

Please Support Our Work
Visit www.osiny.org
to learn more.

Nonprofit Org
U.S. Postage Paid
New York NY
Permit #4952

Open Space



What's Old Is New Again

The Local Benefits of Traditional Forest Values

The “Buy Local” bumper stickers on cars and bicycles usually advocate trips to the local farmer’s market more than the lumberyard. But in northern New England, home of the 26-million-acre Northern Forest, more and more towns are returning to an old model for their timberlands: buying them and creating or expanding community forests.

The trend reflects growing awareness of both the economic and the ecological values of forestland. Having assisted in the protection of 1.7 million acres of forestland in the past decade, mostly large remote tracts, OSI is sharpening its focus on helping towns and nonprofit groups create community-owned and community-managed forests.

Community forests have a long history in America. As far back as 1630, towns owned land to generate timber income for churches and schools. In the late 1800s, after logging had cleared many watersheds, citizens supported town forests to protect their municipal drinking water sources. In the early 1900s, as Theodore Roosevelt marked a new era in conservation,

(continued on page 6)

Community forests can be managed for sustainable timber harvesting, wildlife habitat and public recreation.



Jerry and Marcy Monkman

INSIDE

- 2 - Reflections on Life & Land
- 3 - Habitat Highway
- 5 - Land Matters
- 7 - Q & A with George M. Woodwell



Our Mission

The Open Space Institute (OSI) protects scenic, natural, and historic landscapes to ensure public enjoyment, conserve habitats, and sustain community character.

Since 1964, OSI has protected over 100,000 acres in New York State and assisted in the protection of an additional 1.7 million acres throughout the East Coast.

Reflections on Life & Land

Dear Friends,

The value of land, as you might imagine, is a frequent topic of discussion at the Open Space Institute. How much does land cost, and how are we going to pay for it? Seeking to put OSI supporters' money to best use, we ask, "Is it a good value?"

The value of open space doesn't always fit neatly into ledger entries, however. Value also lies in the amount of carbon a hill thick with forest can capture and contain. There's value in the clean water that percolates through the soil and down to the town at the base of that same hill. There's value in the intact web of locally owned working lands—be they forests or farms—that support local economies by keeping the dollars they generate within the community and giving the next generation a reason to keep its roots intact.

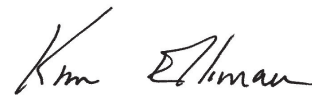
Analyzing land deals thus requires more than measuring acres and counting dollars. OSI's conservation plans rely on evolving information from scientists, ecologists, and economists.

In this issue of *Open Space*, we look at value from several perspectives. First, we take a look at the reintroduction of a centuries-old tool—the community forest. In 17th-century New England, these forests generated revenues for churches and schools. Now, reconfigured town forests are creating jobs and sustaining livelihoods.

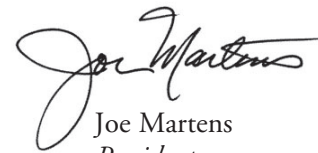
Crossing between two forests in the Hudson Highlands, several important species have used a short, narrow corridor that spans a highway and several towns. Conservation, even at a relatively small scale, has immeasurable benefits, as we see at Black Rock Forest.

We examine the value of a green revolution in a conversation with OSI's 2010 Conservationist of the Year, Dr. George M. Woodwell. We see that protecting our natural resources is an essential investment for our natural world.

We thank you, as always, for your support of our work. As real estate prices fall and we realize good financial value in acquisitions and easements, we can also capitalize on other values that support humans, habitat, and community.



Kim Elliman
CEO



Joe Martens
President

Copyright © 2010
All rights reserved.

Open Space is distributed to members and donors of the Open Space Institute. We welcome your support, suggestions, contributions, and photographs. Please contact us at:

1350 Broadway, Suite 201
New York, NY 10018
Tel: 212.290.8200
Fax: 212.244.3441
www.osiny.org

Board of Trustees

John H. Adams,
Chairman of the Board
Peter A. Bienstock, *Vice Chair*
Caroline Niemczyk, *Vice Chair*
Paul J. Elston, *Treasurer*
Edward A. Ames, *Secretary*
Susan Babcock
Elizabeth Borden
Gilman S. Burke
John P. Cahill
Holly Cummings

Board of Trustees

T. Jefferson Cunningham III
J. Matthew Davidson
John Ernst
Samuel G. Huber
Felix Kaufman
Samuel W. Lambert III
Barnabas McHenry
Katherine O. Roberts
Hume R. Steyer
Patricia F. Sullivan
Valerie Anne Mars,
Honorary Trustee

