



**SCENIC
HUDSON**

ANNUAL
REPORT

2019

Since Ned Sullivan became president of Scenic Hudson in 1999, the organization has secured its reputation as the Hudson Valley’s environmental champion. He has led our terrific staff in continuously updating strategies and tactics to meet emerging challenges while advancing new opportunities for collaboration that boost our effectiveness.

Last year, we continued to broaden our impacts by focusing on three themes—**Promoting Regional Identity**, **Building Community** and **Strengthening Resiliency**. Lands we protected will enhance recreation, keep our air and water clean, and help wildlife adapt to rising sea levels. Partnerships to restore long-neglected natural and cultural assets will help revitalize downtown neighborhoods. And our expertise in siting renewable energy positions the region to be a model for confronting climate change.

We take great pride in these successes—accomplished thanks to your generosity—and in Scenic Hudson’s entire 56-year track record. By sustaining your partnership, together we can anticipate even greater things to come.

Kristi Gault
Board Chair



When I moved from Maine to the Hudson Valley 20 years ago, people asked why I left my job as environmental commissioner of such a beautiful state to join Scenic Hudson. Looking back, I have no regrets, and I am awed by all we have accomplished in our region, which rivals Maine in natural splendor.

Thanks to an incredible staff, a dedicated Board and you, our generous supporters, Scenic Hudson has played an important role in all of the valley’s transformative projects—Walkway over the Hudson, the “daylighted” Saw Mill River in Yonkers and Dia:Beacon. We preserved 30,000 acres of land, including 125 working farms, and created a dozen riverfront parks. And we have fought many battles—almost always prevailing—to stop misguided industrial projects from damaging the river and its wildlife.

In the past year, we’ve made tremendous progress. And as you will see, our vision for the future is even more ambitious. But we have no doubt that—with your continued activism and support—we will fulfill our dreams.

Ned Sullivan
President



20 Years of Progress

1999-2019

Since Ned Sullivan joined Scenic Hudson, he has guided us to one success after another—protecting land, creating parks, halting threats and developing innovative strategies that enhance the health and prosperity of valley communities.

1999

Founder Franny Reese, Ned and Annie Sullivan celebrate opening of **Black Creek Preserve**



2003

Protect 250 acres in Lloyd, halting a proposed 800-unit development and leading to creation of **Franny Reese State Park**

John Halpern

2008

Conserve 102 acres on slope and summit of **Mount Merino**, most prominent landmark viewed from Olana



Ted Spiegel



Robert Rodriguez, Jr.

2011

Opening of **Scenic Hudson's Long Dock Park** in Beacon on former junkyard site

2015

LG settles our litigation, agreeing to lower height of headquarters, **protecting Palisades vistas** and **jobs**

2017

New York State reaches agreement to close **Indian Point nuclear power plant** by 2021, after our decades-long campaign to halt its environmental impacts



Robert Rodriguez, Jr.

Jeff Arzavina

2001

Acquire 12 contaminated industrial acres and spearhead their transformation into **Scenic Hudson Park at Irvington**



STOP
THE PLANT

2005

Ending 6-year campaign we led with partners, NYS rejects plans to build the massive, polluting **St. Lawrence Cement plant** in Hudson

2007

Protect 335 acres across from FDR National Historic Site in Hyde Park, stopping big-box development and enabling restoration of **farm lane** between FDR's Springwood and Eleanor Roosevelt's Val-Kill

2009

Hudson River PCB cleanup commences

Tara and Ned Sullivan join forces in opening **Walkway Over the Hudson**—Scenic Hudson provided leadership financial support



2012

Our plans for **"daylighting" Saw Mill River** become reality as centerpiece of new park in downtown Yonkers

