

eastern new york
Conservation News

SPRING/SUMMER 2014

CELEBRATING

60
YEARS

OF CONSERVATION SUCCESS

— Eastern New York —



Rick Werwaiss, Executive Director of the Eastern New York Chapter © TNC

Our Journey Together

Eastern New York is where The Nature Conservancy first got its start when a group of concerned citizens came together to protect the beautiful Mianus River Gorge from the threat of development. Since then, our conservation work has expanded to all 50 states and 35 countries around the world.

Locally, our work spans across the forests and waters of the Hudson River Valley and Delaware River Basin and encompasses the crossroads of major northeast mountain ranges. We conserve not only the last great places, but also those places that provide the full range of nature's benefits including clean water, clean air, wildlife habitat and economic prosperity.

As our organization has grown, so has our conservation vision. Our focus has shifted from our early protection work of safeguarding individual properties to securing entire habitats. As you read about some of our historic milestones and learn more about our current work. I hope you celebrate all that your support enables us to accomplish.

Looking ahead, there is still much more we need to do to meet the environmental challenges of our day. We will tackle these challenges just as we have done in the past— informed by sound science, bolstered by innovative partnerships, and made possible by your generous and ongoing support.

Thank you for being a part of this journey. I look forward to what we will accomplish together over the next 60 years in Eastern New York and beyond.

With gratitude,

Rick Werwaiss

Rick Werwaiss

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Here are some of the milestones in the Conservancy's 60-year history in Eastern New York. They highlight tangible conservation results and illustrate how our effectiveness is driven by science, strengthened by partnerships, and made possible through the generosity of our supporters.



The Nature Conservancy is founded.

1951

1950s

One-third of Eastern New York's preserves, including, West Branch, Lordsland, and 15 others that are still owned today are the result of purchases made between 1970 and 1975.



Early 70s

1970s

The discovery of the world's healthiest population of globally imperiled dwarf wedge mussel is made and the federally listed endangered dwarf wedge mussel is found in the Neversink River/Delaware River Basin.



A first acquisition of 281 acres in the Southern Lake Champlain Valley includes more than two miles of riverfront on the Poultney River. Today, the Conservancy manages more than 9000 acres around the river in both New York and Vermont.

1990

1990

1990s

Neversink River Bioreserve, a community-based, landscape scale approach to conservation, launches.

A 35-acre donation to the Conservancy for land on the Neversink River becomes an initial part of the Neversink River Preserve.

1995

1996



Release of a Conservancy-authored report warns that one-third of New York's forests do not have enough successful young trees surviving to ensure that these forests remain for future generations.

2012

Eastern New York chapter receives charter, becoming the first chapter of The Nature Conservancy.

Arthur Butler Memorial Sanctuary is donated, making it the Conservancy's first donated preserve.



Land acquisition, a key protection tool, begins with a 60-acre purchase along the Mianus River Gorge. The Conservancy provides \$7,500 to finance the purchase, with the provision that the loan be repaid for use in other conservation efforts.

A modest 10 acre purchase marks the Conservancy's first protection project in the Catskills and eventually expands to include nearly 7000 acres of direct protection.

A partnership with Rockland County forms to protect nearly 500 acres along the Hudson River. Today, the Conservancy continues to work with partners to protect and restore the Hudson River.

1954

1955

1961

1969

1960s

The Conservancy purchases and protects 8,175 acres on the Shawangunk Ridge that are now the Minnewaska State Park.

Eastern NY acquires 12,500 acre Santononi Preserve in the Adirondacks and donates the land to New York State the following year, representing the Conservancy's first land acquisition in the Adirondacks.



An initial gift of \$150,000 creates the Marilyn Simpson Stewardship Endowment.

Albany Pine Bush Commission is established to protect, restore and manage the globally rare Pine Barrens.

"Islands to Highlands" capital campaign launches to raise \$2,000,000 for acquisitions and stewardship both in New York and in Latin America.

1970

1971

1987

1988

1988

1980s

The Shawangunk Ridge Biodiversity Partnership is created to preserve the sensitive wildlife habitat and other natural resources of the Shawangunks.

The Conservancy develops Conservation by Design, a collaborative, science-driven approach for mission success.

The Conservancy partners with the Open Space Institute to acquire Sam's Point Preserve – 5,400 acres sheltering one of the best examples of ridgetop dwarf Pine Barrens in the world.



The Wilton Wildlife Preserve & Park is established as a special community-based conservation program.



1994

1995

1996

1996

Two key Eastern New York programs – the Shawangunk Ridge Program (2001) and the Catskill Mountain Program (2002) – begin.

Removal of the Cuddebackville Dam on the Neversink River is a first for the Conservancy as well as a first dam removal for environmental reasons in New York State.



