



Annual Report 2010

Your Support of Scenic Hudson Creates Enduring Benefits



Last year Scenic Hudson protected 1,315 acres of stunning land critical to the ecology and scenic beauty of the Hudson Valley. Ten exciting park projects revitalized waterfronts and provided 215 construction jobs. More than 375 acres of farmland were saved, bringing our total preserved to more than 8,000 acres. With local citizens up and down the valley we stopped or scaled back 700 units of sprawling development poised to destroy magnificent views or essential wildlife habitat. We're still watchdogging GE's PCB cleanup and have started to monitor a power line from Canada proposed to run the length of the Hudson to ensure it meets its claims of bringing renewable energy to New York City without causing environmental damage to the river and its banks.

All this work will yield long-term dividends, improving the health and well-being of residents for generations. The acres conserved in our Saving the Land That Matters Most campaign contribute to sustainable prosperity, whether by protecting our aquifers, supplying healthy local produce or mitigating climate change impacts. Our new parks make our downtowns vibrant, attracting green businesses. And our ongoing campaign for a clean Hudson will make the river safer for drinking, fishing, swimming and recreational boating.

Our work is often justified in terms of economic benefits, science and public policy. But as you admire the images in this report, please

remember the enormous power of natural beauty.

Unfortunately, threats to the valley persist. Proposed developments that would obliterate forests, pollute streams and pave over farm fields await an economic rebound. We must ramp up efforts to Save the Land That Matters Most now, while real estate prices make each dollar go further.

We're both enormously grateful for your continued generous support to Scenic Hudson.

Frederic C. Rich, **Board Chair**

Ned Sullivan, **President**





Protecting the Valley's Astonishing Beauty

Natural beauty is essential to our lives. Its timelessness renews our spirits and gives us hope. New studies show it even improves our health, reducing stress and boosting immunity.

In the Hudson Valley we're blessed by natural splendor unsurpassed anywhere in the world. Scenic Hudson's track record for preserving the region's iconic landscapes has resulted in the protection of over 28,000 acres—from grand mountain vistas and rolling pastures to tranquil wetlands. All are places of enormous power and majesty, celebrated by writers, poets and artists for hundreds of years.

Sprawling development threatens these treasures, which is why we're now committed to Saving the Land That Matters Most—so future generations can experience the awe that only nature delivers.



Safeguarding World-Class Views

Among the 1,315 acres we protected last year were 140 acres on Popolopen Ridge (left) in **Fort Montgomery**, Orange County, which sit amid a stunning Hudson Highlands landscape visible for miles. The Hudson Highlands Land Trust partnered with us to achieve this victory—one of the most important in our history.

By protecting 119 acres adjacent to our Shaupeneak Ridge preserve in **Esopus**, Ulster County, we expanded this popular hiking and mountain-biking destination to nearly 700 acres, with the potential for new trails offering spectacular Catskills vistas (above).

Fighting for Iconic Vistas

We worked with partners to halt construction of a cell tower just south of Popolopen Ridge that would mar spectacular views throughout the Hudson Highlands.

Comments from our expert planners supported rejection by **Kingston** officials of plans for a 360-unit development that would destroy river views and limit waterfront access.



Connecting People to the River

For centuries the Hudson River was the lifeline of waterfront communities, providing residents with food, employment, transportation and recreation. Gradually people began to lose touch with the Hudson, cut off from its shores by industry and the railroads.

Scenic Hudson is dedicated to restoring this vital connection with the valley's greatest natural resource. Often working with partners, we're providing exciting new places to discover the Hudson's magnificence—through fishing, kayaking or simply admiring a sunset.

Our parks projects last year not only provided 215 immediate construction jobs but will help revitalize Hudson Riverfronts. They'll also offer new opportunities for our environmental-education programs—which reached 900 students last year—to create future stewards for the river.

Westchester County

Natural areas and an esplanade will replace an asphalt plant when Scenic Hudson RiverWalk Park at Tarrytown opens this spring.

Renovation of the Kingsland Point Bathhouse in Sleepy Hollow is nearly complete. Next year students will engage in environmental-education activities in the facility renamed for philanthropist Kathryn W. Davis.

