



1974-2026 • 52 Years of Land Conservation

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## OUR VISION OF LAND PROTECTION

PAM POOLEY, BOARD CHAIR

The Open Land Foundation saves open space for the health of future generations of humans and non-humans. Lois Lippmann, our Land Preservation Committee Chair, likes to quote *Gone with the Wind*: ***“Land is the only thing in the world worth working for, worth fighting for, worth dying for, because it’s the only thing that lasts.”***

It’s in our blood!

Not only does our equestrian heritage nurture a sense of place, but for a small town in the New York Metropolitan area, we are uniquely fortunate to have pastureland, hilly woodlands, and treasured watershed so close to NYC.

Our mission to preserve open space, which is aligned with both North Salem’s Comprehensive Plan and NY State’s Open Space Plan, requires minimal public infrastructure (roads, water/sewer), schools, and emergency services, resulting in a positive fiscal return for local government, and therefore a cost savings to you.

The Open Land Foundation has a strategic plan to increase the pace of land protection in North Salem. We are united with the global target to protect 30% of the Earth’s land and water by 2030 (30x30 initiative). To reach that goal, we actively look at land that’s vulnerable and has conservation value. We have a set of criteria to evaluate these acquisitions such as, wildlife and ecosystem habitats, historic and scenic views, waterways and recreational use. We prioritize green corridors, that is to conserve land near preserves or watersheds.



RED SHOULDERED HAWK IN FLIGHT

We have calculated that we need to conserve an additional 1,600+ acres to meet our target.

We’ve done well so far! During the past decade, we have gained four new preserves: the Jeff Morris Preserve (11.3 acres) near Mills and Gaymark preserves; the Hanna-Spinna Preserve (4.3 acres) near Stempler and Hawthorne preserves; the Hardscrabble Preserve (168 acres) across from the Franklin Fells Audubon Preserve, as well as one private conservation easement (6 acres). Our stewardship staff, and volunteers like you, keep an eye on all the preserves regularly. Your donations are clearly working!

Beyond the Baxter Preserve, I encourage you to visit and explore your preserves that are tucked all around town and its borders. Take a look at our newly designed website to learn how to access the joys of the natural world, right here in North Salem. For details on how to get there, visit [www.nsol.org](http://www.nsol.org).

The North Salem Open Land Foundation and the Westchester County Department of Planning co-sponsored a conference titled “The Future of our Fields: Economics, Land Use, and Collaboration in Agriculture” in December at Old Salem Farm. The genesis of the conference came from a grant that the Open Land Foundation had received from the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets.

Agricultural land contributes significantly to the character of North Salem by providing open space, recreational opportunities, habitat for wildlife, food source for animals and humans alike, and a link to the Town’s agrarian history.

Open space, whether it be from agricultural lands or lands preserved by land trusts like ours, provides wide-ranging benefits for ecosystems, communities, and the local economy. Protected land gives us cleaner air to breathe and water to drink. Trees and soils store carbon, helping to reduce greenhouse gases. Wetlands and forests absorb excess rainwater, filter pollutants, reduce flood risks, prevent erosion and maintain healthy soil.

The community benefits from land protected by Open Land by providing access to our preserves and trails for physical activity such as walks, rides,



GREAT SPANGLED FRITILLARY ON THISTLE

and hikes. Equally, access to nature reduces stress and anxiety and encourages social interaction—all creating an improved quality of life.

Often what’s overlooked are the economic benefits of protected open space. Homes near parks and preserves have greater market value. An Economic and Fiscal Impact Analysis prepared by Pros Consulting LLC for the Friends of Westchester County Parks found that the average land value near a park was 28% higher than compared to land away from a park. Open space like our preserves and the horse trails maintained by the North Salem Bridle Trail Association attract visitors, which in turn relates to money spent to support local bus-

inesses, such as eateries and equestrian centers. Open space also minimizes the cost of infrastructure services that decrease the need for stormwater systems. In addition, trees and vegetation reduce the impacts of heat and improve our air quality, thereby reducing home energy costs.

