

VIEWPOINTS

MHLC's 30th Anniversary
Glenvue Farm in Montgomery County
What's New With Nature Bus in 2022?



MOHAWK HUDSON
LAND CONSERVANCY

Cedar Waxwing by Tom Bessette

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Sarah Carroll
Chair

Claiborne Walthall
Vice Chair

Charles Kruzansky
Treasurer

William Little
Secretary

Lise Bang-Jensen

Joel Bartfield

Ruth Bonn

Alyson Brody

Clifford Erickson

Sandra Geisinger

Michael Hart

Dan Lewis

Allie Middleton

Dave Munro

Ashok Ramasubramanian

Elliott Shaw

Lonnie Threatte

Katherine Marsh Wolfram

ADVISORY COUNCIL

Peggy Sherman

Carol Ash

Charles Buchanan

Ginny Carter

Christopher Gorka

Jeff Jones

Cathie Love

Chuck Manning

Felton McLaughlin

Stewart Myers

Ellie Prakken

Mike Sterthous

Peter Ten Eyck

Maggie Vinciguerra

Val Washington

STAFF

Mark King
Executive Director

Sarah Walsh
Associate Director

Dana Burns
*Office Manager and
Bookkeeper*

Bob Frederick
Seasonal Steward Assistant

Marshall Lefebvre
Stewardship Coordinator

Carrie Stikan
*Communications &
Outreach Coordinator*

Tara Tornello
*Development & Community
Engagement Director*

From the Executive Director



*Mark King,
Executive Director*

Whether you volunteered, donated, or even shared a kind word about the organization, you are a part of our success.

I have played various roles in the Conservancy for many of those thirty years. People often ask what keeps MHLC going and how we have been successful - my answer is passion. People's passion for the land, their communities, and the natural world. Our goal at MHLC is to nurture that passion by preserving new lands, expanding access, and finding ways to keep people engaged with nature. We are looking forward to the next thirty years and the success we can achieve, thanks to your passionate commitment to the land and MHLC.

And speaking of passion, we have a tremendous stewardship team working hard to keep the preserves and trails in great shape. Hopefully, you'll have a chance to meet Marshall Lefebvre, our new Stewardship Coordinator, working alongside

It is hard to believe that 30 years ago, a group of dedicated volunteers founded MHLC in a living room in Slingerlands. And 13,296 acres later, we are just getting going. Through the years, so many people have made this organization successful.

Whether you volunteered,

Parker Eversoll, our Summer Land Steward, and Bob Frederick, our long-term seasonal steward, as you are out on the trails or at a volunteer event. Along with the many volunteer preserve stewards, this team is an essential part of the passion that keeps the preserves humming.

Our 30th anniversary coincides with a new science-based initiative to preserve 30% of New York State's remaining undeveloped lands by 2030, also known as 30 x 30. Newly approved legislation introduced by Assemblywoman Pat Fahy and Senator Todd Kaminsky sets this goal for New York State. This legislation dovetails with efforts at the Federal level and guidance from the U.N. Convention on Biological Diversity. The legislation buffers the impacts of climate change and preserves biological diversity and other well-recognized benefits of land conservation. Although we've made significant progress with approximately 19% of New York already protected, we still have a long way to go. The legislation does not include funding but sets the stage for a big push to increase land and water conservation. MHLC will be working hard to help achieve this goal. Have a wonderful summer, and get out in the woods!



Bozen Kill Preserve entrance by Tom Bessette.

The Next Generation

Glenvue Farm, Montgomery County

When you think “scenic route,” you’d probably describe a drive through the country with beautiful rolling hills, long stretches of farm fields, and undisturbed horizon lines as far as the eye can see. To Russ Kelly and his wife Judy, this describes home. Russ and Judy raised their three sons on the family dairy farm in the Town of Glen. Russ’s father purchased the property in 1972, a fertile green gem in the heart of Montgomery County.

Farming has been in Russ’s blood all his life and for generations before him. Russ Kelly grew up on the family farm in Connecticut, founded by his great-grandfather. As suburbs started closing in around them, Russ’s father looked to purchase land elsewhere. The family began searching for land that matched their budget and was close to their family in Connecticut.

The Kelly family settled in Glen, New York, in 1972. Soon after, Russ began buying into the operation which he eventually bought from his parents. Over the years, their 290-acre farm grew with land purchased from neighboring farmers who didn’t have a next generation interested in taking over. Glenvue Farm, named for its breathtaking views of the Mohawk Valley, now stretches nearly 1,000-acres with recent additions being purchased by the next generation of the family.