In Peekskill contamination has been cleaned up at a 4.7-acre former industrial riverfront site Scenic Hudson acquired and co-owns with the city. It will become Peekskill Landing Park.

Ulster County

At a ribbon-cutting in Lloyd, we welcomed the public to Franny Reese State Park, protected and managed by Scenic Hudson. Also in Lloyd, Scenic Hudson began creating a trail system in our new Illinois Mountain preserve. Additionally, we helped Lloyd and Marlborough acquire land for riverfront parks. The Trust for Public Land worked with us on the Marlborough initiative.

Dutchess County

Construction began at Scenic Hudson's Long Dock Park in Beacon, with new features including a kayak pavilion and renovation of an historic barn into Scenic Hudson's River Center.

Columbia County

New amenities at our Harrier Hill Park in Stockport are popular with bird watchers and picnickers enjoying panoramic Hudson River and Catskills vistas.

Albany County

Scenic Hudson funding helped the county purchase a nine-mile rail bed that it will turn into a recreational trail.





Providing Clean Air & Water

It's crystal clear: the land we protect helps purify the water you drink and the air you breathe. Woodlands collect rain and snow. This water is cleansed as it filters into the ground to recharge the aquifer—a community's prime water source. Increasing a watershed's forest cover by 10 percent can reduce water-treatment costs by 20 percent. One mature tree sequesters 50 pounds of carbon annually and releases enough oxygen to support two humans.

Wetlands and farmland improve water quality too. Wetlands trap contaminants that could reach water supplies. In addition they soak up water, buffering nearby homes and habitats from flooding. When farm fields are replaced by pavement, precipitation once absorbed into aquifers to replenish water supplies instead flows into storm drains.

Each land preservation victory means we can breathe another healthy sigh of relief.

Preserving Lands Offers Myriad Benefits

Advancing our land campaign, we protected 104 wooded acres in **Lloyd**, Ulster County, that provide essential habitat and stunning views from the FDR-Vanderbilt National Historic Sites.

Newly conserved wetlands and woods along the Black Creek in **Esopus**, Ulster County, sit amid 1,061 previously conserved acres in a prime waterfowl area.

Creating Eco-Friendly Parks

Scenic Hudson's Long Dock Park in **Beacon**, Dutchess County, and West Point Foundry Preserve in **Cold Spring**, Putnam County, were selected for a new national Sustainable Sites Initiative $^{\text{\tiny TM}}$ that recognizes park designs for their ability to clean water and reduce pollution.

Championing the Hudson's Cleanup

We continue pushing GE to begin Phase 2 of its PCB cleanup, essential for the Hudson River's health. Independent experts have recommended the project continue without delay. We agree.

Keeping Streams Healthy

As part of the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation's Trees for Tribs program, we planted trees, shrubs and grasses along streams on three of our protected properties. The plants cut pollution in tributaries by filtering run-off.





Securing a Fresh, Healthy Food Supply

With increasing concerns over food contamination from industrial-scale agriculture, safeguarding local family farms takes on added urgency. Valley farms already are leading suppliers of healthy produce to farmers' markets from New York City (right) to the Capital Region. But before the recession, 50 acres of valley farmland disappeared each day—and projections indicate an imminent population surge. So it's essential to secure our farmland base now.

Scenic Hudson is a longtime champion for valley farms, critical to our heritage and the basis of a \$530-million agricultural economy. Since 1998 we've partnered with farmers to protect over 8,000 acres on 50 working farms in five counties.

Our land conservation campaign seeks to preserve 25,000 farmland acres, so fresh, local fruits and vegetables always are within reach.

Conserving an Agricultural Mainstay

In another important farmland success, we protected one of the largest agricultural properties in our history—the 378-acre, family-owned McKeon Farm (left) in **Red Hook**, Dutchess County. The bargain-sale easement saves pastures and hay fields supporting a grass-fed beef cattle operation that supplies valley consumers. This acquisition creates a contiguous block of protected farmland spanning 945 acres.

