



# Rensselaer Plateau Alliance

Conservation Through Community

## 15 years together & 2022 Annual Report

**"To have forests forever, we need to be  
forever committed to making it happen."**

— Shari Gibbs, RPA member





## More than ever, nature needs us

In 2006, a handful of neighbors in Rensselaer County dreamed together of a way to keep the Rensselaer Plateau forested long into the future. I was lucky to be part of that group.

We envisioned healthy forests and waterways, abundant wildlife, trails for hiking and mountain biking, and a sense of pride around the plateau for all who live and work in the region.

Early on, we learned that this dream would only be possible with many people working together—and that *so many* neighbors throughout the plateau region were ready to be part of it!

In 2008, the Rensselaer Plateau Alliance (RPA) was incorporated as a non-profit organization.

Fifteen years later—thanks to a community of people who care—it is a thriving land trust with nine amazing staff members, an energized Board of Directors and volunteer base, awesome members and supporters, community forests managed by volunteers, and nearly 14,000 acres conserved—for good.

**With this big milestone of 15 years, things just keep getting better.** This spring, the Rensselaer Plateau Alliance and Rensselaer Land Trust (RLT) announced the early phases of a merger.

This decision was made thoughtfully by the boards and staff of both organizations, and it was several years in the making. Today the time is right for both organizations to bring together years of





The Snake Hill Cliffs, conserved through the Forests Forever Campaign, showcase a contrast to the patchwork of development in Rensselaer County. RPA seeks to outpace development with conservation by protecting lands while we still can.

experience, engaged members, and the many beautiful and special places that both land trusts have conserved.

One of the most exciting things about this merger is how it will connect the natural areas of Rensselaer County—on and off the plateau—keeping our watersheds healthy, our forests wild, and our young people and communities engaged.

The great programs of both land trusts will keep going strong, and we will be able to go farther and do more for this land we all love.

The merger brings us right back to RPA's original vision of a connected landscape with trails, thriving wildlife, and clean water. It meshes

perfectly with RLT's vision of clean air and water, scenic beauty, and people connected to nature across suburban, urban, and rural communities.

I am so excited for what lies ahead, as we expand our geographic range, our tools and skills, and our vision of what is possible.

Thank you for being part of this truly inspiring adventure.

Yours in conservation,

Jim Bonesteel  
Executive Director





## Our forests, our future—building hope

This spring and summer, Rensselaer County residents felt the effects of a changing climate first-hand through the smoke that reached us from wildfires burning across Canada. Climate research suggests that an early and intense wildfire season in Canada was caused in part by hot, dry, and windy conditions fueled by climate change.

Meanwhile, climate scientists have determined that the planet is hotter now than it has been since the end of our last ice age—and that the primary cause is our use of fossil fuels. Deforestation also plays a big role.

Thankfully, there's hope. When we keep our forests growing and our wetlands healthy, greenhouse gases are soaked up and kept from entering the atmosphere. Forests and wetlands also protect us from the effects of climate change by filtering and slowing down flood waters. They even make

those wildfire-haze days a little more tolerable by absorbing pollutants and cleaning the air.

To build climate resilience and protect threatened plants and animals, New York State has joined **national and global efforts to conserve 30% of undeveloped land and waterways by 2030.**

**RPA's Forests Forever Campaign gave Rensselaer County a big boost toward this goal.** As you read on, you'll see amazing places staying wild forever.

It is a strong and inspiring start—and **more is needed.**

Our forests must be connected for wildlife to find the habitat they need amid development pressure and climate change. Our communities need access to the outdoors. With your ongoing support, our forests and our future stand a fighting chance.



# Forests Forever Campaign

9 properties (1,675 acres) conserved, thanks to you.

Thank you to all who were part of the Forests Forever Campaign!



## Forests Forever Properties

- 1: Lanford Wood Community Forest  
519 acres
- 2: Valentino Family Community Forest  
416 acres
- 3: Boehme Legacy Forest  
196 acres
- 4: Dill Brook Community Forest, *In memory of Robert Simms*  
153 acres
- 5: Sadowsky Property  
101 acres
- 6: Snake Hill  
50 acres
- 7: Sjogreen Property  
53 acres
- 8: Bessie's Woods  
122 acres
- 9: Gutierrez Family Forest  
65 acres

Rensselaer Plateau Alliance  
Conservation Through Community

- Forests Forever Properties
- RPA Conserved Lands
- Other Protected Land
- Rensselaer Plateau Boundary

Map designed by  
Upstate GIS





Nate Simms

## Forests Forever means climate resilience

Each property conserved through the Forests Forever Campaign brings us closer to one big dream: a connected landscape of healthy forests and wetlands that supports climate resilience and wildlife, and offers places for people to play.

