



Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy

Vistas

Volume 12
Number 1

2006 Annual Report

President's Message

2006 was a year of achievement and growth for the Mohawk Hudson Land Conservancy. In our first full year after extending our services from Albany County into the



Peggy Sherman,
President

Mohawk Valley, we completed transactions with five landowners, adding more than 300 acres (including over 140 in Schenectady County) to bring our total protected area to just over 1500 acres.

Through outreach and education efforts, outings at our preserves and regular media coverage, we brought our message of Saving Special Places to a broad audience. We strengthened our partnerships across the region with state and local government officials, and we launched a strategic planning process to chart our course for the next several years.



Honorable Mention
Tammy Ionotti

The Conservancy's vision is to provide a legacy of many protected special places which the communities of our area will be inspired to respect, care for and enjoy. In 2006, there were many sources of inspiration to energize our work:

- the wisdom of conservationist Peter Berle at our May 2006 annual meeting;
- the extraordinary generosity of Steve Brown, Dud Crauer, Arne and Helen Loft and Cal Schmidt, our 2006 donors of land and conservation agreements;
- the "forever" view on a clear September day from the Rensselaerville home of Laura and Marvin Bolotsky, our hosts for our annual country gala; and
- the everyday sights and sounds of the special places protected by the Conservancy, from a great blue heron wading in the Normanskill to the majestic Helderberg Escarpment over Indian Ladder Farms.



First prize winner in our Mohawk Valley Views contest: M. J. Davis, for this view of the falls on Bozenkill Creek, in The Nature Conservancy's Christman Preserve, in Duanesburg.

Numerous supporters who share our goal of saving special places contributed to the accomplishments described in this report. Our membership grew by more than 25% to 520 households and organizations. Our talented and committed staff, executive director Jill Knapp and program assistant Helen Smith, provided the day-to-day leadership to orchestrate the Conservancy's many activities.

In 2006, more than 100 volunteers cleared trails, led outings, worked at our annual fundraising gala or served on the committees whose work is described, below. The Board of Directors joins me in thanking members, staff and volunteers for a very successful year.

Peggy Sherman

Land Stewardship / Preservation

The Land Stewardship / Preservation Committee reviewed a number of parcels of land for protection in 2006. Using the Conservancy's established criteria to evaluate lands for protection, the committee recommended that the board proceed with acquisition of two parcels in the Town of Knox; both were completed in 2006. One parcel, donated by Arne and Helen Loft, added 18 acres to our Winn Preserve; the other parcel, 138 acres donated by Stephen Brown, established a new preserve in the town that will be opened to the public in 2007.



Honorable Mention
Howard C. Olhous

The acquisition of a 38-acre parcel adjacent to both Indian Ladder Farm and Black Creek Marsh State Wildlife Management Area was completed in September, when the property was acquired from Peter Ten Eyck. It has been offered to the Department of Environmental Conservation and will eventually be transferred to the State as an addition to the Wildlife Management Area..

We completed work with two landowners in Glenville in December when we closed on conservation agreements

permanently protecting 141 acres from development. The favorable press we received on these protection efforts has generated interest from other landowners wishing to protect their lands. These two projects were partially funded by the New York Conservation Partnership Program administered by the Land Trust Alliance Northeast Program with support from the State of New York, and by the William Gundry Broughton Foundation.

The committees also took up some important policy discussions to provide guidance for our future land protection efforts. Our stewardship endowment policy was updated to reflect the true cost of protecting land in perpetuity and recommendations for raising the endowment were discussed. A preserve naming policy was adopted and templates were developed for documenting and managing the resources on both easements and preserves.

Membership / Development

Membership increased from 408 in 2005 to 520 in 2006, an increase of 27%. Not only was the number of members up in 2006, but total contributions increased as well. We thank all of you who contributed to our fund appeals. Our fund development plan calls for an annual increase of at least 150 members in each of the next four years.

