

Have you ever wondered who the commissioners are and what they do? **We caught up with Commissioner Jamie Brown** and asked him three questions about his experience as a volunteer commissioner and about his love of the land.

Meet Commissioner Jamie Brown. Since 2021, Jamie has been Open Space Institute's (OSI) Senior Project Manager for Northern NY. Jamie works with landowners and partners throughout the region, from the Canadian border to the Albany area, to protect critical landscapes, including the Adirondack Park. Prior to joining OSI he was the executive director of the Lake George Land Conservancy (LGLC) in Bolton Landing, New York. Prior to working at LGLC, Jamie was the director of land protection at Ducks Unlimited (DU) overseeing all aspects of the organization's national land protection program including the

acquisition and stewardship of easements and fee-title holdings. Jamie also guided the organization through the accreditation process and in 2011, DU became the first accredited land trust working nationwide. Jamie also spent five years working in land protection for The Land Conservancy of New Jersey and Frenchman Bay Conservancy in Maine. During that time, he learned a great deal about the technical aspects of land protection, transaction funding, and stewardship. Jamie has sat at many kitchen tables drinking coffee with landowners and learning about the true importance of conserving land and feels being connected to the community is a priority. Jamie has also served on local planning boards and worked with local elected officials on land protection projects.



Jamie Brown, at Seneca Lake, NY, with his son.

Q: What drives your passion for land conservation?

A: Growing up, I spent many summer days exploring a little patch of woods that a nameless stream ran through. Years later, the woods were replaced with sprawling development called "Streamside Bliss" and the stream became badly polluted. It was miniscule in the grand scheme of things; however, that tiny forest and stream meant the world to me. I wanted to find a way to make a difference, to find a way to allow for communities to grow and thrive, but without paving over acres and removing every last bit of nature. I found what I needed in the land trust community. My hope is that future generations will value and enjoy the land we have protected as much as I loved that little stream in the woods.

Q: What inspired you to become a volunteer commissioner?

A: I always had questions about the work of land trusts, and rarely found satisfactory answers. I guided one of the organizations that I worked for through accreditation, and as painful and scary as the process was, I found in the Accreditation program the answers that I could not find elsewhere. I saw that Accreditation made our organization stronger and greatly improved my skills and knowledge. I wanted to become a part of this group to help other land trusts and land trust staff become better at what they do just as I had.





Q: Do you have any advice to someone considering becoming a volunteer commissioner?

A: If you enjoy deep thinking, collaboration, love this work, want to learn from people smarter than yourself, and consider yourself a "land trust nerd (as I do)", then this is the place for you. You will find personal satisfaction and help to make the land trust movement stronger.

Thanks to Jamie for sharing his story with us! At the end of the year Jamie will finish his time with the Commission. We want to thank him for his dedication and service to the Commission. His thoughtful contributions were invaluable to our work. Thank you Jamie.

The Commission is governed by a diverse board of 18 volunteer commissioners involved in land conservation and nonprofit management experts from around the country. Commissioners volunteer their expertise to verify that a land trust is implementing specific accreditation indicator elements from Land Trusts Standards and Practices. [Click here to learn more about the commissioners, including a commissioner job description.](#)

Commissioners and the Commission review staff work together to review accreditation applications. Several times a year, Commission meetings are held to make decisions on applications.