

OLC is Seeking Accreditation . . . Why is That Important?

There is an accreditation program for land trusts which recognizes organizations like ours that meet national quality standards for protecting natural places forever. The Conservancy is applying for accreditation in May, which is a big step for an all-volunteer organization like OLC, and one that will make our operating practices the same as those of land trusts nationwide, regardless of how large or small they are.

The Land Trust Accreditation Commission, an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance, conducts an extensive review of each applicant's policies and programs. If we are successfully accredited, it will make it easier for OLC to secure grant funding for land transactions, decrease our cost for insurance, and demonstrate to our members the depth of our commitment to land conservation. It will enable us to protect more property and provide access to those preserved lands for the public to enjoy. We also anticipate more community engagement, and in the coming years we plan to offer more volunteer opportunities and educational events to share with our members.



The procedures we follow in managing our nature preserves and conservation easements already follow the Land Trust Alliance standards, and have done so for years, so visitors to our properties should not see significant changes. We will continue to remove invasive plants and add new trees for the benefit of wildlife and people, too. Most of the changes will occur at the board and committee level and will be visible mostly to those who make that extra degree of commitment to the Conservancy and its preservation work in the Valley Creek watershed.

The Commission invites public input and accepts signed, written comments on pending applications. Comments must relate to how OLC complies with national quality standards. These standards address the ethical and technical operation of a land trust. For the full list of standards see <http://www.landtrustaccreditation.org/help-and-resources/indicator-practices>.

To learn more about the accreditation program and to submit any comments you wish to share about OLC, visit www.landtrustaccreditation.org, or email your comments to info@landtrustaccreditation.org. Comments may also be faxed or mailed to the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, Attn: Public Comments: (fax) 518-587-3183; (mail) 36 Phila Street, Suite 2, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866.

Board Member Profile: Margot Taylor

Margot has been a member of OLC's Board of Directors since 2018. She has worked 38 years in the fields of landscape architecture, land preservation, and ecological restoration in the capacity as a designer, conservation easement manager, and certification for sustainable landscapes, one of two residential class projects worldwide. Her Kennett Square, PA property holds a 3-Star SITES certification for sustainable landscapes, one of two residential class projects worldwide.

She is a licensed Landscape Architect and certified educator. She has helped Kennett Township develop cutting edge natural resource protection ordinances. For amusement Margot likes to build ceramic objects and play her fiddle.



Volunteer Spotlight: Bright Spot In A Tough Year . . .



In addition to being skilled OLC volunteers - chopping down vines, mowing, planting trees, etc. - many OLC collaborators are experts in their chosen vocation. One such individual has received world-wide recognition: James Blachly, a key OLC contributor to projects in Airdrie Preserve, won an Award at the 63rd Annual Grammy Awards for Best Classical Solo Album. James is in his 6th year of being musical director for the Johnstown Symphony Orchestra. The winning piece "The Prison" was created by Dame Ethyl Smyth, who Blachly calls one of the most important female composers in history. "This has been an incredibly difficult year for musicians around the world and in particular orchestral musicians. So, this is just a bright spot in a tough year." Learn more about the piece, and get CD information here: <https://experientialorchestra.com/smyth>.

His wife Rebecca is the daughter of long-time OLC volunteers Rick and Toni Linder, so the family tradition continues . . . Make sure to congratulate him the next time you see Jim planting trees or chopping vines!



Annual Meeting? YES!

**Join us Thursday, April 29 at 7:pm via Zoom. Check Your eMail for the URL
See the first video of a series which will eventually highlight each Preserve.
The first video will feature Lorimer and Cedar Hollow Preserves.**

Vine Days Are Back!

As the Spring edition of Landmarks was going to press in 2020 we were just beginning to grapple with the pandemic lock-down and uncertainty. We were thankful that the Preserves could still provide a socially distant outlet for the community, but we recognized that traditional events like Vine Days and the annual meeting had to be paused.

A year on, the Preserves have seen unprecedented usage, the February snows have melted, some of us are vaccinated and we're back to taking care of our precious open space resource. The first Vine Day of 2021 was held on March 13th in perfect weather – sunny but not too hot. A team of over 25 volunteers, ranging in age from 8 to 80, spread out across the upper George Lorimer Preserve woodlands, and very few vines survived the onslaught! Massive thanks to all!

The melted snow and dry weather opened the window for the annual meadow mowing, which occurred on March 15-17th. Once again we received excellent service from Bill Ruh of All Seasons Landscaping, who covered even more ground this year following the partial retirement of long time neighbor and provider Bud Coleman (who will continue to mow trails around the OLC office). We're also grateful to neighbor and board member Art Blumenthal for his help with the small Valley Creek and Cedar Hollow meadows.



There will be one more opportunity to save the trees in Lorimer, this time in the section north of the gatehouse. Including this year the nice row of conifers infested with bittersweet to which the mowing has opened up access. **We look forward to seeing you on April 10th, starting at the Conservancy office on LeBoutillier Road.**



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Check out our Twitter and Facebook feeds for photos from OLC Preserves as an important and beautiful reminder that Nature is still open. #MyHappyPlace