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Our Vision
The Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy contributes to the health of communities by protecting the lands we love.

Our Mission
The Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy enhances the quality of life in the Mohawk and Hudson River valleys by preserving natural, scenic, agricultural, and historic landscapes, and conserving habitats, in partnership with landowners, not-for-profit organizations, businesses, and governments, for the benefit of current and future generations.

Photo: A view of the Catskills, taken during a monitoring visit to an MHLC conservation easement property in Rensselaerville.
**2018 Chair’s Message**

Welcome to our second quarter-century as the Capital Region’s land trust.

I am honored and humbled to write to you as the new chairperson of the MHLC Board of Directors. As MHLC begins its 26th year of service to Albany, Montgomery, and Schenectady counties, I am proud to take on this new role—and so pleased to put my energy into building upon the legacy of growth and success that has come to define MHLC. I begin my tenure with great energy and enthusiasm for the work that lies ahead. MHLC is making an ever-greater difference in our region, and I am committed to working with the Board, staff, Advisory Council, and you, our supporters, to further expand our reach and impact.

By any measure, MHLC’s 25th anniversary year was a great success. To me, it was a fitting celebration of the organization’s maturation, significant conservation successes, and ever-greater impact on the quality of life in this region. Most of all, the year reminded me that the key ingredient in all of that success is the people—the skilled and committed people—who have given so much to this organization over the years. Cathie Love, who recently stepped down as chairperson of the Board of Directors, is the most recent embodiment of this wonderful tradition at MHLC. We owe her, and all others who have given so generously of their time and talents over the past twenty-five years, our heartfelt thanks.

Join us for a look back on 2017: the silver anniversary of the Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy. In this year, we opened two new nature preserves, hosted events across our three-county service region, connected with more people, and set the stage to conserve more land than ever before.

As you know, we are in the business of protecting and conserving lands not just for twenty-five years, but in perpetuity. So as we reflect on a record-setting year, let’s keep our eyes on the horizon, and commit to building upon the wonderful legacy of our predecessors from this 26th year to forever.

Chris Gorka
Chair
MHLC Board of Directors
Two New Preserves

One of our greatest accomplishments in 2017 was opening two new nature preserves to the public: the Strawberry Fields Nature Preserve in Amsterdam and the Fox Preserve in Colonie.

Strawberry Fields Nature Preserve
118 acres | Montgomery County
Strawberry Fields’ 118 acres include the nature preserve, a family homestead, and a working farm. It was protected in 2013 under a conservation easement with MHLC.

2.1 miles of trails wind through the various habitats in this beautiful preserve, which features sweeping vistas of the Mohawk Valley. Over 300 vascular plant species, over 100 bird species, and uncounted other members of the food chain have been identified here.

Grand Opening on May 20
As guests drive up the steep, paved drive to Strawberry Fields Nature Preserve, they are welcomed by a series of signs featuring the lyrics to The Beatles’ “Strawberry Fields Forever.” The lyric signs, dappled by morning sunlight and framed by the emerald green of maple leaves in spring, set the stage for the grand opening of this preserve on Saturday, May 20.

MHLC Executive Director Mark King welcomed a crowd of over 150 guests, thanking everyone for joining the MHLC Board and staff for the opening of the Conservancy’s newest preserve. He expressed his great pleasure to be working with Montgomery County landowners to continue to protect the open spaces which make the Capital Region so beautiful.

Jeff Leon, owner and steward of the preserve, spoke of his work with MHLC to protect this property in 2013 under a conservation easement. He named the property “Strawberry Fields” because of the many wild strawberries found in the open fields and along the trails. As guests leave the property, they see the lyrics to John Lennon’s “Imagine” printed on the back of the driveway signs. Leon explained that he chose the lyrics to “Imagine” because of the unifying message of the song. “I may be a dreamer,” Leon remarked, “but I’m not the only one... For nearly 50 years, Strawberry Fields has given me so many opportunities to learn about, and appreciate, the breadth of life. By opening our nature trails to the public, I hope many more people will take the same opportunities to more deeply realize how much human existence depends on nature, and why overexploitation of nature threatens that existence.”

