

Note from Ellen Pope, Executive Director

Otsego 2000 is at work on multiple fronts, taking on the role of convener, advocate, administrator, and innovator, as we work to celebrate, enhance, and protect the Otsego Lake Region and Otsego County. We welcome and invite collaboration and initiate new efforts when needed. Whether you know us from the Cooperstown Farmers' Market, Otsego Outdoors, Glimmerglass

Film Days, our historic preservation outreach, or our paramount role as an environmental "first responder," this Report to the Community will provide a quick look at Otsego 2000's work and impact. We welcome your feedback and engagement in the programs that matter most to you — drop us a line, drop in, and help us continue to make a difference in Otsego County!

Getting the Word Out on Harmful Algal Blooms in Otsego County

Otsego 2000 was founded over 40 years ago to protect Otsego Lake, the heart of our community. From advocating against a major motorboat launch to our determined grassroots efforts to enact a statewide fracking ban, we take this mission seriously. Today, Otsego Lake as well as other local water bodies like Canadarago and Gilbert lakes, are facing a surge of harmful algal blooms (HAB) in the summer months due to many factors, not the least of which is our warming climate. Realizing the public needs clear messaging about HABs, and how to determine risk, Otsego 2000 joined with the Otsego Land Trust and the Otsego County Conservation Association to convene the Otsego County Environmental Stakeholders Meeting in May

2023. While there is no turn-key solution to the problem of HABs, participants agreed that combining the efforts and expertise of local government, nonprofit, and academic research organizations is essential. The result is one go-to official public source for up-to-date information will help allay concerns and quell misinformation, while giving

people the tools they need to protect their families and pets in local waters, and report any HABs quickly. By the end of June, a dedicated HABs webpage developed by OCCA and other stakeholders—housed on the county's website, otsegocounty.com—will include up-to-date reports on HABs occurring in Otsego Lake and other lakes in the

county. Otsego2000.org will also have a link to the site.

Otsego 2000 provided a \$5,000 donation to the Biological Field Station from the Henry S.F. Cooper Jr. Fund for Environmental Stewardship toward enhancing timely HABs data collection on Otsego Lake, an important economic driver for Otsego County.



Environmental stakeholders discuss important public messaging to alert the public to HABs when they occur.

Otsego 2000: A Holistic Approach to Protecting Our Rural Environment

Otsego 2000 views the environment as highly interconnected; agriculture, economics, land-use planning, town planning, and historic or cultural preservation all contribute to the environment and must be considered with regard to the environment. While we believe growth and

change are both desirable and inevitable, our task is to try to guide our environment — which includes not only Otsego Lake, but also the local towns, villages, hamlets, streets, and highways — along what we hope are more intelligent pathways. While Otsego Lake is the centerpiece,

we are just as concerned with its surroundings, natural and human. All are inseparable. Otsego 2000's environmental stewardship work focuses on protecting the Otsego region's communities from inappropriate development, sprawl, and large-scale industrialization that would

negatively affect air, water, and soil quality, as well as disrupt its rural, agricultural character and quality of life. Currently, we are monitoring Columbia Solar, a proposed solar utility in Herkimer County, to ensure it complies with local laws, protects prime farmland, and respects Home Rule.



Connecting People to Otsego County's Outdoors

"What is great about our local trails is that they offer something different in each season. Thank you for motivating people to try new things. My nephew has now begun mountain climbing, which never would have happened had it not been for the Otsego Octet. Please know that you not only make a difference in the community, but a difference in people's lives."

- John Buddle, Oneonta

It's a truism that connecting people to their natural environment inspires them to work to preserve it. Otsego Outdoors connects residents and visitors with year-round recreational opportunities in and near Otsego County. Since February 2021, more than 850 people (and some dogs) have completed more than 6,600 hikes, paddles, bike rides, volunteer activities, and more as part of the Otsego Octet seasonal challenges. Others use otsegooutdoors.org to get more information, whether it's recommendations for a dog-friendly hike, a great place to cross-country ski, or a park with a fun playground. By

promoting state and county properties, local parks, as well as private land open to the public, otsegooutdoors.org provides a full picture of area recreation. We also highlight local nonprofits that offer outdoors programming, as well as outdoors-related businesses. The events calendar lists a range of local activities, from 5Ks, guided paddles, and invasive species removals to bird walks, bike rides and trail steward training.

