

SCENIC
HUDSON
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ANNUAL REPORT

MEETING THE MOMENT, AMPLIFYING OUR IMPACTS

Thanks to your support, Scenic Hudson helped provide exciting new places for people to connect with the Hudson Valley's natural beauty this year. Walkers and cyclists enjoy magnificent views of the water and soaring cliffs on the Hudson River Brickyard Trail in Kingston, which spans 520 acres we acquired in 2019. Hikers climbing up to the first spectacular viewpoint on Breakneck Ridge now have a safer return route thanks to a project spearheaded by the Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail, a Scenic Hudson subsidiary. We also completed a feasibility study for a stretch of the Westchester RiverWalk under the Gov. Mario M. Cuomo Bridge, a critical missing link in this 51-mile route along the county shoreline.

These accomplishments add to the spectacular array of public parks and trails Scenic Hudson has created since 1963. They provide recreation, inspiration, car-free transportation, and a boost to physical and mental health. Lands we protect — forests, wetlands, family farms — also offer significant benefits, including clean drinking water and air and a steady supply of fresh, healthy food. All help safeguard the valley's rich biodiversity, increasingly endangered yet vital to all life.

Now, however, urgency compels us to amplify our impacts, building on Scenic Hudson's leadership in addressing the most pressing issues facing our region, our nation, and our planet — the climate crisis and environmental injustice.


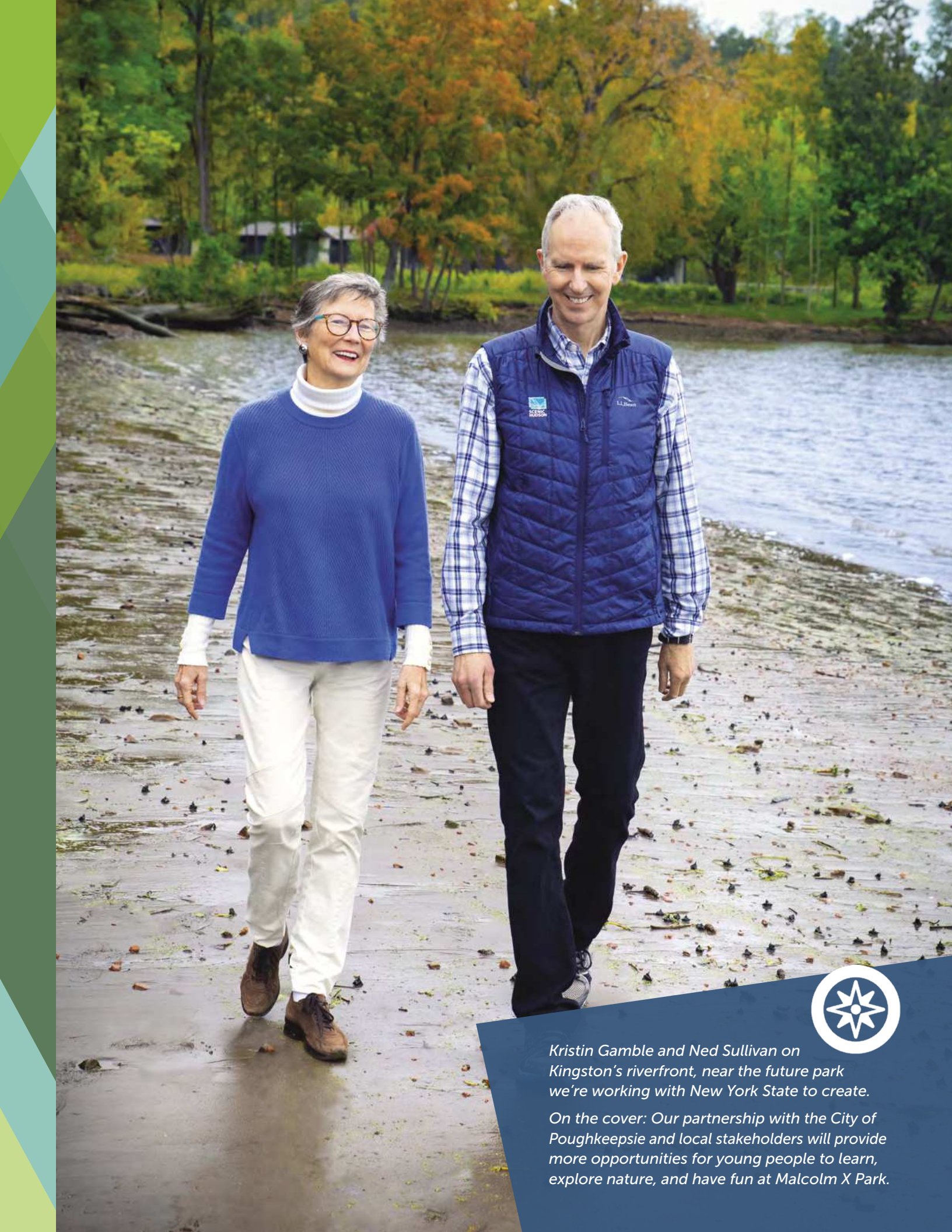
As we continue our land conservation and stewardship work, we are focused on maximizing the ability of the valley's natural resources to stem climate change. We're exploring land management strategies that will allow forests and wetlands to sequester more carbon, preventing it from becoming a greenhouse gas. We're spearheading the implementation of agricultural practices, first employed by Indigenous people, that keep carbon in the ground while making soils more productive. And we're leading efforts to make the region a leader in embracing renewable energy.

