

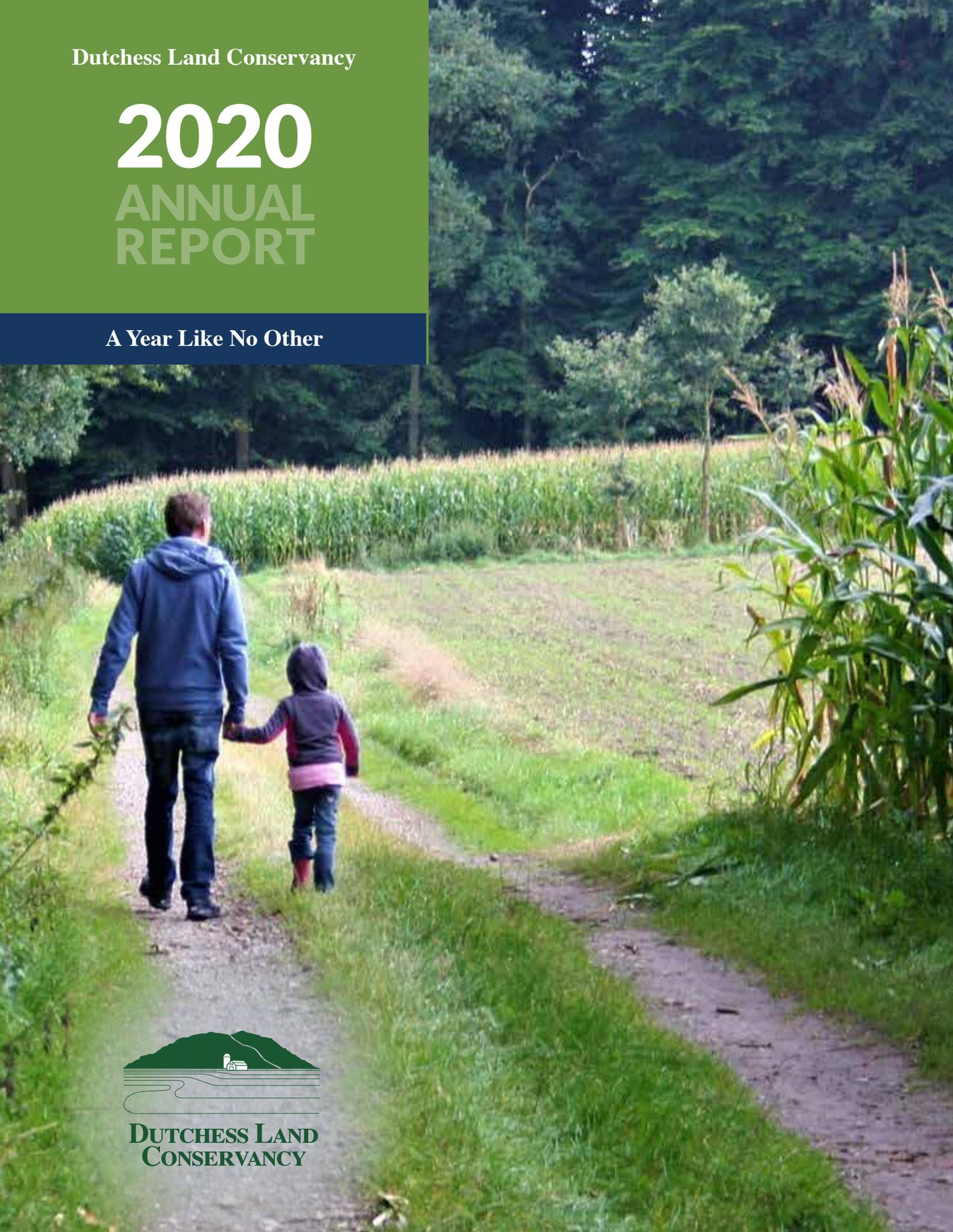
Dutchess Land Conservancy

2020 ANNUAL REPORT

A Year Like No Other



**DUTCHESS LAND
CONSERVANCY**



Our Mission

The Dutchess Land Conservancy (DLC) is dedicated to preserving the scenic, agricultural, and environmental resources of Dutchess County, New York, and the surrounding areas.

The DLC encourages sound, well-planned growth balanced with the conservation of our important natural resources and working landscapes to ensure healthy and vibrant communities for the benefit of all generations.

Through voluntary land transactions with private landowners, conservation land planning assistance, and public education, the DLC works to protect land while helping to channel new growth in ways which will reinforce our natural and agricultural landscapes and create balanced and sustainable communities.

At the DLC we believe that a healthy economy and a healthy environment go hand-in-hand.

Our Vision

As the DLC accomplishes its mission, the result of our work will help ensure:

- Traditional small villages and hamlets surrounded by large expanses of protected farm and forest land, with scenic views that inspire what people love most about this area.
- Sustainable working farms, supported by the community, that include the production of local, healthy foods, healthy forests and timber supplies, as a part of everyday life.
- Connected corridors that ensure diverse and well-functioning ecosystems that provide numerous benefits for human and habitat health and wellbeing including clean drinking water.
- The opportunity for people to enjoy the outdoors and appreciate important natural areas and open spaces which inspires their love of and connection to nature and reinforces their sense of home.



