



NEWS FROM NORTH SALEM OPEN LAND FOUNDATION

Summer/Fall 2022

HAPPY TRAILS, JOCKO!

NSOLF announces the retirement of our dear friend and Executive Director, Jocko McKean. Jocko's last day was June 30th after six years of service. We recognize his unconditional dedication to the foundation, as well as his kindness and congeniality. Jocko will be sorely missed but his accomplishments will always be here to remind us of how important he has been to the Foundation. We wish him every happiness in his retirement. We look forward to seeing you on the trails, Jocko!

NSOLF is pleased to welcome John Baker as our Executive Director. By way of introduction, NSOLF Board secretary Pam Pooley sat down for a Q & A with our new Director. Please see that getting-to-know-you on page two.

REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN FOR THE RACE FOR OPEN SPACE 2022

Lace up your running shoes and join us at Baxter Preserve on Sunday, September 18th for a 5K run, 4K walk and the Kids Fun Run Around the Pond. All members, friends and supporters are welcome! Register as an individual racer, fundraiser or create a team and amplify your fundraising impact.



**SAVE
the
DATE**

SEPT. 18, 2022

Join us for a family fun run/walk to support North Salem's Open Space.
Registration info coming soon.

RACE FOR OPEN SPACE 2022

Baxter Preserve | Baxter Road, North Salem, NY

UPCOMING EVENTS

SEPTEMBER 18TH
RACE FOR OPEN SPACE
AT BAXTER PRESERVE

OCTOBER 1ST
ANNUAL MEETING OF MEMBERS
AT WEIL PRESERVE



AUGUST 14TH
SHADED SUMMER HIKE
AT MARX PRESERVE

OCTOBER 9TH
FALL COLORS HIKE AT BLOOMERSIDE PRESERVE

To register: scan QR code here or visit: www.nsolf.org/raceforopenspace



NEW this year:

Kids Fun Run Around the Pond – Each young racer will receive a medal of completion for making their way around the pond.

Awards Ceremony – We will host an awards ceremony to acknowledge the Top 3 male and female 5K finishers by age group.

Finisher's Village – Make sure you stop by the Finisher's Village to learn about the **North Salem Climate Smart Leadership Committee**. They will have lots of great information for methods

Continued on page 2

RACE!...Continued from page 1

of reducing energy consumption and your carbon footprint.

SPONSORS: Interested in sponsoring this event?

We are asking for your support by donating supplies or by providing a monetary donation. We are anticipating more than two hundred guests at this event. Please know that your donation, large or small, is greatly appreciated by NSOLF. Any donations may be sent to the address below or we will gladly arrange for them to be picked up.



Please email raceforopenspace@nsolf.org or call us at (914) 669-5860 for sponsorship information. Sponsor's logo and business information will be prominently displayed on our race website, on signage on race day, at www.nsolf.org, on social media, t-shirts, and in our upcoming newsletter.

VOLUNTEERS:

Don't want to run? **Volunteer to help us make this event a success!** Volunteers will help with registration, course marshal, cheering section, and so much more.

Email raceforopenspace@nsolf.org to volunteer for this event.

WELCOME NSOLF's NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, JOHN BAKER

Q AND A WITH BOARD SECRETARY, PAM POOLEY

PP: John, you are not a stranger to North Salem...

JB: That's right, my familiarity with North Salem began when our family moved to Connecticut in the late 1990s and I became the Director of Conser-

vation for the Westchester County Parks Department. Mt. Lakes Park was one of the many parks that I supervised and I established a satellite office there. As an avid runner and cyclist, I have logged hundreds of miles on the quiet roads in North Salem.

PP: What is it about North Salem that you find unique?

JB: What is so pleasing to me, is that over the last 25 years, the character and natural beauty of North Salem remains intact.

PP: Are you familiar with our preserves?

JB: I have enjoyed the NSOLF preserves for many years. I'm a regular trail runner and snowshoer in the combined 134-acres of the O'Donohue, Halmi and Hearst-Meade Preserves that are contiguous to Mt. Lakes Park.

