

**Otsego Lake Association Informational Meeting
August 16, 2008**

OLA President, Wayne Bunn, called the meeting to order at The Thayer Farm Interpretive Center. Wayne introduced himself and the Board of Directors in attendance (Scottie Baker, Mary Clarke, Carl Good, Paul Lord, Mickie Richtsmeier, and Burr Southworth) as well as our new treasurer, Carrie Southworth. Board members, Ryan Davine, Tom Horvath, and David Sanford who were unable to attend were also announced. Wayne encouraged everyone to participate in the day's raffle.

Wayne then introduced the major topic of the meeting - to clarify the goals/activities for each of the following organizations: Otsego County Conservation Association (OCCA), Otsego 2000, Otsego Land Trust, and Otsego Lake Association (OLA). Wayne indicated that representatives from all the organizations had been invited to describe their organization and answer questions.

The first to speak was Erik Miller, executive director of OCCA. Erik discussed the organization's 40 year history of environmental advocacy.

Following is OCCA's mission statement:

OCCA is dedicated to the protection, appreciation, and enhancement of the natural resources within Otsego County. The Association's activities are predicated on the belief that the natural environment is inherently valuable; a well-informed public will enjoy and respect our natural heritage; working in partnership with public and private institutions is the best way to achieve our goals; local government should take a leadership role in land-use planning, solid waste management, and in enacting and enforcing conservation and land-use laws; regional and long-term perspectives should be considered when judging the possible effects of any alterations in the natural environment.

To achieve its mission, OCCA will work in cooperation with both public and private entities to promote policies and programs designed to protect the county's water, air, soils, wildlife and natural landscapes for current and future generations. As need be, OCCA may act as a conduit for federal, state, and local grants. It will also produce educational materials and conduct workshops on pertinent environmental issues; encourage sustainable agriculture, forestry, and prudent use of all our natural resources; promote appreciation and enjoyment of the abundant wildlife and scenic beauty of Otsego County.

Erik indicated that OCCA had been focused during the past 10 years on water quality including promoting residential and agrarian riparian buffers, water sampling along the Susquehanna, working with municipalities, participating in the Water Quality Coordinating Committee, funding the boat inspection program, and putting research into action.

Erik said that OCCA had recently launched a major fund raising drive. The Lake Challenge which will bolster such lake programs as the septic inspections

and boat wash. OCCA has two full-time staff people who spend much time on grant writing.

After Erik answered questions from the floor, Wayne introduced Scottie Baker who represents OLA on the Otsego 2000 Board. Scottie said that she was pinch-hitting for Nicole Dillingham, Interim Executive Director of Otsego 2000. The following is the mission statement for Otsego 2000: Otsego 2000 believes that the Otsego Lake region is a masterpiece of nature, and that its surrounding landscapes, valleys, villages, and farms constitute a unique confluence of historic, environmental, cultural, agricultural, rural, and scenic resources. We believe that the long-term economic well-being of the region and the quality of life for its residents derives from these resources and their stewardship. Thus, we seek to protect these attributes for the benefit of present and future generations. As no place is an island, we extend our concern and programs to the region's larger setting in Central New York. We advance our mission through informed advocacy, public education, innovative projects, economic alternatives, and strategic campaigns.

Scottie indicated that among Otsego's achievements were establishing the Cooperstown Farmers' Market, the relocation of the Marcy South Power Line, stopping a boat launch at Glimmerglass State Park, spearheading the establishment of the Glimmerglass Historic District, stopping a solid waste facility in Westford, spearheading the land trust, developing the GEIS (generic environmental impact statement), and providing technical advice regarding establishing guidelines for wind turbines. Issues in which Otsego 2000 is currently involved are natural gas drilling, the Madison Square Garden project, and the ditching project with OLA. Scottie indicated that Otsego 2000 is not a membership organization. It is funded through grants and donations.

Wayne next introduced Peter Hujik, Executive Director of the Otsego Land Trust. Peter informed the group that the Land Trust is a private not for profit organization which is 20 years old and seeks to protect land directly with land owners by using conservation easements. This permanently protects land without giving up ownership through private initiative.

According to its' mission statement, The Otsego Land Trust conserves the distinctive rural character of Otsego County, New York through protecting open space, lands of scenic value, fragile ecosystems, farmland and forestlands.² Peter characterized the Land Trust as using collaborative, solution-oriented approaches to achieve its goals. He indicated that the US Forest Service has placed the Upper Susquehanna Watershed in the top 20 forested land areas threatened by development. To date the Land Trust has protected over 5000 acres, and is one of 90 land trusts in New York State.

Peter said that the goal is to protect 10,000 acres by 2010. At this point, the land trust has protected 800 acres in the watershed including the Thayer Farm and Mt. Otsego. Peter said that they are also hoping to include the Ringwood

Farm. The Land Trust itself has purchased 3 acres on the Susquehanna and has helped with a conservation easement in the Lippitt Development.

Wayne thanked the speakers for their comments. Erik Miller then summarized the areas of concentration as: Otsego Land Trust -conservation, Otsego 2000 - cultural and historic preservation, and OCCA - environmental concerns.

After drawing for the raffle, Wayne turned to the topic of OLA and what we were doing. Board member, Carl Good, reported that he attends and reports back to the OLA Board on the Water Quality Coordinating Committee. Carl also reported on the Zebra Mussel Committee which oversees the boat inspection program. Carl stated that 600 boats had been launched this year to date and that 50% of the funding for this project came from the village and \$10,000 from OCCA.

Board Member, Paul Lord, reported on the no-wake zone buoy project. Paul is head of the Biological Field Station dive team that consists of eight volunteers. Paul reported that this has become something of an orphan program which was started by a small grant with the expectation that its' ongoing support would come from local municipalities, but so far only Cooperstown has helped. OLA allocated funds earlier this year which were matched by the Water Quality Committee. Unfortunately, there have also been additional expenses since a buoy was stolen this summer from the Bayside marina area. Currently there are 18 buoys on the lake.

Wayne also listed other areas where OLA was actively working including a phosphorus-free promotion, coordination with the sheriff regarding law enforcement on the lake, maintaining an educational web site, buffer strip development at Lake Front Park in Cooperstown, mud plume photography, rip rap, ditching in the towns of Otsego and Middlefield, participation in the Otsego Lake Festival, and Adopt a Highway Program on Route 80. (Volunteers were solicited to work on this last project during the meeting,) We were also reminded that OLA's mission was to support and further the implementation of the Plan for the Management of the Otsego Lake Watershed.

Treasurer, Carrie Southworth, gave her report, first thanking Mary Clarke who has agreed to stay available as assistant treasurer. Carrie indicated that the balance in the regular OLA account was \$6981.58 and in the buffer strip account \$1530.91 (as of 8/15/08).

Wayne then announced the awarding of the Lake Citizen Award to the Lake and Valley Garden Club for its' work in establishing Lake Front Buffer Strip Garden. Wayne detailed the history of the project which was culminated by the granting to the Lake and Valley Garden Club of the \$25,000 Founders'

Fund Award by the Garden Club of America. Lake and Valley President Jean Johnson and former Presidents, Suzy Kingsley and Elaine Bresee accepted the Lake Citizen Award for the Club.

Prior to adjourning, Wayne opened the floor for discussion and questions.