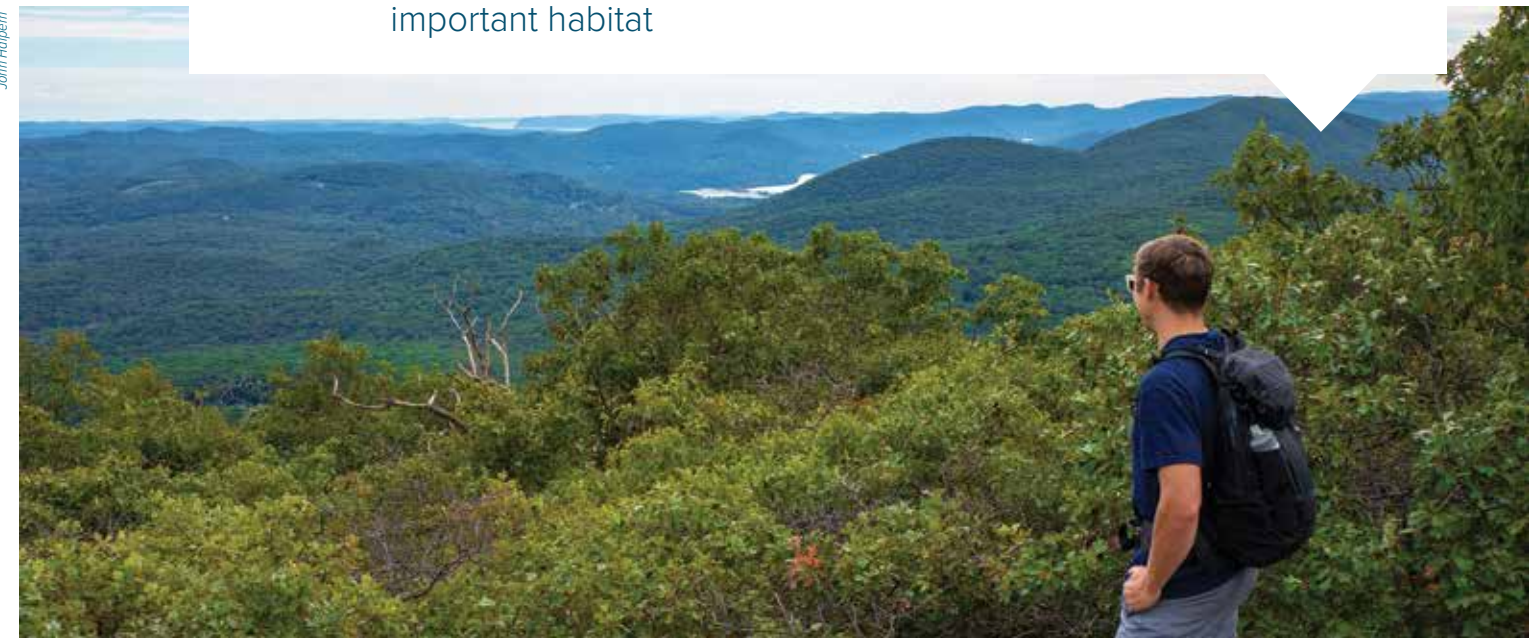


John Halpern

2018

U.S. Coast Guard abandons plans for new **Hudson River anchorages** for vessels carrying crude oil

Conserve 1,178 acres on **Scofield Ridge** in the Hudson Highlands, preserving magnificent views, popular hiking trails and globally important habitat





Eva Deitch

PROMOTING REGIONAL IDENTITY

Preserving the natural beauty that defines the Hudson Valley and ensuring all people have access to its benefits

Increasing outdoor fun: Provided new places to hike, paddle, bike and hunt by protecting 951 acres

Sustaining world-class wildlife: Preserved 403 acres of irreplaceable, globally important habitat

Supplying fresh, local food: Conserved 1,681 acres on 6 family farms supplying fruits and vegetables, meat and dairy products to local and New York City markets

Jay Dorin



BUILDING COMMUNITY

Helping citizens leverage unique natural assets to strengthen their neighborhoods

Building civic pride: Engaged 495 volunteers in cleanup and trail projects

Inspiring tomorrow's environmental stewards: Taught hands-on nature lessons to 1,125 students in our parks' "outdoor classrooms"