### **Snake Hill**

As part of the Forests Forever Campaign, 50 acres of the Snake Hill Cliffs in Poestenkill were conserved forever. These cliffs are not only visually striking—they also contain rare plant communities, including the only Red Cedar Rocky Summit known on the Rensselaer Plateau. Porcupines, bobcats, snakes, and other animals find shelter in the cliffs, too.

### **Connected lands matter**

Snake Hill (page 2–3) and Barberville Falls Preserve (page 18–19), adjacent properties with a road dividing them, make up an important piece of the Rensselaer Plateau’s western escarpment.

Conserving them together will make a lasting difference for our climate, wildlife, and water, and will offer more places to relax in nature.

### **Bessie’s Woods**

Bessie’s Woods lies within the Little Bowman Pond Forest Block, an important section of the Rensselaer Plateau with deep woods and wetlands. The 122-acre property is home to broad-winged hawks, black-throated green warblers, coyotes, bobcats, and snow-shoe hare. Old stone walls and an apple orchard shed light on recent human history, while wetlands and vernal ponds offer vital habitat for plants and animals.





Nate Simms

Photos of conserved lands: Bunker Hill in Boehme Legacy Forest (page 6) and Valentino Family Community Forest (above). The grandchildren of Bill and Kay Valentino, Valentino Family Community Forest donors, joined the grand opening celebration for the new community forest. They even helped cut the hemlock “ribbon” with hedge trimmers before heading out with other attendees on trails named for them.

## Boehme Legacy Forest

The new 196-acre Boehme Legacy Forest project (see story on pages 14–15) conserves a climate-resilient area as well as scenic views from the rocky summit of Bunker Hill. The Quacken Kill, a high-quality trout stream, winds through. The property features wetlands and deep forests that are home to vulnerable plants and animals.

## Valentino Family Community Forest

Valentino Family Community Forest is now open to all, with miles of trails through 416 acres of evergreen and hardwood forests, plus an Adirondack-style lean-to. This June, the community forest grand opening fell during one of the worst days for wildfire smoke pollution.

After the ceremony, RPA members, staff, and municipal officials walked on the new trails. Once in the forest, everyone breathed a little better.

## Building our future, together

With a merger on the horizon, RPA’s name, brand, and website may be changing. Yet—with your continued support—the drive, vision, and foresight behind this work remains steadfast.

As this new countywide organization takes shape, regional partnerships, climate change mitigation, and community engagement for all ages will be more important—and more possible—than ever. We look forward to working with our entire conservation community on what Rensselaer County needs, now and in the future.





Benita Law-Diao



Benita Law-Diao

# Nature is for everyone

Nature is for everyone, but it may not feel that way to all people. Cultural realities can make it harder for people of color to access—and be comfortable in—the outdoors.

For this reason, the Rensselaer Plateau Alliance supports opportunities for groups like Outdoor Afro to get out on the land with a familiar community and safe atmosphere.

“The hike immersed us in the sounds of birds, crickets, frogs, babbling streams, and rustling leaves—and the scent of fresh air.” — Benita Law-Diao

In summer 2022, RPA partnered with Outdoor Afro’s Albany/Upstate New York network to host a hike for local Outdoor Afro participants at Albert Family Community Forest in East Nassau. Local Leader Benita Law-Diao, who organizes many Outdoor Afro outings in the Capital Region and the Adirondacks, planned and led this hike along with Neshima Vitale-Penniman of Soul Fire Farm.

Outdoor Afro is a national not-for-profit organization that celebrates and inspires Black connections and leadership in nature. Annually, the organization selects and trains volunteer leaders, like Benita Law-Diao, who guide their local communities in nature safely and sustainably. Outdoor Afro’s important work impacts more than 60,000 people.