Scenic Hudson's commitment to serving all people living in the valley's river cities also continues to grow, building on decades of work along both sides of the river, from Yonkers to Hudson and Haverstraw to Albany. With partners in Poughkeepsie, Newburgh, and Kingston, we're providing new, inclusive ways for historically underserved residents to connect with nature by restoring long-cherished places to play, relax, and celebrate. Urban gardens and farms we helped establish provide healthy produce to neighbors caring for them, while trees now line one of Newburgh's streets, serving as a catalyst to increase public safety and providing summertime shade. We also continue Scenic Hudson's seminal role in fighting power plants that would pollute the air with climate-warming toxins and set back efforts to achieve environmental justice.

As you'll see on the following pages, we are ready to meet these challenges with hope and determination, acting boldly, decisively, strategically, and courageously. But we cannot do it without you. Your generous support of all of our work is crucial to our continued role as the champion of the Hudson River and Valley.


President


Board Chair



Kristin Gamble and Ned Sullivan on Kingston's riverfront, near the future park we're working with New York State to create.

On the cover: Our partnership with the City of Poughkeepsie and local stakeholders will provide more opportunities for young people to learn, explore nature, and have fun at Malcolm X Park.

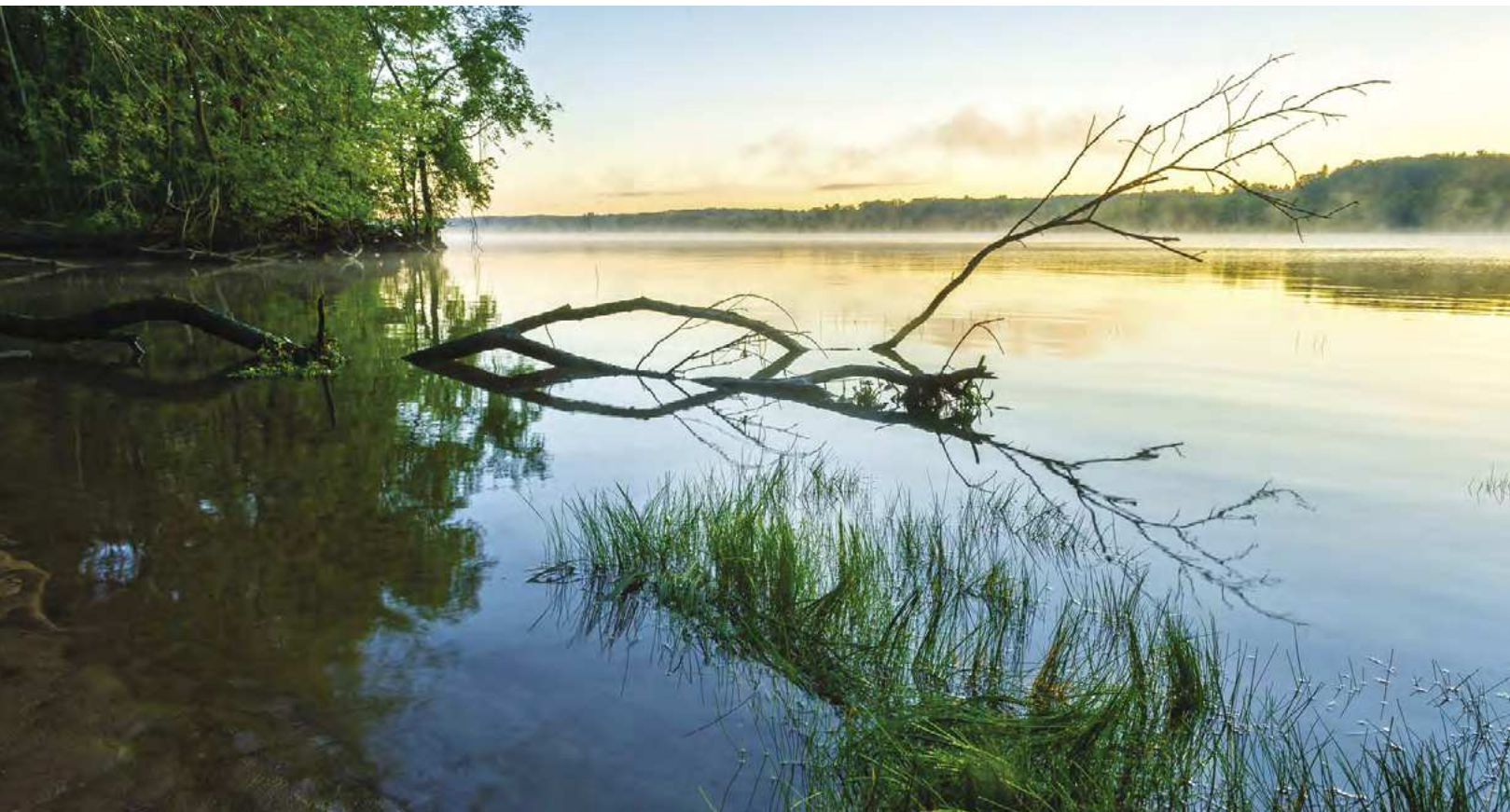
PROTECTING + NURTURING LAND THAT SUPPORTS LIFE