After the remarks from King and Leon, the ceremony concluded with Leon cutting a large ribbon, assisted by his grandchildren, family members, local legislators, and MHLC Board Members. The ceremony was followed by a series of guided tours on the preserve’s trails. The crowd split into smaller hiking parties, trekking across open fields to explore the features of the red and yellow trails: views over the Mohawk River Valley, hemlock forests, a sinkhole, birding areas by a large pond, and the fields and successional forests which make for beautiful terrain in any season.

Photos (from top to bottom): Jeff Leon, owner and Preserve Steward of Strawberry Fields, family, and MHLC Board Members cut the ribbon at Strawberry Fields. | Board Member Claiborne Walthall and daughter Anna enjoy hiking at the grand opening. | Jeff Leon addresses the crowd. | Guests explore the forests of Strawberry Fields Nature Preserve.
With the opening of these two preserves in Montgomery and Albany Counties, MHLC has 18 preserves open to the public. We continue to work to increase access to preserves and connect community members to nature.

**Fox Nature Preserve**

**70 acres | Albany County**

This 70-acre property was donated to MHLC by Dr. Patricia Fox in 2015. Dr. Fox owned the property for over 30 years, and it is one of the last remaining areas of open space in this area of the Town of Colonie.

The Fox Preserve's trail system winds through diverse habitats. The trail passes Shaker Creek, where oxygen-rich waters create hatching grounds for dragonflies and damselflies. Old oak trees provide habitat for migratory birds like the Baltimore oriole, and open fields create ideal nesting areas for eastern bluebirds, the state bird of New York.

The Preserve is a wonderful stop for visitors from the Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail to walk the trails, enjoy river views, and perhaps catch a glimpse of the bald eagles who frequent the Mohawk River to hunt.

**Grand Opening on October 21**

A bright autumn morning set the tone for a beautiful grand opening. Over 100 guests gathered for light refreshments and the grand opening ceremony. The golden yellows of birch leaves popped against a bright blue sky, and sunshine warmed guests and volunteers as we celebrated the opening of this beautiful new public preserve.

The ceremony included speeches by MHLC Executive Director Mark King, Board Chair Cathie Love, Assemblymember Phil Steck, and Dr. Patricia Fox. Dr. Fox, who owned the land for 30 years before donating it, spoke of her initial vision when purchasing the land: to conserve its natural beauty for wildlife and humans to enjoy. This was a wonderful day to enjoy the realization of Dr. Fox's dream.

After the ribbon cutting, guests split into small groups and enjoyed guided hikes along the new trails which weave through open fields, oak forests, and along the banks of Shaker Creek.

MHLC Conservation Director Sarah Walsh described the recreational and ecological importance of this particular property: “the Fox Preserve is unique as it conserves 70 acres in a rapidly-developing part of Colonie. As Colonie grows, preserving green spaces like these for residents and visitors to get outside in the woods is increasingly important to ensure a healthy community. This property is adjacent to the Mohawk River and the Vischer Ferry Preserve to the north, providing a large block of protected land, which is vital for creating a balance between the built and natural environments and providing habitat for wildlife and green corridors for wildlife movement.”

*Photos (from top to bottom): Executive Director Mark King welcomes the crowd. | Dr. Pat Fox speaks about her donation of the land to the Conservancy. | Guests hike through the oak forests of Fox Preserve. | Stewardship and Volunteer Coordinator Sawyer Cresap and supporters and Ashford Glen Preserve Stewards Don and Lois Porter enjoy the grand opening celebration.*
Events