Through partnerships, RPA works with groups that are historically less likely to find their way to our trails, or that may benefit from nature’s healing qualities. If your community has a need for nature, let us know! Reach out to volunteer coordinator Kim Murdick at [kim@rensselaerplateau.org](mailto:kim@rensselaerplateau.org).

## Creating a place for all to explore nature

We’re thrilled and honored to partner again with Open Space Institute’s (OSI) annual Barnabas McHenry Hudson Valley awards. RPA will host 2023 award recipient Christina Bell. A Siena College student, Christina will work with us to create sensory stations and Nature Play areas along Albert Family Community Forest’s new Equal Access trail. Christina’s project will help connect people of all ages and abilities with nature and the outdoors.

In honor of Barnabas McHenry’s contributions and accomplishments, the OSI has established and administers an award to celebrate his leadership and foster future leaders in the Hudson River Valley. The annual award will be used to provide financial support to promising young leaders and exemplary projects that make significant contributions to environmental protection, historic preservation, tourism, environmental justice, and the arts in the Hudson River Valley.

Nate Simms





Fred McCagg

## A bold partnership—from NY to Vermont

Now in its second year, **the Uplands to Lowlands Climate-Resilient Cores and Connectors program** is gearing up for some exciting partnership projects across the region.

Coordinated by Alana Gerus, Conservation Project Manager at RPA, Uplands to Lowlands involves a collaboration between three different Regional Conservation Partnerships. Currently, Uplands to Lowlands supports conservation and restoration efforts along the Taconic Mountains in Connecticut, Massachusetts, and New York—with the potential to add more partners.

“I’m excited for what’s to come over the next year and beyond, like opportunities for volunteers to help with tree planting and pollinator pathways!” —Alana Gerus

Since summer 2022, Alana has been laying the groundwork for these projects to take place.

This spring, RPA and local partners, including Columbia Land Conservancy and Agricultural Stewardship Association, hosted a Landowner Open House to connect landowners with opportunities for their land, from conservation easements to the Family Forest Carbon Program. The Nature Conservancy and American Forest Foundation were sponsoring partners.

### What’s all the buzz about?

Pollinator pathways help support birds and insects with important food and shelter like strips of native plants growing along roads, in parks, and along sidewalks. Riparian buffer projects restore native plants and structure to streambanks that have eroded or lost their natural character.





## Volunteers make a difference for wildlife

On a chilly day in April, Julia Rogers of the Housatonic Valley Association (HVA) came out to RPA's offices at Sky High Community Center (SHAC) for the first-ever Rensselaer Plateau Follow the Forest linkage assessment training. Hosted by HVA, Follow the Forest is a multi-state partnership that gets people of all ages out on the land on behalf of some important neighbors—our wildlife.

The event kicked off a month-long Plateau Follow the Forest bio blitz, where volunteers went out daily in groups to locations where animals like bears, bobcats, foxes, and aquatic animals may be moving between forests. They used an assessment tool that looks at whether these corridors are accessible and safe for the animals.

Ten middle and high schoolers from a local church youth group attended along with Lisa Gutheil, who coordinates the group. Lisa works with the youth to decide what kinds of community service

projects they're most excited about. This one was a hit. A few girls decided to do a field assessment that afternoon, right after the training.

Isla, who just graduated from high school, says, "The concept of these linkages is so cool. And there is one right by my house! It was so easy for me and my friends to collect data and potentially help animals in our area."

**In 2022, RPA volunteers donated 4,500 hours to making our projects (and dreams) a reality.**

Thank you to all who share their time, energy, and passion in this special way.

**Want to become a volunteer member?**

Fill out our Volunteer Interest form (at [rensselaerplateau.org/volunteer](https://rensselaerplateau.org/volunteer)) to get the ball rolling.





# Love the trails?

## You can thank this crew

If you've enjoyed a trail in Rensselaer County, chances are that the Rensselaer Land Trust/Rensselaer Plateau Alliance volunteer trail crew was behind it. Led by Fran Egbert and Peter Wood, the group almost never misses a Wednesday morning work session from April through November. Each year they build and maintain miles of trails as well as bridges, boardwalks, kiosks, and so much more. We can never thank them enough—and can never believe how much they accomplish.

