



2 0 1 5

LAND STORIES:

Creating Jobs, Building Healthier
and More Resilient Communities



Digital files of this and the previous edition of *Land Stories* are available online at: www.scenichudson.org/ourwork/publicpolicy/resourcecenter



Prepared by Scenic Hudson with photographs and projects contributed by:

Adirondack Land Trust • Agricultural Stewardship Association • Brooklyn Queens Land Trust • Columbia Land Conservancy • Dutchess Land Conservancy • Finger Lakes Land Trust • Grassroots Gardens of Buffalo • Land Trust Alliance • Mohonk Preserve • North Shore Land Alliance • The Nature Conservancy • Open Space Institute • Scenic Hudson • Ronnybrook Farm • The Trust for Public Land • Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust



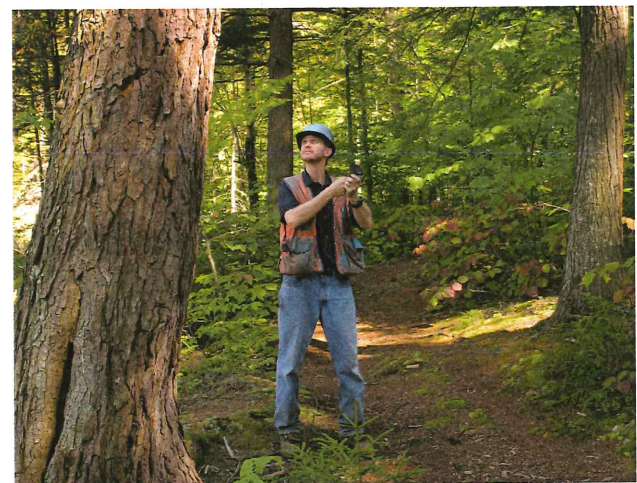
Community gardens, parks, working farmland, world-renowned natural areas... In an increasingly urbanized state, parks and open space are vitally important to our quality of life and, by extension, our economic competitiveness. Tourism, outdoor recreation, agriculture and forestry are economic mainstays in many cities and towns. The state's most effective tool for preserving lands vital to sustaining these benefits—as well as providing fresh food and clean water to millions every day—is a combination of four Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) programs invested in our parks, farms, open space and conservation partnerships.

Devastation wrought by Superstorm Sandy and Tropical Storm Irene to our coastal and riparian areas—among the state's most densely populated and desirable landscapes—highlighted another critical benefit of conserved open space: safeguarding a natural buffer that can vastly reduce the risks to people and infrastructure from storm impacts. Many local governments and land trusts already have identified opportunities and positioned resources to protect natural areas that mitigate threats to essential services such as transportation, food supply and water treatment.

By restoring the EPF's open space/land acquisition, municipal parks and farmland protection lines to historic budget levels, New York State will continue its tradition of making smart investments in local and regional initiatives that create jobs; protect our air, water and natural resources; and expand recreational opportunities that attract tens of millions of visitors each year, in turn promoting economic development.



New York City gardeners show their recent harvest



Forester assesses the variety and health of trees in a New York park
(photo: Mark Godfrey, The Nature Conservancy)



Students spell "WATER" on a field trip to Esopus Meadows Preserve

CONSERVATION VICTORIES

"New York is utilizing the Environmental Protection Fund to provide critical support for many environmental and open space programs, generating revenue, creating jobs, and ensuring a cleaner and healthier New York."