This page: Clockwise from top left: MHLC staff pick gourds at Indian Ladder Farms for the Fall Fundraiser. | A robin’s egg spotted during a spring hike at the Bozen Kill Preserve. | Participants learn to safely build fires with Ondatra Adventures at an MHLC workshop. | Board Member Alyson Brody and son team up with Board Chair Cathie Love and Office Manager Laurie Streeter at the Summer Hike-a-Thon. | The Shaker Creek runs through the new Fox Preserve during a sneak preview of the Preserve. | Bicyclists enjoy our first-ever Day of Fat Biking at Keleher Preserve. | Opposite page: Guests applaud a performance by the brass musicians of the Albany Symphony at our Celebration of Music and Nature in Rensselaerville. | Board Member Dan Lewis, Ethan Winter of the Land Trust Alliance, Preserve Steward Jeff Leon, and Executive Director Mark King at the Fall Fundraiser.
Our 25th anniversary year was a busy one! We hosted over 25 events throughout the year, and enjoyed an incredible streak of good weather for each of our outdoor events. This was truly a year of conservation and connection for MHLC.

**Annual Awards Dinner at Corning Tower**
We launched our year with a spectacular Annual Awards Dinner on January 28. The sold-out crowd filled the observation deck of the Corning Tower in downtown Albany, enjoying drinks and a light buffet as a cloudy sky opened and rays of light from the setting sun spread across the breathtaking landscape below, illuminating the lands we’ve conserved in the past 25 years. We honored Matthew Bender IV as our 25th Anniversary Honoree, celebrating his years of passionate advocacy for land conservation in the Capital Region. We also celebrated Stewart Dutfield, who was awarded the Dan Driscoll Leadership Award for his outstanding work as the Rail Trail Ambassador Coordinator.

**A Celebration of Music and Nature in Rensselaerville**
On Saturday, June 24, guests flocked to the Daniel Conkling House in Rensselaerville for a one-of-a-kind event with the Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy and the brass musicians of the Albany Symphony. Generously hosted by Stewart Myers at his historic property, this event celebrated the protection of the Eldridge Farm and the preservation of the historic agricultural landscapes of Rensselaerville. Guests were treated to a wonderful brass ensemble performance of George Lloyd’s Symphony No. 10, “November Journeys,” conducted by David Alan Miller, and host Stew Myers was invited to conduct the final encore of the evening. After the performance, many guests joined MHLC Conservation Director Sarah Walsh for a guided hike around the property. At the end of the evening, guests drove home in a light rain, greeted by a beautiful rainbow.

**Summer Hike-a-Thon**
Hundreds of hikers, bikers, and outdoor enthusiasts joined us at eleven different outings for our annual Summer Hike-a-Thon. Offerings included outdoor yoga at the new Strawberry Fields Nature Preserve, an amphibian hike at Swift Preserve, mountain biking at Keleher Preserve, and accessible bike rides and walks on the Albany County Helderberg-Hudson Rail Trail.

**Hikes, Workshops, and Naturalist Series**
Partnering with David Muska of Ondatra Adventures, MHLC continued our popular outdoor naturalist series with free offerings throughout our service region, including a Hiking and Backpacking Workshop at Bennett Hill Preserve, Family Wilderness Crafts at Normanskill West Preserve, Wilderness Survival Skills at Holt Preserve, and Edible and Medicinal Plants of the Rail Trail. We hosted many other exciting outdoor hikes and events this year, including a Plein Air Painting workshop with artist and educator Kevin Kuhne, a historical hike through the Normanskill West Preserve, and a Fringed Gentian walk led by Jeff Leon at the Strawberry Fields Nature Preserve.

**Fall Fundraiser at the new Thacher Park Visitor Center**
On September 14, guests gathered at the brand-new John Boyd Thacher State Park Visitor Center, which was built earlier in the year. Over 230 guests enjoyed a lovely evening with conversation, laughter, and a celebration of over 5,000 acres conserved in our region. The biggest event of MHLC’s 25th anniversary, this celebration honored the Conservancy’s conservation partners: the Albany Pine Bush Preserve Commission, Land Trust Alliance, The Nature Conservancy, Open Space Institute, and Scenic Hudson, and recognized our 25th Anniversary Honoree Matthew Bender IV for his extraordinary commitment to MHLC. Dinner by Garden Bistro 24, beverages by Capital Wine and Indian Ladder Farms Cidery and Brewery, live classical guitar music from William David Simcoe, and pumpkins, gourds, and mums from Indian Ladder Farms set the scene for a lovely fall evening. Members and partners looked out from the Helderberg Escarpment over the spectacular landscapes which the MHLC community conserved together, and looked forward to the next 25 years of saving land in our region.