Otsego 2000 administers Otsego Outdoors, which is a collaborative effort of Otsego 2000, the Otsego Land Trust, the Butternut Valley Alliance,

and the Otsego County Conservation Association. The four environmental nonprofits meet quarterly and work together to develop, enhance and promote outdoor events, the seasonal Otsego Octet challenges, and the parks, forests, waterways, and trails that make Otsego County a lovely place to call home. Our work to improve and promote the county's outdoor recreational infrastructure makes it easier for residents and visitors to enjoy the outdoors, adding to Otsego County's quality of life. Visit otsegooutdoors.org to check out recreational ideas and the latest Otsego Octet Challenge!



Above Photo: Janice Downie

Surveying Oneonta's Historic Neighborhoods

Thanks to Otsego 2000's decades-long efforts, along with several preservation-minded communities, Otsego County boasts 15 National Register historic districts encompassing over 27,000 acres, with another 17,000 acres listed as National Register-eligible. This rich historic record contributes to the unique character of the region and our shared sense of place. But preservation is not simply about aesthetics. It is also a proven boost to economic development: the collections of buildings and

storefronts that developed over time give a unique sense of place to communities, making them more attractive to live and work and retire. Federal and New York State historic tax credits further incentivize preservation. The landscapes, hamlets, and villages James Fenimore Cooper celebrated in his writings are largely as they were in the early 19th century, with the exception of the city of Oneonta which experienced exponential growth between 1870 and 1940, thanks to the arrival of the railroads. While

the city is relatively unchanged since mid-20th century, only two small districts have been established. Thanks to a Preserve NY grant from the Preservation League of New York State, with matching funding from the city, Future for Oneonta Foundation, and the Otsego County Chamber of Commerce, Otsego 2000 engaged consultant Jessie Ravage to conduct a reconnaissance survey of the city's roughly 4,500 buildings, with an eye toward identifying potential new historic districts,



which would enable more of the city's property owners to take advantage of the economic incentives provided by the commercial and homeowner historic tax credits.

2023 Historic Preservation Walks and Tours

As part of Otsego 2000's efforts to encourage stewardship of our many historic buildings and villages, Otsego 2000 offers an annual program of walking tours and talks, as well as one-on-one consultations to foster appreciation for local architecture and history. In 2022, Otsego 2000 organized walking tours of Richfield Springs, Sharon Springs, and Cherry Valley, thanks to a grant from the New York State Council on the Arts. Led by

Dr. Cindy Falk, professor of material culture at SUNY-Oneonta's Cooperstown Graduate Program, participants learned about spa town architecture, changes brought to Cherry Valley by the Turnpike, and the Jewish influence on the Village of Sharon Springs. In 2023, along with "Ask an Old House Expert" consultations at the Cooperstown Farmers' Market, where homeowners can learn more about their property and its history, Dr. Falk is leading a

series of talks and walking tours from May to November. From deciphering historic paint colors and the messages in stained glass windows to examining the role of Indigenous places and barns in our landscape, the Historic Preservation Series will enrich participants' understanding of the places we call home. For more information and to register, please visit otsego2000.org/historic-preservation.



