

CONNECTING



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.

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The Hudson Highlands Land Trust is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization incorporated in 1989 under Section 402 of the Not-for-Profit Corporation Law of New York.

Published July 2019

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.

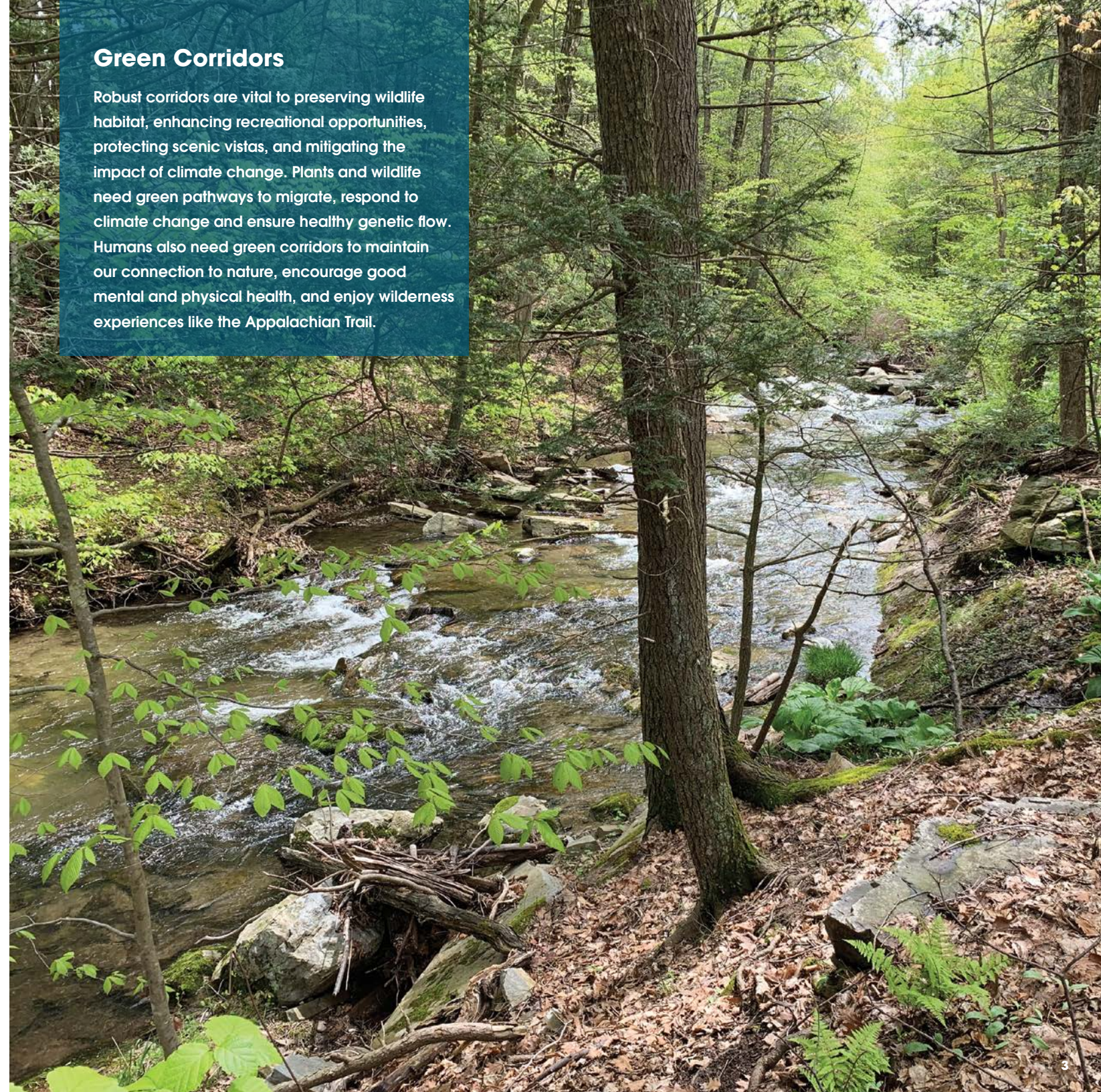
Education and Outreach: Our sold-out 2018 Water Forum and 2019 Wildlife Forum demonstrate the strong level of interest in protecting our natural resources. These events serve to educate our community on these critical issues, and provide opportunities for participants to learn from each other by sharing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

Green Corridors

Robust corridors are vital to preserving wildlife habitat, enhancing recreational opportunities, protecting scenic vistas, and mitigating the impact of climate change. Plants and wildlife need green pathways to migrate, respond to climate change and ensure healthy genetic flow. Humans also need green corridors to maintain our connection to nature, encourage good mental and physical health, and enjoy wilderness experiences like the Appalachian Trail.



