

2020

ANNUAL REPORT



SCENIC
HUDSON
.ORG



We envision...

Thanks to you, we have sustained our tremendous momentum in protecting, and connecting people to, the Hudson Valley's cherished resources through a period of unimaginable challenges. Most important, we have kept our parks open, providing access for all to the healing power of nature.

From past experience, we know that moments of crisis yield opportunities for even greater progress. With this in mind, Scenic Hudson has taken stock of our forward course. What more can we do to ensure a brighter tomorrow for our region, its communities and all of its residents?

We envision a world where...

- ...people treat each other with love, respect and compassion.
- ...access to nature is a basic human right.
- ...clean water and fresh air are available to all.
- ...diversity is celebrated.
- ...our farms and orchards continue to provide their bounty of healthy food.
- ...collective action unites people to revitalize our cities.
- ...we face the challenge of climate change with intelligence and courage.

On the following pages, we report on steps we've taken to start turning our vision into reality.

While the path ahead may be uncertain, we can assure you of two things – Scenic Hudson will move forward fearlessly, and we will never give up in our commitment to safeguarding the region's treasured resources. Courage and perseverance have always been part of Scenic Hudson's DNA. They're the reason we have accomplished so much over the last 57 years.

There's one more essential ingredient to Scenic Hudson's success – generous people like you. By continuing to partner with you, we have no doubt we will secure a healthier, more prosperous future for everyone who calls this magnificent valley home.