The Hudson Valley is one of the “**World’s Greatest Places,**” *Time* magazine recently declared. Preserving the natural and scenic treasures that make it so great remains at the core of Scenic Hudson’s mission.

Our strategic approach to land conservation — linking protected landscapes — exponentially increases public, ecological, and climate benefits. The 68 acres of forest and rolling meadows we conserved in Greene County are adjacent to a State Conservation Area and close to other properties we’ve preserved on **Bronck Island**. Together, these lands are ideally suited for recreation and will allow wetlands to migrate inland as sea levels rise. A 283-acre farm Scenic Hudson partnered to protect in Amenia, Dutchess County, not only sustains a dairy farm but lies within the proposed Great Thicket National Wildlife Refuge, envisioned to preserve a rapidly vanishing mosaic of irreplaceable habitats through conservation easements and outright acquisitions. We also helped conserve agritourism destinations in Ulster and Albany counties operated by the same families for generations.



Protected uplands on Bronck Island will allow species to migrate away from the Hudson’s rising sea levels (bottom left). Recently conserved farmland in Amenia (left) and Ulster County (right) provide healthy food, family fun, and scenic beauty.



PROTECTING + NURTURING LAND THAT SUPPORTS LIFE

Leading efforts to develop natural climate solutions with the team of policy experts, forest managers, and scientists Scenic Hudson convened in the **Northeast Carbon Alliance** (NECA), we co-funded a groundbreaking study by Malcolm Scully, a scientist at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, to investigate how the Hudson River estuary transports carbon and methane. We also co-hosted a conference that united policy, legislative, and land management leaders from eight Northeast states to share carbon sequestration strategies on natural and working lands. For more about NECA, visit its new website: northeastcarbonalliance.org.

Making our own parks more climate resilient, volunteers joined us to plant native trees and shrubs at **Mawignack Preserve** in Catskill (far right), restoring a floodplain forest that will soak up rising waters from adjacent Catskill Creek. And thanks to **Chronolog**, visitors to four Scenic Hudson riverfront parks are increasing our understanding of local climate impacts. This innovative feature (below) invites them to share photos that are collated into videos showing how rising sea levels impact habitats and trails over time.



Amplifying our impacts Scenic Hudson will:

Lead regional efforts to achieve the federal administration's **30x30** initiative — conserving 30% of the nation's lands and waters by 2030 — by developing a framework to strengthen collaboration with land trust partners.

Strongly support the 30x30 commitment to tackle **environmental injustice** by addressing the disparity of green space in less-wealthy communities and communities of color.

Advocate for legislation and policies at all levels of government that will advance natural climate solutions.

Implement **land management strategies** on our own properties that increase carbon sequestration, restore habitats, and make them more climate resilient.