—Gov. Andrew Cuomo
April, 2014

10. Fort Drum ACUB

POLICY GOALS    

11. Carpenter Falls

POLICY GOALS   

12. Hemlock & Canadice Lakes

POLICY GOALS   

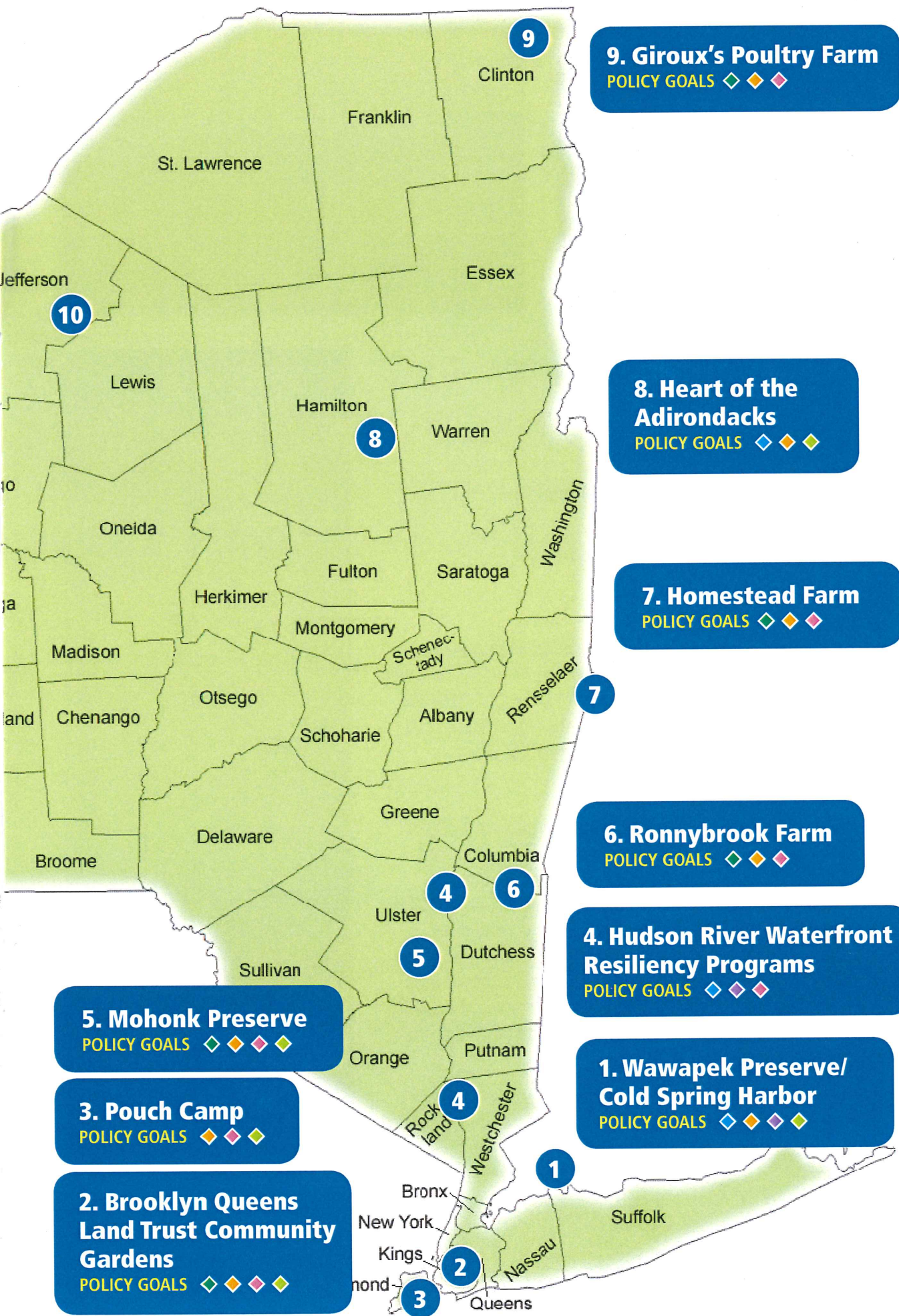
13. Grassroots Gardens of Buffalo

POLICY GOALS    



POLICY GOALS KEY

-  Conserving farmland/sustaining supplies of fresh, local food
-  Protecting water quality
-  Enhancing economies through agriculture, tourism & outdoor recreation
-  Creating resilient waterfronts & infrastructure
-  Building community assets & promoting environmental justice
-  Increasing public access to natural resources



5. Mohonk Preserve
POLICY GOALS ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆

3. Pouch Camp
POLICY GOALS ◆ ◆ ◆

2. Brooklyn Queens Land Trust Community Gardens
POLICY GOALS ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆

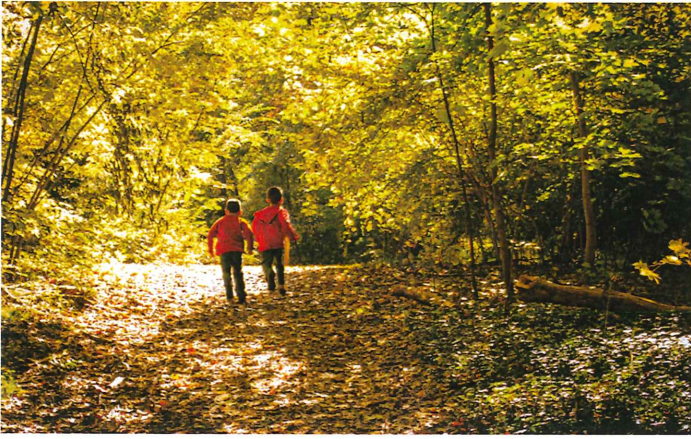
6. Ronnybrook Farm
POLICY GOALS ◆ ◆ ◆

4. Hudson River Waterfront Resiliency Programs
POLICY GOALS ◆ ◆ ◆

7. Homestead Farm
POLICY GOALS ◆ ◆ ◆

8. Heart of the Adirondacks
POLICY GOALS ◆ ◆ ◆

9. Giroux's Poultry Farm
POLICY GOALS ◆ ◆ ◆



Wawapek Preserve, Cold Spring Harbor (Suffolk County)