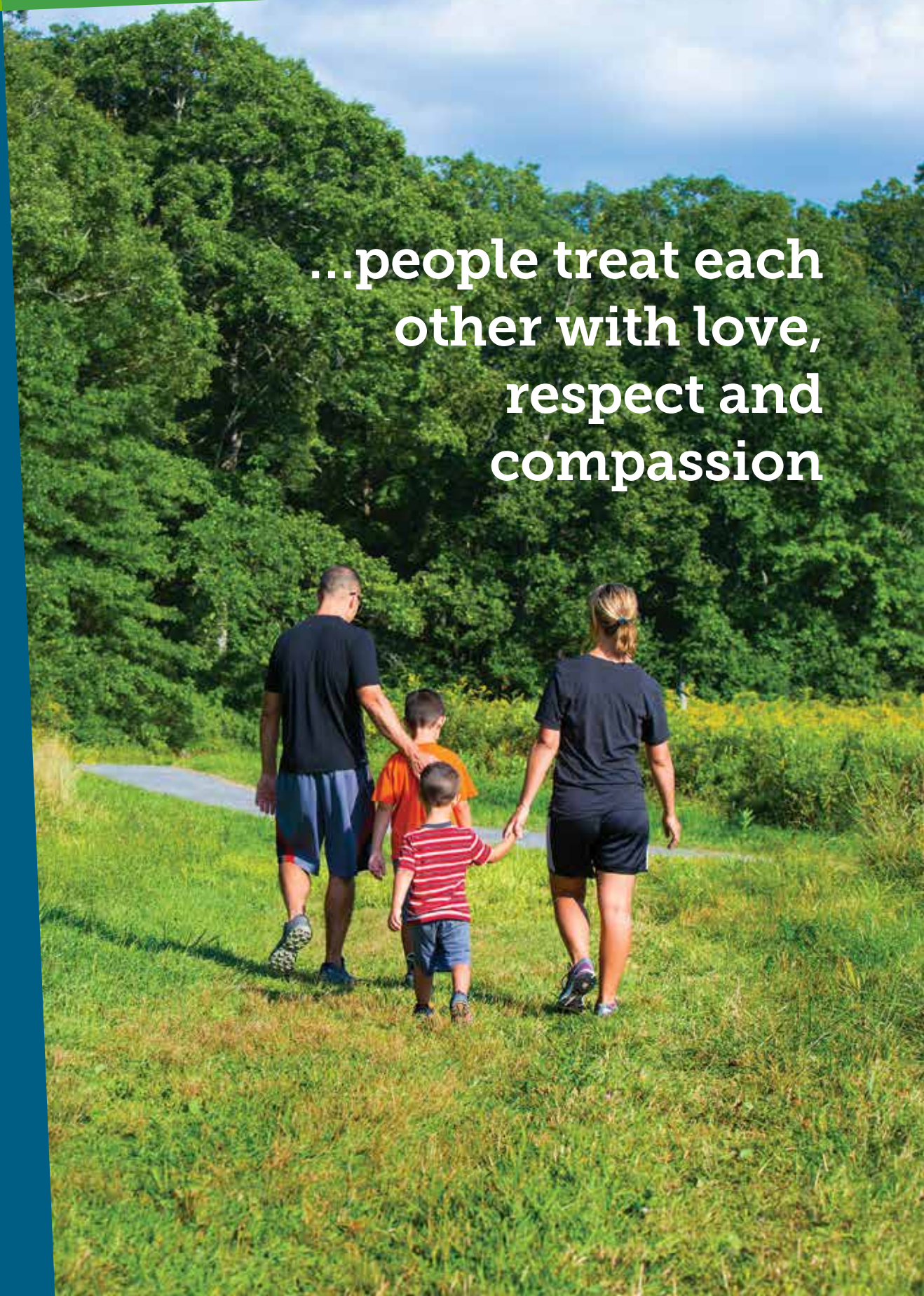
President



Board Chair

We envision a world where...

