

## Open Space



## Pathways for the Future

Two OSI Studies Focus on the Catskills

**O**n August 28, the Catskills, a region that has already struggled to sustain economic growth in recent years, was dealt a crippling blow as Hurricane Irene charged through New York, flattening homes and dumping record-breaking rains on flooded agricultural lands.

For farmers, the damage was immense. The storm's winds and rains washed out entire growing seasons, sweeping crops from fields and leaving the Catskills, a one-time hub for Romantic writers and painters, resembling none of its storied past.

Recovery costs will be great. As rebuilding efforts pick up steam, however, it's important that the attention focused on the region also galvanize efforts for long-term renewal—something the Open Space Institute has been working toward for years.

The Catskills are endowed with great beauty and plentiful resources, the same assets that influenced the Romantic poets and painters a century ago. Recognizing these values, OSI issued two reports earlier this year, each exploring future paths for the region.

Although both reports were released months before Irene, their conclusions are perhaps *(continued on page 6)*

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Patrick Dollard



## Our Mission

The Open Space Institute (OSI) protects scenic, natural and historic landscapes to ensure public enjoyment, conserve habitats and sustain community character.

Since 1964, OSI has protected over 116,000 acres in New York State and through loans and grants assisted in the protection of more than 1.9 million acres from Quebec to Georgia.



Greg Miller

# Reflections on Life & Land

Dear Friends,

Hurricane Irene has shown us that in just a matter of hours, issues and concerns can change. The storm and its floods caused catastrophic damage to homes, farms, and public lands in the Catskills.

Since the storm, however, we've been inspired to see communities come together and hear stories of neighbor helping neighbor, as residents begin the process of recovery. The region's citizens, like the Catskills, are hardscrabble and resilient.

OSI has worked in the Catskills for more than 30 years, in that time protecting nearly 30,000 acres of wilderness, river valley, farm and forest. Our work there has spanned the entire complement of what we think of as landscape conservation—protected lands, intelligently linked, that preserve the nature, history, culture and community of a region while creating a foundation for rural economies and human lifestyles.

Building on that foundation, OSI released a pair of reports earlier this year that forecast opportunities and possibilities for the Catskills, and we're hopeful—confident in fact—that our vision remains accurate.

Know that all of us at OSI remain dedicated to the people and place of the Catskills, and we look forward to working in your communities again.

Kim Elliman  
*President and CEO*

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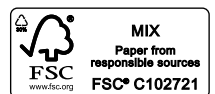
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*Inset:* Vintage postcard view from Pratt Rock, Prattville, NY;  
*Below:* Red Barn in Woodstock, NY; photo Greg Miller; *Page 2:* Kaaterskill Falls, Haines Falls, Catskills, NY; photo Greg Miller





## The Northern Greens

### Forests and Mountains Connecting Countries



*View of the Green Mountains, Canada*

**T**he Green Mountain range, one of the oldest rock formations on Earth, is today an essential wildlife corridor, providing much-needed habitat for more than 50 at-risk species.

The northern Greens, crossing from Vermont into Quebec, contain large blocks of forestland, ravines and steep slopes that make the region both geologically and ecologically important. They're also renowned for a concentration of lakes unrivaled anywhere in the Canadian portion of the Appalachian range.

On each side of the border, U.S. and Canadian conservation groups are working to protect lands increasingly under pressure from development. One such organization, Appalachian Corridor Appalachien (ACA), advises a dozen or more volunteer groups working in their individual communities.

"We're like a toolbox for all these local volunteer groups," said Mélanie Lelièvre, ACA's executive director. "The volunteers know how to reach their neighbors and get people involved, and we have mapping, scientific expertise and other services that we make available to them."

Using a grant from OSI's Transborder

Land Protection Fund, which has approved grants to help conserve nearly 8,000 acres in the northern Greens, ACA and its partners recently protected the 92-acre Pâquet property in southern Quebec. Strategically located between Sutton Mountain to the south and Mount Orford to the north, the property is part of the Missisquoi North watershed, known for its important population of wood turtles, a species at risk in Quebec.