We continue to engage landowners to consider the benefits of land conservation whether it be a conservation easement on their property or a land donation to the Open Land Foundation. Together, we can preserve open space and enrich our community.

## NOTES FROM THE FIELD

ANDREW MIDDLEBROOK, DIRECTOR OF STEWARDSHIP

### Strength in Small Spaces: Why Regional Collaboration is the Future of Conservation

In the world of land conservation, the “lone wolf” model is rapidly becoming a relic of the past. As we gathered for our third annual Regional Stewardship Roundtable at the Weil Headquarters, the atmosphere was one of seasoned partnership. For small and mid-sized land trusts, the challenges of climate change, invasive species, and shifting demographics are too vast to tackle in isolation.

Instead, we are finding that by sharing our maps, our lesson plans, and our expertise, we are building a more resilient landscape.

This third meeting allowed us to reflect on just how much we’ve accomplished since our first gathering. We aren’t just talking; we are doing.

Looking back at the past year, two major successes stand out as blueprints for future collaboration:

First is the Collective Chainsaw Safety Day: By pooling our resources, we brought in top-tier

arborist professionals to train our combined staff and volunteer crews. This ensured that every organization, regardless of size, meets the highest safety standards for trail maintenance and habitat restoration. Second is Forest Restoration Plots: Following last year's discussions, several organizations successfully installed coordinated restoration plots. These sites are now living laboratories, helping us track native species that thrive best in our specific regional microclimates.



Building on such momentum, this year's roundtable focused on demystifying technology. Transitioning to new mapping software can be daunting for a small staff.

By discussing our technology openly, we've moved beyond trial and error. We now know what saves time and the mapping tools that help us to identify hunting stands and property boundaries. This "peer-review" of technology ensures that donor dollars are spent on proven solutions rather than expensive experiments.

Stewardship is often a battle fought in the trenches, sometimes against a wall of Mile-a-minute vine or Purple loosestrife. The roundtable highlighted a vital shift toward targeted mutual aid.

This simple mantra, encouraging partners to share resources and volunteer capacity, transforms our individual preserves into a unified defensive line. Whether it's partners offering site visits to new acquisitions or hosting an on-site training, we are managing entire wildlife corridors rather than isolated islands of green.

Perhaps most exciting is the move toward shared priority mapping. By identifying adjoining parcels across organizational lines, we become more than just "small land trusts," we become a regional powerhouse.

This coordination makes us exponentially more competitive for New York State and Land Trust Alliance grants. The potential for multi-organization acquisition sends a clear message to funders: this land isn't just a tax parcel; it's a vital organ in a larger ecological body.

The momentum from our three years of roundtables proves that our "town hall" model of conservation is working. As we move toward new communication channels and a regional library of lesson plans, we aren't just saving land, we are building a community of practice.

The mission of a land trust is to protect land forever. In a changing world, "forever" is only possible if we work together.

See you on the trails.

## BAXTER PRESERVE SENTINEL TREE PROGRAM

### SPRING IS FOR PLANTING

The Baxter Preserve Sentinel Tree Program, started by a generous donation from Steve Rattner and Maureen White, is a long-term investment in the health, beauty, and resilience of Baxter Preserve. Through this program, we care for the trees that already grace the landscape, thoughtfully remove those that are declining, and—most importantly—plant new native species that will thrive for decades to come. These "sentinel trees" will stand watch over the preserve for the next 50 years and beyond,

supporting local wildlife and enriching the natural environment for future visitors.

Planting a native tree is also a meaningful and lasting way to celebrate a milestone, honor someone special, or remember a loved one. Each tree becomes part of the living legacy of the preserve—a gift that grows more valuable with time.

A contribution of \$2,000 includes the planting of your tree as well as its ongoing care, ensuring it has the support it needs to flourish.