Otsego 2000 Historic Preservation Series

6/14, 5:30 PM, Milford

All the Colors of the Rainbow:
Deciphering Historic Paint Colors

7/11, 12-2 PM, Cooperstown

Ask an Old House Expert
Cooperstown Farmers' Market

7/16, 4-5:30 PM, Cooperstown

Glorious Glass: Stained Glass in
Houses of Worship Walking Tour

8/20, 4-5:30 PM, Springfield

Raising Barns:
Past, Present, and Future

9/10, 4-5:30 PM, Morris

More than the County Fair:
Village of Morris Walking Tour

10/8, 4-5:30 PM, Cooperstown

Cooperstown's Indigenous
Places Walking Tour

11/12, Time TBA, Cooperstown

Messages in Paint, Wood, &
Stone Walking Tour
To reserve, visit otsego2000.org
or call 607.547.8881

Historic Tax Credits Ease Cost of Home & Barn Maintenance

Owning and living in a historic building, whether it is a 1820s cottage, 1880s grand Victorian, 1910 foursquare, bungalow, or stately Italianate, has its benefits — historic homes are 'the greenest' buildings when it comes to carbon footprint. Generally built before fossil fuel energy, materials are all natural and largely sourced locally. Today's building materials are often synthetic/composites, and likely shipped great distances using climate-harming fossil fuels. So, while

it may appear less expensive to build new, in the long run the carbon footprint of that new building can have a serious impact, when demolition, debris disposal, and new materials and building techniques are factored in. Increasing historic homes' energy efficiency, however, can be a hit to the wallet. Here in New York, homes and buildings listed on the National Register (as over 3,500 are in Otsego County) may be eligible for a 20% income tax credit for

qualifying renovation expenses, including energy upgrades like heat pumps, insulation, and windows, including most of the usual home maintenance like roofing, paint, and electrical/plumbing. Otsego 2000 provides free technical assistance to homeowners in historic districts, and thanks to our efforts, Otsego County ranks 5th in the state for usage of the credits. Close to 100 local homeowners have successfully navigated the tax credit process so far while preserving their historic homes.



In 2022, New York added a 25% historic barn tax credit for maintenance of barns built before 1946, as long as they are not residences. Importantly, the barn tax credit is retroactive five years, unlike the homeowner tax credit.

If you are planning work on your home and think you might qualify for the historic tax credits, it's important to have the work pre-approved before starting. Contact Ellen Pope at Otsego 2000 with any questions or for assistance in completing the application.

Cooperstown Farmers' Market: Rooted in Community



DID YOU KNOW?

In 2022, the Cooperstown Farmers' Market's partnership with Cooperstown Composting diverted 2,000 lb of market customers' food waste from the landfill. Be sure to visit cooperstowncomposting.com for more information on their services.

Otsego 2000 founded the Cooperstown Farmers' Market to support local growers, producers, and artisans and to provide the community with access to fresh local food, artisan crafts, and other locally made and grown items. The market, now open year-round on Saturdays, plus Tuesday afternoons in July, August, and September, has seen a steady increase in attendance, with many locals making the Market an essential part of their week.

Forty-three farmers, producers and artisans within a 50-mile radius are on the roster. Nearly 30 are weekly while others attend on a rotating basis. Four also offer seasonal CSA options. Not only is the market an important economic driver for the community, the market is a welcoming gathering place, with children's activities, live music, free recipes, cookbook swaps, displays by local

nonprofits, and special events, including Honeybee Day, Zucchini Races, Pumpkin Day, and a Holiday Market. Our friendly corps of Market Volunteers is growing, greeting everyone who comes with a welcome and a smile. Through the Cooperstown Farmers' Market, Otsego 2000 works to ensure access for all to fresh local food. We partner with the Cooperstown Food Pantry, whose clients receive free vouchers to redeem at the Farmers' Market for fresh fruit and vegetables. In 2022, this program provided \$7,000 in fresh produce to food insecure people in northern Otsego County. And, this number will increase again in 2023 now that the Food Pantry is offering vouchers year-round, a recognition of the program's success and the range of healthy fruit and vegetables available at the Market every month of the year.

In addition, shoppers are welcome to use SNAP/EBT at every Market, and with SNAP Match, they receive up to \$15 extra to spend at the Market on groceries. The SNAP Match program is funded by the Cooperstown Lions Club. The Market also participates in the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, which provides coupons to seniors and veterans. Along with providing access to fresh local food, these initiatives provide local farmers with additional customers and revenue.

