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KIM ELLIMAN OP-ED LAUDS CONSERVATION FOR ACCESS TO NATURE AND TRAILS

In a recent guest column for the Hudson Valley's *Daily Freeman*, Kim Elliman, OSI CEO and president, urges public investment in trails and trail networks. Elliman pointed to a recently completed \$1 million OSI project to refurbish sections of the Walkkill Valley Rail Trail – a community asset that is seeing its visitation rates grow.

"The pandemic has driven a record number of us outside to see our families and friends, making clear our need for outdoor spaces that enable connection and respite," reads the column.

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PROMOTING EQUITY & EDUCATION

Earlier this month, OSI announced recipients of the 2021 Malcolm Gordon Charitable Fund grants. OSI awarded eight grants, totaling more than \$66,000, to Hudson River Valley organizations toward environmental education projects and programs that engage local communities, inspire the next generation of environmental stewards, support access to healthy food, and make nature and the outdoors more available and welcoming to all people.

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OSI HITS THE "VIRTUAL" ROAD

In a slate of virtual presentations this spring, OSI staff is sharing their knowledge and educating local land trusts, community leaders, and other decision makers on the versatility and cost-effectiveness of land protection as a tool to fight climate change and protect water sources. By translating scientific research into practical guidance, OSI is promoting strategic conservation for carbon absorption, to buffer the impacts of storms on flood-prone communities, and safeguard water quality.

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OSI CITIZEN ACTION GROUP TAKES ON THE FOOD GAP

The New York Times magazine recently featured Karen Washington, food activist and co-founder of OSI's Citizen Action Group Black Urban Growers (BUGS), an organization of volunteers committed to building networks and community support for growers in both urban and rural settings. In 2012, *Ebony* magazine voted her one of their 100 most influential African Americans in the country.

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OPPORTUNITIES FOR HUDSON VALLEY STUDENTS

OSI is now accepting applications for its 2021 Barnabas McHenry Hudson Valley Awards. The awards, of up to \$5,000 each, provide financial support for undergraduate or graduate students to partner with nonprofits in the Hudson Valley. Each year, up to four young leaders are selected in the fields of environmental conservation, historic preservation, the arts, tourism, and healthy communities.

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