



# Mohonk Consultations

NUMBER 26 • 2016

LET'S TALK IT OVER AT MOHONK: A TRADITION OF CONNECTING PEOPLE THROUGH DIALOGUE

## Costs and Benefits of Sustaining Conserved Lands

THE VALUE TO COMMUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR SUSTAINING THEM



Mohonk Preserve's *Rock the Ridge* is an annual 50-mile endurance and benefit race. The race helps the Preserve to meet the ever-growing demands of the land and visitors, including conservation, environmental education, visitor safety, and carriage road restoration and maintenance.

*Photo courtesy of Tom Bushey Photography and Mohonk Preserve.*

“We all love our parks, trails, farms, and world-renowned scenic vistas. But how can we make sure they are there for future generations?” was the question that inspired Chris Bernabo, Kitty Brown and Marty Irwin, the 2015 Mohonk Consultations Conference Committee. “When we learned there is almost \$10 billion worth of deferred maintenance at our federal parks we began to wonder how our Hudson Valley conserved lands are faring,” said Bernabo.

Thus the theme of our annual Fall Conference struck a vital chord with more than 130 elected officials, park managers, recreation directors, land trust members and staff, and outdoor enthusiasts attending from all over the Hudson Valley and as far away as Maine. The conference was co-

sponsored by Mohonk Preserve and Scenic Hudson and generously supported by Barton & Loguidice, D.P.C., Medenbach & Eggers, P. C. and Brooks & Brooks Surveyors. Glenn Hoagland, Executive Director of the Preserve, noted that the attendee list was made up of the “Conservation All-Star Team.”

Carol Ash, Chair, Carey Institute for Global Good and Open Space Institute Board, opened up the morning with an extensive *Overview of Land Conservation Challenges and Benefits*, followed by Jessica Sargent, Director of Research, Trust for Public Lands, who spoke on the *Economic Benefits of Land Conservation*. Sargent cited many of the financial and health benefits of outdoor recreation and tourism.

[continued on page 4]

### SAVE THESE DATES

Come to Mohonk Mountain House for these 2016 events. REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED.

#### Spring Forum

Beyond Rooftop  
EXPANDING SOLAR ENERGY  
IN OUR COMMUNITIES

SUN APRIL 10, 2016 • 3 - 6 PM

#### Distinguished Achievement Award

Honoring Rondout Valley Growers Association

SUN JUNE 12, 2016 • 5 - 8 PM

#### Autumn Conference

Realizing A Culture of Peace

MON NOV. 7, 2016 • 9 - 4 PM

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**Mohonk Mountain House**  
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2016



SUNDAY  
 APRIL 10  
 3-6 PM

**Spring Forum**

Beyond Rooftop  
 EXPANDING SOLAR  
 ENERGY IN OUR  
 COMMUNITIES

**Y**OU ARE INVITED TO OUR ANNUAL community Forum in the Mohonk Mountain House Parlor. As a follow-up to the interest generated in this topic at our November Conference, we offer this forum in collaboration with Mohonk Preserve. Our forum will give a brief overview of the legal, technological, financial and ecological issues involved in employing alternative energy initiatives.

Visit: ([www.mohonk-consultations.org/beyond-rooftopexpanding-solar-energy-in-our-communities/](http://www.mohonk-consultations.org/beyond-rooftopexpanding-solar-energy-in-our-communities/)) for details and registration information when available.

SUNDAY  
 JUNE 12  
 5-8 PM

**Distinguished Achievement Award**

Honoring Rondout Valley Growers Association

**P**LEASE COME CELEBRATE the Rondout Valley Grower's Association (RVGA) and their mission of strengthening ties between the Rondout Valley's farms and the local community. Receiving the award on behalf of RVGA are its President Nicholas Cipollone and Executive Director Deborah DeWan. The ceremony and reception that follows will be held in Mohonk Mountain House Parlor.

RVGA is a nonprofit community organization comprised of local farmers, residents, and businesses that are committed to strengthening the region's family farms and preserving agricultural open space for

future generations. The Valley's fertile soils have been farmed since before the Half Moon sailed up the Hudson River.

Since its start in 2003, RVGA has helped local farmers, businesses, and the community to keep local farming strong and support our farming community – a diverse array of over 50 farms, from 13th generation families to newcomers.



