



6:00 - 6:20: Welcome!
Enjoy locally grown tastes and hot cider, explore displays.

6:20 - 7:30: Hear 10 short talks - Conservation Stories.

7:30 - 8:00: Q & A with our speakers.

8:15 - Stay for a Guided Crescent Moon Hike!



Meet the People Making Local Conservation Happen: *Talks, Tastes, and a Tour!* Part One: Forests and Fields



(Part Two: Farmland, June 13th 6-8PM at Indian Ladder Farms)

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Talks, Tastes, and a Tour!

Part One: Forests and Fields

* * * * *

(Part Two: Farmland, June 13th 6-8PM at Indian Ladder Farms)

Event Co-sponsors

- ▶ Towns of Bethlehem and New Scotland
- ▶ Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy
 - ▶ Delmar Farmers Market
 - ▶ Albany County
- ▶ New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
 - ▶ Friends of Five Rivers

Enjoy local tastes!

Thank you to Field Notes and Indian Ladder Farms

Field Notes:

- ▶ Farm-to-table chefs: Joan Porambo, Kyle MacPherson
- ▶ Food sourced from Lansing Farm in Colonie
- ▶ 20-acre farm just conserved with MHLC!
- ▶ Visit them for Saturday dinners and Sunday brunches, and find their food truck at events

▶ www.fieldnotes-ny.com

Indian Ladder Farm:

- ▶ Hot apple cider from New Scotland apples

▶ www.indianladderfarms.com



Photo: Field Notes

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their conservation
stories:

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2. Mark King, Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy
3. Jeff Leon, Strawberry Fields landowner
4. Lauren Axford, Pine Hollow Arboretum
5. Steve Downs, landowner
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What is "Open Space"?



RECREATION

(State Forests and Parks, Preserves, Private Lands Trails Access)





EDUCATION

Community Forests; interpretive trails





NATURAL RESOURCES

(preserves, state forests and parks,
conservation easements)



Wildlife Conservation



Ecological Conservation



A photograph of a forest path in autumn. The path is covered in fallen leaves and leads into a dense forest. The trees are filled with vibrant autumn foliage in shades of yellow, orange, and red. A bright light source is visible at the end of the path, creating a glowing effect. The text is overlaid on the lower half of the image.

“HUMAN” RESOURCES
(working forest easements,
farmland easements)



Food Production



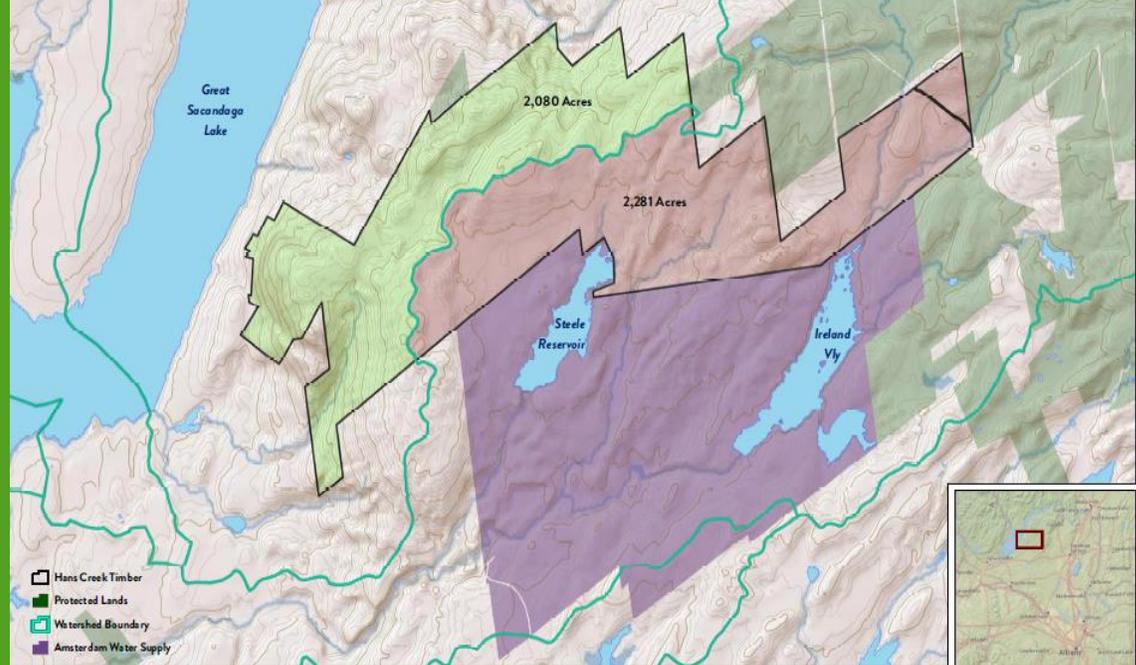
Forest Products

Examples: Working Forest Easements,
Community Forests



Drinking Water

- ▶ Case Study: City of Amsterdam, Hans Creek
- ▶ Town of Bethlehem
 - ▶ Vly Creek Reservoir Watershed: Lake, wetlands 12.3%; Agricultural 15.8%; Forest, shrub, grasses 65.2%; Residential 6.7%
 - ▶ Vly Creek Reservoir located in Town of New Scotland, but is large source of Bethlehem drinking water



What is needed for conservation to work?

- ▶ Benefit of conservation must outweigh the cost (\$\$, natural resources vs development)
- ▶ Partnerships:
 - ▶ Need an interested landowner
 - ▶ Need an entity to hold the conservation easement or land - land conservancy, municipality, state entity
- ▶ Need \$\$\$ (even for donations)
- ▶ Time: some projects take decades (easement terms, grant awards, negotiation process, estate planning)
- ▶ Community support: Some projects are reliant on community as

partner (community forests, local



How can non-profits and municipalities help private landowners?

- ▶ *Connections* to conservation-minded forest and farm land buyers and sellers
- ▶ Identification of \$ *sources* for easements
- ▶ *Advocate* for state funding for working forest easement \$\$
- ▶ *Partnership* with Towns on OS projects
- ▶ *Purchases* of conservation lands to establish preserves or parklands



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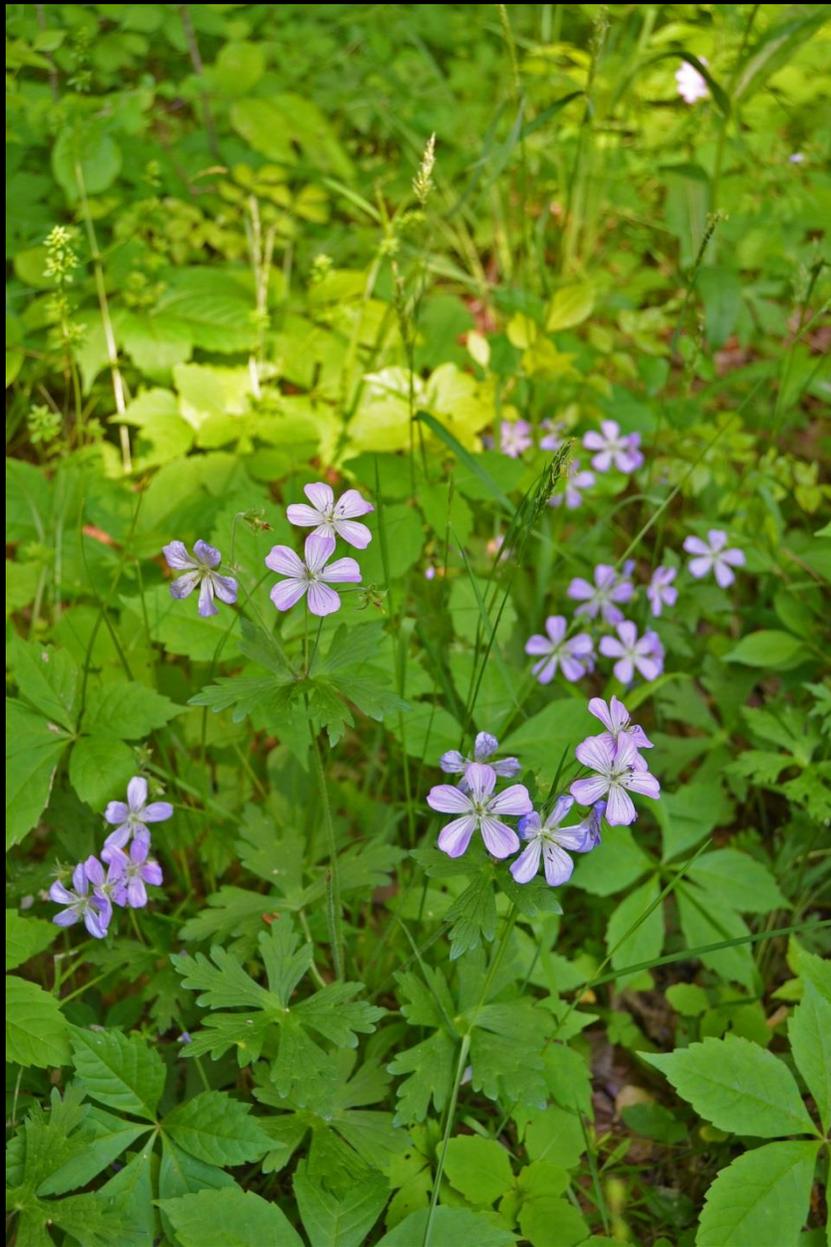


