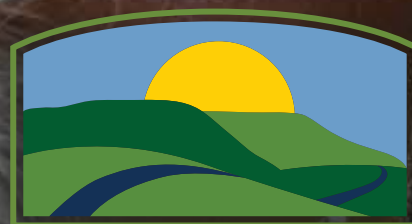


# VIEWPOINTS

Family Time on the Trails  
Vosburgh Farm, Montgomery County  
Connecting the Catskills to Adirondacks  
30th Anniversary Celebration Success



**MOHAWK HUDSON**  
LAND CONSERVANCY



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# From the Executive Director



Mark King,  
*Executive Director*

It's hard to envision the coming winter as we enjoy these last warm, sunny days in November, but the season is quickly approaching. Many of us dread winter, and some even migrate south, but it is a special time to embrace. Winter provides a change in perspective and an opportunity to see the world in another light. *Yes, this is a pre-winter perspective; ask me in late February, and I may admit the season is wearing a little.* Regardless, winter is best met by jumping right in—a ski, snowshoe, or just a brisk walk outdoors will make you appreciate the cozy home fires, whatever they may be!

Although the year is wrapping up, things at MHLC certainly don't slow down for the season. End-of-year fundraising is crucial for the organization, and I hope you'll join us to help meet our exciting fundraising challenge. We offer our most heartfelt thanks to the generous donors who spur us

to action through these matching challenges. *(Read more on page 5.)* And speaking of a spur to action, the newly passed environmental bond act will provide a much-needed boost to address the many environmental challenges we face, from aging water lines to critical open spaces. We also congratulate the Town of Bethlehem on its bold efforts to protect open space with the approval of a 300-acre farmland acquisition. A successful completion of this project will encourage other communities, demonstrating that they too can play a vital role in open space protection.

Many other projects are in motion at MHLC. We have almost 2,500 acres of new acquisitions in progress—there will be a lot of exciting news to share in the new year! Trail planning is underway at Bender Melon Farm Preserve, and a late fall mowing of the fields along Routes 85 and 85A will keep the land open as we work on habitat improvement plans. And, of course, there are always events, activities, and new things to observe at the preserves. So get outside, enjoy the winter, and we'll see you on the trails.

A stylized, handwritten signature of Mark King in black ink.

*Photo below, courtesy of The Altamont Enterprise: MHLC Staff, Board, and supporters gather at a special kiosk unveiling at the Bozen Kill Preserve in September. The new signage, funded by Suzette Tanis-Plant, honors the Indigenous history of the land in the Bozen Kill Conservation Corridor.*



# Family Time on the Trails

For Moss Cail and Karen Stainbrook, family time with their children Theo and Orla packs much more action than your run-of-the-mill movie night. They have rolled up their sleeves and got to work together as MHLC trail team volunteers!

Moss and Theo started volunteering in July 2021 at the Winn Preserve and Karen and Orla joined the “trail team” shortly after that. Since then, their family members have participated in about a dozen workdays and special projects with MHLC. Besides clearing new trails, they have helped clean up trash, pull invasives, renovate kiosks and bridges, build stone and wood beam staircases, haul in lumber and remove debris from worksites.

The Cail-Stainbrook family has always enjoyed hiking and visiting the local MHLC preserves. Their favorite is the Hollyhock Hollow Sanctuary. “We think the preserves are a great feature for the community and lovers of the environment, so we wanted to give back to help support the preserves to make it easier for everyone to access the trails and enjoy the outdoors,” said Karen. “We also got the benefit of learning more about the environment, trail maintenance, bridge and step building, and how to use various tools. And, of course, we got to meet the wonderful staff and other volunteers!”

Theo Stainbrook, a 10th grader, and his sister Orla Cail, a 7th grader, both enjoy the outdoors and hiking with friends. Orla is also part of an informal hiking group. Over the summer, the siblings worked together to blaze and clear several trails on the family's little plot of woods—they were pleased to report this one was a paid project! Volunteering has given Theo and Orla the opportunity to learn new skills and build confidence in their abilities. When asked about their favorite part of volunteering for MHLC, they listed, “learning about tools and how to build trails,” adding, “...and Bob is cool!” (It should be noted that this is the ultimate compliment from a teenager and a well-deserved nod to our Stewardship Assistant Bob Frederick, who leads the volunteer workdays.)

Bob shared his thoughts about the family's involvement: “No matter the task, their family brings a positive attitude, willingness to learn, and community spirit. Moss and Karen have an incredible relationship with their children, and we see their influence now that their children are starting to help out on their own.”

