities.

Years ago we learned that there are many experts — like OSI — who know land conservation the way we know water treatment. It's exactly the way a partnership is supposed to work: take the best of one organization, pair it with the best of another, and make both organizations more effective.

Sebago Lake is Maine's second-largest lake, New England's deepest, and it has been the drinking water supply for Greater Portland since 1869. Its water quality is so outstanding that it requires minimal treatment. The job of treating it is done in part by the more than 25 million acres of forest that carpet its watershed. The water district does the rest.

The abundant forest cover is the good news; the bad news is that more than 90 percent of that forest is unprotected and therefore could be lost to development. The work of OSI and its partners is needed now more than ever.





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Rendering of proposed improvements

The Beaverkill Covered Bridge in Roscoe, NY, is being restored thanks to a plan developed by OSI.

OSI is working with the NYS Departments of Conservation and Transportation, Catskill Mountainkeeper, and Friends of Beaverkill Community. The restoration is part of a larger project to improve public access to the Beaverkill River, enhance the surrounding picnic area, and interpret the site's industrial and recreational past. The bridge, featuring original wooden peg engineering and replica stone work, is expected to be completed by the summer of 2017.