

Downybrook Nature Preserve: A Birding Stop for All Seasons

Downybrook Nature Preserve, a scenic wildlife sanctuary in the town of Brownville, has many different habitats that seasonally offer a wide variety of birds for the bird watcher.

Downybrook's walking trails are open to the public and take visitors through natural wetlands, grasslands and woodland. Several ponds with boardwalks and strategically placed benches offer some of the best views of waterfowl and marsh birds. Common waterfowl that may be seen are Wood ducks, Mallards, Black ducks and Blue-winged and Green-winged Teal. During spring migration, Hooded Mergansers and Pied-billed Grebes might be a possibility.

Many species of marsh birds – such as Red-Winged Blackbirds, Grackles, Marsh Wrens, Swamp Sparrows, Great Blue Herons and Green Herons. Barn Swallows and Tree Swallows – can be seen hawking insects over the ponds.

Take a slow springtime walk on the trails and you will hear many species of birds setting up territories. In open areas, Song, Field and Savannah Sparrows, Eastern Kingbird, Bobolink, and Eastern Meadowlark will be active. In the plantations, Nuthatches, Chickadees and Blue jays are a common sight.

Keep an eye to the sky as several species of raptors – including Red-Tailed Hawk, Northern Harrier, Cooper's Hawk, Sharp-shinned Hawk, American Kestrel, and Turkey Vulture – make use of the area.

During fall and winter, several species of northern Finches may be present when there is a migration south.

Downybrook is recognized as Backyard Wildlife Habitat by the National Wildlife Federation, in addition to being an official Wildlife Refuge by the National Campers and Hikers Association. Twin sisters Helen and Mary Eldrett, Downybrook's owners for more than 40 years, spent countless hours digging ponds, planting trees and building footbridges.

Downybrook was transferred over to OBI from the Eldretts in 2015. OBI will continue what the Eldretts started with this unique property, so that it may be preserved and enjoyed for generations to come.

- Lee Ellsworth

Visit Downybrook Nature Reserve

Location: 24353 Perch Lake Road, Brownville

Hours: Open to Public Daily Dawn til Dusk

For More Information: obilandtrust.org

FEEDING BIRDS IN WINTER BILL HALLER, NORTH COUNTRY BIRD CLUB

The best options for feeding birds in a particular location depend on both the season and the habitat. These determine which bird species are most likely to be in the area and, therefore, which foods would be most effective in attracting them. However, three foods are appropriate in nearly every situation:

- Black-oil sunflower seed is a favorite of nearly all birds; if you offer only one food, this should be the one. (Note that striped sunflower seed has less nutritional value and is more difficult for smaller birds to open.)
- Nyjer (thistle) seed attracts a variety of Finch species; a special feeder is required, since nyjer seeds are very tiny.
- Suet attracts Woodpeckers, Nuthatches, and Chickadees.

Other foods which often bring birds to feeders include safflower seed (a favorite of Northern Cardinals), cracked and whole corn, and whole peanuts. Use only unsalted peanuts. Do not use peanuts in the shell if you value your lawn. Squirrels like to bury them, and then dig them up later.

Making Homemade Treats and Seed Blends

It is easy to make homemade treats by adding seeds, peanut bits, and raisins to peanut butter (a favorite of a great variety of birds) or to melted suet. While commercial seed blends can be effective, less expensive blends often have substantial filler that birds don't eat. You get what you pay for.

Make your own seed blend using black-oil sunflower seeds along with some combination of safflower seeds, white millet, cracked corn, and peanut hearts. This results in a blend with no filler.

These are general suggestions meant to provide a starting point for feeding birds. Give them a try, and go with what works best for your location.