Moss said, “Volunteering with MHLC has been a great opportunity to create shared experiences and accomplishments. Although the kids sometimes grumble about having to “do work,” they always end up having fun, learning something new, and feeling proud of what we accomplish. Volunteering as a family gives us more time together and an opportunity to work cooperatively with other people to support a common goal ...and it shows our kids how easy it can be to give your time to help others.”

The Cail-Stainbrook family is one example of the many families we hope to engage on our trails—whether it's a workday, a public event, or just a walk in the woods. Shared time in nature energizes your mind, body, and soul. It makes you feel good when you contribute your talents to something bigger than yourself. And it connects you to a community of people you can learn from, find shared values, and eventually, call friends.

Thank you to Moss, Karen, Theo, and Orla, *and our entire team of volunteers*, for all your hard work and dedication!



Karen, Theo, Orla, and Moss break for a photo during a workday at Normans Kill West.

**Learn more about volunteer opportunities at**  
[www.mohawkhudson.org/volunteer](http://www.mohawkhudson.org/volunteer).



# Protecting Natural Landscapes in Montgomery County

## The Vosburgh Farm

Jan Vosburgh is the fifth-generation owner of her family's farm in the Town of Palatine, Montgomery County. The 91-acre farm has been a part of the Vosburgh family since Jan's great-grandfather and his brother purchased it in the 1800s. The rolling hills provided fertile grazing pastures for Jan's father's heifers in years past and now offer long views of the Mohawk Valley.

Passionate about the environment, Jan has been working with MHLC to ensure the long-term protection of her land. In the spring of 2022, MHLC was awarded a grant from The Nature Conservancy's Resilient and Connected Networks funding program that will provide closing costs for a conservation easement donation on the Vosburgh property.



Ginkgo tree on Vosburgh Farm.

## Restoring Habitats for Wildlife

Since gaining ownership of the farm in 1983, Jan has taken many steps to improve the property. Farmers who lease the fields are held to organic standards to ensure the land's long-term health. Jan also started planting trees on the property to enhance wildlife habitat and increase the property's biodiversity. Over the years, she has planted an impressive collection of both

native and specimen trees. Associate Director Sarah Walsh was elated when walking the property. "I was so excited to see adult Ginkgo trees, Dawn Redwoods, Bald Cypress, and Kentucky Coffee trees," said Sarah, "it was like being in a private arboretum seeing these specimens that you only see in books or special collections."

Jan's long-term land stewardship has yielded a healthy and diverse habitat, evident from the myriad of wildlife tracks found on a wintry visit to the property. The active populations of fishers, white-tailed deer, birds, and small mammals on the land are a good sign of habitat diversity and health.

The tree filled Vosburgh property is unique in the Palatine landscape, which has been cleared for large-scale agriculture over the years. The property's woodlands are an oasis for



Tracks in the snow are a good sign of healthy, diverse habitat.

wildlife, ensuring refuge for resident animals and a safe stepping stone for animals migrating across the landscape, particularly north to the Adirondack Park, only 4 miles away. When assessed through The Nature Conservancy's Resilient and Connected Lands mapping tool, the property scored above average for resilience and far above average for diverse habitats, making it eligible for funding through TNC's program.

"I want to thank the Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy and the Nature Conservancy for the opportunity to protect this old farm," said Jan Vosburgh.

## Looking Ahead

MHLC staff is finalizing this conservation easement, and we look forward to formally announcing its protection in the coming weeks.



Jan Vosburgh and her sister, Mari, tour the property with Associate Director Sarah Walsh in February 2022.



