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WE ARE ALL STEWARDS OF THE LAND!

PAM POOLEY, BOARD CHAIR

Our 50th Anniversary celebrating 1974-2024 left an indelible footprint on our conservation-minded community as together we purchased **168 acres** off of Hardscrabble Road— our “jubilee” preserve! It’s our first protected land on the west side of North Salem, and you made it happen!

We have **lots to do** to get it ready for walkers and hikers, including mapping and blazing trails, staking borders, removing failed, dangerous trees along paths, and clearing a small parking area of natural materials for preserve access. These tasks are how we manage and **forever look after** your open land. Stewardship is a job that’s **never finished**, stewardship is our ongoing commitment to the land you have saved with us!

This land is your land. Nature is a priority to us, and land asks for nothing in return. **But we must reciprocate with good care.** Consider the upkeep in your own backyards and multiply that by our 29 preserves. **Stewarding the land is our covenant as a land trust.** And we love taking care of it for your pleasure and safety. We have some large stewardship projects including the repair of the dam at Baxter Preserve, which captures the water in the pristine lake there.



In 2025, the Open Land Foundation staff and trustees are strategizing stewardship for the next fifty years. We will consult our **Land Management Plans**, which we produce for every preserve. These are our roadmaps for stewardship, and we are planning a capital campaign to keep our land **thriving for the next half century**. If you would like to get involved with our stewardship efforts by volunteering or fundraising with us, please reach out to me at pam@nsolf.org.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

JOHN BAKER

Our NEW Baxter Preserve Sentinel Tree Program

In honor of our 50 years of conservation, the *Baxter Preserve Sentinel Tree Program* was launched last year by a very generous, visionary donation of \$50,000 from Steve Rattner and Maureen White. Their gift allowed NSOLF to initially remove numerous dead trees from within the preserve, as well as along Baxter Road (with permission from the North Salem Historic Commission), and to plant sixteen native, climate resilient trees that will form an allée of trees along Baxter Preserve.

The purpose of the Baxter Preserve Sentinel Tree Program is to care for healthy existing trees, remove declining trees and most importantly plant new native trees such as shagbark hickory, basswood, American sweetgum and black tupelo. The new trees will watch over Baxter Preserve for future generations of visitors to enjoy. The trees that were tasked with this responsibility years ago have been impacted by age, more powerful storms and an array of insects and

Continued on page 2



diseases that have compromised their health and vigor.

Why are trees so important to our community? They improve our air quality by absorbing carbon dioxide and releasing oxygen, filter pollutants from the air and enhance overall air quality. Trees act as carbon sinks, sequestering carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, which helps mitigate climate change. They provide shade and release water vapor through transpiration to cool the environment. Trees play a crucial role in the water cycle by absorbing rainfall, reducing runoff and charging groundwater. Their root systems stabilize soil, preventing erosion and maintaining soil health. Our native tree selections provide habitats for a vast array of wildlife, offering food, shelter, breeding grounds and maintaining ecological balance. For example, the native oak tree attracts over 500 beneficial caterpillars that feed our birds in Spring. As we all enjoy at our flagship Baxter Preserve, our trees fill us with a sense of peacefulness.

We encourage you to participate in the *Baxter Preserve Sentinel Tree Program*. It's a perfect oppor-



tunity for individuals, families and organizations to plant a tree in honor of someone or in memory of a beloved friend or family member. You can purchase a mature 2.5 inch caliper native tree that will be planted and maintained in perpetuity at Baxter Preserve for \$2000. You can choose your tree from a list of native tree species as well as in consultation with North Salem Open Land Foundation, and choose its location. Your tree will be virtually memorialized on our website. There will be space available to write a short, virtual dedication. No physical plaques are allowed in Baxter Preserve but you will receive a hard copy of your tree dedication certificate to frame.

Another way to support this program is a direct donation to the *Baxter Preserve Sentinel Tree Program* that will be used to care for the existing trees and removal of declining trees at Baxter Preserve.