Nick Cipollone of Barthel's Farm Market in Ellenville and President of the RVGA Board with Deborah DeWan, RVGA Executive Director. *Photo by Patty Matteson.*



**MODERN VS. TRADITIONAL:**  
 Black cow stands in front of solar panels that generate electricity from sun light.  
*(Photo licensed from Canstockphoto.)*

Current projects include working with the local school district to bring fresh local food into the school cafeterias, helping to bring local produce to the food insecure in Ulster County through RVGA's Farm to Food Pantry program, and holding programs for farmers and neighbors to continue building awareness about local food and farming.

"Rondout Valley has fertile and important agricultural soils, a centuries-old legacy of farming and a strong community of growers," said Deborah

DeWan. "RVGA is an organization both rooted in farming and in community. We are committed every day to celebrating, educating and advocating about the importance of farming in this community, and to helping connect the next generation with their role in

creating a sustainable local food supply." ([www.rondoutvalleygrowers.org](http://www.rondoutvalleygrowers.org))

More details about pre-registration will be forthcoming via email in the spring. In case we don't have your email address, please share it with us if you wish to receive that information.



### MOHONK CONSULTATIONS

The purpose of Mohonk Consultations is to bring about a clearer understanding of the interrelationships of all life on earth, emphasize the need for sustainable use of all the earth's resources, including humans, and support the development of practical means to do so.

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Our annual newsletters are available as pdf files at:  
[www.mohonk-consultations.org](http://www.mohonk-consultations.org)

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MONDAY  
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## November Conference

### Realizing a Culture of Peace

LIVING IN RIGHT RELATIONSHIP with ourselves, others and the world around us can lead to positive changes in attitudes, behaviors and norms. The Conference will consider:

- How can we create conditions for a just and sustainable society that are ethically and ecologically sound?
- How can we live and work together to build safe and non-violent communities?

Join us to continue an historic tradition dating back to the Lake Mohonk Conferences on International Arbitration, held annually at the Mohonk Mountain House between 1895 and 1916. These Conferences led to the founding of the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague, and helped galvanize initiatives that led to the creation of the League of Nations and the UN itself.

Keynote Speaker: **Dot Maver, PhD**, pictured below, is an educator and peace builder whose work inspires cooperation on behalf of the common good. She is Project Director with Kosmos Associates, a Founding Trustee of the National Peace Academy USA, and a founder and board member of the Global Alliance for Ministries and Infrastructures of Peace.

Check our website for further information as the November 2016 date approaches. ([www.mohonk-consultations.org/](http://www.mohonk-consultations.org/)) We will send email reminders with registration links and details to you in the fall. Please make sure we have your email address.

Pictured, second from right: Dot Maver, President, National Peace Academy, September 2014.

The UN General Assembly held an all-day High-level Forum on the Culture of Peace to explore ideas and proposals on ways to build and promote this Culture, as well as to highlight emerging trends and policies that can significantly impact its implementation.



## Costs and Benefits of Sustaining Conserved Lands

### The Value to Communities and Challenges for Sustaining Them

Sargent pointed out that open space frequently saves a municipality tens of thousands dollars by avoiding municipal infrastructure costs. The return on investment is especially beneficial in New York State. For example, Sargent said, "Every \$1 invested by New York in the Environmental Protection Fund returns \$7 in natural goods and services in the following categories: water quality protection; air pollution removal; storm water management; agricultural goods; wildlife habitat; soil retention; erosion control; carbon storage and sequestration." Sargent also used the Johnson County Parks and Recreation District of Kansas as a model of sustainable parks development and funding. ([www.jcprd.com/park\\_admin/budget.cfm](http://www.jcprd.com/park_admin/budget.cfm))

Cara Lee (The Nature Conservancy), Ethan Winter (Land Trust Alliance), Kathleen Davis (Hyde Park Recreation), Mark Castiglione (NYS Hudson Greenway), Brad Barclay (Duchess County Department of Public Works) led a lively panel discussion on *Benefits and Challenges for Conserved Lands*.

A bountiful lunch in the West Dining Room, featuring fall fruits and vegetables from New York State farms, sparked animated networking as well as oohs and ahhs over the seasonal dining. An energized audience returned to the Parlor to hear Henry Tepper, Past President, Massachusetts Audubon Society discuss the *Challenges for Sustaining Long-Term Stewardship*.