# Mapping the Catskills to Adirondacks Linkage

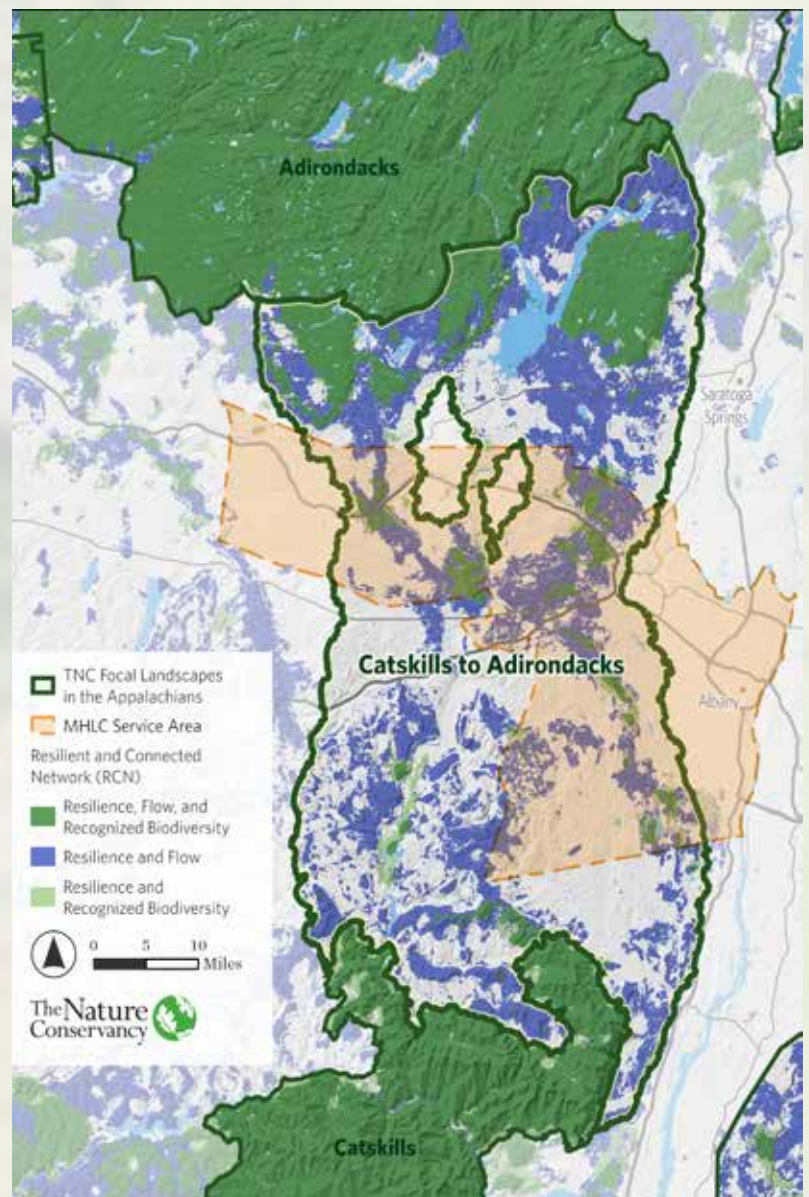
In 2020, Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy was awarded funding through the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's Mohawk Watershed Program. With this funding, MHLC and The Nature Conservancy launched a project to assess wildlife passage within the north-south corridor of the Mohawk Valley. The goal was to prioritize land protection of resilient areas for wildlife crossings and to provide guidance to transportation authorities on improvements to road culverts and bridges to ensure safe wildlife crossings.

The project was a multi-pronged approach to assess current conditions in the region and to create a comprehensive map of this newly identified Staying Connected Initiative linkage for future land protection and transportation and municipal planning. The first step started with boots on the ground to measure existing bridges and culverts along Route 5, Route 5s, Route 88, and the New York State Thruway. Game cameras were placed at crossings to assess what wildlife is currently using existing infrastructure. Next, the Nature Conservancy's mapping staff began a robust assessment of natural resources in the area using GIS computer modeling software. Analysts used data to identify areas that can bounce back from major disruptions such as climate change. They also studied wildlife flow data looking at existing impediments on the landscape that would prevent wildlife movement to predict the most likely pathway wildlife will move across the landscape.

By combining these datasets and many more, including existing culvert and bridge data, TNC staff created maps modeling where improvements in wildlife crossings can have the most significant impact. The collected information was combined into a plan for municipalities, transportation authorities, and conservation organizations to take action to improve wildlife crossings and protect vital lands that help facilitate wildlife movement. This plan also provides recommendations on restoration initiatives to improve habitat for a healthier Mohawk Valley.

With the project recently completed, we look forward to sharing results through presentations over the coming months. These results will help guide our future conservation work and increase partnerships in the region towards the goal of a connected Catskill to Adirondack Corridor.

**MHLC staff has presented at more than a dozen organizations across the region in an effort to increase awareness about the importance of the wildlife movement in our area.**



**See the recorded presentation on YouTube! Scan the QR code or visit <https://youtu.be/knooNKmbNb0>.**



# Step Up to the Challenge

Year-end is the single most impactful time of year for charitable organizations across the globe. As you plan your giving this season, step up to our 2022 matching challenge and **DOUBLE** your gift to MHLC!