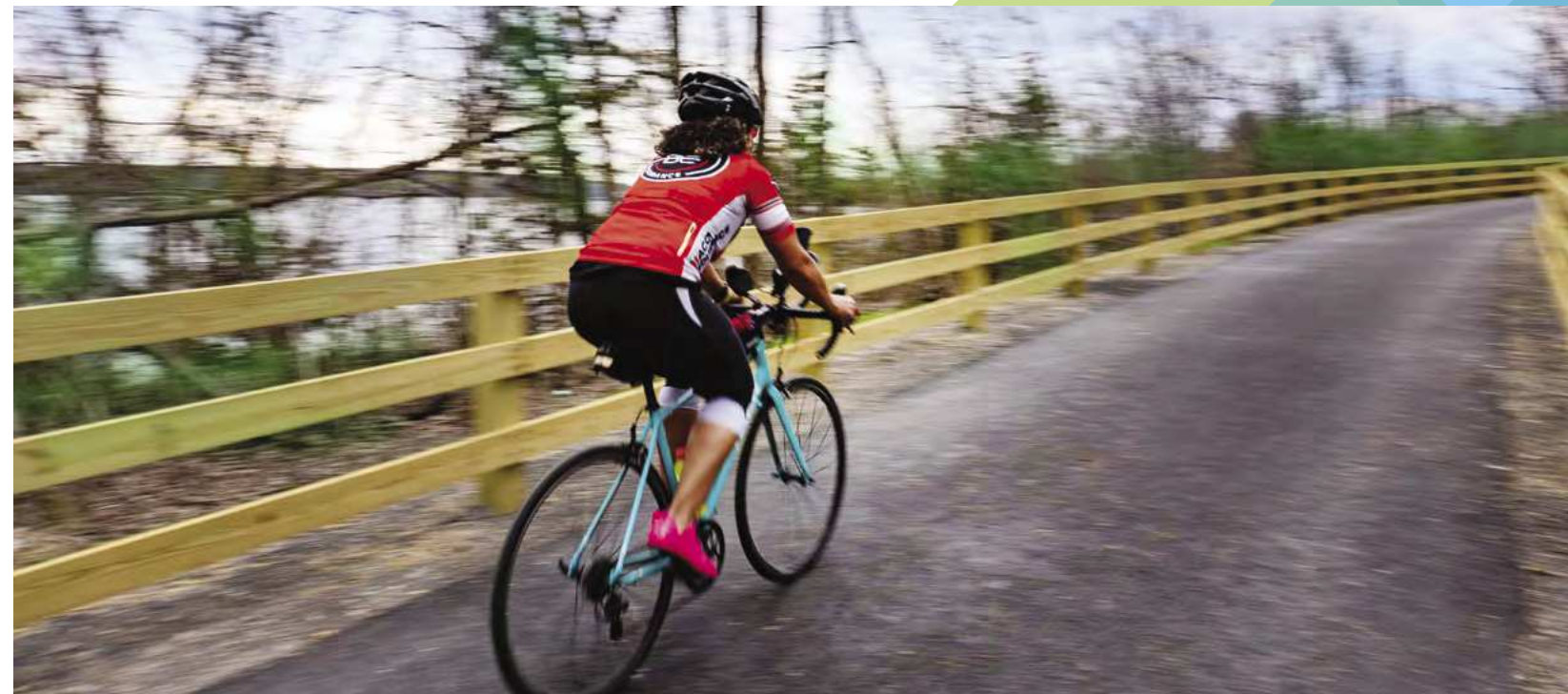
The restored floodplain forest at Mawignack Preserve on Catskill Creek (this page) will provide new habitat and buffer downstream homes and businesses from climate-related flooding. Above left: Increasing access to nature is among the improvements planned for Poughkeepsie's Malcolm X Park.