Now, the third generation is in position to take over the operation at Glenvue Farm. Two of the Kelly’s three sons, Justin, 43, and Ryan, 41, will continue the family business. The Kellys are working with MHLC to finalize a New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets grant (NYSDAM) that will fund the purchase of development rights from the farm. This purchase will not only protect the prime and statewide soils of significance from future development, but it will also relieve some of the financial burden for the next generation. Russ explains, “The farm will have to continue to grow. It has changed dramatically since when my father bought it to where it is now. We are also hoping that the funds will allow our sons to acquire more land if they want, or improve the facilities, or just have options for different forms of agriculture.”

Besides funding the transition to the next generation, selling the development rights will ensure the land always remains as open space. If Russ’s sons leave farming, or if his only granddaughter does not choose to farm—the land will be protected from land use change. “We didn’t have a lot of development pressure, but now there is tremendous pressure from solar,” said Russ. “There are two solar projects adjacent to us and a big 2,000-acre one proposed in town that is targeting best farmland in the area. It is short-sighted; we need to secure green energy without sacrificing farmland.”

MHLC has been working to protect vital farmlands to balance development and open space for 30 years. Our work started with protecting Indian Ladder Farm in Altamont and has more recently protected Lansing Farm in Colonie. With our current work in Montgomery County, MHLC is poised to protect more than 1,600 acres of farmland. The American Farmland Trust states that every day 2,000 acres of agricultural land are paved over. This staggering fact makes our work to save land—and the pace it occurs—more important than ever for a sustainable future.

Our work with the Kelly family and Glenvue Farm will not only help the next generation continue farming but will also ensure soils for future food production and reduction in land use change. Once the conservation easement is secure, this beautiful green space near the middle of town will be preserved forever--and the scenic route will be enjoyed by generations to come!



The Kelly Family gather for a photo, a view of the Mohawk Valley, below: Dairy operations thrive at Glenvue Farm.



30 Years & GROWING

*F*rom its humble beginning as an all-volunteer group meeting in members' living rooms, Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy has grown into a recognized leader in local conservation. Along the way, we have protected our region's valuable open space with 26 conservation easements placed and 22 preserves opened to connect people to nature. In total, nearly 13,300 acres have been protected—all this is possible thanks to the dedication, vision, and support of many! We've asked a few of our long-time members to share their stories...

I had recently moved to the Capital Region when I asked my new friend, Henry Tepper, then the director of the Columbia Land Conservancy (CLC), why Albany did not have a similar organization. He encouraged me and, between The Nature Conservancy and CLC, brought a number of us together. We met on a cold, snowy evening at Dr. Dave Shern's home in Bethlehem, and from there, the organization began. Over its first few years, the Albany County Land Conservancy (ACLC) established a board, started a newsletter, held fundraisers, and held multiple educational programs to get the word out about the importance of land conservation. The Board took on the successful campaign to conserve a community treasure - Indian Ladder Farms by working cooperatively with the Ten Eycks, the community, and the Town as well as the Open Space Institute and the State of New York. My husband Paul and I put an easement on part of our property in the Helderbergs. Paul dedicated himself to persuading neighbors, including the Wards, Virginia Carter, and the Bolotsky's, to do similarly. Paul and I are so proud of the organization that MHLC has become through the dedication of Mark King, among others. ~*Helene Goldberger*



Helene Goldberger and Paul Baitsholts in the Adirondacks.

I first heard about a group called the "Albany County Land Conservancy" in the early 1990s and thought, "This is great! Who are these folks? How do I get involved?" There were no staff members, no executive director, and meetings were generally held in Board members' homes or offices. I knew several founding members and Board members, which made joining the fledgling group even easier. [Eventually, the meeting location settled in a home on Maple Road in Slingerlands owned by Board member Dr. John Abbuhl, adjacent to the Pine Hollow Arboretum he established.]

After about a decade of involvement, I joined the Board of Directors, eventually becoming Secretary to the Board for the last few years of my Board term. By then, meetings were held in a regular location, the first executive director had been hired, and many easements and acquisitions had been completed. The organization had changed its name to the Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy, better reflecting the geographic area the Conservancy hoped to protect. Awareness of the organization grew rapidly through outreach campaigns and word of mouth about the wonderful local preserves available to the community. Membership swelled, too. Landowners desiring to protect their properties began asking about easements and donations, propelling the Conservancy forward. And despite the occasional growing pains, I'm glad to see it hasn't slowed down since! ~*Erick McCandless*



Erick McCandless and his wife Antoinette Villani at MHLC's 2010 Fall Fundraiser.