Advocating for a New Partner

New funding is imperative to protect valley farmland. Fortunately Washington wants to help. At a meeting we organized with farmers and environmental leaders during the America's Great Outdoors Hudson Valley listening tour, U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack praised collaborative efforts to preserve the region's farms. "What you have is a model for the future farmers of America," he said. "The USDA wants to be a partner." We're working with the valley's congressional delegation and federal officials to make sure this happens.





Ensuring the Valley's Vibrant Economic Future

Essential to the region's prosperity, Hudson Valley parks and scenic vistas are the basis of a \$4.7-billion tourism industry responsible for 80,000 jobs. They also help maintain an outstanding quality of life critical to attracting new businesses. In the last five years, more than a dozen green technology firms have relocated to the valley. The region's excellent recreational opportunities and natural beauty, which make it easier to hire and keep top-notch employees, motivate chief executives to grow their businesses in the valley.

Many of our land preservation victories safeguard landscapes viewed by thousands from the valley's key historic sites. Our parks offer exciting, close-to-home places to enjoy nature and help draw visitors to downtown waterfronts. They provide a much-needed catalyst for economic renewal that balances development with conserving irreplaceable natural resources.

Rising to the Cause of a Tourism Linchpin

In another landmark achievement, we preserved the most important unprotected landscape seen from the **FDR National Historic Site**, preventing proposed development on 185 riverfront acres in **Lloyd**, Ulster County. The property also is visible from the popular Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site.



Bringing People Downtown

Shattering projections, Walkway Over the Hudson State Historic Park—supported by a major Scenic Hudson investment—drew 720,000 visitors in its first year. *The Wall Street Journal* reported a surge in business in shops and restaurants at both ends of the span.

Shaping Healthy Waterfronts

Our new book, *Revitalizing Hudson Riverfronts*, will guide development valleywide. It details practical steps local officials and developers can take to realize the untapped economic potential of their waterfronts while protecting scenic and ecological resources. It's available at www.revitalizinghudsonriverfronts.org.



Preserving Extraordinary Biological Diversity

Just 13.5 percent of New York's land mass, the Hudson Valley sustains 85 percent of its vertebrate species, and over 180 rare or imperiled species. Yet sprawling development continues to diminish habitat essential for maintaining this ecological crown jewel.

Healthy ecosystems support plants and animals that prevent diseases such as West Nile virus and Lyme disease. They eradicate crop-destroying pests and mitigate erosion. And they boost our economy: bird/wildlifewatching is America's fastest-growing recreational pursuit.

Saving the Land That Matters Most conserves irreplaceable habitats—forests, wetlands, ridgelines. Just as important, by preserving contiguous landscapes we maintain links between habitats critical for many species' survival. At the same time, we're making our parks more inviting for wildlife.

Maintaining and Sharing an Ecological Powerhouse

We worked with the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill in **Saugerties**, Ulster County, to preserve 194 acres featuring remarkably diverse ecosystems. With the Esopus Creek Conservancy we're creating public trails connecting people to the land's wildlife and over a mile of unspoiled Hudson Riverfront (left). We've now created or enhanced more than 50 parks, preserves and historic sites.

Keeping Habitats Intact

We worked with partners in **Pine Plains**, Dutchess County, to reduce units at the proposed Carvel Development from 950 to 625, conserving more habitat for endangered turtles and salamanders.

Encouraging Biodiversity

In meadows at our Poets' Walk Park in **Red Hook**, Dutchess County, and Stockport Conservation Area in **Stockport**, Columbia County, we've begun a grassland recovery plan to benefit threatened grassland-nesting birds and insects.

Last year volunteers pitched in at 11 Scenic Hudson parks to remove 20 acres of invasive plant species crowding out native plants on which wildlife depend.

Taking Stock of Wildlife

For the NYS Hudson River Estuary Program, 70 Scenic Hudson volunteers tracked herring and eels spawning in our Black Creek Preserve in **Esopus**, Ulster County. They recorded the highest numbers of these important but declining fish populations in any Hudson tributary.

Financial Overview

Consolidated results for Scenic Hudson and The Scenic Hudson Land Trust for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2010, show total operating expenses were \$18.0 million, up from \$13.2 million spent in FY 09, an increase of 36.6 percent for the year. The increase in expenses was driven by newparks construction in Westchester, Dutchess, Ulster and Columbia counties.