...people treat each
other with love,
respect and
compassion

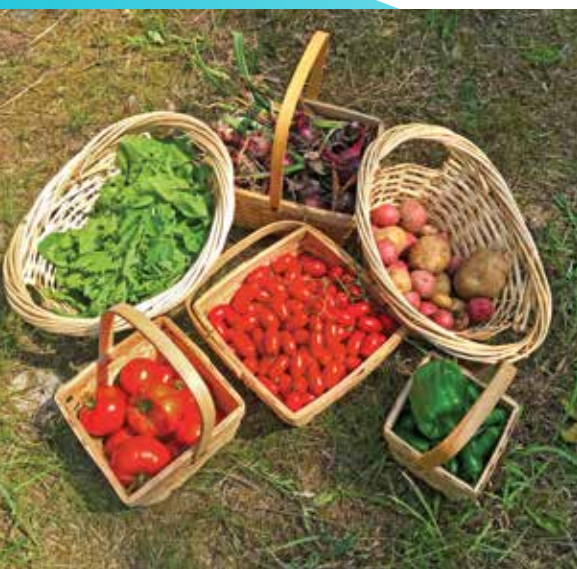




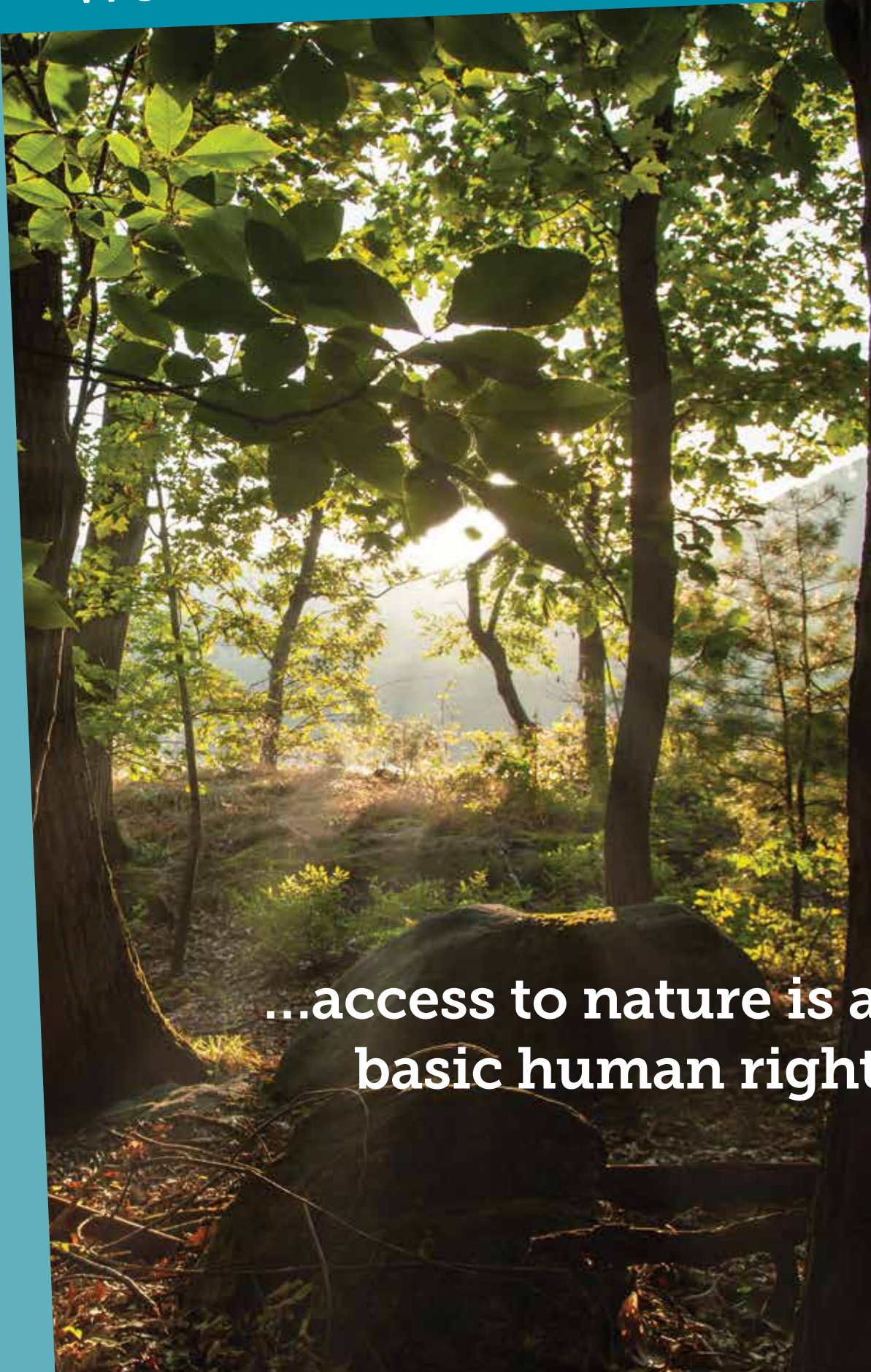
John Burroughs said, "I go to nature to be soothed and healed and have my senses put in order." This year, Scenic Hudson parks have welcomed a record number of visitors. Like Burroughs, they come to these beautiful lands for recreation, solace, inspiration and peace. As always, our top priority is to keep our parks safe and inviting, so people can count on having their minds and bodies refreshed and their spirits uplifted.

Increasing access to fresh food for Newburgh families – essential for staying healthy – local teens in the city's summer youth employment program worked with us to create an urban farm at the city's long-neglected Crystal Lake. While working, they enjoyed a crash course in agriculture and the importance of conserving farmland. After tending and harvesting the remarkable variety of fruits and vegetables, they shared this bounty with their neighbors.

With hunger on the rise, many of the valley's social service agencies have been overwhelmed. Helping to confront this crisis, Scenic Hudson partnered with FeedHV to acquire dairy products from local farmers. They supplied milk, yogurt and butter – more than 60,000 pounds of food in all – to outreach programs serving children in Poughkeepsie, Kingston and Hudson. "The impact was immediate," said Friends of Hudson Youth's Peter Frank. "The milk we are getting is fresh, local and has traveled the fewest food miles possible. It was a real gift."



We envision a world where...

A photograph of a sunlit forest path. The path is covered in fallen leaves and leads into a dense forest. Large trees with green leaves frame the path, and a large, dark rock is in the foreground. Sunlight filters through the trees, creating a warm, golden glow. The text "...access to nature is a basic human right" is overlaid on the bottom right of the image.

...access to nature is a
basic human right



Though located in the heart of the Hudson Highlands, Highland Falls has long lacked a truly local place for people to take a woodland walk, explore nature, and admire inspiring vistas of the river and mountains. Taking the first step in creating a park where the public can enjoy these activities, Scenic Hudson protected 31 beautiful, ecologically important acres (opposite, top). The land is within a 10-minute walk of the homes of 2,500 village residents and the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. Across the river, we and our partners are making great progress on creating the Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail (hudsonfjordtrail.org). This 7.5-mile linear park between Cold Spring and Beacon will provide a safe and dramatic gateway to some of the valley's most popular hiking trails.



