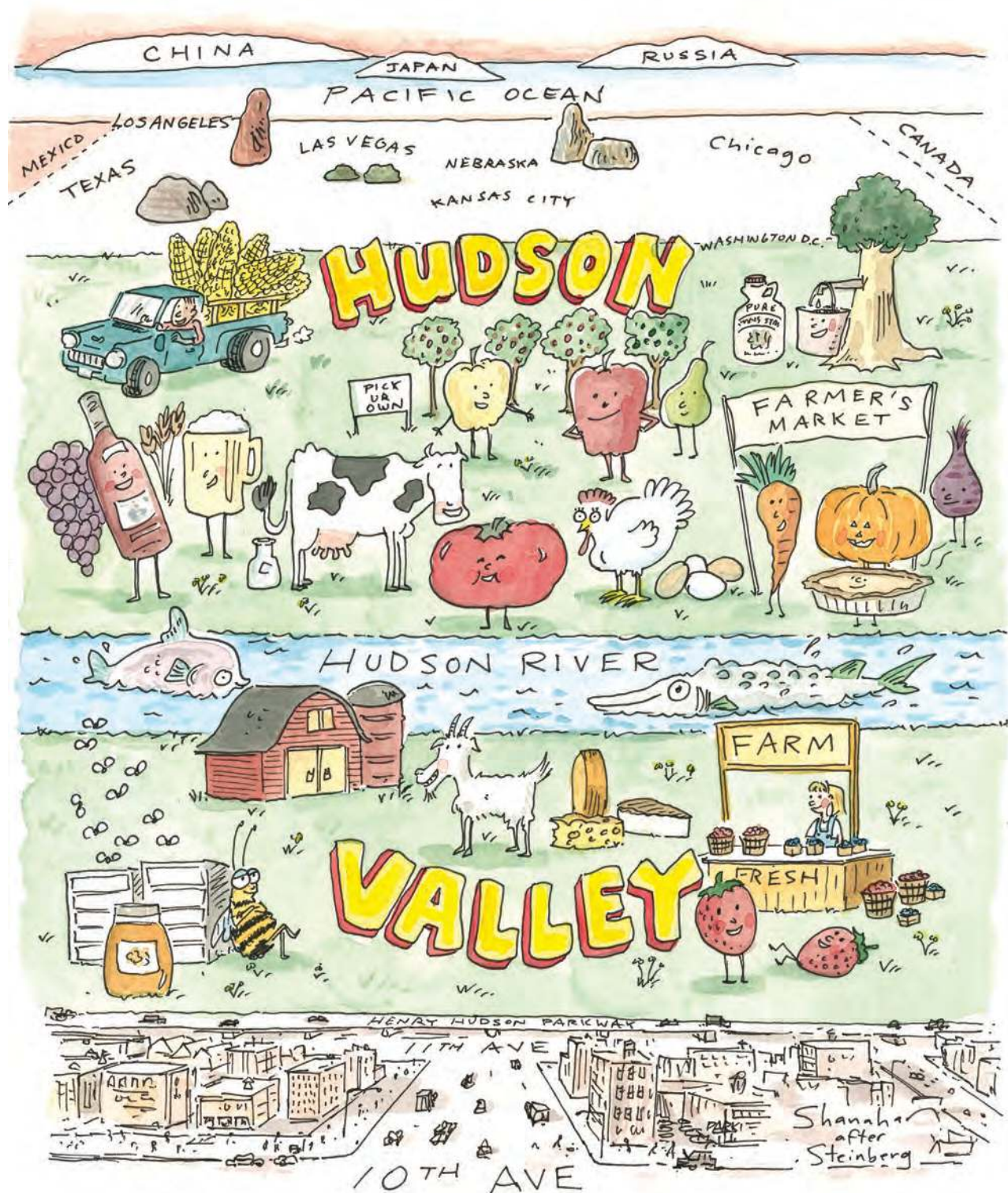


SECURING FRESH, LOCAL FOOD FOR NEW YORK CITY AND THE HUDSON VALLEY

A Foodshed Conservation Plan for the Region





● Hudson Valley Farms serving GrowNYC Greenmarkets



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This plan presents a strategic approach to conserve the agricultural land that can supply fresh, local food to the people of New York City and the Hudson Valley. It answers several fundamental questions:

- How much land is there to be conserved?
- How many farms are in the region's foodshed?
- Which farmland is most critical to save?
- What will it cost to conserve the highest priority farmland?
- And perhaps most importantly, what must be done to save it?

The plan focuses on farmland in 11 Hudson Valley counties where it is most possible to reinforce the growing economic sustainability of regional agriculture. The farms in this study are predominantly within 150 miles of New York City, making the distance between farm and table relatively short. Studies have been made of how the region's "food system" works, and important initiatives are underway to create opportunities to grow food within New York City itself. But until now, no one has created a strategic plan to conserve the agricultural lands in the city's foodshed before they are lost.

New York City has an estimated \$866 million or more of unmet demand annually for regionally produced food, with substantial demand coming from underserved communities. The Hudson Valley has the agricultural land to help meet these needs. Nearly 18 percent of the region's land is farmland. More farms from the Hudson Valley provide food to GrowNYC Greenmarkets than from any other area near the city. Hudson Valley farms serve 90 percent of these farmers' markets and also are significant suppliers to restaurants, groceries and other food outlets.

Hudson Valley farms also maintain our scenic working landscapes, rural heritage and quality of life, all of which help drive a multi-billion-dollar tourism industry and fuel greener economic growth. Conserved farms safeguard wildlife habitat and environmentally sensitive areas such as meadows, woodlands, wetlands and streams. They also protect local aquifers and other drinking-water supplies—and keep a lid on local property taxes by requiring just 37 cents in municipal services for each \$1 of taxes they pay.¹

Yet according to the American Farmland Trust, New York State has been losing farmland at an alarming rate—the equivalent of one farm every 3½ days. Over the last 25 years, the state has lost almost half a million acres of farmland to subdivisions, strip malls and scattered development, threatening food security and local economies.