We held our 2006 annual Gala in September at Marvin and Laura Bolotsky's historic home in Rensselaerville. The weather cooperated to make for an enjoyable and profitable fundraiser for the Conservancy. Generous contributions to the silent auction from many friends and members made for lively bidding and provided a significant increase in revenue compared to 2005. Our 2007 Gala will be held at the Pruy House in the Town of Colonie on Sunday, September 23.



Honorable Mention
Howard C. Olhous

Six outings were held in 2006 to introduce our members and friends to MHLC preserves and other natural areas in the region. In 2006 we plan to have some special interest outings for members to increase awareness of some of the "special places" we have protected.

Board Development

The Board Development Committee has the crucial role of providing leadership for the Conservancy. In 2006, the committee recruited two new members, one to fill Lois Porter's expiring term and the other to fill a vacant position. We regretted Lois' decision not to continue on the board, but appreciate her willingness to stay on as an active member of the Land Stewardship/Preservation Committee. In January 2007, we welcomed Judy Thom-

son and David Barnet as new board members. In addition to identifying and recruiting board members, the committee is responsible for providing board members with information to assist them in fulfilling their legal responsibilities as directors of a not-for-profit corporation. A revised position description from board members was drafted in 2006 to clarify some of these duties and this was approved by the board in January 2007. The committee is actively seeking potential board members who can bring a diversity of skills to the Conservancy and help us connect with our members.



Second prize: To Howard C. Ohlhous for this view of the Mohawk Valley and Adirondacks beyond, from Crawford Road in Princetown.

Public Information

We completed our efforts to have a consistent logo, tag line and brand image.

The committee published three newsletters in 2006, updating friends and members on the Conservancy's activities. Our website was updated and improved to provide timely information about our programs and activities. We encourage you to check our website mohawkhudson.org regularly for updates on outings and volunteer opportunities. Underwriting for "In Your Backyard" on WAMC expanded our outreach via the air waves. Newspapers across the region provided excellent coverage of many of our programs and activities. Our new 4 panel display made its debut at the Altamont Fair where we had a booth in the Grange Hall.



Honorable Mention
Matt Milless

Tri-Village Greenway

The committee had a very productive year in promoting land conservation activities and increasing awareness of our preserves in the Town of Bethlehem. In May, a benefit concert by the Friendship Singers raised over \$800 which was donated to the Conservancy for the installation of kiosks at our Phillipinkill, Swift, and Normanskill Preserves. These will be installed in the Spring of 2007.

Discussions with the Bethlehem High School Science Department led to interest in using the Swift Preserve as an outdoor classroom. During the summer, a team of teachers developed teaching materials that incorporate field trips to the preserve into the 9th and 10th grade earth science and biology curricula. It is anticipated that classes will start visiting the preserve in the Spring of 2007. Trails were developed at the Normanskill Preserve which provide scenic views of the Stevens Farm, as well as access to the creek. Further trail work is planned for the Preserve.

Monthly meetings, well-attended by local residents, energize this committee and provide opportunities for volunteers to actively participate in the work of the Conservancy. This committee meets on the second Tuesday of

(Continued on page 5)

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Thank you to all who provided financial support through generous contributions of cash and/or donations of goods and services.

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most months. New members are always welcome. Call 436-6346 for the date of the next meeting.

Mohawk Valley

The Mohawk Valley Committee kicked off the Mohawk Valley Views Contest in the spring to increase awareness of the scenic resources in Schenectady and Montgomery counties. With good publicity from the Schenectady Gazette, the contest attracted numerous entrants who regularly submitted pictures of places throughout the region that they considered picturesque.



Third prize: To Ronald Burch for this view of the Mohawk River and Glensville Hills from the Mabee Farm Historic Site in Rotterdam.

The committee, in cooperation with the Town of Glensville, also hosted a workshop by University at Albany Professor Gary Kleppel who discussed land use planning. This workshop was well received.



Hon. Mention
Neil Shapiro

In the Fall of 2006, John Davis, a University at Albany student, began working on a Geographic Information System (GIS) study of the open space resources in Montgomery County. John's work will provide the Conservancy with a detailed analysis of the natural, historic, and cultural resources to guide our future land conservation efforts in the county.

