

Catskill Center for Conservation and Development --- Background Information

SUMMARY

The Catskill Center for Conservation and Development's (Catskill Center) mission is to foster and protect the environmental, cultural and economic well-being of the six-and-a-half-county Catskill region. It is guided by the understanding that responsible conservation creates opportunity and it is the major force advocating for both the Catskill Park and the entire region.

The Catskill Center's activities involve arts and culture, education, natural resources and economic growth. These are pursued through three program areas: Regional Collaboration, Stewardship of public and Private Lands, and Inspiration for Responsible Economic Growth.

Formed in 1969 and headquartered at the Erpf Center* in Arkville, NY, the Catskill Center is a non-profit, tax-exempt 501C(3) corporation. It employs an executive director and staff and is guided by an all-volunteer board of directors with representation from local, regional and New York City metropolitan areas. For more information, visit www.catskillcenter.org.

PROGRAMS FULFILLING THE MISSION

Through its three program areas, the Catskill Center leads efforts to protect the Catskill Park and Forest Preserve while advancing conservation, cultural and economic development initiatives throughout the region.

Recent activities focus on raising funds for operating the Congressman Maurice D. Hinchey Catskills Visitor Center (CVC), Mt. Tremper, NY, (in partnership with the NY State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)), the official visitor center for the Catskill Park; educating State legislators in Albany, NY on the importance of the Catskills; participating in invasive species control and streamside land acquisitions programs, and operating as a land trust, including Platte Clove and Thorn Preserves in Hunter and Woodstock, respectively.

Details of CCCD's three programs include:

- * Regional Collaboration: Organizing and leading an annual Catskill Park Day for State legislators in Albany, NY, forming and leading the Catskill Park Coalition as well as creating and chairing the Catskill Park Advisory Committee (CPAC), and managing and operating the CVC.
- * Stewardship of Public and Private Lands: Managing all five fire towers in the Catskill Park through the Catskill Fire Tower Project; running the Streamside Acquisition Program (SAP) in partnership with the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP); operating the Catskill Regional Invasive Species Partnership (CRISP) in partnership with DEC, and initiating the process of becoming a fully accredited land trust through which it now manages two properties, accessible to the public, including Platte Clove, Thorn Preserve and more than 1,200 acres of conservation easements.

- Inspiration to Help Build Understanding of the Catskills, and Encourage Responsible Economic Growth: Providing programs to help visitors, residents and educators connect meaningfully with the Catskills through the CVC and other programs; advocating for broadband service in the region; guiding the Belleayre Resort’s project planning to meet environmental standards and gain community support; helping local and regional economies through the SAP, allowing recreation on DEP land with streams near villages and hamlets; staging receptions and exhibits for local artists at the Erpf Gallery, and providing the Artist-in-Residence program at Platte Clove Preserve.

RECENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- More than \$20 million has been raised for the Catskills through the efforts by the Catskill Park Coalition, founded by CCCD in 2014. This includes \$7.2 million in NY State’s budget for the Catskill Park and \$8 million to fund a new gondola lift at the Belleayre Ski Center. Thirty organizations now participate in the Catskill Park Coalition, advocating for the Park and communities throughout the region.
- CCCD regularly convenes meetings of more than 50 stakeholders of the Catskill Park Advisory Committee (CPAC), including representatives from state agencies and communities, counties and user groups throughout the region. Members of the Committee participate in discussions on a number of wide-ranging Park issues. CPAC is led by the CCCD and was founded by it in 2015.
- Thanks to a large donation in 2017, CCCD was able to rehabilitate and restore the Thorn Preserve’s residential cottage in Woodstock, to be used for CCCD programs and to be budgeted for an onsite caretaker. CCCD is working with the town of Woodstock to upgrade parking and signage at the Preserve for easier public access.
- With a \$10,000 grant from the New York State Conservation Partnership Program, CCCD is making at its Platte Clove Preserve in the Town of Hunter, including building a central trailhead location and kiosk, relocating an eroded access trail, reconstructing the trail to Plattekill Falls, and other upgrades.

FUNDING

The Catskill Center is financially supported by its general membership and its board members, a variety of New York state and federal agencies, and a growing number of foundations, and bequests. The CIC is also supported by NY City’s Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), The Catskill Watershed Corporation, and generous staff and volunteer time commitments from Catskill Mountainkeeper, Catskill Mountain Club, and New York-New Jersey Trail Conference.

* The Erpf Center building was purchased in 1969 by Seager Fairbairn who donated it to the Arkville-based Erpf Fund. In 1983, local philanthropist, Sue Erpf Van de Bovenkamp donated the building to the Catskill Center.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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CVC - The Congressman Maurice D. Hinchey Catskills Visitor Center

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