Mission Statement

The Hudson Highlands Land Trust is a community-based, accredited land conservation organization devoted to protecting and preserving the natural resources, rural character and scenic beauty of the Hudson Highlands.
Connecting Land, People & Wildlife

Dear Friends,

With your support, we took a great stride forward in implementing our Strategic Plan in 2018. We increased our Land Conservation focus on connecting the dots between already conserved lands. Plus, our Municipal Planning and Education/Outreach efforts drove a groundswell of community input into land-use decisions.

Land Conservation: Our vision for the Hudson Highlands landscape is more ambitious than ever. By the end of 2019, our conservation portfolio will have grown by 1,000 acres in just three years! Most of that land was acquired to build buffers and connections between existing preserves. These connections matter—they ensure quality habitat for our wildlife and quality of life for our communities. You will read about one of these transactions in this report.

Municipal Planning: As proximity to New York City places increasing pressure on our undeveloped land, we have also seen a rise in community engagement in land-use decisions.

We now have active Conservation Councils or Boards in all of the towns in our service area. With our help, these groups are creating essential tools for conservation decision-making, like the Natural Resource Inventory in Putnam Valley and the Natural Heritage Project in Cornwall.

Education and Outreach: Our sold-out 2018 Water Forum and 2019 Wildlife Forum demonstrate the strong level of interest in protecting our natural resources. These events serve to educate our community on these critical issues, and provide opportunities for participants to learn from each other by sharing ideas and personal experiences.

Thank you—our supporters, volunteers and community members—for caring enough to make our collective vision of the Hudson Highlands a reality.

Nancy Berner, Chair
Michelle Smith, Executive Director
Creating Green Corridors

Many conserved lands in the Hudson Highlands are fragmented, which threatens our wildlife habitat, ecosystem health and scenic vistas. Our most recent strategic plan called for an upgrade to our Legacy Landscapes Plan (see page 6) with a focus on connecting protected lands, ensuring these areas can thrive as healthy networks of vibrant, interconnected ecosystems, which are critical to our wildlife. In 2018, we started to put this plan into action by beginning to identify and conserve high priority lands that will ensure robust green corridors between isolated parks, preserves and other protected areas.

Granite Mountain: In 2017, we conserved more than 350 acres on Granite Mountain in Putnam Valley, creating a new Preserve for the community. Since then, we’ve been working to improve the trail system and make the Preserve more accessible to the public. In 2018, we expanded the Preserve with the addition of an adjacent 40-acre parcel, and we are working with Putnam County on a management agreement for their adjoining land. Connecting these lands will bring the Preserve to more than 500 acres in total.

Appalachian Trail: We increased our focus on protecting lands adjoining the Appalachian Trail (A.T.). The A.T. runs through our mission area, connecting state parks in the area, and we are working to keep this important corridor green for both wildlife and people. In 2018, with support from the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, we partnered with private landowners in Garrison to conserve a 72-acre parcel adjoining the A.T., a portion of which is a critical buffer around the Trail—permanently protecting a high-priority parcel on Philipstown’s Open Space Inventory.

“On the East Coast, the A.T. is the backbone of the wilderness—a place where all protected lands are connected to something greater,” Nicole Wooten, our Natural Resources Manager, said in an interview with Journeys Magazine. “[It is] a large landscape that really is important beyond just the East Coast of the U.S. Ecologically speaking, the Trail is part of the heartbeat of the wilderness along these [American] continents.”

We are grateful to our land conservation partners in these efforts, including generous landowners who wanted to conserve their properties; New York State Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation; Appalachian Trail Conservancy; Town of Putnam Valley; Town of Philipstown; Open Space Institute; Badey & Watson Surveying & Engineering; Scenic Hudson; and Dutchess Land Conservancy.

Partnerships are Essential to Building Green Corridors

We partner with other land trusts, landowners and conservation investors to bring connectivity projects to fruition.

Legacy Landscapes Plan

Preserving our iconic views, cherished lands and vital natural resources

Our Legacy Landscapes Plan, established in 2011 and updated in 2015, identifies land protection priorities throughout our mission area. Based on comprehensive analysis of all the parcels within our mission area, this initiative focuses our land conservation efforts on implementing appropriate solutions for those landscapes deemed too important to risk. We work in partnership with private landowners, regional conservation organizations and government agencies to achieve these goals.