For more information, to purchase a tree or donate to the *Baxter Preserve Sentinel Tree Program*, please contact Andrew Middlebrook, Director of Stewardship at andrew@nsolf.org or 914-669-5860 ext.104.

NOTES FROM THE FIELD

ANDREW MIDDLEBROOK, DIRECTOR OF STEWARDSHIP

The Vital Role of Snowfall After a Drought: A Blessing for Our Ecosystems and Water Supply

As winter settles into our rearview mirror and spring emerges, I find myself reflecting on the snowfall we experienced this winter and what that means for our budding landscape and the creatures that call it home. Snowfall plays a critical role in our ecosystem: it provides vital water resources and helps restore balance after the dry spell of a recent drought, such as the one we experienced in the latter half of 2024.

After an extensive period of drought, which often results in below-average rainfall and reduced water supplies, the snow that blankets the landscape serves as a natural reservoir. Snow accumulates in mountain ranges and higher elevations, where it is stored throughout the cold winter months. This snowpack, often referred to as a “snow



reservoir,” gradually melts throughout the spring, releasing precious water into rivers and streams.

This melting snow is a primary source of fresh water for many communities, agricultural areas, and ecosystems that define the northeast. In regions that rely on snowmelt to replenish reservoirs and rivers, the snowfall after a prior

drought becomes crucial for replenishing water to healthy, sustainable levels, restoring vitality to the landscape.

In the wake of a drought, when groundwater levels have dropped and water reserves dwindled, a substantial snowpack can alleviate the strain on existing water supplies playing a significant role in mitigating the risk of a “water shortage crisis.” By replenishing freshwater sources, snow provides an insurance policy against the long-term impacts of drought on food production, drinking water, and energy resources. Without this winter precipitation, the ongoing dry conditions could lead to even more severe water shortages and economic strain in affected areas. A drive by any of our local reservoirs these past few months have provided us a startling glimpse into how important these winter storms will be for our region as we move forward in 2025.

Beyond human communities, snowmelt provides essential water for ecosystems. Rivers and streams depend on the steady flow of water from melting snow to provide life-sustaining moisture for plants and animals alike. Snowmelt supports critical habitats for species that rely on aquatic environments, such as fish, amphibians especially during the spring and summer when water is in the highest demand. Our vernal pools are recharged by snowmelt providing vital breeding ground for sensitive amphibians and other creatures that rely on these habitats to sustain future populations. Without them, these animals have a slim chance of surviving in an environment that is rapidly changing due to the effects of climate change and extreme weather fluctuations.

Furthermore, snow helps regulate the temperature of waterways, preventing them from warming too quickly in the early months. This cooler water temperature is crucial for preserving aquatic life, especially in regions where heat waves and droughts can put additional stress on ecosystems. Our local



trout populations are a key example of a species that depend on cooler water to successfully spawn future generations. Any local fly fisherman will tell you of the changes they’ve witnessed in trout populations due to warmer water temperatures over the past decade or more, and the ripple effect this has on the overall health of the ecosystem.

After the hardships of a drought year, snowfall offers a vital lifeline that helps communities, wildlife, and ecosystems recover. Our spring ephemerals rely upon it, sensitive habitats and creatures alike cannot survive without it and neither can we. As we continue to face the challenges presented by climate change and water scarcity, understanding the importance of snow as a water source becomes more essential than ever.

So, while winter storms might seem like a seasonal event to some, it is much more than just beautiful scenery. For many, it represents a critical resource that offers hope for the year ahead—restoring life and balance to the environment after the grip of a drought.

Let’s appreciate the snowflakes when they fall, knowing that they hold the promise of renewal to come. See you on the trails.

IT TAKES A VILLAGE!

LOIS LIPPMANN, 50TH ANNIVERSARY HONOREE

We recently celebrated our 50th Anniversary of conserving open space in North Salem.

Lois Quinn Lippmann was presented with a Lifetime Achievement Award for her legacy of service and commitment to preserving North Salem’s bucolic nature. Below is her acceptance speech. What an incredible story of vision and perseverance. Thank you for all that you have done and continue to do for our beautiful community, Lois!