This spring, to make trail work possible for those who work during the week, RPA launched a Weekend Trail Crew led by volunteer Karen Boswell. Karen says, "Trail Crew allows people of all ages and abilities to enjoy the woods and help with our trails. Everyone is welcome!" **Weekend Trail Crew meets monthly on second Saturdays through October.** Interested? You can learn more by emailing Kim Murdick at [kim@rensselaerplateau.org](mailto:kim@rensselaerplateau.org).



## Amphibians Crossing

Each year, starting with the first warm rains in early spring, frogs and salamanders emerge from their winter homes in the forest and migrate to their breeding pools and summer habitat. Often, a road lies in the middle of their travel route. Thankfully, the Hudson River Estuary Program's Amphibian Migrations & Road Crossings (AM&RC) trains volunteers throughout the Hudson Valley to be "crossing guards" for the animals, helping them cross safely and recording the species they find. The information they collect helps state biologists understand how our amphibians are doing—and where they are living and breeding—so that we can better protect them.

In late winter, RPA and RLT teamed up to host our first AM&RC training. Laura Heady from the Hudson River Estuary Program presented to a packed room at SHAC, full of Rensselaer County residents eager to help the frogs and salamanders that live in our forests. Volunteers then formed groups to go out together on rainy evenings.





## For girls, time in nature builds confidence

Do you recall your first experience exploring nature? Maybe it was a trip with a mentor.

For today's children, screentime and threats like tick-borne illnesses make opportunities to get outside less likely. Young people are missing out on nature's calming and inspiring influence—and we are missing the chance to nurture our future conservation leaders and decision-makers.

Rensselaer Youth Outdoors (RYO) is trying to break through these modern barriers and bring kids closer to nature.

In partnership with Dyken Pond Environmental Education Center and Grafton Lakes State Park, RYO runs a summer Forest Conservation Corps for teens, nature-based teacher trainings, school and youth group programs, and collaborations with community organizations.

In May, RYO led a day-long nature immersion trip for Girl Scout Troop 1759 at Albert Family Community Forest on the Rensselaer Plateau.

RYO director Michala Hendrick and Albert Family Community Forest steward Fred McCagg planned the day together.

Some of the girls had been hunting or camping before with their families. For others, being out in the woods was an entirely new experience.

**Are you a youth group leader, educator, or parent hoping to engage youth out on the land?**

Reach out to Michala Hendrick at [michala@rensselaerplateau.org](mailto:michala@rensselaerplateau.org) or visit [www.ryoutdoors.org](http://www.ryoutdoors.org) to see how we can help!



After Michala helped the girls tune into their natural surroundings, retired NY State DEC hunter educator Chuck Dente volunteered his time teaching them archery.

Later, Michala and Fred led the troop on a hike along a stream, identifying plants as they went. Each girl had a journal to record her observations, and learned how to use a map and compass, build a shelter, and even what to do if she ever got lost or injured in the woods.

To make the day extra special, Michala and Fred ended the day with a campfire dinner of Alpine mac and cheese and a night hike.



"The night hike was scary for some of the girls," says Michala. "I told them that night-hiking makes me nervous sometimes, too, and assured them that together we would be safe and have lots of fun."

The girls headed onto the trail in a buddy system, with headlamps and flashlights. Step by step, their worries eased. By the end of the hike, they were laughing and howling together through the forest.

"Being in the woods allowed the girls to show sides of themselves that I haven't seen before, and it helped them make new friendships and connections with each other and the forest," says Schuyler Gail, Troop co-leader.

"Being in the woods allowed the girls to show sides of themselves that I haven't seen before."

—Schuyler Gail, Troop co-leader

The young women went home that night changed ever so slightly from who they had been in the morning—and with an extra dose of confidence.

"I think the day we spent together will be something that they remember all their lives and will be part of shaping the adults they become," says Schuyler.



Fred McCagg

## Trail Running Series comes to the Plateau

This summer, trail runners of all levels and ages are getting out for runs together on Rensselaer Plateau trails. RPA member Chris Busch is leading these free, informal runs at varied locations. Whether you're new to trail running or have been doing it for years, you are invited to join in the fun! It's a great way to explore new places and connect with people who share your interests.

Learn more and sign up for the Trail Running email list at [rensselaerplateau.org/events](https://rensselaerplateau.org/events).





Nate Simms

## The Bunker Hill forest stays wild

As a young girl living in New Jersey, Betsy Boehme Howe had severe asthma. Her parents, Louise and Ernest Boehme, were advised to move someplace with cleaner air for her health.