Other elements that make the Market a weekly destination? A full schedule of local musicians performing on Saturdays and Tuesdays, a new bike rack for our customers who pedal to the Market, and a partnership with Cooperstown Composting to divert food waste from the landfill.

Corn Fritters with Aged Cheddar and Arugula



- 6 ears sweet corn, enough for 3 cups kernels
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 4 scallions, including an inch of the greens, finely sliced
- ½ cup chopped parsley
- 2 tablespoons shredded basil or dill
- 1 cup grated or crumbled aged cheddar
- 1/3 cup all-purpose flour
- Sea salt and freshly ground pepper
- Unsalted butter or oil for frying
- 3 handfuls of arugula, stems trimmed

Slice the kernels off the ears of corn into a mixing bowl, then use back of knife to press milk out of the cob.

Add the eggs, scallions, herbs, and cheese and as much of the flour as can be easily absorbed. Heat a large skillet over medium heat, adding enough butter or oil to cover the surface generously.

Divide the batter roughly into sixths and drop into the skillet. Fry over medium heat until golden, about 2 minutes. Flip and fry til golden on the other side.

Place a fritter on each of six plates and top with arugula leaves. Serve immediately.

Serves 6 as appetizer, or can be adapted for smaller fritters for hors d'oeuvres.

From Local Flavors by Deborah Madison.



Cooperstown
— Est. 1991 —
Farmers' Market

Open Saturdays Year-Round: May—December, 9–2; January—April, 10–2.

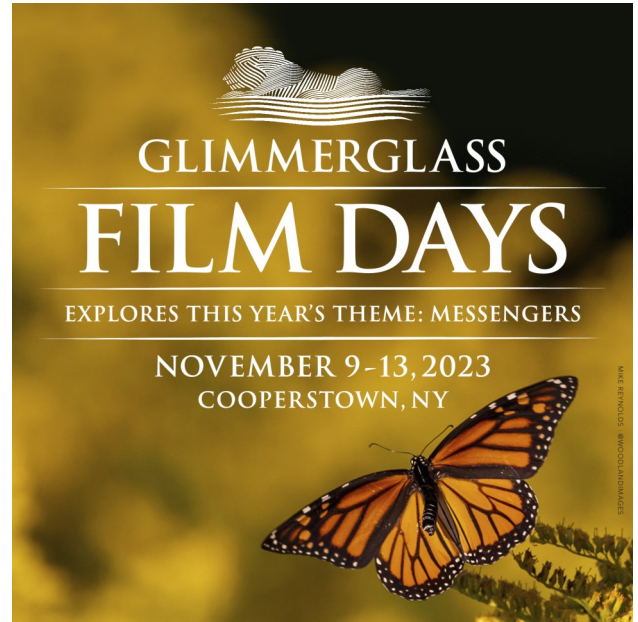
Open Tuesdays July—September, 12–4.

Glimmerglass Film Days' 11th Edition Explores "Messengers"

"Why not create an environmental film festival in Cooperstown?" In 2012, Peggy Parsons, the founder of the film program at the National Gallery of Art who has strong ties to Cooperstown, posed this question to Otsego 2000 executive director Ellen Pope. After brainstorming and assembling a talented Steering Committee, Glimmerglass Film Days was created.

Held each November to bring more energy to the shoulder season, Film Days offers exceptional films that explore humanity's complex relationship with the natural world. Peggy's idea and Otsego 2000's implementation was a success, with locals and well as visitors enjoying the annual film festival that features filmmaker talks, art exhibits, guided walks, books, and the chance to enjoy Cooperstown's Main Street, local businesses, and the region's natural beauty. Over 10 years, we have brought 89 filmmakers and experts (a few multiple times) to Cooperstown for enriching discussions and insights into key issues of the day as well as the craft of filmmaking.

