Oatlands for All 2026 Annual Report

From Vision to Action: A Year of Extraordinary Progress

October 1, 2025 – September 30, 2026

Leesburg, Virginia



OATLANDS

A Site of the National Trust *for* Historic Preservation

From Vision to Action: A Year of Extraordinary Progress

Just one year ago, we articulated an ambitious vision for Oatlands: a place where our extraordinary land, complex history, and vibrant community come together to illuminate the fuller story of America. We envisioned a historic site that not only preserves the past but inspires discovery, fosters belonging, and creates meaningful connections for generations to come.

Today, that vision is becoming reality. In just one year, we have made remarkable progress in preservation, interpretation, and community engagement. From replacing the mansion's portico columns to bringing more than 250 people together for *Seeing Our Humanity*, we have honored the past while creating new opportunities for learning and connection.

These accomplishments reflect the vision at the heart of *Oatlands for All*, our new five-year strategic plan. This is our roadmap for action, guiding us in preservation, deepening relationships with descendants, expanding educational opportunities, and strengthening community partnerships. *Oatlands for All* is a promise to steward this extraordinary landscape, confront history with honesty and courage, and ensure that future generations find meaning and belonging here.

None of this would be possible without our dedicated staff, volunteers, descendants, partners, and supporters. Your generosity, commitment, and belief in Oatlands have brought us this far and give us the confidence to imagine even more.

We have accomplished so much together this year. And in many ways, we are just beginning.

Thank you for helping us build an Oatlands for all: a place where history matters, community thrives, and everyone has a part in shaping what comes next!

Margaret Salazar-Porzio, Ph.D.
Executive Director

2026 SNAPSHOT

40,000	annual visitors
20+	community partners
22	volunteers
1,000+	students reached
418	acres protected
28	structures maintained



***Left**: Oatlands Educator Donna Bohanon teaches summer camp students about artifacts in the mansion. Extreme Journey camp is a partnership with the Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Heritage Area.*

One Year, Many Milestones

2026 IN REVIEW

Fall 2025 — Restoring a Legacy

The greenhouse restoration reached substantial completion, and Oatlands continued its commitment to descendant remembrance, public programs, and preservation of the historic landscape.

Winter 2026 — Establishing a Shared Vision

The adoption of *Oatlands for All*, our five-year strategic plan, established a framework for connecting preservation, interpretation, community engagement, and institutional sustainability.

Spring 2026 — Advancing Preservation

The replacement of the mansion's six portico columns marked a major preservation achievement. Living history programs, landscape activities, and educational experiences continued to bring visitors to Oatlands.

Summer 2026 — Deepening the Conversation

Seeing Our Humanity: America250 Justice for All brought descendants, preservation leaders, artists, and community members together for an important conversation about history, memory, and responsibility.

Fall 2026 — Celebrating Our Supporters

The inaugural *Garden Soirée* celebrated the people whose generosity sustains Oatlands and honored the extraordinary support of Mrs. Jacqueline Mars, while helping secure matching support for the next phase of portico preservation.

Across the Year — Sustaining Momentum

From collections assessment and landscape stewardship to new interpretation and community partnerships, Oatlands advanced work that will continue to shape its future.









Looking Ahead to 2027

Land

Continue preserving Oatlands' historic buildings, gardens and landscapes, including the next phase of portico restoration, Smokehouse conservation and targeted reforestation.

History

Advance descendant-centered research, archaeology, and interpretation to uncover and share a fuller understanding of Oatlands' history.

Community

Expand hands-on learning, youth programs, and community partnerships to welcome new audiences and make Oatlands a place of discovery for all.

LAND & COLLECTIONS



Stewarding Our Historic and Natural Resources

In 2026, Oatlands' preservation priorities became tangible accomplishments. We made significant investments in the care of this extraordinary place. Each milestone reflects our responsibility to protect Oatlands' historic and natural resources today and for future generations.

SPOTLIGHT: ADVANCEMENTS IN STEWARDSHIP

Renew

In spring 2026, we **replaced the six columns on the mansion's front portico** to address critical structural needs while honoring the labor and craftsmanship of the enslaved people who built Oatlands.

Restore

The newly restored **historic greenhouse** and our beautiful gardens continue to flourish through thoughtful cultivation and ongoing care, sustaining Oatlands' living legacy for generations to come.