The formal presentations concluded with an afternoon panel, consisting of Rita Shaheen (Scenic Hudson), Bob Canace (The Peter and Carmen Lucia



Glenn Hoagland reporting back to the attendees and sharing "Best Ideas" at a Round-Table Session. Photo by Fred Gerty.

Buck Foundation), Joe Alfano (Mohonk Preserve), Christine Chale (Rodenhausen Chale LLC), and Ryan Courtien (Town of Dover) who offered ideas for *Finding Funds and People for Stewardship*.

A subject that created discussion during the morning roundtables came from Ethan Winter of the Land Trust Alliance, who talked about a growing interest by farmers and other land stewards in generating revenue by

installing solar panels on their land.

"The state of NY is committed to community solar/shared renewable [sources] and just earlier this year the PSC issued guidelines. Just recently, New York Governor Cuomo announced a goal of 50 percent of NYS's energy coming from renewable. We expect to devote a panel discussion on this very subject as part of the NYS Land Summit coming up in May 2016," Winter said. "New York wants to be a leader in renewable energy so this is a very exciting time for conservation of both land and energy."

NOTE: Consultations will continue this dialogue in our April 10, 2016 Forum.

Highlights that emerged at attendees' roundtable summaries included numerous concrete examples of the economic benefits of recreational land in the Hudson Valley.

Also cited were the biggest challenges to sustaining conserved lands including:

- Raising money: funding sources often change, for instance generational changes may mean a loss of donors.



Setting a big stone in Trapps trail building by an all-volunteer climbers' crew that saves costs of upkeep on Mohonk Preserve. This crew has gathered each Sunday during warm months each year since 2000, giving more than 9,000 hours to building and repairing trails. Photo courtesy of Stu Soycher.

- Needed expertise in legal and land management areas.
- The need for increases in overall support and public awareness: ways to inspire communities to support land stewardship might be to make presentations to town boards and offer outreach events.

Among the effective approaches talked over were:

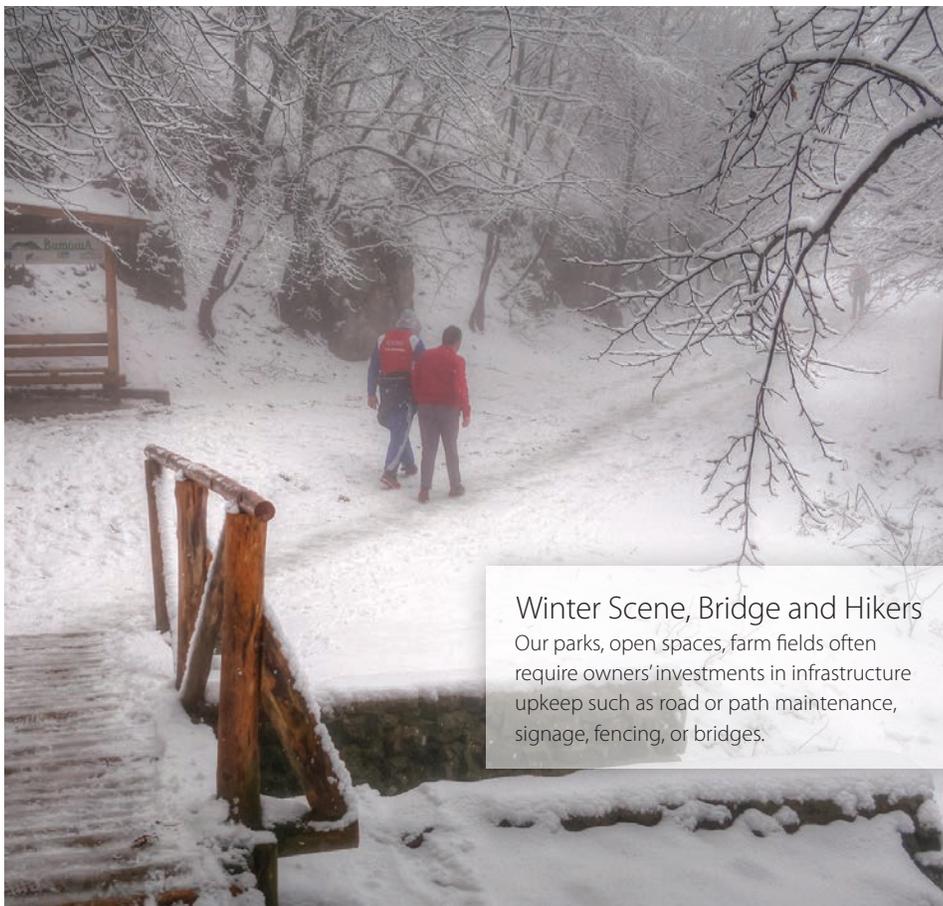
- Collaborations among land stewards such as monitoring of land; stewardship workshops for land trust practitioners to dialogue and to share information, techniques and best practices in the management of conservation land preserves and conservation easements.
- Ongoing education for stewards, municipalities and the public so that local conserved land becomes regarded as an asset or resource for the region.
- Discussion of new ways to raise money. One example suggested was that Real Estate Transfer Taxes allow 10 percent to be used for maintenance and few communities use this mechanism.
- Putting into effect tiered, prioritized maintenance plans.

