



For Immediate Release

Date: August 29, 2016

Contact: Sara Scheeren
sara@otsegolandtrust.org
(607) 547-2366

Otsego Land Trust Secures Interim Funding for Brookwood Point

Otsego Land Trust (OLT) has obtained commitments totaling \$243,000 to extend its ownership of Brookwood Point for at least the next seven years.

In a prepared press release issued by OLT, its Chairman Harry Levine announced that several donors have combined to pledge funding for the 22 acre property. Mr. Levine said, "I am delighted that we now have enough financial stability to continue making this beautiful property available to the public."

Last year, the land trust issued a request for proposals to solicit interest in the purchase of the northern 11 acres of the property. The purpose of the contemplated sale was to sustain continued ownership and public access of the southern half of the property. Many inquiries were received but none met OLT's conservation objectives and the land trust closed the RFP process in November, 2015.

With today's announcement, Mr. Levine said that OLT now has enough funding to last seven years and has pledged to hold the property for at least that period. During these next seven years, the land trust will invite the community to assist in developing a long-term vision for the property and to find more permanent funding sources.

According to Jane Couch, a land trust director, "We will develop a management plan that is based upon an open dialogue with the community. In the coming months, we will hold several public meetings with the goal of collecting ideas on the long-term use of the property and its funding. We hope to complete the plan before next summer." Community meetings will be held on September 29 and October 25 at Templeton Hall in Cooperstown.

Today, half the property is not accessible to the public due to safety concerns about dangerous structures, including the old main house and bridges, which continue to deteriorate. In order to make use of the entire property for eventual public access and to address these safety concerns, the OLT board of directors has decided to raze the house.

OLT will now retain local historical experts to ensure that appropriate mitigation and deconstruction occur. OLT has previously turned over a trove of papers and photos detailing the history of the house and property to the New York State Historical Association.

Recent construction activity at Brookwood Point involves improvements to the entrance and driveway. These improvements are funded by a federal Scenic Byway grant. Last year, OLT also erected a storage shed, ADA canoe/kayak access to the lake, and a composting toilet through funding from the National Park Service Chesapeake Gateway Grant program.

John Winter, executive director of OLT, said “We are very grateful to the donors who have stepped forward to help us maintain Brookwood. We hope that their generosity leads to a long term solution to the funding of its care and maintenance. During the next seven years, we will be trying our very best to create a means to ensure permanent public access and enjoyment of this special place.”

Adding one note of caution, he said, “However, if we again do not succeed, there is still the possibility that we will need to find a new home for the property. For now though we’re very excited about these next seven years at Brookwood.”

Mr. Levine noted that he was pleased about the enthusiasm expressed by the land trust board which joined in the funding pledge by donating \$29,000. “This tangible expression of support tells a lot about the desire of OLT to succeed with Brookwood Point.”

In addition to Brookwood Point, Otsego Land Trust owns six other properties which allow public access to lakes, streams and forests and are known as the Blueway. OLT also has protected over 10,000 acres in partnership with about 100 property owners who have donated conservation easements on their lands.

To learn more about Otsego Land Trust, visit www.otsegolandtrust.org