While a patchwork of federal, state, county, municipal and not-for-profit land trust programs already helps to conserve individual Hudson Valley farms—with 81,430 acres saved to date, including 11,500 acres alone by Scenic Hudson—a new, strategic initiative to conserve a critical mass of the region's farmland is needed if we want to expand, let alone maintain, the land base that ensures access to fresh, local food.

KEY FINDINGS

This plan provides a crucial first step in achieving this goal. It was created through a process of stakeholder outreach, data gathering and geographic information system (GIS) analysis. The analysis, which is described more fully below, indicates that:

- There are 5,387 farms comprising 730,389 acres of significant farmland in the 11-county regional foodshed.
- Only 11 percent—81,430 acres—has been conserved to date.
- Hence, 648,959 acres of important farmland, on 4,969 farms, remains at risk.

Of this, the analysis identifies:

- 815 farms totaling 212,047 acres as “highest priority” for conservation.
- 1,970 farms totaling 263,333 acres as “high priority” for conservation.
- 2,184 farms totaling 173,578 acres as “medium priority” for conservation.
- Nine priority conservation areas have the greatest density of priority farmland. These clusters, which together contain 614 “highest priority” farms totaling 163,673 acres, are where resources should be directed first as part of a strategic approach to conserving the region’s farmland.
- It will cost an estimated \$720 million to conserve all 163,673 acres. (This reflects an average cost of \$4,400 per acre. Cost estimates are based on interviews with qualified real estate appraisers familiar with farmland and conservation easement values in the region and Scenic Hudson’s direct experience. The range of values considered reflects geographic differences, farm size, environmental constraints, amount of road frontage and other factors.)
- The average farm in the 11-county region contains 136 acres. Due to their size, proximity to urban centers, ownership structure and level of capitalization, Hudson Valley farms are well-suited to provide sustainably produced foods and to support family farming in a way that is impossible in other areas of the country where so-called “factory farms” are more prevalent.

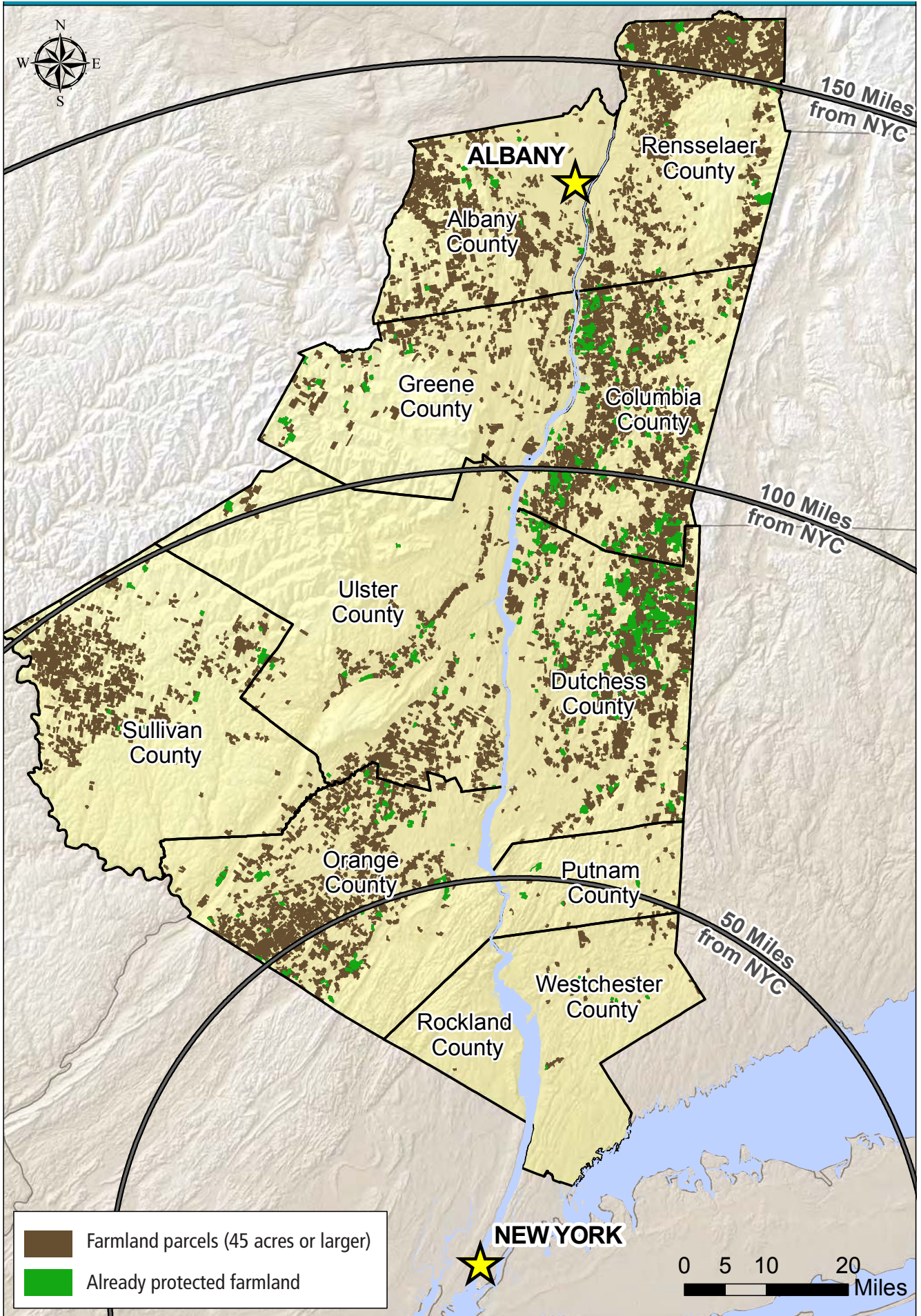
Armed with this plan, policymakers, philanthropic funders, farmers and land trusts will be able to embark on a clear path to permanently conserve the region’s farmland while complementary initiatives are being advanced to strengthen the food distribution system and increase access to fresh, local food.