FOSTERING COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS THAT UNITE PEOPLE TO EACH OTHER + NATURE

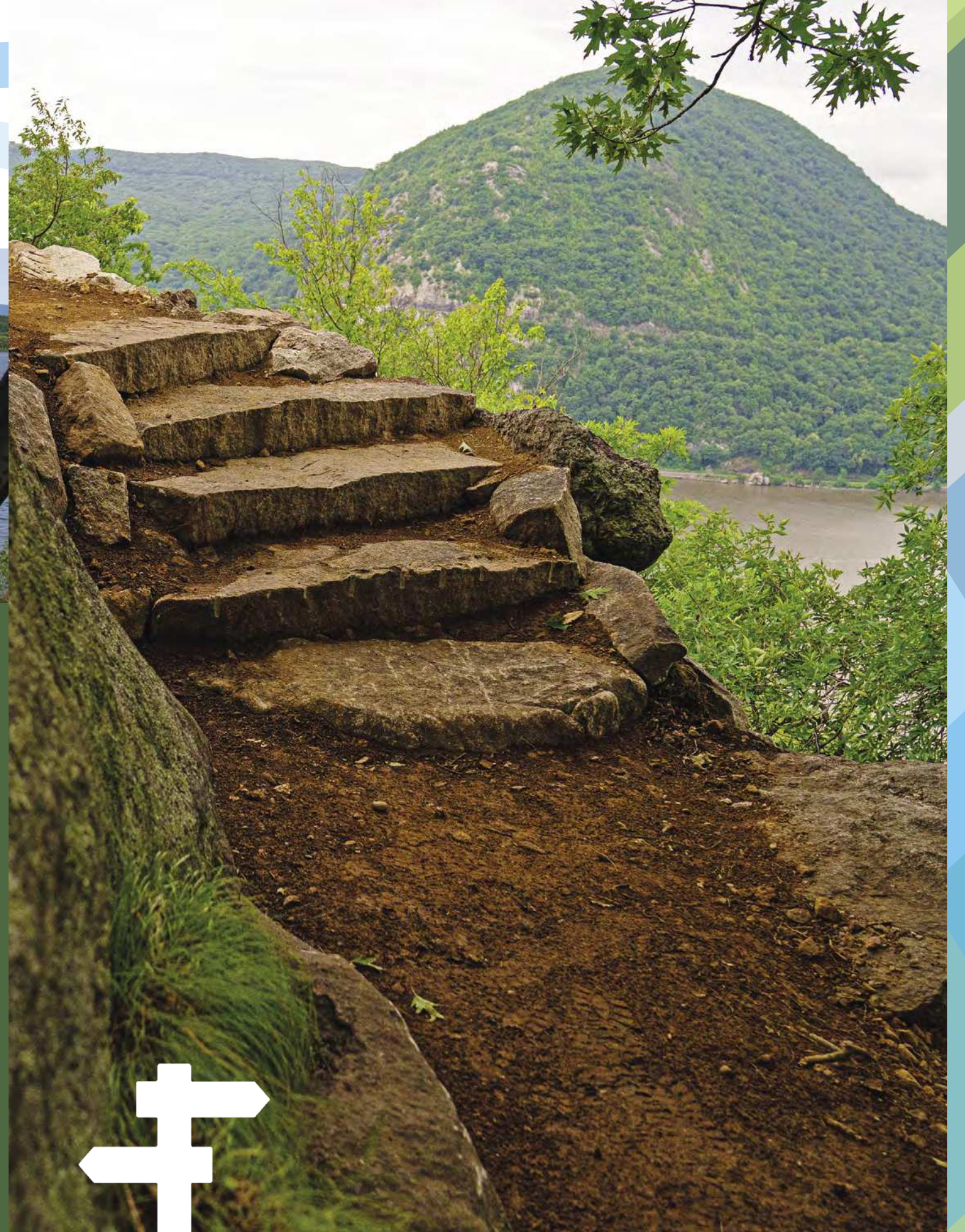
Along with boosting people's physical and mental health, trails promote emission-free transportation and tourism critical for growing the valley's economy and providing new jobs. In Ulster County, the **Hudson River Brickyard Trail**, which crosses the future state park we're partnering to create, joins with the Kingston Greenline, giving more bikers and pedestrians access to downtown jobs, shops, and restaurants. Nearby, we continue efforts to complete the **John Burroughs Black Creek Trail**. Passing through lands (below) that inspired the renowned nature writer, this 11-mile route between Esopus and Lloyd promises to be one of the premier mid-valley destinations for hiking, biking, and paddling. It will link with the Hudson Valley Rail Trail and Walkway Over the Hudson (both part of the statewide Empire State Trail), encouraging multi-day excursions in the region. Adding to the project's benefits, protected wetlands along the trail not only safeguard vital habitat but soak up floodwaters, mitigating downstream damage during intense storms.



Along with providing recreation, Walkway Over the Hudson (top left) and the Hudson River Brickyard Trail (this page) offer car-free commuting amid spectacular scenery, while the future John Burroughs Black Creek Trail will attract more hikers, cyclists, and paddlers to the region.



FOSTERING COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS THAT UNITE PEOPLE TO EACH OTHER + NATURE



We also made great strides in increasing people's connections to the valley's natural beauty. On Breakneck Ridge, the **Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail** (a supporting organization of Scenic Hudson) partnered with the state to complete its first project — a trail providing a safe return route from the mountain's first dramatic viewpoint. Named after Daniel Nimham, 18th-century leader of the local Indigenous Wappinger peoples, the Nimham Trail (right) protects fragile habitat and should reduce the number of hikers who get lost or injured blazing paths back to their cars.

In **Bethlehem**, a suburb of Albany, Scenic Hudson funding and technical assistance enabled the town to add 21 acres to its riverfront park, increasing opportunities for residents and visitors to explore the outdoors and providing a buffer from rising sea levels. We also commissioned a study demonstrating the potential to create new public gateways to the river by restoring several **historic bridges** (including one at our Poets' Walk Park, above) that span the railroad tracks in Dutchess County.



Amplifying our impacts Scenic Hudson will:

Help to ensure a new route for walking or biking to work, schools, and businesses from Poughkeepsie's Northside neighborhoods by supporting Dutchess County's creation of the 2.7-mile Urban Trail. It follows a former railbed in the city and town that Scenic Hudson protected.

Continue leading efforts to complete a "missing link" in Westchester County's 51-mile **RiverWalk**, beneath and connecting to the Gov. Mario M. Cuomo Bridge. Along with increasing opportunities for carbon-free travel to jobs and essential services, it will help reduce local traffic congestion.

Engage and train **land stewards** in communities to help maintain our parks and create new trail connections.

Support community participation in drafting the **PK4Keeps Comprehensive Plan** in the City of Poughkeepsie — a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for residents to shape future policies and strategies critical for strengthening connections between and within neighborhoods.