The Conservancy successfully works with New York City and the states of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware to implement sustainable water flows in the Delaware River Basin, one of the Conservancy's first sustainable water management projects.

The Conservancy authors the Northern Shawangunk Ridge Fire Management Plan to address the need for a more proactive approach to fire management and to protect the ecological integrity of the Shawangunk environment.

The Conservancy is instrumental to the passage of a new law that regulates water withdrawals from New York's rivers, lakes and streams.

2001-02

2004

2008

2011

2011

2000s

The Conservancy launches *Partners Restoring the Hudson*, a public-private partnership, to create a comprehensive, federally-recognized restoration and resiliency plan for the Hudson River Estuary.

Using state-of-the-art technology and science, the Conservancy leads the development and adoption of the New York Streamflow Estimator Tool which enables water users and regulatory agencies to evaluate impacts of water withdrawals.



Development of a climate adaptation toolkit to help natural resource managers and other decision makers make climate-smart decisions across New York gets underway.

Have a favorite ENY milestone that didn't make the list?

Share it with us @ eny@tnc.org.

2012

2013

2013

Water for Tomorrow

Smart Choices for Water Resources

John F. Kennedy believed that “anyone who can solve the problems of water will be worthy of two Nobel prizes – one for peace and one for science.”

The Nature Conservancy also believes that the solutions will require *everyone* to be involved, and that the U.S. can – and should – lead the movement to secure fresh water for the world.

Why the big concern? For starters, by 2050 over 70% of people on Earth will live in an urban area. Yet more than half of the world’s largest global cities are already water-stressed. In New York, more than 15 billion gallons of water are taken daily from our lakes, rivers and groundwater for drinking, industry, farming and power. Decisions about these individual competing uses are often made without considering their cumulative impact.

New York has never had a framework to make sure we don’t run out of this precious resource.

We need a plan.

To ensure that New Yorkers will have enough of this critical element to thrive in the future, towns, communities and businesses must together chart a more sustainable pathway to growth. To help meet this challenge, The Nature Conservancy is using state-of-the-art technology and science to ensure that water withdrawals from our lakes, rivers and streams are done in a comprehensive and smart way.

The Conservancy recently released its recommendations for water management in the tributaries of the Great Lakes. These recommendations represent a scientific protocol for determining how much water can be withdrawn to meet people’s needs and grow our economy without adverse environmental impacts. They join similarly developed recommendations covering much of New York and Pennsylvania for the Upper Ohio, Susquehanna and Delaware River Basins. The recommendations are part of our Water for Tomorrow initiative, which aims to reimagine how New York’s fresh water is managed.

To make good choices requires seeing the full picture. Tools and information like the ones being developed by The Nature Conservancy and its partners will help move New York toward a future with enough water for everyone.

But knowing where your water comes from is the first step to protecting it, so find out today. Currently, only 23% of Americans know what lake, river or pond lies at the other end of their faucet. We need to change that. If you don’t know where to start, try water.nature.org. Be part of the social change that our planet needs. It’s time for some #liquidcourage.



Action for a Healthy Hudson

The Hudson River Estuary, the most majestic and famous part of the Hudson River, is a long arm of the sea stretching 153 miles from New York Harbor to the Troy Dam. With tidal flows that provide a changing mixture of fresh and salt waters, this biologically rich environment is home to a diverse array of plants and animals that depend upon its natural rhythms and productive waters.

In our Hudson Valley region, approximately sixteen million people enjoy – and depend on – the estuary for drinking water, food, travel, commerce, manufacturing and recreation.

Although the Hudson River is far cleaner than it was 40 years ago, many environmental challenges still face the river today. Our human “built” environment has exacted a steep toll on the natural habitats like floodplains, tidal wetlands and shallow water areas that protect and buffer our communities. While working to address the consequences of past activities, communities are simultaneously grappling with the unprecedented storm damage from severe weather, sewage overflows and other challenges. With rising sea levels and increasingly frequent and severe storms expected in the coming decades, these pressures are expected to multiply.