PP: Do you have a favorite?

JB: For me, the open fields and open canopy to the vastness of the sky make Baxter Preserve a perfect location for contemplation and reflection. This past Christmas, my family and I enjoyed a cherished morning stroll there together.

PP: What other ways have you been involved with the Town?

JB: As the Westchester Parks Director of Conservation, I've worked with the Town of North Salem government regarding its day camp program at Mt. Lakes Park and the construction of Camp Morty there in 2006. Over the years, I've had the pleasure of collaborating with many Town leaders.

PP: Tell us about your experience managing parks.

JB: I managed Tibbetts Brook Park, Muscoot Farm and Lasdon Park and Arboretum before becoming Director of Conservation. My role as Director was to oversee the natural and cultural resources of the 17,000-acre Westchester County Parks system.

PP: How does that relate to our preservation of open land.

JB: The diversity of parks has given me a wealth of experience in land stewardship, managing and maintaining conserved land, while enhancing the visitor



EXECUTIVE Q & A...*Continued from page 2*

experience. All this is transferable to my new role as Executive Director managing NSOLF preserves and easements.

PP: *What's one of your key takeaways?*

JB: What my experience has taught me is that parks and preserves need advocates and supporters to preserve and maintain open space in perpetuity for future generations.

PP: *How do you go about that?*

JB: It is important for us to engage our community and visitors to the value of our work that has such a positive impact on the environment and rural character of North Salem. Additionally, I want to identify land

preservation opportunities within the Town and engage with landowners to understand the benefits of land protection.

PP: *Tell us more about your aspirations for open space here.*

JB: I am really looking forward to continuing the outstanding efforts of NSOLF in land preservation and excellent ecological work that Jocko McKean and Andrew Middlebrook have accomplished in the stewardship of our preserves. And importantly, I want to foster our relationship with our devoted corps of volunteers who generously give their time to help us in so many ways!

NOTES FROM THE FIELD

BY ANDREW MIDDLEBROOK, STEWARDSHIP DIRECTOR

I often find myself telling friends and family about the amazing things I get to witness in the field each day. Whether I am at work, on a hike or even in my own backyard, I do my best to stay vigilant of the living things around me. Big or small, they all play a vital part in our local ecosystems whether we recognize them or not. Now more than ever is the perfect time for us to make ourselves aware of who we share our land with and how we can better maintain it to ensure that we all have a future where we can coexist in harmony.

I think back to a time when I worked with kids getting them out in the field for a variety of outdoor activities with a set goal in mind for the day only to have my plans get sidetracked when an odd insect or wildlife sighting would derail things for a few minutes. Some would see this as an intrusion to the group's focus but I learned to take these moments and use them as teaching opportunities. Moments like this soon became a thing

...I DO MY BEST TO STAY VIGILANT OF THE LIVING THINGS AROUND ME. BIG OR SMALL, THEY ALL PLAY A VITAL PART IN OUR LOCAL ECOSYSTEMS WHETHER WE RECOGNIZE THEM OR NOT.

I looked forward to that truly added value to the day and made more of an impact than the allotted activity we had planned. Allowing the opportunity for kids to observe the living world up close provided insight into how we can all coexist with nature in more positive ways.

Years later, I've found that these same moments frequently shape the future of how we manage the land here at NSOLF. A recent encounter with a Wood Turtle on one of our preserves, a NYS species of special

LAND FAQs: BACKYARD STEWARDSHIP

It's no secret that our environment is under attack by so many challenges—invasive plants, pesticides, carbon emissions, to name a few. It can feel overwhelming to consider these obstacles and how we can help combat them. Being a "Backyard Steward" may be the small change that makes a big impact.

Whether you are a new or seasoned homeowner, there are a few simple steps that can be considered to help the environment when you are planning your landscape.