**Conservation Easements 101**
We welcomed friends old and new to a free conservation workshop in Schenectady County, where guests learned about different options for conserving land and spoke with landowners who have conserved their land with MHLC. The event included guided hikes through a conserved property and a tour of a passive solar house. We welcomed questions, guided landowners through conservation options, and also discussed ways in which individuals can work together to conserve their surrounding landscapes without being landowners themselves.
Connecting Online, Conserving The Land

As our network of supporters, friends, volunteers, preserve visitors, donors, and partners grows, we continue to connect in new and exciting ways. During our 25th anniversary year, we increased our online outreach, delivering updates on land protection and upcoming events through e-newsletters, blog posts, and social media.

In 2017, the Conservancy’s Facebook following grew by over 60%. Our Instagram community grew by almost a third, and we connected with local newspapers, other land trusts, and regional conservation organizations through Twitter. By sharing our work online, we partnered with more media outlets.

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Moving into our second quarter-century, MHLC will continue to connect online, while also encouraging connection and conservation in the field.

Resources

Thousands of passports were distributed throughout Albany, Montgomery, and Schenectady Counties in 2017. Our initial printing of the passports quickly ran out, and with generous support from the Bethlehem Garden Club, we were able to do a second print run.

Passports are available at the MHLC office at 425 Kenwood Avenue in Delmar. We recommend using your passport with a free Preserve Map, also available at our office and at preserve kiosks.

Nature Passport Released

In 2017, in celebration of our silver anniversary, we released the Capital Region Nature Passport: a new, free resource for explorers, adventurers, and naturalists of all ages and expertise levels. The passport is a collection of 25 micro-adventures which can be completed entirely within the forests, streams, and fields of MHLC’s public preserves and protected lands. From finding hidden habitat gems to trying out new trails, the Capital Region Nature Passport encourages visitors and residents to pull on their boots, get out the door, and get some dirt under their nails. As part of our increasing efforts to connect residents and visitors with the natural beauty that surrounds us, the passport was an incredible success.

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Passports are available at the MHLC office at 425 Kenwood Avenue in Delmar. We recommend using your passport with a free Preserve Map, also available at our office and at preserve kiosks.

Photos (top to bottom): The Nature Passport is our new family-friendly resource. | Volunteers mail thousands of passports from the MHLC office. | Spectrum News interviews Executive Director Mark King at Bike-to-Work Day, noting the Albany County Helderberg-Hudson Rail Trail as a zero-carbon transportation option for bicyclists and pedestrians.
Staff

We said goodbye to Stewardship Director Connie Tedesco this year; her bright energy and dedication to conservation are missed, but the tremendous work she accomplished for the Conservancy is carried on by two new staff members. In May, we welcomed Sawyer Cresap as our Stewardship and Volunteer Coordinator and Sarah Walsh as our Conservation Director. With five full-time staff members and one half-time staff member, MHLC has unprecedented team power which has greatly increased our capacity to conserve and protect land.

Volunteers

MHLC volunteers led the way for our 25th anniversary, helping with trail work, office mailings, and public events. Our dedicated Bozen Kill Preserve volunteers held several work days improving this popular preserve. At Keleher Preserve, mountain bikers built and improved trails.

On both Earth Day and National Trails Day, volunteers built trails at the new Fox Preserve in Colonie. With their hard work, we were able to open over one mile of trails to the public at our grand opening in October.

We continued our partnership with local scout groups: in 2017, we worked with two Life Scouts from Troop 58 Elsmere: Connor Roddy and Jacob Kantrowitz, on their Eagle Scout projects, which improved Swift Preserve and the Restifo Sanctuary.

Volunteers joined our silver anniversary in so many ways: facepainting at farmers markets to raise money for the Conservancy, tabling at festivals as representatives of MHLC, building trails, leading hikes and assisting with events, and helping with data entry and mailings in our office. Without these volunteers, we would not have had the success that came to define our 25th year as the Capital Region’s land trust.