Bringing people together: Hosted 1,782 children and their families at fun events



Eva Deitch

STRENGTHENING RESILIENCY

Offering guidance and strategies for communities to preserve our environment in the face of climate change

Promoting clean energy: Mobilized more than 1,000 citizens to oppose plans for new fossil-fuel plants

Supporting climate-smart agriculture: Reached more than 200 farmers and other stakeholders to explore agricultural techniques that reduce greenhouse gas emissions

Enhancing habitat: Planted 200 native trees and shrubs in our parks to support wildlife and reduce erosion and flooding



Jeff Mertz

Promoting Regional Identity

Preserving Natural Treasures

Inspiring and invigorating—the unspoiled lands and waters of the Hudson Valley invite contemplation and recreation, as well as provide a prescription-free antidote to stress. Scenic Hudson keeps protecting “must-save” places because they make such a difference in people’s lives.

People of all abilities will enjoy the nature trails and kayak launch at the new 231-acre park Dutchess County is creating around Lake Walton in East Fishkill. Scenic Hudson initially protected this land, which provides habitat for abundant wildlife (right). Prior to transferring it to the county, we removed tons of debris. Located adjacent to the popular Dutchess Rail Trail, this will be the county’s first universally accessible park.

Enhancing recreational and educational opportunities for visitors to Columbia County’s Stockport Flats—a destination for paddling (top right), fishing and birdwatching—we conserved 117 acres, including nearly 1.5 miles along Stockport Creek (an important Hudson River tributary) and a nine-acre island.

Preserving magnificent vistas that draw visitors to Mills-Norrie State Park and other outdoor attractions, we protected 27 riverfront acres in Ulster County that sit between our Esopus Meadows Preserve and 106 acres we preserved in 2013. In addition to safeguarding the property’s natural gems—a gravel beach (bottom right), riverfront bluffs and dramatic bedrock “spine”—this transaction will allow us to double the size of the preserve.



Emily Hague



Tyler Blodgett



Robert Rodriguez, Jr.



Promoting Regional Identity

Conserving Family Farms

Along with supplying us with the freshest food, Hudson Valley farms contribute to the \$5.7 billion in revenue that New York agriculture generates each year. Keeping people—and rural economies—healthy is why Scenic Hudson partners with farm families to conserve their productive fields and orchards.*

Farms we protected this year supply local and New York City markets with everything from bison to blueberries. Some of our transactions provided long-time farmers with resources to expand, while others made land affordable for young farmers. On one project in Orange County, where development pressures are especially severe, we partnered in utilizing two innovative new tools to ensure a working farm will never stop working. It requires any future sale to be to a farmer at a price reflecting the land's agricultural value, and the new owner to maintain production. This means the fresh food pipeline will keep flowing right to your table.



photos this spread: Robert Rodriguez, Jr.

**see inside back cover for a list of other farmland protection partners*

Promoting Regional Identity

Providing Outdoor Adventures

Whether you're eager to take a casual stroll, bike up a mountain trail, or just sit and admire a magnificent sunset, parks created or enhanced by Scenic Hudson have just what you're looking for. And we keep providing new opportunities to connect with nature, whatever your pace.