MOHAWK HUDSON
LAND CONSERVANCY

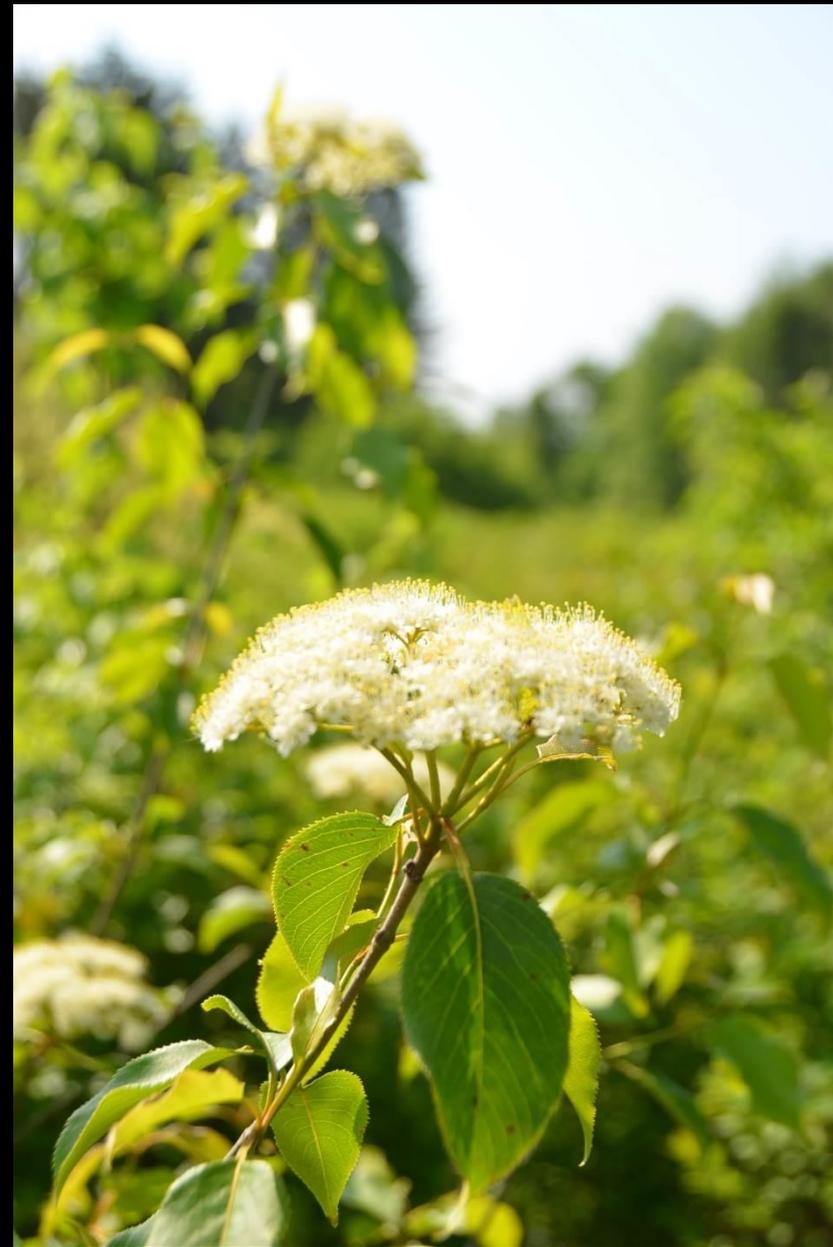


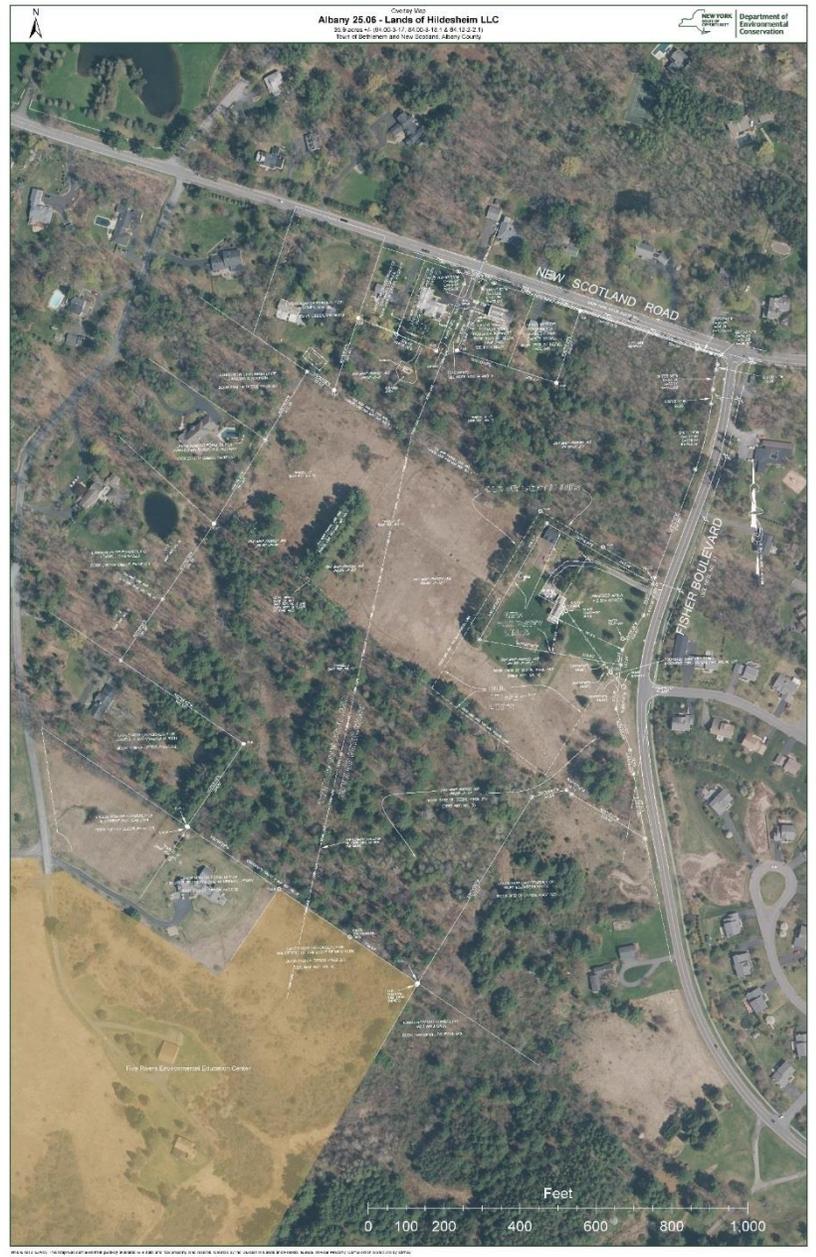
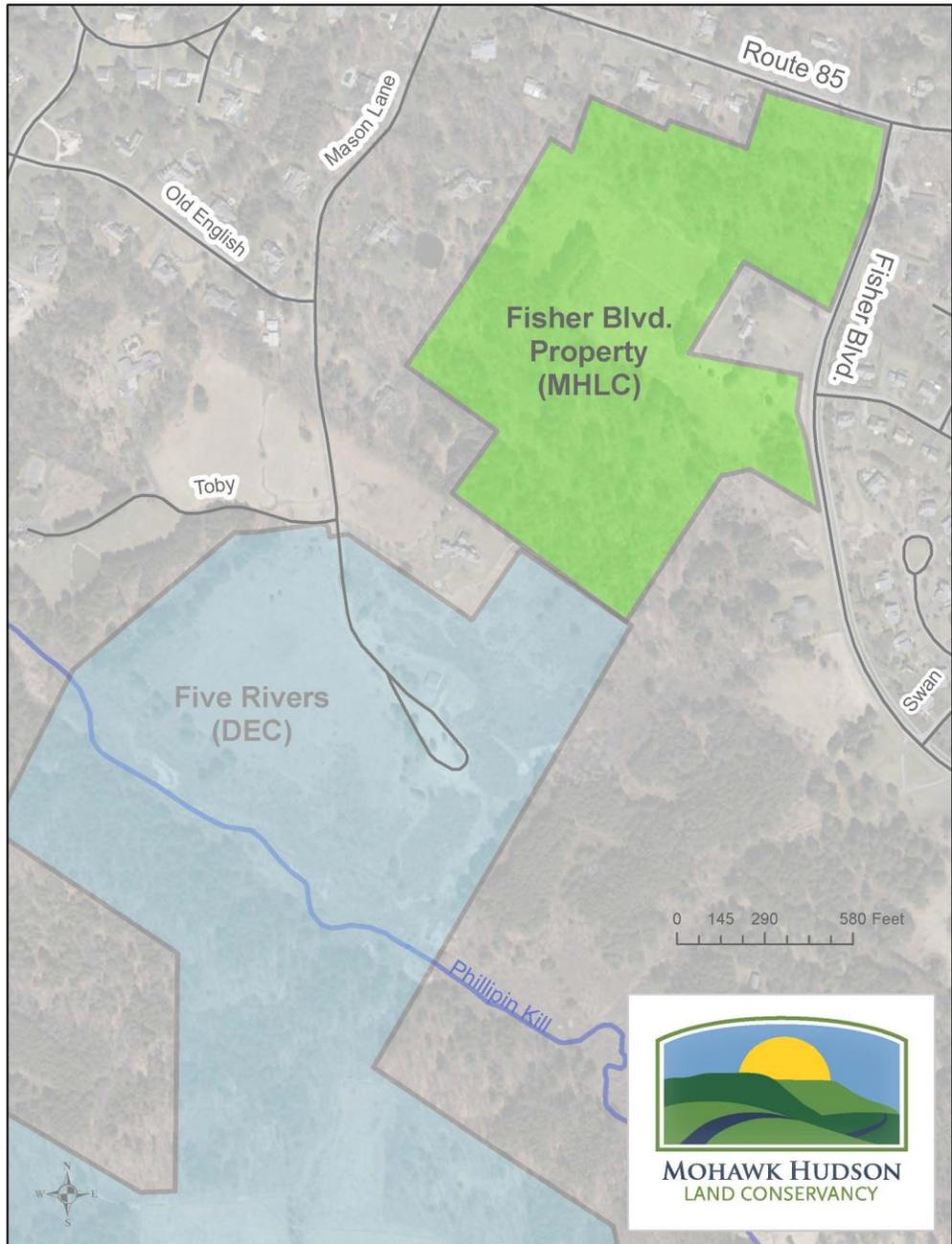
Fisher Boulevard - Fiver Rivers Expansion

A 35 acre property
donation



In a rapidly growing area





Communications -
get the word out



Share the success



Celebrating
Success!

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Strawberry Fields

Located in the Town of Amsterdam,
Eastern Montgomery County

Its 118 acres are
protected in
perpetuity from
overdevelopment

- Operates on a net
zero sustainable
basis
- Contains a family
home, working
farm, and nature
preserve with
public trails.





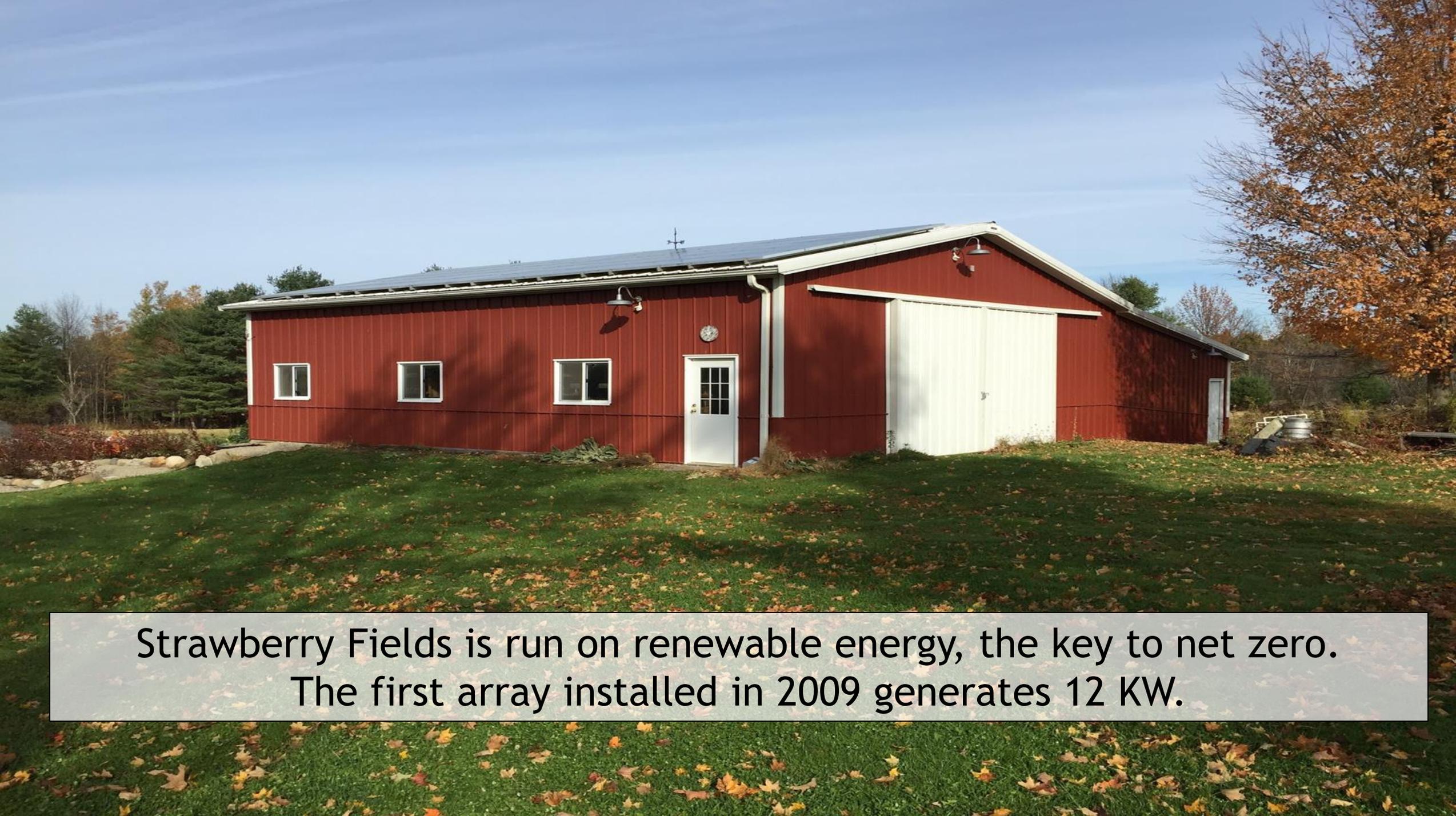
We started on the road to net-zero in
2003.

We arrived in 2013.

This is the condensed story of how we
changed our lives to mitigate climate
change.



Strawberry Fields is a multi-use home for the Leon Family. Over the 10 years, 2 blower door tests and insulation have tightened up this 120 year old house.