Thanks to generous matching gifts from Marcie Love and an anonymous donor, **every dollar donated to MHLC by December 31, 2022, up to \$50,000, will be matched**—doubling your support for our mission!

Step up to the challenge to do twice as much good for conservation in the Capital Region and the communities we serve.

With your charitable gift to Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy, you make a powerful impact on local conservation and help to provide access to nature and the healing powers it brings. Your gift will also help support large scale landscape connectivity to mitigate climate change and protect environmentally important places.

Through an exciting partnership with local conservation-minded artist Ken Wilson, every donation of \$250\* or more will be entered into a raffle to win *Mohawk Morning*, an 8x10 original framed oil painting by the artist. Ken Wilson was born, raised, and educated in Albany, New York. Shortly after graduating college at University at Albany, he served as a member of the New York State Police. Now, Ken is a recognized, award-winning artist whose work can be seen in several galleries throughout New York and New England.



*Mohawk Morning* by Ken Wilson in antique wood frame.

**Double your impact today at [www.mohawkhudson.org/donate](http://www.mohawkhudson.org/donate).**

*\*Eligible donation amount does not include matched funds. One entry per person. Drawing to be held on Tuesday, January 3, 2023.*

## Fisher Trail at Five Rivers

In 2018, MHLC acquired a 35-acre parcel at the corner of Fisher Blvd. and Rt. 85 in Slingerlands. MHLC then granted New York State a conservation easement on the land and entered a management agreement with the neighboring Five Rivers Environmental Education Center. The property is now accessible to the public by way of the new Fisher Trail which officially opened on October 11.

Fisher Trail marks the first ADA accessible trail on land owned by MHLC. The majority of the 0.65-mile Fisher Trail is accessible to people with mobility disabilities. This portion of the trail runs from the parking area off of Fisher Blvd. to a viewing platform overlooking the Phillipin Kill. Past this point, the trail continues down a steep slope into the ravine of the Phillipin Kill and connects with Five Rivers' other trails and the Visitor Center. The trail is a big win for the entire community, and MHLC is thrilled to see access to nature expanded to even more people.



# A CELEBRATION FOR *Conservation*

MHLC celebrated its 30th anniversary Fall Fundraiser on Thursday, September 29, 2022. More than 250 guests attended the event, which was held at the beautiful Orchard Creek Golf Club in Altamont, New York. The evening began with cocktails and hors d'oeuvres while guests enjoyed the perfect early autumn weather and sunset views of the Helderberg Escarpment from the venue's outdoor patio. New Scotland Spirits provided complimentary tastings of spirits produced on their New Scotland, New York farm. The sounds of live music by Spiral Tango filled the room as guests mingled and enjoyed lively conversation.

For many guests, this was their first opportunity to reconnect with fellow MHLC supporters since 2019, when the last Fall Fundraiser was held before the Covid-19 pandemic paused all in-person gatherings. The evening felt like a joyous reunion among like-minded friends and neighbors, together again in support of Capital Region conservation.

The annual award program began as guests were served dinner prepared by the Orchard Creek culinary team. Executive Director Mark King hosted the awards ceremony, highlighting the important contributions of the evening's honorees, each of whom has had a great impact on our community and the environment: Dr. Margaret Craven, the 2022 Event Honoree (*top photo*); Lorraine Plauth, recipient of the Dan Driscoll Volunteer Leadership Award; and Dr. Eric Foster, recipient of the Saving Special Places Award.

Associate Director Sarah Walsh then shared exciting updates on this year's Nature Bus programming and introduced a video produced by Pilot Girl Productions, which featured Nature Bus riders and attendees at Normans Kill West Preserve during a free educational program this summer.

Over \$75,000 was raised in support of MHLC's mission to conserve and steward the lands and waters of Albany, Montgomery, and Schenectady Counties, making the 2022 Fall Fundraiser and silent auction important pieces of our ongoing efforts to raise funds and awareness for the critical issues of land protection facing us today.

We give immense gratitude to all who attended and contributed to the success of the event. Special thanks to our event sponsors, generous auction donors, and our Honorary Committee Co-Chairs, Harold and Lauren Iselin. With this support, we are poised for another successful year of land protection, preserve stewardship, educational programming, and much more!

View more event photos on Facebook at <https://tinyurl.com/4byhbwea>.