Conservation partners

Suffolk County, Town of Huntington, North Shore Land Alliance

Amount of EPF support

\$500,000

Use

An EPF matching grant supported acquisition of the historic DeForest Williams estate, preventing proposed subdivision of 32 acres on the environmentally sensitive coastline above Cold Spring Harbor and enabling creation of Wawapek Preserve. Co-owned by Suffolk County, the Town of Huntington and the North Shore Land Alliance, the preserve offers passive recreation and stunning harbor views.

How does it benefit the community/region/state?

In addition to contributing to scenic vistas and extraordinary recreational opportunities that attract tourists to Long Island at a rate of more than 5 million per year—generating millions of dollars for local economies—Wawapek Preserve protects drinking water supplies and critical coastal habitats that sustain a vibrant fishing industry, while providing a natural buffer from storm surges and other extreme weather events. Preventing the land's proposed development precludes septic leakage, pesticide pollution or run-off into the harbor, and man-made erosion. Stewardship of the land involves collaboration between villages, towns, the county and private stakeholders, including schoolchildren—making this a place that truly brings the community together.

“Thanks to the collaborative efforts of Suffolk County, North Shore Land Alliance, the Town of Huntington, private investors, foundations and organizations, the 32-acre Williams property was preserved. This treasured land is the jewel in the crown of our coastline and its location is critical to the Cold Spring Harbor and Lloyd Harbor communities. As a sensitive nature preserve and recharge area for our aquifer, preserving this open space will have positive implications for our environment and water supply for generations to come.”

— Suffolk County Legislator
William Spencer, M.D.



Community Gardens in Brooklyn & Queens

Conservation partner

Brooklyn Queens Land Trust, Land Trust Alliance

Amount of EPF Support

\$124,000

Use

The EPF has enabled the Brooklyn Queens Land Trust (BQLT) to build on three key elements of its work, including development of a new three-year strategic plan and activities supporting implementation of Land Trust Alliance standards and practices as BQLT prepares to add new properties and work toward LTA accreditation.

How does it benefit community/region/state?

Via the 33 member gardens it owns, operates and manages, BQLT secures much-needed green space in 16 diverse neighborhoods throughout Brooklyn and Queens. Each community has a different vision and use for its own garden, and this broad range reflects the varied needs in an urban environment. With development pressures increasing in Brooklyn and Queens, protecting these gardens becomes ever more critical, not only to provide space to grow fresh fruits and vegetables—essential for residents' health and well-being—but to offer a shared place for community programs and services. The gardens also support native plants, birds, bees and other wildlife that enhance biodiversity and environmental health.

“The community gardens are beyond valuable to the culture and quality of life in New York City. In such a crowded and busy place, it is even more essential to have green spaces to stimulate a sense of local community and a connection to nature and each other. The gardens provide a place to slow down, to feel safe and nurtured, to meet and connect with neighbors, and remember the joys of doing our part to make the community thrive and grow. In these gardens, urban youth can learn about the joys of gardening, and understand that food not only comes from a factory or a supermarket, but also grows from the earth.”

—Charlotte Lily Gaspard, New York City native and community gardens supporter



Pouch Camp (Staten Island)

Conservation partners

Trust for Public Land; NYS Department of Environmental Conservation; Port Authority of NY & NJ; Boy Scouts of America; NYS Assembly; Staten Island Borough President's Office; NYC Council; Protectors of Pine Oak Woods; Committee to Save Pouch Camp; Land Trust Alliance.