Strawberry Fields is run on renewable energy, the key to net zero.
The first array installed in 2009 generates 12 KW.



The second array is a ground mount and generates 13 KW.

- Both arrays have paid back their costs in savings.
- All future generation from these arrays is zero cost.
- They will last longer than me!



**This is our second electric car,
the Chevy Bolt.**

Renewable Energy

The second key to net zero is swapping out fossil fuel for renewable electric:

- Two electric cars.
- Converted our propane home heating to geothermal that runs on an electric heat pump;
- our propane water heater to a heat pump water heater;
- property maintenance is now done on an electric ATV rather than tractor.
- Lawn is mowed with lithium ion zero turn mower.
- Chainsaw and weed whacker are electric.

Lovin' Mama Farm

Strawberry Fields also has a working farm run by son and daughter-in-law.

- USDA organic certified
- No-till agriculture
- vegetable and flower farm
- Community Supported Agriculture

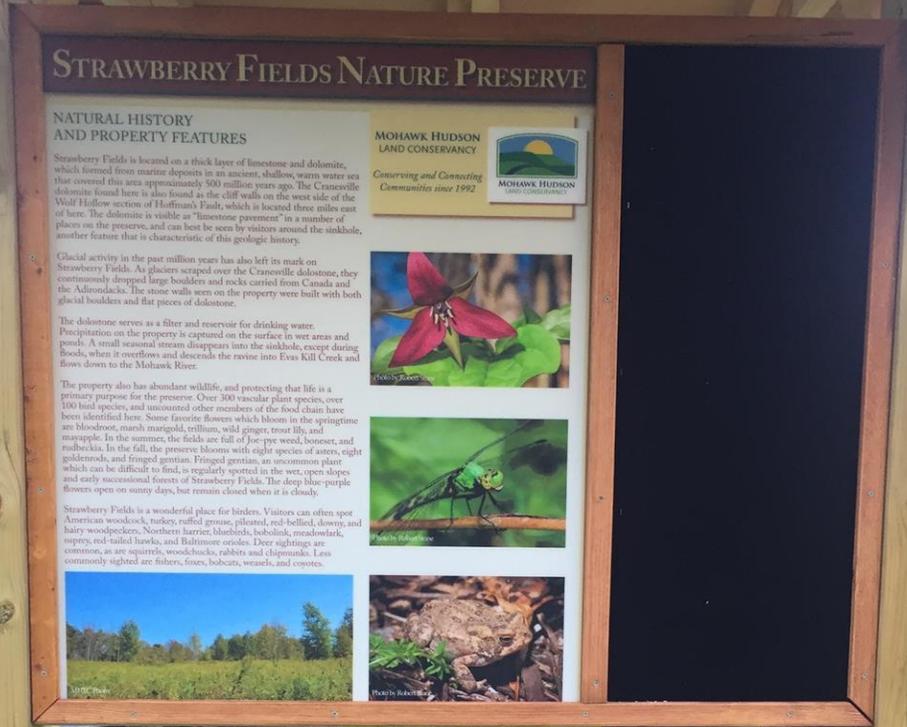




You'll hear more about Lovin' Mama Farm at the next "Meet the People" event on June 13th that's all about conserving farmland!

Strawberry Fields is also a nature preserve:

- 118 acres permanently protected by a Conservation Easement held by Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy
- Three miles of nature trails are open to the public all year
- Anyone can enjoy what Strawberry Fields has to offer
- Thousands have visited since the trail was officially open to the public in 2017
- We offer workshops and special events





Fringed Gentian

- This is my favorite wildflower...
- More than 300 different plant species have been identified on the land.
- The Gentian is hard to find these days.
- A spur trail is available to see it in bloom during September and October.



Cardinal flower and Trout lily

Two more favorite
flowers of mine.





Wonderful bird- watching:

There are over 100
species of birds at
Strawberry Fields.

The American
Bluebird is a
favorite.



CANADA GEESE TAKING OFF FROM THE WETLAND



The Grandkid Conservation Corps!

- Headed out to plant American Chestnut seedlings.
- We added another species to Strawberry Fields where we expect to re-establish the American Chestnut that until a century ago dominated the eastern landscape.
- (Yes, that's the electric ATV!)

A vibrant rainbow arches across a dark, stormy sky. The landscape below is lush and green, featuring a line of trees on the left, a field of tall grass in the middle ground, and a fence in the foreground. The overall scene is dramatic and beautiful.

**THANKS FOR VISITING
STRAWBERRY FIELDS!**

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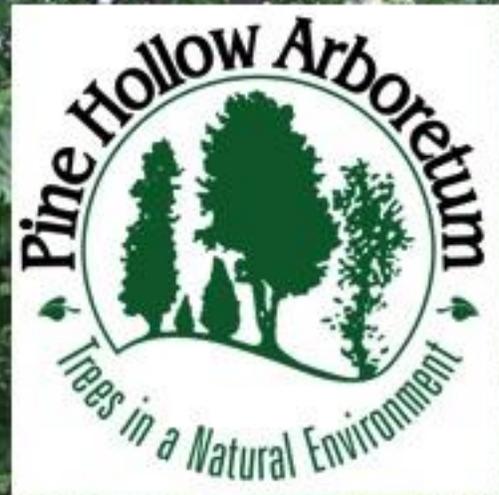


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Lauren Axford, Executive Director

- Founder Dr. John W. Abbuhl began planting trees around his private residence over 50 years ago

- Tax-exempt 501(c)(3) status granted in 2007 and chartered by the NYS Department of Education in 2008

- Horticultural collection of over 3,600 unique trees, shrubs and other wood plants from around the world

- 11 ponds, Eastern White Pine forest and a network of trails

- Free and open to the public 365 days a year from dawn until dusk



The Pine Hollow Arboretum

Areas

- 1 Maple Avenue Entrance
- 2 Western Glade
- 3 Magnolia Field
- 4 All Purpose Swamp
- 5 Spruce Room
- 6 Metasequoia Field
- 7 Chestnut Grove
- 8 Japanese Hill
- 9 Oriental Glade
- 10 Chinese Strip
- 11 Silverbell Trail
- 12 Azalea Field
- 13 Fir Trail
- 14 Pine Hollow Residence
- 15 Pine Cove
- 16 Glacier Ridge
- 17 Natural Forest Area
- 18 Locust Hill
- 19 Oak/Cypress Swamp
- 20 Oak Ridge

Legend

Water	
Trails	
Wooded Area	
Open Area	

Bodies of Water

- A Front Pond
- B Back Pond
- C Side Pond
- D Mid Pond
- E Greenhouse Pond
- F Russian Pond
- G Himalayan Pond
- H Island Pond
- I Sycamore Pond
- J Spruce Pond
- K John's Pond
- L Golden Chain Falls

Pine Hollow Arboretum

16 Maple Avenue, Slingerlands, NY 12159
(518) 439-6472
pinehollowarb@gmail.com
www.pinehollowarboretum.org



- Dr. Abbuhl purchased the adjacent parcel of land and, in his words, began “letting the land tell me what to do
- Grounds are managed in nuanced way that encourages the natural ecosystem and respects the inherent qualities of the land
- Today, The Pine Hollow Arboretum manages approximately 22 acres, with several neighbors allowing plantings on their adjacent properties.



**Front Pond
2000**



**Front Pond
2018**



**Magnolia
Field 2018**

Photo credit:
PJ Namkoong

Looking forward.....

- Continue to build our organizational infrastructure
- Increase accessibility (parking, ADA accessible areas)
- Continue to develop horticultural collection
- Improve maps/establish new trail loops
- Expand our environmental education program
- Continue to preserve and enhance this unique beautiful community asset for the benefit of ALL!





34 Pine Hollow Road
Slingerlands, NY 12159
518-992-2033
pinehollowarb@gmail.com
www.pinehollowarboretum.org

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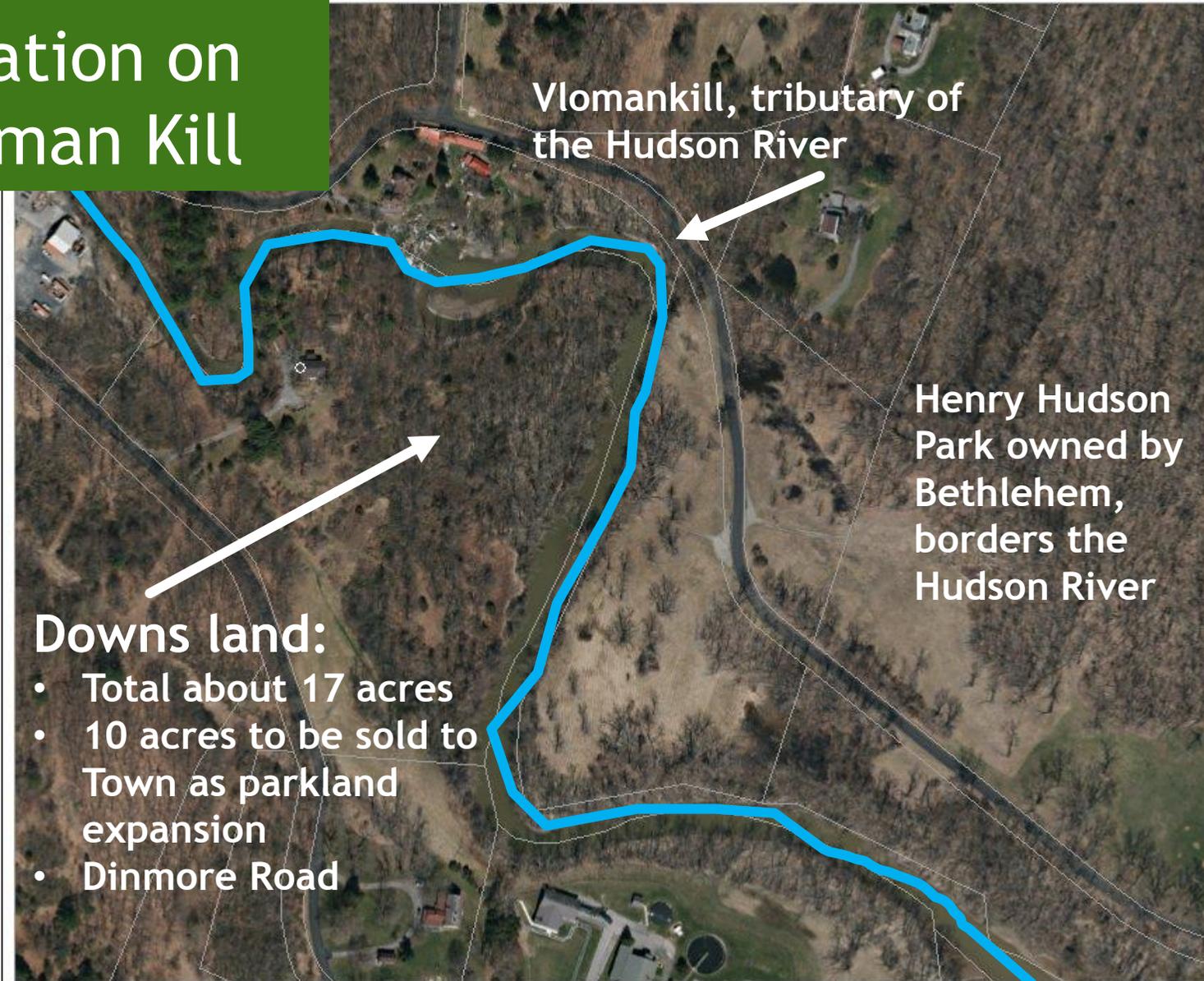
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Conservation location on Vloman Kill



This product is for informational purposes and may not have been prepared for, or be suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes. Use of this information should review or consult the primary data and information sources to ascertain the usability of the information.