*Continued on page 4*

Continued from page 3

As a participant in the program, you have the opportunity to:

- Choose from a curated list of native tree species selected for their ecological value and suitability to the preserve
- Work closely with our team to select a location that feels most meaningful to you
- Create a virtual dedication on our website, where your personalized tribute is featured alongside your tree's listing

Getting started is easy—go to [www.nsof.org/our-work](http://www.nsof.org/our-work) and click on the “Baxter Sentinel Tree Program” order form. Once we receive your submission, a member of our team will reach out to guide you through selecting your tree and its placement.

Thank you for considering this thoughtful and lasting gift to Baxter Preserve.



## BAXTER PRESERVE DAM UPDATE

Many thanks to everyone who contributed to our “I Gave a Dam” campaign! Because of your generosity, we raised \$76,214 to offset the \$380,000 cost of the Baxter Dam Repair project. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation has directed our organization to undertake the rehabilitation work to keep the dam safe and functioning. The work includes:



- Replacing and repairing concrete walls and spillways
- Removing trees and stumps from the downstream slope
- Replacing the dam's low-level valve

The cold temperatures and heavy snow this winter restricted our contractor, Papitto Construction Co., Inc. and their construction schedule. With milder days, they have lowered the level of the pond and have removed the spillway and shortly will be pouring concrete for the new spillway and walls. We are assessing the best plan of action for the replacement of the low-level valve.

We appreciate your continued patience with the construction site. For ongoing updates, please sign up for our monthly email at [www.nsof.org](http://www.nsof.org).

## CHECK OUT OUR NEW WEBSITE!

We're pleased to announce the launch of our redesigned website—created to help you explore, enjoy, and learn more about the lands we protect together.

What's new:

- **Improved navigation** to preserves, trails, and (New!) maps
- **Updated stories and photography** regarding stewardship projects and conservation efforts
- **A streamlined way to learn about events and programs**
- **Intuitive forms** for supporting conservation and membership renewal

Visit the site to see for yourself! [www.nsof.org](http://www.nsof.org)



MALE DOWNY WOODPECKER

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## UPCOMING EVENTS FROM THE NORTH SALEM OPEN LAND FOUNDATION

### MAY 9:

Vernal Pool Exploration at Weil Preserve, 10AM

### MAY 30:

Celebrate Nature at Baxter Preserve, 10AM to 2PM

### JUNE 6:

Breakfast with the Bobolinks at Hayfield-on-Keeler, 10AM

### JUNE 24:

Echoes in the Night: Discovering Our Local Bats at Weil Preserve, 8PM

### JULY 11:

iNaturalist Quest: Exploring North Salem's Biodiversity, 9AM

### JULY 28:

Buck Moon Meditation at Hayfield-on-Keeler, 7:30PM

### AUGUST 19:

Pollinators After Dark at Weil Preserve, 8PM

### SEPTEMBER 26:

Bluegrass in the Meadow at Weil Preserve, 5PM

### OCTOBER 17:

Annual Meeting of Members at Weil Preserve, 4PM

### RECURRING MONTHLY EVENTS

check [www.nsof.org](http://www.nsof.org) for the monthly updates

**FIRST WEDNESDAY VOLUNTEER DAY**—A monthly, hands-on stewardship opportunity offering a chance to get outside, get your hands dirty, and make a direct impact on local conservation efforts.

**THIRD THURSDAY ON THE TRAIL**—A monthly guided walk series offering an opportunity to explore the lesser-known and much-loved preserves that make North Salem special.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION AND REGISTRATION, PLEASE VISIT [WWW.NSOLF.ORG](http://WWW.NSOLF.ORG)**



BLACK CHERRY

## WELCOME ABOARD!

**Brandon Sumpman** is joining us as a Seasonal Land Steward. He is a devoted husband and father of two amazing children, as well as a proud Marine Corps veteran with a background in operating heavy equipment. With nearly 20 years of experience in the entertainment industry, he has contributed to a wide range of high-profile events—from the New York City Marathon to New Year's Eve celebrations in Times Square, and major concerts at Madison Square Garden and around the globe.