It was in July, 1972, Ken and I, along with our two young boys, had just moved to Grants Corner from St. Louis. Interstate 684 was under construction and across the road from our little farmhouse, our neighbor was selling loads of dirt to the construction com-

pany building the new highway.... Basically they were strip mining North Salem’s precious topsoil.

Ken and I joined other concerned neighbors – Herb and Elizabeth Graff, Bud Mandelstam, Roy Bergstrasser, Bill Ahearn, Linden Farrar and many others

at a town board meeting held on the second floor of Delancy Hall. Ken and I had never been to a town board meeting in our lives, but that evening we figured out just who we would like to get to know better in our new community. There were rumblings that were even about the idea of founding a land-saving organization to protect North Salem which had dairy, hay, apple and horse farms. Not long after that meeting a small group of people led by Elizabeth Graff and Bud Mandelstam founded the North Salem Open Land Foundation. Ken and I immediately joined. I was in my twenties at the time, with no experience in saving land, so my responsibility was to make cookies and coffee for the meetings. I was quite happy to do whatever I could to help out. Fairly soon after, the town assessor, David Morgan, who was an avid fly fisherman, encouraged a couple by the name of Lance that they should consider donating their parcel of land along the Titicus River to the newly formed North Salem Open Land Foundation. Perhaps there was a little self-interest there! But, the fledgling organization soon had acquired its first piece of land.

At the same time, there were other pristine areas in town which developers owned, such as the Race-track on Baxter Road. A group of men and women of Golden's Bridge Hounds, Austine Hearst, Gene Colley, Joe Pinto and others, purchased that 100 acres and a second parcel across the road and gave it to North Salem Open Land Foundation for preservation.

Meanwhile, I had graduated from making cookies and found myself on the town planning board. With so much development pressure in the early 1980s, it was apparent that a new Master Plan for our town was called for and the zoning needed to be tightened up. A new town planner by the name of Manny Emanuel from the west side of Hudson, who had a reputation for helping towns such as ours, was hired and a new master plan was written and a new zoning ordinance was adopted. The new ordinance called for larger lot zoning, protection of wetlands and steep slopes, protection of woodlands and overall recognition of preservation of open space. Industrial zoning was removed from along the north side of Hardscrabble Road and away from our public schools.

North Salem became known for being well informed with tough planning boards, and a town board, which supported its appointed boards. Many town residents may remember the public hearing of the Stewart Down zoning application, in which three hundred good citizens showed up for the public hearing in

CAROL
GOLDBERG
PRESENTS
LIFETIME
ACHIEVEMENT
AWARD TO
LOIS.



the high school auditorium where there was standing room only. A hard battle was fought to save this beautiful land!

Let's not forget the men and women such as Peter Bliss, Charlie Voelkl, Roger Vandenburg, Sam Weinstein, and Cynthia Curtis who served on planning boards, zoning boards, and conservation boards. And, those on the town board—John White and Pat Murphy—who voted with me in 1985 to adopt the zoning ordinance which pretty much still stands today.

It isn't just office-holding individuals who need to be recognized and thanked. We need to remember the cub scouts and boy scouts, Steve Mulligan and Edris Scherer's 4-H Club kids who volunteered to clean up stone walls and remove invasive plants and continue to do so. We must remember the North Salem Bridle Trails Association which cleared and maintained the beautiful riding trails so many enjoy. And, thank you to Golden's Bridge Hounds for chasing the foxes and coyotes away from our chicken coops!

And, finally, I'd like to recognize the many good citizens of North Salem, who came out to the public meetings and spoke up in favor of land preservation, and voted for elected officials who value the land as much as NSOLF does. Remember the group known as the Concerned Residents of North Salem, with Peter Farina and Jesse Goldberg? They were the group that helped save the apple orchards from a huge warehousing complex and later on, a condo development. And, let's never forget the popup newspaper known as the *Rural Press* which kept us informed of meeting dates and everything else that was going on in town.