The New York region is not unlike other metropolitan areas in its growing interest in access to fresh, local food. But the convergence of interests and resources makes it possible for this region to lead the nation by creating a replicable model for conserving its foodshed as an essential part of a truly sustainable regional food system.

This plan also can be a jumping-off point to examine other important questions. For example, as the region’s food production, processing and distribution systems become more efficient and as the agricultural land base becomes increasingly secure, what kinds of food—and how much food—can the public expect these lands to produce?

HUDSON VALLEY FOODSHED Farms by County		
County	Farms*	Acreage
Albany	525	64,075
Rensselaer	775	104,520
Greene	250	37,400
Columbia	846	117,151
Sullivan	642	68,679
Ulster	424	50,667
Dutchess	627	106,113
Orange	808	92,636
Putnam	30	2,817
Rockland	3	215
Westchester	39	4,687
TOTAL:	4969	648,959

*includes only unprotected farms



HOW FARMLAND IS CONSERVED

For almost 20 years more than a dozen not-for-profit land trusts have been working with Hudson Valley farm families to conserve the region's farmland. The primary mechanism that is used to conserve farmland is a conservation easement, which permanently restricts the property to agricultural and associated uses by preventing subdivision and incompatible development. A conservation easement transaction involving a farm may also be referred to as the purchase of development rights (PDR). In addition to agricultural land, conservation easements on farms often protect important natural resources such as streams, steep slopes and wetlands from potentially damaging land uses and activities. PDRs usually are purchased, although many have been donated or sold at a price below market value.

The fair market value of a conservation easement is determined by comparing the value of the property as restricted by the easement to its unrestricted market value. Typically, a conservation easement on a Hudson Valley farm has a value equal to 50 to 60 percent of the unrestricted value of the land.

Proceeds from the sale of conservation easements on Hudson Valley farms have enabled farmers to invest in equipment and infrastructure and increase productive capacity—making farming in the region more viable and adding to agriculture's already substantial economic punch. Scenic Hudson's transactions alone have delivered more than \$30 million to local farm families.

PDR benefits current and future generations of farmers. Once a conservation easement is placed on a property, its resale value typically is reduced. Thus, while the sale of a conservation easement has made it possible for some older farm families to monetize a substantial amount of the equity in their farms, it also has enabled younger farm families to purchase the land due to its reduced cost. Yet long-term affordability is not always guaranteed. In response to growing interest in assuring that conserved farmland remains affordable to farmers (as opposed to purchasers who may convert farms to residential estate use), innovative tools such as the "option to purchase at agricultural value" are gaining in usage as part of farmland conservation transactions.



Farmers are investing conservation easement proceeds to enhance efficiency and productive capacity.

"More than 70 percent of our farms are going to change hands in the next 20 years. If we want to continue to have productive farms in the foodshed, it's critical that we keep the land affordable for the next generation of farmers."

— Lindsey Lusher Shute, Director and Co-Founder,
National Young Farmers Coalition

A THRIVING “FOODHIVE”

In recent years, there has been a tidal wave of interest in fresh, local food—for public health and food security, and to meet evolving culinary trends. Public policy is reflecting this in different ways, such as in New York City Mayor de Blasio’s call to reduce the city’s “foodprint,” First Lady Michelle Obama’s “Healthy Food” campaign and Governor Andrew Cuomo’s support for five regional “food hubs” around New York State.

The Hudson Valley has become an economically vibrant “foodhive” supporting new and diverse businesses and social activities. Groups such as the Hudson Valley Agribusiness Development Corporation (HVADC) and the Hudson Valley Food and Beverage Alliance work with farmers, wholesalers and retailers to develop infrastructure and market local products. HVADC also educates the public about local food production through its Hudson Valley Bounty program. In Kingston (Ulster County) Farm2Table Co-packers and Hudson Valley Harvest are helping farmers process and add value to their products and to distribute them to New York City and other markets. The number of farmers’ markets in the region has grown significantly. The Local Economies Project’s Hudson Valley Farm Hub will offer training and research leading to more innovative farm practices. Groups like Glynwood and the Stone Barns Center for Food & Agriculture are educating a new generation of farmers about what it takes to be successful and sustainable. And the American Farmland Trust is helping to make it easier for institutions to source and serve locally produced food and linking farmers to suitable land for farming.

Other important work is being done to create a better-functioning regional food system, including the potential for public and private investment in “food hubs” where produce can be aggregated, processed and distributed. A recent Local Economies Project report demonstrates that there is great potential in the region to capitalize on growing consumer demand to scale up the distribution of local food, benefiting Hudson Valley farms and communities. New York City and New York State are investing in wholesale- and retail-level food distribution infrastructure at Hunts Point and other locations. GrowNYC’s Wholesale Greenmarket Co. is making fresh local food available to New Yorkers who do not have adequate access.

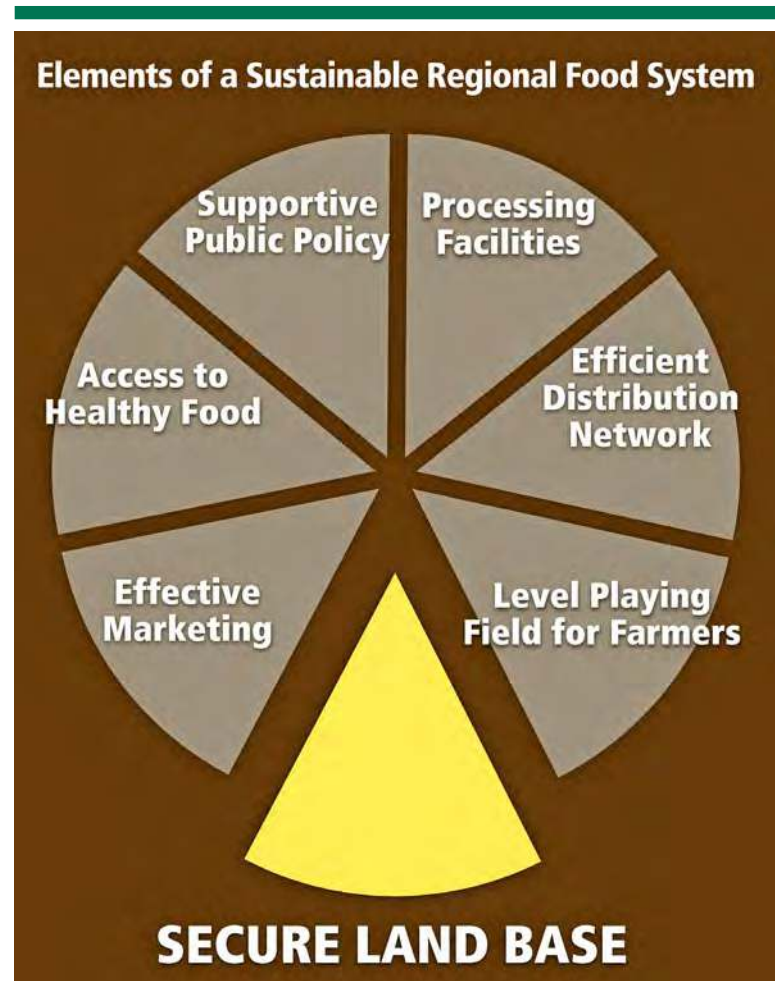
All of these mutually supportive initiatives are needed to build a more economically sustainable and equitable regional food system.