A Letter from the President



In March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic changed everyone's familiar routines. As a non-essential business, the DLC had to swiftly and efficiently shift to a remote working environment. Like so many other organizations, we developed a new infectious disease policy and safety protocols while regularly keeping up with changing rules and regulations. As safety precautions waned, we slowly made our way back to the office where we implemented further plans to ensure the health and safety of our staff and visitors. However, during this uncertain time, something amazing happened: land conservation quietly thrived.

Our education programs moved online and gained a wider audience. Our supporters, undaunted by the pandemic, continued to make land conservation a priority. People who wanted to protect their land stepped forward and worked to complete their projects. With the help of a consultant, we launched a strategic planning process to shape our goals for the next five years. We developed a valuable outreach tool to showcase land conservation and its benefits through our new short film, "Forever Protected." And these are just the highlights!

With appreciation,

Becky Thornton

President



Photo: Mike Adamovic

Land Conservation

Despite all the challenges in 2020, you ensured that conservation in Dutchess County continued to move forward. Six conservation projects were completed in five towns, protecting more than 700 acres of land, water, and natural resources to benefit us all. Your support has also set the stage for future land preservation. We are thrilled to report that funding is in place to protect the spectacular 180-acre Seven Wells property adjacent to the Stone Church Preserve. The acquisition of this key property will double the current size of the Preserve. Funding has also been secured to protect four more working farms, and we are currently on track to complete additional conservation projects on 800 acres in 2021 – all thanks to you!



CONSERVATION HIGHLIGHTS



SISTERS OF CHARITY – 75 ACRES, STANFORD

The sisters of charity donated an easement to the DLC to protect their land in the Town of Stanford. The property features a portion of an historic rail bed and borders other DLC protected lands. The Sisters intend to transfer the land to the Winnakee Land Trust for a public access nature preserve.



DIAMOND TRAIL PROPERTIES, LLC – 34 ACRES, PLEASANT VALLEY

This property existed as a pre-approved seven lot subdivision situated near other DLC protected land and a core farming area in Pleasant Valley. With this easement donation, the property is preserved, and can only be developed into a one house lot.



DGT MILLBROOK HOLDINGS, LLC – 22 ACRES, NORTH EAST

Located in a core area of preservation, this property is now part of nearly 8,000 acres of DLC protected lands.



CARY INSTITUTE OF ECOSYSTEM STUDIES – 45 ACRES, UNION VALE

Part of a large area of contiguous forest located on West Mountain, these lands ensure further protection of this ecologically significant geological feature near the Dover Stone Church Preserve.



SHEKOMEKO, LLC – 438 ACRES, NORTH EAST

The easement donated by Shekomeko, LLC protects a mix of farmland and a large swath of contiguous forest land that contains steep slopes on which development is often inappropriately sited. The property also contains a long segment of a tributary of the Shokomeko Creek.

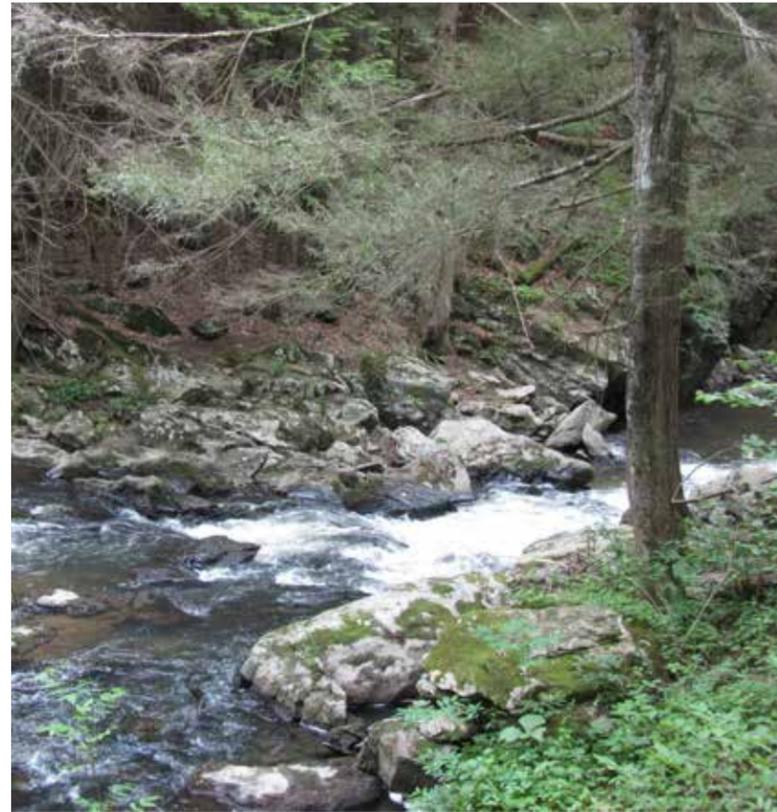


SPEETER (JORDAN LANE FARM) – 153 ACRES, PINE PLAINS

The preservation of Betsy Speeter's family farm not only protects critical water resources but creates a contiguous block of land protected by the DLC: some 5,000 acres of active farmland, including the Pulver Farm, Mashomack Preserve, and two Schultz Hill Farms/Ronnybrook Dairy properties are in the immediate vicinity of Jordan Lane Farm (this newly protected property).