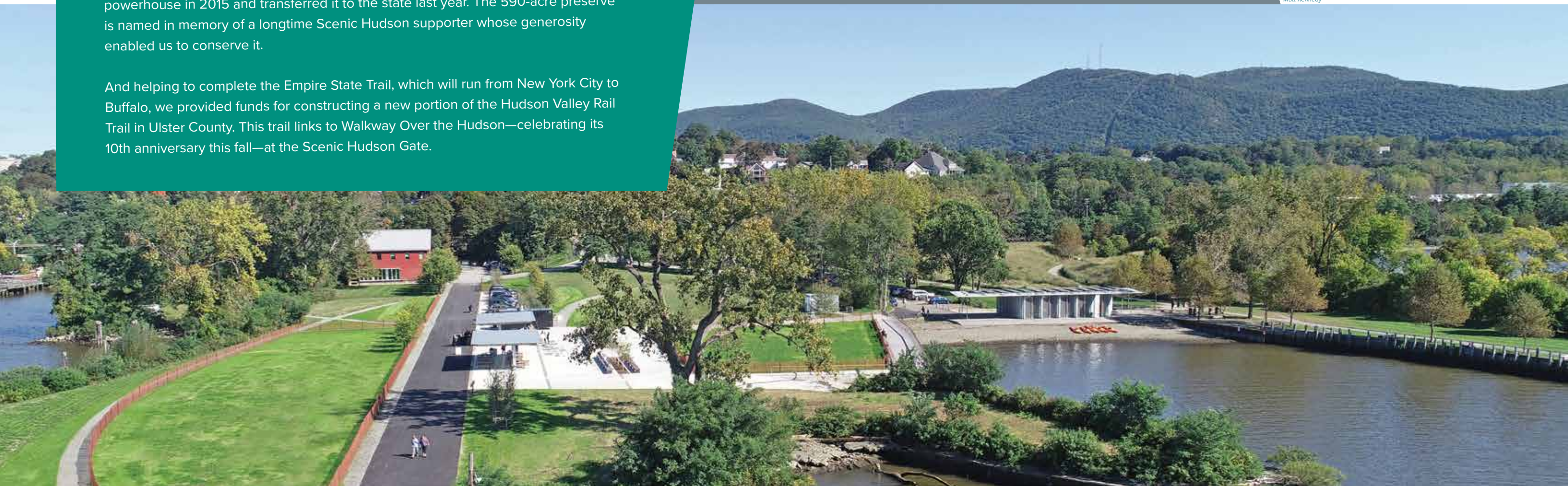
Our Long Dock Park in Beacon has been a big hit since its 2011 opening. Now, its popularity has reached new heights thanks to a four-acre addition (on left in photo below) featuring shade pavilions, a river overlook, a set-up for food trucks and picnic tables to enjoy their fare. We also completed renovation of the park's award-winning kayak pavilion, assuring it will remain the go-to destination for paddling in Newburgh Bay.

Opened in April, the state's Charles Flood Wildlife Management Area at the Empire Brickyard in Columbia County (right) offers hikers a great new place to explore bird-filled grasslands, dramatic bluffs and ravines, and views encompassing the Catskill, Taconic and Berkshire mountains. Scenic Hudson protected this ecological powerhouse in 2015 and transferred it to the state last year. The 590-acre preserve is named in memory of a longtime Scenic Hudson supporter whose generosity enabled us to conserve it.

And helping to complete the Empire State Trail, which will run from New York City to Buffalo, we provided funds for constructing a new portion of the Hudson Valley Rail Trail in Ulster County. This trail links to Walkway Over the Hudson—celebrating its 10th anniversary this fall—at the Scenic Hudson Gate.



Matt Kennedy





Karen Pearson



Eva Deitch



Eva Deitch

Promoting Regional Identity

Engaging Citizen Activists

People **do** make a difference. By informing and mobilizing citizens to take a stand against threats to their environment and quality of life, Scenic Hudson secures potent partners.

Following months of community-based advocacy to keep open cherished places for fishing, boating and hunting, Amtrak announced in January that it was withdrawing plans to build fences at riverfront sites in Dutchess and Columbia counties. A month earlier, we introduced a study highlighting barrier-free alternatives that would improve rail safety without blocking public access, and shared it with more than 100 local officials and citizens at a forum. Amtrak isn't abandoning the plan, but says it will work with communities and state agencies to revise it.

A groundswell of opposition to a plan to construct a new air-choking and climate-warming fossil-fuel plant in Ulster County resulted in the company replacing it with a proposal for a 100% renewable energy project. We provided legal and technical support to the local coalition against the plant.