Offering the potential to provide new recreational opportunities adjacent to the Hudson Valley Rail Trail and Empire State Trail, Scenic Hudson conserved 303 acres in Lloyd, Ulster County. The property includes irreplaceable forested wetland habitats and more than a mile of frontage along Black Creek (center), an ecologically rich Hudson River tributary. The land's proximity to the NYS Thruway and Mid-Hudson Bridge made it particularly vulnerable to development.

Continuing our campaign to stop Amtrak from erecting fences and gates that would cut off communities from long-cherished riverfront destinations, Scenic Hudson released a Hudson River Access Plan. Informing our plan were 5,500 comments from the public about their favorite spots for fishing, paddling, hunting and hiking. It recommends ways to cross rail lines safely (below) instead of constructing the proposed barriers between Poughkeepsie and Rensselaer.



We envision a world where...

...clean water
and fresh air
are available
to all





The importance of clean water has never been more apparent. Several of Scenic Hudson's recently protected lands safeguard long stretches of streams, preventing potential new sources of pollution from reaching them and eventually the Hudson River. Some of these properties also contain wetlands that not only filter impurities from water flowing through them but soak up floodwater from storms, so it won't damage nearby homes and businesses. In Poughkeepsie, we and our partners are creating strategies to restore the Fall Kill Creek (opposite), which winds through the city's Northside and enters the Hudson near the city's drinking water intake. Via field trips and video lessons, we're engaging local youth in learning about the aquatic life in the creek and the importance of keeping it clean.

Exactly four decades ago, Scenic Hudson achieved its first victory – halting a power plant from defacing Storm King Mountain. Ironically, we're now leading the fight against another proposed power plant just 10 miles from Storm King. If built, the Danskammer fracked-gas facility (left) would dramatically increase air pollution in nearby communities already suffering high incidences of asthma and other respiratory illnesses. Most hard-hit would be residents in the nearby City of Newburgh, one of the state's poorest municipalities, who already contend with significant health threats from contaminated water supplies. The plant also would cause a huge rise in climate-warming carbon emissions, in defiance of New York's nation-leading goal to reduce them. The bottom line is that it isn't needed – the state acknowledges current facilities and clean energy projects under construction can meet future electric demand.

It took 17 years of vigorous action before our Scenic Hudson forebears succeeded in protecting Storm King Mountain. Like them, we and our partners in the Stop Danskammer Coalition (stoptheplant.org) are determined to do what it takes – as long as it takes – to secure a healthy future for our children and grandchildren.

We envision a world where...

...diversity is celebrated





Scenic Hudson educators envisioned "People Who Make a Difference" (opposite) after failing to find compelling information about environmentalists their students could relate to and be inspired by. They partnered with graphic design students at Dutchess Community College to create this series of posters recognizing women, People of Color, youth, Native Americans and members of other Indigenous groups working on the front lines of the environmental movement. Honoree Karen Washington, an advocate for Black farmers and herself a farmer, stressed the posters' importance: "We don't see enough of ourselves as Black women and role models in the food and farming sector. This project celebrates our work and lets young women know that they, too, can aspire to do great things."

"The biggest thing I get from Sojourner Truth's story is resilience, perseverance, strength and determination. These are the things that inspire me in my life." Jessieca McNabb shared these words during a ceremony at Shaupeneak Ridge (top), where Scenic Hudson has created an interpretive trail honoring the abolitionist and pioneering advocate for civil and women's rights. The trail is located near the route Truth took to escape 29 years of enslavement. Along with informing visitors about Truth's life and work, the trail encourages them to carry on her legacy of generosity and compassion.

We envision a world where...