Photos (top to bottom): Conservation Director Sarah Walsh uses GPS to monitor conserved lands. | Stewardship and Volunteer Coordinator Sawyer Cresap photographs a conservation easement property for documentation. | A crew of volunteers poses at Keleher Preserve after a day of trail work. | Boy Scout Connor Roddy builds bird boxes for Restifo Sanctuary as part of his Eagle Scout Project. | Below: The Bethlehem Garden Club donated two benches to MHLC Preserves in Bethlehem: MHLC staff, Board members, and volunteers installed the new benches with representatives from the Garden Club.
1991: First meeting on December 17
1992: The Albany County Land Conservancy (ACLC) is incorporated
1993: IRS grants tax exempt status as 501(c)(3)
1994: Helderberg Escarpment identified as first priority area
1994: Holt Preserve becomes the first public preserve
1998: First 500 acres are preserved
1998: Schoharie Creek Preserve becomes the first property acquired in Montgomery County
2001: A Winn Preserve parcel becomes the first land purchase by ACLC
2002: 10th Anniversary Celebration
2003: First 1,000 acres are preserved
2003: Indian Ladder Farms becomes ACLC’s first easement purchase
2005: First office space is rented
2005: First paid employee is hired: Executive Director, Jill Knapp
2005: Name is changed to the Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy
2006: Dudley & Lois Crauer’s easement becomes the first donated easement and the first Schenectady County property
We began as an all-volunteer organization—a group of neighbors concerned about the rapid development of land in Albany County in the early 1990s. Years of hard work, collaboration, and support have transformed that small group into a growing, thriving community of conservationists. Through partnerships with other organizations, prioritization of key conservation areas, and most of all, through your support, MHLC has become the Capital Region’s land trust.

Look back with us at the past 25 years. Our staff and Board have grown, our resources have increased, and the amount of acreage we protect each year is growing exponentially. These numbers tell the story of our first 25 years, and we hope you’ll join us for the next 25—and beyond.
LAND DONORS
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Katherine & John Barber
The Becker Family
Jerry Bilinski
Stephen Brown
Michael Cirillo
Lester Citrin
Patricia Fox
Jennifer Hilton
William & Winifred Holt
Arnie & Helen Loft
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Mansions at Delmar
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Bruce & Diana Shank
Greg Swift of Swift Builders
Clifford & Cynthia Tepper
The Spinney Group
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Margaret Craven Snowden
Roswell Eldridge
David & Sandra Geisinger
Walter & Alice Gibson
Jeffrey Leon
Open Space Institute
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Andrew & Bernardita Ward

PURCHASED EASEMENT
Margaret Craven Snowden
Christine Lehman
Peter Ten Eyck, II
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Marcie Love
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Maggie Vinciguerra
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Ms. Arlen Westbrook
Brian & Melinda White

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Connie & Harry Wilbur
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Shawn M. Allan
Karen C. Beck
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Ruth Bonn
Mark Brogna
Glen Bruening
Carol Butt
John & Connie Clarkson
Christine Cook
John & Grace Crary
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Bill & Betty Nathan
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N. Stewart & Caroline Stone
James Suozzo
John & Sally Ten Eyck
Josey Twombly
Patrick VanRoey
Alan & Barbara Via
David & Mary Carol White
Alan Wilson & Diana Dietrich
Jeff & Karen Wilson
Victoria Balkoski & Paul Winkeller
Caleb Wistar

$100 to $249
Lawrence & Penny Alden
Lisa & Jim Allendorph
Dwight & Shanna Anderson
Anonymous
Another Rail Trail User
Katherine Armstrong
Andrew Bradford Arthur
Paul & Melanie Axel-Lute
Cheryl Baitsholts & Ray Baitsholts
Jeffrey & Martha Baker
Charlie Barnes
Lisa Barroco
Joel & Andrea Bartfield
Frank C. Bateman
Walter Bazar
Sue Beatty
Ellen Higgins & Richard Beer
Andrew & Beth Beers
Maureen & Keith Behrens
Jeffrey Bender
Bickham-Okoniewski Family
Gus & Susan Birkhead
Sherry Bostwick Bishko
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Mary Ellen & Peter Bloniarz
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Paula Brewer
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Peter & Martha Deborah Brown
Barbara Brundage
Regina Boyles & George Burns
Dominick & Teresa Campana
The Carazza Family
Jill Adams & John Chaplin
Judith & Louis Clough
### 2017 Financial Report