I joined the ACLC Board in 2001, and it was “all hands on deck” to raise the matching funds for the NYS grant to purchase the development rights for Indian Ladder Farms—appeals for donations, house parties, concerts, and the “Country Gala at the Farm,” our first fall fundraiser. So many people contributed to this success and continued to support the Conservancy with their time and money. In addition to conserving Indian Ladder Farms, we were building the organizational infrastructure for the Conservancy!

In the absence of staff, Board members did nearly everything, from working with landowners to protect their land to setting up tables and parking cars at the fall gala.

Dan Driscoll suggested I work on membership, and we drove to Chatham to learn how the Columbia Land Conservancy handled it. They had several staff members, a real membership database, and office space! On the ride home, we imagined what the Albany County Land Conservancy could do if only we had those resources.

I organized the 2002 annual meeting at the Scholz-Zwicklauer Hofbrau in Berne. Our speakers' remarks were punctuated by the steps of the polka club on the floor above us!

Big steps forward in 2005 yielded a new name to reflect a broader region, office space “backstage” at the Slingerlands Methodist Church, a NYS Conservation Partnership Program staffing grant, and the appointment of Jill Knapp as Executive Director.

I am so grateful for the donors, volunteers, Board members and staff who have brought us to this point! ~Peggy Sherman



Peggy Sherman currently serves on MHLC's Advisory Council. Peggy and her husband John Sherman have served as MHLC volunteers for over 20 years.

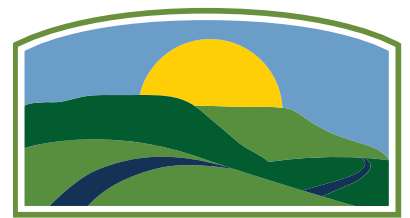
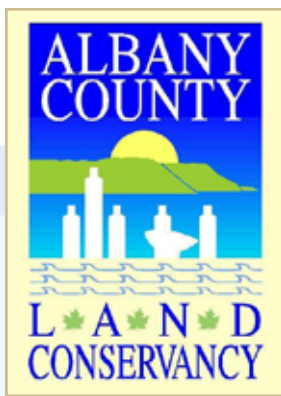
When in 2004 I first met members of the Albany County Land Conservancy, I was impressed with how much the all-volunteer group had accomplished in their first twelve years as an organization. It seemed like a great foundation to build on with fresh volunteer energy. The following year I joined the Board. During my six years on the Board, we changed our name to Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy, hired our first full-time executive director, established the Stewards Circle and Advisory Council, and accelerated the pace of land protection by doubling protected acres. It was a heady time.”

“My engagement with MHLC was with the intention of permanently protecting Strawberry Fields as one personal response (in addition to living a net-zero life) to our collective climate challenge. Closing the conservation easement in 2013 was a most satisfying accomplishment of a long-held goal. Yet, the opening of our nature trail and the Strawberry Fields Nature Preserve to the public in 2017

has become an even more rewarding action. It gives ongoing pleasure every time I see the sun glinting off a car roof at the kiosk or meet visitors on the trail. I hope they all leave with a bit greater respect for the land and everything that lives here. ~Jeff Leon



MHLC Board members gather with the Leon Family to cut the ribbon on opening day at Strawberry Fields Nature Preserve in May of 2017.



MOHAWK HUDSON
LAND CONSERVANCY

It all started here!

LAND
CONSERVANCY

Saving Special Places

*Conserving and
Connecting Communities*

1992

1992
The Albany County Land Conservancy first met on December 17, 1991, and was officially incorporated in January 1992.

1994

The 148-acre Holt Preserve becomes first public preserve.

1993

The Albany County Land Conservancy (ACLC) is granted nonprofit 501(c)3 status.

1994

Helderberg Escarpment is identified as the first priority area.

1998

The 198-acre Schoharie Creek Preserve becomes ACLC's first preserve in Montgomery County.

2001

An 11-acre addition to the Winn Preserve becomes first land purchase by ACLC.

2003

Indian Ladder Farms is ACLC's first conservation easement purchase.

2003

**1,000
acres
protected**

2005

The first paid employee is hired and the first office space is rented from a Slingerlands' church.

2005

The organization name is changed to Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy.

2006

The Crauer property is first conservation easement donated in Schenectady County.