"Huge thanks to all the good people at Glimmerglass Film Days for such a wonderful festival experience. We were honored to share screen and stage with such talented company," said Peter Hutchison, director/producer of *Devil Put the Coal in the Ground*, which won the 2022 Audience Choice Award along with *The Automat*. In 2023, Glimmerglass Film Days will be held November 9-13. Films will be shown at the Fenimore Art Museum, National Baseball Hall of Fame, and other Cooperstown landmarks. The theme is *Messengers*. Joey Katz and Xander Moffat now join Peggy in selecting the films, and the Steering Committee of JoAnn Gardner, Jim LaCava, Van Broughton Ramsey, Peter Rutkoff, Erik Stengler, and Sydney Waller work with Otsego 2000 staff to offer the region a dynamic cultural event. In recognition of the success of Film Days—and its perseverance through COVID—in 2022 the New York Council on the Arts (NYSCA) awarded a major three-year grant of \$49,500 per year to Otsego 2000. Films will be announced in September at glimmerglassfilmdays.org!



"Otsego 2000's creative work provides the benefits of the arts to both their community and all of New York. Arts organizations are essential, leading our tourism economy and fueling sectors such as hospitality, transit, and Main Streets across our state." —Katherine Nicholls, Chair, New York State Council of the Arts

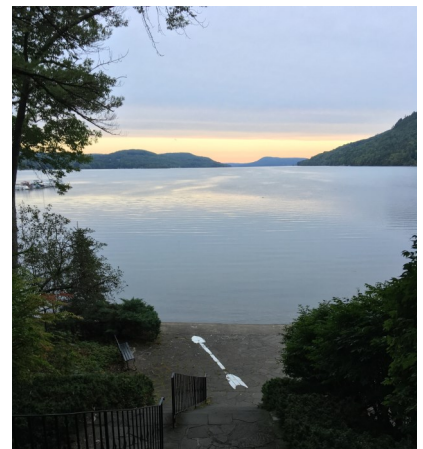
Otsego 2000 in the Community

Otsego 2000's staff may be small, with just three full-time and one part-time employees, but our commitment to community extends to civic engagement. Ellen Pope, executive director, serves on the Regional Innovation Council's Quality of Place and Business, Entrepreneurship, and Agriculture working

groups, as well as on the Cooperstown Planning Board, and as president of the Rotary Club of Cooperstown for 2023-2024. Jennifer Armstrong, finance and operations manager, serves on the Oneonta Housing Commission and the Greater Plains Elementary School PTO, as well as treasurer of the Future

for Oneonta Foundation.

Peg Odell, program and communications manager, volunteers weekly for the Cooperstown Food Pantry where she also provides pro bono PR advice. She has served on several local nonprofit boards, and spends a lot of her free time scouting trails and paddles to feature in Otsego Outdoors.



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Otsego 2000 Needs You

Thank you for adding to the vitality of the greater Otsego Lake region by

- enjoying the natural beauty of Otsego County through Otsego Outdoors and its Octet Challenges,
- buying local at the year-round Cooperstown Farmers' Market,
- experiencing a dynamic long weekend of independent films at Glimmerglass Film Days,
- learning more about local architecture, history, and the role of Main Streets,
- advocating for healthy air and water and
- protecting farmland by reducing energy consumption and speaking up when our natural resources are threatened.

With Gratitude to Otsego 2000's Cooper Circle

Otsego 2000 created the Cooper Circle to recognize those who demonstrate selfless stewardship of our Otsego Lake Region's singular natural, historic, and agricultural resources by making generous gifts of \$1,000 or more in unrestricted support. By providing anchor funding, Cooper Circle members make it possible for Otsego 2000 to continue its vigilance and advocacy on behalf of our community. None of Otsego 2000's accomplishments would be possible without the critical annual support of these individuals. Cooper Circle members gather annually to review accomplishments and challenges in the region. We value their advice and insights along with their financial support.

With an annual gift of \$1,000 or more, or monthly recurring donations of \$84, you can be a part of this essential group of community leaders, ensuring the long-term success of Otsego 2000 and our efforts to protect the greater Otsego Lake region.

DONATE NOW
WWW.OTSEGO2000.ORG

2023 Cooper Circle Members

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