Preserve

With a grant from the Loudoun Soil and Water Conservation District, we **removed invasive species** to improve the health of Oatlands' landscape and protect its natural resources.

Conserve

Caring for Oatlands' historic collections is essential to preserving our material heritage. This summer, a **specialist team assessed 125 historic garments**, laying the groundwork for their long-term preservation.

HISTORY

History lives in more than documents and objects. It lives in people, families and communities whose stories are too often missing from the record.

FEATURED PROGRAM

Seeing Our Humanity | America 250: Justice for All



Photo by Mikaeel Martínez-Jaka







Photography by Larisa Epatko

As part of the National Trust for Historic Preservation's America 250: Justice for All initiative, Oatlands hosted *Seeing Our Humanity* on July 25, 2026, bringing together over **250 descendants, historians, preservation leaders,** and **community members** to explore the changing meanings of freedom, justice and belonging in America.

Featuring a keynote with the National Trust's President and CEO **Brent Leggs** and Academy-nominated actor **Djimon Hounsou**, the program fostered powerful conversations about historical memory, memorialization and repair. The gathering brought to life the vision of *Oatlands for All: A Strategic Plan for Land, History, and Community (2026–2030),* particularly our commitment to descendant-centered interpretation and meaningful community partnerships. By honoring the lives and legacies of those enslaved at Oatlands, we are working together with descendants to preserve and share a fuller, more inclusive history that connects the past to the present and helps shape our shared future. For a more in-depth look at the day, check out the National Trust's blog post by Margaret Salazar-Porzio, Ph.D.: "Where History Meets Humanity at Oatlands."

COMMUNITY

Oatlands thrives through the people who learn, gather and grow here.

Students explore history in meaningful ways through guided experiences at Oatlands, connecting classroom learning to our historic landscape, buildings and collections.

Families discover welcoming spaces for exploration and creativity through hands-on programs that inspire curiosity across generations.

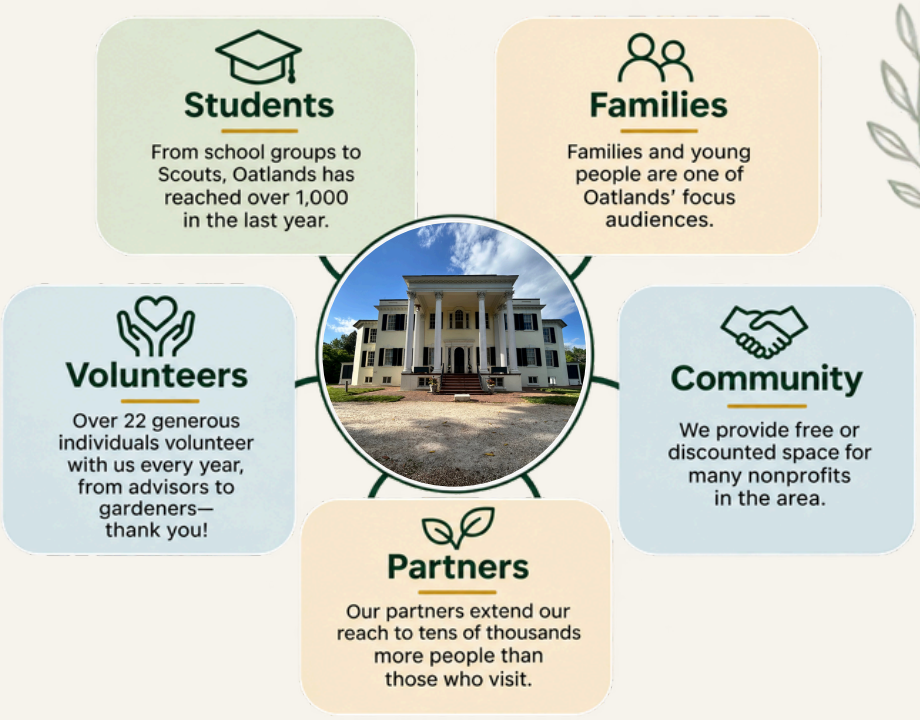
Cross-country meets bring over 4,000 **athletes**, coaches and spectators to our grounds, making Oatlands a vibrant gathering place for the wider community.

