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Board of Directors

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- Lee Ellsworth– Vice-Chair & Land Steward
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- Urban Hirschey– Emeritus Board Member

Greetings from OBI!

Despite the many challenges of 2020, it has been a great year to get outdoors! More people are finding that nature offers both recreation and respite. Enjoying the land we protect helps energize our mission: preserving wildlife habitats, scenic vistas, open spaces and woodlands in Jefferson County.

Although we were unable to hold events this year, we have made real progress. Here are a few highlights:

🍁 We completed Phase 1 of our Downybrook Nature Reserve improvements, including a wildlife observation deck, parking lot, signage, kiosks, well as bridge walkways on the trails. The work was funded by a grant from the New York State Conservation Partnership Program with matches from Northern New York Community Foundation and donations from our supporters. The trails at Downybrook on Perch Lake Road in Brownville are busier than ever!

🍁 We welcomed a new Board member- Carrie Fleming, from Chaumont, NY. Carrie’s background in education and wildlife biology will be a great addition to our all-volunteer organization.

🍁 OBI Land Trust and its board members contributed to the COVID-19 Community Support Fund established in Spring of 2020 by the Northern New York Community Foundation. We are all in this together.

Looking ahead, work is underway on a Phase 2 of our Downybrook improvement plan. This plan includes trail upgrades and projects to make visits more enjoyable. Our work to preserve land in our service area continues. We are working with two landowners to preserve ecologically significant land in early 2021. Exciting details soon to come!

We hope you will support OBI, as the need for your donations to continue our efforts in saving and maintaining land is EXTREMELY IMPORTANT. Donations have decreased due to COVID-19 and our primary grant source is not available due to State budget constraints. (A number of you have recently renewed your friendship or made a donation and we THANK YOU very much!)

Please become a friend of OBI Land Trust and/or make a donation! You can contribute by using the enclosed envelope or by going to the OBI Land Trust website: www.obilandtrust.org. We and all OBI supporters appreciate it! THANKS!

Sincerely,

Jim LaPlante, Board Chairperson



Picture:
 Lee Ellsworth

Celebrate the Special People in your Life New Naming Opportunities at Downybrook Nature Reserve!

The connection between land and people is the reason organizations like OBI Land Trust exist. Places like Downybrook Nature Reserve in Brownville help us experience the beauty of the North Country. Now it's also a place where you can honor or memorialize a loved one, special event or share a message that inspires the love of nature. OBI Land Trust has opportunities throughout the scenic habitats to provide lasting honor. Each is customized by working with families to create the most appropriate memorial/honor for friends, family and events that shape our lives. Our many trails, bridges, benches, interpretive panels, vistas, and structures at Downybrook are part of this unique campaign. Please Contact OBI Land Trust at 315-649-6045 to discuss the perfect lasting tribute.



Success for OBI Land Trust is made possible by people like Fred Valentine. The longtime carpenter and talented woodworker spent many hours crafting cedar frames for more than 20 interpretive panels that are now on display throughout the habitats at Downybrook Nature Reserve. He and his wife, Anne, have lived on St. Lawrence Avenue in Brownville for nearly 20 years, not far from the reserve and he was happy to help us with this project. Fred, age 87, is a familiar face to many. He was a teacher at area schools as well as Watertown Correctional Facility before starting Valentine Construction in the early 1970s. The business completed a countless number of new homes and remodeling jobs around the Northern New

York over four decades. In recent years, Fred has taken up the hobby of woodturning and creates all kinds of beautiful wooden bowls and other vessels.

OBI Land Steward Lee Ellsworth was joined by award-winning botanist Anne Johnson and other volunteers on a recent tour of an alvar habitat in the town of Lyme that is part of OBI's largest preservation property. The private land of more than 400 acres is owned by William & Peggy Couch and has been under conservation easement protection with OBI since late 2006.

