



# PRESERVATION POST

Winter 2025/2026





# About



The mission of the Orange County Land Trust is to preserve water resources, critical habitat, rural and urban farmland, scenic viewsheds, and ecosystems in and around Orange County for the benefit of all who depend on them.



## Preservation Post

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Dear Friends,

2025 was an outstanding year for the Orange County Land Trust thanks to you. We closed on four land protection projects resulting in the protection of over 800 acres of streams, forests, wildlife corridors, and other vital landscapes that supply clean drinking water, create new recreational opportunities, sustain nature's balance, and contribute to a sound quality of life for the greater Orange County community.

Your generosity also inspired us to think outside the box to make an even greater impact in conservation. We partnered with the Hudson Estuary Trees for Tribes program to complete 10 plantings of native trees and shrubs to help enhance the capacity, functionality, and integrity of stream buffers to filter runoff, absorb floodwaters, and stabilize soil. We have also begun developing a reforestation plan at our Lower Bashakill Preserve in partnership with The Nature Conservancy. By Spring 2026, 5,000 trees will have been planted within a floodplain of the Basha Kill, a tributary of the Neversink River. Increasing forest cover in this area will help safeguard water quality and provide new sources of food and habitat for wildlife.

Finally, we have started the process of forming an affiliate land trust, the Hudson Delaware Land Conservancy, to help accelerate the pace of land protection outside of Orange County where there are ample, time-sensitive opportunities to save some of the most irreplaceable natural and agricultural lands in the region.

These victories, aspirations, and momentum will surely continue well into 2026 and beyond, especially with you by our side.

Thank you for making our work possible.



**Jim Delaune**

Executive Director



# The Latest in Conservation

## LATINI FOREST



The City of Port Jervis has purchased the 462-acre Latini Forest that borders the Port Jervis Watershed Park and Recreation Area, with a permanent conservation easement and public access easement conveyed to the Orange County Land Trust.

The forest is located within the City of Port Jervis's drinking source watershed and contains streams that flow into Reservoir 1, all of which will be added to the Port Jervis Watershed Park to expand trails and public access. Situated along a ridgeline to the northeast of Port Jervis, the forest offers multiple scenic vantage points that overlook the City, Town of Deerpark, and Shawangunk Ridge.

The Latini Forest acquisition, along with the acquisition of the Boehmler Pond property in December 2024,



has resulted in the protection of 1,027 acres since the development of Port Jervis's land acquisition program. Aimed at safeguarding its drinking water and enhancing its recreational assets, the City's program was launched in 2019 thanks to a NYS Water Quality Improvement Program Grant. A portion of the \$1.8M grant funded the purchase and protection of Latini Forest, along with \$361,291 in funding from the Open Space Institute (OSI)'s Delaware River Watershed Protection Fund (DRWPF) and \$50,000 in funding through The Nature Conservancy's Climate Resilience Grant Program.

The Latini Forest project, sponsored by the City of Port Jervis, was funded by a CWIA/EPF Water Quality Improvement Project Grant administered by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC).

Launched in 2014 with funding from the William Penn Foundation's Delaware River Watershed Initiative, OSI's DRWPF has protected more than 25,000 acres of forested land to safeguard water quality in the Delaware River Watershed, a source of drinking water for approximately 15 million people – including residents of northeastern Pennsylvania, as well as Trenton, Philadelphia, Wilmington, and New York City.



The Orange County Land Trust and Orange County Water Authority have protected 13.5 acres of forest in the Town of New Windsor.

The project's primary objective is to safeguard water quality of Brown's Pond, also known as Silver Stream Reservoir, which is a backup drinking water source for the City of Newburgh.

The importance of protecting land around Brown's Pond is cited in the Town of New Windsor's 2021 Comprehensive Plan. The Orange County Water Authority's Moodna Creek Watershed Conservation and Management Plan also underscores the need for adequate buffers to protect water resources from runoff and impacts from surrounding development.