Louise had grown up in Troy, and Ernest, who grew up in Germany with summers spent on a family farm, traveled to Upstate New York for his work as a mechanical engineer. He learned that Grafton was known for its clean air.

The Boehme's soon purchased Jay Hakes Farm, a former dairy farm, and began life in the country.

Their new home came with deep forests, wild strawberry patches, and a winding section of the Quacken Kill Creek, a high-quality trout stream. Bunker Hill, a forested hill with a rocky summit and overlook, rose up from the streambank.

Now surrounded by nature, Betsy and her brother Bill scrambled all over the land, finding the best swimming holes in the Quacken Kill and hiking to the summit of Bunker Hill.

Once grown, Betsy settled in Massachusetts and Bill in Montana. As Louise and Ernest were aging,

they sold the original homestead and five acres but kept most of the land. After their death, Betsy and Bill inherited that land.

### A shared love of the land

In 2002, Betsy received a letter at her home in Massachusetts from David Hunt. Hunt introduced himself as a neighbor on Jay Hakes Road in Grafton, on the Rensselaer Plateau.

David shared that he was an ecologist and botanist with an affinity for Bunker Hill and the surrounding forest. He wrote of how he hoped to see that land remain wild. He asked for permission to hike to the summit of Bunker Hill to study the plants and animals.

From that first letter came two decades of correspondence and friendship-building visits between David and Betsy.

David watched over the Boehme's farm, collecting trash tossed along the roadside and leading ecology walks on the land.

"I really appreciated David's deep connection with and knowledge of nature," says Betsy.



### **Bunker Hill stays wild, forever**

The future of the land in Grafton was on Betsy and Bill's minds. As they thought about how special the forest, creek, and hill had been for them as youngsters, they were increasingly aware of nearby threats like mining and development.

"I live in a fast-growing area in Montana," says Bill. "Watching development happen so quickly makes me think about our land in Grafton. That mountain and trout stream need to stay wild."

In 2022, Betsy and Bill decided to donate most of the land—196 acres in total—to RPA for permanent conservation.

"It's a special place, and we want it to stay that way," says Betsy.

Betsy and Bill are grateful that future generations of young people will have the chance to explore the Quacken Kill, pick berries, and gaze out across a forested landscape from the summit of Bunker Hill. They know their parents would be happy, too.

"Watching development happen so quickly makes me think about our land in Grafton. That mountain and trout stream need to stay wild."

—Bill Boehme

**Boehme Legacy Forest** is slated to open to the public in 2024, with a trail across the Quacken Kill and up Bunker Hill.

## — In Memory of David Hunt —

David Hunt, Ph.D., a founding member of RPA, passed away from cancer at age 63 on March 24.

He provided ecological reports for conservation plans for both RPA and RLT, was deeply valued by both organizations, and ultimately helped to unify conservation efforts across the Rennselaer Plateau.

Colleagues and friends will fondly remember David for his encyclopedic knowledge of botany and ecology, an unparalleled level of detail in his studies and reports, and his readiness to work in all weather conditions, or waist-deep in mud, without a thought.

He will also be remembered for his sincerity, loyalty in friendship, love of playing games, choice to live without a cell phone or email, and his deep connection to nature.

Jim Bonesteel, Executive Director of RPA says, "David was critical to the formation and success of RPA. He produced the most detailed Conservation Plan around, identifying ecological communities down to a 50-foot radius."



David intended for his land on Jay Hakes Road, close to Boehme Legacy Forest, to be conserved.

"Dad was relieved to know that Bunker Hill and the forests around it were protected, and our land as well," says David's son, Terrason, 19. He's now donating the land to RPA in honor of his father.





"The purpose of this Bequest Challenge is to preserve forestland forever; and it means all of us working together." — Bill Lanford

## Giving today, safeguarding tomorrow

### Lanford Fund Bequest Challenge

The need for conservation is ongoing, every day. That's why we're thrilled to announce the Lanford Fund Bequest Challenge. Through this Challenge, your planned gift can start supporting local conservation right away.

### How the Bequest Challenge works

If you put RPA in your will or designate RPA as a beneficiary, Bill Lanford will donate \$1,000 in your honor to RPA. This match will be made for the first 30 planned gifts. With your help, we can raise \$30,000 through this exciting Challenge for conservation in the near-term—while also planning for the future.