More air and water pollution and a blow to the state's ambitious efforts to combat climate change—that's what's at stake if the proposed Danskammer natural gas power plant in the Town of Newburgh, Orange County, gets built. Spearheading efforts to halt it, we hosted information sessions that attracted 500 concerned citizens. We inspired them and hundreds more opponents of the facility to send public comments to the state's Board on Electric Generation Siting and the Environment, urging it not to give the required approval.

We also continued our 40-year campaign for a healthy Hudson River. Our advocacy in Washington helped spur the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to admit that it cannot determine if General Electric's cleanup of cancer-causing PCBs it dumped in the river will at any point in the future meet the minimum threshold of a federal Superfund project—to protect human health and the environment. Scientific data clearly show that more work is needed, so we will keep pushing for a more comprehensive cleanup. At the same time, we're working to ensure that the river receives the greatest possible amount of funds from GE under the Natural Resource Damage portion of the Superfund cleanup—to restore damaged habitats and other waterfront resources.



Building Community

Energizing & Empowering Youth

The earlier young people engage with nature, the more likely they develop a lifelong attachment to it. In Poughkeepsie, the enthusiasm of children attending the annual Summer Learning Academy sessions (left page) led by Scenic Hudson educators bodes well for our planet’s future. In field trips to several of our parks, the sixth-graders enjoyed lessons about water quality and how a healthy river depends on stopping pollution from flowing into it. At the end of the program, they shared their new knowledge with visitors at the city’s waterfront park. We also introduced Poughkeepsie elementary students to the surprising variety of creatures inhabiting Fall Kill Creek, which flows past their school.

Across the river in Newburgh, we continued our partnership with Newburgh Free Academy’s P-Tech program (below). Via in-class lessons and field trips to local parks, our educators helped high-schoolers learn about threats that climate change pose to the region and their city, and they explored the benefits local residents receive from open spaces. The students helped plan and run our annual Newburgh Winterfest, engaging their neighbors to help restore this natural treasure in their “backyard.”

In Kingston, Scenic Hudson’s Juniper Flats Preserve remains a primary “outdoor classroom” for city schoolchildren. For many of them, the field trips led by Wild Earth provide their first hands-on contact with nature. Also, we provided support for the Kingston Maritime Museum to launch *Solaris*, the first solar-powered boat operating on the Hudson. It provides a great new “floating classroom” for teaching about the city’s river-based history as well as lessons in ecology, aquatic habitats and rising sea levels.



Building Community

Embracing Civic Pride

Bringing together partners to restore a community’s natural and cultural assets—those places that make it unique—can be a key to supporting residents’ efforts to strengthen their neighborhoods.

Recognizing and preserving a vital but long-forgotten aspect of Kingston’s past, Scenic Hudson partnered with local groups to protect the site of the Pine Street African Burial Ground, the final resting place of dozens, if not hundreds, of enslaved African Americans. It’s the first step in creating a “mini-museum” tracing the substantial contributions these men and women made to the city’s early development. “Rise up and live in us, and we will not fail to honor you,” said one speaker at a moving ceremony (top right) celebrating the land’s future.

Making it possible to enjoy magnificent views of the Hudson River and Highlands just minutes from downtown Newburgh, we worked with dozens of volunteers to complete a 1.5-mile trail leading from city-owned parkland around Crystal Lake—whose cleanup we spearheaded—to the top of our Snake Hill property. The 200-plus children and parents who attended our annual Newburgh Winterfest in February enjoyed guided snowshoe treks (bottom right) on the new trail and other fun activities.

Poughkeepsie residents have a bigger place to explore nature and history right in the heart of their city. We collaborated in conserving two acres containing a key feature of the Springside estate designed by Andrew Jackson Downing. A National Historic Landmark open daily to the public, Springside is the only largely intact work by the “father” of American landscape architecture. Also committed to enhancing the enjoyment and safety of city parks in Poughkeepsie’s Northside neighborhood, we co-hosted a series of events that brought together local residents to share ideas about making them safer and healthier, and organized several volunteer cleanups (right).