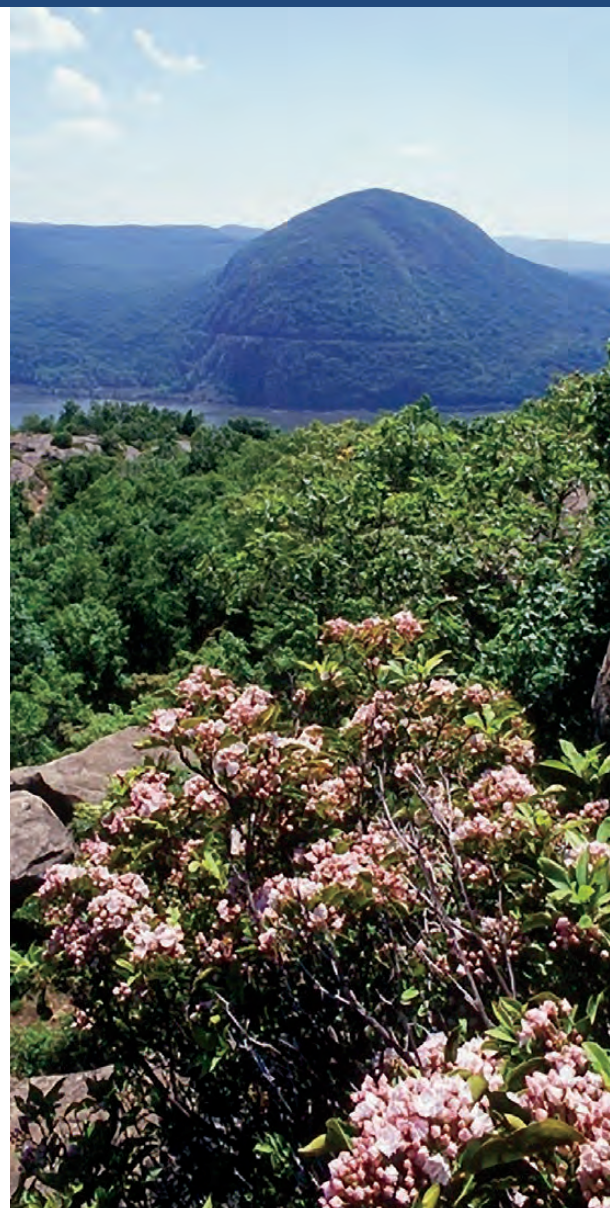
In 2013, recognizing the need to restore the estuary to a healthier condition, The Nature Conservancy established *Partners Restoring the Hudson*, a vital partnership comprised of more than 22 regional environmental organizations and local communities in collaboration with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New York State Department of State and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to create a federally recognized Hudson River Restoration Plan. A single, comprehensive plan will provide a shared vision to guide future action and investment in the Hudson River.

In January, scientists began working with a project team from Columbia University to develop a more complete understanding of the river’s important habitat patterns and the way it is used by fish, wildlife and people.

“For the first time ever, more than 170 sources of spatial data related to the habitats and infrastructure of the Hudson River Estuary have been compiled into a single database,” says Andy Peck, Freshwater Project Manager at The Nature Conservancy. “Next, we will integrate and analyze this data to create a comprehensive map showing the current location, quality, and quantity of the Hudson’s most critical and ecologically sensitive resources.”

Armed with this knowledge, the *Partners* will then determine what specific actions or projects would best protect and restore the estuary, as well as where those projects should occur. Expert scientific teams are now identifying “ecological goals” for the Hudson – the quantifiable project targets that are necessary for a healthy estuary and reduced community risk in the face of climate change and rising sea levels.

This ambitious partnership is driving critically important science, conservation, community engagement and policy outcomes that could reverse devastating ecological losses and protect our beautiful Hudson and all that it provides us, now and into the future.



Top: View of the Hudson © TNC
Bottom: Sunset at Croton Park © STEVE STANNE



Faces of Eastern New York



Cameron Icard © BARBARA BANKS

Like many of the Conservancy's supporters, Donor Relations Manager **Cameron Icard** delights in nature. She appreciates the pressing need to protect our lands and waters, locally in the Hudson Valley and the Delaware River Basin and beyond, in order to meet the challenges that lie ahead for people and nature.

Before joining the Conservancy, Cameron worked as a major gifts officer for Farm Sanctuary, a leading shelter and protection agency for food animals and in real estate in Sarasota, Florida. Cameron has a passion for community involvement and has served on the boards of several Florida arts and human service organizations.

Cameron enjoys hiking, cycling, cinema, and vegan cooking. She relishes time with her family and their two rescued dogs. When she wants to be completely self-indulgent, she curls up with hot tea and a good book.



Michele DeRossi © JOSEPH VIDARTE

Philanthropy Coordinator **Michele DeRossi** worked as a special events and fundraising coordinator for the Saratoga Springs Preservation Foundation before joining the Conservancy. She holds an undergraduate degree in communications and art history.

Prior to settling in the Hudson Valley, Michele was fortunate that her work with the Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival allowed her to travel extensively throughout the U.S. and several other countries. An avid skier, backpacker, hiker and traveler, she is passionate about preserving the lands and places she loves, both regionally and abroad.