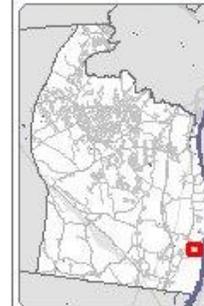
Town of Bethlehem
Dept. of Public Works
Engineering Division

445 Delaware Avenue
Delmar, New York 12054

Phone: (518) 439-4955
Fax: (518) 439-5808



General Location Map:



Map Extent

Prepared by:
arcgis2

Date:
2/21/2018

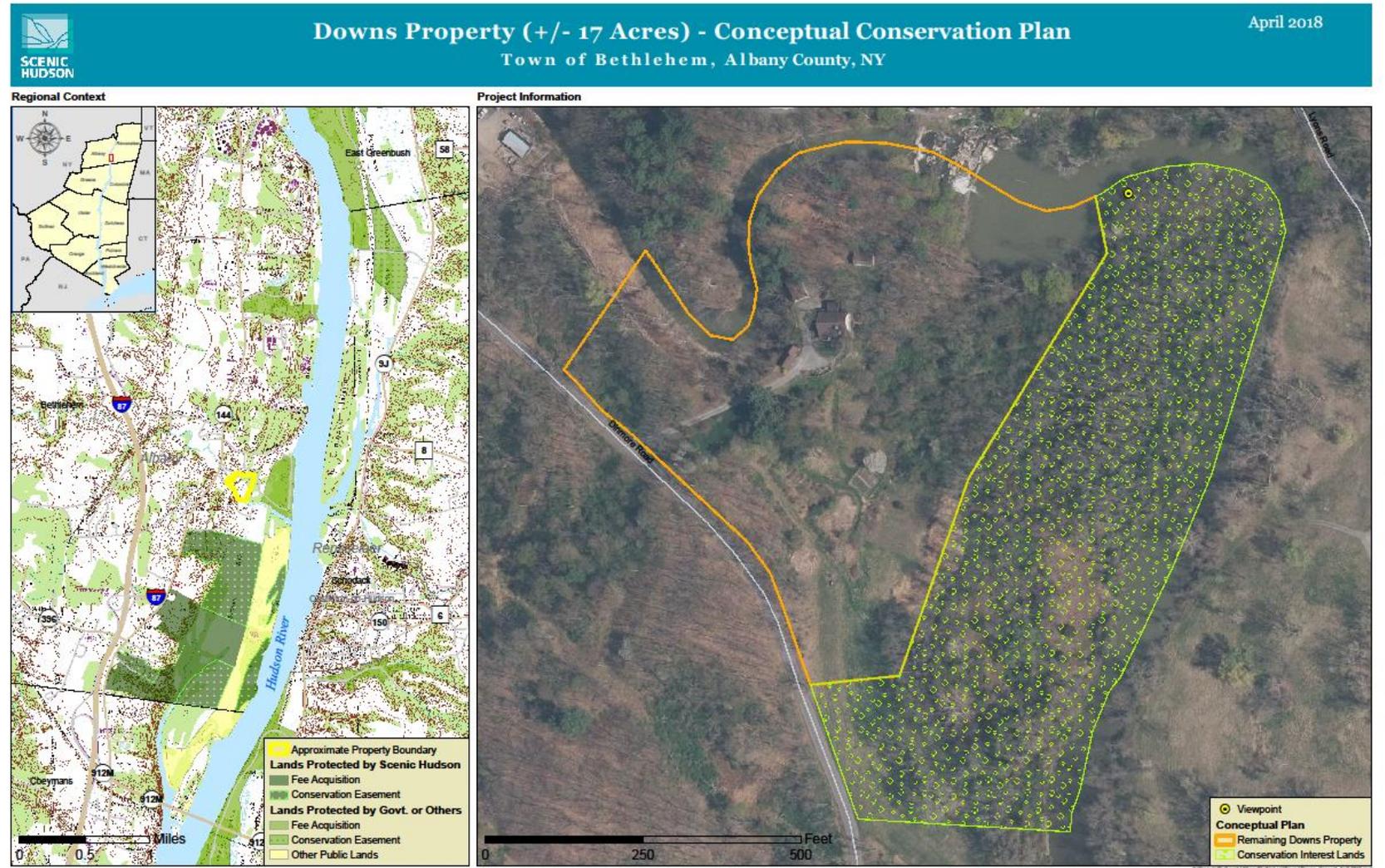


This custom maplet was generated through the Bethlehem Geographic Information System's Automated Web Map Service.

Copyright 2015.

A win-win local conservation project

- I'm selling 10 acres of my total 17 acres for conservation
- Will protect 1,600 feet of Vroman Kill shoreline
- Important Hudson River Estuary wildlife and fisheries habitat, flood protection, recreation



Unique land:

- ▶ Always felt this land should be conserved
- ▶ History, ecology, recreation
- ▶ Very unique property, bordered by tidal creek - Vloman Kill - that flows into the nationally significant Hudson River
- ▶ Connected to Bethlehem's Henry Hudson Park via the creek



Vloman Kill falls as seen from the property



Bethlehem House and graveyard

Conservation process:

- Started about a year ago talking with Town
- Brought in two non-profit conservation organizations
 - Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy
 - Scenic Hudson
- Decided to sell a 10 acre portion of land along the Vloman Kill as an expansion of Town's Henry Hudson Park



Conservation process:

- ▶ Enhances the value of remaining adjacent property
- ▶ Costs for making conservation happen can be difficult to cover
- ▶ Costs were shared by Town, SH, MHLC (about \$7,500 total)
 - ▶ Survey of the line to divide parcel,
 - ▶ Appraisal to determine fair value of land to be sold,
 - ▶ Environmental assessment.



Margot's Meadow

Site visit with
Town, Scenic
Hudson, and
Mohawk Hudson
Land Conservancy



Conservation process:



Pointing out
Vloman Kill Falls
view from
Roger's Rock - a
beautiful vista



Old scout ballfield

- Scenic Hudson, Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy, and Town to share land purchase costs.
- Town will use Parkland Set Aside Fund.
- Land will be conserved as parkland, added to Henry Hudson Park, and managed by Town.

As new addition to Bethlehem's Henry Hudson Park:

- New walking trails, vistas for park users
- (Not open yet - coming soon!)
- Land access will include mowed trails established by my family
- gorgeous views of the creek as it flows toward the Hudson River



View of the Vroman Kill falls after a rainstorm from "Roger's Rock"

Walking path in woods



As new addition to Bethlehem's Henry Hudson Park:

- New water access from the Vloman Kill
- Popular kayak launch at Henry Hudson park (new in 2014)
- Fun to see the falls from Roger's Rock on the land, or from the creek by boat!



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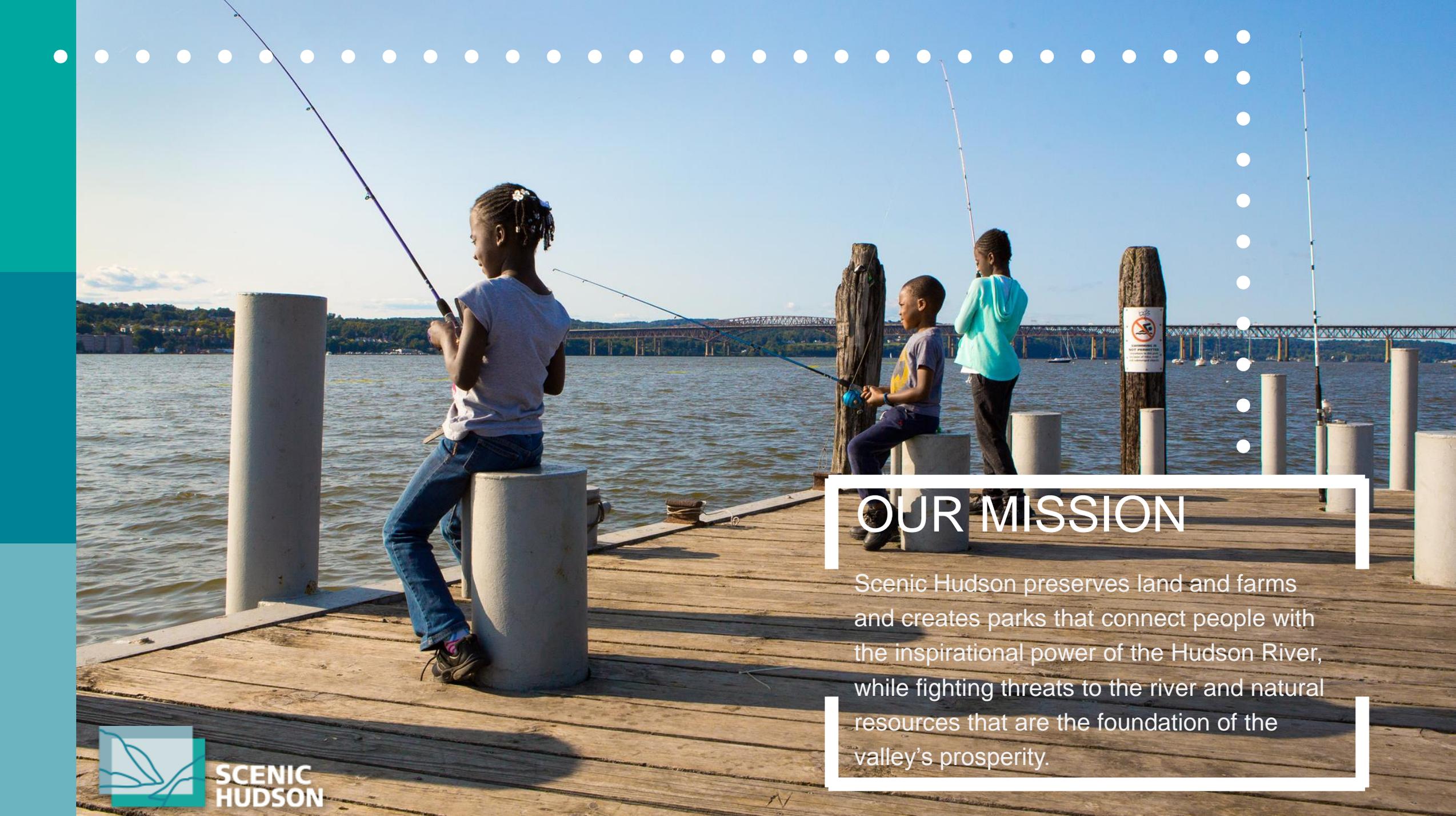


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OUR MISSION

Scenic Hudson preserves land and farms and creates parks that connect people with the inspirational power of the Hudson River, while fighting threats to the river and natural resources that are the foundation of the valley's prosperity.



SCENIC
HUDSON

THE BINNEN KILL AND HUDSON RIVER

A CONSERVATION STORY



- ▶ Working with conservation-minded landowners, Scenic Hudson has conserved a 535 acre assemblage of land where the Binnen Kill meets the Hudson River.
- ▶ Five acquisitions with a total approximate value of \$2.4M; a mixture of donations & purchases with SH endowment funds.
- ▶ Nearly half of this assemblage is owned by Scenic Hudson; the remaining acreage is owned by private parties and is protected with conservation easements.

WHY PROTECT THE BINNEN KILL?