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 5) 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.



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:

	Conservation Projects	Acres
Protected in 2018	5	527
Protected in 2017	4	200
Protected in 2016	8	445
Protected in 2015	6	364
Protected in 2014	4	158
Protected in 2013	8	515
Protected in 2012	4	262
Protected in 2011	3	160



Partnerships are Essential to Building Green Corridors

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

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.



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.

"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.

"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."



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!

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.



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."*



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.

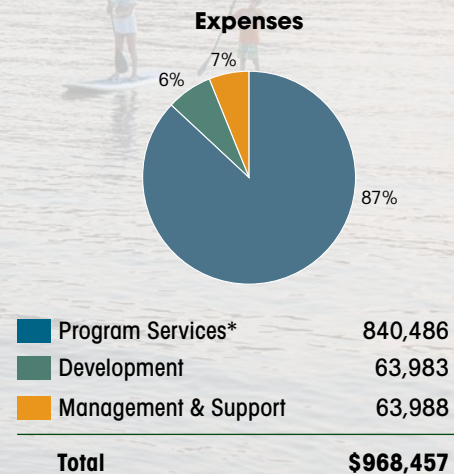
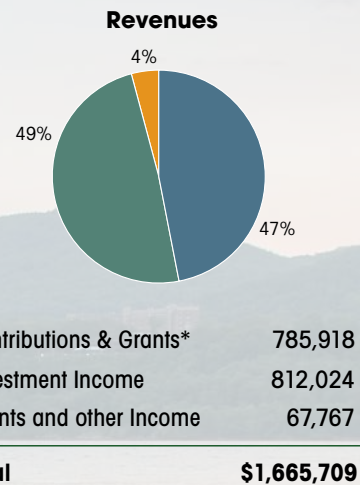
Revenues including contributions, grants and investment income were \$1,665,709 in FY2018, up from \$1,542,455 in FY2017. This change included two large offsetting items. On one hand, grant funds for the Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail project were reduced to zero in FY2018, from \$400,000 in FY2017. More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

The Board engaged Pattison, 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 assets, which are pooled in a diversified portfolio. Total investment return for 2018 was (3.8)%, following a return of 22.8% in 2017.

Consolidated Statement of Financial Position for FY18 and FY17		
	30-Sep-18	30-Sep-17
Cash and Money Market Funds	\$1,685,698	\$1,181,455
Public Securities	6,876,286	6,498,826
Land and Other**	1,217,643	1,158,849
Total Assets	9,779,627	8,839,130
Total Liabilities**	(589,366)	(603,481)
Net Assets	\$9,190,261	\$8,235,649



* "Contributions and Grants" do not include any revenue for the Fjord Trail project, and yet "Program Services" expenses include \$115,138 in Fjord Trail project expenses. Excluding this Fjord Trail expense, the remaining FY2018 expenses of \$853,319 are covered by the sum of "Contributions and Grants" plus "Events & Other" totalling \$853,685.

** FY2018 Land assets consist primarily of the Granite Mountain Preserve property (worth \$1.155 million, financed in part by a mortgage, shown as a FY2018 Liability 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, who all have personal ties to the Hudson Highlands and bring a wealth of knowledge and professional experience to the Board.



Michael Clarke

Michael is the Director of The Fresh Air Fund's Sharpe Reservation, a 2,000+ acre property located near Fishkill, 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 view sheds, 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 Shearman & Sterling 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.

THANK YOU!

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 so grateful for your commitment to protecting and preserving the Hudson Highlands alongside us.

Individual Supporters in 2018

Linda Tafapolsky and Jamie Adams	Sarah Bayne and Gil Burke	Heidi and Sam Dolnick	Adie and Richard Garfein
Debra Adamsons	Chuck Burleigh and Lithgow Osborne	Janet and Anthony Dolot	Robert Gaudreau and Howard Kaplowitz
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Maryanne McGovern Kenyon and Chris Kenyon	Hans Moeller	M.J. and Barry Ross	Stephen Torpie
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Marit and Lars Kulleseid	Judy and George Muser	Paul Salvatore	Judith Aisen and Kenneth Vittor
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Judy and Leonard Lauder	Martha and David North	Francie and Bill Schuster	Lee Warshavsky
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Michael Leonard	Christine and Rodman Patton	Anne Sidamon-Eristoff	Martha Howell and
May and Peter Leung	Steve Pelotto	Catherine and Andrew Sidamon-Eristoff	Ned Whitney
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Susan Brune and Chip Loewenson	Polly Townsend and Perry Pitt	Marianne and Robert Smythe	
	Janis and Bob Polastre	Jean Sommerville	