Stewardship of the Land

Your constant and unwavering support helps us to meet our stewardship responsibilities each and every year. The DLC now holds 422 conservation easements on over 500 properties in Dutchess and Columbia counties. In order to remain in compliance with our Land Trust Accreditation standards, monitoring is required to properly steward the land placed under our care. Each year, all protected properties are monitored by air and roughly one third are visited by staff. In 2020, we visited 168 properties and our ground monitoring staff hiked a total of 296 miles. That's the equivalent of walking from Millbrook to Buffalo! The use of connected tablets, in conjunction with our new stewardship database, has helped to streamline our monitoring process and make our staff more efficient in the field. The database also helps staff keep track of requests from easement owners regarding their properties. Owner contact was on an upward swing in 2020, with over 80 inquiries that required staff review and evaluation.



Farms & Farming

Our joint Farmer/Landowner Match Program with the Columbia Land Conservancy continues to bear fruit, and has resulted in more than 400 farmers and landowners enrolled in the program. To date, 81 matches of farmers with farmland have resulted in more than 4,000 acres in agricultural production.



Education

With in-person events interrupted by the pandemic, we responded by providing our educational events online through Zoom. This allowed our programs to reach wider audiences than ever before, and, with your support, people were able to learn about topics as varied as solar grazing, managing wildlife, silvopasturing, stewarding land, and our wild canine friends – coyotes, foxes, and wolves. We also developed informative posts for social media that took our Facebook and Instagram followers on a deep dive into the natural world with weekly conservation themed posts and recommended nature apps for their phones. By September, we were able to partner with Wethersfield Farm to hold a socially distanced scavenger hunt to get people outdoors and on the land. Thanks to your dedication to our mission, and the cooperation and collaboration of our many partners, our education programs reached more than 500 people in 2020!

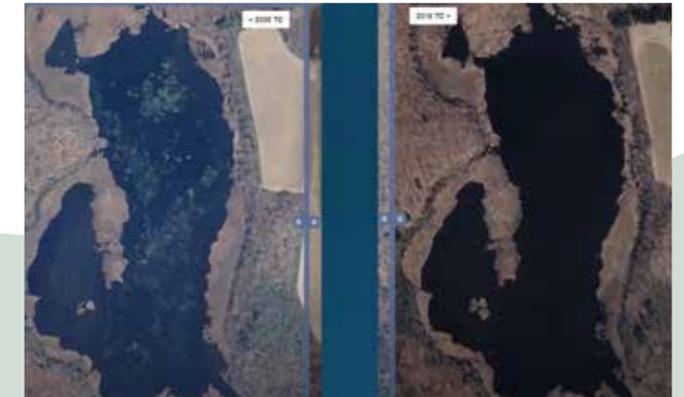


EDUCATION HIGHLIGHTS



Wildlife Expert Sue Morse on Wolves, Coyotes, and Foxes

DLC partnered with the Salisbury Association Land Trust to co-sponsor a lecture by Sue Morse, an acclaimed wildlife researcher and educator, at the Housatonic Valley Regional High School. This year's talk focused on wolves, coyotes, and foxes, and was well attended and very popular.



Learn Your Land Webinar Series –

Originally an in-person program, the “Learn Your Land” Workshop with Cornell Cooperative Extension Dutchess County successfully transitioned to an online format and became a three-part webinar series. Speakers from the DLC, CCE Dutchess County, the DEC Estuary Program, and the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies covered land use history and stewardship, online mapping resources, and management options for landowners, while guiding them through the mapping, assessment, and planning phases of stewarding their land.

Wildlife Stewardship Webinar Series

The DLC partnered with the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies and the National Wild Turkey Federation to present a three-part webinar on “An Ecological Approach to Wildlife Stewardship.” Participants learned about the ecological principals of wildlife management, threats to animals in their natural environments, options for managing their land for local fauna populations, and assistance programs for landowners to improve wildlife habitats.



Millbrook School Environmental Science Class on Conservation

For many years, the DLC has been invited by the Millbrook School to participate in their Environmental Science class unit on conservation. The class sessions were held on Zoom this year but the level of interest was undiminished. To prepare for the class, students watched the DLC's short film, *Forever Protected*, and were eager to learn more. Class members were presented with an overview of land conservation and the work done by the DLC, ecosystem services, the history of the land, and the importance of traditional ecological knowledge.