Amount of EPF support

\$6 million

Use

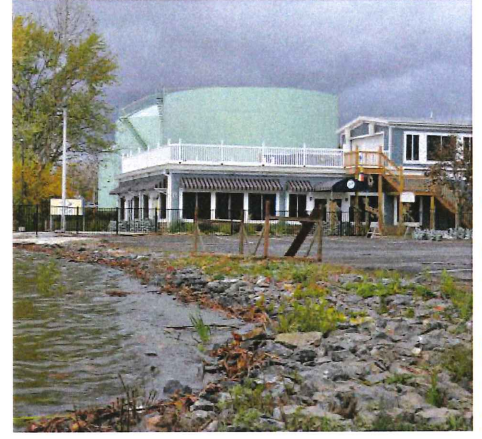
In 2011, Trust for Public Land executed an option with the Boy Scouts of America to preserve the 100-acre camp—the group's only outdoor facility located within New York City and one of the largest unprotected open spaces remaining in the city. The property's protection was completed in two phases through the purchase of a conservation easement now managed by NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. Located within the 3,000-acre, ecologically diverse Staten Island Greenbelt, the land ensures a permanent place for boys and girls to camp, hike, and swim in the heart of the city.

How does it benefit the community/region/state?

Pouch Camp offers outdoor recreation annually to more than 25,000 young people from the New York Metropolitan Area, many from the region's most underserved households. In addition to being an important resource for the Boy Scouts, it plays host to Girl Scouts, YMCA groups and youth from the nearby Kaufmann Camp. The Boy Scouts also host co-ed learning programs at the camp, introducing youth to life skills, wilderness survival, fishing, boating and camping—many for the first time. Nearby delis and outdoor recreation shops also benefit from the influx of regional visitors attracted to Pouch Camp for hiking and fishing.

"The William H. Pouch Scout Camp is an irreplaceable property in the heart of the Greenbelt, Staten Island's premier park. For generations, scouts and their families have enjoyed Pouch's trails and campgrounds—something you can't experience anywhere else in New York City. With the protection of Pouch Camp, countless more young people and the public at large will be able to enjoy these beautiful grounds. The Committee to Save Pouch Camp and its supporters are grateful to the State of New York and our elected officials for committing to preserve this wonderful place, making it available to the public for years to come."

—Alex Zablocki,
Eagle Scout and co-founder
of the Committee to
Save Pouch Camp



John Carl D'Annibale, Times Union

Creating Resilient Hudson Riverfronts (Rockland, Ulster & Greene counties)

Conservation partners

Village of Piermont, City of Kingston, Village of Catskill, Scenic Hudson, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, The Nature Conservancy, Consensus Building Institute

Amount of EPF support

Open Space and Park and Recreational program funds would leverage new investments and complement monies already secured from state and federal grants.

Use

When Tropical Storms Irene and Lee and Superstorm Sandy hit Hudson Riverfront communities in 2011 and 2012, they experienced unprecedented flooding that damaged homes, businesses and municipal infrastructure. State/federal funding supported the convening of task forces in Catskill, Kingston and Piermont to prepare for sea-level rise and future catastrophic weather events. Additional EPF funding would allow these communities to achieve more flood-resilient coastlines through the protection of coastal tidal wetlands and other open space along their shores. These critical buffer zones will reduce flooding impacts and sustain river-based economic development.

With EPF funding, *Partners Restoring the Hudson* is developing a federally recognized Hudson River Comprehensive Restoration Plan to improve the function and health of the estuary's natural systems, enhance regional economic potential and increase community resiliency. Additional EPF funds are enabling Scenic Hudson to replace an environmental center destroyed by Superstorm Sandy with a specially designed pavilion that can withstand storm surges.

How does it benefit the community/region/state?

Sea levels in the Hudson River estuary could rise up to six feet by 2100, putting shoreline communities and critical infrastructure (including train tracks, power plants and water treatment facilities) at grave risk. EPF and other state/federal funding support local efforts to confront this challenge. Additional funding for land acquisition would enable communities to make their waterfronts more resilient. Protection priorities include the estuary's freshwater wetlands; to date only about half of the total 15,000 acres of these natural flood buffers have been conserved.

“In actuality, Piermont is a seaside village, directly connected to the Atlantic Ocean and at the mercy of its slowly rising waters. Sea level rise is not an abstract notion for our village, but an intimate encroachment that is growing more evident on a yearly basis.”

—Piermont Mayor
Chris Sanders



Mohonk Preserve Foothills Connectivity Project, New Paltz (Ulster)

Conservation partners

Mohonk Preserve; Open Space Institute; Glynwood; Land Trust Alliance; NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation; Palisades Interstate Park Commission; Wallkill Valley Land Trust

Amount of EPF support

\$1.2 million

Use

This multi-year initiative includes acquiring and making park improvements on 857 acres of open space between the Village of New Paltz and Mohonk Preserve, permanently protecting iconic views of Sky Top and Bonticou Crag while facilitating public access by car or bicycle via new, off-road trailheads. In addition, the initiative will connect the preserve's multi-use recreational carriage roads to the Wallkill Valley Rail Trail—whose length was recently doubled through a separate acquisition by the Open Space Institute and the Wallkill Valley Land Trust (an independent transaction also supported by EPF funds). Further, the project will provide an important link in the strategic plan to establish a “river-to-ridge” trail network with Walkway Over the Hudson, the Hudson Valley Rail Trail, and the envisioned Kingston Greenline and Ashokan Rail Trail.