Corporate, Institutional & Foundation Support in 2018

Amazon	Glynwood	Nancy P. Durr Fund
American Express	Goldman, Sachs & Co.	New York Community Trust
Andrew Sabin Family Foundation	Green Glasses Fund	New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
The Anonymous Philanthropic Fund	Greenway Conservancy for the Hudson River Valley	Nina Abrams Fund
Appalachian Trail Conservancy	The Hartley Corporation	Open Space Institute
Benevity Community Impact Fund	HFG Charitable Giving Fund	PCW Management Center, LLC
Berner Family Fund	Hyde and Watson Foundation	Penguin Random House
Black Rock Forest Consortium	International Business Machines Corporation	Peter and Carmen Lucia Buck Foundation
Brown Advisory	Jeffrey and Mary Elizabeth Bunzel Charitable Fund	Putnam Valley Residents' Coalition
Catherine and Andrew Sidamon-Eristoff Family Fund	Jewish Communal Fund	Rafael and Dale Zaklad Philanthropic Fund
Christine and Rodman Patton Charitable Fund	John and Frank Sparacio Charitable Foundation	The Related Companies
Cornell University	J.P. Morgan	Roxanne and Henry Brandt Foundation
Croushore Hilmes Donor Fund	Kenneth Vittor and Judith Aisen Charitable Fund	Scenic Hudson
CR Properties Group, LLC	Land Trust Alliance	Schwab Charitable
D.J. McManus Foundation, Inc.	The Lanegate Foundation	Shelby Cullom Davis Charitable Fund
Dolnick Family Fund	Land Family Foundation	Shuree Abrams Foundation
Dr. Bettina P. Murray Charitable Fund	Legacy Yards Tenant L.P.	Sorenson Family Foundation
Edward B. Whitney Fund	Leonard and Judy Lauder Fund	The Stebbins Fund, Inc.
Fidelity Charitable	Linwood Fund	Thall Industries
Flinn Family Charitable Fund	Lostand Foundation, Inc.	The Topfield Foundation, Inc.
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Frederic C. Rich Charitable Fund	Marzollo Charitable Fund	The Vidda Foundation
Gale Epstein Charitable Fund	MasterCard International Inc.	Wray Family Fund
Getty Images, Inc.	Matthew Marks Charitable Trust	
	Morgan Stanley	
	Musgrave Family Fund	



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	In Honor of
Louise Todd Ambler	Frederick H. Osborn III
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Emily Kirwan and Jay Grimm	Bonnie Turner

In Memoriam

Donor	In Memory of
Susan and Kenneth Conover	John Grimmer
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Volunteers in 2018

Shoshanna Abeles	Matt Decker	Maura Kane-Seitz	Asher Pacht	Georgia Sommer
Debra Adamsons	Frank DiMarco	Steve Kelman	Valerie Peyronnet	Kyle Sussmeier
Leo Alves	John Erskine	Johanna Kiernan	Katelyn Pidala	Lindsey Turner
Evelyn Ashburn	Michel Fithian	Lew Kingsley	Antonia Abraham Pitney	Joshua Uchetel & Putnam Valley BSA Troop 41
Mia Azcue	Bonnie Fogarty	Jonathan Kruk	Thad Pitney	Russell Urban-Mead
Gail Bennett	Krystal Ford	Lee Kyriacou	Perry Pitt	Mike Usai
Michael Bennett	Julia Foster	Cassie Laifer	Martha Rabson	Diane Vitetta
Nate Berner	Paul Gallay	Linda Lange	Eileen Reilly	Jared Ware
Lynne Bernstein	Anne Gayler	Stefan Linson	Julie Ruben	Ted Warren
Elizabeth Bradford	Phoebe Geer	Damian McDonald	Christine Ruppert	Wendy Whetsel
Tom Bregman	Julie Geller	Edwin McGowan	CDT Grant Ryan	Freya Wood-Gallagher
MAJ John Case	Bridget Goldberg	Jon Midler	Jamison Sabatini	YMCA Camp Combe Service Corps
Carla Castillo	Brian Grahn	Nicole Mitchell	Glenn Sapir	
Elisa Chae	Jieh Greeney	Sabine Moran	Randi Schlesinger	
MAJ Jim Comstock	Patricia Grove	Niklas Moran	Brett Schwartz	
Chris Crill	Elinor Hart	Friedel Muller-Landau	Catherine Serreau-Thompson	
Jane Crossley	Steve Ho	Honor O'Malley	Barbara Smith	
Bill Crowder	Dell Jones	Ellis Osterfeld	Peter Smith	

Hudson Highlands Land Trust

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