



You're a valued partner

As someone who has protected land through a conservation easement, or purchased land with an easement on it, you're playing a vital role in preserving the Hudson Valley's world-renowned landscape. Scenic Hudson is proud to have partnered with you and other enlightened landowners to permanently safeguard nearly 10,000 acres. Whether it's noteworthy for its soils, wildlife habitat, views, ecosystem or as a backdrop to an historic landmark—your land is special to us.

Scenic Hudson wants to strengthen its relationship with you. We can provide advice, referrals and sometimes even materials. Let me know your questions, comments or suggestions. Thanks.

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Conservation Easement Manager
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We're here to help

Let Scenic Hudson's staff be a resource for you as you care for your easement-protected property. *Greener Valley* will share information and answer questions about conservation-easement issues, such as:

- Habitat restoration
- Native and invasive plants
- Wildlife management
- Erosion control
- Agricultural topics





ON THE LOOKOUT

Invasive plants can destroy healthy land

Across the valley invasive plant species are waging war with our native flora and fauna. What's at stake? These fast-spreading plants can choke out the microbial, fungal and plant and animal species necessary for a healthy landscape.

Just as one or two foods aren't sufficient to sustain humans, one or two plants aren't as beneficial for the land as a diversity of vegetation.

Help halt the spread of invasives

1. Don't use invasives, and remove them where you can.
2. Use native plants.
3. Encourage your local nursery to stock natives, not invasives.
4. Look at the list below of most common invasives to avoid.
5. Learn more from the New York Flora Atlas (atlas.nyflora.org).

Plants to be avoided—an abbreviated list

Tree of heaven • honeysuckle • garlic mustard • Norway maple • black locust • purple loosestrife • multiflora rose • sycamore maple • Japanese/giant knotweed • giant hogweed • pachysandra • wisteria • ivy • oriental bittersweet • bittersweet vines • Japanese barberry • cork tree • Russian olive • autumn olive

Consult your local Cornell Cooperative Extension office or the NYS Flora Atlas (atlas.nyflora.org) for specific species information.

In our next issue, we will provide facts about native plants.



TREE-OF-HEAVEN

Barbara Tokarska-Guzik*



HONEYSUCKLE

Charles T. Bryson*



PURPLE LOOSESTRIFE

Steve Dewey*



ASIAN BITTERSWEET

David M. Diaz



WISTERIA

Wendy VanDyk Evans*

*Invasives photos: www.invasive.org

NEW INCENTIVE FOR EASEMENT DONATIONS

Congress and the President have enacted a tremendous expansion of the federal tax incentive for conservation-easement donations.

The new law:

- Raises the deduction a landowner can take for donating a conservation easement from 30 percent of their income in any year to 50 percent.
- Allows qualifying farmers to deduct up to 100 percent of their income.
- Increases the number of years over which a donor can take these deductions from six years to 16 years.

BIG VICTORY FOR CONSERVATION

This is a tremendous gain for land conservation and sets a new benchmark for the importance it's given by our elected officials. It's hoped that the new incentives will increase interest in land preservation and appropriately scaled development across the country.

YOUR HELP NEEDED TO MAKE THESE CHANGES PERMANENT

The current bill only applies to easements donated through 2007. Land conservation organizations throughout America are working hard to make these changes permanent—and we need your help.

Last year New State enacted its own conservation easement tax credit, allowing an annual maximum of \$5,000 per taxpayer. Contact David Diaz for more details about this and the federal tax deduction.

For additional information about these and other important tax-law issues, please visit our Web site at www.scenichudson.org or the Land Trust Alliance at www.lta.org. Before making decisions about your land, seek professional legal and tax advice.





Scenic Hudson's Mission

Scenic Hudson is dedicated to protecting, preserving and restoring the Hudson and the riverfront as a public and natural resource.

www.scenichudson.org

LANDOWNER Q&A— Dave Fraleigh

Dave Fraleigh's family has been working Rose Hill Farm in Red Hook, Dutchess County, since 1798. He took over operations from his father in 1979. In 1998 Scenic Hudson purchased a conservation easement on the 124-acre apple orchard.

Q: How hard is it to be a farmer today?

A: There are so many challenges, including weather, labor, markets and location, and you can't control most of these. But probably the hardest thing is picking a business model. You have to carefully pick your model and be able to adapt to changes in the market. After expanding the orchard with funds from the conservation easement we sold to Scenic Hudson, we had three hard years. The first year we had serious problems with disease, second year we had severe hail, third year we had disease and hail. It was really tough. Years ago, Bob Greig [of Greig Farm in Red Hook] said, "To want to farm is a congenital defect." I think I agree.

Q: Are you glad you worked with Scenic Hudson?

A: Yes, it was good decision for us. Looking back I would probably make a couple of changes, but it's hard to foresee what's going to happen in 10 years.

Q: Why should the public buy local produce?

A: If people want to see farmland in the future, then buying local is really important. There are also environmental costs associated with transporting products over long distances.

Q: Do you have a particularly memorable story about life on the farm?

A: We have a large Kindelder sprayer that's really better on flat land; our land is hilly. My father rolled the sprayer over twice, and I rolled it once. Very scary situations, but we learned our lesson. We widened the axles, and the Kindelder hasn't rolled over since.

Q: How do you think the Hudson Valley will look in a decade?

A: There will be more houses and traffic, and overall there will be fewer farmers and less farmland. The farms that are still here will either be huge or very small. Traditional agriculture like dairy and corn will be even less common than now. Fruit and horse farms will probably be more common.

Notwithstanding the pressures on Hudson Valley farming, through the commitment and vision of people like Dave Fraleigh and you, agriculture has a bright future here.