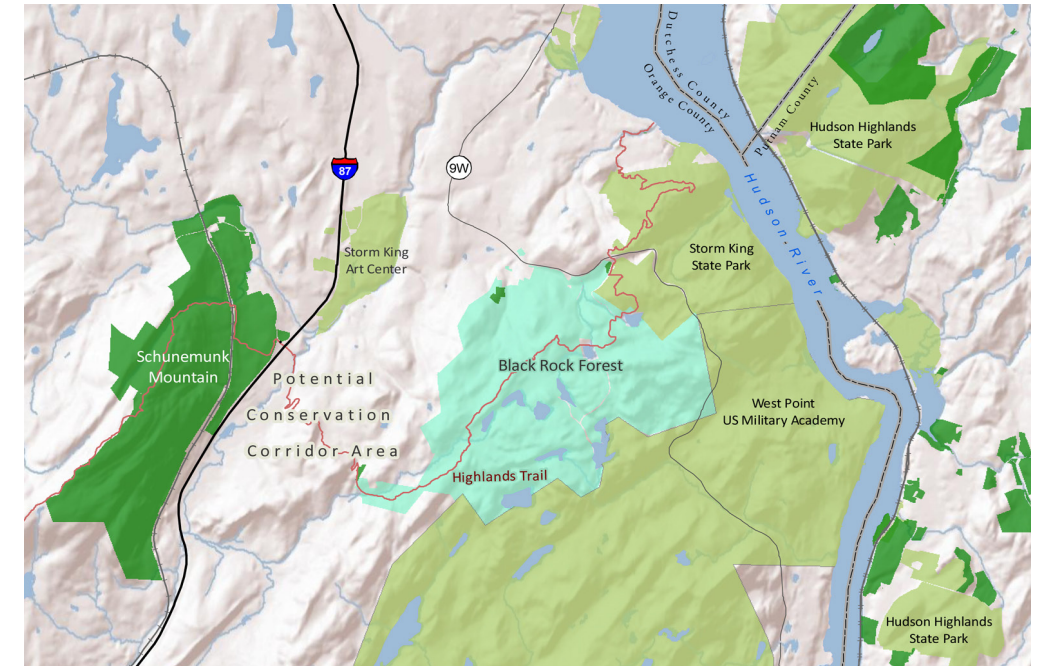
Newsletter Contributors

Tally Blumberg
Kim Elliman
Peter Howell
Joe Martens
Jeff Simms
Meera Subramanian
Production: Susan Morningstar
Graphic Design: Jenkins & Page
Printer: Monroe Litho
Cover photos: Jerry and
Marcy Monkman



Habitat Highway

The High Value of Small Parcels



This map illustrates the mix of public and private lands that create a critical wildlife corridor in New York's Hudson Highlands, 50 miles north of New York City. Lands protected by OSI are shown in dark green.

Over the past century, more than 83,000 acres of land has been conserved in the Hudson Highlands, a segment of the Appalachians that cuts across Orange, Putnam, and Westchester counties. Now, OSI is turning its attention to a mere 180 acres, a slender mile-and-a-half corridor that is critically important for the diverse wildlife of Orange County, just an hour's drive from New York City.

The handful of unprotected parcels constitutes an important ecological link connecting protected tracts on either side—Schunemunk Mountain, a state park, and the Black Rock Forest Preserve, a major OSI project. These lands, together with Harriman State Park, Storm King State Park, and Sterling Forest, form a green landscape that has inspired artists and provides habitat for native wildlife.

"This connection, even as small as it is, is the reason that we have the wildlife we have here," said Bill Schuster, the executive director of the Black Rock Forest Consortium, "and it needs to be protected." Black Rock and Schunemunk are habitat for bears, bobcats, coyotes, otters, and other animals that range over large, unfragmented areas.

"Some of our native wildlife requires large home ranges, bigger than any single forest," Schuster said, "and all organisms need suitable habitat for seasonal migration, dispersal, and interbreeding with adjoining populations, or they will not survive over the long run. This forested landscape corridor provides that critically needed habitat link between the highlands and Schunemunk Mountain, which would otherwise be quite isolated."

(continued on page 4)

Black Rock Forest, a nearly 4,000-acre living laboratory for field-based scientific research, provides students a chance to experience and learn about the value of habitat lands and the creatures who roam there.