Now, Brandon is shifting gears to a new mission: working hands-on at the North Salem Open Land Foundation. Driven by a passion for sustainability and community impact, he is focused on enhancing local environments and helping protect the planet for future generations.



**Allison O'Rourke** joined us as the Operations Manager, a new position for NSOLF, where she supports land conservation through strategic operations, programming, and community engagement.

She is the Chapter President of Wild Ones Lower Hudson Valley, a former member of the Pound Ridge Conservation Board, and currently serves on the Pound Ridge Human Rights Advisory Committee. She transitioned into land conservation from a marketing and operations background, bringing a strong foundation in organization, communication, and program execution. A self-described plant and ecology enthusiast, Allison is a devoted student of native plant systems and biodiversity. In her free time, she enjoys working with native plants and continuing to deepen her knowledge of ecology.



RACCOON FORAGING AFTER A THAW

## WELCOME NEW AND RETURNING TRUSTEES!

We are excited to announce that Cynthia Vance-Abrams and Ed Taylor have joined our Board, along with returning Trustee, David Peterson.

**Cynthia Vance-Abrams** brings with her an extensive and varied background in nonprofit work. Born in Dallas, Texas, she grew up in a family that valued the arts and civic responsibility. After earning her M.F.A. from Southern Methodist University, she moved to New York City and spent more than 20 years working as an actor in theater, television, and commercials across the country. She later served on the National Board of the Screen Actors Guild from 2000–2007, contributing to key committees and helping lead successful efforts to pass child performer protection laws and film and television tax incentives in New York. From 2008–2014, she worked in editorial, marketing, and acquisitions for children’s books at Abbeville Press. Returning to performing in 2015, Cynthia joined the Grammy-nominated Broadway Inspirational Voices choir, eventually serving as Vice President and later as Executive Director. After her husband’s passing in 2023, she returned to Abbeville Press as President and now also serves as trustee of the Abrams Family Art Collection.



Born in Brooklyn and raised between Vermont and Long Island, **Ed Taylor** developed an early appreciation for open land, clean water and community life. He founded Down East Seafood in 1990, and grew that from a one-man operation to a 70-employee company, generating \$27M in annual revenue. After selling the company to a public firm in 2022, he continued his commitment to sustainability through his restaurants - Purdy’s Farmer & the Fish, Hudson Farmer & the Fish, Bistro de Ville, and Br’er’s BBQ - all emphasizing locally sourced ingredients, community engagement, and responsible stewardship of natural resources. Ed hopes to bring his entrepreneurial experience, environmental awareness and collaborative energy to NSOLF in support of its



mission to conserve and protect the land we share.

**David Peterson** is a returning Trustee. David is the Founder and President of the Onera Foundation, a private foundation that advocates for the preservation of historic American architecture by funding exhibitions and innovative programming, including art and film. He is Board Chair of the Harlem Academy school, an independent NYC school offering promising students a leading education regardless of economic circumstance. He serves on the Advisory Council of the Glass House, a National Trust Historic site in New Canaan, Connecticut and is a board member of The Foundation for Art and Preservation in Embassies, a public-private partnership with the US State Department dedicated to providing permanent works of American art for embassies worldwide. He holds a BA from Dartmouth College, an MBA from New York University, and a MS in Historic Preservation from the Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation. His first book, *US Embassies of the Cold War: the Architecture of Democracy, Diplomacy and Defense*, was released in 2023. He is currently an Adjunct Professor at Columbia University.



NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD

## REMEMBERING CAROL GOLDBERG, TRUSTEE AND FRIEND



It is with great sadness that the board and staff of the Open Land Foundation share with you the passing of our beloved long-time trustee, friend, neighbor, and colleague **Carol Goldberg**. As many of you know, Carol's unexpected death is a shock to the entire North Salem community.