How does it benefit the community/region/state?

The state's largest nonprofit nature preserve, Mohonk Preserve employs over 50 people and hosts more than 165,000 visitors annually who enjoy nature study, hiking, running, biking, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and world-renowned rock climbing. The Foothills Project will accommodate 10,000 to 15,000 area visitors, resulting in additional job creation and supporting continued growth in the outdoor recreation and artisanal crafts and farm-to-table industries currently thriving in the region. In addition, Mohonk Preserve's partnership with Glynwood, whose Hudson Valley Farm Business Incubator project is located on a Foothills parcel, will enhance agribusiness enterprise within the Hudson Valley/ New York City foodshed and expose visitors to cutting-edge green farming practices.

“This project brings Mohonk Preserve closer to populated areas and increases opportunities for people to discover and explore our region. Obviously there are economic and health benefits... It's good for visitors and businesses, but also great for the people who can go for a hike on their lunch breaks.”

—Rich Gottlieb,
owner of Rock & Snow,
a New Paltz store specializing in
hiking, cross-country skiing,
and rock and ice climbing

“This project will help expand tourism and ensure better protection of an important environmental asset.”

—Senator John Bonacic,
2012



Ronnybrook Farm, Ancram (Columbia County)

Conservation partners

Scenic Hudson, Columbia Land Conservancy, Dutchess Land Conservancy, Osofsky family

Amount of EPF support

\$2.3 million

Use

This grant will enable the acquisition of conservation easements on 394 agricultural acres owned by the Osofsky family, whose Ronnybrook Farm Dairy provides milk, yogurt, ice cream and other products to markets in the Hudson Valley, New York City and the tri-state region. More than 160 acres of these protected lands feature USDA Prime farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance, making them a “high priority” for protection under Scenic Hudson’s Foodshed Conservation Plan—a blueprint for preserving those lands critical for supplying fresh, local food to consumers in the Hudson Valley and New York City.

How does it benefit the community/region/state?

A model of on-farm processing and value added production for dairy operations in the region, Ronnybrook Farm plays an integral role in sustaining the Hudson Valley’s \$800-million agricultural economy. Funding from these conservation easements will ensure a smooth transition of the operation to the third generation of the Osofsky family, owners of Ronnybrook Farm since 1941.

“Support from the EPF for the conservation easements means the third generation of my family has the opportunity to take over the farms we’ve been running since 1941.”

—Rick Osofsky, farmer,
Ronnybrook Farms



Homestead Farms, Brunswick (Rensselaer County)

Conservation partners

Agricultural Stewardship Association, Scenic Hudson, Rich and Linda Bulson

Amount of EPF support

\$340,651

Use

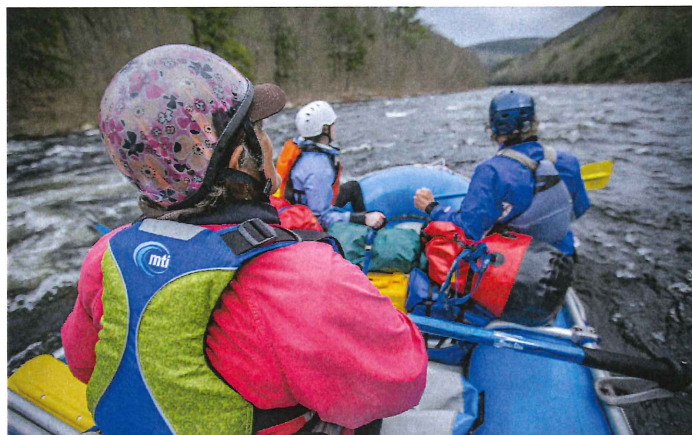
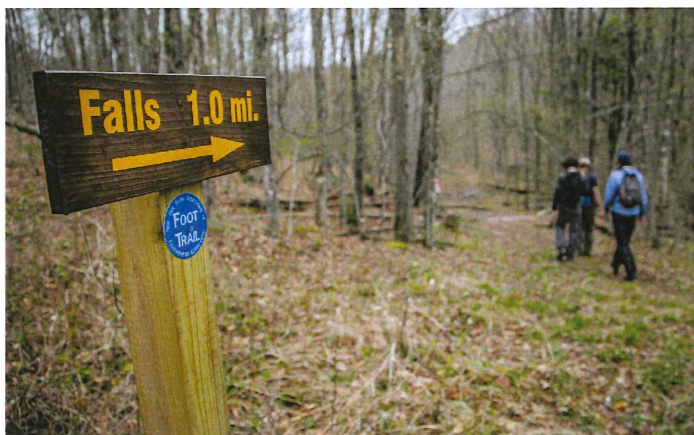
EPF funding is supporting the acquisition of a conservation easement on this 165-acre farm located five miles from the City of Troy. Current farmers Rich and Linda Bulson—just the third family to own this land, continuously farmed since the late 1700s—are ready to retire and transfer the operations. The easement will enable Zack and Ann Metzger, young farmers who have transitioned from being the Bulsons' employees to leasing portions of the land, to acquire the property at an affordable price, fulfilling the Bulsons' long-held commitment to secure its permanent use as a farm. Homestead Farms offers more than 150 varieties of vegetables and flowers, as well as chickens, beef, pork and turkey, through a Community Supported Agriculture operation and at the Troy Waterfront Farmers' Market.

