

Ontario Bays Initiative, Inc.

An Eastern Lake Ontario Conservancy

What is OBI?

OBI is a non-profit land trust organization dedicated to the voluntary conservation and thoughtful stewardship of undeveloped, private land in Jefferson County, New York. Our service area encompasses the towns of Brownville, Cape Vincent, Ellisburg, Henderson, Hounsfield, LeRay, Lyme and Pamela and includes many miles of Lake Ontario shoreline.

What do we do?

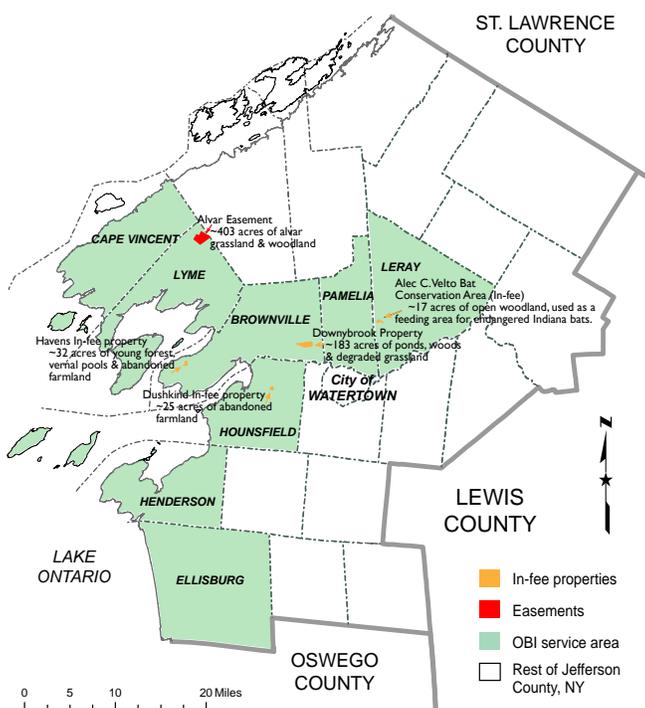
We work with landowners and conservation partners (such as the Department of Environmental Conservation and Ducks Unlimited) to preserve and protect open spaces such as woodlands, open fields, and undeveloped shorelines.

To do this we use conservation easements. These are legal documents tailored to each individual property and landowners' wishes. The landowner keeps the land, but certain limitations are placed upon what may be done to the land. These limitations can be as strong as not allowing development on the land, to as simple as allowing trail maintenance and hunting. The conservation easements are as variable as the properties they cover, but have the same goal - to protect open space in the north country.



Lesser Yellowlegs (one of the many migrating sandpipers) feeding along the Lake Ontario shoreline.

Map showing location of Ontario Bays Initiative, Inc. Easements & In-fee lands in relation to the rest of Jefferson County, NY.



How do we do it?

We are an all-volunteer land trust that was founded in 1993 by a small group of individuals who wanted to take a hands-on approach to preserving the rural and scenic character of Northern NY. We do our best to aid landowners with understanding possible options for their properties with only the board and two consultants.

What is involved with what we do?

A land trust is about more than just saying we work with landowners and the land. It is about all the work that goes into it as well.

Every year, property boundaries on both OBI easements and in-fee (properties owned by the land trust) must be inspected. If there are problems such as trespassing or damage, then someone from the organization must talk with the neighbors and others about the issues and how to solve them.

Maintenance of the properties is another must. Trails need maintenance, including cutting back the vegetation and placing wood chips in the muddy areas. We also work with other conservation partners, including DEC, to better

Our Mission

Our mission is to preserve, protect and encourage sustainable management of the land, water and biological resources of the Lake Ontario region of Jefferson County, New York. To accomplish this mission, we will protect lands containing significant biological resources and/or areas of critical open space within our service area

understand how to manage the diversity of habitats within our easements and in-fee lands. Being a land trust is not a one step process, but many faceted, with constant attention required.

What can you do to help?

Ontario Bays Initiative is an all-volunteer land trust. Because of this, we can use your help! Look for the sign-up sheet on the display table and, if you have the time, sign up to help with a project. Any help is appreciated!

Thank you for your interest!

For more information you may contact Ontario Bays Initiative, Inc. through our website of <http://www.obilandtrust.org/>, or call at (315) 649-6045.

Ontario Bays Initiative, Inc.
An Eastern Lake Ontario Conservancy



May apple at the Alex C. Velto Bat Conservation Area in the spring.

Ontario Bays Initiative, Inc. Board of Directors 2015

Jim LaPlante – Chairperson
Tracy Valentine – Secretary
Joan Treadwell Woods – Treasurer

Directors:

Joel Block Lee Ellsworth Sally Hirschey Carla Malmgren Carol Simpson
Julie K. Covey - ***Executive Director*** Gerry Smith - ***Senior Consultant***