Because it's connected to groups on the ground, ACA brings a unique grassroots focus to a major conservation initiative that also includes national conservation groups and government agencies from both sides of the border.

"We're not just waiting for opportunities," Lelièvre said. "Along with our partners, we're planning for the priorities in our area. We've conducted landscape analyses to identify the corridors that connect different forests, so we're planning regionally for the most important projects."

The northern Greens linkage was identified by Two Countries, One Forest—a longtime OSI partner in the region—as one of the top five conservation priorities

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## Northern Greens

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in the northern Appalachian and Acadian ecoregion for its biodiversity and vulnerability to development. The linkage is a key to landscape connectivity, providing a north-to-south corridor that's destined to become even more critical in the face of climate change.

As OSI's Transborder fund helps protect more wildlife habitat, Lelièvre is optimistic about the future of the region. Just 10 years ago, she said, there were only 400 hectares (less than 1,000 acres) of conserved habitat in the greater Quebec area. Today, more than 10,000 hectares (approximately 25,000 acres) has been protected, and momentum is steadily growing.

"A lot of people are seeing what's going on here and, as a result, a culture of conservation is developing," she said. "We're really proud of these achievements because now we're working to accomplish what the people in our communities want to see."

Alliance partners for the restoration of the Shawangunk Ridge carriage roads:

New York State Palisades  
Interstate Park Commission  
Mohonk Preserve  
Mohonk Mountain House

To learn more about the Alliance and the campaign to restore the Hamilton Point Carriage Road, visit [www.allnysparks.org](http://www.allnysparks.org)

## Hamilton Point Carriageway Restoration

Among the most defining characteristics of the magnificent Minnewaska State Park in Ulster County are the graceful, historic carriage roads that wind through the park. The wide and gentle roads, originally built to serve 19<sup>th</sup> century horse-drawn buggies, today provide access to rugged promontories and spectacular overlooks. Even before Hurricane Irene, the carriage roads—like so many other features of New York's state parks—were crumbling in disrepair. Now, after the hurricane, some roads have suffered even more damage, losing both footbridges and roadbeds.

OSI's Alliance for New York State Parks has launched a \$500,000 private fundraising campaign to save and restore

the 3.7-mile Hamilton Point Carriage Road. Thanks to lead donations from individuals and the Pew Charitable Trusts, more than \$300,000 has already been raised.

"Vigorous grassroots support is vital for quality parks and recreational facilities—the building blocks of livable communities and strong, diverse economies," said Rose Harvey, commissioner of the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. "I urge people who enjoy parks to get behind the Alliance for State Parks' campaign to improve Minnewaska State Park. State parks need partnerships like this to build a green and sustainable park system for the 21<sup>st</sup> century."



PPC

Hamilton Point Carriage Road



# Land Matters *News & Events*

## Federal Funds Beef up Hudson Valley Farms

Earlier this year, the Open Space Institute tapped into a federal funding source to help save three Hudson Valley farms. With the support of the Natural Resources Conservation Service—a U.S. Department of Agriculture fund that is divided into state-by-state allocations—OSI acquired easements that will

protect the Kiernan, Hector and Wright farms.

The Kiernan farm, a 140-acre operation in the Ulster County town of Gardiner, is a leading producer of grass-fed beef in the Hudson Valley. The 166-acre Hector farm, in Liberty, Sullivan County, is currently being

leased for hay and corn production. OSI expects it to be purchased and run by an adjacent dairy farmer.

The third operation, the 120-acre Wright farm, in Warwick, Orange County, produces grass-fed beef and Christmas trees. In the fall, the Wright family offers hay rides, pumpkin picking and a corn maze, making the farm a popular weekend destination for families.



