

2017-J2416

Senate Resolution No. 2416

BY: Senator BONACIC

COMMENDING the Wallkill Valley Land Trust upon the occasion of celebrating its 30th Anniversary on June 3, 2017

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize and pay tribute to those organizations dedicated to increasing public awareness of, and appreciation for, the natural resources of New York, recognizing the role all citizens have in protecting the environment and the quality of life in this Empire State; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commend the Wallkill Valley Land Trust upon the occasion of celebrating its 30th Anniversary at its seventh Annual Historic House Tour, "Houses on the Land: The First Highway - Huguenot Homesteads From New Paltz to Bontecoe"; the closing reception will be held at a private farm on the Land Trust's first easement; and

WHEREAS, This year's tour will explore the legacy of New Paltz's Huguenots and their expansion northward along the eastern banks of the Wallkill River to Bontecoe, New York, on the Esopus River border; and

WHEREAS, The "Duzine", as the first dozen settlers were called, built their houses on the terrace above the Wallkill River where vista's

sweep west to the Shawangunk Mountains; the seven houses on the tour include examples of an early stone house, a charming modern interpretation of a Dutch-style stone dwelling, two Greek Revival structures, as well as a late 19th Century manor house, and a soaring labyrinthine barn converted to modern day living; and

WHEREAS, In 1987, Kitty Brown attended a conference on Development and Land Trusts held at the Bear Mountain Inn sponsored by the Dutchess County Land Trust and the Trust for Public Lands (TPL); she then attended a smaller, regional workshop at the Mohonk Preserve sponsored by TPL and funded by the J.M. Kaplan Foundation; and

WHEREAS, From this second conference grew three organizations: The Rondout-Esopus Land Conservancy, The Woodstock Land Conservancy, and the Wallkill Valley Land Trust (WVLT); co-founder Kitty Brown worked with several directors to form the corporation's legal status including Jean S. Bartlett, Kathy Hudson, John Jacobs, Robert Lasher, Jay A. LeFevre, James Ottaway, Jr., Johanna Sokolov and Seward Weber; in February of 1987, Fran Dunwell and William Rhoads joined the Board of Directors as the WVLT was officially incorporated in New York State; and

WHEREAS, Since its inception, the WVLT has strived to be there when land owners needed it; this vital organization's first project involved the protection of a 7.3-acre property along the Wallkill River in Gardiner, New York; and

WHEREAS, In 1990, the WVLT signed its first completed Conservation Easement on the Kellar Farm, protecting 88 acres of agricultural land, a large portion of which borders the Wallkill River in the Town of Esopus; and

WHEREAS, Through the years, many residents donated their private land to the WVLT, ensuring the beautiful and valuable land for livestock and wildlife would not be turned into a development; and

WHEREAS, The WVLT and the TPL purchased the 12.2-mile Rail Trail, and conservation easements were put in place in 1991; through fundraisers and outreach events, improvements were made all along the Wallkill Valley Rail Trail; and

WHEREAS, Through this effort, the Wallkill Valley Rail Trail Association (WVRTA) was officially formed in 1991; the organization focused on stewarding and advocating for the Trail with events such as the Rail-Trail Fund Day and the Great Wallkill Valley Rail Trail Linear Lap Sit; and

WHEREAS, Today, the Wallkill Valley Rail Trail is a popular safe-haven for both community members and visitors to run, walk, bike, cross-country ski, and horse ride; the Trail truly enhances the quality of living in New Paltz and Gardiner; and

WHEREAS, As a result of the diligent efforts of the Wallkill Valley Land Trust, the region east and south of the Shawangunk Ridge which feeds the Wallkill River remains a region abounding with the varied and beautiful landscapes that give it its distinctive sense of place, remaining an attractive place in which to live, work, and raise a family; and

WHEREAS, It is incumbent upon all citizens to recognize and applaud the efforts of organizations such as the Wallkill Valley Land Trust that work tirelessly on behalf of protecting our natural surroundings for the benefit of present and future generations of New Yorkers; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commend the Wallkill Valley Land Trust upon the occasion of celebrating its 30th Anniversary; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the Wallkill Valley Land Trust.