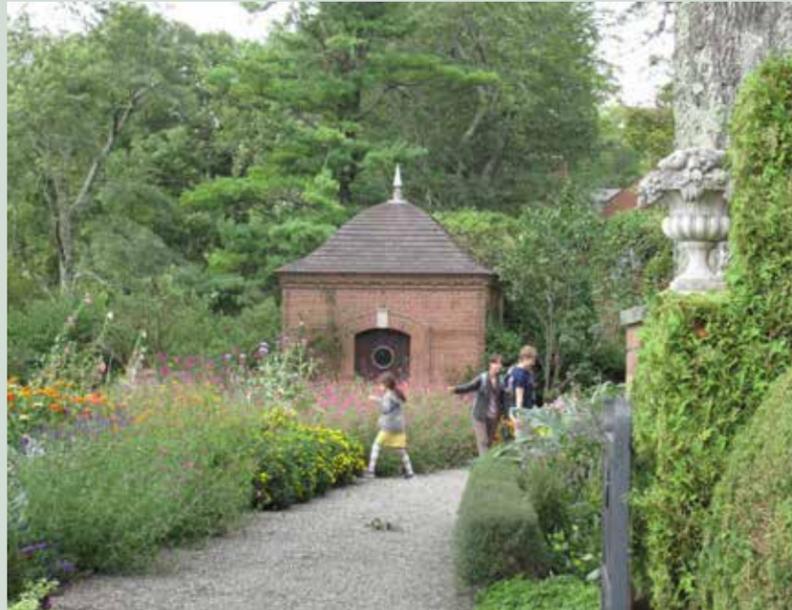
Farmer/Landowner Match Program Webinars

2020 was our seventh year of collaboration with the Columbia Land Conservancy on the Farmer/Landowner Match Program. As with most of our educational endeavors, the "Down to Earth" series was moved to an online format this year. Webinar topics included solar grazing and silvopasturing. The third session was a remote networking event for participants in the program.



Wethersfield Farm Scavenger Hunt

The DLC and Wethersfield Foundation co-sponsored a family friendly scavenger hunt through Wethersfield Farm's Wilderness Walk and formal gardens. Participants received a DLC bag full of supplies to create a do-it-yourself craft. They also explored the paths to locate items they could use to complete a nature-themed mobile.



Learning About the Natural World on DLC Social Media

To give folks a way to learn about nature while at home due to quarantine, we took to Facebook and Instagram as a means to connect with them each and every day. With themed features, including backyard scavenger hunts, new outdoors apps and links, local farm related info, interviews, and book recommendations, we were able to offer up education on the natural world in easy to understand morsels on platforms where they could be easily reached.

Newsletter Features: Nature of Things and Explorer's Notebook

These exciting education articles brought members up to date on the natural world around them. Nature of Things featured an interview with a different animal species to broaden our knowledge of local wildlife. Explorer's Notebook focused on various topics of interest, including cooperation among plants in nature and tree, leaf, and bark identification.



NATURE OF THINGS



Rudolf the Ruby-Throated Hummingbird regales our Lucas Gordon with dating tales from the sugar-saturated feeder.

Q: Tell us about yourself.
As Hello there, my name is Rudolf the Ruby-Throated Hummingbird. You can also refer to me as *delicious-visit*. Currently, I am in a state of utter exhaustion as I have just completed my annual migration from my wintering quarters in southwestern Mexico. This is a long, perilous journey, especially for a creature measuring no more than 4 inches from beak to tail and weighing little more than a penny. But, for an extraordinary bird such as myself, the chance to rendezvous with single backbones in my Dutchess County breeding ground makes the lengthy well worth it. I take the length of this journey as a particular point of pride since no other of the 300 species of hummingbird seen up to the neck. Most of those quitters never leave the equatorial region of the western hemisphere. This means we are the only species you'll typically see in this part of the country.

Q: You must work up quite an appetite on your trip... As Rudolf, you have no idea. One of the things that makes hummingbirds unique is that we see the only birds to constantly hover during flight. We can hover in place when sucking nectar from a flower and can even fly backwards. The catch is that this form of flight requires beating our wings 53 to 75 times per second. You can imagine this fevered wing-flapping burns more than a few calories. In order to keep up the speed I end up consuming at least half of my total weight in sugar every day. This adds up to 50 to 60 meals per day that I'm constantly making stopovers for, using my highly extensible gizzard and long narrow beak to scoop up nectar and small insects from flower blossoms.

Q: You are an absolutely beautiful and fascinating bird, could I interest you in taking one or two of your 60 daily meals over at my place?
As if you are asking me out on a date, the answer is no... If you simply want to leave some food out for me and my friends, that would actually be much appreciated! I am partial to a liquid solution of one-part granulated sugar and four parts water. Just bring your water to a rolling boil, add the sugar, let it dissolve, cool it, and then leave it out in your yard in a hummingbird feeder. With a well-maintained feeder and a little bit of luck, you could see your backyard become a thriving hotspot of hummingbird activity from early May to late September. By September, the weather becomes too cold for even the most hardy hummingbird feeder to keep us from heading south.

Q: You said that Dutchess County is your breeding ground, does that mean my backyard will become something of a singles resort?
As Rudolf! I myself hope to court a handful of females this breeding season and your backyard seems to have the exact romantic ambience that I am looking for. You'll probably have the buzz of our wings and our high pitched chirps, then, before you know it, six male hummingbirds with our signature iridescent, red throats will be engaging one another in thrilling aerial jousts, vying for the attention of nearby female onlookers. Eventually, some of the ladies will be sufficiently impressed and soon enough two white, pin-sized eggs will appear within the confines of our tiny vibrant-wired nests. A month or two later, the next generation will be hovering across your lawn, in constant hunt for one of their countless daily meals. ☺

EXPLORER'S NOTEBOOK

For this installment, Julie Hart takes a look at cooperation in nature. In each of the three relationships described below, you might think that these different types of flora are competing with each other for resources, while in fact they are helping one another receive the full benefits of the land.