Executive Director's Message



Jill Knapp
Executive Director

Our progress in 2006 was remarkable! We surpassed our land protection goals for the year with the generous donations from Stephen Brown and Arne and Helen Loft. We completed the purchase of a 37-acre parcel adjacent to Indian Ladder Farm which enlarges the protection of the Black Creek Marsh in the Town of Guilderland. We culminated the year by closing on two easements with landowners in the Town of Glensville, which protect historically and geologically important lands. In total, we protected 333 acres of "special places" in 2006.

We revived our past educational programming efforts in 2006 when we hosted three educational programs. These programs, which attracted an average attendance of approximately 60 people, provided community officials and local residents with information on land use planning and open space protection. The evaluations of all programs were good and we plan to do more outreach in 2007.

We initiated a strategic planning process in 2006, recognizing that the Conservancy, as a "staffed" organization, had significantly increased its capacity and a new plan was needed. The Board of Directors adopted our new strategic plan at the February 2007 board meeting. This

ambitious plan provides guidance for the next four years as we further refine and develop the organization. We will strive to meet the ambitious goals we have set for ourselves in this plan: strategically conserving more land; enhancing the management of lands we currently protect; increasing awareness and public commitment to land conservation; and strengthening our organization. We have a lot to accomplish in the next few years, but I believe we are well on our way to saving many more special places throughout the Mohawk Hudson region.

I thank all of the board members, committee members, volunteers, and our Program Assistant, Helen Smith, who have contributed their time, effort, and expertise to making the past year such

a success. I look forward to what we can achieve together in 2007.

Jill Knapp

Treasurer's Report

The Conservancy again made excellent progress in 2006 against its plan to increase fund development to meet the costs of staff and its obligations for stewardship of land. Total Income more than doubled, with the most significant factor an increase in Contributions to nearly \$83,000 in 2006 versus nearly \$39,000 the prior year. Also noteworthy was a significant increase in income from our Gala.

	2006	2005	%chg
Total Income	183,584	90,251	134
Total Expenses	131,667	52,483	150
Net Ordinary Income	51,917	37,768	37

Total Expenses increased in line with our budget, more than double last year. Most of the increase is related to our having staff for the full year. Without our staff, it is unimaginable that we could have made so much progress in building a stronger Conservancy. Our Net Ordinary Income of nearly \$52,000 was much better than our break-even budget for the year, although approximately \$35,000 of this was due to use of Restricted Grants received in prior years whose income we recognized in 2006 by meeting the restrictions.



Honorable Mention
Howard C. Olhous

Looking ahead to 2007, we have again planned a break-even budget with the hope that, once again, we will gain many new supporters, and that all our members will consider increasing their level of support so we can improve over the budget. The Conservancy has responsibility for

perpetual stewardship of lands it accepts for preservation. Meeting this responsibility will not be possible without increasingly generous support.

Jeff Leon



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Jill Knapp, *Executive Director*; Helen Smith, *Program Assistant*

Coming Events

May 5, 1:30 PM - Hike for the Hearty

Explore our new Schiffendecker Farm Preserve. Call 436-6346 for more information.

May 6, 12:00 - 4:00 PM - Albany History Fair

Visit our display at the fair. Albany Heritage Area Visitors Center, Quackenbush Square at the corner of Clinton and Broadway in downtown Albany.

May 16 - Annual Meeting

Join us for our Annual Meeting and dinner at the Stockade Inn in Schenectady. Our guest speaker will be Carol Ash, Acting Commissioner of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. Watch for your invitation or call 436-6346 for reservations.

May 20, 8:00 AM - Birds and Bagels

Expert birdwatcher Frank Murphy will lead this Rensselaerville outing. Call Helene Goldberger at 797-3139.

June 2, 2:00-4:00 PM - Hike with Your Hound.

Bring your family and your dog for a leisurely afternoon stroll at our Phillipinkill Preserve.

September 23 - Our Annual Country Gala

Save the date for this festive event to be held on the beautiful grounds of the historic Pruyn House in Colonie.