Legacy Landscapes Plan Scorecard

Priority parcels that we have directly conserved or acquired, or that we have facilitated the permanent preservation of by another conservation entity, are shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conservation Projects</th>
<th>Acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Protected in 2018</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protected in 2017</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protected in 2016</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protected in 2015</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>Protected in 2013</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Protected in 2012</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protected in 2011</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Partnering to Protect Breakneck

In 2018, we established a new partnership with the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference’s (NYNJTC’s) Breakneck Ridge Trail Stewards program to help teach hikers best practices for natural resource conservation in this popular public park. Breakneck Ridge, which is within Hudson Highlands State Park in Putnam and Dutchess Counties, has experienced an upsurge in popularity—NYNJTC estimates hundreds of thousands of visitors a year. Unfortunately, ecological degradation has become an unintended consequence of this trail’s popularity.

The Trail Stewards program aims to educate and assist the public in the safe, responsible and enjoyable use of Breakneck Ridge, which has been ranked the most popular hiking destination in the country by trails.com. As part of our ongoing partnership, we help educate Trail Stewards on the precious natural resources of the Hudson Highlands and how hikers can protect them. We also jointly host quarterly workshops at the NYC REI store in SoHo for future visitors to Breakneck Ridge. “Our focus is on the trails and the people who use them, and our collaboration with HHLT allows our team to prepare hikers in NYC before they even get to Breakneck Ridge. This partnership has allowed improved natural resource protection training for Trail Stewards stationed at the trailhead. That knowledge is, in turn, parlayed to tens of thousands of visitors.”

Partnering for Connectivity in Putnam Valley

Like many of our land transactions, our 2018 acquisition of 149+ undeveloped acres near Granite Mountain Preserve in Putnam Valley is the result of a successful conservation partnership among us, the landowners, and a government agency (New York State Parks). This acquisition has protected woodlands, streams and hiking trails, as well as safeguarded an important wildlife corridor, all while creating a larger contiguous recreation area for the Putnam Valley community.

The property adjoins the Agatha A. Durland Scout Reservation and neighboring Clarence Fahnestock Memorial State Park. The Boy Scouts of America Westchester-Putnam Council have offered to partner with us on projects at the new property, including improving trails and enhancing access to parkland. The Scouts have already been an enthusiastic and effective partner at Granite Mountain Preserve, initiating the construction of a new parking lot kiosk, which was an Eagle Scout project.

This acquisition also celebrates the legacy of a conservation-minded family, the Rosenbaums, who owned the property for decades. We had been building a relationship with Lester and Sally Rosenbaum for several years, as their property had been identified as a conservation priority through our Legacy Landscapes Plan (see page 5). When Mr. Rosenbaum passed away at the end of 2017, the family was looking to sell the property and hoping for a conservation solution. We recognized the urgent need to conserve it in order to safeguard the link to Fahnestock State Park. Now, the Rosenbaums’ land has been permanently protected for the enjoyment of generations to come.

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“The New York-New Jersey Trail Conference is honored to partner with HHLT on initiatives to protect Breakneck Ridge and Hudson Highlands State Parks,” said Hank Osborn, Regional Programs Manager and East Hudson Program Coordinator for NYNJTC.
Creating Planning Tools for Conservation

With new staff dedicated to public policy and planning, we were able to deepen our engagement with municipalities on natural resources and open space planning, as well as watershed protection strategies.

Putnam Valley—Natural Resources: In 2017, we received support from the Hudson River Estuary Program (HREP) to help the Town of Putnam Valley develop a Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) to guide land-use decision-making in the town. The NRI was completed in 2018, with HHLT working in partnership with Cornell University’s Natural Resources department and the town’s Commission for the Conservation of the Environment. More than two-dozen GIS maps and narrative reports detailing the various natural, cultural, scenic and historical features of the town were developed. The town officially accepted the NRI and maps in early 2019.

Councilwoman Wendy Whetsel said of the project in the Putnam County News and Recorder, “This has been the most comprehensive project I’ve ever seen taken within the town. The mapping that came out of this was absolutely amazing.”