**...our farms and orchards
continue to provide their
bounty of healthy food**



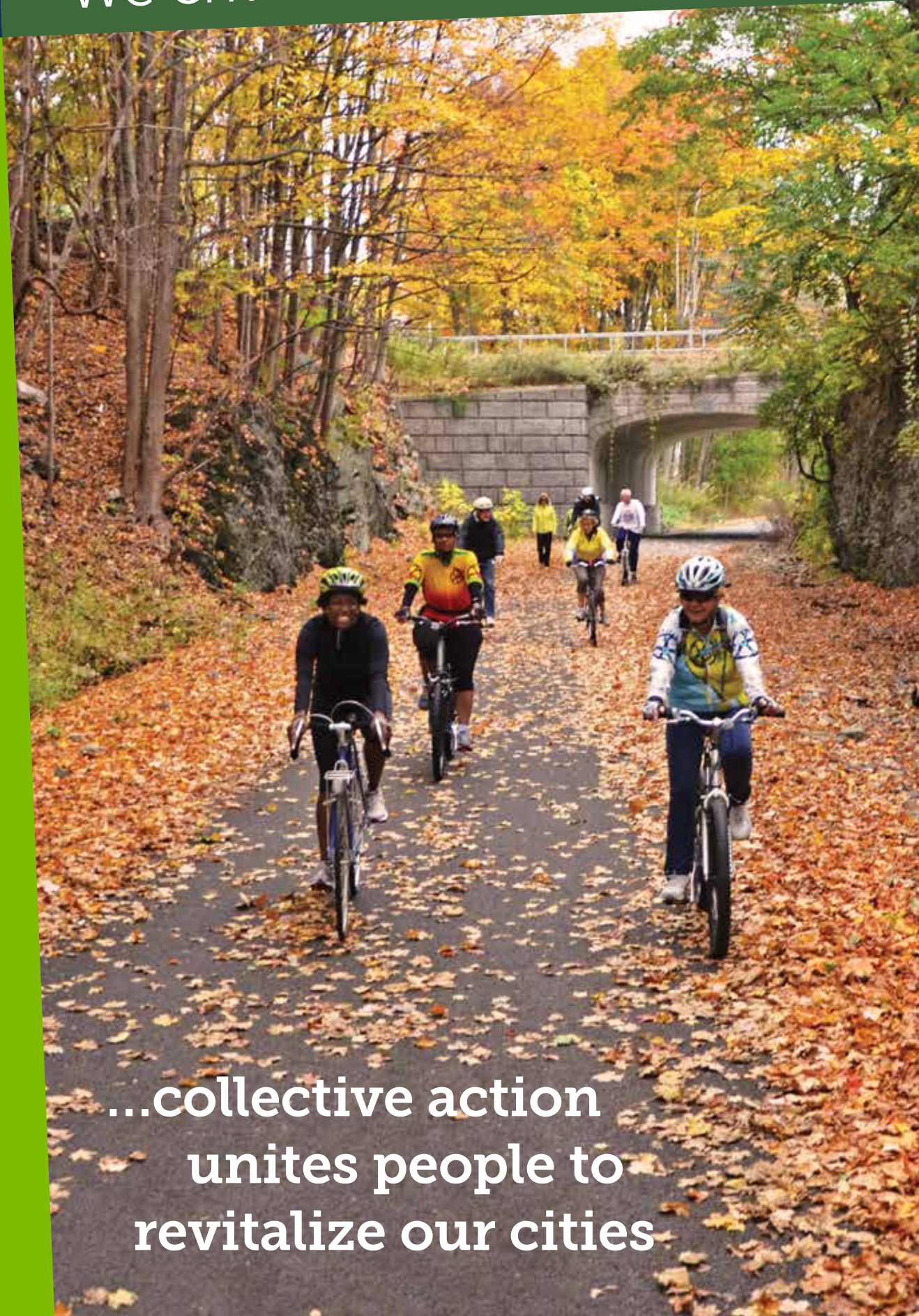
Helping to sustain the operations of nine farms supplying fresh food to local and NYC markets, we protected the 165-acre Chester Agricultural Center and 211-acre Esopus Agricultural Center (opposite) in Orange and Ulster counties, respectively. Partners in these projects included The 1772 Foundation, Equity Trust, USDA and visionary “social-impact” investors committed to keeping high-quality agricultural land in the hands of farmers by offering affordable, long-term leases. Creek Iverson, owner of Seed Song Farm (right) at the Esopus Agricultural Center, hailed the transaction as a “benefit not only to...experienced landless farmers like me, but to the entire community.”



Many farms have begun selling fresh produce directly to the public to offset cutbacks in orders from wholesalers, restaurants and schools. Scenic Hudson helped connect them to new markets by creating an online directory of farms that welcome walk-in and mail-order business. “This list is invaluable. Thank you!!” wrote one satisfied consumer. Many of the family-run operations in the directory have partnered with us to conserve their productive fields and orchards — so they will always be available to keep nutritious food on our tables.