"Having grown up in the Southern Adirondacks, I love learning more about the Conservancy's expansive body of work throughout this area and in turn, sharing that knowledge with the people who want to actively make a difference in its future."

Joining Our Board

The Eastern New York Chapter welcomes Alan Gallo to its Board of Trustees. Mr. Gallo became involved with The Nature Conservancy through the Eastern NY Conservation Committee and especially appreciates the Conservancy's scientific and solid business approach to conservation issues. A 25-year veteran of American Express, Mr. Gallo has risen through the corporation to his current position as Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer of Global Corporate Services and Enterprise Growth where he oversees more than 500 finance professionals globally and leads several finance-wide initiatives.

Also a certified public accountant, Mr. Gallo holds undergraduate and graduate degrees from NYU's Stern School of Business. In 2010, he was recognized with the Stern School's Beta Gamma Sigma Distinguished Alumnus Award. An avid runner and triathlete, Mr. Gallo resides in Brooklyn with his wife and two children where he also serves on the boards of Turning Point and The League Education & Treatment Center.



GET OUTDOORS!



Left to right: Christman Sanctuary © JEFF PERKINS; Spring Brook, a tributary of the Neversink River © MARI-BETH DELUCIA; Jack-in-the-Pulpit © ANDY NELSON

Connect with the natural world at some of Eastern New York's most popular preserves. We have chosen a few of our favorite places. So lace up your boots and explore the outdoors!

Wander the Appalachian Trail in Pawling

A stone's throw away from Metro North's Appalachian Trail stop, visitors enjoy a tranquil hike along the Pawling Nature Reserve's world famous path. The more than 10 miles of trails provide a range of hiking experiences from one-hour to full day hikes. An uncommon variety of plant and animal life thrive here. Beautiful second-growth oaks dominate the area, accompanied by wetlands, maple and hemlock forests and fields.

Marvel at Waterfalls in Duanesburg

Christman Sanctuary, a small, well-hidden jewel outside of Albany offers its own rewards – a 30-foot waterfall and several lesser cascades along the Bozen Kill creek. Alternate layers of sandstone and shale are found in the large pool at the foot of the waterfall. Along the preserve's relatively easy trails, visitors pass through a series of plantations: locust, cedar, spruce, red pine and white pine.

Find Forests and Fields in Cuddebackville

Along the Neversink River, lies the Neversink River Preserve where visitors can wander along the river, and through floodplain forest, mixed hardwood forest, successional mixed hardwoods and fields, and along swamps, streams and beaver ponds. A variety of beautiful wildflowers — bee-balm, cardinal flower, Dutchman's breeches, blue flag, closed gentian, trout lily and many others – can be found in the forest and meadows. Along the river, you may see common mergansers, wood ducks, osprey, blue herons, or a bald eagle. In the forest and fields, listen for numerous warblers, songbirds, and more.

Take a Guided Hike in Mount Kisco

Downloadable audio guides found on the trails at the Arthur Butler Sanctuary educate visitors about this natural area. The generally rocky land with several outcrops and boulders provides a reminder of the region's glacial past. Nearly five miles of trails traverse the deciduous forest and its diverse habitats – vernal pools, red maple swamps and conifer stands. The hawk watch, a popular destination during peak viewing season (mid-September through mid-May), offers wonderful views to Long Island Sound and western Connecticut.

Explore a Boardwalk in Stuyvesant

A freshwater tidal swamp is formed only rarely, when the banks of a river rise at a very gentle angle to flat land. At Mill Creek, a tributary of the Hudson River, a freshwater tide washes twice a day up the creek and over much of the land area of the Lewis A. Swyer Preserve. The preserve protects one of five sizeable freshwater tidal swamps along the Hudson River. A half-mile boardwalk leads visitors through three natural communities: a freshwater tidal swamp, a freshwater tidal marsh and freshwater intertidal mudflats.

Spot Ferns in Niskayuna

Both in the forest and along the streams of the popular Lisha Kill Natural Area, visitors can find flourishing stands of a variety of ferns. The Christmas fern, so named because its small leaflets are shaped like Christmas stockings, is easily recognizable. Ostrich fern that grow between 4 and 6 feet tall are found along the moist bank of the Lisha Kill. Other common plants found in the site's hemlock dominated forest community include wild strawberry and sarsaparilla, speedwell, fly honey-suckle, Jack-in-the-Pulpit and skunk cabbage.

ON THE WEB »

Learn more about our preserves and the places we protect at nature.org/eastern.



Your legacy for generations to come.

Anyone can make a difference by leaving a lasting gift to conservation. By including The Nature Conservancy in your will or estate plan, the expression of your individual values will have a real impact on the future of the natural world.

To learn more about making a gift that provides a legacy for future generations, contact The Nature Conservancy today:

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