Cornwall—Open Spaces: In collaboration with the Orange County Land Trust, and also with funding from HREP, we have been working with the Towns of Cornwall and Blooming Grove to develop Open Space Inventories, building upon the NRI work already completed in both towns. These inventories will identify the most important open spaces for conservation solutions. In 2018, we facilitated community leadership discussions and collected public input to help the towns identify and prioritize open spaces that are important to the community. This work will be completed in mid-2019.

Philipstown—Water Resources: We are leading a clean water initiative updating a decade-old water resource study and forming a community coalition to advance water resource protection strategies. This work is supported through a grant from the Land Trust Alliance and NYS Department of Environmental Conservation Partnership Program. In 2018, we mapped the land areas that are most important to the protection of key water resources. In 2019, we will conduct tests of aquatic life in two key streams—Clove Creek, a major tributary to Fishkill Creek, and Foundry Brook, the water supply for the Village of Cold Spring. A report on the water study will be delivered to Philipstown and Cold Spring in early 2020.

Meet Our Volunteers:

Glenn Sapir

Our volunteers are the lifeblood of our organization. Whether they are clearing trails in Granite Mountain Preserve, serving on our Young Friends committee and helping us put on a spectacular Fall Fest, or preparing a fundraising mailing in the office, we couldn’t accomplish a fraction of our work without our loyal volunteers. We deeply value the contributions each and every one of them have made to furthering our mission.

Glenn Sapir is one of our all-star volunteers. As a member of the Putnam Valley Commission for Conservation of the Environment, he chaired our Natural Resources Inventory project (see page 8), reaching out to the public and acting as a spokesman to the Town Board for the project. Glenn also helped develop the Conservation, Public Lands and Recreational Resources map for the NRI. At the same time, Glenn has been working behind the scenes to enhance recreational opportunities at Granite Mountain Preserve and across Putnam Valley. He was instrumental in researching information about hunting regulations, as well as other recreation and ecology issues, for the Preserve. His work always emphasizes a balance in recreation and ecological protections.

Glenn says of his experience volunteering with us: “I am pleased that HHLT is taking an active role in conserving wild lands in my town, and I am happy to help in that conservation ethic, at the same time helping to ensure that traditional recreational uses of the resources continue in the best interests of the residents and those natural resources.”

Our sincere thanks to Glenn and all of our volunteers for their dedication to land conservation in the Hudson Highlands!
Honoring Young Leaders in Conservation

Each year, we host the Young Friends Fall Fest at Winter Hill to bring together younger members of our community in celebration of conservation. Last October’s event was filled with fun autumn activities for all ages, including a guided hike to the historic Redoubts, fresh apple cider pressing on an antique cider press, and hands-on nature activities for children.

New in 2018, we established the Timothy Osborn Roberts—Young Friends Conservation Award in memory of local conservationist Timothy Roberts. Each year going forward, the award will honor extraordinary young leaders in conservation whose work has contributed to the protection and preservation of the Hudson Highlands. Mr. Roberts, whose family has been a leader in conservation in the Highlands for generations, was one of the founding members of the Young Friends of HHLT committee, which helps to plan and host Fall Fest.

The inaugural award was presented during Fall Fest to Jason Angell and Jocelyn Apicello of the Ecological Citizen’s Project for their groundbreaking work organizing and leading the Philipstown Community Congress. The Congress helped launch a number of new initiatives with environmental conservation themes, like the Philipstown Trails Project, a Philipstown Carbon Inventory and our own Clean Water Initiative. We also presented a special merit award to David Marzollo for his spontaneous clean-up of more than 50 tires that were illegally dumped in Indian Brook over the summer.

“Younger generations inherit this earth, and increasingly they are engaged in conservation, stewardship and disrupting the negative effects of human activity on our planet,” said award recipient Jocelyn Apicello. “We are so motivated to see the young people of the Hudson Valley engage civically and be active in climate, social and environmental justice initiatives. The HHLT Young Friends Fall Fest helps ensure this spirit will be passed on to younger generations.”