Interested in Birding? The North Country Bird Club welcomes new members. Information concerning local sightings, field trips, and an informational Newsletter are provided with your NCBC membership. Visit NORTH COUNTRY BIRD CLUB on Facebook for more information or email haldex@twcny.rr.com



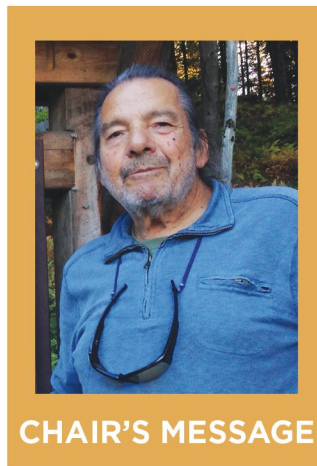
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- Tracy Valentine, *Newsletter Editor*

As I write this, the weather and leaves are changing and the geese are “gagging” signifying the coming end of 2018.

2018 has been an exciting year for OBI Land Trust. On one hand, we introduced our outreach program with a number of events and activities, which was very effective, culminating in our 25th anniversary celebration, which turned out to be the most successful fundraiser we have ever had, not to mention a good time! And there is more to come! On The other hand, we lost our contract executive director, so we are back to being an all volunteer organization. I am proud of the way the board has stepped up to the challenge. We on the



CHAIR'S MESSAGE

board now all know much more about the management of a successful land trust!

I am also proud of all our supporters who have made our first 25 years possible. You can read in the newsletter and our website about volunteering at OBI. We need you! We would love to have a few more board members, as well as volunteers to be involved in committees, such as our Downybrook Advisory Panel. There are also other ways to volunteer as well.

If you are interested, please give us a call or an email. We look forward to fortifying our volunteer organization to move OBI forward.

THANKS!

Jim LaPlante
OBI Board Chairman

Join Us! The non-for-profit OBI Land Trust relies on contributions from the public and grants from foundations to fund our projects in land conservation.

Please send your contributions to:
P.O. Box 117, Chaumont, NY 13622.

Become a “Friend of OBI.”

Levels of membership range from \$100 Protector of the Land to \$1500 Friend of the Land.

Look for our end of year message in early December.

We need and appreciate support of OBI!

IN MEMORY OF WILFREDA “BILLIE” STONE
Donors Honor Her Life and Stone Family Legacy of Conservation



Irwin and Billie Stone

During a life well-lived with a long list of accomplishments, longtime Watertown resident Wilfreda “Billie” Stone also notably had a hand in ensuring that a pristine stretch of Henderson Harbor shoreline would remain forever wild.

A longtime Watertown attorney, mother of two and active community member, she passed away on June 12, 2018 at age 96. Mrs. Stone was outspoken, intelligent and known for her no-nonsense style and her tireless involvement in various local organizations. She practiced law for 42 years.

She and her husband, the late Dr. Irwin Stone, a Watertown internist, were very active in Henderson Harbor Yacht Club, where they raced sailboats until the 1990s. Their love for Henderson Harbor led the Stones’ children, Charles and Gale, to create a conservation easement with OBI Land Trust in late 2015 to forever protect from development the family-owned property called Stoney Cove. It is one of the last stretches of open space along the shoreline of Henderson Harbor and has 1700-feet of natural shoreline, natural cove and limestone cliffs. The easement was finalized nearly 50 years after Irwin helped purchase the property to save it from being developed for a limestone quarry business.

“We are very pleased to be able to fulfill the wishes of our parents in preserving Stoney Cove for the North Country,” said Charles and Gale Stone in a recent statement. “We also acknowledge the efforts of OBI Land Trust, which has made preserving our parents’ goals and objectives for this special property a reality.”

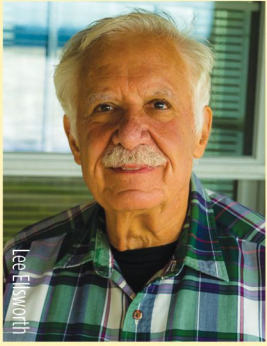
Charles and Gale expressed their gratitude for the donations in memory of their mother and her wishes for conservation of Stoney Cove. “We are very humbled by their expression of support for our mother and OBI Land Trust,” they added.

