

# NEWS

## Women Sharpen Their Woodcutting Skills

### The Women's Fund

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LAST NOVEMBER, 15 WOMEN found a chance to take outdoor property management into their own hands—in the most literal sense—when the Otsego Land Trust (OLT) sponsored a workshop on chainsaw skills. A \$4,800 grant from the Women's Fund covered expenses for the debut session of “Making the Cut! Chainsaw Skills Workshop For Women.” The grant will also support a second session, which OLT plans to offer this March.

Taught by Nathan Waterfield, an arborist from TimberWorks Forest Management in Cherry Valley, the free, two-day workshop teaches women to operate, sharpen and maintain a chainsaw safely and lets them practice those skills in the woods.

Although a chainsaw is a very useful piece of equipment, it's also dangerous, and fear of injury keeps many women from trying to use one, said Anne Wilfer, public lands manager at OLT in Cooperstown. “We wanted to offer a course that would empower them to learn all the safety features and to get some practice, learning how to start, sharpen, use and maintain the equipment.”

After going through the basics on the first day, the workshop gives women a chance to put their newly-acquired skills to work on the second day, limbing and felling trees in the field. “The hope is that they would be able to then go



home and do this on their own,” Wilfer said.

OLT works with many property owners, male and female, through its efforts to protect rural woodlands, farmlands and waters. Besides purchasing some property itself, OLT helps interested property owners preserve land by creating conservation easements. The easement is an agreement, customized to the owner's needs, that shields the property from major development. It might also

be designed preserve a specific habitat or natural feature.

The Land Trust originally designed the workshop to help women with conservations easements on their properties. “There are women owners who have forests they want to be able to maintain, or they might want to clear trees when they fall on their trails, or cut up firewood,” Wilfer said. But any woman can sign up to learn new skills, as long as space is

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available. For the spring, OLT is looking for a venue in Delaware County, hoping to reach an entirely new pool of participants.

The fall workshop took place at the Thayer Farm in Cooperstown, running from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. each day. "It filled up very quickly," Wilfer said. OLT used the Women's Fund grant to pay Waterfield, provide lunch for the women and purchase safety glasses, ear plugs, gloves, hard hats and other gear. "And then we brought saws, and we encouraged the participants to bring their own personal saws, so they could get a feel for how to work with their own equipment as well," she said.

As a professional arborist who also takes part in international lumberjack competitions, Waterfield brought some interesting insights to the workshop, Wilfer said. But he also tuned in well to the needs of his students. "On the second morning, a couple of people said, 'I was really stiff yesterday just from being so tense about operating a chainsaw for the first time,'" she recalled. "And he said, 'Oh—let's take a little time to do some yoga!'"

Based on feedback that OLT received from participants, the first workshop delivered a great deal of value, Wilfer said. "People really appreciated how thorough the class was."

## 18th Annual Women's Fund Breakfast

PULITZER PRIZE AND EMMY Award winning journalist Maria Hinojosa will deliver the keynote message at the 18th Annual Women's Fund Breakfast, to be held May 30 at the DoubleTree by Hilton in Binghamton.

Hinojosa's talk, titled "Own-ing Your Voice," draws on lessons she learned from her mother. Hinojosa shares her deeply personal story of how being different from every-one else can be your great-est strength by using your own narrative. "In our worst moments, we have to imagine that we can, in fact, take hold of our own power and eat our fear," says Hinojosa, who has been recognized by People En Español as one of the 25 most powerful Latina women.

Hinojosa's nearly 30-year career as a journalist includes reporting for national outlets such as PBS, CBS, CNN and NPR. She anchored an



MARIA HINOJOSA

Emmy Award-winning talk show from WGBH in Boston and now is the founder of a multimedia company based in Harlem. Hinojosa is the author of a new memoir, titled *Once I Was You*, and the May 30 program will include a book signing.

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BlueShield, WSKG Public Media, United Health Services, Inc., Coughlin & Gerhart LLP, Binghamton University College of Community and Public Affairs, Cushman & Wakefield/Pyramid Brokerage Company, NBT Bank, Visions FCU, Girl Scouts of NYPENN Pathways, Dannible & McKee, LLP, and The Leadership Alliance.

Tickets for the program, \$50 per person and \$30 for students, are available at <https://cfscny.fcsuite.com/erp/donate/list/ticket>

## Welcome and Farewell!

Please join us in welcoming Sharon Chesna and Judy Osburn to the Leadership Committee.



Judy Osburn is an attorney who works for the New York State Unified Court System as chief clerk of the Broome Supreme and County Courts. Prior to joining the Courts, she was in private practice locally, at a small law firm in Johnson City for 10 years and at her own law firm, Osburn Law Offices, in Binghamton for 10 years. She earned a Bachelor's Degree from Tufts University and a Juris Doctor Degree from Cornell Law School. She is a past president of the Broome County Bar Associ-

ation and remains an active member of this organization. She is also a co-trustee of the Titus-Colesville Fund, a charitable trust established for the benefit of the Harpursville/Colesville community.



Sharon Chesna is the Executive Director of Mothers & Babies Perinatal Network—a regional community-based health/human service agency focused on the reduction of infant mortality. Ms. Chesna has over 30 years' experience in the field of perinatal health and nonprofit management. She completed her academic studies at Binghamton University, receiving

a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration and a Master's Degree in Public Administration and Health Care. Sharon is committed to volunteering and is a member of a number of boards of directors and advisory councils at the national and state level as well as locally.

As Sharon and Judy join the committee, we bid a fond farewell to Karen Bearsch, Marcia Steinbrecher and Ann Machlin, six-year veterans of service to the Women's Fund. Thanks to all for their commitment to the Fund and making a difference in the lives of women and girls in the region. We will miss them!