- Use native plants and flowers to help reduce air pollution. Other benefits to native plants are that they require less water and fewer pesticides, and provide food and shelter for many important pollinators.
- "Leave the leaves"; when you leave the leaves in place in the fall, you will provide much needed shelter for many beneficial insects and pollinators for the winter months.
- Seek organic lawn care solutions to reduce the amount of pesticides and herbicides in our environment.

Please visit www.pollinator-pathway.org for more information on how to get started. Contact andrew@nsolf.org if you would like to be a part of the North Salem Pollinator Pathway.

Continued on page 4

A NOTE... *Continued from page 3*

concern, promptly changed our management approach to encourage a successful future for the species at this site. The discovery of rare and unique plant species through careful observation during field inspections has also elicited the same approach. In each of these occasions, I was not expecting these interactions to occur but was truly grateful for the moment to passively observe and report upon our findings.

I took this approach and applied it to my own property after we bought it with the hopes of turning what was once a heavily mown and underappreciated landscape into a thriving oasis for native wildlife and plant species. Again, by using simple observations



PHOTOS: ANDREW MIDDLEBROOK

from the field, I was able to identify the species I had hoped to attract through taking note of what plants and habitats they were visiting the most in the wild. One of my favorite success stories comes from the year I planted common Milkweed in our pollinator garden with the hopes of attracting Monarch Butterflies. For years I had never seen any visit our gardens so I figured by simply planting the Monarchs host plant I could at least increase the odds of attracting a few. The plant took well to the site and soon began to flower which quickly began to attract several Monarch Butterflies. As the season progressed, I began to notice a Monarch caterpillar slowly growing bigger and bigger until a chrysalis showed up on an adjacent plant. I visited everyday until it emerged in my absence and began its new life. It was an amazing experience to observe and a real life lesson into the symbiotic relationship our native species have with the landscape they rely upon.

This is truly where we can all decide to play a vital role in how the future will play out for the creatures that call our local ecosystems home. We can certainly do our part to recycle and not litter but how can we make a big impact quickly to help with issues such as deforestation, habitat loss and global warming? The answer lies in getting outside and taking a closer look

Continued on page 5

GUEST COLUMN...BY JOCKO MCKEAN

Stewardship Is the Answer

We often are asked about the most important things we need to be doing to protect the environment. Many of the answers are out of our control or too big to tackle, or even at a cost that is prohibitive. But the reality is that we need a paradigm shift in how we think about these issues as a whole. Stewardship is the answer. Whether you are taking care of a deck of native flowers or a meadow of indigenous species, stewardship is still the answer. Already I can feel the pushback in terms of my reference to indigenous species. How is that even possible in today's world? Likely it is not possible but, it gives us something to shoot for under the umbrella of stewardship. Of course there are non-native species in the "meadow" and of course many of us don't use exclusively "native" flowers on our decks or border gardens. Try as you might, it is very difficult to find native species in our garden centers and in some cases impossible. Furthermore, these commercial sellers and growers are all too often eager to sell you invasive species such as burning bush, barberry, and a slew of other invasive species. After all, the bang for the buck is many fold as these foreign invaders grow faster and longer than our native

DO WE NEED A SHIFT TO QUIETER, MORE SUBTLE WAYS TO "CLEAN UP" OUR PROPERTIES?

I BELIEVE THE TIME HAS COME TO SAY WE DO.

species. Therein lies the problem. We have abdicated our responsibility to be good stewards of the environment by, well, fill in the blank—by doing what is easiest and giving in to the established aesthetic that lawns and gardens have to look a certain way. Even if you are not a staunch believer of climate change, it seems more and more clear that fossil fuel engines are too loud, too aggressive, and simply too good at what they are designed to do. Do we need a shift to quieter, more subtle ways to "clean up" our properties? I believe the time has come to say we do. Do we need healthier ways to control insects, weeds, and even invasive species if we ever get that far? Again, I believe we do. The paradigm shift occurred well after the mid 20th century when we had to grow more, produce more, consume more, and look what that has resulted in: more use of

Continued on page 6

A NOTE... *Continued from page 4*



Common milkweed.

at who we share the landscape with. I encourage each and every one of you to do as I did and take note of the interesting species we live among and do your part to plant native species on your landscape to provide them the proper sustenance and habitat they require to continue on as a species. We can learn much more from nature if we nurture it instead of exploiting and abusing it. It should distress you to learn how crucial the loss of native pollinators is to the global food stock if we do not act in a timely manner to preserve them. We may not always find them cute and fuzzy but their role to the greater good far surpasses what we may see them as.