How does it benefit the community/region/state?

Farms are the heart and soul of a healthy, prosperous community. In addition to supplying residents with nutritious, locally grown food, New York's farms have a tremendous economic impact. One of the largest sectors of the state economy, they produce \$4.7 billion in products annually, not to mention the billions of dollars and thousands of jobs created by related industries and services such as food processing, trucking and tourism. Farms also provide open space, scenic views, wildlife habitat and other critical environmental resources.

"The state Farmland Protection grant will make it possible to meet our goals of conserving the farm and providing for our retirement while enabling the transfer of Homestead Farms to the next generation of young farmers."

—Rich and Linda Bulson



©Erika Edgley/TNC

Heart of the Adirondacks/Finch Lands (Essex, Fulton, Hamilton & Warren counties)

Conservation partner

The Nature Conservancy, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation

Amount of EPF support

\$6.7 million

Use

In April 2013, New York State acquired 9,885 acres from The Nature Conservancy in the Adirondacks. These properties, once owned by paper manufacturer Finch, Pruyn & Co., include the Indian River and OK Slip Falls-Blue Ledge tracts. One phase of a larger, multi-year EPF-funded conservation project, the transaction ensures the permanent protection of a combined four-plus miles of undeveloped shoreline along the Hudson River and the state's most popular whitewater paddling route.

How does it benefit the community/region/state?

Along with preserving extraordinary lands and waters, this multi-year conservation effort will create economic opportunities for nearby communities as the tracts become available to the public for outdoor recreation for the first time in more than a century. Outdoor guides and inns already are advertising these gems as local attractions. In addition to providing clean air and natural filters for run-off, the forests provide habitat for black bear, moose, songbirds and other wildlife, while the waters sustain brown trout and other fish.

“The acquisition has provided access for a broader group of people to explore a beautiful and undeveloped stretch of the Hudson River with almost no obvious human impacts on it. With the new land available, we are able to offer more rafting and kayak trips for beginners, children and older generations—more business and more opportunities for people to connect with the river.”

—Nate Pelton, owner, North Creek Rafting Company



Giroux's Poultry Farm, Chazy (Clinton County)

Conservation partners

Adirondack Land Trust; Clinton County; Craig, Willie and Roger Giroux

Amount of EPF support

\$495,989

Use

Funding supported acquisition of an easement protecting 471 acres of cropland essential to the Giroux family's third-generation chicken operation—New York State's largest egg-producing company. The easement provides capital for the Giroux family to reinvest in their operations, including recently purchased apple orchards.

How does it benefit the community/region/state?

The Giroux family runs an integrated farm—growing and processing feed, raising birds, distributing and marketing eggs, composting and selling manure. The diversity of their operations helps to ensure that conservation dollars invested in their farm bolster the local community through job creation and value-added products. The Giroux family has been recognized by the Lake Champlain Basin Program for their "green" farming practices. The farm's products, including eggs with a "Certified Humane" stamp of approval, can be found in stores across New York and New England, including Hannaford and Price Chopper.

"We are doing apples now, too. As a family business, a little diversity will be good. You don't want to keep all your eggs in one basket, as they say."