The most important agricultural crops in many Native American cultures are corn, beans and squash. Together, they are often called the "Three Sisters" and the planting methods for these crops reveal the beneficial relationships among them. Corn is planted in hills or rows and beans are planted nearby, while squash seeds are interspersed between the hills or rows of corn and beans. As they grow strong and tall, the corn plants provide a natural trellis for the bean vines to climb, and the bean plants increase soil fertility by fixing nitrogen. The squash vines spread out around the corn and beans to shade the ground, which increases soil moisture and reduces weeds. The spiny stems and leaves of the squash plants also provide protection for the corn and bean plants from foraging animals.

The Greek words for "fungus" (*mycelium*) and "root" (*rhizome*) come together both literally and linguistically in the term "mycorrhiza," which refers to a fungus that grows in association with the roots of a plant. This may sound like a parasitic relationship, but both the fungus and the plant benefit from their connection! The plant, which can make its own food through photosynthesis, has difficulty absorbing certain nutrients from the soil. However, soil nutrients are easily absorbed by the fungus, and the connection between fungus and root provides the plant more access to these nutrients. In exchange, the fungus, which doesn't photosynthesize and cannot make its own food, is given access to the plant's sugars through the same connection.

Another successful fungus/plant partnership is the lichen, which may grow on trees, soil, dead wood and even rocks. Lichens are composed of a fungus and an alga, and together they form an organism that looks nothing like either of its components. The three types of lichen are foliose, which are leafy in appearance; fruticose, which are branched; and crustose, which appear as a crust of color that cannot be removed from its substrate. In each type of lichen, the fungus provides structure and anchors the lichen to its substrate, while the alga produces food through photosynthesis. Nutrients are absorbed from the atmosphere and precipitation, and from the presence of lichen is an indicator of good air quality! ☺



Special Events

How do you spread the word about land conservation during a pandemic? Make a movie! We successfully created Forever Protected, a short film produced by famed environmental filmmaker Jon Bowermaster, featuring Liam Neeson. The film speaks to the importance of protecting our land and features stunning local landscapes. We premiered the film in October to a socially distanced crowd in Amenia at the Four Brothers Drive-In. The film will be a valuable outreach tool to highlight land conservation.



DLC by the Numbers



43,500+
Acres Protected



19,500+
Acres of Farmland Protected



14
Education Events In 2020

23

Towns with DLC Protected Properties



35
Years Protecting Land



19,500+
Acres of Forests Protected



4,500+
Acres of Water Protected



6
Properties Protected in 2020



296
Miles Ground Monitoring
in 2020



421
Conservation Easements

Organizational Excellence

Being able to display the Land Trust Accreditation Seal on our website and in outreach materials is important to us. Knowing that we meet the highest standards possible for organizational excellence gives our supporters the confidence that the DLC can uphold our long-term commitment to permanent land conservation and stewardship. This year, upon evaluation, we were awarded Accreditation Renewal through 2025!



Finally, we launched our Strategic Planning process with the help of a consultant and with input from local stakeholders. The completed Strategic Plan will serve as a guiding document for the growth and development of the DLC over the next five years.

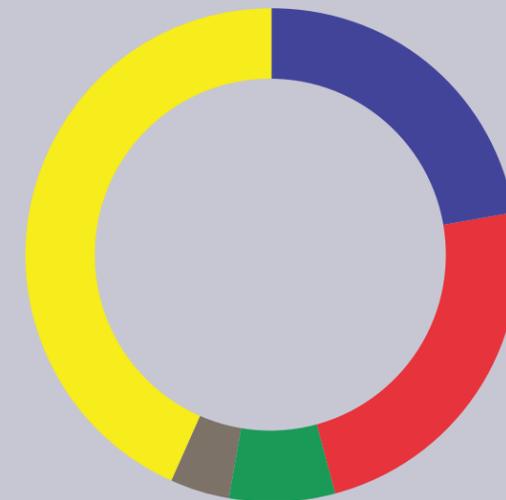
Advocacy

We continue to advocate for land conservation issues near and dear to our supporters. While the Land Trust Advocacy Days in Washington DC had to cancel the in-person event, we were able to make our voices heard through the re-envisioned Virtual Land Trust Advocacy Days to advocate for new legislation around the IRS SALT Rule, and encourage support for the prior Farm Bill, the Land and Water Conservation Fund, the Forest Legacy Program, the Highlands Conservation Act, the 30 by 30 Conservation Initiative, and other worthwhile initiatives.