In conclusion, I ask that you take a few minutes each day to step outside and see who your neighbors are. They may be very small, they may fly and some may even scare you but the point is, without them our own future may look starkly different. Do your part to encourage others as well to learn more about the place they live and how they can reintroduce native plants to their own backyards to create a more appropriate habitat for the creatures we've displaced. After all, this was their home first so why not try and live together so we can all enjoy this beautiful planet we get to call home? Mars is pretty far away so let's do what we can here first.

See you on the trails.

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARD 2022

Congratulations to **Eric Weston**! Eric is the recipient of our 2022 Environmental Award. He recently graduated from John Jay High School. He has been a valued volunteer at NSOLF, having volunteered to plant trees, as well as participate in the NSOLF Summer Youth Corps program.

Eric found his love for the outdoors at a young age when his family took an extended family trip to several National Parks. He will be attending Alfred State University in the fall. Best of luck to you, Eric!



Eric (at left) receives his award from Stewardship Director Andrew Middlebrook.

NSOLF WELCOMES THREE NEW TRUSTEES TO THE BOARD

Within the past half year, North Salem Open Land has welcomed three new trustees. We are so pleased to welcome these awesome new additions. Starting last fall, the Board voted to add **Jon Miller** as the 17th trustee. Earlier this calendar year the Board also welcomed **Bill Frank** and **Teri Mendelsohn** as our 18th and 19th trustees.

Continued on page 6

NEW BOARD...*Continued from page 5*

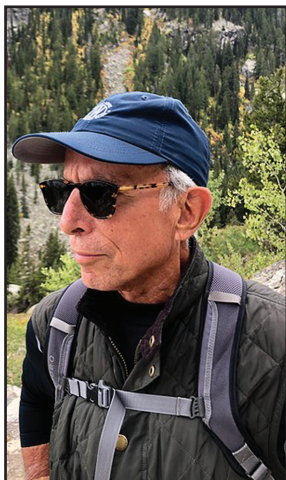
Jon and his wife Claudia have lived in North Salem for the past five years. He has worked as a real estate broker serving downtown Manhattan and Brooklyn since 2006. Jon was the Director of the Shambhala NYC Meditation Center in New York City from 2016 to 2018 where he and the center provided meditation courses & classes for thousands of people on a yearly basis. During his leadership there he built a strong cohesive team, which created the conditions for their revenue-donations to increase by 85% over the course of his tenure. Jon attended the University of California, Berkeley and served in the U.S. Military from 1982 to 1985.



Teri, whose primary residence is in New York City, has for the past several years, founded and run Mendelsohn Consulting which specializes in the design, implementation and launch of digital products for online and mobile platforms for the management of environmental, social, and governance risk. Teri is

also the co-founder and co-leader of the Energy and Environment Women's Circle for Columbia Business School Alumni Affairs.

Bill, and his wife Sally, moved to North Salem in 2003 and only a few years ago moved to Waccabuc. He has been a volunteer steward for NSOLF for the last few years and is delighted to be able to give even more as a trustee. Bill's resume includes his work as a partner for Epic Partners LLC, founder and Board member of Resonant Software, and an Executive V.P. for ACTV Inc. Bill's work on various other boards has given him the expertise to bring valued experience to the Open Land Board of Trustees.



Please join us in welcoming Jon, Bill, and Teri.