The Orange County Water Authority was awarded a NYS Water Quality Improvement Program Grant in 2018 to protect land that would negatively impact water quality of Brown's Pond and Washington Lake. A portion of the grant funded the purchase of a conservation easement on the 13.5 acre property.

The Brown's Pond project, sponsored by the Orange County Water Authority, was funded by a CWIA/EPF Water Quality Improvement Project Grant administered by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC).



The Orange County Land Trust has finalized two conservation easements with private landowners that resulted in the protection of 421 acres of land within the Lower Neversink River Watershed in the Towns of Deerpark and Forestburgh.

The properties contain a contiguous expanse of forest, wetlands, and streams, as well as 1,150 feet of frontage on the Neversink River. A portion of the conserved land also abuts the Neversink River Unique Area.

The permanent protection of these forested parcels further safeguards water quality in the Neversink River and supports a host of wildlife, especially forest interior bird species and other mature forest-dwelling species.

Since the Save Orange County's Last Wilderness initiative was launched in 2024 by OCLT, over 1,500 acres of land in the Town of Deerpark have been protected. The initiative focuses on the protection of land surrounding the Port Jervis Watershed, Neversink River, Mongaup River, Basher Kill, and Delaware River for water quality, flood mitigation, outdoor recreation, and other benefits.

Both conservation easement projects were supported through the Open Space Institute's Delaware River Watershed Protection Fund, and were made possible with funding from the William Penn Foundation's



Delaware River Watershed Initiative, which seeks to protect water quality in the Delaware River Basin. The projects also received funding through The Nature Conservancy’s Climate Resilience Grant Program.



Prospect Hill Property  
Town of Deerpark



Buttermilk Falls Property  
Town of Deerpark



Credit: Kyle Sanduski

OCLT and The Nature Conservancy will be joining forces to reforest 10 acres of floodplain at our Lower Bashakill Preserve in Cuddebackville.

The collaborative effort involves the planting of 5,000 trees comprising 11 different native species



and aims to establish forest cover, create wildlife habitat, and improve water quality in the Basher Kill, a tributary of the Neversink River.

As one of The Nature Conservancy's 15 reforestation projects planned throughout New York State in 2026, the Lower Bashakill Preserve project will represent the third largest in terms of acreage and trees, and is the only project taking place outside of the North Country region.

Reforestation planting is set to begin in April 2026.



OCLT partnered with the NYSDEC Hudson Estuary Program this year on ten Trees for Tribs projects throughout the region.

In total, 2,355 native trees and shrubs, including 52 different species, were planted along the Wawayanda Creek, Moodna Creek, Satterly Creek, Wallkill River, Rochester Creek, and Shawangunk Kill, among other Hudson River tributaries.

The program provides landowners, community organizations, and municipalities with free native seedlings to help restore stream buffers during the spring and fall each year.

Expanding stream buffer areas and restoring native vegetation helps to store water during droughts and helps protect people and property from the impacts of flooding. Healthy vegetated stream buffers intercept rainfall, filter runoff, capture sediment, absorb excess floodwaters, lower water temperatures, and reduce erosion.

Restoring vegetated buffers upstream from flood-prone areas can help to reduce speed, and potentially the volume, of floodwaters flowing downstream. Healthy stream buffers also offer habitat benefits and contribute to ecosystem resiliency.



## FARMLAND PROTECTION



OCLT is lining up potential projects in anticipation of the next round of Farmland Protection Implementation Grant funding through the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets. In addition to taking advantage of this crucial source of farmland protection funding, OCLT is exploring funding opportunities through the USDA-NRCS Agricultural Conservation Easement Program. By doing so, OCLT will have the ability to partner with additional landowners that are interested in protecting their farmland from non-agricultural use and development.

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## ***Stay in the Know!***

*Join our e-mail list to receive conservation news, upcoming events, and more.*

*Sign up now at [www.oclt.org/newsletter-signup/](http://www.oclt.org/newsletter-signup/) or scan the QR code.*







Credit: Gerald Berliner



# Community Scenes



## Planning Ahead

OCLT's Michael Sweeton led a series of workshops aimed at assisting municipal and community leaders in establishing community preservation and farmland protection plans. Additional workshops were held with farmers on a range of topics, including farmland succession.