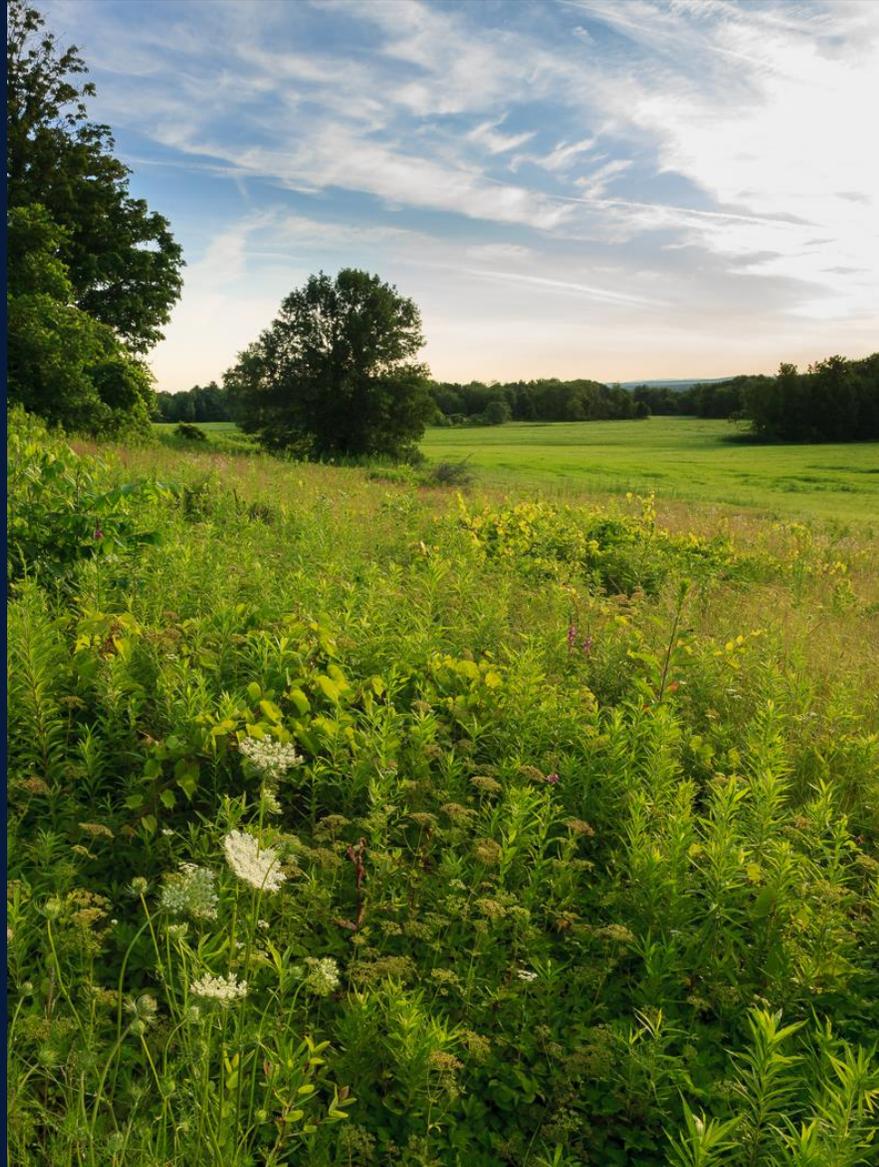
CONSERVATION VALUES



- ▶ Fertile agricultural soils with centuries of active farm use.
- ▶ Scenic views from the Hudson River, River Road, and the Castleton-on-Hudson Bridge.
- ▶ Ecological communities – such as freshwater tidal wetlands, riparian floodplain forest along the Binnen Kill, and submerged aquatic vegetation – which provide habitat for a myriad of sensitive bird, fish, and plant species.

HOW DID WE GET HERE?

OPPORTUNITIES AND PERSISTENCE

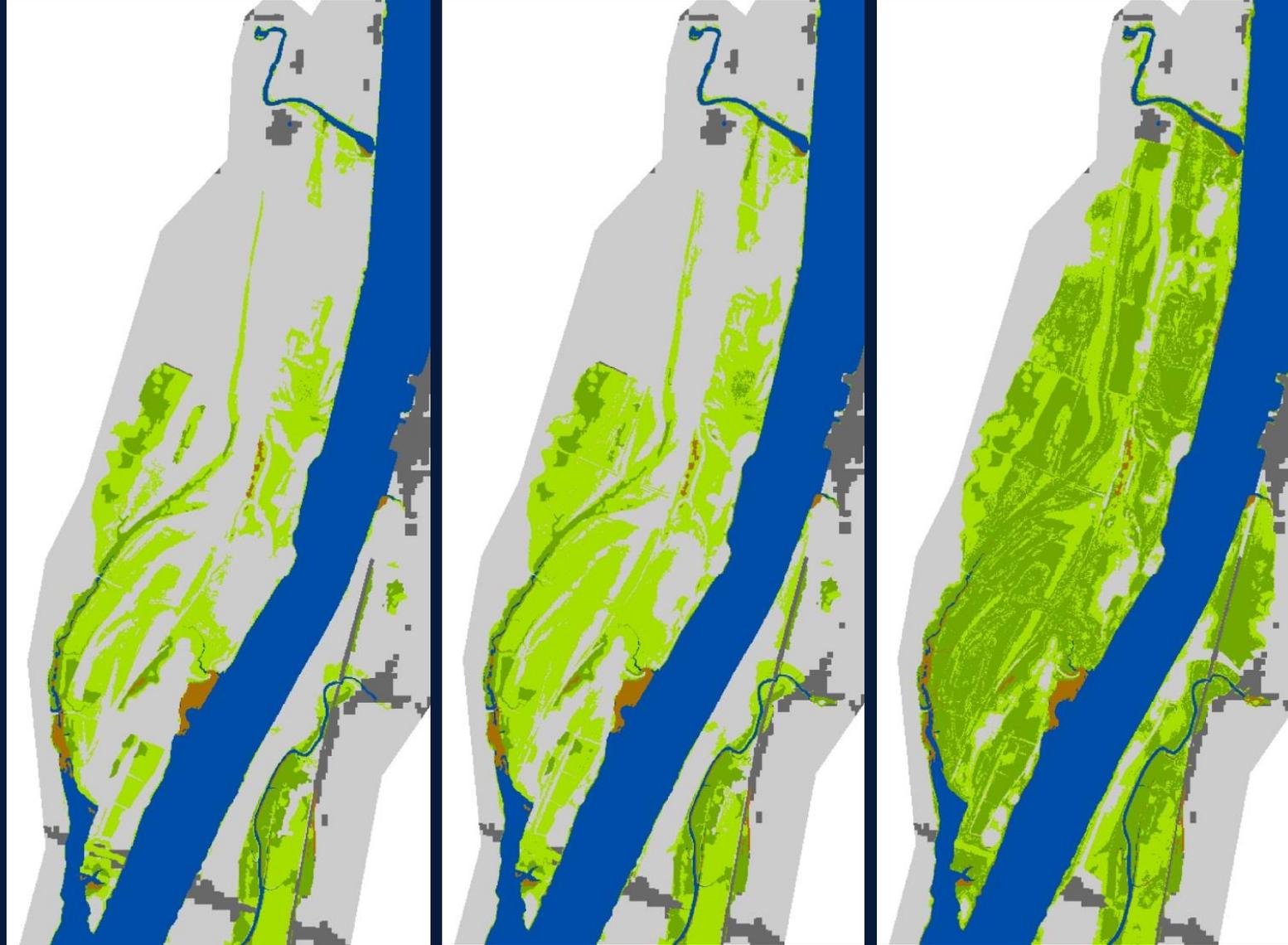


- ↑ Building relationships with landowners and finding common goals.
- ↑ Finding opportunities to partner with public and private entities.
- ↑ Our work in the Binnen Kill area started in 1986 – successful conservation projects require patience!
- ↑ There is still more work to do!



WHAT'S NEXT?

SEA LEVEL RISE & WETLAND MIGRATION



- ▶ Climate change is causing sea levels to rise.
- ▶ As the tidally-influenced Hudson River rises, the additional water will need somewhere to go!
- ▶ Wetlands help to mitigate impacts from rising water levels and increasing storm events.
- ▶ Scenic Hudson will continue to look for opportunities to work with local partners and willing landowners to protect critical wetland migration pathways.

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Bender Lane



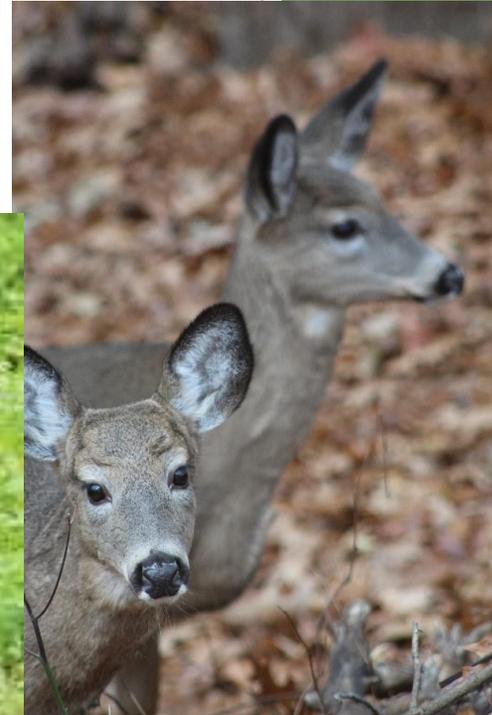


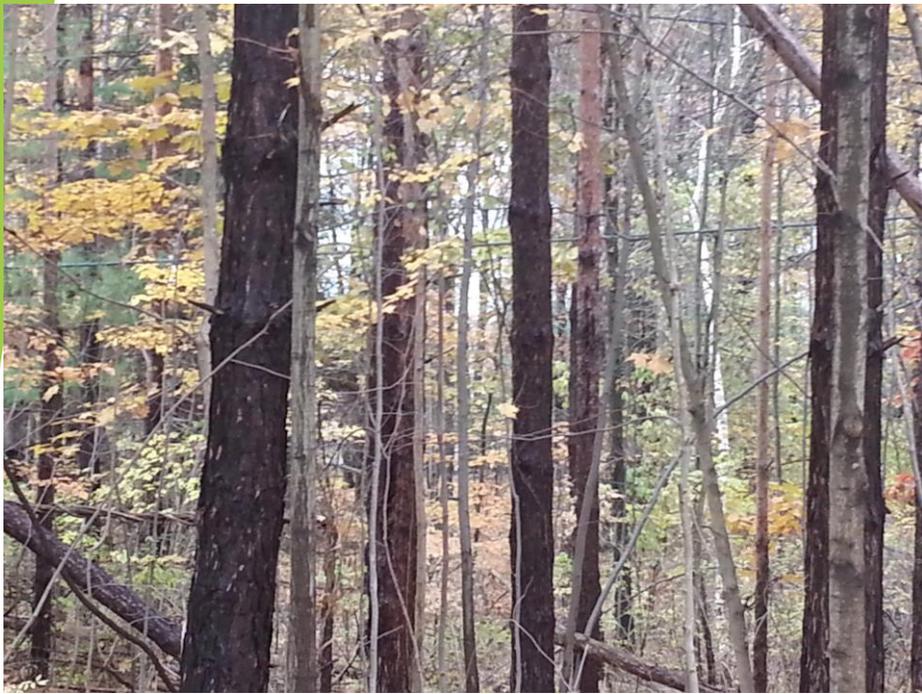
The Why...

For us, the **Bethlehem Conservation Easement Exemption** program was a no-brainer. We enjoy looking out our window and seeing this 11-acre forest, unencumbered by houses, street lights, driveways and cars, knowing that the land is home to countless wildlife and plant species, a pristine creek, wetlands, and tranquil solitude.

We decided to conserve our forest in perpetuity, which gave us a **90% tax exemption** on this land.

Protecting our wildlife habitats
is our primary concern.....