However, due to multiple pressures—including land fragmentation and conversion, high property taxes, aging infrastructure, national trends toward larger-scale farms and international competition—the Hudson Valley has experienced long-term erosion in the amount of its productive farmland. *If demand for food was the only factor influencing whether farmland should be in production, then the Bronx and Westchester still would be growing food instead of shopping centers and tracts of housing.*

The only way to truly ensure that the capacity exists to provide the region with fresh local food is to ensure that the most fundamental piece of the region’s food system—the farmland itself—remains intact.

“The Hudson Valley is blessed with some of the world’s most productive farmland. We need to keep this land available for the upcoming generation of farmers who are willing and eager to produce delicious, healthy local food.”

— Mark Adams, President, NY Farm Bureau of Dutchess and Westchester Counties



PLAN METHODOLOGY

This plan offers a strategic blueprint to halt the loss of the region's farmland. Scenic Hudson's GIS foodshed model:

- identifies those farms that are important to consider for conservation;
- prioritizes farms based on their agricultural values; and
- shows where the most important clusters of farms are located within the region.

Identifying Individual Farms. The model identifies farmland parcel-by-parcel. Local farmland data exists at various levels of completeness and accuracy, so the model uses three different data sources to identify parcels that may be farmland and then takes further steps to verify that data to maximize accuracy. Data sources for farmland include agricultural districts,² agricultural land use designations³ and agricultural tax exemptions.⁴

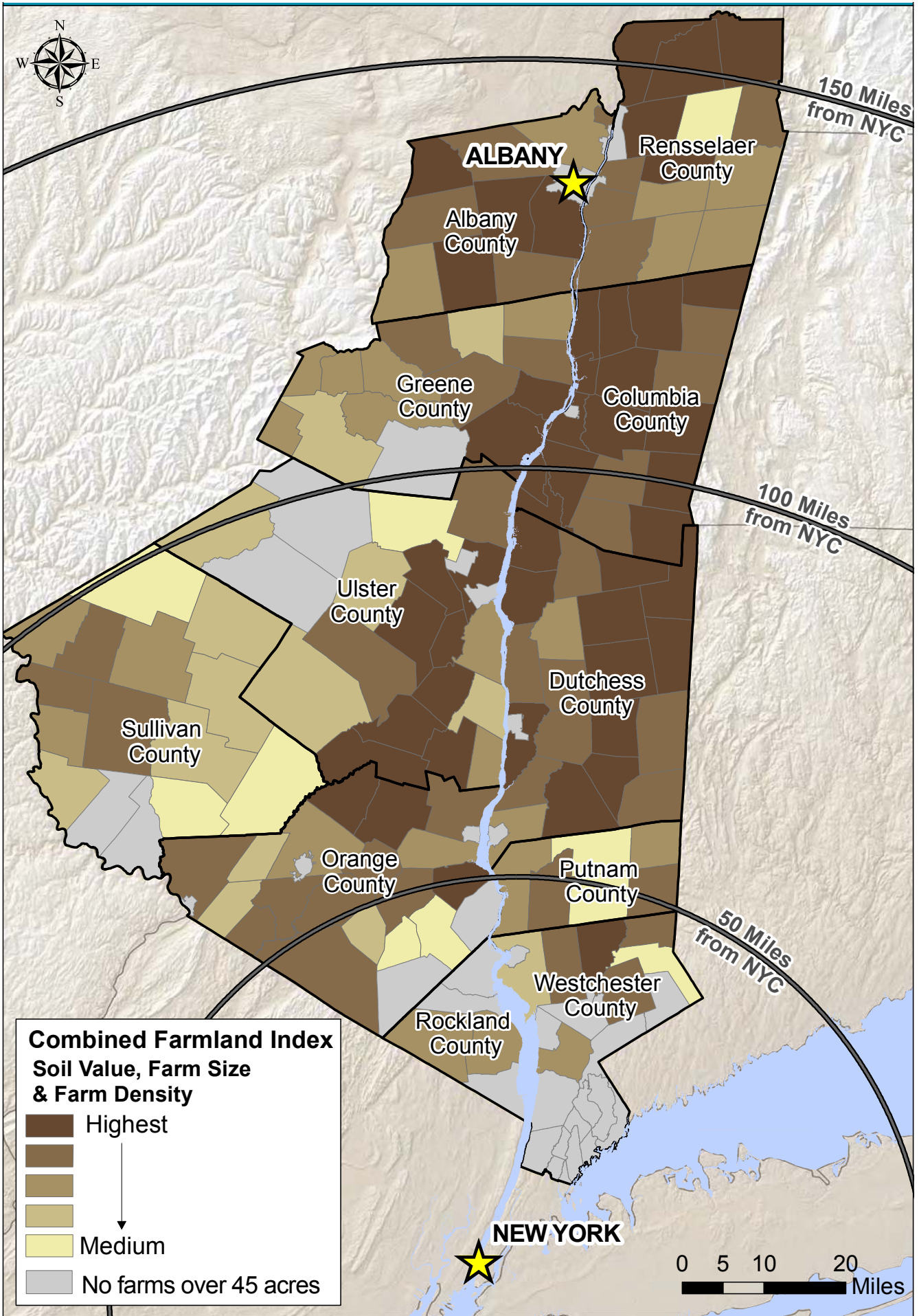
The model combines these data sets to yield those parcels that are "possible farms." Possible farms are further verified by aerial photography. Obvious non-farmland parcels such as forest lands and golf courses are removed. Remaining farmland parcels are queried by owner name, and contiguous parcels of similar ownership are combined together as individual farms.⁵ The resulting farmland includes 5,387 individual farms of 45 acres or larger, comprising a total of 730,389 acres.⁶ (Farms that are smaller than 45 acres contribute in important ways to the region's food system by serving farmers' markets, niche food outlets and CSA's, and by stimulating local economies. However, they are not included in the total acreage identified in this report because these farms make up a small share of the total agricultural land base. In addition, from a strategic conservation perspective it is far less efficient and more costly to conserve them.)

