

Meet Scenic Hudson's New Conservation Easement Monitoring Team

If you saw us walking around your property this spring or summer, you probably noticed some new faces. We're delighted to introduce ourselves—Scenic Hudson's new conservation easement monitoring and management team.



Conservation Easement Manager Mike Knutson

I started at Scenic Hudson in 2005 as ecological restoration program assistant, then became conservation easement management assistant before taking over as manager this spring. Before coming to Scenic Hudson, I held a variety of different positions, including English teacher, park ranger and trail maintainer. I have a B.S. in Environmental Science from SUNY Plattsburgh and love to spend my free time hiking and backpacking.

Conservation Easement Management Assistant MacKenzie Waro

I came to Scenic Hudson in June. After graduating from Cornell University in 2007, I worked with the NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets as an ecosystem-based management assistant. Coming from an agricultural background, I still enjoy showing sheep, riding horses and coaching an equestrian vaulting team near my hometown of Cooperstown.



If we haven't met you already, we hope to soon. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us.

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What is the 2006 New York State Conservation Easement Tax Credit?

If you own property restricted by a conservation easement that was donated or sold at less than full fair market value (known as a bargain sale), you may be eligible for an annual refund of 25 percent of property taxes (school, county and town) paid on the protected land, up to a maximum of \$5,000 per year. This is an annual, recurring credit that original or subsequent owners can enjoy upon filing a state income tax return. The credit is a refund; even if you owe no income tax or less than the amount of the easement tax credit, you may be eligible for the refund. Easements that were sold at full fair market value are not eligible for the credit.

For more information, contact Michael Knutson or visit the Land Trust Alliance's Web site at www.landtrustalliance.org/community/Regions/northeast/ny-tax-credit.

Scenic Hudson can't guarantee you will receive any tax benefits. Only a qualified tax attorney or accountant can determine whether these credits apply.



Robert Rodriguez, Jr. • www.robertrodriguezjr.com

Save the Date

Landings: A Workshop to Encourage Collaboration Between Non-Farming Landowners and Farmers in Search of Land will share concrete steps and present models for building relationships between landowners and farmers, as well as offer advice from those who have forged long-term relationships. It will take place on Saturday, Dec. 13, at Hawthorne Valley Farm in Ghent, Columbia County. Space is limited; to register or for more information, visit hawthornevalleyfarm.org/publications/farmerworkshop.htm; call 518 672 7500, ext. 105; or e-mail rachel@hawthornevalleyfarm.org.

Great New Victories in Land Campaign

Thanks to landowners and land-preservation partners, we've made great strides recently in our campaign to Save the Land That Matters Most—protecting 65,000 acres of the highest agricultural, scenic and ecological importance.

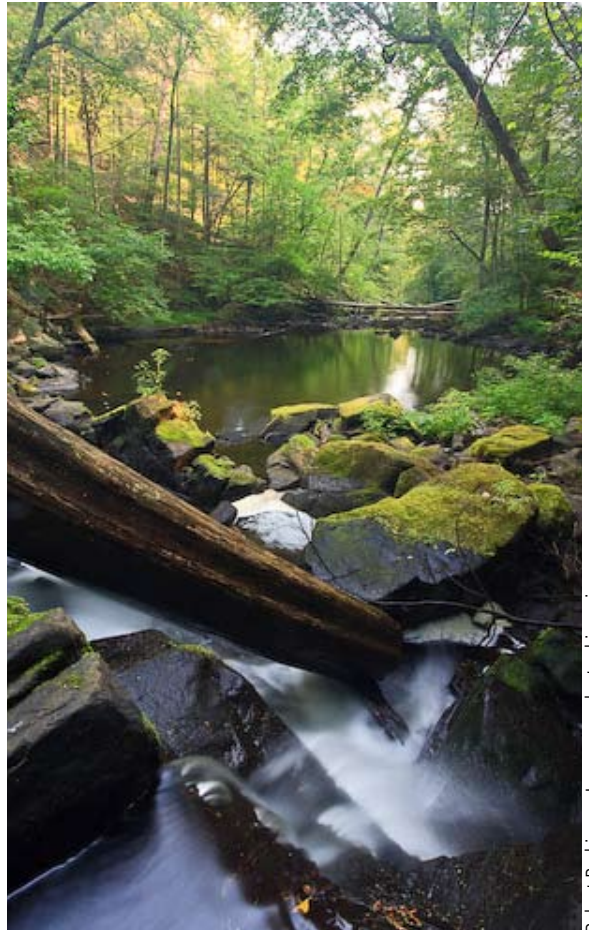
The Town of Red Hook, Dutchess County, joined with us in conserving four contiguous working farms totaling 225 acres (one of which is depicted in the photo on the previous page).