Roundtable participants collectively brainstormed innovative insights, ideas and observations that were shared through a “Best Ideas” group dialogue:

- Many agencies and reports are available as resources for conservation support and maintaining land.
- Insufficient funding is a challenge to stewardship.
- Municipalities, land trusts and other non-profit groups can receive funding to acquire open space, but not to manage or maintain it. “Management” is not on the priority list for most donors.
- Volunteers are critical: it’s important to build public support by showing the array of benefits.
- All stewardship is local.

Other noteworthy contributions to this conference included but were not limited to the following thoughts:

- The issue of conserved lands raising property values and therefore taxes to pay for management – will this make



### Winter Scene, Bridge and Hikers

Our parks, open spaces, farm fields often require owners’ investments in infrastructure upkeep such as road or path maintenance, signage, fencing, or bridges.

the benefits unaffordable? Do local municipalities with parks include management in their operating budgets through their recreation department or in long term planning?

- Solar farm integration as a revenue source is interesting and complicated (who maintains, what’s the environmental impact, who benefits from the revenue?)

While the above ideas represent important shared areas of the discussions, for reasons of space we cannot list them all.

The expertise and in-depth information of our event speakers and panelists are important to the Mohonk Consultations Board, but so too is feedback we received. Over 80 percent of respondents to our post-conference survey said that “networking” and “bringing back new ideas to my community” were among the most useful outcomes of the gathering. “Recognizing that stewardship is just

as important as acquisition” and “great information, great speakers” were emphasized themes throughout the survey.

At the end of the day, we each saw more clearly the many challenges of sustainable stewardship of conserved lands. Beyond merely acquiring important lands we must generate more support to take care of them for future generations.

In that regard, Mohonk Consultations’ mission “is to help bring about a clearer understanding of the interrelationship of all life on earth, emphasizing the need for sustainable use of all the earth’s resources, including the human community, and support the development of practical means to do so.”

Thank you all for “Talking it over at Mohonk” with us last November. Many of the presentations may be viewed at: ([www.mohonk-consultations.org/conferences/](http://www.mohonk-consultations.org/conferences/)).

## REPORTING BACK - OUR 2015 EVENTS:

### MONDAY NOVEMBER 9, 2015

**Mohonk Consultations hosted a full-day conference "Costs and Benefits of Sustaining Conserved Lands."** Over 132 attendees networked, participated in roundtable discussions and listened to a variety of speakers from state, county, private and public land conservation organizations. Please see pages 1, 4 - 5 for full details.



Ann Guenther in Spring 2015.  
Photo by Patty Matteson.

### MONDAY, JUNE 8, 2015

**Ann Guenther was joined in the Mohonk Mountain House Parlor** by over 110 supporters at the presentation of our 2015 Distinguished Achievement Award to Ann and the New Paltz Climate Change Coalition. The Award program included performances

with sing-alongs of ecology related songs sung by Betty and the Baby Boomers. The program also featured a delicious reception on the East Porch overlooking Mohonk Lake.

### SUNDAY APRIL 12, 2015

**The Challenges Facing Existing Family Farms.** We gave a three-hour community Forum hosting more than 90 local farmers and their families, farmstand owners, CSA managers and staff, Cornell experts, agri-business development organizers, farmer training organizations and interested citizens. Roundtable discussions elicited sharing and brainstorming of the nature of family farming in this region.