### Thank you Bill Lanford

Bill's vision, compassion, and generosity is the guiding light and inspiration behind the Lanford Fund Bequest Challenge.

### Join the Circle

In recognition for your generosity, you'll become part of RPA's Legacy Giving Circle, which honors those who have made bequests or life income gifts to RPA. These gifts help protect land and water resources in Rensselaer County into the future.

**Learn more** about the Lanford Fund Bequest Challenge and Legacy Giving Circle by scanning the code.





# What better way to say you care?

**When you gift in honor of someone,** it says a lot about them—and you. We will send the person, or the family, you have honored a card letting them know of your thoughtful contribution. It's a lovely way to note how special they are and how much they cared about the forests, waters, and community we all cherish.

## **In Honor of**

### **Anne Gale**

Peg and Jay O'Connor

### **Annie Jacobs**

George Jacobs

### **Barbara Sinacore**

Cheryl Cammer

### **David Farren**

Peg Munves and Moy Wong

### **Elizabeth Hayes**

Ryan Peters

### **Everyone who loves the outdoors!**

Gail Belles

### **Fred DeMay**

Gerald Beer

### **HRM Fred McCagg**

Chris Keegan

### **George Wilson**

Paul Rosenberg and Patricia Kernan

### **Jake Jacobson**

Kristen Atkins

### **Joe and Ariana Lake**

Robert Williams

### **John O'Neill**

Michael Weliczka

### **Kay and Bill Valentino**

Craig Raisig

### **Leo Nadeau**

Danielle Schaff

### **My town of Grafton**

Tyler Bellamy

### **Our Grandchildren**

Barbara Frankel

### **Richard Sr. and Margeorie Hixon**

Richard Hixon

### **Ruth Frownfelter**

Patricia Jolie

### **Peter Mueller**

Ecovative

### **Stephen Pentak**

Jamie Seibert

### **The Adirondack Trail Ride**

James Rath

### **The wedding of Paul Keegan &**

### **Jennifer Wiley**

Maureen Wiley

### **Volunteers**

Valerie and Charles Kavanaugh

### **John Solomon**

Ingrid Effman

### **Kristin**

Martin Hotvet

### **Mom and Dad**

Annie and Don Cosgrove

### **Dr. Paul Osterdahl Sr., M.D.**

Naomi and Jay Bloomfield

Betty Jean and Thomas Bonagura

Karen Boswell

Robert and Teresa Briggs

Susan Edwards

Julie-Ann Fortran

Virginia Gabrielle

Mary Ann Hartmann

Carla Herbert

Raymond and Larri Vreeland Jarosz

Carolyn Kearns

Michelle LeClair

Beverly and William Morrison

Tom and Margaret Phillips

Mary Frances Sabo

Graceann Wallingford

### **Richard & Margeorie Hixon**

Jennifer J. Hixon

### **Virginia Frost**

Rick Giolito and Lindsay Frost

### **Wini O'Shea**

Bradley Field

## **In Memory of**

### **Bonnie Gray**

Suzanne Pazienza

### **Bruce Steffek**

William Jacobs

### **Doree Cox**

Brian Zweig

### **E Kenneth James**

Melodee James

### **Janice Smyth Simons**

Janice Kullman





# There are so many ways to care for the Rensselaer Plateau

Reach out to Jim Bonesteel for a confidential discussion of your giving options at 518-712-9211 or [jim@rensselaerplateau.org](mailto:jim@rensselaerplateau.org). You can also learn more by scanning the code to the right, or by visiting [rensselaerplateau.org/support](https://rensselaerplateau.org/support).



## Become a monthly donor

Make a difference every day with a sustaining membership. Monthly gifts—whether \$10, \$25, or \$100—make conservation possible year-round.

## Plan a gift to future generations —join the Legacy Giving Club

Leave a gift of any size in your will or plan a gift of real estate. See page 16 to learn how your planned gift can start supporting conservation—today!

## Give back with a Qualified Charitable Distribution

If you are 70½ years or older and must take the Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) from your IRA, a Qualified Charitable Distribution could be used to satisfy the RMD by making a direct, trustee-to-trustee transfer to RPA.