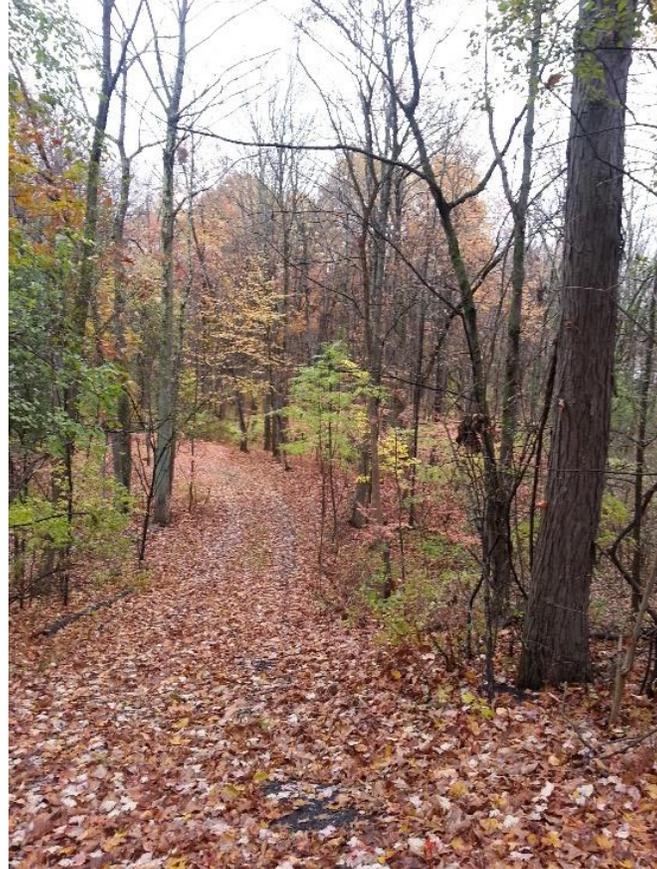
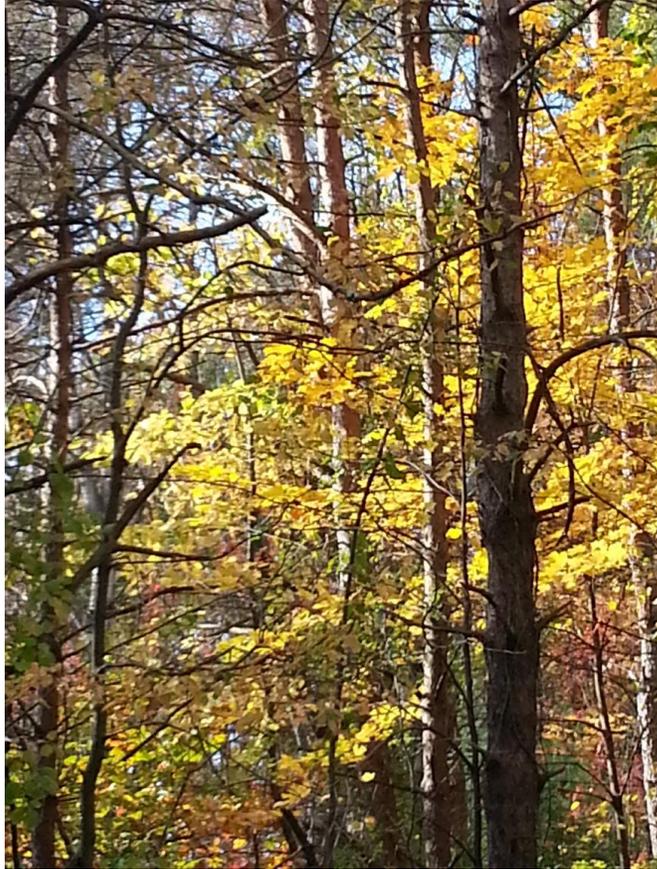




The Process....

- ❖ The uniqueness of our parcel
- ❖ Clear and concise communication with the Town representatives
- ❖ Simple-language contract: “Conservation Easement Agreement” between us as landowners and the Town of Bethlehem
- ❖ Paperwork prepared in a timely manner
- ❖ Proposals to Boards well researched and presented by Rob Leslie, Director of Economic Development and Planning, and Karen Shaw, Open Space Coordinator

Into the woods.... future hiking and biking trails?



Perhaps future partnerships might open this area to the public and possibly connect to other conservancy lands like the MHLA Schiffendecker Farm Preserve

Everyone loves driving down Bender Lane, in all four seasons. Now, part of this scenic view will be protected forever!



Bender Lane is even beautiful during the fall when.....
you didn't realize your camera
was loaded with black & white film.





We recommend Bethlehem's Conservation Easement Exemption program to other interested landowners. Save money while saving the land! Give them a call.



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Giles Wagoner, Forester

- Forests provide clean air, clean water, forest products, wildlife habitat, scenic beauty.
- Private landowner stewardship of forest ecosystems is critical.



Tulip tree, *Liriodendron tulipifera*



Yellow birch, *Betula alleghaniensis*

Forest Facts:

- Most common forest types are birch/beech/maple (53% of forest land area)
- Economic importance of NYS forests
 - \$300 million annually to private landowners for logging



Northern Red Oak, *Quercus rubra*

My forested land:

- 70 acres of forest in Selkirk - diverse and healthy
- Grandfather bought land in 1928, I bought land 2003.
- Harvest takes place only about every 20-25 years



Northern Red Oak, *Quercus rubra*

NYS Forest Tax Law Program, or “480-a”

- Tax relief program through a partnership with New York State
- Voluntary property assessment reduction (80%) program that supports sustainable forestry management
- I was the first participating landowner in Albany County!



Northern Red Oak, *Quercus rubra*

NYS Forest Tax Law Program, or “480-a”

- Need at least 50 acres of contiguous forest
- Commit to a 10 year management plan prepared by professional forester (costs \$)
 - Identifies scheduled tree harvests, noncommercial thinnings, etc. (harvest every 15-20 years or so)
- Management plan approved by NYSDEC Regional Forester
- Annual recommitment
- While enrolled, cannot develop land or subdivide land - land is conserved



White oak, *Quercus alba*

NYS Forest Tax Law Program, or “480-a”

- Receive 80% reduction in your assessed value of the property (local, county, school taxes).
- If you want to get out of the commitment, there is a financial penalty of paying back the tax benefit you received over past 10 years.
- File with deed with the County, so acts as an easement that runs with the land.
- Forest land is essentially conserved through the stewardship of the forester/landowner.
- Benefits the timber industry in NYS, while ensuring sustainable forestry practices.
- Supports wildlife management and bird watching - ruffed grouse, song birds, woodpeckers, owls, etc.



Thank you!

**Happy to
answer
questions and
serve as a
resource for
other forest
owners.**

Meet the People Making Local Conservation Happen: *Talks, Tastes, and a Tour!*

Part One: Forests and Fields



(Part Two: Farmland, June 13th 6-8PM at Indian Ladder Farms)



Thank you to our
speakers for sharing
their conservation
stories:

1. Katie Petronis, Open Space Institute
2. Mark King, Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy
3. Jeff Leon, Strawberry Fields landowner
4. Lauren Axford, Pine Hollow Arboretum
5. Steve Downs, landowner
6. Mike Knutson, Scenic Hudson
7. Kris Sigsby, landowner
8. Giles Wagoner, landowner
9. [Adam Zaranko, Albany County Land Bank](#)
10. Fran Sheehan and Rob Davies, NYS DEC; and Jim Bonesteel, Rensselaer Plateau Alliance



ALBANY COUNTY
LAND BANK CORPORATION

Albany County Land Bank & Open Space Conservation

Meet the People Making Local Conservation Happen: Talks, Tastes, and a Tour!

Part One: Forests and Preserves

Thursday, February 7th | 6:00 PM

What is a Land Bank?

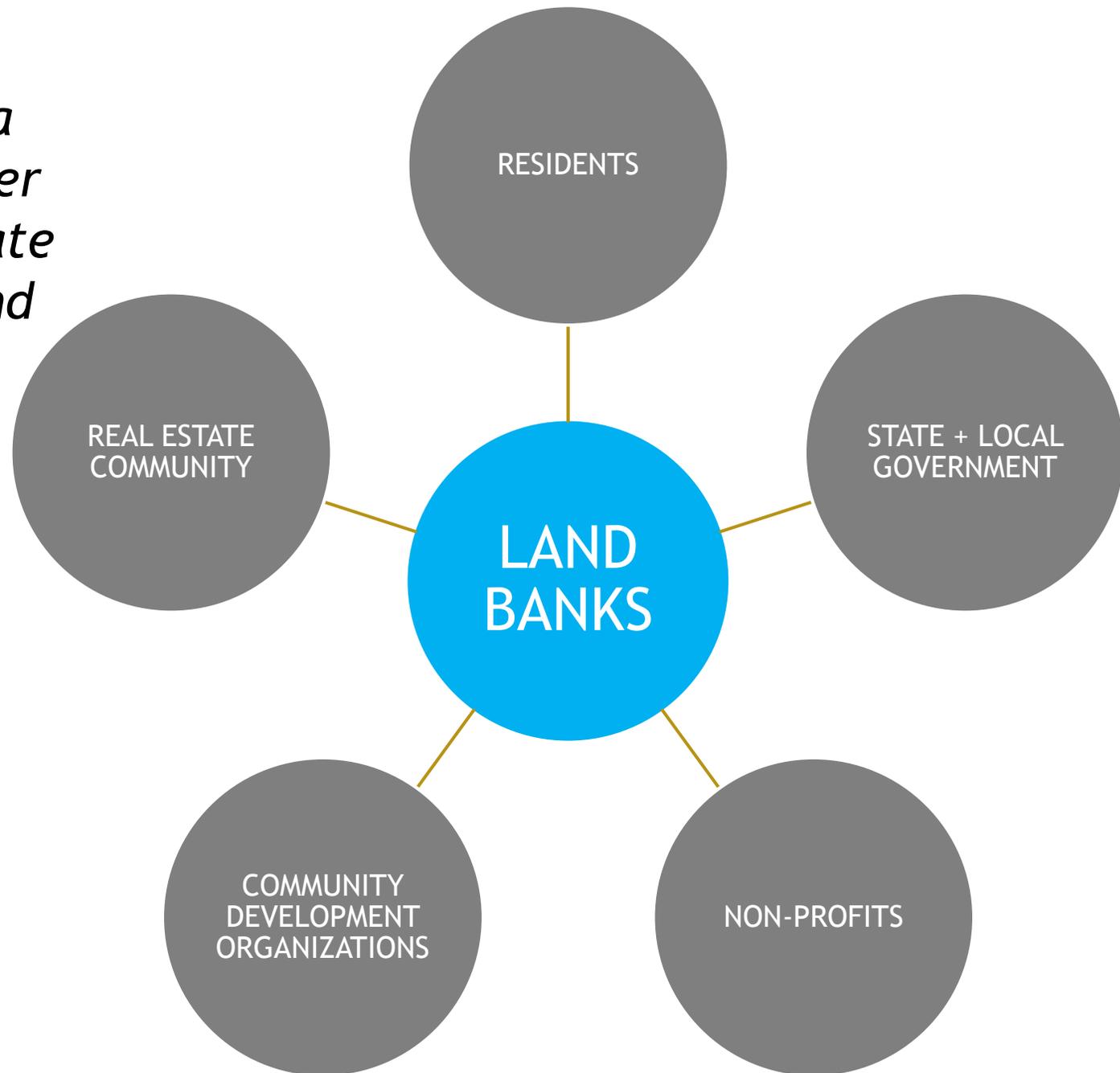
Land banks are nonprofit entities that work in collaboration with community members and local government to revitalize neighborhoods by returning vacant, abandoned or tax foreclosed properties back to productive use