So, if you haven't figured it out yet, it took a village to save the character of beautiful North Salem. So, I am accepting this award on behalf of the people of North Salem. We did it together! And,



I am accepting it on behalf of the future generations who, I'm sure, will stay vigilant in the face of ongoing threats to North Salem's rural character and open land.

I want to leave you with this thought... As the author Margaret Mitchell wrote nearly one hundred years ago, "Land is the only thing in the world that amounts to anything, for it is the only thing in this world that lasts."

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

UPCOMING EVENTS FROM THE NORTH SALEM OPEN LAND FOUNDATION

Get ready for an exciting year with the North Salem Open Land Foundation as we host a series of educational and interactive events designed to connect you with nature.

Check out our upcoming events below!

APRIL EVENTS

April 26th: Pitch in for Preserves

MAY EVENTS

May 10th: Trees and Their Frenemies
with Taro Ietaka

May 31st: Members Day at
Baxter Preserve – Fun for all ages

JUNE EVENTS

June 7th: Breakfast with the Bobolinks
with Jim Nordgren

JULY EVENTS

July 9th: Buck Moon Meditation & Mindful
Meadow Walk with Catherine Downs

July 8th–29th: TULA Yoga, Summer
Outdoor Series

SEPTEMBER EVENTS

September 27th: Weil'd Night at
Weil Preserve

**STAY CONNECTED WITH US FOR MORE UPDATES
AND REMEMBER TO BRING YOUR CURIOSITY
AND LOVE FOR THE NATURAL WORLD. FOR
MORE INFORMATION AND REGISTRATION,
PLEASE VISIT WWW.NSOLF.ORG**

PITCH IN FOR PRESERVES — BAXTER PRESERVE SATURDAY, APRIL 26TH, 10:00AM TO NOON



Join us for our second annual Pitch in for Preserves, a day of environmental stewardship at Baxter Preserve! This event is perfect for nature lovers and eco-conscious individuals who want to make a positive impact on our beautiful landscape. We will be breaking into groups to clear invasive vines from trees—an essential task for the health and longevity of these trees—and also cleaning up litter around the preserve. Your help will make a meaningful difference in maintaining the natural beauty of Baxter Preserve. Register at nsolf.org

WE'RE HIRING!

PART-TIME SEASONAL LAND STEWARD

Do you want to make a difference in land conservation by getting outside and participating in stewardship activities, putting your outdoor skills to use, maintaining trails, and sharing knowledge with the community?

NSOLF is seeking a **Part-Time Seasonal Land Steward** to assist with land stewardship activities including invasive species management, trail maintenance, restoration projects, and community engagement. This is a field-based role that requires strong ecological knowledge, outdoor skills, and a commitment to the preservation of natural resources. Go to <https://nsolf.org/get-involved/employment> for more information and application details. **Application Deadline: May 5th**

MAY IS MEMBERSHIP MONTH AT NSOLF

Save the date: Saturday, May 31, 2025, 11am – 2pm

We want to meet you and share the beauty of open land with you! Join us at the Baxter Preserve "The Racetrack" on Baxter Road in North Salem for Members Day. Whether you're an existing member or want to learn more, it will be fun for all ages!

More details to follow at nsolf.org

BEECH LEAF DISEASE...ONGOING

VICTORIA CRAIG, CONSERVATION TECHNICIAN

Showcasing the Work of the Beech Leaf Disease Coalition: My StoryMap

We're excited to share a new digital resource that highlights the important work being done by the Beech Leaf Disease (BLD) Coalition in the lower Hudson Valley. **The BLD Coalition is a group of environmental organizations formed as an offshoot of LHPRISM, implementing solutions to Beech Leaf Disease related forest degradation.**

I created and designed this interactive StoryMap which offers a comprehensive overview of the BLD Coalition's efforts to protect and preserve American beech trees.

The StoryMap seamlessly combines maps,



photos, and engaging narratives to illustrate the coalition's ongoing research, monitoring, and restoration efforts. By exploring this digital platform, users can learn about the signs of BLD, its spread across the region, and the collaborative work being done to mitigate its impact on local Beech populations. This StoryMap serves as a great resource for anyone interested in learning more about BLD and the innovative solutions being put into action.

