CLC is celebrating the publication of a Natural Resources Inventory for Columbia County. This important tool for municipalities, planning boards, non-profits, and landowners provides the most current knowledge base and best practices for conservation. Authored by biologists at Hudsonia and guided by an advisory group of volunteers from across the county, this is the product of a unique partnership between CLC and the County Environmental Management Council.

CLC has played a key role in this project, applying for and managing grant funds that supported Hudsonia’s work and the design of the publication.

The NRI is extensive and addresses the current state of, and potential threats to, the natural resources of Columbia County. It identifies various protective measures, including legislation and non-governmental action among other strategies for achieving conservation goals. With over 40 full-color maps and figures, and many more beautiful photographic images, the NRI is a masterful visualization of the special qualities of the county.

The NRI is a trove of interesting facts, such as the presence of Logan’s Line—a major geologic fault extending from Canada to the Southern Appalachian Mountains—running directly through the County. The many waterfalls that occur naturally along Logan’s Line were essential in powering the County’s mills over time.

There is no better way to get to know and support the special places of Columbia County than to take advantage of the many volunteer opportunities available to all those who want to lend a hand. Monitor bird populations, eradicate invasive species, and make trails safer so even more people can enjoy the natural world.

Have an idea for something else? Let us know!

Sign up today by emailing John Horton at john.horton@clctrust.org or calling 518.392.5252.
The dynamic geography of Columbia County is displayed on the Elevation Map (Figure 2 in the NRI) reproduced inside.

The NRI further reveals significant tracts of contiguous forest, a feature that provides refuge for a wide variety of plants and animals that require large areas of uninterrupted habitat. Species that rely on these habitats include the eastern box turtle, the wood thrush, the scarlet tanager, and the black bear. The County’s younger forests support populations of the New England cottontail rabbit, and the ample grasslands are home to regionally-rare birds like the bobolink sparrow.

The story of Columbia County’s evolution through time is writ large by the NRI. About 100 years ago, nearly 80% of the County’s forests had been cleared, primarily for agriculture focused on grazing sheep, and then dairy. Today, growing fruit plays a larger role in the economy and there are far fewer farmers than there once were, though a relatively large amount of land still remains in agriculture.

Though much has changed, an incredible variety of plants and animals still call Columbia County home, thanks to diverse habitat, abundant fresh water, unique geology, and a community of people dedicated to stewarding the land with care.

The NRI was prepared by Hudsonia Ltd. with significant contributions from the Hawthorne Valley Farmscape Ecology Program. The NRI was funded in part by a grant from the New York State Environmental Protection Fund through the Hudson River Estuary Program of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. Furthermore, a program of the J.M. Kaplan Fund, provided a grant to support design, layout, and printing.

Find out more about the NRI, where to view it online, and an upcoming workshop series by contacting Christine Vanderlan at 518.392.5252, ext. 208 or christine.vanderlan@clctrust.org.
Upcoming Events

Learn to be a Better Birder  
January 26, 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.  
CLC Office; 49 Main Street, Chatham

Visionary Women Book Signing  
March 8, 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 pm.  
Spotty Dog Bookstore, Hudson

Wildlife Tracking Workshop with Flying Deer Nature Center  
February 2, 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.  
Hand Hollow Conservation Area, New Lebanon

Big Night Training  
March 15, 5:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.  
CLC Office, Chatham

Great Backyard Bird Count  
February 16, 8:00 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.  
Ooms Conservation Area, Chatham

Maple Sugaring Demonstration  
March 16, 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.  
Farm at Miller’s Crossing, Hudson

Schedule subject to change - register at clctrust.org!
2 Elevations

The western one-third of the county was covered by a huge lake during the last ice age.

Maintaining habitat connectivity is critical for facilitating the migration of species among habitats.

Figure 2. Elevation zones in Columbia County, New York. Columbia County Natural Resources Inventory, 2018.