



Why Do We Monitor?

You've probably come to expect the annual phone calls and letters announcing our monitoring season. But you still may wonder why we need to visit your property every year.

Scenic Hudson has a legal obligation to ensure that the protections outlined in each conservation easement are maintained. Conservation easements seek to preserve resources that bring "public benefit," which means Scenic Hudson must protect those resources for the good of all. Not doing so could jeopardize the land's natural, scenic or ecological integrity, as well as the effectiveness of conservation easements as land-protection tools and our status as a legal land trust.

The I.R.S. and the U.S. Senate have become intimately involved with scrutinizing conservation easements, making it even more important for Scenic Hudson and

landowners to understand their roles in guaranteeing that easements are respected.

Happily, Scenic Hudson works with owners, like you, who are just as interested in conserving their properties as we are!

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Conservation easement in Columbia County



Unhealthy woodland
(note hay bales preventing erosion)



Healthier woodland

Which Woods are Healthy?

Many of us have woodlands that might appear unruly, cluttered with fallen logs, sticks and undergrowth.

Landowners often think they're doing something good when they remove these, but actually they may be causing harm.

While removing debris from areas prone to forest fire may be necessary, don't overlook the benefits of decomposing wood, leaves and vines. They release essential nutrients into the soil, directly supporting myriad animals, insects, plants and fungi. Cleared of nutrient-rich debris, a woodland can quickly become an ecological desert, plagued with erosion and poor water quality.

What about pesky shrubs and saplings blocking views?

Native shrubs are essential to the woodland ecosystem, helping to hold soil and provide food for birds and other animals. Saplings are next-generation trees that help nurture wildlife and soil. Trees and shrubs also help combat global climate change.

That said, removing trees and debris as part of a forest-management plan written by a qualified forester or forest/natural resources manager can improve a woodland's health. These plans often include replanting, a critical component in caring for your woodlands. For a list of qualified foresters, go to www.dec.ny.gov/docs/lands_forests_pdf/coopforlist.pdf or call the NYS DEC at 845 256 3076.

New Partners Protecting Farmland

We've continued to gain new partners since our last newsletter. Thanks to the conservation ethic of a landowner and the hard work of Scenic Hudson, the Open Space Institute and Ulster County, a large multigenerational Rondout Valley farm has been permanently protected from sprawling development with conservation easements. The 325-acre Davenport Farm produces melons, pumpkins, sweet corn and other vegetables sold at a family-run farmstand. The farm borders Esopus Creek, an important Hudson River tributary.



Incentives for Easement Donations Not Yet Extended

Last December the U.S. Senate passed the 2007 Farm Bill, which included an extension of tax incentives for donated conservation easements. It also helps easement donors with moderate incomes realize more tax benefits.

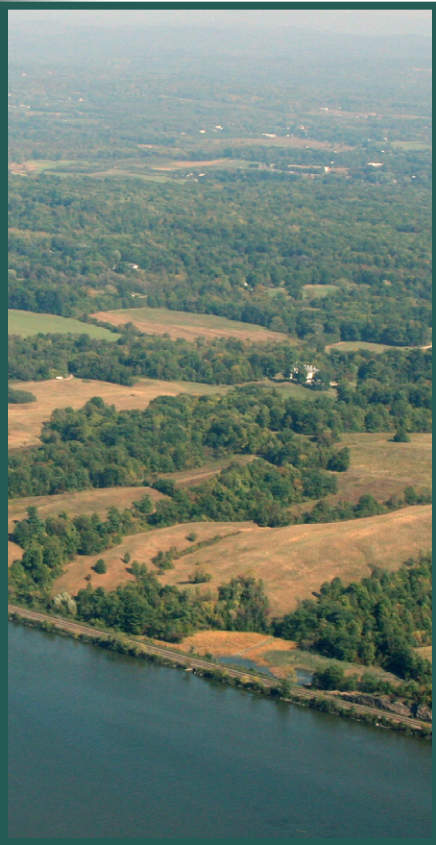
However, it is not law yet!

The bill now is being vetted in the House of Representatives. Although the extension has been omitted from the House legislation, a separate bill (HR 1576) has been introduced to approve it, and our Hudson Valley representatives are cosponsors.

Please write your representative to thank them for supporting HR 1576. Also urge them to write to House Ways and Means Chairman Charles Rangel or Ranking Member Jim McCrery to help ensure the extension is included in the final Farm Bill.

For a sample letter, visit www.lta.org/publicpolicy/tax_incentives_updates.htm#policyhowtohelp





Rokeby Preserve

Scenic Hudson's Mission

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

101 Conservation Easements

9,953 Protected Acres

www.scenichudson.org

LANDOWNER Q&A—

Wint Aldrich and his family in 1994 placed a conservation easement on Rokeby Preserve, their historic 413-acre property in Red Hook, Dutchess County. Mr. Aldrich is deputy commissioner of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.

Q: Your family's history at Rokeby is quite long. Who was the first owner?

A: Peter Schuyler was granted the land (and much of what is now known as the Town of Red Hook) by King James II in 1688. Schuyler was the first mayor of Albany.

Q: What has the property been used for?

A: Farming has been its most common use. It began in the early 1700s when Colonel Henry Beekman settled and subdivided the entire property, which was many thousands of acres, into 150-acre farmsteads. Farming continued through the 1800s and 1900s. We closed our dairy farm in the 1960s but have recently created a small organic-produce operation that is run by my niece.

Q: How has the land been passed down through the generations?

A: Many people have been confused by the numerous name changes on the property deeds. We have what can be called a "matrilineal history." In nearly every instance, the land has been passed from woman to woman. The names have changed many times throughout our family's history because all the women married and assumed their husband's last name.

Q: Are you happy you and your family protected Rokeby with a conservation easement?

A: I couldn't be happier. Protecting viable and spectacular lands from poor development is very important to me. I always wanted to protect our land and legacy, and was very excited when we finally had the chance to actually do it. We were even able to use some of the proceeds from the conservation easement to repair part of the main house (built in 1811), which was in need of some care. It's important to note that without the help of Martin and Toni Sosnoff, as well as Scenic Hudson, neither Poets' Walk Park nor Rokeby Preserve would have been protected.