Land banks are a local solution to a national crisis



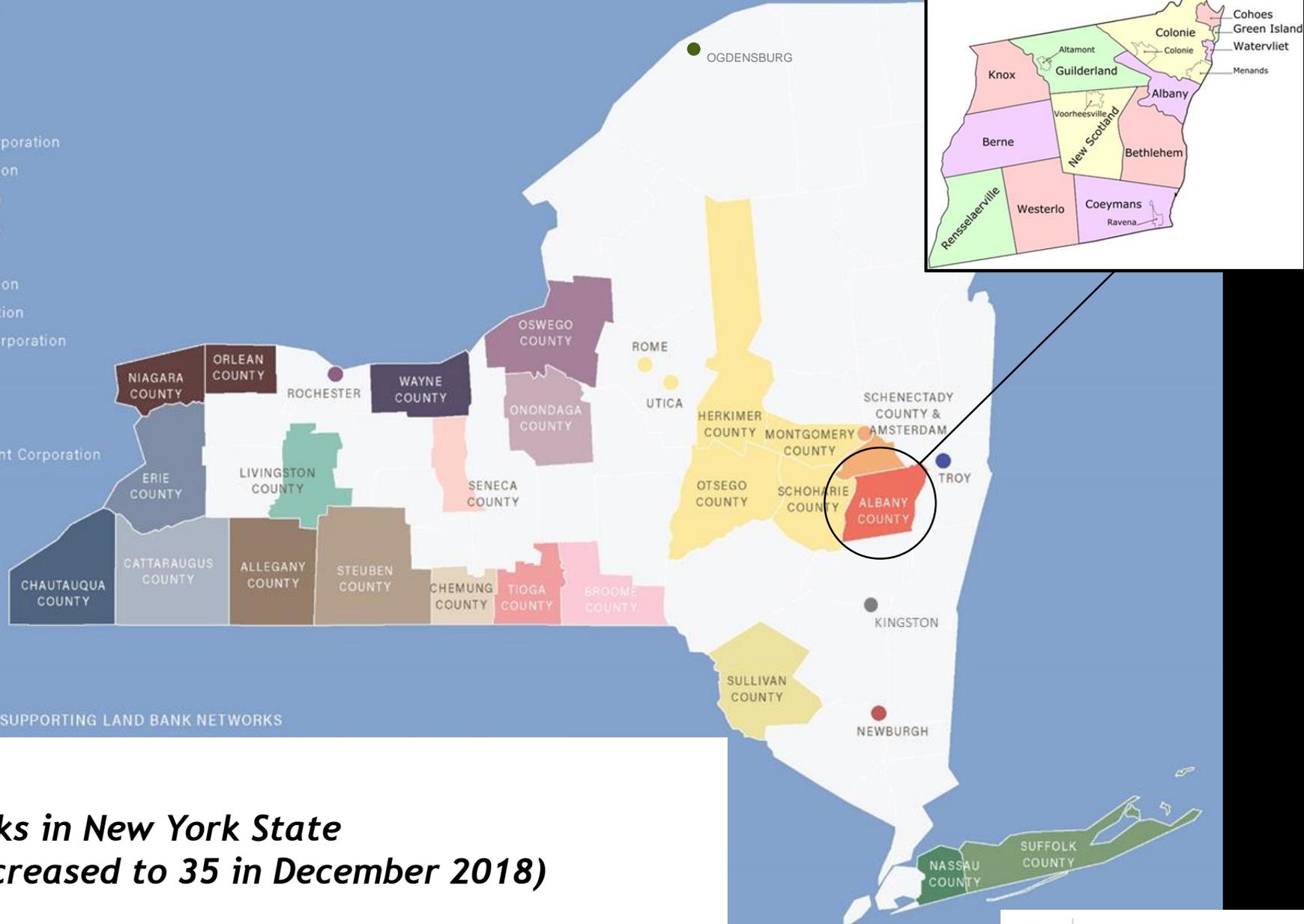
Land banks can function as a platform that brings together multiple partners to facilitate community revitalization and create new opportunities!



NEW YORK LAND BANKS

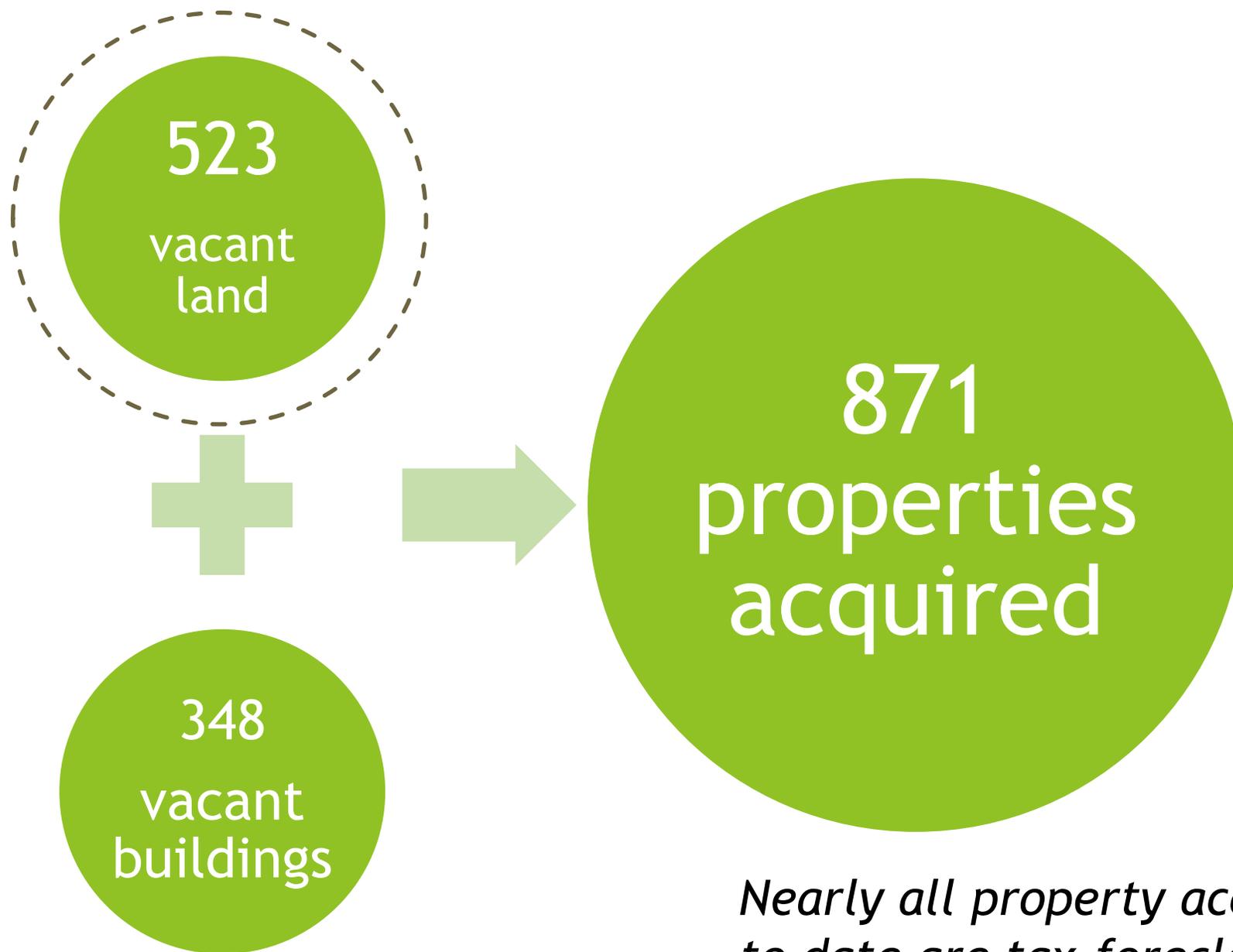
NEW YORK LAND BANKS, AS OF FEBRUARY 2018

- Albany County Land Bank Corporation
- Allegany County Land Bank Corporation
- Broome County Land Bank Corporation
- Buffalo Erie Niagara Land Improvement Corporation
- Capital Region Land Reutilization Corporation
- Cattaraugus County Land Bank Corporation
- Chautauqua County Land Bank Corporation
- Chemung County Land Bank Corporation
- Finger Lakes Regional Land Bank Corporation
- Greater Mohawk Valley Land Bank Corporation
- Greater Syracuse Property Development Corporation
- Livingston County Land Bank Corporation
- Nassau County Land Bank Corporation
- Newburgh Community Land Bank
- Niagara-Orleans Regional Land Improvement Corporation
- Oswego County Land Bank Corporation
- Rochester Land Bank Corporation
- Steuben County Land Bank Corporation
- Suffolk County Land Bank Corporation
- Sullivan County Land Bank Corporation
- Tioga County Land Bank Corporation
- Troy Community Land Bank
- Wayne County Land Bank



LIST OF STATE AND NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTING LAND BANK NETWORKS

***There are 25 Land Banks in New York State
(legislative cap was increased to 35 in December 2018)***



Nearly all property acquisitions to date are tax-foreclosed properties from Albany County





A Land Bank property in the Town of Rensselaerville

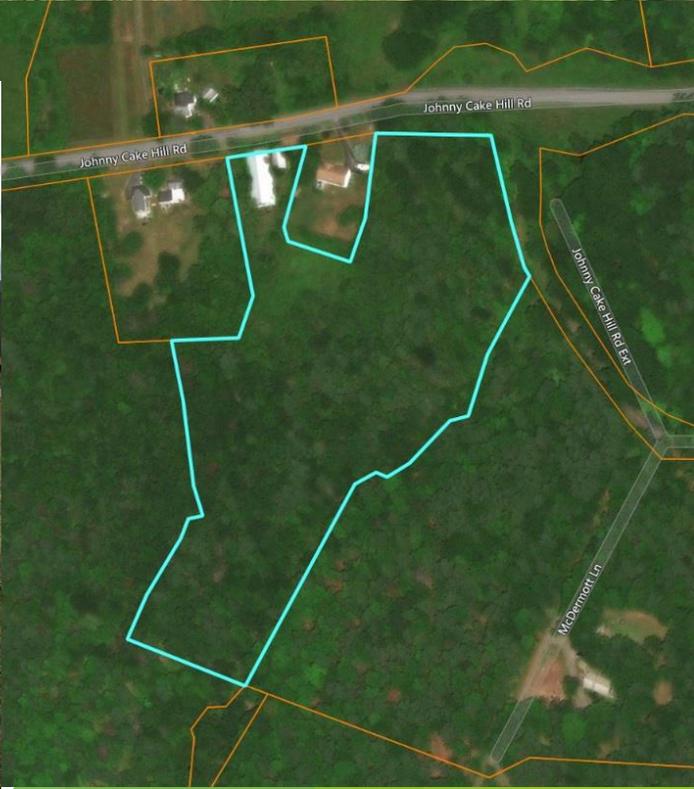




**A Land Bank property
in the Town of Knox**



ALBANY COUNTY
LAND BANK CORPORATION



ALBANY COUNTY
LAND BANK CORPORATION



Vacant Lot Transformations



ALBANY COUNTY
LAND BANK CORPORATION



Vacant Lot Transformations



ALBANY COUNTY
LAND BANK CORPORATION

Working with Municipalities to Support Open Space Conservation: Wemple Road, Town of Bethlehem, NY



THANK YOU!

www.albanycountylanbank.org



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Part One: Forests and Fields



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10. [Fran Sheehan and Rob Davies, NYS DEC;](#)
[and Jim Bonesteel, Rensselaer Plateau](#)
[Alliance](#)

Community Forests



Key Aspects of Community Forests:

- Owned in fee by municipality or land trust for the benefit of the community
- Open to public free of charge for outdoor recreation and education
- Provides benefits to community, both economic and non-economic, through forest management, water supply protection, outdoor recreation and wildlife habitat (ecosystem services)
- Community involvement in management and use of forest



Why We Support Community Forests:

- Not possible for State to conserve all of our wonderful natural resources
- Recognize importance of the forest resource
- There is a need to connect people with nature
- Community Forests have proven to be highly successful for many years in other parts of the country.
- The Towns of New Scotland and Bethlehem could use community forests to promote public outdoor recreation, ecosystem protection, economic benefit and community spirit and involvement



DEC and Community Forest Support

- Continue State Forester's role to advocate for more community forestry funding in the state budget and US Forest Service Budget
- Consider having DEC or a local land trust purchase working forest conservation easements on community forests
- Governor Cuomo has proposed a new grant program in state Environmental Protection Fund to provide \$3 million for land trusts for the purchase of working forest conservation easements





Planning for a Community Forest

Community Engagement First

2011 - Idea

2012 - Learning

2013 - Public Workshop, Committee
Formed, Search for Land

2014 - Contract, Grant, Closing



Rensselaer Plateau Alliance

Conservation Through Community

RPA's Approach

Community Management/Oversight

Committee of Community Members

- Decisions about activities and uses (with guidance)
- Rallying and coordinating volunteers, building trails, etc.
- Programs, outings and pet projects
- Fundraising to support activities
- Advise and request funds from RPA's Board of Directors