## Potting Up

OCLT staff and board members volunteered at the NYSDEC Region 3 headquarters in New Paltz to assist Hudson Estuary staff with potting and preparing native seedlings for eventual planting as part of the Trees for Tribes program.



## Little Bellas in Port

This past spring, OCLT board members and supporters made contributions to Little Bellas of Port Jervis to help them purchase additional gear for campers. OCLT's Jim Delaune stopped by to meet the faculty and see the campers in action.





## Trails for Wellness

OCLT partnered with Nourish Counseling to create a Wellness Nature Trail on the grounds behind their Middletown office! The Trail will help support Nourish's clients, connect children with nature, and provide a peaceful, outdoor space where emotional regulation and mindfulness skills can be taught.



## Celebrating Women

OCLT celebrated Women at the Forefront of Conservation and Agriculture at its 2025 Benefit Reception. The distinguished honorees included Cari Watkins-Bates, Christina Chan, Liana Hoodes, Lucy Joyce, Virginia Kasinki, Melinda Meddaugh, Kathleen Nolan, Sharon Soons, Terri Thal, and Karen Washington.



## Flora and Fauna Fun

A highlight of Pine Island's Pumpkinfest was OCLT's outreach table, which included a popular interactive game, "Eliminate the Invasives" beanbag toss. Nearly 300 children took turns eradicating some nasty species!



## Budding Stewards

OCLT welcomed Girl Scout Brownie Troop 633 to Moonbeams Preserve. Ahead of their trip, OCLT supplied the troop with Moonbeams Preserve Activity Booklets, which include illustrations and information about the plant and animal life found at the Preserve.





## Cooking Up Dialogue

A group of food system leaders, including several chefs, met with leaders from the conservation and agricultural community in Bloomingburg to discuss consumer education, as well as overcoming economic and climate-related challenges through collaboration.



## All In on AOOA Farm

OCLT had the pleasure of hosting our Louis Mills Conservation Society members at All For One One For All (AOOA) Farm, a non-profit regenerative silvopasture farm in Goshen dedicated to blending culinary excellence with careful stewardship of the land.



## At Our Preserves

OCLT hosted several public events at its nature preserves, including the Fall Plein Air Renedevouz at Moonbeams Preserve. Nearly 20 artists of all skill sets took inspiration from the varied landscapes.



## Ag Connections

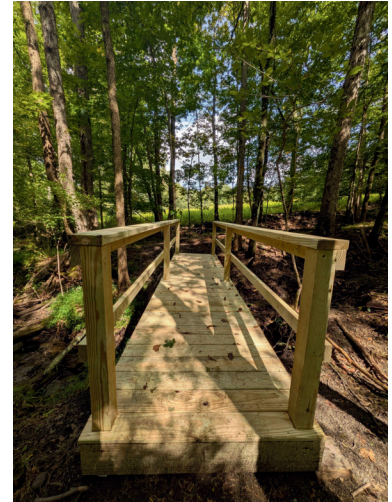
Members of OCLT's board and staff visited local farmers, including Matt and Trish Southway of Otisville, and attended several farmer mixers organized by Cornell Cooperative Extension. Opportunities like these provide OCLT with invaluable insight into the day-to-day operations of local farmers.







## Improvements at Moonbeams Preserve



OCLT continues to enhance your outdoor experience at Moonbeams Preserve with the installation of a new staircase, trail-connecting footbridge, and interpretive signage.

This series of trail improvement projects was made possible thanks to a 2025 O&R Strategic Partnerships Grant from Orange & Rockland Utilities, a Conservancy Trails Grant from Hudson River Valley Greenway, and the Jerome Spector Stewardship Fund.

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## Support OCLT with Tax-Smart Giving

Make a bigger impact for conservation while enjoying valuable tax savings.