OSI acquired over 2,700 acres at Schunemunk Mountain in an ongoing effort to conserve the unique natural resources of the Hudson Highlands. In addition to preserving critical natural habitats and public recreational usage, the park protects the viewshed of the Moodna Train Trestle (in the photo above), an historic bridge and regional landmark dating from 1883.



Greg Miller

Habitat Highway

(continued from page 3)

In addition to large mammals, the corridor supports and ensures connectivity for a variety of plants, insects, and other organisms—all of which contribute to the diversity of life that is the core of a healthy ecosystem.

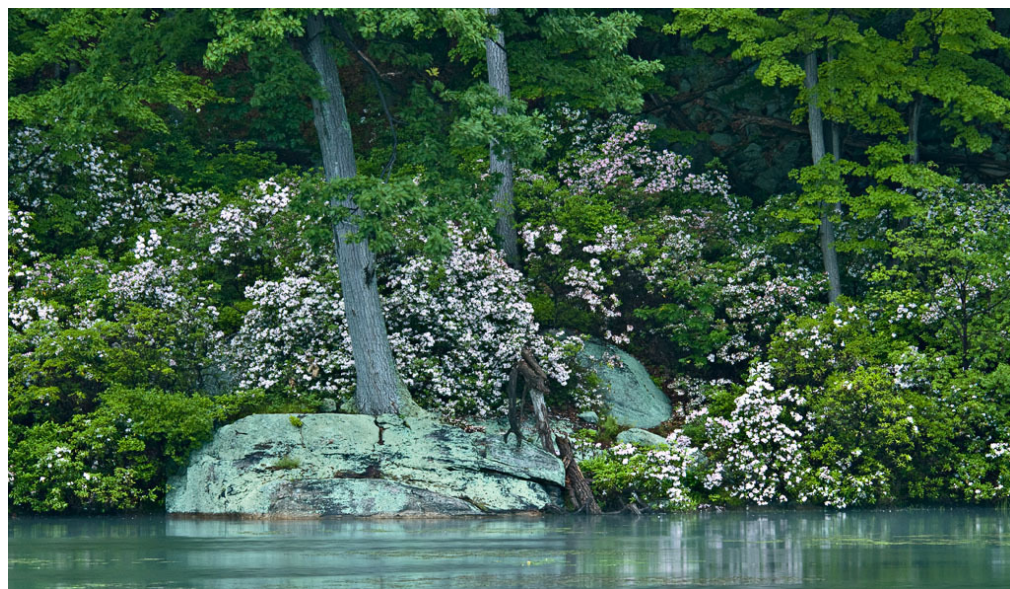
OSI is currently moving forward on three conservation projects that would protect approximately 180 acres in the corridor, helping to keep vital habitat connections intact. Even on a relatively small scale—10 acres here, 20 acres there—projects like these have the potential for significant impact, ecologically and otherwise.

“While these connections are critical to the long-term protection of plant and wildlife habitat, they also offer important connections for potential recreation, such as trails and the preservation of scenic

viewsheds the general public can enjoy,” said Jim Hall, the executive director of the Palisades Interstate Park Commission.

One major obstacle to preserving the ecological corridor between Schunemunk and Black Rock Forest is the New York State Thruway, which bisects these two protected areas. Although birds and insects can cross the Thruway, it presents more of a challenge for mammals. Black Rock staff intends to review wildlife movement over time to determine whether a series of tunnels and underpasses or some other system could accommodate wildlife on the move. Several years ago, New York State built culverts underneath the Adirondack Northway to facilitate wildlife crossings, with mixed results so far.

For its part, OSI will continue to work to protect the undeveloped parcels to ensure that the historic viewshed and wildlife corridor remain intact.



Greg Miller

Black Rock Forest is remarkably varied in environments and biota: blue crabs, bald eagles, bobcats, and boreal conifers all thrive within sight of Manhattan.

Land Matters *News & Events*

The Value of Smart Conservation

In April, OSI brought together a diverse and experienced group of leaders from the land trust, development, and land-use planning communities to study “conservation development,” a planning and conservation finance tool that may be an option when there is insufficient funding to completely protect a property from development.

Conservation development projects are essentially hybrids in which carefully considered real estate development is allowed in order to help finance the conservation of a site. A land trust, for instance, could help secure a conservation easement on one portion of a site while providing input for a clustered, ecofriendly development in another area of the same property that has less conservation value.

In the face of uncertain and dwindling public and philanthropic funding, nonprofit organizations and private developers are exploring the concept to achieve both conservation goals and other public benefits, including affordable housing and well-planned, “smart” growth.