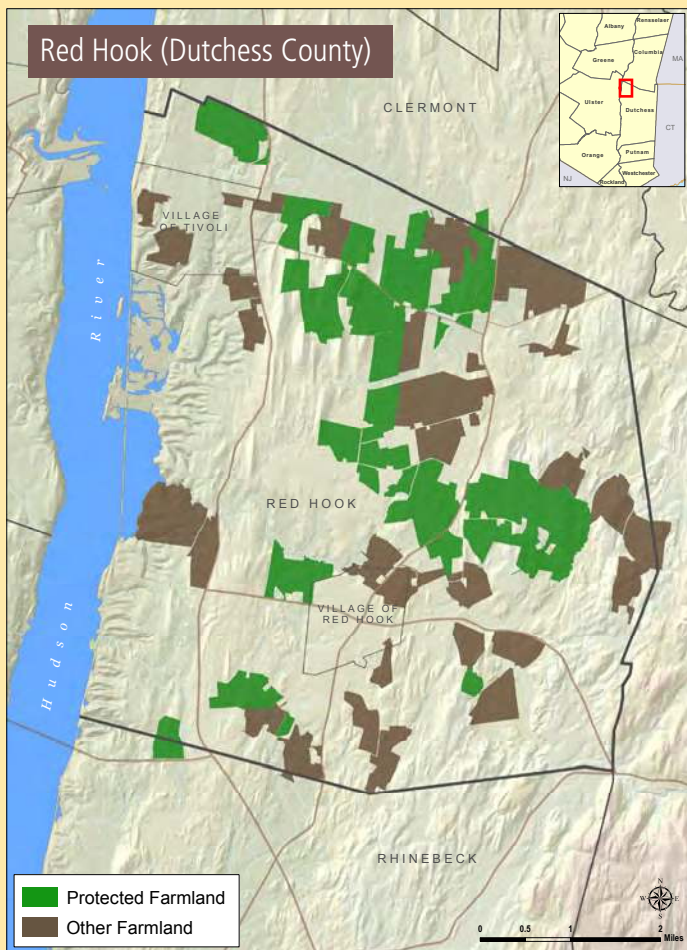
Prioritizing Individual Farms. The model prioritizes each farm based on productive capacity of soils and farm size. For soil values, every soil is assigned a numerical value based on "soil group" data from the NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets. These soil groups quantify the productive capacity of each soil type for cropland production.⁷ Soil polygons are overlaid with the parcel outlines of individual farms and the mean value for all soils within each farm is calculated. This yields a numerical ranking of soil productive capacity for each farm.

Additionally, each farm is ranked by farm size: 45-100 acres, 100-200 acres and more than 200 acres. Finally, the soil value ranking (weighted 2/3) and the farm size ranking (weighted 1/3) are combined to assign one final numerical value for each farm in the study area.⁸

Identifying Regional Areas of Importance. After identifying the location and relative value of each farm, the model spatially identifies regional areas of importance. First, each town is queried to identify the mean soil productive capacity value throughout the town. Second, the density of farmland by town is calculated. Finally, the average size of farms within each town is calculated.⁹ These three metrics are then combined to yield a cumulative farmland index for each town.¹⁰ Collectively, based on all of the information analyzed at both local and regional scales, the model identifies nine priority conservation clusters with the highest density of high-value farmland.¹¹







A MODEL OF STRATEGIC CONSERVATION

Scenic Hudson is leading an effort to create a “critical mass” of conserved farms in communities that prioritize agriculture as key to their economic future. Over 15 years, more than 10,000 acres have been protected and over \$30 million delivered to almost 70 farm families. This approach is creating a more secure environment for farming, making land more affordable to the next generation of farmers and providing a sound basis for the commitment of public and private funds. In the town of Red Hook (Dutchess County), below, more than 53 percent of the town’s active farmland now has been conserved. This strategy is fully scalable, and should be utilized as part of a campaign to conserve the region’s highest priority farmland.



ORGANIZING FOR SUCCESS

Conserving the region’s foodshed will require a new public-private partnership of farmers, land trusts and government working together in a coordinated way. Furthermore, while conserving individual farms can be done by individual land trusts using project-specific funding, conserving the region’s foodshed will require engaging a broader range of groups working in New York City and the Hudson Valley to advance the multiple components of a sustainable regional food system.

To date, farmland conservation in the Hudson Valley has been carried out primarily on a local basis, and not in furtherance of a larger, strategic plan. These efforts by land trusts working with farmers and government have been funded by a mix of private and public sources, systematically directing resources to the most highly rated individual farms applying for support at any moment in time. While positive results have been achieved, as a strategic initiative this falls far short of what is needed to protect the most valuable agricultural land across the region.

In response to the rampant loss of farmland to sprawling development and other economic challenges, federal, state and local farmland conservation programs were created in the 1990s and early 2000s. These programs generally were small in scale and not organized to conserve the foodshed as a regional asset. The 2008 financial crisis predictably resulted in cutbacks, severely impacting the amount of funding available.