The list below recognizes those who sent donations to OBI Land Trust this year in memory of Wilfreda “Billie” Stone:

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| LuAnn Clausen & Ellen Zander | Cambridge, Wisconsin | Virginia S. McCreary | Watertown, New York |
| Janet Summerville | Sackets Harbor, New York | Nancy P. Goodwin | Watertown, New York |
| Ruth M. Fish | Watertown, New York | Dr. Barton & Anna Van Slyke | Watertown, New York |
| Hope R. Metcalf | Watertown, New York | Mary E. Dood | Holland, Michigan |
| Dr. Richard & Polly Matarese | Henderson Harbor, New York | Watertown Bridge Club | Watertown, New York |
| Lyle & Eileen Eldred | Niskayuna, New York | William & Diane Ryckbost | Holland, Michigan |
| Michael & Jacquelyn Schell | Chaumont, New York | Joan Treadwell Woods | Henderson Harbor, New York |
| Renee Lustick | Watertown, New York | Dr. & Mrs. Douglas M. Sanford | Watertown, New York |
| John H. Treadwell II | Henderson Harbor, New York | | |



INSIDE OBI: Joel Block



OBI Board Member Joel Block never turns down a volunteer job that takes him outdoors and into nature. He often pulls on a pair of work boots and tags along with our land steward for a day's work – clearing nature trails, seeking

out invasive plants or trudging through forest and grassland during annual property inspections.

You would never suspect he might be from the city – until he starts talking. His Bronx, NY accent is a dead giveaway.

Joel comes to us as a retired administrator at LaGuardia Community College, one of City University of New York's 23 campuses. Growing up across the street from the Bronx Botanical Gardens and a stone's throw from the Bronx Zoo,

he was exposed to the wonders of the natural world, something one doesn't usually expect from a "city boy."

"Too many people from outside the city fail to realize the vast variety of flora and fauna that thrive in city woodlands. I've had raccoons, rabbits and an opossum in my garden in Flushing, Queens, and have seen deer, foxes and coyotes too in the city parks," said Joel.

Joel and his partner, Judith McGaughey, have lived on scenic Point Salubrious in Chaumont since 2007. They love hiking, biking, sailing and skiing.

Joel has been a member of the OBI's all-volunteer board for nearly 10 years. He joined because he wanted to be involved in a homegrown land trust that works to protect land for future generations.

"I feel very honored to be a part of OBI and to see all the wonderful work we've done," said Joel. "What especially appeals to me is the opportunity for expanding land conservation here in the North Country."



OBI supporters Uli and Dave Larrabee, of Rodman, are pictured above on June 2 at Wine and Birdsong, a day of exploring a private wildlife preserve in Henderson Harbor, NY.

"The bird song gathering was a lot of fun and we enjoyed sharing the day with others," they said. "When this event comes up next year, be sure to attend. It's not every day one gets to see a Red-Bellied Woodpecker."

The event was sponsored by OBI and White Caps Winery, Chaumont.

OH, WHAT A NIGHT!

OBI Land Trust Celebrates 25 Years of Conservation and Pays Special Tribute to Two Loyal Supporters

At OBI Land Trust, we think a quarter-century of conservation is a great reason to celebrate.

This year's annual fundraiser – held August 6, 2018 at Crescent Yacht Club – was extra special as our volunteer land trust marked 25 years of service to Jefferson County's shoreline communities. The celebration was our most successful fundraiser ever and drew dozens of supporters, including State Rep. Addie Jenne. She presented Citations from the New York State Assembly to both OBI Land Trust and our guests of honor, Urban and Sally Hirschey.

The Hirscheys, formerly of Cape Vincent, are the epitome of the volunteer spirit and we were grateful to honor them in the presence of our other OBI "friends" – our loyal supporters and volunteers who join us each year for our annual summer gathering. Our success depends on all of you!



Urban and Sally Hirschey

Rep. Jenne said that OBI's success and 25-year milestone was "a testament to the people in the community and the strength and dedication" that has allowed our volunteer land trust to survive and thrive in Jefferson County, where tourism and agriculture are a way of life.

Rep. Jenne praised the Hirscheys as "wonderful people" who are examples of how commitment to your community can truly make a difference at the local level. The Citation to the Hirscheys noted their involvement in OBI and various other local causes. Sally has retired as the longest serving board member on OBI's board of directors. The couple has been among OBI's top donors and donated their time and talents to our land trust. The Hirscheys have been named Emeritus members of the OBI Board of Directors.