Through conferences and related research, OSI is seeking to improve the conservation community’s understanding of conservation development and when it may or may not be prudent to utilize the tool.

OSI is convening experienced practitioners for their insight into how it might advance the practice of conservation development as well as increase the flow of private real estate development dollars toward projects that fulfill both housing and conservation goals.

The Value of Historic Landscapes



Brett Cole

In November, OSI conserved three Orange County farms totaling 328 acres in one of New York’s most productive farming regions. The farms were protected via grants from New York State for the purchase of development rights, with additional support from Orange County.

OSI has established a strong presence in Orange County by conserving more than 1,300 acres of farmland there since 2001. Farmland preservation then enhances local economies and supports a healthy variety of land uses.

OSI also acquired a strategically located 62-acre parcel directly adjacent to Lindenwald, the historic Columbia County home and estate of Martin Van Buren. Its proximity to the Martin Van Buren National Historic Site and the uncertainty surrounding its future use had made the property a concern for the National Park Service. OSI is now working with the Park Service and nearby Roxbury Farm, a large community-supported agriculture operation, to determine whether this property can be used by both entities.

And in March, OSI acquired a 67-acre parcel that includes world-renowned rock-climbing sites. The Studley property, with its 350-foot cliffs, will soon be added to the Mohonk Preserve, one of OSI’s longstanding conservation partners, and be open to the public.

The Value of Experience

With three partners—The Trustees of Reservations’ Putnam Conservation Institute, the Pew Charitable Trusts, and the Land Trust Alliance—OSI is launching a new program to ensure the long-term sustainability of land trusts in Massachusetts. The Massachusetts Land Trust Acceleration Program will provide financial and technical resources to help the commonwealth’s land trusts earn accreditation from the Land Trust Accreditation Commission.

Over the next two years, OSI will help 15 land trusts become accredited by providing capacity grants and technical assistance. The Massachusetts Land Trust Acceleration Program will make accreditation more attainable by providing the financial and technical resources to apply best standards and practices without slowing the momentum of land conservation and stewardship projects.

Accreditation is awarded to land trusts that meet clear standards for organizational quality and permanent land conservation. Applicants must demonstrate compliance with a set of best practices that indicate their ability to operate ethically and legally and to protect the public interest with sound land transactions and stewardship. OSI became accredited in 2008. The Massachusetts Land Trust Acceleration Program selection committee met in early May to choose the first grantees, and OSI will announce the awards later this spring.

What's Old Is New Again

(cont. from page 1)

New England towns began to recognize that town forests not only generated funds and gave them pure water but also served their communities by preserving places for hunting, fishing, and enjoyment of the natural world.

Today's interest in community forests is a response to a major shift in the Northeast's landownership patterns. As timber production moved to other parts of the world in the 1990s, U.S. timber companies began selling forestland to investment firms and developers eager to parcel off large tracts. The future of the natural areas surrounding many New England towns was uncertain. OSI, teaming up with communities and other organizations and taking advantage of alternative funding sources, such as New Market Tax Credits and the Forest Legacy Program, seized the opportunity to enact landscape-level protections through the Northern Forest Protection Fund, which provided grants and loans for conservation easements and direct acquisition of three early community forest projects in New Hampshire and Maine.

The Farm Cove Community Forest, for example, protects 27,080 acres in Maine's easternmost county, where residents had become concerned that forestland would be subdivided, taken out of production, and closed to public access. The community forest encompasses timberland certified to Forest Stewardship Council standards and an ecological reserve rich in wildlife habitat and recreation opportunities. Blending loans and grants totaling \$3 million, OSI helped finance the deal, which linked hundreds of thousands of already-conserved

acres into a corridor of protected lands. OSI's role as an honest broker, leveraging funds from a variety of sources, has led to a strong network of partnerships between and among the region's towns, timber companies, citizens, the federal government, banks, and land trusts.

"Community forests represent the next wave of conservation," said Peter Howell, OSI's executive vice president. "It is as much about community equity and economic development as it is about conservation."

OSI is working closely with the Community Forest Collaborative and other groups to monitor emerging community forest projects that achieve conservation and community economic objectives. The list of reasons to keep land under local control has grown longer since early settlers first enacted the concept. Whereas town forests once supported churches and schools, they now can play an important economic and cultural role, retaining or creating jobs in the recreation and tourism sectors as well as the timber industry. As climate change becomes an international priority and carbon market programs gain traction, local woodlands can serve as a source of biomass fuels and green-certified timber products as well as a living carbon bank for carbon offset credits.