Looking Back at 2018 Events

In addition to our land conservation and municipal planning work, we offer events and programming to help our community members better understand issues related to natural resources protection, land conservation and stewardship. 2018 highlights include our Winter Carnival, Community Forum on local water issues, three Take-a-Hikes, Conservation Cocktails, Autumn Cocktail Benefit, Young Friends Fall Fest (see page 11) and Winter Hill Tree Lighting.

Citizen’s Project for their groundbreaking work organizing and leading the Philipstown Community Congress. The Congress helped launch a number of new initiatives with environmental conservation themes, like the Philipstown Trails Project, a Philipstown Carbon Inventory and our own Clean Water Initiative. We also presented a special merit award to David Marzollo for his spontaneous clean-up of more than 50 tires that were illegally dumped in Indian Brook over the summer.

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### 2018 Financial Report

#### Financial Overview

Results for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2018 (FY2018) show total operating expenses were $968,457, down from $1,103,252 in the prior year (FY2017) as outlays associated with the Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail project continued to decrease from their high point in FY2016.

Revenues including contributions, grants and investment income were $1,665,709 in FY2018, up from $1,542,455 in FY2017. This change included two large offsetting items. On one hand, grant funds for the Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail project were reduced to zero in FY2018, from $400,000 in FY2017. More than offsetting this was an increase in realized capital gains in FY2018 of $568,090 over those realized in FY2017, as the $400,000 in FY2017. More than offsetting this was an increase in realized capital gains in FY2018 of $568,090 over those realized in FY2017, as the $400,000 in FY2017. More than offsetting this was an increase in realized capital gains in FY2018 of $568,090 over those realized in FY2017, as the liability of $575,000 plus deposits on strategic land acquisitions that closed after September 2018.

The Board engaged Patterson, Koskey, Howe & Bucci, CPAs, PC to perform an independent audit.

#### Financial Structure

HHLT maintains a Board-designated investment fund, the Highlands Steward Fund, which is reserved for land conservation, stewardship, defense and acquisition. The Finance Committee of HHLT’s Board, working with an outside investment management firm, oversees the organization for an independent audit.

In 2018, we welcomed three new members to our Board of Directors: Michael Clarke, Jim Modlin and Thad Pitney, who all have personal ties to the Hudson Highlands and bring a wealth of knowledge and professional experience to the Board.

#### Consolidated Statement of Financial Position for FY18 and FY17

<table>
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<th>30-Sep-18</th>
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<td>Cash and Money Market</td>
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<td>Land and Other**</td>
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<td>Total Assets</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Liabilities**</td>
<td>(899,366)</td>
<td>(603,481)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Net Assets</td>
<td>$9,190,261</td>
<td>$8,235,649</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Contributions & Grants* | 785,918 |
* Investment Income       | 812,024 |
* Events and other Income | 67,767  |
| Total                   | $1,665,709 |

* Contributions & Grants do not include any revenue for the Fjord Trail project, and net “Program Services” expenses includes $115,138 of Fjord Trail project expenses. Excluding this Fjord Trail expense, the remaining FY2018 expenses of $842,319 are consistent with the sum of “Contributions and Grants” plus “Events & Other” totaling $855,484.

** FY2009 Land assets consist primarily of the Granite Mountain Preserve property worth $1.155 million, financed in part by a mortgage, shown as Liabilities of $575,000 plus deposits on strategic land acquisitions that closed after September 2018.

#### HHLT Welcomes Three New Board Members

In 2018, we welcomed three new members to our Board of Directors: Michael Clarke, Jim Modlin and Thad Pitney.

**Michael Clarke**

Michael is the Director of The Fresh Air Fund’s Sharpes Reservation, a 2,000+ acre property located near Filmsill, NY, where thousands of children enjoy summer programs each year. Prior to joining the Fund, Michael was a social studies teacher in Northern New Jersey. He is a graduate of Kean University and holds a Masters in Public Administration from Long Island University. Over the past few years, we have been working with Michael on developing a formal partnership with The Fresh Air Fund to bring environmental career opportunities to a more diverse audience.