2009

**2,000
acres
protected**

There are many more stories and milestones to share. If you would like to contribute a story or photo for the annual fall fundraiser presentation, contact us at connect@mohawkhudson.org!

MOHAWK HUDSON LAND CONSERVANCY



*Thank you to our supporters
who helped us achieve so much
over the last 30 years!*



And we'll keep growing...

Upcoming Events

Summer Hike-a-thon Scavenger Hunt

**All MHLC Preserves and
the Albany County Helderberg-Hudson Rail Trail**
All through the month of July!

Search for bird creations at the preserves and on the Rail Trail! Be sure to send us a photo to receive an ice cream card from our sponsor Stewart's Shops. You'll also be entered in a drawing for a chance to win a unique birdhouse from Wildbird Junction or an original bird-themed artwork from the event.

ART's Woodcut Painting Workshop

Albany County Rail Trail Pavilion in Voorheesville
Saturday, July 9

Session One - 1 - 2 PM; Session Two - 2 - 3 PM

Join Art on the Rail Trail for a special all-ages workshop with local artists Grace Lang and Ramiro Davaro-Comas to paint a bird-themed woodcut figure to bring home!

Wilderness Wayfinding with Ondatra Adventures

Schoharie Creek Preserve
Saturday, July 16 from 1 - 4 PM

Not all learning happens in the classroom. Learn several key skills regarding navigation and wilderness survival with Dave Muska of Ondatra Adventures.

Mushrooms of Holt Preserve with Ondatra Adventures

Holt Preserve
Sunday, July 17 from 10 AM - 1 PM

Join Dave Muska of Ondatra Adventures to learn about the many mushrooms found in our forests, the ecological significance of fungi, mushrooms as food and medicine.

ART's Chalk the Walk

Albany County Helderberg-Hudson Rail Trail
Saturday, September 10 from 11 AM - 1 PM

Join Art on the Rail Trail for the annual chalk art celebration! We welcome all ages and abilities at this family-friendly event. Register in advance, \$10 for a 3 ft. square.

MHLC's Annual Fall Fundraiser is September 29

Orchard Creek Golf Club, Altamont

See the back cover for details! Ticket information and sponsorship opportunities will be posted to the website soon.

Check our events calendar for new offerings!

www.mohawkhudson.org/events



Earth Day Story & Hike at Normans Kill West Preserve.

Celebrating Earth Day

In partnership with Bethlehem Public Library, MHLC hosted a special Earth Day event for kids at Normans Kill West Preserve on April 22. It was a beautiful day for a story and a hike Connecting kids to nature grows the next generation of conservation advocates!

On Saturday, MHLC hosted an Earth Day Workday at Bender Melon Farm Preserve. Over 30 people came out to pick up trash along 85A and Hilton Road, install a new bike rack at the trail head, and remove some invasives along David's Trail. The team made great progress and the preserve is ready for the busy summer season.



Volunteers collect roadside trash at the Bender Melon Farm workday event.

What's New for Nature Bus 2022?

Thanks to valuable input from the community, we've made some improvements! This year, Nature Bus has a convenient rotating schedule with shorter ride times, new partner locations, and more FREE programs. The CDTA map below shows the two routes that alternate on Saturdays through September. The Five Rivers - Six Mile Waterworks Park route began on May 28 and runs every other Saturday through September 17, and the Thatcher State Park route began on June 4 and runs every other Saturday through September 24. You'll see on the map below that MHLC's Normans Kill West Preserve is included on both routes. And a Hilton Barn stop was added for access to Bender Melon Farm Preserve.

More programs? You got it! We've partnered with **Flying Deer Nature Center** to offer guided hikes at Normans Kill West Preserve from 9 AM – 2 PM on June 25, July 16, and August 13. Programming is timed to the Nature Bus drops off times and open to everyone, *advance registration is not required*. Look for additional programs throughout the summer.

Our volunteer ambassadors will also be at **Bender Melon Farm Preserve** to greet Nature Bus riders on most Saturdays. Be a part of the Nature Bus team—volunteer to be a trail ambassador! Contact us at connect@mohawkhudson.org to learn more.

Funding for this project was provided from the NYS Environmental Protection Fund through the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's Office of Environmental Justice. Nature Bus 2022 would not be possible without the generous support from the Friends of Thatcher State Park, the Natural Heritage Trust, Albany Pine Bush Preserve Commission, Adirondack Mountain Club, Albany Chapter, and private donors.