GUEST COLUMN...*Continued from page 4*

herbicides, bigger and louder machines to do the work for us; a decline in bees, birds, and countless numbers of species that will likely go extinct before we decide to make that paradigm shift I refer to as stewardship. Here are some brief, yet important steps to start making that shift to a healthier, more sustainable future.

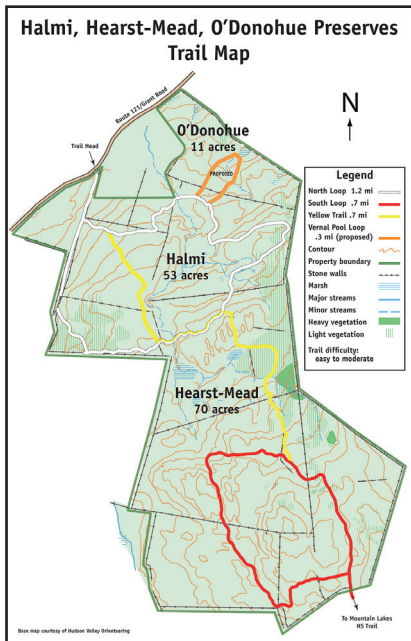
First, take stock of what you have and decide what scale you are capable of dealing with. If you don't know what is out there in your meadow or in your woods you don't have much of a chance to make things better. This means, be patient and take the time to learn what is out there. Using easily available tools out there such as the Seek app or iNaturalist, you can spend some rewarding time cataloguing and tracking what you already have. Likely this will include some things you don't want and hope to get rid of. More importantly, you will find out what you do have that is vitally important to the pollinators out there including flowers, shrubs, trees, and grasses. This may lead you down the road to find out what is threatening the good things you already have and start to eradicate them.



Mushrooms

MAP ENHANCEMENT PROJECT 2022

It is with great pleasure that we accepted funding in the amount of \$10,620 from the NYS Conservation Partnership Program for a Map Update Project. This grant will support our efforts to update and standardize our maps to be educational and user-friendly resources available both online and in print.



We feel this project is very important given the expanded use of our open space in the past few years since the pandemic began. The increased number of visitors to our Preserves during this time has raised the need to inform the public how to safely access the trails. This will be extremely helpful for hikers, birders, and skiers to be able to confidently navigate the Preserves. We expect to roll out the finished maps in 2023.



Chrysalis.

MUST LOVE DOGS *On Leashes*

For the love of our dogs, safety, and habitat protection,
your dog is welcome here but **USING A LEASH IS REQUIRED.**



North Salem Open Land Foundation

Join us @ www.nsof.org

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

Non-Profit
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 6004
Brewster, NY

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

OFFICERS

Nina Eisenman – Chair
Duncan Dayton – Vice-Chair
Pam Pooley – Secretary
Bill Frank – Acting Treasurer

TRUSTEES

Elizabeth Almeyda
John Chaffee
Bruce Colley
Linda Farina
Carol Goldberg
Robert Habermann
Gary Holtzer
Peter Kamenstein
Lois Lippmann
Teri Mendelsohn
Jon Miller
Janet Olshansky
Sheila Perrin
Carol Timmis

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

John Baker

COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

Amanda Dickerson

STEWARDSHIP DIRECTOR

Andrew Middlebrook

RACE FOR OPEN SPACE 2022

REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN FOR THE RACE FOR OPEN SPACE 2022. Join us at Baxter Preserve on Sunday, September 18th for a Kids Fun Run Around the Pond, 5K run, and 4K walk. All members, friends and supporters are welcome! Register as an individual racer, fundraiser or create a team and amplify your fundraising impact. Go to www.nsolf.org/raceforopenspace or **scan the QR code** (on pg 1) with your phone.

We Need You!

NSOLF depends on the continued support from the community.

Please make a tax-deductible contribution today.

(Our annual membership drive is mailed each April.)

All members are invited to join us for a Member Celebration in October.

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 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$35 ☐ \$_____

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

Follow us on Instagram, Facebook, and www.nsolf.org