Tyler Blodgett



Seth McKee

Eva Deitch





Strengthening Resiliency

Responding to the Challenge of Climate Change

Over the last seven decades, 18 of the 19 warmest years have occurred since 2001. Halting this “new normal” depends, in large part, on reducing greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change.

New York’s new Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act mandates transitioning to a statewide electrical system producing zero carbon emissions by 2040. To help the region do its part in achieving this goal, we have ramped up efforts to promote the smart-from-the-start approach outlined in *Clean Energy, Green Communities*, our guide to siting renewable energy. We’re engaging more municipalities and developers to achieve early consensus on where new solar facilities belong and how they can be designed to minimize environmental impacts.

We’re also exploring ways to provide incentives for farmers to embrace regenerative agriculture—methods that not only reduce a farm’s carbon footprint but make its soils more productive and climate-resilient. Results of a six-month study Scenic Hudson commissioned that received feedback from nearly 200 farmers and other agricultural stakeholders show promising opportunities to promote greenhouse gas mitigation on farms we seek to conserve in the future. Now, we’re talking with farmers, governments and other nonprofit groups about taking steps to implement the study’s recommendations. And we continue collaborating in research being undertaken to verify the ecological and climate impacts of regenerative farming at the Scenic Hudson Soil Lab on Old Mud Creek Farm in Livingston, Columbia County (left). Abby Rockefeller, who worked with us to protect the farm in 2015, founded this visionary project with Benjamin Banks-Dobson. We also successfully advocated for state funding to collect additional data about the effectiveness of regenerative agriculture from five valley farms that will participate in the two-year initiative.

Making it easier to start planning for rising sea levels and more frequent storm surges, Scenic Hudson scientists played a leading role in the launch of the Hudson River Flood Resilience Network. This group of municipalities and organizations is eager to share data, expertise and adaptation strategies with local officials, developers, businesses and residents.





Strengthening Resiliency

Keeping Wildlife Safe & Healthy

We're working to ensure the plants and animals that contribute to the Hudson Valley's remarkable biological diversity—and benefit people in so many ways—have a fighting chance to survive in our changing climate.

The land Scenic Hudson conserved along Stockport Creek will help to prevent pollution along one of the Hudson's largest freshwater tributaries. That's critical not only for maintaining the river's water quality, but for sustaining the many imperiled fish species—including sturgeon and shad—that spawn or feed in the stream and tidal wetlands at its mouth.

Protecting the 27-acre property (bottom left) that links our Esopus Meadows Preserve with lands we preserved in 2013 helps to safeguard a 1.2-mile stretch of unspoiled riverfront along one of the prime breeding grounds for striped bass, and over 600 acres of intact forest, a rarity along this stretch of the Hudson. Together, these lands preserve migration pathways on which many wildlife species depend.

At the same time, we continue making our parks as wildlife-friendly as possible—by managing meadows that furnish habitat for grassland birds (whose populations are in rapid decline), removing fast-growing invasive plants that crowd out native species, and planting native trees and shrubs (top left) that provide shelter and food for birds, insects and mammals.



Jeff Mertz

Robert Rodriguez, Jr.



SCAPE

Our Vision for the Next 20 Years

PROMOTING REGIONAL IDENTITY

Connecting communities to each other and nearby natural landscapes—enhancing residents’ well-being and local tourism

Complete the **Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail** (7.5 miles from Cold Spring to Beacon), a “linear park” along the most dramatic stretch of the Hudson River (this page), and the **John Burroughs Black Creek Trail** (11 miles from our Black Creek Preserve to Illinois Mountain in Ulster County), allowing hikers and paddlers to explore the same wildlife that inspired the famed nature writer

SCAPE



BUILDING COMMUNITY

Revitalizing cities by transforming long-neglected natural treasures into community assets—making neighborhoods safer, healthier and more vibrant, and attracting new jobs and residents