Watch the Nature Bus video on our YouTube page, or scan here: ►





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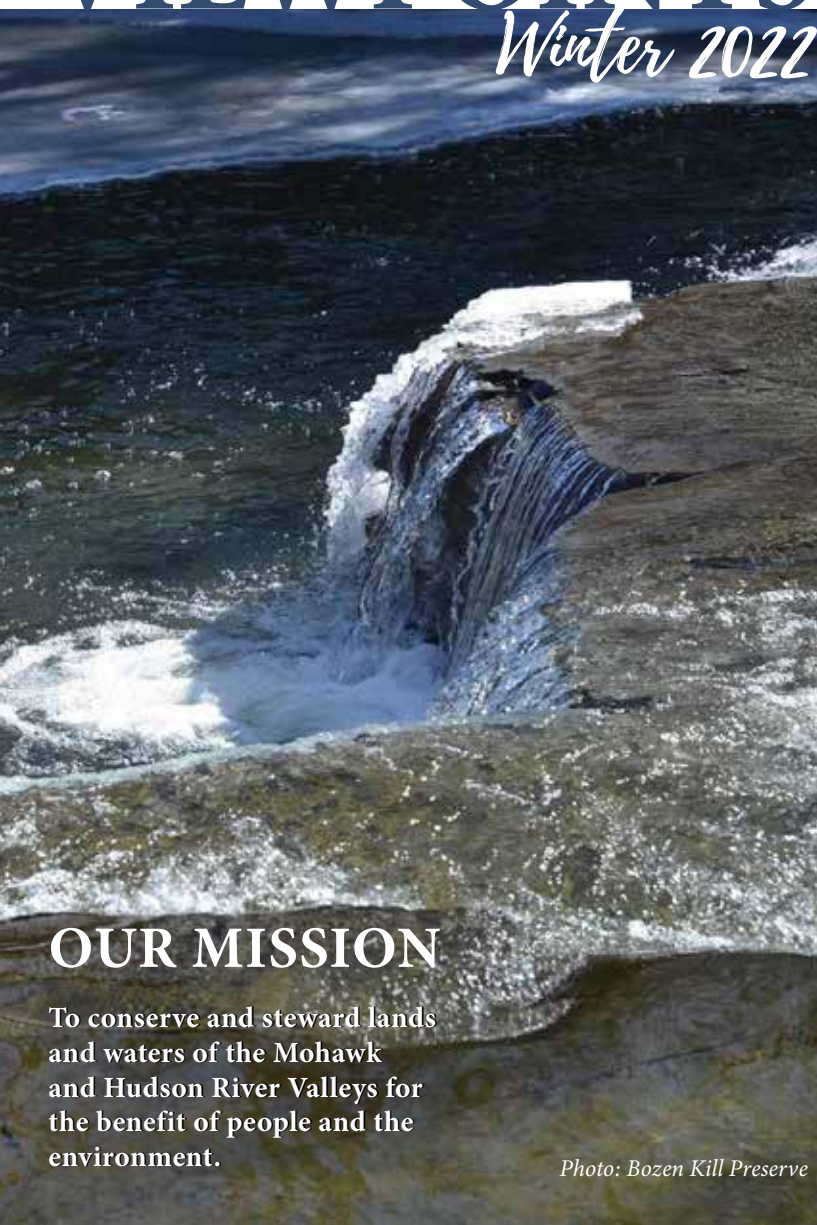
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## IN THIS ISSUE

Family Time on the Trails  
Vosburgh Farm, Montgomery County  
Connecting Lands for Wildlife  
Year-end Matching Challenge  
Fisher Trail Now Open  
Fall Fundraiser Success

# VIEWPOINTS

*Winter 2022*



## OUR MISSION

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

*Photo: Bozen Kill Preserve*

## HONORING THE INDIGENOUS HISTORY OF THE BOZEN KILL CONSERVATION CORRIDOR

To properly acknowledge the rich Indigenous history of the lands we protect, MHLC updated the permanent kiosk signage at the Bozen Kill and Wolf Creek Falls Preserves earlier this year.

Executive Director Mark Kings stated, "It is so important that we recognize the entire history of the lands that MHLC preserves. The arrival of Europeans in North America often overshadows the rich cultural history and unique perspectives of the Indigenous peoples who inhabited these lands long before. This small step of recognition helps open our minds to a more accurate historical perspective and a deeper understanding of our past that can bring us toward a more enlightened and inclusive future."

Read more about this project in the press release (Aug. 30, 2022) at [www.mohawkhudson.org/news](http://www.mohawkhudson.org/news).