Financials

2020 REVENUE



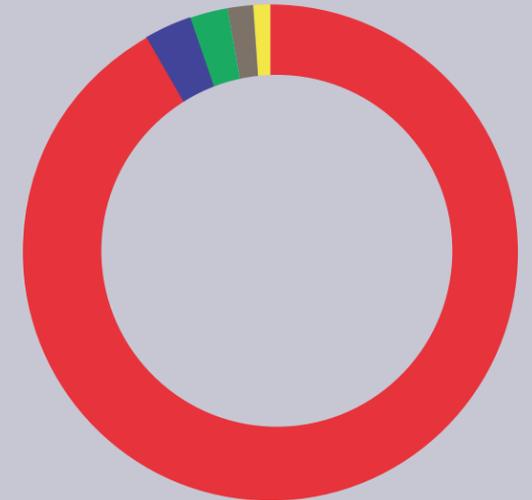
■ Individual Contributions	\$ 807,645
■ Grant Income	\$ 854,591
■ Special Event Income	\$ 244,921
■ Miscellaneous Income *	\$ 148,050
■ Non-Operating Revenue/Loss**	(\$1,557,100)

Total \$ 498,107

* includes dividend/int income, donated rent income, bequest

**includes net investment earning, loss on sale of Keeler Lane, PPP Loan Forgiveness, Stewardship contributions

2020 EXPENSES



■ Land Conservation	\$1,372,659
■ Stewardship	\$ 391,809
■ Education	\$ 307,401
■ Administration	\$ 201,030
■ Development	\$ 119,197

Total \$2,392,096

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 Kristen Anderson, Stewardship Associate

Stewards of the Land

Stewards of the land are essential partners of the DLC. They are the ones who manage and steward their protected properties now and into the future.

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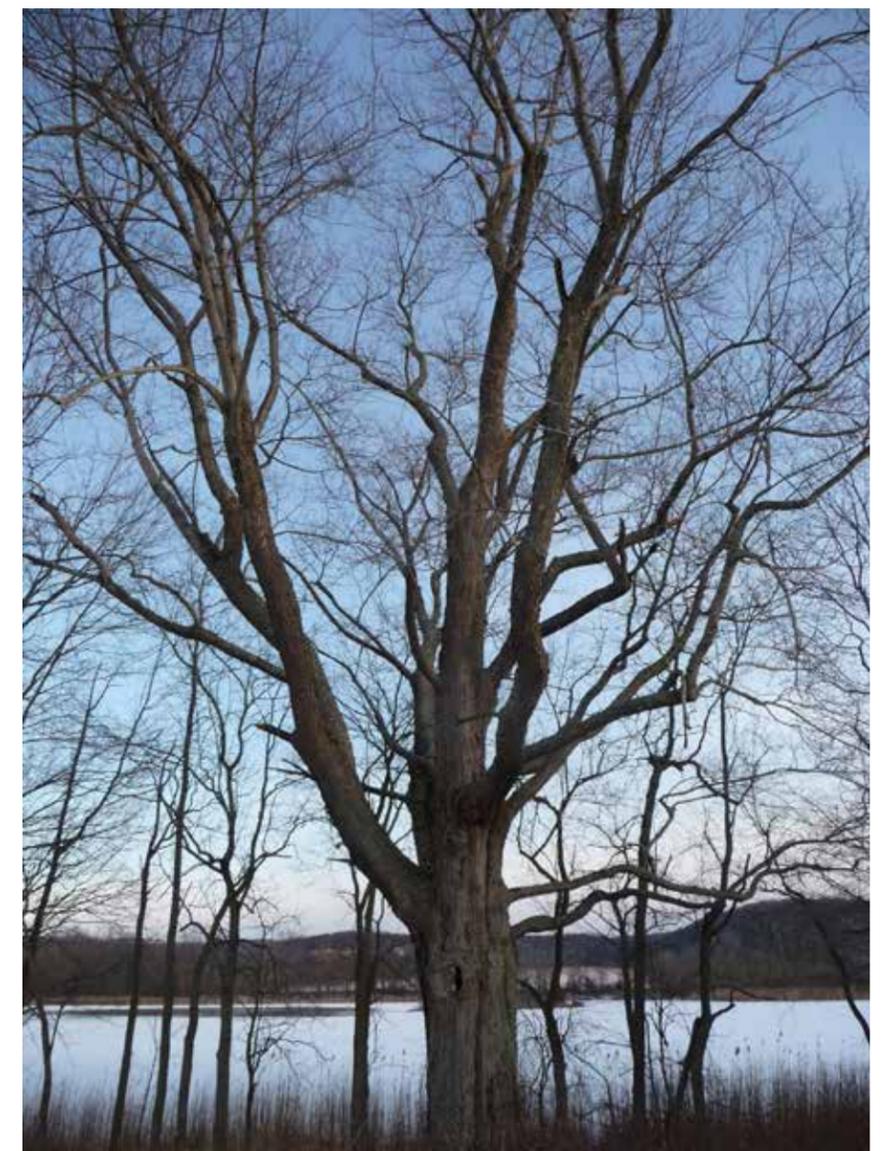
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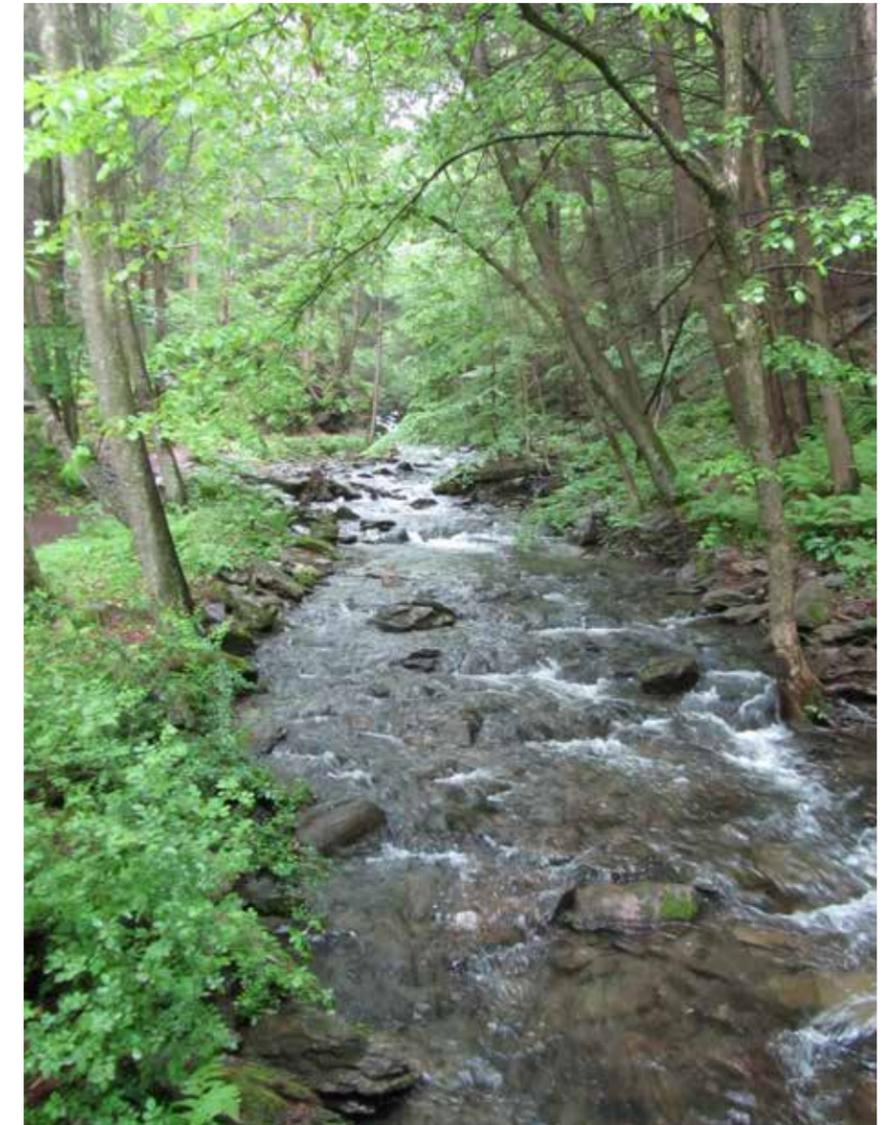
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Kim and Niles Wheeler
Andrea Woodner and Allison Kavey
Martha and Murray Zimiles