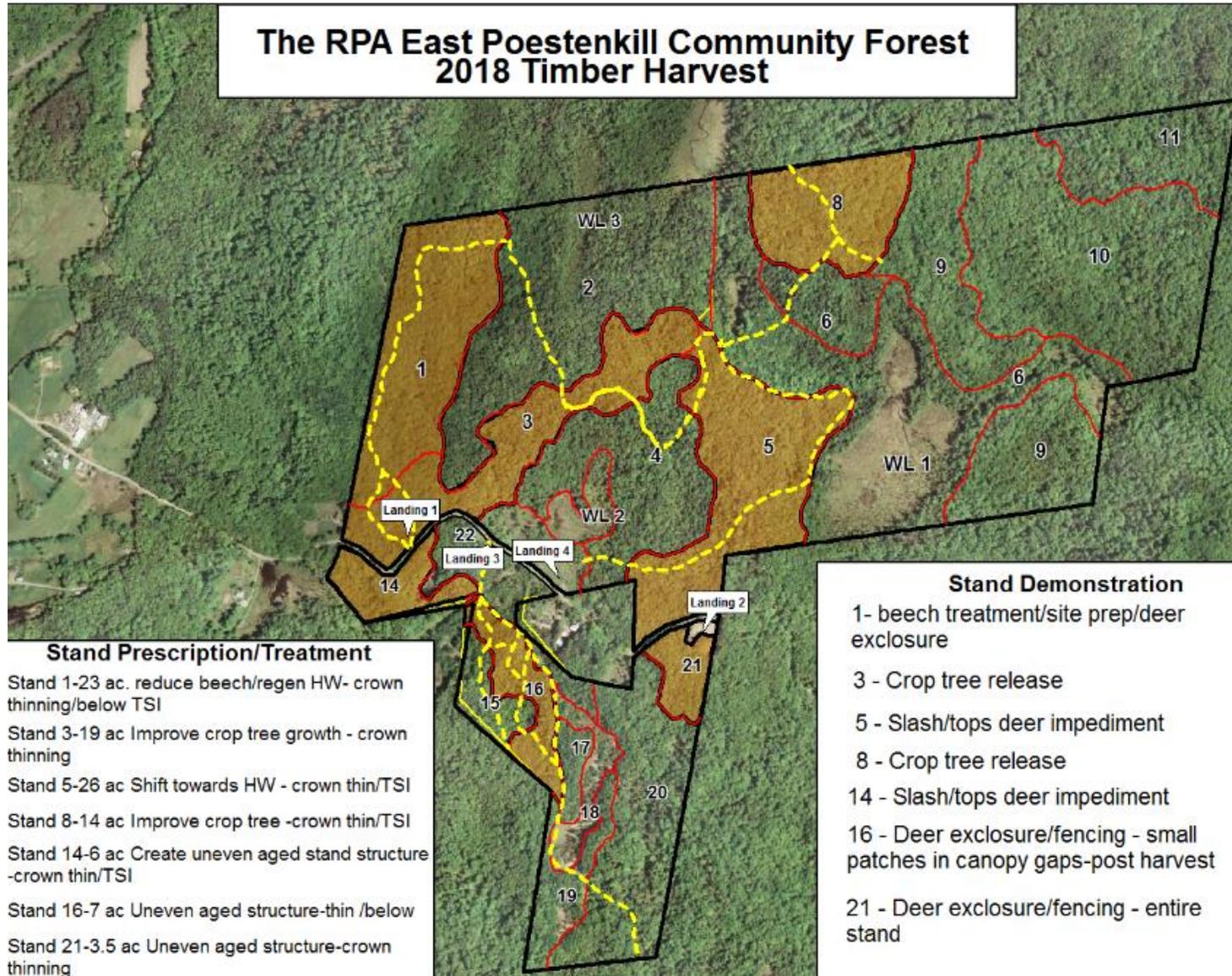


What's Happening

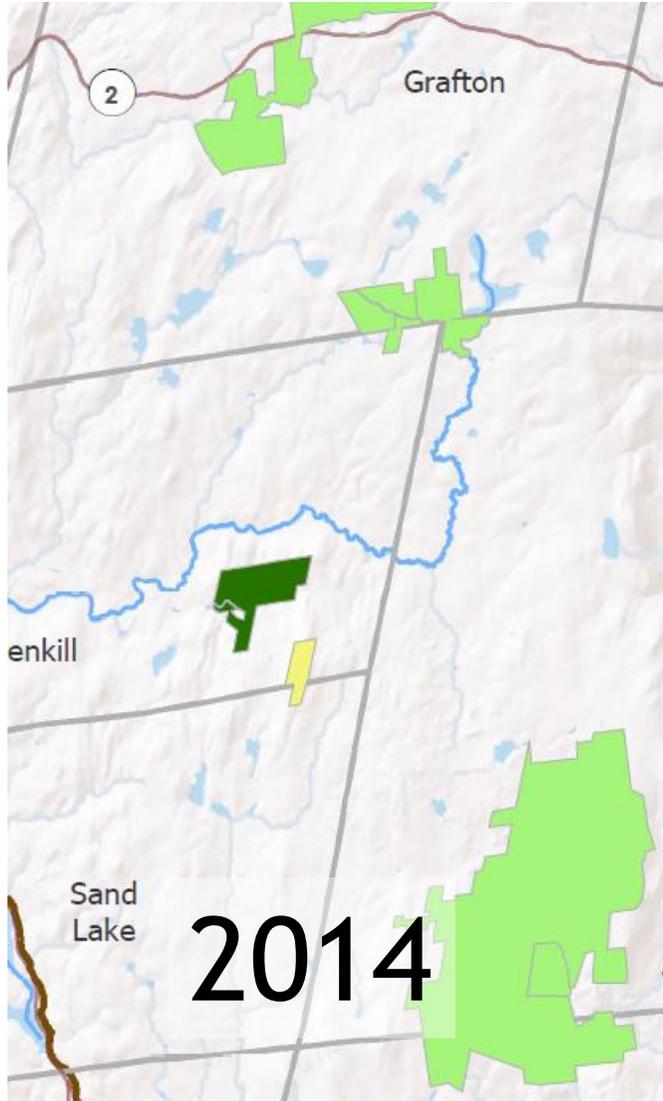


Forest Management Plan

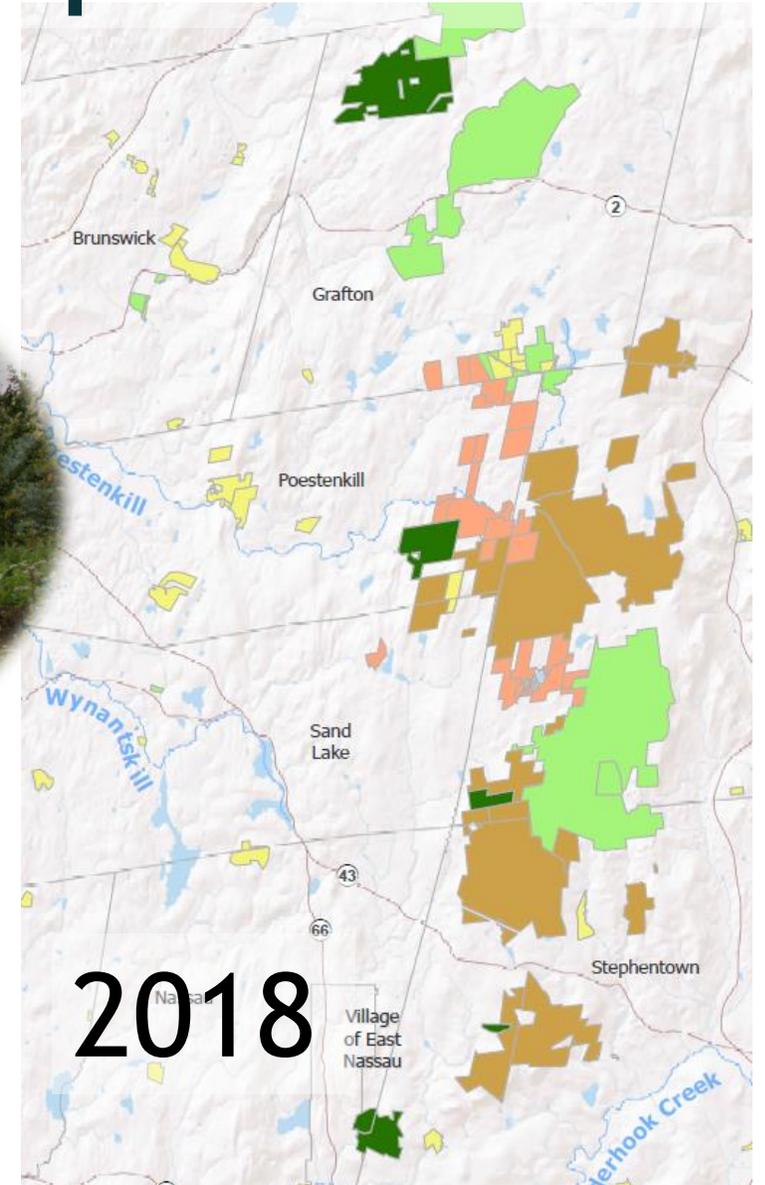
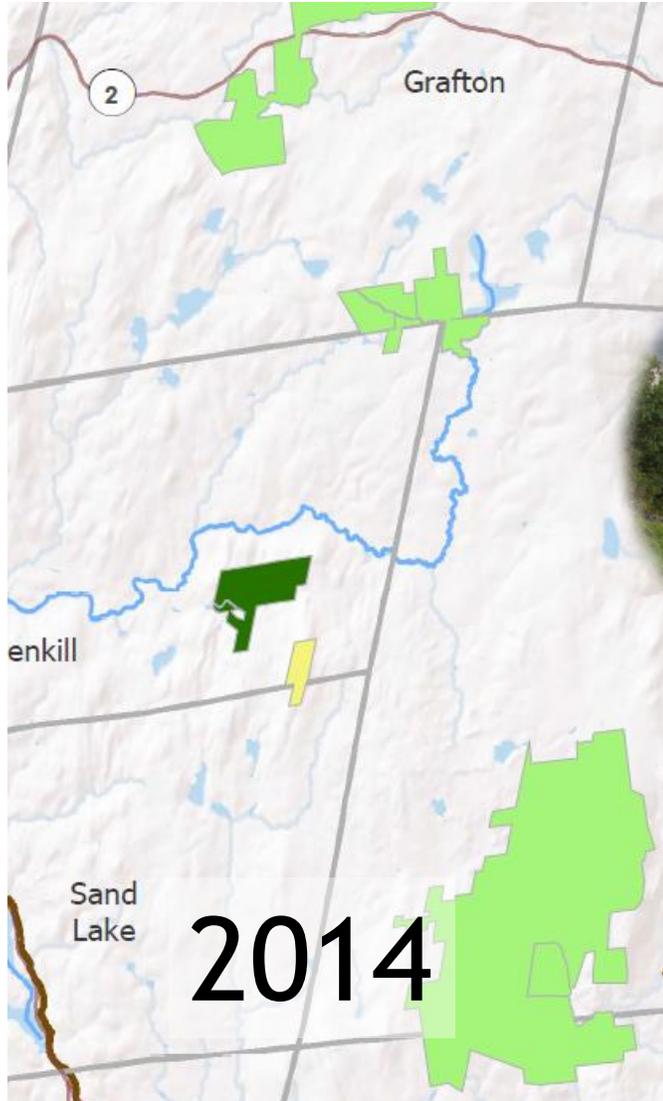
- Model Forest
- Planned Harvests
- Workshops
- Training for Forest Professionals
- Trails - lots of trails, bridges
- Mountain Bike trails & skills park



Part of a Larger Landscape Initiative



Part of a Larger Landscape Initiative



Funding and Support



U.S. Forest Service Community Forest Program	\$300,000
NYS Conservation Partnership Program, NYS Environmental Protection Fund and Land Trust Alliance	\$75,000
Fundraising from individuals	\$312,000
In-Kind Volunteer Time	\$60,000 +

Jim Bonesteel

(518) 712-9211

jim@rensselaerplateau.org

**I am always happy to talk
about Community Forests!**



Questions and Answers

Where do we go from here?

- **People**
- **Partnerships**
- **Funding**



THIS SPRING - PART TWO:

Meet the People Making Local Conservation Happen:

Talks, Tastes, and a Tour!

“Farmland Conservation”

Thursday, June 13th

6:00-8:00PM

At Indian Ladder Farms

In the Apple Barn

Guided Farm Tour before the program: 5:00-5:45PM!

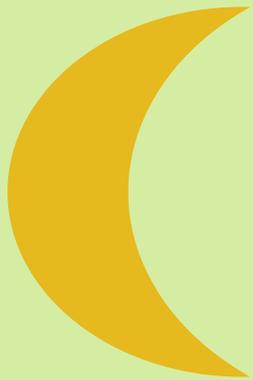


Thank you!

★ 8:15 - 9:00



Bundle up and join a
Guided Crescent Moon Hike
with Five Rivers Staff!



Enjoy the trails!