This Foodshed Conservation Plan provides a framework for each of the following essential stakeholders to realign and strengthen their support for protecting farmland in the region.

Public Programs:

The **US Department of Agriculture's** Natural Resources Conservation Service administers the Agricultural Land Easement Program (ALE), formerly known as the Farm and Ranch Land Protection Program (FRPP). ALE awards cover 50 percent of the cost to purchase a conservation easement. Prior to 2011, very little Hudson Valley farmland was conserved using FRPP funds. However, in the last three years Scenic Hudson alone was awarded \$6.13 million to complete 27 projects in the Hudson Valley.

***What's needed?** It is crucial that the amount of ALE funding directed to New York State continues to be increased and extra consideration be given to land in the foodshed where the need is greatest and pressure on the land most acute. ALE program regulations need to be consistent with New York State's program to maximize financial leverage.*

The **federal income tax deduction** has enabled some owners of farmland (though typically not working farm families) to donate or sell their development rights at a reduced price. In fact, approximately 10 percent of the 81,430 acres already conserved in the study area was protected this way. The tax deduction associated with donated conservation easements is a critical, low-cost incentive to landowners that must be made permanent. The deduction was enhanced to make it more feasible for land-rich but cash-poor farmers and ranchers to reap its benefits.

***What's needed?** Congress extended and enhanced the conservation easement tax deduction through 2014, but it is crucial that the deduction be made permanent, including the enhanced benefits available to farmers and ranchers.*

New York State's Department of Agriculture & Markets administers a farmland protection program (FPP), which is funded from the state's Environmental Protection Fund. The program proved to be extremely popular with farmers, generating more than 400 applications during its first 10 years of operation. From 1996 to 2008, NYS spent \$130 million to conserve over 53,000 acres on 211 farms. The 2008 financial crisis predictably resulted in cutbacks severely impacting the amount of funding available. On a very positive note, in May 2014 Governor Cuomo reinstated the FPP with \$20.5 million for new projects.

The FPP covers up to 87.5 percent of the cost to acquire farmland easements, but strong demand for the program across the state may reduce capital available to individual projects. The state also provides funds to help counties create farmland protection plans, which are used to qualify and rank individual project proposals.

In addition there is potential for other state agencies, such as the Environmental Facilities Corporation, to provide low-cost financing to conserve farmland that protects public drinking-water supplies.

***What's needed:** Governor Cuomo has reinstated the FPP program, and it is critical now that the state prioritize the completion of transactions and increase funding over time if it is to play a leading role in saving our most important farmland. Program regulations need to be made consistent with the federal ALE program to maximize leverage with federal and local programs. New York also can strive to make the FPP more efficient by shortening the time from award to closing.*

Several **counties** in the foodshed have provided funds to help save farms, but the economic crisis caused cutbacks. Dutchess County's Partnership for Manageable Growth has been funded through the issuance of serial bonds. The program can pay up to 50 percent of a project's cost and has provided \$6.6 million to farmland protection and open space projects over 12 years. Similarly, Orange County's Open Space Fund Program offers up to 50 percent in matching funds for the protection of open space and farmland, but it, too, has not been active since 1993. Ulster County has adopted a farmland protection plan but has provided no funding for agricultural easements. Columbia County does not currently have a farmland preservation program but it is nearing adoption of its first Farmland Protection Plan, an important precursor to accessing state FPP funds.

While the creditworthiness of counties and political will across jurisdictions may vary, county government programs typically contribute between 10 to 50 percent of project cost.

***What's needed?** Counties generally have capacity to fund larger PDR programs than towns and can leverage local government commitment to farmland protection by providing financial incentives. County programs must be reinvigorated and structured to be "plug and play" with state, federal and local programs.*

Towns and villages have the authority to issue bonds and, if specific state-enabling legislation has been passed, to enact a local Community Preservation Act (CPA) to fund farmland and open space protection projects via a transfer fee on real estate transactions. Warwick (Orange County) and Red Hook (Dutchess County) have pioneered such efforts. Red Hook passed a \$3.5 million bond for open space and farmland protection in 2003 and a CPA in 2007. Warwick passed a \$9.5 million bond to support its Agricultural and Open Space Preservation Program in 2000. Several Westchester County towns also created funding mechanisms, but all have gone dormant since the financial crisis.

***What's needed?** As the real estate market heats up again, now is the time for municipalities to consider creating local bonds and enacting a CPA to leverage investments by county, state and federal agencies. But there is no general authority for municipalities to adopt CPAs, and this affront to home rule must be changed.*

New York City has invested hundreds of millions of dollars to conserve the watershed lands around its upstate reservoirs since 1997, including approximately 24,000 acres of farmland. Yet it does not have a program designed to conserve the lands in the region on which its residents depend for a significant amount of their fresh, local food. A commitment from the city to protect its Hudson Valley foodshed would be a “game changer” in making the long-term supply of fresh food to urban food deserts more robust, reliable and secure. It would support Mayor de Blasio’s goals to increase the city’s access to locally grown food and reduce the city’s “foodprint;” leverage substantial additional support from other public and private sources; and create good jobs.

***What's needed?** With public support stronger than ever, now is the time for the city to invest in the conservation of its foodshed. The city's commitment should be structured to take advantage of financial contributions from state and federal governments, and to maximize the involvement of the region's land trusts.*



[We need to be] “weaned off the culture that gets its food from 3,000 miles away.”

— NYC Mayor Bill de Blasio

Private Support

Private philanthropic funds have not been significant investors in the conservation of farmland in the foodshed. In other states, such as Vermont, there is a tradition of private philanthropic support for farmland conservation. Filling this missing piece of the puzzle is essential for a successful effort to conserve the foodshed.