With more than **20 community partnerships**, Oatlands extends its reach far beyond traditional historic site programming.

Collaborations with **Loudoun County Public Schools**, the **Black History Committee of the Friends of Thomas Balch Library, StageCoach Theatre**, **HealthWorks, Loudoun Hunt Pony Club** and **Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Heritage Area**, among many others, strengthen educational opportunities, deepen historical understanding, support landscape stewardship and bring new audiences to Oatlands. Together, these partnerships advance our *Oatlands for All* strategic vision to connect land, history and community.



Students pose alongside Rusty, Oatlands' famous and faithful garden sentinel.



None of this work is possible without our small dedicated staff, generous volunteers and trusted partners who advance Oatlands' mission every day. **Together, we steward Oatlands, rooted in care, strengthened by collaboration, and open to all.**

With gratitude

to the donors, volunteers, partners, staff and community who carry Oatlands forward.

FROM VISION TO ACTION

2026 Strategic Plan Key Performance Indicator Tracker

2026 ACHIEVEMENTS	2027 GOALS

01 ◉ INTERPRETATION & CHANGING MEANINGS OF FREEDOM

- 250+ at Seeing Our Humanity
- 1,000+ Students reached
- New Dialogic Tour developed and beta-tested
- Relaunched Reclaim Your Story tour
- 10 Speakers throughout the year

- 6+ public dialogues / 400+ participants annually
- 5-year Interpretation Plan developed
- Dialogic Tour refined with visitor feedback

02 ◉ DESCENDANT ENGAGEMENT

- Ethical Stewardship Policy established
- Descendants Day included Recognition from House Representative Suhas Subramanyam
- Co-created tours and exhibits
- Updated and added new family histories on Oatlands.org
- Led proposal development for LCPR Arts grant

- Grow participation and programming
- Urgent oral histories with elders
- Complete genealogical research for 2-3 families
- Explore descendant-led video and podcast series
- Provide grant-writing and strategic guidance support to Gleedsville Legacy Foundation and Mt. Olive Church

03 ◉ LAND & COLLECTIONS

- Historic Greenhouse restoration
- 6 portico columns replaced
- ~125 garments assessed
- Grant-funded invasive plant removal
- Renovations completed to rental property

- Restoration of the Smokehouse and North Garden Wall
- Restoration of Corinthian Capitals
- Reforest 35 acres of Oatlands fields
- Forensic analysis of portico columns started
- 5-year Collections Care plan developed

04 ◉ LIVING LEARNING LANDSCAPE

- Summer Camps
- Landscape Tours
- Launched Visitor Feedback survey
- Relaunched Living History Weekend
- Explore Oatlands Day
- Miles for Mammograms 5k with HealthWorks

- New Descendant-led interpretation throughout landscape
- Indigenous History tour launched
- Start development of Hands-on History stations
- New interpretation in Visitor Center
- Archeological master plan started
- Living History weekend becomes annual event

05 ◉ PRESERVATION LEADERSHIP

- Loudoun 250 Committee
- 2026 Community Blue Ribbon Award from the Loudoun County Joint Architectural Review Board
- Active Heritage Pass Partner
- Loudoun County Preservation & Conservation Coalition

- Add and deepen active preservation/cultural partnerships
- AAM panel on Section 106

06 ◉ STAFF & OPERATIONS

- Staff training and peer exchanges
- New Staff Guidebook created
- Emergency Protocol established
- New wayfinding signs added across the property

- 4 learning opportunities per staff member annually
- Create and hire new position dedicated to descendant engagement with NTHP African American Action Fund
- 10-year Cyclical Maintenance plan developed

07 ◉ SUSTAINABLE RESOURCES

- $150K unrestricted gifts from Major Donors
- $27.2K Garden Soirée gross
- $15K in new donations
- Portico match achieved

- Track members and engagement
- Grow private philanthropy contributions to support mission-driven activities and preservation priorities
- Monthly budget overview meetings for fiscal responsibility

"Oatlands produced leaders in the National Gallery of Art, the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the White House Historical Association... They all took root here. What incredible gifts for the country."
- Mrs. Jacqueline B. Mars





















"You made history fun! My favorite activity was learning in the Oatlands garden. It was very beautiful and I keep telling people about it!"
- Amr, LCPS Middle School Student