For additional details, programs, and bus schedules, visit our website:

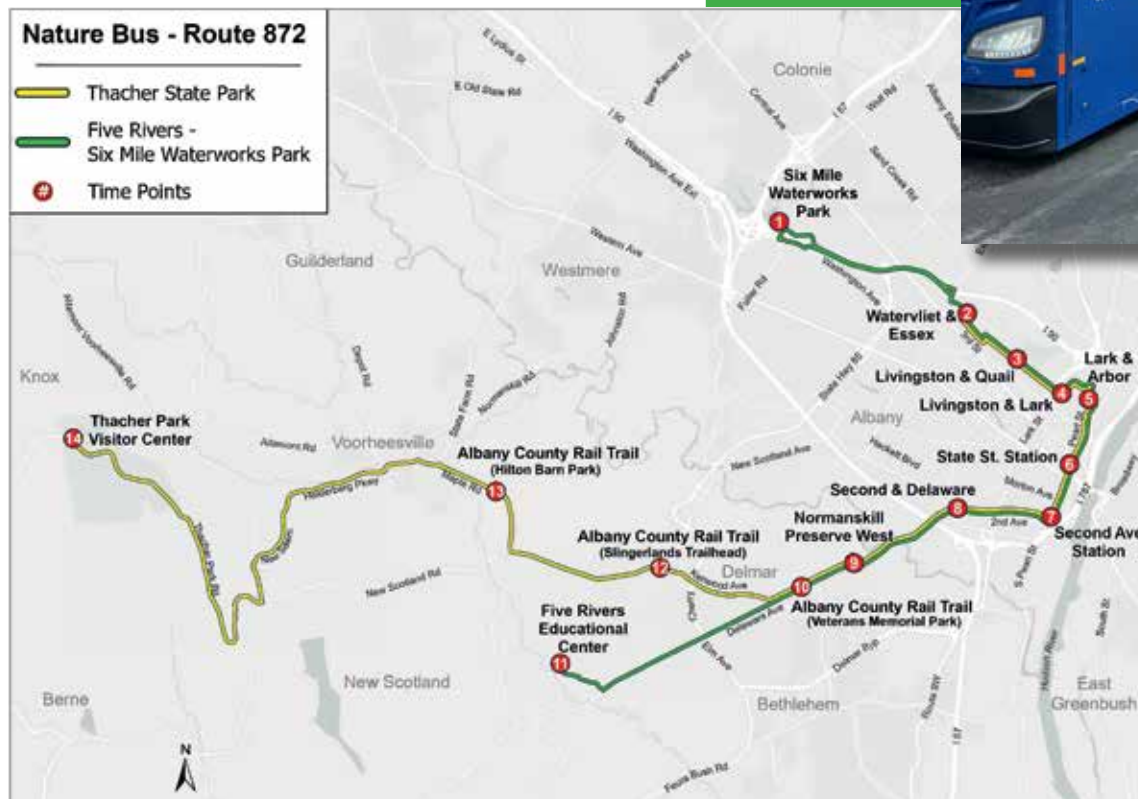
www.mohawkhudson.org/nature-bus

Stay connected to MHLC!



Paul, CDTA Nature Bus operator and nature enthusiast, welcomes riders on the first day of service this spring.

Left: The new Nature Bus route operates on a rotating schedule for shorter ride times.



Welcome to the Team

Marshall Lefebvre joined our team in March as the new Stewardship Coordinator. Originally from southwestern Pennsylvania, Marshall holds a BS in Conservation Ecology from California University of Pennsylvania and relocated to New York's Finger Lakes Region in 2015. Marshall has worked as a research technician with the NYS Hemlock Initiative at Cornell University, a landscape restoration specialist with NYS Parks, and with several small farms and businesses. He has a passion for community building and cultivating human/land connections. Marshall likes to spend his time gardening, wood carving, tree climbing, canoe camping, and playing music.

In May, we welcomed our new Summer Land Steward, Parker Eversoll. Parker, a native of Madison, Wisconsin, holds a BS in Geology and Environmental Studies from the University of Wisconsin. Previously, he worked as a geologist with an environmental consulting firm focused on contaminated site remediation. Parker has a passion for sharing time with others in natural spaces and is excited to be able to do that with MHLC this summer. Parker enjoys hiking, skiing, camping, fly fishing, and mountain biking.



Parker Eversoll (left) and Marshall Lefebvre (right) wrap up a workday at Swift Preserve.