Create a greenway along Poughkeepsie’s restored **Fall Kill Creek** (right), providing new opportunities for recreation and business development in downtown neighborhoods, and support community members’ efforts to create a great new public park at the **People’s Waterfront**, located on a former contaminated industrial site in Newburgh

MASS Design Group



STRENGTHENING RESILIENCY



Making the Hudson Valley a regional model for embracing renewable energy—confronting the climate crisis and growing the “green” economy

Help New York State achieve its goal of carbon-free electricity by providing expert guidance to municipalities about **win-win strategies** to spur the development of solar energy while protecting lands of scenic, ecological and agricultural importance



Eva Deitch

Financial Overview

Scenic Hudson’s total consolidated operating and capital budget during the year was \$31.1 million and included three components: the Scenic Hudson operating budget and The Scenic Hudson Land Trust operating and capital budgets.

Scenic Hudson

Scenic Hudson’s operating budget for FY19—\$9.8 million—supported efforts to promote regional identity, build community and strengthen resiliency. Our initiatives enhanced benefits valley residents and visitors receive from our work protecting land, creating parks and halting threats to the region’s natural beauty. The funds enabled Scenic Hudson to preserve world-class vistas, irreplaceable wildlife habitat and family farms supplying healthy food; partner with communities and others to provide beautiful new places for people to exercise and explore nature; and mobilize citizens to join our campaigns to make the Hudson River cleaner, safer and more accessible.

The Scenic Hudson Land Trust

The land trust spent \$18.4 million in capital to secure conservation easements on farms and acquire ecologically important lands along the Hudson that will provide outstanding new recreational opportunities for people who live, work and play in the region. The land trust spent \$2.9 million for creating, maintaining and improving our parks; for staff costs in monitoring conservation easements; and for working with partners to implement the Foodshed Conservation Plan and Hudson Valley Conservation Strategy. For every dollar of Scenic Hudson capital, we leveraged nearly two dollars of private or governmental funds.

Financial Structure

Scenic Hudson maintains four endowments: The Lila Acheson and DeWitt Wallace Hudson Valley Land Preservation Endowment (\$176 million at year-end FY19), used to support land conservation activities; a board-designated fund for general operating expenses (\$18 million at year-end FY19); the Kathryn W. Davis Fund for Park Planning and Community Land Use (\$5.1 million at year-end FY19); and an Easement Enforcement Fund (\$1 million at year-end FY19). The assets are pooled in a diversified portfolio supervised by an investment committee. Total investment return was 5.2 percent for FY19. The board approved \$8.7 million in spending from the endowments for the year (5 percent of the past 12 quarters’ rolling average value).

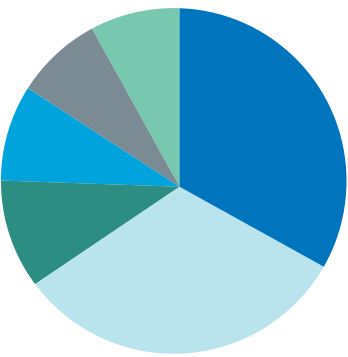
Although lands owned by the land trust are eligible for tax exemption, Scenic Hudson paid \$389,421 in property taxes and payments in lieu of taxes in FY19 and \$164,832 in FY18. Scenic Hudson generally seeks relief from taxes at the first opportunity following acquisition of the property.

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

Consolidated Statement of Financial Position

	June 30, 2019	June 30, 2018
Land areas (at cost)	66,390	58,413
Cash and investments	235,302	229,573
Other assets	9,995	11,546
Total assets	311,687	299,532
Liabilities	7,406	4,289
Net assets	304,281	295,243
Total liabilities and net assets	311,687	299,532

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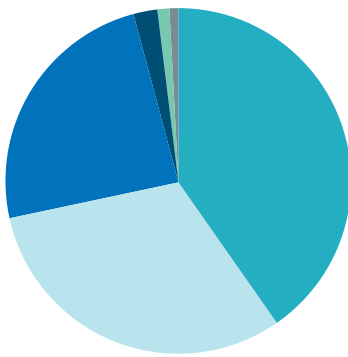