PROMOTING RESPONSIBLE RENEWABLE ENERGY DEVELOPMENT

“I don’t want the world to get too hot,”
said a six-year-old girl at a state hearing last March
about the **Danskammer fracked gas power plant** in Newburgh.

One of thousands of people responding to our call to help Stop the Plant, she summed up what’s wrong with Danskammer: It will spew millions of tons more climate-warming emissions annually. It’s also a setback for achieving social justice. Air pollution from the plant will further burden Newburgh residents already suffering one of New York’s highest asthma rates. Experts we commissioned have proposed a climate-friendly alternative for the site — a **clean-energy battery storage facility** (rendering at right) that will deliver a healthier planet and local jobs.



Amplifying our impacts Scenic Hudson will:

Continue leading the **Stop Danskammer Coalition** we convened to stop construction of this climate-warming facility and textbook example of environmental injustice.

Review proposed new transmission lines, necessary to achieve New York’s climate goals, to ensure they minimize environmental and community impacts.

Ensure our new office in **Poughkeepsie** is a model of environmental sustainability.

Encourage access to our parks via climate-friendly transportation by installing more **electric vehicle (EV) charging stations** and **bike racks** in them.

A new U.N. report stresses the need to slash greenhouse gas emissions immediately or face dire permanent consequences. Scenic Hudson is leading the way in transitioning the valley to clean energy. Our **How to Solar Now** toolkit has become a go-to resource for communities — and even entire counties. It provides guidance about siting new solar facilities to minimize impacts on natural, historic, and ecological resources. In Greene County, we worked with developers and local officials to ensure these win-win results. The **Flint Mine solar facility** — the first large-scale solar array approved in the region — will meet annual electricity needs of 21,000 homes, conserve habitat for threatened grassland birds, and limit views from nearby roads and public viewpoints.



← UPDATE!
NYS denies Danskammer’s air permit — a great victory!
Read more:
ScenicHudson.org/danskammer

ADVANCING CLIMATE SMART AGRICULTURE AT MULTIPLE LEVELS



Regenerative farming techniques such as cover cropping and no-till practices can minimize — and even reverse — carbon released into the atmosphere, while simultaneously increasing productivity and farm resiliency. Leaders of Indigenous groups are sharing traditional agricultural methods with the **Northeast Carbon Alliance**, while farmers engaged in the state's **Hudson Valley Carbon Farming Pilot Program** (for which Scenic Hudson helped secure funding) are testing these and other strategies. Data are being analyzed at the **Scenic Hudson Soil Lab**, on the Rockefeller family's Columbia County farm that we partnered with Columbia Land Conservancy to protect. And it will be shared via the **eight-state regional network** we established to promote climate-smart farming in the Northeast. On the advocacy front, we helped secure passage of the state's **Soil Health and Climate Resiliency Act**. If signed by the governor, it will establish programs to assist farmers in improving the health of their soil and encourage them to adopt regenerative agricultural methods that mitigate climate impacts and improve water quality.



Amplifying our impacts Scenic Hudson will:

Advocate for legislation that promotes research into and implementation of regenerative farming practices, including the **U.S. Farm Bill**.

Establish **regenerative agriculture demonstration areas** in Columbia and Ulster counties to test climate-smart practices, and connect local farmers to technical resources to help implement them.

Provide grants to address the under-representation of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) farmers in the region, who have historically lacked access to funding, technical assistance, and land.

Data from the Scenic Hudson Soil Lab (co-founded by Benjamin Banks Dobson, pictured here) will guide agriculture's future role in confronting the climate crisis. We're committed to enhancing opportunities for farmers of color like food justice activist Karen Washington (left), an honoree of our People Who Make a Difference poster project, who cultivates land Scenic Hudson conserved.



RESHAPING THE POLICY LANDSCAPE



Governments play an essential role in Scenic Hudson's work — and in achieving a healthy, equitable future for all Hudson Valley residents. Our advocacy remains vital for securing their collaboration and support. In Washington, we urged passage of the **Great American Outdoors Act**, the largest federal investment in land protection in a generation. It assures permanent and stable funding for the **Land and Water Conservation Fund**, a longtime ally in preserving the Hudson Valley's natural and historic treasures. In Albany, we helped sustain a \$300-million **Environmental Protection Fund** in the annual budget and ensure the **Clean Water, Clean Air, and Green Jobs Environmental Bond Act** will be on the 2022 ballot. If passed by voters, the bond would make a game-changing investment — as much as \$4 billion — in protecting communities from climate impacts, safeguarding water quality, creating parks, conserving and restoring habitat, and creating jobs.

Making a historic investment in providing residents with clean water, fresh food from family farms, and new parks and trails, voters in the Town of New Paltz overwhelmingly approved creation of a **Community Preservation Fund**. Scenic Hudson's expertise in grassroots organizing helped ensure passage of this critical tool for protecting vital natural resources from rising development pressures.