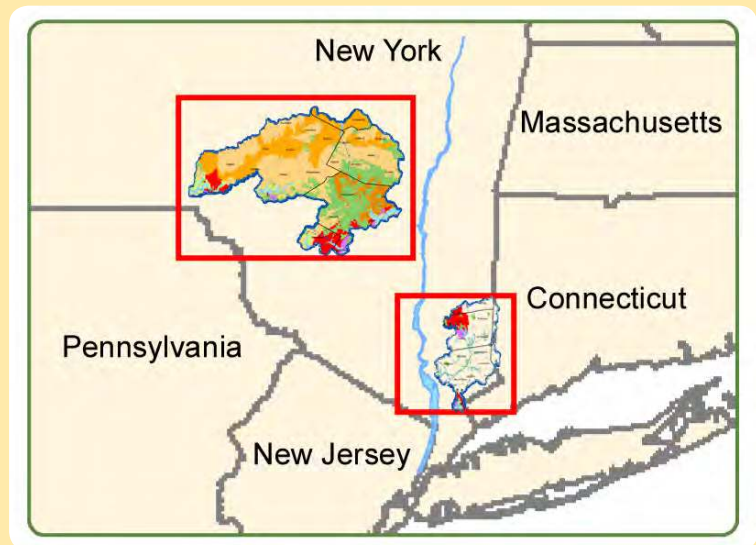
***What's needed?** It's all about ensuring broader public access to fresh, local food—and the big foundations need to be at the table. The results will be tangible, direct and permanent. There is no better opportunity for the philanthropic community to provide strategic leadership than to create a pooled fund to match public investments in protecting the foodshed.*

Impact investors, driven by the desire to achieve “triple bottom line” —social, environmental and economic objectives—have been exploring opportunities to acquire farms in the foodshed. However, with few exceptions, actual conservation transactions have been slow to materialize.

***What's needed?** The purchase of conservation easements on farms can increase the potential economic return for these investors. In exchange, investors can agree to convey easements at a reduced price in order to make projects feasible. Standardized project types and financing structures need to be created. A clearinghouse of potential funders also could help link funders with farmers and conservation organizations.*

NYC WATERSHED ANALOG

New York City's 16-year-old program to conserve lands within its 1-million-acre watershed area has protected more than 96,000 acres through the purchase of conservation easements and fee acquisitions. In that time, the program has increased the percentage of protected land area in the watershed basin from 24 percent to more than 34 percent. This has been achieved through a partnership between New York City (which contributes roughly \$6 million for PDR transactions to the not-for-profit Watershed Agricultural Council each year), the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and the Watershed Agricultural Council.



Data Sources: Mapped Features: NYC DEP GIS, 1999-2009. Produced by DLP, 9/1/09

Not-for-profit **land trusts** play a leadership role in securing farmland protection easements by convening farmers, local and county governments, and state and federal agencies; negotiating transactions; and in some cases contributing financially. Until now, private fundraising to conserve farms in the foodshed has occurred almost entirely on a farm-by-farm basis.

***What's needed?** With the broader context this Foodshed Conservation Plan provides, it now is possible for land trusts and foundations to collaborate to conserve the region's foodshed and to provide private matching funds for local, state and federal grants.*

Farmers, of course, are the most important conservers of farmland. Their dedication to farming as a way of life in the face of multiple challenges cannot be overstated. Deciding to permanently conserve a farm is a significant commitment that many farm families are making. And while selling a conservation easement may not be the right option for all farm families at any given time, the response by farmers to PDR programs has been overwhelmingly positive.

***What's needed:** Any program must have the confidence of the farming community. Maintaining trust among government agencies, land trusts and farmers is critical to the success of efforts to conserve the foodshed. Easement transactions need to take into consideration farmers' interests and concerns, including long-term affordability of the land to young farmers who do not already own their farms.*

"I've placed conservation easements on my own farmland, and I always encourage other farm families to do the same. It's the only way we can protect the precious prime soils in our farming communities from development, and it helps to hold together the foundations of our local farm economy."

— Ken Migliorelli, owner-operator Migliorelli Farm, Red Hook, and NYC Greenmarkets vendor and board member



NEXT STEPS

This Foodshed Conservation Plan provides the data needed to take action to permanently protect the region’s agricultural land so it will continue to be available to produce food. It is neither necessary nor realistic to expect this to happen all at once. The next step is for stakeholders to use this plan as a starting point to coordinate their efforts, build public support and set an achievable goal that is aggressive enough to make a meaningful difference over time. Several building blocks need to be put in place:

- The many stakeholders across the sustainable food system network—from groups working for food justice and agricultural producers to farmland conservation organizations—must come together in support of each other’s efforts as part of a shared regional vision.
- The region’s land trusts need to organize their efforts strategically around the highest priority clusters of farms.
- Public and private funding programs need to be structured to incentivize leveraging of available resources to create momentum and build confidence in the process:
 - federal, state, county and local governments—including New York City—all must be reliable contributors;
 - the private philanthropic community must be converted from being a funding “prospect” into a leading funding “partner;” and
 - the potential of impact investors to achieve conservation outcomes must be demonstrated.
- Metrics need to be established against which to measure success.

We have a unique and exciting opportunity to harness growing demand for fresh, local food to ensure that the agricultural lands in the region’s foodshed remain available for farming. With the exception of a reliable and adequate stream of funding, the key elements are in place: strong public interest; this Foodshed Conservation Plan; local, state and federal conservation programs; not-for-profit land trusts with the expertise to carry out projects; reasonable land values; and a supportive agricultural community. Now is the time to act.



Endnotes

¹ American Farmland Trust, “Assessing the Cost of Community Services” (www.farmland.org/documents/Cost-of-Community-Services-Studies-American-Farmland-Trust.pdf)

² Agricultural District data from NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets (various dates by county 2005-2012).

³ Agricultural land use data from NYS Office of Real Property (2011). Farmland defined as agricultural use (codes 100-190), residential agricultural (code 241) and abandoned agriculture (code 321).

⁴ Exemption data from NYS Office of Real Property (2011) and joined to tax parcels provided by local tax agencies (2011). Exemptions include 4172 (Agricultural District formed by county or New York State) and 173 (Agricultural Land outside of agriculture districts) only.