#### Operating Revenue
- $736,273
  - Major Gifts: 23%
  - Earned Income: 22%
  - Corporations/Foundations: 14%
  - 25th Anniversary Events: 13%
  - Individual Contributions: 10%
  - Grant Funds: 7%
  - Board: 6%
  - Other: 5%

#### Operating Expenses
- $578,618
  - Land Acquisition & Stewardship: 42%
  - Outreach: 29%
  - Development: 15%
  - Management/General: 14%

#### Current Assets
- $1,240,715
  - Unrestricted Operating Fund: 39%
  - Stewardship Endowment: 34%
  - Temporarily Restricted Funds: 14%
  - Long Term Reserve Fund: 9%
  - Strategic Acquisition Fund: 4%
In Honor of Sandra Geisinger
In Honor of Miles Garfinkel
In Honor of Bill Gamble
In Honor of Sandra Geisinger
In Honor of Roman Hedges & Marian Schwager
In Honor of Norman Hulme
In Honor of Jane Kalkanian
In Honor of Peter Kermani
In Honor of the John Kulak Family
In Honor of Cathy Love
In Honor of Albert & Doris Lowenfels
In Honor of Mary Moriarty
In Honor of Stewart Myers
In Honor of Matt & Stephanie O’Connor
In Honor of Rita & Joe Okoniewski
In Honor of Matt & Sara Saplin
In Honor of Paul Shatsoff
In Honor of Ruth Thomas
Memorials
In Memory of Gerald Andritz
In Memory of Jeffrey Beach
In Memory of Geraldine Blanchard

Honorariums
In Honor of Carol Arthur
In Honor of Matthew Bender IV
In Honor of Susan Blaney
In Honor of Michelle Capuano
In Honor of Rachel L. Denham
In Honor of Marilyn Fancher
In Honor of Patricia Fox
In Honor of Cynthia Frederick
In Honor of Bill Gamble
In Honor of Miles Garfinkel
In Honor of Sandra Geisinger

In Memory of Mark Butt
In Memory of Cyrus Cady
In Memory of Dave Camp
In Memory of Dan Driscoll
In Memory of Lisa Evans
In Memory of Carlos Chiquito
In Memory of Roman Hedges & Marian Schwager
In Memory of Norman Hulme
In Memory of Jane Kalkanian
In Memory of Peter Kermani
In Memory of the John Kulak Family
In Memory of Cathy Love
In Memory of Albert & Doris Lowenfels
In Memory of Mary Moriarty
In Memory of Stewart Myers
In Memory of Matt & Stephanie O’Connor
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In Memory of Gerald Andritz
In Memory of Jeffrey Beach
In Memory of Geraldine Blanchard

In Memory of Christopher Gehrer
In Memory of Thomas Genovese
In Memory of Jan Harvith
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Photos (top to bottom): The white trail at Normans Kill West Preserve. | A monarch butterfly in Rensselaerville. | Woodland sunflower at Schoharie Creek Preserve.
After 25 years, the Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy continues to expand and connect the network of preserved lands across Albany, Montgomery, and Schenectady Counties.

Our growing community of friends and supporters make this preservation work possible. We thank you for being part of this community: a group of people dedicated to protecting the scenic, recreational, and environmental value of the Capital Region.

We have a vision of connecting the Catskill Mountains to the Adirondacks through a corridor of protected land, forever preserving the character of our region, protecting our food, water, and air resources, and providing green spaces for better climate stability and for future generations to enjoy.

As we reflect on MHLCC’s silver anniversary, we invite friends both old and new to join in the next quarter century of conservation, recreation, and connection.