We envision a world where...



...collective action
unites people to
revitalize our cities



For the last 200 years, the 520-acre property that Scenic Hudson protected in the City of Kingston and Town of Ulster (left) has been an active industrial site, off-limits to the public. Now, we're working with New York State and local and regional partners to reconnect communities with the property's mile-long Hudson Riverfront and vast woodlands. Transforming this former brickyard and cement works into a public park will deliver significant recreational and economic benefits to Kingston, Ulster County and the entire region. Through a new community info page (quarrywatersparkinfo.org) and virtual meetings, we're engaging residents to share their ideas for the park, so we can ensure it reflects their vision.

People living in Poughkeepsie's Northside neighborhoods have expressed a strong desire for safe, healthy places to gather and enjoy the outdoors. In response, with the city and local groups we're creating a community farm that will supply fresh fruits and vegetables to local families and provide space for residents to grow their own produce. The farm should be up and running next year. We also funded the acquisition of a 2.7-mile former rail corridor in the city. Dutchess County will construct a rail trail linking the Northside to shops, businesses, jobs and the nearby Dutchess Rail Trail (opposite). And with other partners, we're working with the city to revitalize two Northside parks. Scenic Hudson's long-term commitment to Poughkeepsie's future is reflected in our purchase of two derelict Northside manufacturing buildings. We plan to create a headquarters for our staff as well as outdoor parkland and a green community hub.

Upriver in Columbia County, 79 acres of meadows and forest (below) that Scenic Hudson conserved are a short walk from downtown Hudson. This land provides an outstanding opportunity to create a public park for city residents and visitors to enjoy recreation and connect with nature. Possible activities include hiking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and birdwatching.



We envision a world where...

...we face the challenge of
climate change with
intelligence and courage





Recognizing an “all-hands-on-deck” approach is essential for ending the climate crisis, Scenic Hudson convened the Hudson Carbon Consortium, uniting public policy leaders, farmers, forest managers and scientists to find and rapidly implement natural solutions. The consortium builds on work at the Rockefeller family farms in Columbia County, the Farm Hub, Duke Farms, Glynwood, and Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture (above), and the leading scientific research by Black Rock Forest, the Marine Biological Laboratory, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution and the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies. The team is exploring how sustainable forest management and regenerative agricultural practices can reduce – and even reverse – emissions of climate-warming carbon and methane. Under the leadership of carbon farming pioneer Ben Banks Dobson, the effectiveness of emerging strategies is monitored at the Scenic Hudson Soil Lab on Old Mud Creek Farm (below), which we conserved with the Columbia Land Conservancy and landowner (and Hudson Carbon co-founder) Abby Rockefeller.

Outlining steps New York must take to ensure all people are positively impacted by its transition to renewable energy, Scenic Hudson released our “Roadmap to a Clean Energy Future for the Hudson Valley.” Many of its recommendations were included in the state’s new Accelerated Renewable Energy Growth and Community Benefit Act. We also continued engaging municipalities and developers to achieve early consensus on solar facilities that minimize or mitigate potential impacts to the natural resources and rural character we all cherish. To protect views from two National Historic Landmarks – the Thomas Cole House in Catskill and Oliver Bronson House in Greenport (left) – we worked with developers to modify their projects. The developer of the latter called it “a model of low-impact community solar development... compatible with Scenic Hudson’s forward-looking vision for sustainability in the Hudson Valley.”



Financial Overview



Scenic Hudson's total consolidated operating and capital budget during the year was \$40.5 million and included four components: the Scenic Hudson operating budget, The Scenic Hudson Land Trust operating and capital budgets, and the Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail operating budget.

Scenic Hudson

Scenic Hudson's operating budget for FY20 – \$9.2 million – supported efforts to enhance the 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 \$25 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 \$4.2 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.

Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail

An affiliated entity of Scenic Hudson established in January 2020, Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail spent \$2.1 million (including \$1.3 million incurred by Scenic Hudson on its behalf before January 2020) on early-phase development of this linear park between Cold Spring and Beacon.