In Memory of:

Ilya and Meta Bolotowsky
By: Andrew Bolotowsky
Jesse Bontecou
By: Gayle Bontecou
By: Bradford and Barbara Kendall
By: Mr. and Mrs. Bryant Seaman, III
Mark Bontecou
By: Yasaman and Vuk Djunic
Lauren Gallagher
By: Claire Ackad
Ralph K. and James M. Kistner
By: Mrs. Helen M. Kistner
David J. McKee, Jr.
By: Mary Ann McKee Hitt
Hans Joerg Meili
By: The Beharry Family
By: Friends and Colleagues at
Greenberg Traurig
By: The Holt Family
By: Andrea Walton
Barbara Meyer
By: Alison Meyer
By: Chuca Meyer
By: Molly Meyer
Scott Meyer
By: Alison Meyer
Dr. Frank A. Migliorelli
By: Ruth Migliorelli
Tish and Bowdie Neiley
By: Carol Neiley
Neil Pierson
By: Elizabeth Pierson
Matt Pelish and Julia Pelish Brijbassi
By: Christine Craig
Oakleigh B. Thorne
By: Sarah Caplan
By: Drew and Linda Casertano
By: Robert Copen
By: Mrs. David R. Hathaway
By: Dr. Robert and
Mrs. Linda Marshall



By: The Team at Northern Trust
By: Paul Quartararo
By: Mr. and Mrs. Bryant Seaman, III
By: Becky Thomas and the Team
at Sequel
By: Becky Thornton
By: Fred and Trina Whitridge
Oleg Salnikoff
By: David and Jane Parshall
By: Becky Thornton

In Memoriam:

Jesse Bontecou 1926-2020
Christopher Kent 2021
Robert K. Johnson 1938-2020
Carola Lott 1938-2021
Dale Mountan 1945-2021
Teresa Parker 1932 - 2020
Oakleigh B. Thorne 1932-2020
Donald Tober 1931-2021

Robert Trump 1939-2020
Ralph Weindling 1931-2021

In Honor of:

Leslie Barclay
By: Sis and Moby Mudge
Steve Benardete
By: Monica and Herb Allen
Tim Bontecou
By: Judy and Russell Carson
Bruce Capuano
By: Justin Capuano
Jerry Carroll
By: Linda Lewis
Joshua Lachter and Shira Atkins
By: David King
Bonnie Stedt
By: BZ and Michael Schwartz
Becky Thornton
By: DLC Staff
By: Stephanie Mauri