OBI wishes to thank everyone who participated, including SUNY Potsdam Professor Glenn Johnson, who brought along his students to help educate people about the plight of the Blanding's turtle, a threatened species in New York State. Other reptiles

and amphibians were also featured and guests were able to ask questions about conservation close to home.

The summer gathering is an annual event that helps fund operations for our Chaumont-based land trust and also is a tradition that brings together OBI supporters and those looking to learn more about our land trust.

OBI Land Trust greatly appreciates the recognition by Rep. Jenne and we also are grateful for the supporters who make our land trust a success. Thank you to all who joined us for this truly wonderful night and let's get set for even greater success for OBI Land Trust in the next 25 years!

"The work OBI does is important not only for the environment but also to the wildlife," said Judy Killmer, an OBI supporter who lives on Point Salubrious, Chaumont.

"Coming to this event every year and supporting OBI is one of the ways that I can do something to help preserve land for the future," said Laura Teuchtler, a Cape Vincent resident and longtime OBI supporter who attended the 25th anniversary event.



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Become a Steward of the Land Today



The stunning print of an original drawing by talented sketch artist **Anna Stunkel** will be our gift to donors to OBI Land Trust at a minimum \$1000 Level, Steward of the Land. The professionally matted print of a Red-Headed Woodpecker will be available to those who contribute at the \$1000 level - or higher - to our

non-profit land trust, effective now through 2019.

Anna has had a lifelong interest in birds and the natural world. She graduated from the College of the Atlantic in 2013 with a BA in Human Ecology and a concentration in Wildlife Biology. She has since worked as a seasonal field biologist in various areas of the country. This includes work as a raptor counter in California, Idaho, Maine, Virginia and New York. For two springs, she has worked as a spring migration raptor counter at Derby Hill Bird Observatory in nearby Oswego County. She has also worked with seabirds, woodpeckers, and songbirds in various areas of the country. Anna is a wildlife and pet portrait artist who works mainly in colored pencil and pen.

OBI Land Trust is very pleased to be able to offer this highly-detailed and lifelike print to our highest level supporters!

EVENTS & WALK ABOUTS...

Winter Birding on Pt. Peninsula, Saturday, January 12, 2019

Come ride with us and enjoy a birding trip along the shores, and in the field around Pt. Peninsula and surrounds. Winter on the peninsula has long been a prime birding destination. We will watch for raptors such as Red-tailed and Rough-legged Hawk, Northern Shrike, American Kestrel, Snowy Owls and Bald Eagles. Snow Buntings, Longspurs, Swans, and several species of waterfowl may also be seen.

Join us for an exciting view of winter life at Pt. Peninsula. This trip is sponsored by OBI Land Trust in partnership with the North Country Bird Club.

Transportation will be provided and a field guide will be on hand as we spend a Saturday exploring the bird life on the peninsula, located in the Town of Lyme.

For more information please visit: www.obilandtrust.org



Northern Shrike

Lee Elsworth

GET INVOLVED!

Conservation starts with people. We are always looking for friendly faces interested in helping us to fulfill our mission. We offer opportunities to get involved with OBI Land Trust:

Volunteer in the Field — There are many ways to help OBI preserve natural habitat in your own community. Seasonal trail maintenance and assisting with minor upkeep is always a help. Individuals and groups such as scout troops have volunteered and we welcome you to provide a helping hand.

Event Planning and Assisting with Activities — OBI hosts several birding excursions and you are welcome to suggest venues, help with bird identification and the overall success of the day!

Share your images and reflections — Are you an amateur photographer? Or writer? Share with OBI Land Trust for a chance to have your images or article posted on our website or in our publication.

ANOTHER WAY TO GIVE TO OBI



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How? Use **AmazonSmile**. AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way for you to support our land trust every time you shop at Amazon, at no cost to you. When you shop at smile.amazon.com, you'll find the exact same selection and convenience, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to OBI.

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