Financial Structure

Scenic Hudson maintains four endowments: The Lila Acheson and DeWitt Wallace Hudson Valley Land Preservation Endowment (\$174.2 million at year-end FY20), used to support land conservation activities; a board designated fund for general operating expenses (\$20.2 million at year-end FY20); the Kathryn W. Davis Fund for Park Planning and Community Land Use (\$5 million at year-end FY19); and an Easement Enforcement Fund (\$1 million at year-end FY20). The assets are pooled in a diversified portfolio supervised by an investment committee. Total investment return was 3.5 percent for FY20. The board approved \$9.2 million in spending from the endowments for the year (5 percent of the past 12 quarters' rolling average value).

In addition, a fund to support operations and maintenance of the Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail will be established with an intercompany grant from The Scenic Hudson Land Trust to the Hudson Highlands Trail. The opening balance of \$2.5 million will be pooled with the aforementioned endowments.

Although lands owned by the land trust are eligible for tax exemption, the land trust paid \$449,396 in property taxes and payments in lieu of taxes in FY20 and \$389,421 in FY19. Scenic Hudson generally seeks relief from taxes at the first opportunity following acquisition of the property.

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

Consolidated Statement of Financial Position

	June 30, 2020	June 30, 2019
Land areas (at cost)	87,441	66,390
Cash and investments	220,799	235,302
Other assets	8,576	9,995
Total assets	316,816	311,687
Liabilities	10,646	7,406
Net assets	306,170	304,281
Total liabilities and net assets	316,816	311,687

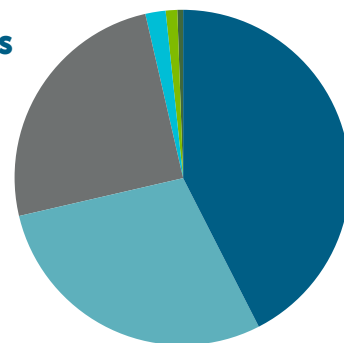
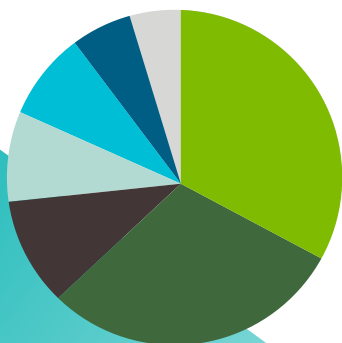
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Consolidated Operating Expenses

Land Conservation*	32.9%
Science, Parks & Community Engagement (incl. River Cities)	30.3%
Fjord Trail	10.1%
Administration	8.4%
Policy, Advocacy & Outreach	8.0%
Fundraising	5.5%
Communications	4.7%

Consolidated Operating Revenues

Foundations	42.5%
Individuals	29.0%
Investment Allocations for Spending**	24.9%
Government***	1.9%
Other Sources	1.3%
Corporations	0.3%



* 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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* denotes multi-year commitment

+ participation in Matching Gifts Program

• participation in Patagonia Action Works

2020 Contributors

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JULY 1, 2019, AND JUNE 30, 2020