Our Legacy Society Members

Barbara J. Agren
 Sara Allen
 Kathleen Vuillet Augustine
 Mr. and Mrs. Steven Benardete
 Anne Briggs
 Mr. and Mrs. Everett Cook
 Lawrence G. and Lorna H. Graev
 Mrs. David Hathaway
 Nancy H. Henze
 Fernanda M. Kellogg
 Tara Kelly
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 M. Taylor Pyne

Eric W. Roberts
 Mr. and Mrs. David Rosenberg
 Jay Schwamm
 Peter Tcherepnine
 Becky Thornton
 Olivia van Melle Kamp
 Henry H. Westmoreland

Special friends who have left us generous bequests:

Julia Hall
 Arnold Rubinstein
 Molly Schaefer
 Faith Tompkins
 Everett Ken Weedin, Jr.
 Ralph and France-Helene Weindling

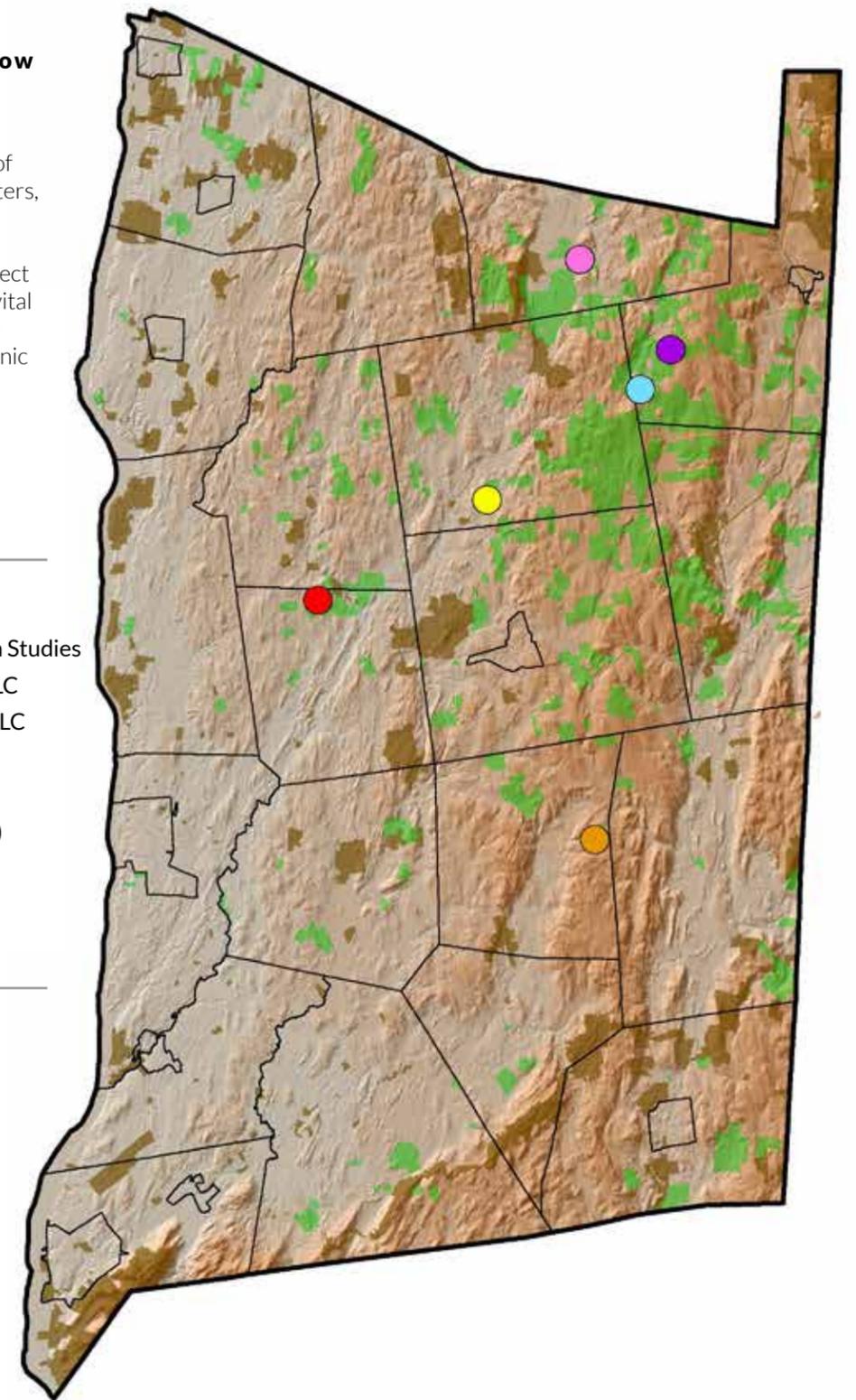


More than 43,000 acres now protected!

It is only through the generosity of our landowners, farmers, supporters, local communities, government agencies, and land trust partners that we can continue to help protect Dutchess County's watersheds, vital farmland, wildlife habitat, diverse ecosystems, and unparalleled scenic views for future generations.

2020 Projects

- Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies
- DGT Millbrook Holdings, LLC
- Diamond Trail Properties, LLC
- Shekomeko, LLC
- Sisters of Charity
- Speeter (Jordan Lane Farm)
- Towns
- DLC Protected
- Other Organizations





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