Scan the QR code to check it out and explore how the BLD Coalition is working to protect these vital trees and their ecosystems.

NSOLF WELCOMES NEW BOARD MEMBERS



Virginia Connolly, a retired GE Executive of 28 years, is a resident and an active member of the North Salem community. Virginia led the Marketing and Corporate Communications Team for GE Capital Aviation Services (GECAS). She was directly responsible for Investor Relations, competitor and industry analysis, as well as GECAS branding.

Virginia serves as a trustee on the Keeler Library Board, where she was a former President. She is also co-chair of the Conservation Advisory Council. Virginia stewards the Durand Preserve. She was formerly a member of the Improvement and Historical Societies. Virginia is married with 3 children and 2 dogs.

Christopher Brockmeyer has lived in North Salem with his wife, Xenia and daughter, Emilia, since 2001. He is deeply rooted in the community. Chris served a 4-year term on the North Salem Town Board. He was appointed to the North Salem Planning Board and is currently serving as Deputy Chair. He participates on North Salem's Climate Smart



Committee. In addition, he has served on the Boards of the Keeler Library, and the North Salem Historical Society (NSHS). Chris previously served on the Board of NSOLF and we are happy to have him back!

Chris has been the Director of Employee Benefit Funds for the Broadway League, the national trade association for the Broadway theatre industry, since 2007. He is the Employer Co-Chair on 23 multi-employer pension, health, and annuity/401(k) funds, which provide benefits to workers in the entertainment industry. Chris also sits on many boards and committees of national employee benefits-related organizations.

Andrew Peters lives in North Salem with his wife Michelle and their two children, Noah and Isla. Andrew has spent his career in the financial industry and is the Founder of Revelare Partners. You can find the family almost always outside, regularly exploring many of the NSOLF preserves, picking wildflowers, blackberries and exploring "super-secret streams."

We look forward to working with Virginia, Christopher and Andy on upcoming projects!



SIGNS OF SPRING

EDRIS SCHERER, NSOLF MEMBER

On February 26th, we received a lovely message from Edris Scherer, a longtime NSOLF member and avid birder.

Yesterday at the Baxter Preserve while walking along the west side of the pond just past the Viewing

Stand at the oak tree, I was actually stopped in my tracks by the call of a male red-winged blackbird. And



of course there is never just one.

I looked back in my calendar to see when my first red-winged blackbird sightings were over the last few years and found an even earlier arrival time for them in 2022 on February 20th.

I count my blessings and am very grateful for all your efforts every single time I walk on a NSOLF preserve.

SAVE THE DATE

Weil'd Night

A Pig Roast & Celebration!

Saturday, September 27th

Weil Preserve



~ Catered by ~
Chef Paul Gileno

~ Music and Merriment by ~
Andrea and the Armenian Rug Riders

More details to follow

THANK YOU FOR CELEBRATING 50 YEARS WITH US!

Our 50th Anniversary Celebration was an inspiring and successful event because of you! Many thanks to Jamie Dinan and Elizabeth Miller for allowing us to gather with 325 guests at Staysail Farm on October 26, 2024 to celebrate half-a-century of land conservation.

Senator Pete Harckham presented NSOLF with the New York State Senate Empire Award, in recognition of outstanding contributions and dedication to the growth, prosperity and betterment of their community and New York State.



ALAN MENKEN GAVE AN OUTSTANDING PRIVATE PERFORMANCE.



With your participation, we raised a net of \$500,000! These funds were put to use acquiring a new 168 acre preserve that's being prepared for the public later in 2025. Scan the QR code to view the new preserve.



Thank you to our generous Corporate Sponsors who helped make the 50th Celebration a success!

Staysail Farm, Hayfields Market, Haverford Quality Investing, Hogan, Rossi & Liguori, Old Salem Farm, Insite Engineering, Meccanic Shop, D&T Brothers Plumbing & Heating, Michele Leasure PT OCS

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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 ☐ \$_____

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- ☐ 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
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