Gifts of \$500,000 and above

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Jane W. Nuhn Charitable Trust*
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Patagonia Action Works
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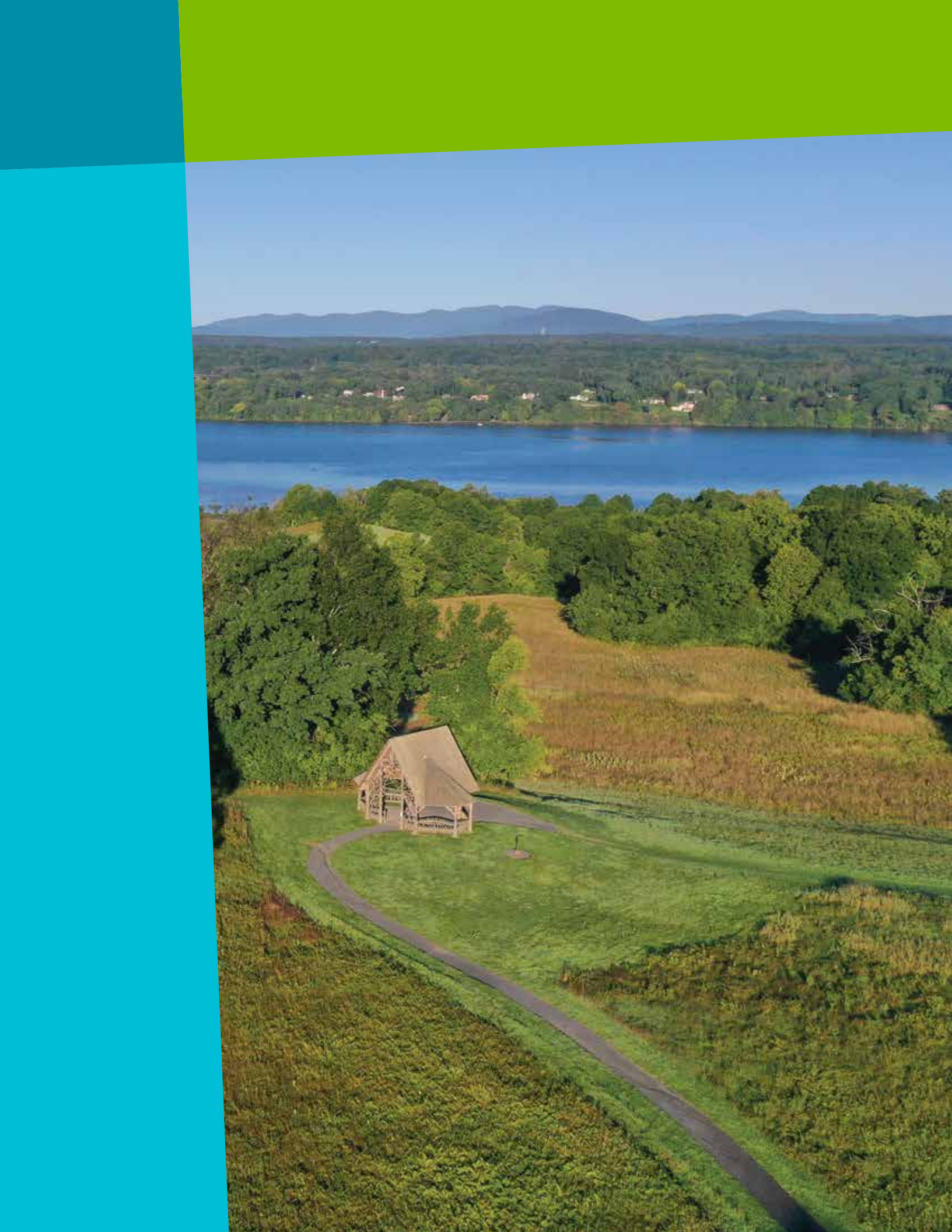
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Drew Polinsky
Park Operations Associate

Carly Shenold
SCA Intern/Parks and Trails Assistant

Pete Tamburrini
Parks Repair and Maintenance Technician

Yanan Wu
Parks and Design Associate

Policy, Advocacy and Outreach

J. Jeffrey Anzevino
Director of Land Use Advocacy

Andy Bicking
*Director of Public Policy
and Special Projects*

Hayley Carlock
Director of Environmental Advocacy

Nickesha Chung
Environmental Outreach Organizer

Carli Fraccarolli
Environmental Program Associate

Audrey Friedrichsen
*Land Use and Environmental
Advocacy Attorney*

Althea Mullarkey
Public Policy and Special Projects Analyst

Communications

Riley Johndonnell
Director of Communications

Seth Martel
Graphic Designer

Erin Nylen-Wysocki
Communications Associate

Reed Sparling
Writer & Scenic Hudson Historian

Jason Taylor
Associate Director of Communications

Development

Jody Harris
Assistant Director of Development

Margaret A. King
Assistant Director of Development

Veronica Renzo
Database Coordinator

Matt Rohr
Development Associate—Writer

Kristin Sullivan
Development Associate

Tremaine Thompson
Development Assistant

Operations and Finance

Caroline Alsup
Headquarters Project Manager

Theresa Andersen
Director of Human Resources

Stephanie Cowherd
Controller

Sara Hicks
Accountant



Scenic Hudson, Inc.

One Civic Center Plaza, Suite 200
Poughkeepsie, NY 12601-3157
845 473 4440
ScenicHudson.org

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