Michael says: “I am excited to join the HHLT Board for several reasons—their focus on preserving land and creating scenic new trails, to name just two. The opportunity to make land more accessible to communities who are less fortunate has been a personal passion. I first learned of HHLT through my current role at The Fresh Air Fund and have grown to love and respect the mission and work.”

**Jim Modlin**

A former Fortune 500 business executive, Jim is the principal and owner of a global management consulting firm, Global Leadership Consultants, LLC. He is also a professor in leadership and management at the Stillman School of Business at Seton Hall University and the President of the Town of Highlands Chamber of Commerce. Jim has more than 20 years of active duty military leadership service as a United States Army officer. He holds a PhD from the Georgia Institute of Technology and an MS from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, both in Mechanical Engineering. He is also a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point.

Jim says: “The Hudson Highlands is a national treasure to be shared, protected, and enjoyed by all. There is no other place on earth like it. It is a privilege to be part of an organization dedicated to the preservation of this natural and beautiful resource.”

**Thad Pitney**

Thad is an experienced corporate attorney and business advisor. He is currently Head of Finance & Operations and General Counsel at LoanStreet Inc., a fast-growing financial technology start-up. He was previously in-house general counsel with a publicly-traded medical device company and an associate with Shearnan & Steing LLP and Cravath, Swaine & Moore LLP. Originally from Maine, Thad graduated from Princeton University and Syracuse University College of Law, where he was an editor of the Syracuse Law Review. Thad has served on our Young Friends committee for the past several years along with his wife, Antonia Abraham Pitney. The couple and their three young children have a weekend home in Garrison.
Individual Supporters in 2018

Thank you to our dedicated friends, supporters and volunteers for the time, energy and financial contributions you have donated toward our mission. Your support and collaboration has made all of the great work you’ve read about on the pages of this report possible. We are grateful for your cooperation to magnificent preserving the Hudson Highlands alongside us.
HHLT’s Legacy Circle A Deep and Lasting Commitment

Our Legacy Circle was established to recognize and honor our supporters who have generously provided (or plan to provide) gifts of land and/or financial support through bequests and trusts. Legacy Circle membership reflects a deep and lasting commitment to the conservation of the Hudson Highlands. Please contact us if you would like more information.

In Honor of

Donor
Louise Todd Anbinder
Robert Bakall
Emily Kirwan and Jay Grimm
Susan and Kenneth Conover
Donor In Memory of
John Grimmer
Timothy O. Roberts
John Dickinson
John Grimmer
HIGHLANDS LAND TRUST

In Memoriam

Donor
Susan and Kenneth Conover
Donor In Memory of
Susan and Kenneth Conover

Volunteers in 2018

Shoshanna Ables
Debra Adams
Leo Alves
Evelyn Ashburn
Mia Azoue
Dall Bennett
Michael Bennett
Netta Berman
Lynne Bernstein
Elizabeth Bradford
Tom Brigham
MAJ John Case
Certa Calistri
Ellis Chao
MAJ Jim Comstock
Chris Cill
Jane Crosseley
Bill Droescher

Moff Dicker
Frank D’Iorio
John Erisken
Michael Fitman
Bonnie Fogarty
Kiyoshi Ford
Julio Foster
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Phoebe Geer
Julie Geller
Bridget Goldberg
Briana Gracin
Jain Greeney
Pronoie Guroff
Elenor Hart
Steve Ho
Dee Jones

Maura Kane-Salit
Steve Kahan
Konnor Kienan
Jonathan Krak
Lee Klyshtov
Cassie Laaker
Linda Lange
Stephen Linson
Damarion McDonald
Edwin McIveron
Jon Mider
Sara Michel
Sabine Moran
Nikolai Moran
Frieda Muller-Lendus
Honor O’Malley
Ellis Colvert

Aash Parikh
Valerie Peyronnet
Kathelyn Pedra
Antonio Abraham Photy
Thad Pittney
Penny PhR
Carmela Robson
Eileen Reilly
Julie Ruben
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Katherine Shindiecker
Director of Conservation

Karen Doyle
Public Policy & Planning Manager

Ashley Rauch
Outreach & Events Manager

Momo Smith
Institutional Funding Manager

Nicole Weoten
Natural Resources Manager

Jonathan Leitner
Operations Coordinator

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