## IN MEMORIAM: HELEN L. VUKASIN OCTOBER 16, 1922 – JANUARY 16, 2016



Helen Vukasin, co-founder of Mohonk Consultations.

We celebrate the life of our friend, Helen L. Vukasin, who, with Keith Smiley, co-founded Mohonk Consultations in 1980. Helen's earlier work with The Mohonk Trust's Committee on International Development and in Africa led to collaborations with the International Peace Academy and meetings with UN delegates and staff at

Mohonk Mountain House. She chaired our Board from 1995-2001 and devotedly attended all meetings following her move to Lumberton NJ in 2001 (a three-hour drive one way!).

Helen also co-founded with Dan Guenther the educational Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farm, Phillies Bridge Farm Project, the first of its kind in Ulster County in 1995. She served as its Director from 1995 to 2000. ([www.philliesbridge.org/](http://www.philliesbridge.org/))

Helen earned a degree in economics from UC-Berkeley. She devoted some of her varied professional life to economic development in many parts of the world, while honoring the cultures and arts of different peoples and enthusiastically looking for practical ways forward for them. She authored five books on our responsibility for natural resources and the environment. As recently as 2015, Helen helped revise our by-laws. Donations in her memory will be used to further our programs.

## ELECTED OFFICIALS RECOGNIZE MOHONK CONSULTATIONS

Congressman Chris Gibson, NYS Senator John Bonacic, NYS Assemblyman Kevin Cahill and Ulster County Executive Mike Hein created official proclamations and resolutions recognizing the 35 years of service given by Mohonk Consultations on significant issues last May. "Mohonk



Pictured left to right: Mohonk Consultations Advisor, Catherine Hoselton, and Board: Daniel Freedman, Anne Finn, Patty Matteson, Martin Irwin, Sandra Smiley, Ellen Brady, Brad Berg, Kitty Brown, Ron Brand and Sarah Underhill. Photo by Maureen Stanton.

Consultations has led the way in fostering discussions that truly make a difference," said Bert Smiley, President, Mohonk Mountain House.

He added "From 1980 to the present day, Mohonk Consultations has supported collaboration and clarity on issues of local, regional, and national importance. We at Mohonk Mountain House are pleased to be part of this ongoing tradition of hosting conferences in a setting where people can experience the magnificence of nature as they explore ways to sustain it."

## Please Continue to Support our Work!

IN THE 21ST CENTURY, we often sit alone and connect to the Internet to see what others are thinking and doing. However, nothing compares to people actually coming together, in person, to consider and act upon the critical issues of the times.

Mohonk Consultations continues the tradition of bringing together people of diverse perspectives, in a most magnificent setting, allowing for the creation and galvanizing of inspired initiatives. The opportunity to network, learn and experience the presence of experts and colleagues both near and far, makes our work so special.

Our activities are dependent upon the donations of those of you who realize what is possible. Can you please help support our mission by giving a tax-deductible contribution?

Take a look at our web site and see the breadth and richness of the many forums, conferences, awards and publications that have been the manifestation of our 36-year tradition of convening. You'll also note that we are not a membership organization and do not collect dues.

We thank you very much for your assistance in sustaining our work.

*Brad Berg,*  
CHAIR, BOARD OF MANAGERS

**YOU** bring the spirit of positive change to our communities. We couldn't do it without you! Thank you each and every one.

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The Rosendale Trestle was renovated in 2013, thus completing the Wallkill Valley Rail Trail from Gardiner to Kingston, NY, a 22-mile run. The Wallkill Valley Land Trust and the Open Space Institute raised the funds for the restoration. Fundraising by WVLT for ongoing maintenance continues.



## Help Strengthen Our Communities and Our Neighbors' Lives

Please contribute to Mohonk Consultations' 2016 work and beyond.

To donate online: [www.mohonk-consultations.org/donate](http://www.mohonk-consultations.org/donate)

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# 2016 CONFERENCE

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 MOHONK MOUNTAIN HOUSE

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Dot Maver, Mohonk Consultations' 2016 Conference keynote speaker, is Project Director with Kosmos Associates, a Founding Trustee of the National Peace Academy USA, and a founder and board member of the Global Alliance for Ministries and Infrastructures of Peace.

*Photo courtesy of Dot Maver.*

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