—Craig Giroux,
third-generation poultry
farmer



Fort Drum Buffer and Working Farms (Jefferson & Lewis counties)

Conservation partners

Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust, Fort Drum, Ducks Unlimited

Amount of EPF support

\$1 million

Use

The EPF grants supported acquisition of conservation easements on the 566-acre Schuler Farm and 46-acre Kerry deer farm. Additional funding will aid the purchase of development rights on the 1,265-acre Murray Farm and 129-acre Brotherton Property; both transactions will close in January 2015. All of these initiatives are part of the Army Compatible Use Buffer (ACUB) Program.

How does it benefit the community/region/state?

Since 2009 the ACUB Program has been establishing buffer areas of farmland and natural lands around Fort Drum to limit encroachment and maximize areas inside the installation that can be used to support its mission to train soldiers. A \$1.4-billion annual economic driver in the North Country, Fort Drum is a significant presence in the community, and its closure or loss of training capacity would be devastating. Further supporting the regional economy, EPF grants have provided leverage to secure millions of dollars in federal funding for the ACUB Program, bolstering its success.

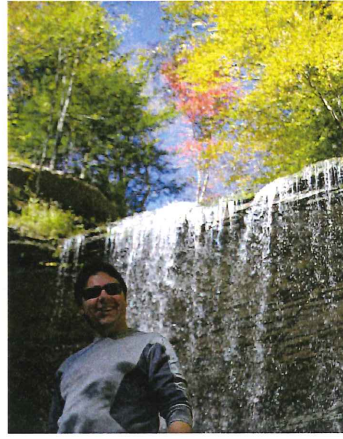
In addition to supporting Fort Drum's work, the easements are providing proceeds to enable farmers of these four working farms to invest in their operations or make the land affordable for the next generation of farmers. (Agriculture remains the primary industry in Jefferson and Lewis counties.) The transactions also ensure the permanent protection of critical wildlife habitat, offering places for local schoolchildren to connect with nature.

"Fort Drum and its ACUB partners are working together to keep Fort Drum un-encroached so we can continue our important mission of training troops and landowners can preserve their current way of life. I call that a win-win"

—Col. Gary A. Rosenberg,
Garrison Commander,
Fort Drum

"Kids need something in this area where they don't have to travel so far to learn about nature and the environment. We think our sugar shanty in the woods is the perfect place for them to be."

—Kristy Sullivan,
who has used a portion of funds received from the ACUB Program to fulfill her dream of creating a place to experience nature firsthand on her family's 204-acre farm



Carpenter Falls, Niles (Cayuga County)

Conservation partner

Finger Lakes Land Trust, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation

Amount of EPF Support

\$152,800

Use

Though it was privately owned, people traditionally used a 35-acre forested parcel to reach Carpenter Falls, an iconic cascade on Bear Swamp Creek, which feeds into nearby Skaneateles Lake. When the land came on the market in 2005, the Finger Lakes Land Trust (FLLT) moved quickly to purchase it. (The property was conveyed to the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation in 2008.) Today local residents and visitors enjoy access to the falls and mature forest, as well as a mile-long hiking trail leading to the lake through adjacent lands owned and managed by the FLLT.

How does it benefit the community/region/state?

Tourism is a major segment of the Finger Lakes Region's economy, and Carpenter Falls Unique Area is one of an increasing number of destinations attracting visitors from around the world. Protection of the property's steep slopes and sensitive streamside areas also help maintain the water quality of Skaneateles Lake, the drinking water supply for the City of Syracuse.

“Personally, I have enjoyed taking trips to Carpenter Falls for years, and I think it is a worthy step to take measures in making sure this area is preserved for future generations. I know there are many users of this area who visit due to its natural features and ease of access. In my opinion, taking steps to ensure that the balance between recreational use of unique areas such as this and the preservation of safe drinking water for the region is an important part of ensuring a sustainable future not only for the aesthetic beauty of the area, but also for the utility of critical water resources.”

—Scott Catucci,
associate director of
Outdoor Education and
Student Development,
Syracuse University



Hemlock and Canadice Lakes (Livingston & Ontario counties)

Conservation partners

The Nature Conservancy, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, City of Rochester

Amount of EPF support

\$13.7 million

Use

In 2010, the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation used EPF acquisition funds to purchase land around Hemlock and Canadice lakes from the City of Rochester in a transaction facilitated by The Nature Conservancy. The goal was to protect the only remaining undeveloped Finger Lakes and the source of Rochester’s water supply.

How does it benefit the community/region/state?