Amplifying our impacts Scenic Hudson will:

Advocate strongly for passage of the **Clean Water, Clean Air, and Green Jobs Environmental Bond Act** and the federal **New York-New Jersey Watershed Protection Act**, which will provide less affluent communities with financial and technical support to adapt to climate impacts.

Lead efforts to make the **Hudson River healthier for people and wildlife** by spearheading a collaborative campaign to restore areas damaged by 50 years of PCB contamination.

Support the needs of residents in historically marginalized neighborhoods and work with them to ensure these needs are heard.



Partnerships with governments support Scenic Hudson's work conserving farmland — essential for feeding valley and New York City residents — and enhancing the region's green economy. Here, the sail-powered schooner Apollonia loads a cargo at our Long Dock Park for delivery to New York City.



ENGAGING COMMUNITIES THROUGH PUBLIC SPACES THAT ARE SAFE, INCLUSIVE, + ACCESSIBLE



Parks and other natural assets in Poughkeepsie, Newburgh, and Kingston suffer from decades of neglect. With local partners, Scenic Hudson is working to restore these prime outdoor resources, providing welcoming new places for people to come together, relax, and have fun. In Poughkeepsie, what once was a woodland degraded by dumping is now the **Pershing Avenue Neighborhood Farm + Gardens**. It features plots (all quickly reserved!) where Northside residents grow fresh food. Soon, it also will feature a farm whose bounty will be shared with local families. The need for such a space is evident in the many groups that joined with us to create it and will help guide its future operation — the Poughkeepsie Farm Project, City of Poughkeepsie, Ecological Citizens Project, Glynwood, and Nubian Directions II.

Many less affluent neighborhoods suffer from “tree inequity,” lacking **street trees** that lower temperatures while improving air quality, pedestrian safety, and public health. Helping to “leaf out” Newburgh, which has lost more than 4,000 trees in the last few decades, Scenic Hudson teamed up with local residents and groups to plant trees on South Miller Street, a pilot for a city-wide initiative. Meanwhile, in Kingston we partnered with the Kingston Land Trust to put ownership of the **Pine Street African Burial Ground** directly into the hands of Harambee, an African-American cultural organization that spearheaded efforts to protect this historic resting place for enslaved people.



Communities coming together: Newburgh residents helped plant neighborhood street trees, while Kingston’s historic Pine Street African Burial Ground (top), which Scenic Hudson partnered to protect, offered a fitting place to celebrate Juneteenth.



ENGAGING COMMUNITIES THROUGH PUBLIC SPACES THAT ARE SAFE, INCLUSIVE, + ACCESSIBLE

We're also committed to ensuring all our partnerships are inclusive, and that work reflects local residents' needs and concerns. In Kingston, we co-hosted meetings in English and Spanish for the community to share visions for the future **Hudson Cliffs State Park** we're helping to create. Our **Stop the Plant** campaign is galvanizing Newburgh residents whose health will be most directly impacted by air pollution spewed from the proposed Danskammer fossil-fuel plant. And to provide a forum for feedback about collaborative work on Poughkeepsie's Northside — including opportunities for outdoor public space at our new office — we created a new website: northsideconnected.com.

At the same time, we're reaching out to youth — listening, learning, sharing, and inviting participation — to create healthier, more beautiful, and equitable communities. Teens employed by Nubian Directions II helped build important infrastructure at the **Pershing Avenue Neighborhood Farm + Gardens**, learning valuable job skills. A pilot for making interpretive features in all of our parks more inclusive, we're creating a new interactive kiosk at **Poets' Walk Park** with feedback from teens engaged in community organizations like the Youth Crew of Kingston's YMCA Farm Project. And in Newburgh, young people are learning to be stewards for the newly planted street trees.



Amplifying our impacts Scenic Hudson will:

Partner with the City of Poughkeepsie and other stakeholders to commence improvements to the Northside's **Pershing Avenue** and **Malcolm X parks**.

Ramp up the street trees initiative in Newburgh and planning for a trail corridor in the city along the formerly industrial shores of **Quassaick Creek**.

Develop inclusive programming and experiences at the future **Hudson Cliffs State Park**.

Increase the number and diversity of young people working with Scenic Hudson as members of the **Student Conservation Association**, whose contributions have been invaluable over the last 20 years, and implement a **fellowship program** offering stipends for young people in Poughkeepsie, Newburgh, and Kingston who help carry forward projects in these cities.

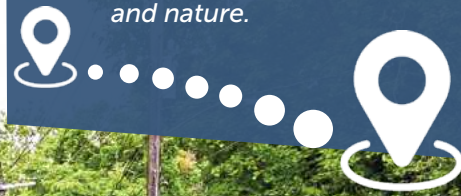
Increase opportunities for communities to discuss shared concerns and implement solutions via the **Successful River Cities Coalition**.

