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CONTACTS:**

Carrie Stickman, Communications and Outreach Coordinator  
(518) 436-6346 / [carrie@mohawkhudson.org](mailto:carrie@mohawkhudson.org)

Jaime Watson, CDTA Director of Corporate Communications  
(518) 437-6842 / [Jaimew@cdta.org](mailto:Jaimew@cdta.org)

## Nature Bus Service Finishes Pilot Year Strong; Community Partners Seek Public Feedback

**ALBANY, NY (January 4, 2022)** The Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy (MHLC), the Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA) and local project partners offered free bus service to connect communities in the City of Albany to natural areas in Albany County. The complimentary service ran every Saturday from June 19, 2021 through September 25, 2021.

Nearly 1,000 City of Albany residents utilized the free service over its 15-week run to access nine different outdoor locations to enjoy nature. Project partners provided programming for Nature Bus customers including a story walk to read while outdoors, archery lessons, tree identification, nature walks and more. Riders were greeted at most locations, welcoming them to facilities and giving them an orientation on what locations have to offer.

As the group looks towards Nature Bus 2022, we want to hear from you! In partnership with CDTA, the Nature Bus project partners are launching a quick survey to gauge feedback on the service and how it might be improved in future years to better meet community needs.

You can access this short survey by visiting: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NatureBus>

“We were thrilled to see so many folks utilizing this service and want to ensure this is the best way to provide access to nature for those who need it most. We feel the survey is a great way to help shape the future of this service,” **said Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy’s Conservation Director Sarah Walsh.**

“We are pleased to see so many people taking advantage of the Nature Bus this year. Providing accessibility and opportunity to our local communities continues to be a top priority. We hope people will take the time to complete the survey and give us their feedback. This will help us and

our partners determine the best way to move forward in 2022.” **Jaime Kazlo, CDTA Director of Corporate Communications**

“The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation continues to work with our partners to support the Nature Bus, which is providing Albany residents with the opportunity to enjoy DEC’s Five Rivers Environmental Education Center, a place to explore and learn about nature,” **DEC Commissioner Basil Seggos said.** “During its first season, the Nature Bus demonstrated that barriers limiting access to public lands and destinations can be overcome with creative thinking and collaboration. We look forward to continuing to work with local residents to ensure all New Yorkers know our State lands and sites are open to everyone.”

“Friends of Thacher were pleased to be a part of this pilot program. We are strongly committed to its goals of diversity and equity. We encourage broad participation in the survey to help refine the program going forward.” **Betsy Miller Friends of Thacher Park Treasurer**

Funding to make this service free for 2021 was courtesy of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy, Friends of Thacher Park, and MVP Health. This project would not be possible without partnerships from CDTA, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historical Preservation, Friends of the Tivoli Lake Preserve and Farm, Pine Hollow Arboretum, and Albany County.

To learn more, visit MHLC’s Nature Bus website: <https://mohawkhudson.org/nature-bus/>. The 2021 Nature Bus partners locations included:

- Tivoli Lake Preserve and Farm, Albany
- Pine Hollow Arboretum, Slingerlands
- Albany County Helderberg-Hudson Rail Trail, Slingerlands
- DEC’s Five Rivers Environmental Education Center, Delmar
- Hilton Barn Park & Helderberg-Hudson Rail Trail, Voorheesville
- John Boyd Thacher State Park, Voorheesville
- Lawson Lake County Park, Feura Bush
- Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy’s Bennett Hill Preserve, Clarksville
- Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy’s Norman’s Kill West Preserve, Delmar

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Please find the attached images:

*View of the pond from the trails at Pine Hollow Arboretum*

*Nature Bus at Five Rivers, photo by Leah Atkins, DEC's Statewide Accessibility Coordinator*

*Overlook view from MHLC's Bennett Hill Preserve*