Success in protecting the forests around Hemlock and Canadice lakes means Rochester has a secure supply of some of the highest-quality water in the country. In addition, the undeveloped state of the lakes makes them premier recreational destinations, providing the only place in the Finger Lakes to venture back in time and ponder what the region looked like long ago. Adding to these opportunities, The Nature Conservancy is completing several trail projects around the lakes, including a lake-to-lake interpretive trail that will showcase the area’s natural communities, geologic features, history and importance to people.

“It’s rare that we are able to simultaneously protect the environment, reduce property taxes and maintain an important resource for public use. This sale accomplishes all of these goals.”

—Assemblyman
Joseph D. Morelle
Majority Leader



Community Gardens, Buffalo (Erie County)

Conservation partner

Grassroots Gardens of Buffalo, Land Trust Alliance

Amount of EPF support

\$98,000

Use

Grassroots Gardens of Buffalo (GGB) has facilitated the creation of—and provided stewardship for—73 community and school gardens throughout the City of Buffalo. GGB also offers supplemental programming that further engages community members and stakeholders.

How does it benefit the community/region/state?

GGB leverages its assets—located on more than 110 previously vacant and blighted city lots—by offering hands-on programming that engages the community, improves access to healthy food and increases environmental awareness. With the recent addition of a full-time Program Manager, GGB also makes meaningful connections between Buffalo residents and their land, influencing lifelong behaviors. To date, GGB's Workshop Series has provided critical technical assistance and materials to more than 1,000 gardeners, most of them beginners. Thanks in part to EPF funding, GGB can continue growing: in 2014 it created four new gardens and is on target to add more—including nine school gardens—in 2015. All of the gardens capture and retain stormwater that otherwise would overburden the city's wastewater system, posing health threats to local waterways.

In a food desert, we found ourselves no more.

But then, the garden had something else in store.

Somebody's brother was murdered. Their heart was filled with grief.

...found working in the garden was their only relief.

—excerpt from "The Garden"
by Gerldine Wilson,
lead gardener in garden tended
by students of PS 18 Dr. Antonia
Pantoja Community School of
Academic Excellence

"Our garden has brought students, neighbors, teachers and volunteers together. It has taught us we can grow healthy food. It has inspired us to work together for the betterment of the community. Most of all, smiles are seen by eager and enthusiastic young people."

—PS 18 teacher and school garden leader Maggie Henry

Money in the Environmental Protection Fund is divided into three accounts: open space; solid waste; and parks, recreation and historic preservation. Most of the funds are administered by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation; Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation; Empire State Development Corporation; Department of Agriculture & Markets; and Department of State.

Projects profiled in this year's *Land Stories* received funding through the following EPF-related programs and grants:

1. **Municipal Parks** offers grants for the acquisition, planning, development and improvement of parks, historic properties and heritage areas.
2. **Open Space/Land Acquisition** provides for the conservation, preservation and enhancement of open space; natural, historic and cultural resources; and recreational opportunities.
3. **Agricultural and Farmland Protection Program** helps counties and municipalities plan for the future of agriculture in their communities by funding programs that keep farmland in production.
4. **The New York State Conservation Partnerships Program** offers competitive matching grants, land trust assistance and other support for conservation land trusts throughout the state.

Additional funding came from NYS Department of Environmental Conservation Office of Environmental Justice and Hudson River Estuary Program; NYS Department of State Brownfield Opportunity Areas Program; and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

LAND CONSERVATION: Protecting Resources and Promoting our Economy

- **A 2012 analysis found that for every \$1 the Environmental Protection Fund invests in land and water protection, \$7 in economic benefits is returned to the state through natural goods and services like removal of air pollution, water quality protection and stormwater management.**
- **Investing in farmland conservation means investing in New York's economy: its farm-food system contributes over 10 percent of the state's \$1.3 trillion total gross output.**
- **Tourism is New York's fifth largest employment sector, supporting 714,000 jobs and generating \$29 billion annually in wages; majestic scenery, parks and historic sites are among the principal attractions.**

About New York's Land Trusts

New York is home to more than 90 nonprofit land trust organizations. From Long Island to Erie County, these community-supported land trusts work with local, state and federal partners to facilitate conservation projects. New York's local land trusts own 167,000-plus acres on more than 1,060 properties—most open at no cost to the public. Land trusts in New York work in rural agricultural regions and urban areas, from Harlem and Brooklyn to Kingston, Troy and Buffalo. These hardworking organizations help to steward more than 2,200 conservation easements on over 282,000 acres of privately owned and managed lands statewide. They employ approximately 300 full and part-time staff, and have nearly 80,000 supporters and community volunteers.