Greg Miller

*Kiernan's 65-cow grass-fed beef operation is one of several farms in a region that locals have dubbed the "Gardiner Beef Belt," a critical mass of 1,300 acres along NY County Route 7.*

## Community Forests Take It for Granite

A start-up grant from OSI's Community Forest Fund is helping The Trust for Public Land, the Millstone Trails Association and the municipality of Barre, VT, a town that has struggled to recover from the decline of the New England granite industry, protect approximately 375 acres of former quarry land as a new community forest.

The groups intend to conserve 13 separate parcels to assemble the Millstone Hill Community Forest by the summer of 2012. Protection of the land would conserve wildlife habitat and water resources, reassemble separately owned parcels to protect connectivity, provide new opportunities for sustainable forest management and eventually provide income to the town of Barre.

Just as other regional trail systems have brought revenue and increased consumer activity to local businesses, the Millstone Forest's extensive trail network, which stretches for 70 miles and provides access to dozens of historic quarry sites, can bring new life to a part of Vermont that has been largely passed over by the state's recreation-based tourism economy.

The project is one of the first to receive funding from the Community Forest Fund, an initiative launched in 2010 to protect community-owned forests, a historic fixture in many northern New England communities in the 19th century.

## Intact Forests

Together with the managers of major forestland tracts in eastern North Carolina, the Open Space Institute is laying the groundwork for a pilot project that could precede OSI's broader study on forest ownership throughout the East Coast.

Coastal North Carolina is an ideal location for a case study, as it boasts more than 1 million acres of investor-owned forestland that buffers another million acres of ecologically important conserved land. Real estate development pressure is predicted to rise in the eastern part of the state, yet the presence of intact forest holdings, viable wood markets, clean water and wildlife habitat makes it a region where forestry remains the highest and best use of the land.

The Open Space Institute began work in 2009 on a report that will inventory private forestlands owned by timber investment management organizations (TIMOs) and real estate investment trusts (REITs) across the eastern U.S. The final report will document the location of major forest holdings and identify areas where concerted efforts should be taken to retain land in forest use.



Matt Tilghman

## Catskills

(cont. from page 1)

even more relevant today: the Catskills are rich with possibility.

“Private Lands, Public Benefits” is intended to help the region’s decision makers direct development in appropriate ways. Across the four Catskill counties of Sullivan, Ulster, Greene and Delaware, OSI’s study identified more than 500,000 acres of “preferred growth areas.”

These areas represent land that could be developed without harming important natural resources—features like the six reservoirs that provide clean drinking water for more than 9 million residents in the New York City metro area and the 700,000-acre Catskill Preserve, which attracts half a million visitors every year while supporting a wide range of wildlife species.

“OSI’s report presents a thoughtful analysis of our region. It doesn’t mislead or ignore the need for growth but visualizes growth happening in conjunction with targeted conservation efforts in which multiple interests are satisfied,” said Jonathan Drapkin, president and CEO of Pattern for Progress, an organization that promotes solutions that enhance the growth and vitality of the Hudson Valley.

The preferred growth areas take advantage of existing and planned infrastructure: roads, schools, water and sewer lines, and emergency services. By directing new development toward these areas, Catskill towns can limit urban sprawl and preserve the region’s extraordinary water, habitat, and recreational resources.

“OSI is not anti-development. We recognize and believe that growth should proceed,” said Kim Elliman, OSI’s presi-

dent and CEO. “We are hopeful, however, that as hurricane recovery efforts continue and development resumes, landowners and public officials will work together and respect the Catskills’ open spaces as they make important decisions about the future of the region.”