In the new century we've moved beyond either-or scenarios. Community forests are a creative way to help communities have a sustainable economy and a healthy environment, intact wildlife habitat and natural resource management, vibrant communities and thriving tourism. Tapping into a living legacy, town forests are a time-tested approach to a new era of land conservation in the Northern Forest.



Community-owned forests may be the answer for towns that are now confronting unanticipated large-scale land use changes.

Finding a Key to Life on Earth

The Value of a Green Revolution

A Conversation with George M. Woodwell

Dr. George M. Woodwell, director emeritus and senior scientist of Woods Hole Research Center, is the recipient of the 2010 OSI Land Conservation Award.

Dr. Woodwell has spent a lifetime studying ecological systems and has broad interests in global environmental issues and policies. Before founding the Woods Hole Research Center, he was founder and director of the Ecosystems Center of the Marine Biological Laboratory in Woods Hole and a senior scientist at Brookhaven National Laboratories. He has served on the boards of the Natural Resources Defense Council, the National Council of the World Wildlife Fund, the World Resources Institute, and the Environmental Defense Fund, and he is a former president of the Ecological Society of America, a member of the National Academy of Sciences, and a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Woodwell has written more than 300 major papers and books in ecology. He holds a doctorate in botany from Duke University and has taught at the University of Maine and at Yale's School of Forestry and Environmental Science.

We spoke with him about the opportunities for conservation in the current economic crisis.

OSI: Woods Hole Research Center, which you founded, is celebrating its 25th anniversary. What's the biggest change in conservation priorities you've witnessed in the past quarter-century?

GMW: The major transition has been the shift of conservation from a peripheral to a central issue in government. The present challenge is to do away with a fossil fuel-based economy and replace it with a solar energy-based economy. Otherwise we are heading toward a global impoverishment of the landscape that will continue to cause the failures of government we're seeing today.

OSI: How can conservationists address that impoverishment?

GMW: One needs to ask, what is key to living on the earth? The key is that the earth has an intrinsic capacity to run itself—that is the basis of human wealth in the end. The core element is that you have to decide—we have to decide—to celebrate the life of the earth, and the system under which it works.

OSI: How should conservationists respond to the economic crisis?

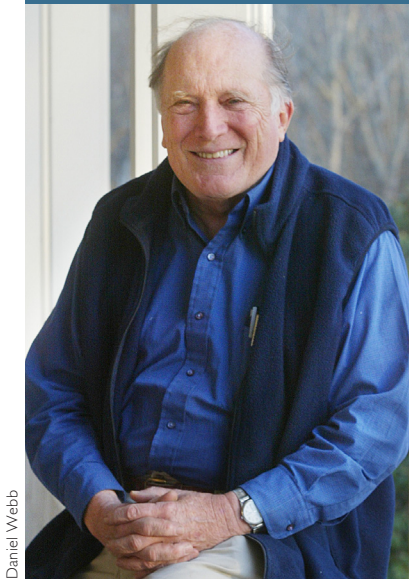
GMW: Financial squeezes force everyone into a conservative stance in which they don't want to change because it seems risky, but people have to realize what has brought us to this impasse. We have to make a new departure, but people need guidance from the conservation movement to define what the new model should look like.

OSI: What are land conservationists doing right? What could they be doing better?

GMW: One of the big jumps is New York's recognition that it's worth the investment to protect its watershed in order to keep the city's water clean. But it's bigger than even watersheds. I was just up at the Garrison Institute, on the land that OSI helped to protect, and the former monastery has this beautiful stonework, yet no lichens were growing anywhere, the rain is so rotten. So what is the role of conservation? To put forth a set of objectives that can work in a new world. We need a Copernican Revolution in thought.

OSI: How do we achieve that?

GMW: It really does take a new model of the world. I was talking to an officer of the New York City administration who was struggling to implement their green initiatives. The difference between what they are willing to do and what I say needs to be done are night and day. He dismissed me with, "You're asking the public to sacrifice." And I said, "No, I'm asking the public to move on to a new world that is much greener, and much healthier, and more fun to live in."



Daniel Webb

George M. Woodwell
Director Emeritus, Senior Scientist
Woods Hole Research Center

More on www.osiny.org

Learn about OSI's campaign to fill in a gap in the Long Path Trail in the Shawangunks.

www.osiny.org/longpath

OSI's Albany office has moved:
291 Hudson Avenue, Suite B
Albany, NY 12210