## Woods & Water Heritage Circle

When your annual gifts add up to \$1,000, you become part of this leadership circle. WWHC members enjoy a special annual event with RPA staff, board, and other members.

## Donate stock

A gift of stock can provide you financial and tax benefits while supporting conservation.

## Donate real estate

Gifts of appreciated real estate avoid capital gains taxes and could entitle you to a deduction against your taxable income, based on your property's current appraised value.

## Donate an in-kind gift

Support conservation by donating tools, equipment, supplies—or an item or professional service to our annual Gala & Silent Auction.

## Become a Volunteer Member

Stand up for forests and your community by building trails, sharing your talents, or doing office work. Send an e-mail to Kim Murdick at [kim@rensselaerplateau.org](mailto:kim@rensselaerplateau.org) to learn more.

## Donate crypto

You can donate cryptocurrency by going to Crypto for Charity ([www.cryptoforcharity.io](http://www.cryptoforcharity.io)) and choosing Rensselaer Plateau Alliance, Inc. as the nonprofit to which you wish to donate.



# Thank you for caring for our land and water

Each year, RPA's conservation community — that means you! — creates lasting, positive change.

Your care, together with that of others, fuels amazing work on behalf of the land, water, and communities of Rensselaer County. To see the friends and neighbors who were 2022 members and supporters, scan the code.



## 2022 Highlights



### Young people engaged

**37 teens** on the land with Forest Conservation Corps



### Special places protected

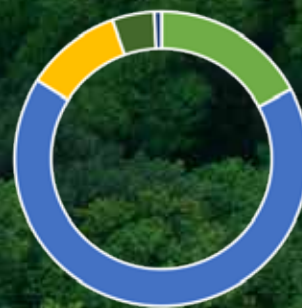
**9 properties** and **1,675 acres** conserved through Forests Forever campaign



### Volunteering for wildlife

**222 tires** pulled from Dill Brook Community Forest

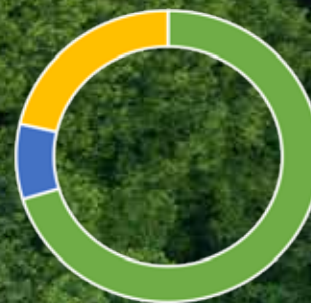
## 2022 Income



Individual Gifts	\$753,607
Government Grants	\$193,973
Foundations, Trusts	\$120,000
Special Events	\$52,372
Other	\$8,856

**TOTAL:** \$1,128,808

## 2022 Expenses



Program Services	\$533,333
Management/General	\$162,688
Fundraising	\$63,014

**\*TOTAL:** \$759,035

**\*Funds expended on land acquisitions:** \$648,103

These are preliminary unaudited figures. For audited financials, contact Jim at 518-712-9211 or [jim@rensselaerplateau.org](mailto:jim@rensselaerplateau.org).

Image of Barberville Falls by Nate Simms.



PO Box 790  
Averill Park, NY 12018  
518-712-9211

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Tanja Eise  
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Rachel Riemann  
Jim Slavin  
Sophie Schwarz-Eise

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Lisa Hoyt  
David Hunt  
Bill Niemi  
Chet Opalka  
Teri Ptacek  
David Sampson  
Padam Singh  
Karen Strong  
Gary Thomann

## STAFF

Jim Bonesteel  
*Executive Director*  
Alana Gerus  
*Conservation Project Manager*  
Bay Habshey  
*Operations & Development Manager*  
Elizabeth Hayes  
*Communications &  
Development Associate*  
Annie Jacobs  
*Communications Director*  
Dan Morse  
*Data Systems Manager*  
Kim Murdick  
*Volunteer Coordinator*  
Andrew Schwitzgebel  
*Stewardship Manager*  
Michala Hendrick  
*Rensselaer Youth Outdoors Director*



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## Honoring the Plateau's Indigenous stewards and cultural heritage

It is with gratitude and humility that we acknowledge we are learning, speaking, and gathering on the ancestral homelands of the Muh-he-con-ne-ok or Mohican people, who are the Indigenous peoples of this land.

Despite tremendous hardship in being forced from here, today their community resides in Wisconsin and is known as the Stockbridge-Munsee Community.

We pay honor and respect to their ancestors as we commit to stewarding a more inclusive and equitable space for all.