Consolidated Operating Expenses

Parks & Community Engagement	33.3%
Land Conservation*	32.3%
Land Use Advocacy	10.2%
Administration	8.4%
Fundraising	8.0%
Communications and Public Policy	7.8%

Consolidated Operating Revenues

Foundations	40.3%
Investment Allocations for Spending**	31.4%
Individuals	24.3%
Other Sources	2.3%
Government***	1.0%
Corporations	0.7%



*Including conservation easements. **The vast majority of investment allocation for spending supports land acquisition and parks creation. ***The majority of revenues from government provide capital for farmland and open space preservation and parks.

Hudson River Stewardship Society

INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE INCLUDED

SCENIC HUDSON IN THEIR ESTATE OR

LONG-TERM FINANCIAL PLANS

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Peter and Jo Baer
Barry A. Benepe
Benson Blake, Jr.
Patricia Carroll-Mathes
Joseph Chapman, Jr.
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Christopher Davis
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Ned and Tara Sullivan
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Mr. and Mrs. Steve Varvaro
Dawn Watson
Henry H. Westmoreland
Wheelock Whitney III
Alexander E. Zagoreos

** denotes multi-year commitment*

+ participation in Matching Gifts Program

♦ Also generously donated to the Urban Initiatives Fund in honor of Ned Sullivan's 20 years of service to Scenic Hudson

2019 Contributors

INDIVIDUALS WHO MADE GIFTS BETWEEN
JULY 1, 2018, AND JUNE 30, 2019

Gifts of \$500,000 and above

Anonymous
Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, Inc.*
Dyson Foundation*
James and Susan Goodfellow* ♦
Nancy F. Perkins
Shelby Cullom Davis Charitable Fund/
Christopher C. and Elizabeth Davis*
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The Walbridge Fund*

Gifts of \$100,000-\$499,999

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Carolyn Marks Blackwood/
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Connie Curran* ♦
Kristin Gamble ♦
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The Peter and Carmen Lucia Buck Foundation
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Gifts of \$10,000-\$24,999

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Stephanie G. Wheeler
Robert H. Wilder, Jr.

Gifts of \$3,000-\$4,999

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* Board member of both Scenic Hudson and The Scenic Hudson Land Trust
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‡ The Scenic Hudson Land Trust board member



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The following are our staff members as of October 2019

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Gail Krein-Clearwater
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Conservation GIS Manager

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Administrative Assistant

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Land Transaction Attorney

Abdiel López Torres
Land Project Manager

Cari Watkins-Bates
Assistant Director of Land Conservation

Science, Climate and Stewardship

Nava Tabak
Director of Science, Climate and Stewardship

Jo-Anne Asuncion
Conservation Easement Administrative Support

Dan Smith
Land Stewardship Coordinator

Sarah Turner
Conservation Easement Manager

Alex Wolf
Conservation Scientist

Parks and Community Engagement

Rita D. Shaheen
Director of Parks and Community Engagement

Heather Blaikie
Senior Park Planner

Geoff Carter
Parks and Restoration Manager

Anthony Coneski
Event and Community Project Manager

Jude Costigan
Parks Maintenance Associate

Sara Hicks
Administrative Assistant

Matt Kennedy
Parks Stewardship Coordinator

Carley Kiernan
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Joseph Kiernan
Senior Parks Project Manager

Kate Phipps
Education and Community Engagement Coordinator

Drew Polinsky
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Parks Repair and Maintenance Technician

Yanan Wu
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Urban

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Hayley Carlock
Director of Environmental Advocacy

Nickesha Chung
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Farmland protection partners

In addition to the farm families, those collaborating with Scenic Hudson to conserve farmland last year included Agricultural Stewardship Association, Columbia Land Conservancy, Dutchess Land Conservancy, Equity Trust, Orange County Land Trust and NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets.





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