North Salem will not be the same without her active and caring presence. She represents so much of what we are as a town, and we are indebted to her for what we have become. This remembrance can't begin to measure her impact on the North Salem community, but for the Open Land Foundation, she was involved from its beginnings, 52 years ago. She led the organization as its chair for years, helped save numerous parcels, and placed a conservation easement on her own property to preserve it forever. As Carol would say, North Salem's open space "did not happen by accident."

Carol is a model to us, never quitting to advocate for land protection and never hesitating to stop walkers in Baxter asking, "Are you a member?" She exemplified and supported everything we admire here: stewardship, equestrian tradition, and our unique rural nature.

"Carol is North Salem," says trustee Peter Kamenstein. She is everything we hope and stand for because she was filled with the grace and love of life. Many know her for her appreciation of music, garden design, antiques, pets, to name a few of her passions. You could always count on Carol for a caring word and a witty observation. We miss her already. Fortunately, Carol had been informed that she was to be honored at our foundation's fundraiser party that's in the works for Saturday, September 26—and we will honor her indeed. We will share information with you about this upcoming event soon.

Thank you for keeping Carol's family and friends in your thoughts and prayers.

*Save the Date!*

### **BLUEGRASS in the Meadow**

Honoring Carol Goldberg

Saturday, September 26th

5:30 - 9:30 PM

Weil Preserve



~ Live Auction ~ Music by ~  
Mike Burns and Highway 53

#### **Stakeholder Notification/Public Notice**

The land trust accreditation program recognizes land conservation organizations that meet national quality standards for protecting important natural places and working lands forever. The North Salem Open Land Foundation is pleased to announce it is applying for accreditation renewal. A public comment period is now open.

The Land Trust Accreditation Commission, an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance, conducts an extensive review of each applicant's policies and programs. As an accredited land trust, the North Salem Open Land Foundation has a proven track record as a strong, effective organization you can trust to conserve and protect your land forever.

The Commission invites public input and accepts signed, written comments on pending applications. Comments must relate to how the North Salem Open Land Foundation complies with national quality standards. These standards address the ethical and technical operation of a land trust. For the full list of standards see:

**<http://www.landtrustaccreditation.org/help-and-resources/indicator-practices>.**

To learn more about the accreditation program and to submit a comment, visit:

**[www.landtrustaccreditation.org](http://www.landtrustaccreditation.org), or email your comment to [info@landtrustaccreditation.org](mailto:info@landtrustaccreditation.org).**

Comments may also be mailed to: the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, Attn: Public Comments, 36 Phila Street, Suite 2, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866.

Comments on North Salem Open Land Foundation's application will be most useful by June 14, 2026.

North Salem Open Land Foundation  
P.O. Box 176  
North Salem, NY 10560

STD PRSRT  
Postage Paid  
Permit No 38  
Danbury CT

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

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JOIN THE MOVEMENT  
PROTECT NORTH SALEM'S  
OPEN LAND



Scan the QR code to learn more about NSOLF, make a donation, or to renew your membership.

***We Need You!***

**NSOLF depends on the continued support from the community.  
Please make a tax-deductible contribution today.**

Enclosed is my gift of:

- \$10,000  \$5,000  \$2,000  \$1,000 *Donors of \$1000 or more are invited to attend our annual Donor Party.*
- \$500  \$250  \$100  \$75 Family Membership  \$50 Individual Membership  \$\_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

- A matching gift program is offered through my employer. (Please enclose form)
- Please send information about the financial benefits of donating a conservation easement.
- Please contact me about volunteer opportunities at NSOLF.



Please make your tax-deductible contribution payable to  
**North Salem Open Land Foundation, P.O. Box 176, North Salem, NY 10560 • (914) 669-5860**  
*Online Donations can be made at [www.nsolf.org](http://www.nsolf.org)*

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