

## Celebrating Another Great Land Victory

Chalk up another historic victory in our Saving the Land That Matters Most campaign: 590 spectacular acres in Stockport, Columbia County. One of the largest privately owned, undeveloped tracts along the Hudson River estuary, this extraordinary landscape had been a Scenic Hudson conservation priority for decades.

What made it a “must-save” property? First, outstanding natural features—including 2.4 miles of river shoreline, grasslands, forested bluffs and ravines, and wetlands. And second, its location—adjacent to the 1,500-acre Stockport Flats unit of the Hudson River National Estuarine Research Reserve, an important field laboratory for stewardship and education, and a prime destination for paddling, fishing, boating and bird watching.

In addition, the land contributes to scenic views enjoyed by 1 million Amtrak passengers who pass it annually, while its shoreline and bluffs are prominently visible from several popular riverfront parks. Further, the property’s uplands offer a critical pathway for species to migrate away from habitats likely to flood because of rising sea levels. Finally, the land offers outstanding new recreational opportunities, meaning it will boost tourism, but it won’t require municipal services—making this acquisition a win-win for the local economy.

Home to various industries in the 1800s, the land began to revert to its natural state in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. When a landfill was proposed for the site in the 1980s, local citizens joined to fight off those plans. Several leaders of that effort provided generous support for this acquisition, also enabled through a loan from The Peter and Carmen Lucia Buck Foundation.

# Busy Spring Yields Victories, Fuels Ongoing Campaigns

This newsletter highlights the great progress Scenic Hudson made on all fronts this spring.

## PROTECTING “MUST-SAVE” LANDS

After decades of perseverance, we removed a “must-save” property from our wish list, protecting 590 environmentally critical acres in Columbia County that includes nearly 2.5 miles of Hudson Riverfront.

We ramped up the potential for achieving the goal of our Foodshed Conservation Plan—ensuring valley and New York City residents have access to fresh, local food—by working with farmers to preserve their productive fields and advocating successfully for a \$20-million state budget commitment to protect the region’s farmland. Overall, we’ve protected 13,000 acres on more than 90 family farms.

## HALTING SERIOUS THREATS

At a press conference in April (top right), I helped launch the Campaign for a Cleaner Hudson, the new coalition of environmental groups and municipalities urging General Electric to get more PCBs out of the river now. Shortly after this event, which received national media attention, we achieved a major breakthrough. For the first time the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), which is overseeing the cleanup, said it supports efforts to compel GE to dredge more before removing its equipment from the river. In May the *New York Times* joined our cause, stating that “There is one entity with the skill, money and machinery to set this problem right, to heal the river for good: General Electric... the company that sickened the river in the first place.”

During the spring we continued our outreach to federal officials about severe risks the valley faces from the transport of flammable crude oil by rail, using a March derailment in Illinois as a potent example of the dangers we face. That crash and spill in one of the state’s prime destinations for outdoor recreation caused what the EPA called an “imminent and substantial danger” of contaminating the Mississippi River.

## WORK REMAINS, YOUR SUPPORT CRITICAL

However, our work isn’t over. We continue seeking a compromise that would stop LG Electronics from constructing a tower atop the National Natural Landmark Palisades. And we keep advocating that new transmission lines proposed to cut through valley communities cost too much, jeopardize historic and scenic treasures, and—most importantly—aren’t needed to meet future electric demands.

We’re so grateful for your past support, which enabled us to accomplish so much. By sustaining your partnership with Scenic Hudson, we can keep on building momentum in creating a healthy, economically prosperous Hudson Valley.



Ned Sullivan, President



# ADVOCACY UPDATE

We remain on the front lines in efforts to halt major threats to the valley.

## Power lines not needed, too costly

With fellow members of the Hudson Valley Smart Energy Coalition, in April we filed formal comments with the state Public Service Commission (PSC) regarding proposals to construct new high-voltage power lines that could cut through 25 valley communities. We evaluated the potential environmental, visual and economic impacts of the projects and stated which should be eliminated from contention and which would be preferred, assuming a need is found. We still contend there's *no* need for the lines, whose billion-dollar tab would be borne chiefly by valley residents. The PSC has granted the coalition an entire day to make our case at the July technical conference scheduled to determine the project's future.

## New guidelines for shipping crude don't go far enough

New federal requirements for the design of tanker cars and other actions to improve the safety of shipping volatile Bakken crude oil by rail haven't allayed our concerns about the potential for a catastrophic explosion or spill in the valley. The new rules would allow the most common and dangerous DOT-111 railcars to remain in use for up to a decade. And by permitting DOT-111s on trains carrying fewer than 20 cars of flammable crude in a row or up to 35 cars dispersed through a train, they ignore that almost all recent crude disasters involved fewer than 10 cars. Finally, the rules don't address dangers posed by shipping heavy Canadian tar sands crude, an emerging threat in our region.

We're exploring ways to compel the U.S. Department of Transportation to eliminate these loopholes so valley residents are fully protected.