In Ulster County, we teamed with the Open Space Institute and NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets to preserve a 45-acre farm in the Rondout Valley, making possible the launch of a new dairy operation.

In the Town of Lloyd, also in Ulster County, we secured development rights on 82 scenic acres along the Black Creek (shown at right), protecting an extensive wetlands complex containing vernal pools and hardwood swamps.

A previous easement partner in the Town of Stuyvesant, Columbia County, once again worked with us to protect 114 acres that support this multigenerational farm's 300-cow dairy operation.

Thanks to all who helped preserve forever these magnificent and irreplaceable landscapes.



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Scenic Hudson Achieves Distinction

Scenic Hudson, Inc., and The Scenic Hudson Land Trust, Inc., recently became one of the first land conservation organizations in the country to be accredited by the independent Land Trust Accreditation Commission. To earn this honor, achieved by only 39 land trusts nationwide, Scenic Hudson had to demonstrate that we meet the Land Trust Alliance's stringent national quality standards and practices in our conservation and stewardship work. Accreditation also demonstrates that we not only are publicly accountable, but are stewarding lands for the public's benefit in perpetuity.



Paper mill at Gomez Mill House

Scenic Hudson's Mission

Scenic Hudson is dedicated to protecting, preserving and restoring the Hudson and the riverfront as a public and natural resource.

107 Conservation easements

10,424 Protected acres under easement

www.scenichudson.org

LANDOWNER Q&A— Ruth K. Abrahams

In 2002 the Gomez Foundation for Mill House worked with Scenic Hudson on a conservation easement to protect its historic structures and 26 surrounding acres that straddle the Orange-Ulster County border. Ruth K. Abrahams is executive director of the non-profit Gomez Foundation for Mill House.

Q: What makes the Gomez Mill House such a special place?

A: It's unique in that it has five different stories to tell about previous owners who had significant historical impact on America. It's also the earliest surviving Jewish dwelling in North America, built as a trading post in 1714 by Luis Moses Gomez, a Colonial Jewish leader.

Q: How long has the Gomez Foundation for Mill House been caring for the property?

A: The foundation was established by Gomez descendants in 1972. The house opened to the public as a museum in 1979.

Q: Are you happy the foundation protected the Gomez Mill House with a conservation easement?

A: Yes. The easement helped create an environmental buffer that protected the historic core structures and the historic integrity of the site while enriching the visitor's experience.

Q: What are the foundation's future plans for the property?

A: We plan to improve amenities and the total visitor experience with a new parking lot, a Native American Discovery Trail, an information kiosk to introduce visitors to the history of the site and eventually to build a visitor center to house exhibits and educational programs that will expand upon the stories of the Gomez Mill House's diverse residents. Over the last 12 years, over 1,000 third graders from the Newburgh school system have come to learn about the Mill House and the role of its owners in the local history of the Hudson Valley. We're currently developing an education program for seventh to twelfth grades with a curriculum focusing on social and environmental issues as they relate to the property.

To learn more about the Gomez Mill House, visit www.gomez.org