Scenic Hudson

Expenses totaled \$5.3 million, a 9.3-percent decrease over the prior year, and operating revenues totaled \$5.7 million, down 3.8 percent from the previous year. Monies were spent to protect lands vital to clean water, wildlife and working farms; to create beautiful public parks; to assist communities with planning for appropriate growth; and to pursue the historic cleanup of Hudson River PCBs.

Consolidated Statement of Financial Position

	June 30, 2010	June 30, 2009
Land areas (at cost)	57,688	53,826
Cash and investments	139,677	131,815
Other assets	23,916	23,826
Total assets	221,281	209,467
Liabilities	9,032	6,371
Net assets	212,249	203,096
Total liabilities and net assets	221,281	209,467

[in thousands]

The Scenic Hudson Land Trust

Expenses totaled \$14.4 million, including \$7.8 million to build and maintain public parks, \$3.1 million to purchase conservation easements and \$1.2 million in grants to local communities to purchase land and construct parks for public use. In addition the land trust spent \$5.6 million to purchase five properties. In FY 10, the land trust protected 1,125 acres through acquisitions and conservation easements. We also conserved 190 acres by supporting projects led by our partners.

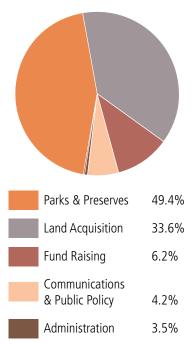
Financial Structure

Scenic Hudson maintains two endowments: The Lila Acheson and DeWitt Wallace Hudson Valley Land Preservation Endowment (\$118.5 million at year-end FY 10), used to support land conservation activities, and a board-designated fund for general operating expenses (\$9.3 million at year-end FY 10). The assets are pooled in a diversified portfolio supervised by an investment committee. Total investment return was 15.8 percent for FY 10. The board approved \$7.4 million in spending from the endowments for the year (5 percent of the past 12 quarters' rolling average value).

Although lands owned by the land trust are eligible for tax exemption, Scenic Hudson paid \$239,978 in property taxes and payments in lieu of taxes in FY 10 and \$278,943 in FY 09. Scenic Hudson seeks relief from taxes once land is available for public access.

The board engages Marks Paneth & Shron, LLP, to perform an independent audit, which is available on our website.

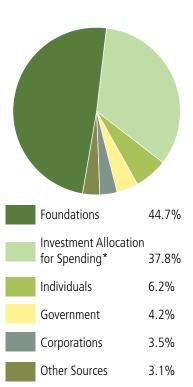
Consolidated Operating Expenses



Land Use Advocacy

3.1%

Consolidated Operating Revenues



^{*} The vast majority of investment allocation for spending supports land acquisition and parks creation.



Thank you supporters

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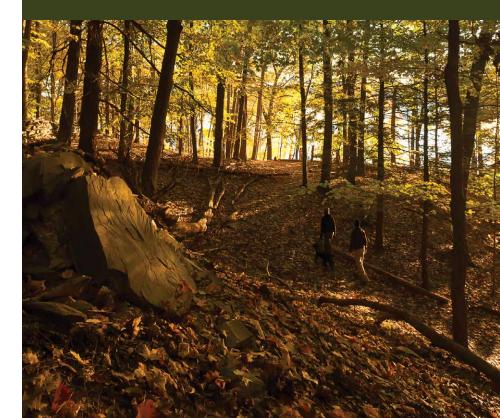
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"What a great organization! We look forward to becoming more involved, getting to know all the parks and to donating what we can. Truly, we are thrilled to know about all the work that you do. Thank you!"

—Audrey Isaac and Michelle Iacolina, first-time Scenic Hudson park visitors



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"The development of this park will provide an economic boost for the business community. There has been a large increase of tourism in Beacon—people who not only look for shops and restaurants, but are also here for the beauty of the river, the trails and the mountain. Long Dock Park will be one more reason for tourists to come and enjoy the city."

—Beacon Chamber of Commerce President Ron larossi on construction of new amenities at Scenic Hudson's Long Dock Park



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