Continue **Community Changemakers** — a way to honor and amplify the voices of local people leading efforts to make a difference in Poughkeepsie, Newburgh, and Kingston.

Poughkeepsie's Pershing Avenue Neighborhood Farm + Gardens provides space for local residents to grow fresh food and enjoy camaraderie. We're relying on Kingston teens (left) to create exciting new interpretive features at Poets' Walk Park.



Creating a safe transportation corridor along Poughkeepsie's Fall Kill Creek offers great potential for connecting city residents to each other and nature.



Scenic Hudson's total consolidated operating and capital budget during the year was \$24.1 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 land acquisition and pre-construction budget. Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail, Inc. is a separate 501(c)(3) entity that is a supporting organization of Scenic Hudson, Inc.

Scenic Hudson

Scenic Hudson's operating budget for FY21 – \$10.0 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 \$1.4 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 \$5.4 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

Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail spent \$3.9 million on land acquisition and related 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 (\$212.6 million at year-end FY21), used to support land conservation activities; a board designated fund for general operating expenses (\$24.5 million at year-end FY21); the Kathryn W. Davis Fund for Park Planning and Community Land Use (\$5.7 million at year-end FY21); and an Easement Enforcement Fund (\$1.1 million at year-end FY21). The assets are pooled in a diversified portfolio supervised by an investment committee. Total investment return was 25.6 percent for FY21. The board approved \$9.6 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 is pooled with the aforementioned endowments. At year-end FY21 this fund had a balance of \$3.0 million.

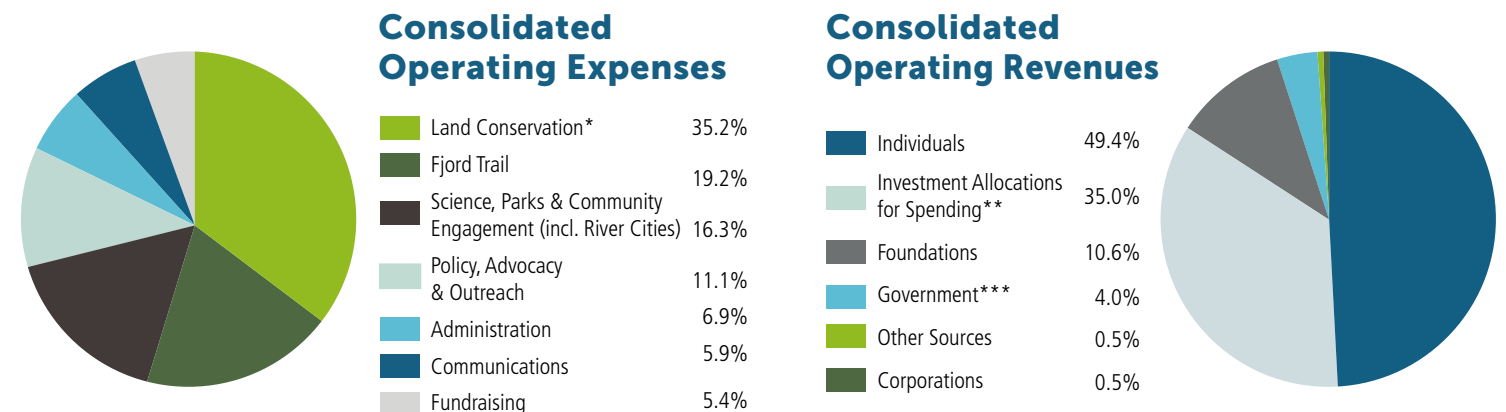
Although lands owned by the land trust and Fjord Trail are eligible for tax exemption, they paid \$391,382 and \$23,662, respectively, in property taxes and payments in lieu of taxes in FY21. In FY20, the land trust made \$449,396 of such payments. Collectively, these organizations generally seek relief 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, 2021	June 30, 2020
Land areas (at cost)	90,917	87,441
Cash and investments	268,852	220,799
Other assets	7,868	8,576
Total assets	367,637	316,816
Liabilities	7,807	10,646
Net assets	359,830	306,170
Total liabilities and net assets	367,637	316,816

(\$ = 000's)



* 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

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SCENIC HUDSON IN THEIR ESTATE OR

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Gifts of \$500,000 and above

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Scenic Hudson's work protecting grassland bird habitats helps to assure the survival of many species that have suffered severe population declines.

*Non-board member

‡ Scenic Hudson Land Trust board member only

Scenic Hudson envisions our future Poughkeepsie office (bottom center) as a welcoming space for all Northside residents and visitors to learn, grow, play, and celebrate together.



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- Vacant
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- Beth Myers
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GIS and Land Data Manager
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Senior Land Project Manager
- Abdiel López Torres
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- Anthony Coneski
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Parks Stewardship Coordinator
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- James Newport
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- Seth Martel
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- Erin Nysten-Wysocki
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Development

- Jody Harris
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- 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
- 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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