⁵ Combination of parcels by owner name will not comprehensively identify all individual farms. Some farms may have multiple parcels under different names but still operate as one farm. It is expected that the total number of farms in the foodshed region is less than 5,387.

⁶ Total numbers include some farmland that already has been protected. Of the total numbers, approximately 418 farms comprising 81,430 acres are currently protected.

⁷ Soil group values (www.agriculture.ny.gov/AP/agsservices/SOILCOUNTY.htm) are provided in tabular form by NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets. Tabular data is joined to the Soil Survey Geographic (SSURGO) Database to identify spatial values. Note that soil group valuations are for cropland only and may not reflect accurate valuations for other agricultural activities.

⁸ The final prioritized ranking for each farm is calculated as 66.7 percent soil group value + 33.3 percent farm size value.

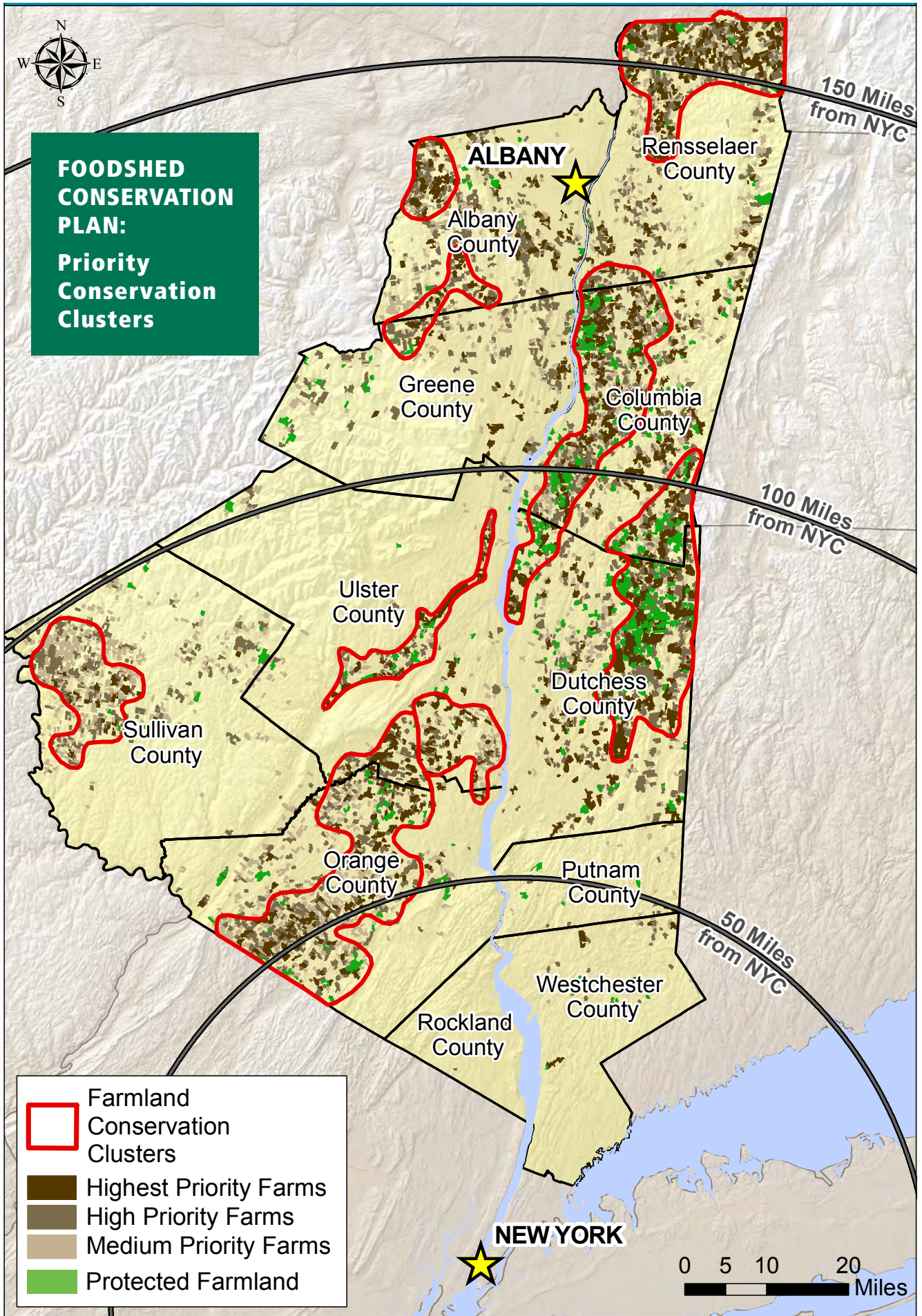
⁹ Towns with fewer than five farms are given correspondingly lower collective values for farmland size so as not to skew this valuation in towns with only a few farms.

¹⁰ The foodshed model “farmland index” for towns is calculated as 50 percent productive capacity value + 25 percent farmland density value +25 percent farm size value.

¹¹ Note that the productive capacity value is for cropland only. Scenic Hudson also conducted a query to identify dense areas of non-cropland farms. Southern Ulster County includes a statistically significant density of orchards. One of the nine foodshed conservation clusters is in this area.

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PRINCIPAL AUTHOR: Steve Rosenberg • **GIS ANALYSIS:** Jason Winner





SCENIC HUDSON

land ■ parks ■ advocacy

"This [plan] is a model of how it should be done. The concept of a foodshed offers opportunities for both urban and rural communities to recognize what connects them and how they can work together to build vibrant local economies. But we need to move swiftly to assess the state of our foodsheds and then move to conserve them—few steps could do more to improve the health of people in cities and the health of the rural landscape."

—BEST-SELLING AUTHOR AND PROFESSOR MICHAEL POLLAN



www.scenichudson.org



Cover illustration by Danny Shanahan.

"View of the World from 9th Avenue" was created in 1976 by *New Yorker* illustrator Saul Steinberg (1914-1999). With respect for Mr. Steinberg, *New Yorker* cartoonist Danny Shanahan created this parody to focus public attention on the Hudson Valley's rich agricultural bounty right outside New York City's back door.

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