The future success of the Catskills is also inexorably linked to its tremendous agricultural value. A second OSI report, “Ground Up: Cultivating Sustainable

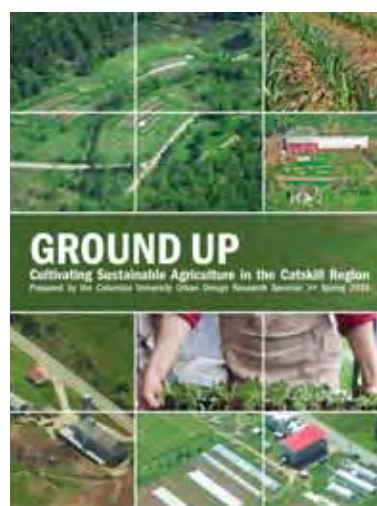
Agriculture in the Catskill Region,” was produced in conjunction with the Urban Design Lab of the Earth Institute at Columbia University. It profiles five Sullivan County farmers who are developing new agricultural models, such as selling organic produce to high-end chefs and producing value-added products like yogurt or mozzarella and ricotta cheeses.

“A healthy industry is one that is willing to change, and these farmers, who are proving their tenacity right now, are at the forefront of the Catskill’s agricultural industry,” Elliman said. “Their operations, built on adaptability, are the

ones that will ultimately keep the small farmer in business.”

The Catskills’ proximity to New York City and the growing appeal of locally grown food has helped create new markets that offer hope, this year and in the future, for local economies.

The subtext of both reports, as Patrick Dollard, CEO of the Center for Discovery, observed, is that farming and development are not incompatible with conservation. Although the immediate future seems daunting, in time all three will become essential parts of a new and sustainable Catskills.



## A Green Economy for the Catskills

Q & A with Patrick Dollard, CEO of The Center For Discovery



*The Center for Discovery was founded in Harris, NY in 1948, and in 1980 expanded to its current form—an educational campus, farm (protected by OSI) and residential facilities spread across 1,000 acres. The Center provides educational, clinical, residential and family support for more than 1,000 children and adults with significant disabilities. With a staff of approximately 1,500, it also employs one of the largest workforces in the Catskills. Recently, we sat down with Patrick Dollard, the Center's CEO, to discuss farming, community and his thoughts about the future of the Catskills.*

**Describe your vision for healthy economic growth and conservation in the Catskills. Is it possible to build a community that can support people who will stay here?**

If you look at the economic growth of Sullivan County, The Center for Discovery went from 12 staff to 1,500 staff, so we've been a major economic driver here in a time that coincided with the collapse of the tourist industry. Our great success is attributed in many ways to the beauty and the landscape of this region, so there is a lot of interest in preserving that. We have 1,500 families in this region that are very connected, and I think in the last five to seven years there's really been a resurgence, particularly in land preservation and moving back to some of our historical ties in agriculture. That's tremendously important

for the development of our communities here. We need to market that better, the idea of being a foodshed for New York City. I think that Catskill Mountainkeeper and other local groups are also extremely mindful that it's not a matter of just tree hugging anymore. We need to look for economic development where people can live and be sustained.

We'd also like to bring a university up here—to create jobs, maintain people who will stay here beyond their degrees and not move out of the area to go to college. But we still need partnerships that lure people into this area, to find more economic drivers. I think agriculture, because of the market in Manhattan, could be a sustaining economic force for Sullivan County and for the Catskills.

**You also mentioned a real cultural shift, in terms of people's vision for this area.**

Science is creating all kinds of different ways to keep people alive longer. We have become so much more mindful of our interaction with nature and the toxins that are inside us that create disability. Agencies like ours needed to become greener to think like that. That has enabled us to join with people who 30 years ago never would have talked to us. And, 30 years from now I'm hoping there are more people at the table. We have so much more in common if we can work from a positive point of view.

**It sounds like you are hopeful. Like there's already a bit of a shift going on.**

Very much. I am extremely hopeful. We have talented people here who are doing exceptional things. There's so much potential in this part of the state.



*Patrick Dollard*  
The Center for Discovery, CEO

Read the full interview:  
[www.osiny.org/Dollard](http://www.osiny.org/Dollard)



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*The view from Overlook Mountain looking southwest to the Ashokan Reservoir*