## PCBs—Get the job done now

With partners we launched the Campaign for a Cleaner Hudson ([www.cleanerhudson.org](http://www.cleanerhudson.org)) to persuade General Electric to conduct critically needed restoration dredging in the Hudson's navigational channel and remove additional acres of highly contaminated river sediments before the company dismantles its cleanup equipment later this year. GE has legal obligations beyond the current EPA-mandated cleanup, and the work we're calling for would count toward its natural resource restoration requirements. Scientists say failing to eliminate these "hotspots" now could delay by decades the river's economic and environmental recovery. Endorsing the campaign are more than 65 upriver and downriver municipalities that have passed formal resolutions calling on GE to remove these toxins immediately, and the *New York Times*, which published an editorial strongly urging GE to get the job done now.



## Foodshed Plan Picks Up Key Support

We continue making great strides in efforts to implement our Foodshed Conservation Plan—protecting enough farmland to meet growing demands for fresh, local food in the valley and New York City.

We picked up key stakeholders in pursuing a budget commitment from New York City to dedicate \$5 million annually for farmland protection over the next decade. To date the plan has received enthusiastic support from 14 City Council members; 25 of the city's premier chefs and restaurateurs, including Mario Batali, Dan Barber, Lidia Bastianich, Bill Telepan and Jean-Georges Vongerichten; and many city-based food, hunger, environmental and planning groups.

On our own farmland protection front, we and Columbia Land Conservancy recently partnered with farmers Eileen Wallding (above left) and Nicholas Pandjiris to protect their 60-acre Whistle Down Farm in Claverack, Columbia County. In addition to providing a variety of vegetables to local consumers via a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) operation and the City of Hudson Farmers Market, the farm supplies produce to four New York City food pantries. In the future, the farmers plan to create a u-pick berry operation and offer goat dairy products.

Whistle Down's owners are committed to utilizing sustainable farming practices that improve and build the soil without the use of chemical pesticides or fertilizers—evidence their passion for growing the healthiest food is matched by their commitment to land stewardship.

# COMING SOON—EXCITING NEW PARK AMENITIES



Work progresses on projects to enhance visitors' experiences at two of our most popular parks. At Esopus Meadows Preserve in Ulster County, a new pavilion will open later this summer. Specially designed to withstand flooding and storm surges, the structure will host environmental education programs and feature signage about how to make riverfront communities more resilient to rising sea levels. At West Point Foundry Preserve in Cold Spring, Putnam County, a second phase to stabilize remains of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century ironworks located there will be capped off—literally—by reinstalling the Office Building's impressive cupola atop the 1865 structure. Work should be completed by year's end.

## Scenic Hudson, Inc.

One Civic Center Plaza, Suite 200  
Poughkeepsie, NY 12601-3157



SAVING THE LAND THAT MATTERS MOST

## Enjoy Sizzling Summer Fun

Join us for fun, free and informative events in our parks.  
More info: [www.scenichudson.org/events](http://www.scenichudson.org/events)

### Free Guided History Tours

*West Point Foundry Preserve, Cold Spring (Putnam County)*  
Saturday, July 4, Aug. 1 & Sept. 5 • 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m.  
Explore the remains of the ironworks that sparked America's Industrial Revolution and helped win the Civil War.

### Rhythm on the Riverfront

*Foundry Dock Park, Cold Spring (Putnam County)*  
Thursday, Aug. 6, 13, 20 & 27 • 6-8 p.m.  
Toe-tapping concerts plus a spectacular setting equal four very special evenings. Come early and bring a picnic.



Volunteer Workdays

Help us keep invasive species at bay in four popular parks.

*Scenic Hudson Park at Peekskill Landing, Peekskill (Westchester County)*

Saturday, July 11 • 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

*Scenic Hudson's Long Dock Park, Beacon (Dutchess County)*

Saturday, July 25 • 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

*Madam Brett Park, Beacon (Dutchess County)*

Saturday, Aug. 8 • 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

*Esopus Meadows Preserve, Esopus (Ulster County)*

Saturday, Aug. 22 • 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Save the Date!

### Farmland Cycling Tour

*Poets' Walk Park, Red Hook (Dutchess County)*

Saturday, Sept. 19 • 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

After energizing on fresh donuts, cider and apples (courtesy of local farmers), pedal through the rolling countryside of Dutchess and Columbia counties on a 10-, 25- or 45-mile ride, passing farms Scenic Hudson helped protect. Then enjoy a fabulous lunch and live music back at the park. Register early: This event (limited to 250 riders) fills up quickly.

### NEW LEAF PAPER® EcoAudit™

Scenic Hudson, Inc. saved the following resources by using 800 pounds of New Leaf Ingenuity, made of 100% post-consumer recycled fiber, designated Ancient Forest Friendly™ and manufactured with electricity that is offset with Green-e® certified renewable energy certificates. Calculation based on research by Environmental Defense Fund and other members of the Paper Task Force.

