The Munsee, the “Totem Wolf Clan” of the Lenape people, who originally inhabited the watershed, called the creek Kahaksink, “place of wild geese.” In the 1600s it was given its current name for the redcoat, or fort (red/vt. In Dutch), near the mouth of the creek.

The Rondout Creek became economically important in the 19th Century when the Delaware & Hudson Canal was built to carry coal from Pennsylvania to NYC. The canal ran alongside the creek to Kingston. Today the Rondout is part of NYC’s drinking water supply, and it is noted for its biological diversity, fishing, boating, and other recreational activities.

The Catskill and Shawangunk Mountains are ecologically significant for their biodiversity, in large part due to their contiguous, unfragmented forests. The NYS Open Forests and the links between them in the Rondout Valley.

The Rondout Creek is part of the tidal Hudson River Estuary. It includes Sleightsburg Marsh as well as flats, tidal wetlands, and shallows. The wetlands at the mouth of the Creek are both freshwater and tidal—a globally rare ecosystem. Tidal wetlands serve a very important purpose, not only providing habitat for rare plants and young fish, but other benefits like flood attenuation and wastewater dilution and purification.

The tidal Rondout is a warm water stream that has experienced considerable human impact over time. Natural Heritage Program recognizes the tidal creek as a waterfowl overwintering area, important for species including mallard, black, and wood duck, and an anadromous fish concentration area for American shad, alewife, blueback herring, and striped bass among coastal fish and wildlife habitat.

Healthy, natural systems act as green infrastructure, supplying services that support life. They help purify drinking water, control floods, replenish aquifers, pollinate crops, and create fertile soil. They also provide opportunities for outdoor recreation, environmental education and research, and help us adapt to a changing climate.

For all of the beauty throughout the watershed, the water quality is consistently compromised. Learn what you can do to help. Please visit us at RondoutCreekWatershedAlliance.org or like us on Facebook.
A creek that we can swim in and fish in is both our right and our responsibility.