MHLC Joins **New York State Birding Trail**

This past spring, MHLC's Normans Kill East and Normans Kill West Preserves were included in New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's announcement of the Capital Region NYS Birding Trail. The Birding Trail is a series of locations throughout the state that provide world-class opportunities for the public to get out and see birds to connect with nature.

MHLC's Normans Kill East and Normans Kill West Preserves provide a mix of forested and stream-side habitat, a great place to see migrating waterfowl on the Normans Kill, neotropical migratory nesting birds, and species that require deep forests for their lifecycles, such as the wood thrush. All MHLC preserves also offer eBird Hotspots for birders to log their observations to help scientists understand birds and bird populations over time.

To get to Normans Kill West Preserve, jump on the Nature Bus! Normans Kill East Preserve is also accessible from CDTA Route 18, a short walk from the Delaware Ave/Mason Rd stop.

Check out our preserves web page to learn more about these locations and plan your birding trip today!

www.mohawkhudson.org/preserves



New NYS Birding Trail signs were installed at the Normans Kill Preserves.

Grateful for Our Volunteers

Don and Lois Porter have served as volunteer preserve stewards at Ashford Glen Preserve for an astounding 22 years! Their involvement with MHLC began in 1999 when the all-volunteer organization was called the Albany County Land Conservancy. The Porters were instrumental in MHLC's acquisition of Ashford Glen Preserve. Besides their own significant contributions, they rallied neighbors to raise critical funds needed to complete the project. The acquisition was just the beginning of their commitment to the preserve and MHLC.

Dan Driscoll, a founding member of the organization and "super volunteer," was an early mentor for Don and Lois as they learned about stewardship and managing land. They worked closely with Dan to delineate the boundaries of the Ashford Glen Preserve in the fall of 2000 and have carefully watched over the land ever since. Lois also served as a Board member for several years and was among the members who recommended the hiring of Jill Knapp as the first full-time director of the organization in 2005.

"A great deal of progress has happened since that time," said Lois. "The organization has matured under the capable leadership of Mark King and now boasts five full-time employees and one part-time employee, as well as a full-time seasonal employee and intern."

The Porters have stepped down as preserve stewards, passing the torch to Charles and Liz Seeley. "Don and I have enjoyed watching the Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy grow, expand, mature, and remain true to its core reason for being—to protect open space," said Lois. "One of our great joys has been documenting the deer, fox, raccoons, turkeys, and birds that live in Ashford Glen by using the game camera supplied by the organization. We are thrilled to be leaving the 'Glen' in the capable hands of our neighbors, the new stewards Charles and Liz, as well as the superb staff of the MHLC."

*Thank you, Don and Lois, for your long-time service and dedication!
You will always be a part of what makes Ashford Glen Preserve so special.*



The Porters join new preserve stewards Charles and Liz Seeley for a photo op at Ashford Glen Preserve.

The Future of Impactful Giving

Our first 30 years of conservation work in the Capital Region were supported by the loyal and passionate donors who understood the importance of our mission and stood by us every step of the way. Their generosity has been vital to our success and will continue to shape our future. This year, we welcomed a new recurring giving program of Evergreen Supporters – comprised of our most loyal donors who choose to give in monthly or quarterly installments. Their consistent giving allows us to take quick action when unexpected needs arise so we can continue to protect the land we all love, now and for years to come.

We invite you to join the Evergreen Supporters by setting up your recurring gift today. You will make a significant impact on our ability to carry out our mission, which is more important now than ever before. And with your recurring gift, you can feel confident that each month your donation is sustaining the beauty and health of our community.

Visit www.mohawkhudson.org/evergreen to learn more and enroll.



IN THIS ISSUE

Celebrating 30 Years

The Next Generation at Glenvue Farm

Nature Bus Returns

NYS Birding Trail Designation

Honoring Our Preserve Stewards

Upcoming Events

VIEWPOINTS

Summer 2022

Celebrating 30 Years

Join us for MHLC's Annual Fall Fundraiser
Thursday, September 29, 2022 at 5:30 PM
Orchard Creek Golf Club in Altamont

Please save the date for our most important fundraising event of the year, *30 Years & Growing, an Anniversary Celebration*. We look forward to gathering to celebrate our first 30 years of service with dinner among friends, engaging conservation stories, and a gorgeous view of the Helderberg Escarpment.

OUR MISSION

To conserve and steward lands and waters of the Mohawk and Hudson River Valleys for the benefit of people and the environment.



For details, visit www.mohawkhudson.org/30years.