### Qualified Charitable Distributions from Your IRA

If you're 70½ or older, you can transfer up to \$108,000 directly from your IRA to OCLT without paying income tax. If you're 73 or older, your gift can also count toward your Required Minimum Distribution (RMD)—helping you meet IRS rules while making an immediate impact on OCLT's mission.

Contact your IRA administrator to request a Qualified Charitable Distribution from your IRA to OCLT.

### Donating Appreciated Stock

When you donate appreciated stock, you can avoid capital gains taxes and receive a full fair market value deduction for your gift. It's an easy and efficient way to leverage your portfolio growth to help advance the protection of our most important lands for the benefit of generations to come.

### Donor-Advised Funds

Charitable giving through a donor-advised fund (DAF) is easy and flexible. You can make an outright gift to OCLT at any time and/or designate OCLT to receive all or a portion of the fund value upon the termination of the fund.

For more information, please contact us at 845-534-3690 extension 1. Thank you for considering a gift to the Orange County Land Trust!

This information is intended as general information, not specific legal or financial advice. Please consult your financial or tax professional for advice about charitable giving options that work best for you.







## The Conservationist Club – Monthly Giving

Support conservation all year long by joining OCLT's Conservationist Club with your monthly gift. You can set up recurring payments simply and conveniently via credit card or electric bank transfer, and at year-end OCLT will mail you a summary of your gifts.

For more information, email  
Sarah@oclt.org or call 845-534-3690  
extension 1.



*"I chose automatic monthly gifts because making a difference is as seamless as a Netflix subscription. It's great to be creating sustainable change in my backyard while I binge watch The Office for the third time. All for the cost of a few lattes and no additional effort on my part. That's an easy win."*

-Erin Tolman  
OCLT Board Member and Supporter

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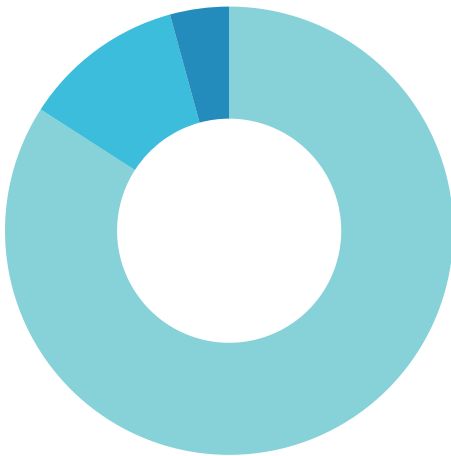
# 2024 Financials

- Investments - 8.4%
- Grants - 29.8%
- Donations from the Community - 18.2%
- Proceeds from Sale of SLMP - 43.6%



In 2024, income sources consisted of Donations from the Community (\$321,485, or 18.2%), Grant Funding (\$524,750, or 29.8%), Investments (i.e., income/change in asset value) (\$148,865, or 8.4%), and Proceeds from the Sale of the Sugar Loaf Mountain Property (\$767,908, or 43.6%).

- Land Protection and Stewardship 84.1%
- Management and Support 11.6%
- Fundraising 4.3%



In 2024, income was allocated as follows: 84.1% for Land Protection and Stewardship (\$1,037,785), 11.6% for Management and Support (\$143,731), and 4.3% for Fundraising (\$52,488).



# THANK YOU

to all those who made contributions in 2024

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Yes! Apples

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 NYS Department of Environmental  
 Conservation  
 Orange County Government  
 Town of Warwick

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*In Honor of Joan Augello*  
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*In Honor of Jo Hull*  
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 Ralph DiBart

*In Honor of Marlena Lange*  
 Diana Church

*In Honor of My Father Who Taught Me  
 the Value of Sitting Quietly in Nature*  
 Anna Moore

*In Honor of Carol Roe*  
 Richard and Meg Scanlan

*In Honor of John Vander Voort*  
 Michael and Virginia O'Keefe

**Memorial**

*In Memory of Norma Molitch Deull*  
 Anonymous

*In Memory of Dr. Michael Gilman*  
 Susan Gilman



*In Memory of Dr. Thomas Glendening*

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Joan Augello and Dick Ernenwein\*

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