



# Catskill Mountainkeeper 2023 Program Highlights

## SIGN THE BIRDS & BEES PROTECTION ACT

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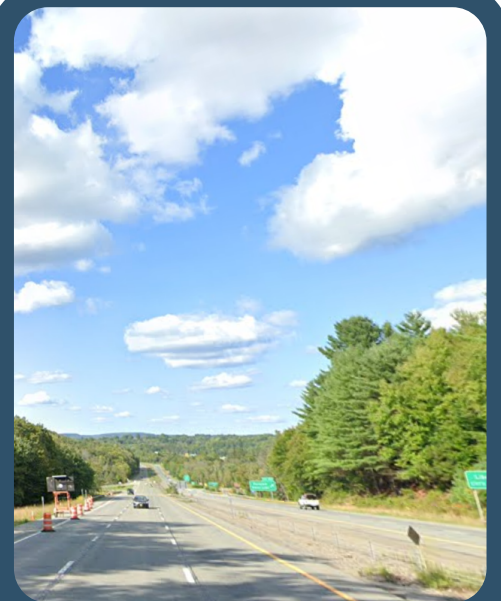
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*fig. a: pollinator, threatened by neonicotinoid use*



Working alongside strong environmental and agricultural organizations throughout the state, Catskill Mountainkeeper effectively rallied our supporters, engaged in strategic lobbying efforts, and organized effectively to secure **resounding approval for the Birds and Bees Protection Act in both the New York State Senate and Assembly**. Now, with the bill awaiting Governor Hochul's signature, time is of the essence and we're doing all we can to urge her to sign it into law.

Throughout 2023, Catskill Mountainkeeper lead and supported winning **campaigns to advance our mission**: to protect our region's forests and wild lands; safeguard air and water; nurture healthy, equitable, and sustainable communities; empower environmental justice communities; and accelerate the transition to a 100% clean and just energy future in New York State and beyond.



This year, Catskill Mountainkeeper helped spearhead a diverse coalition of local, state, and national groups to **oppose a billion-dollar plan to expand Route 17** in the Catskills and Hudson Valley Regions for nearly 50 miles.

The proposed plan would not only fail to achieve its stated goal of reducing traffic congestion but is also flatly inconsistent with New York's Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA) mandates to slash greenhouse gas emissions 85% by 2050 – as well as running afoul of other federal and state laws.

Mountainkeeper and our partners are calling on Governor Hochul to develop an alternative, sustainable transportation plan for Route 17 and use this highway campaign to push the NYS Department of Transportation's (DOT) to develop state-wide regulations and strategies to implement the CLCPA.



October 19, 2023 marked the release of the 9th edition of the *Compendium of scientific, Medical, and Media Findings Demonstrating Risks and Harms of Fracking*. Co-edited by Mountainkeeper Senior Research Director Kathy Nolan, MD with colleagues at the Concerned Health Professionals of New York (CHPNY), this report forms the underpinning for work to fight fracking and break our dependence on climate-destroying fossil fuels.

The report received media attention across the state and continues to support clean, safe energy advocacy efforts in New York and around the world.



Mountainkeeper's summer **Catskill Trail Steward** program, a "boots-on-the-ground" effort to help orient visitors to and minimize high use impacts on popular understaffed outdoor trails and recreational areas, enjoyed a very successful third summer. Working alongside the NYSDEC, our four stewards greeted folks at popular trailheads and swimming spots, educating people about Leave No Trace™ Conservation principles and tackling myriad challenges ranging from tick removal to helping hikers finding trail heads to assisting forest rangers with trail maintenance.

## Keep in touch!

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## 6,258 visitors

In 2023, Mountainkeeper's Summer Trail Stewards welcomed visitors to the Beaverkill Covered Bridge, Big Pond, Crystal Lake, and Alder Lake's trails and recreation areas.

## 222 dogs



and four cats



## 99 assemblymembers + 45 senators 144 yes votes

Thanks to the relentless work of Mountainkeeper supporters, staff, and colleague organizations, a strong majority of both houses of the legislature voted to pass the Birds & Bees Protection Act.



## 1 signature

All the Birds & Bees Protection Act needs to become law is Governor Hochul's signature. She can reduce New Yorker's harmful chemical exposure and save pollinators with a stroke of her pen, and we're calling on her to sign the bill.



## 100 qualified voters



Under an antiquated state law, it only takes signatures from 100 qualified voters to form a new village in New York State. This law is being exploited to dodge land use and environmental protections.

Mountainkeeper and our allies are working to update the law to preserve water, land, and community protections, and now it awaits the Governor's signature.

## 10,000 lbs of fruit



Mountainkeeper's Liberty Farmers Market had another stellar season. Between 150-200 shoppers visited each week to buy fresh, local produce and products.

## 200 lbs of garlic

## and nine amazing vendors



## \$6.5 million



Thanks to our Catskills representatives, supporters, and Catskill Park Coalition partners, we successfully advocated for at least \$6.5 million state investments into our Park and Region. The funding supports great work like trail building and upgrades, scientific research, stewardship programs, campground improvements and invasive species management.

## 120+ items repaired



Mountainkeeper's Hurleyville Repair Café builds community, as neighbors help neighbors fix broken household items like TVs, lamps, clothing, small kitchen appliances, and more. We're scheduling more Repair Cafés for 2024. Don't despair, repair!



## 10 Repair Cafés

## Millions of metric tons of methane



In 2023 the fossil fuel industry tried to gut the state's landmark Climate Leadership & Community Protection Act by changing the way we account for methane gas emissions, which would drastically underestimate methane's impacts on global warming. Mountainkeeper & NY Renewables fought back. Together, we won.

## 2024

Mountainkeeper is excited for a new year filled with impactful work to protect the Catskills from unsustainable development, supporting local farms and work to build our amazing communities, and spearheading campaigns to advance climate justice. None of this would be possible without you, our closest friends and supporters. We're deeply grateful for you. Thank you for joining us in this important work.

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