

Great Rondout Wetlands: The Great Pocomma Vly, Cedar Swamp, and Beer Kill Wetlands / Cape Pond in Marlinton, Olive, Rochester, and Wawarsing contain unique or rare species or ecological communities, and most are surrounded by extensive forest that serves as an important buffer. In some cases, these large wetland and forest complexes provide a critical connection of natural habitat between the Catskills and Shawangunk mountains.



The creek and its sister, the Wallkill River, drain a vast area of more than 1,100 square miles, stretching from the Catskills in the north and west to Sussex County, New Jersey in the south. Together, the Rondout and Wallkill form one of the Hudson River's largest tributaries.

The Rondout Creek watershed consists of distinct segments: the non-tidal creek which includes the Rondout Reservoir and the tidal portion. It has a diverse and abundant natural heritage, with species and ecological communities of regional, state, and global significance. These natural systems are the scenery and living fabric that provide a regional identity, creating a sense of place for its residents.

THE WATERSHED

The geology, topography, hydrology, and land use history all weave together to shape a diversity of habitats supporting an equally diverse array of plant and animal communities. The priority habitats include streams and riparian corridors, forests, a variety of wetlands, grasslands, shrublands, farms, cliffs and caves.

The watershed's rich biodiversity is a result of its variable landscape. To the north are the forested Catskill Mountains, where headwater streams such as the Sapwash Creek originate in the Catskill Forest Preserve. To the south are the steep rocky slopes of the Shawangunk Ridge, supporting another large forested area that also sources headwater streams. The higher elevation tributaries flow to the more level terrain of the valley, where floodplains, wetlands, and farmland are more common, and tributaries such as the Kippleshush Creek meet the Rondout. To the east, the watershed holds the limestone caves and the Binnewater Lakes of Rosendale.

Non-tidal Rondout Creek Watershed

Karst Aquifer Region: Characterized by caves, sinkholes, mines, springs, lakes, and sinking streams, the karst region is situated in a narrow band of carbonate rock underlying parts of Esopus, Marnakating, Marlinton, Rosendale, Rochester, and Wawarsing.



OUR MISSION

The **Rondout Creek Watershed Alliance (RCWA)** was founded to restore the Rondout Creek (Kahaksink) and its tributaries, to act as the voice of the creek, and to advocate for the protection and improvement of the watershed by increasing community awareness and implementing collaborative conservation efforts.

Healthy, natural systems act as green infrastructure, supplying services that support life. They help purify drinking water, control floodwaters, 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.



Unfragmented Forests: The Catskill and Shawangunk Mountains are ecologically significant for their biodiversity, in large part due to their contiguous, unfragmented forests. The NYS Open Space Conservation Plan prioritizes the protection of these forests and the links between them in the Rondout Valley.



The tidal Rondout is a warm water stream that has experienced considerable human disturbance but remains important for migratory and resident freshwater fish. The New York 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 others. It is a state-designated significant coastal fish and wildlife habitat.

The Rondout Creek is part of the tidal Hudson River Estuary. It includes Sleighsburg 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 Creek

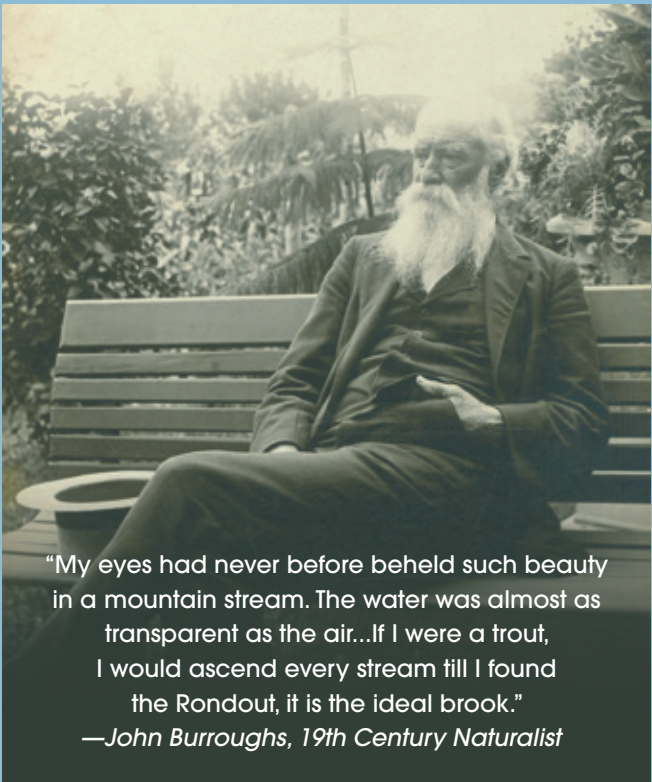
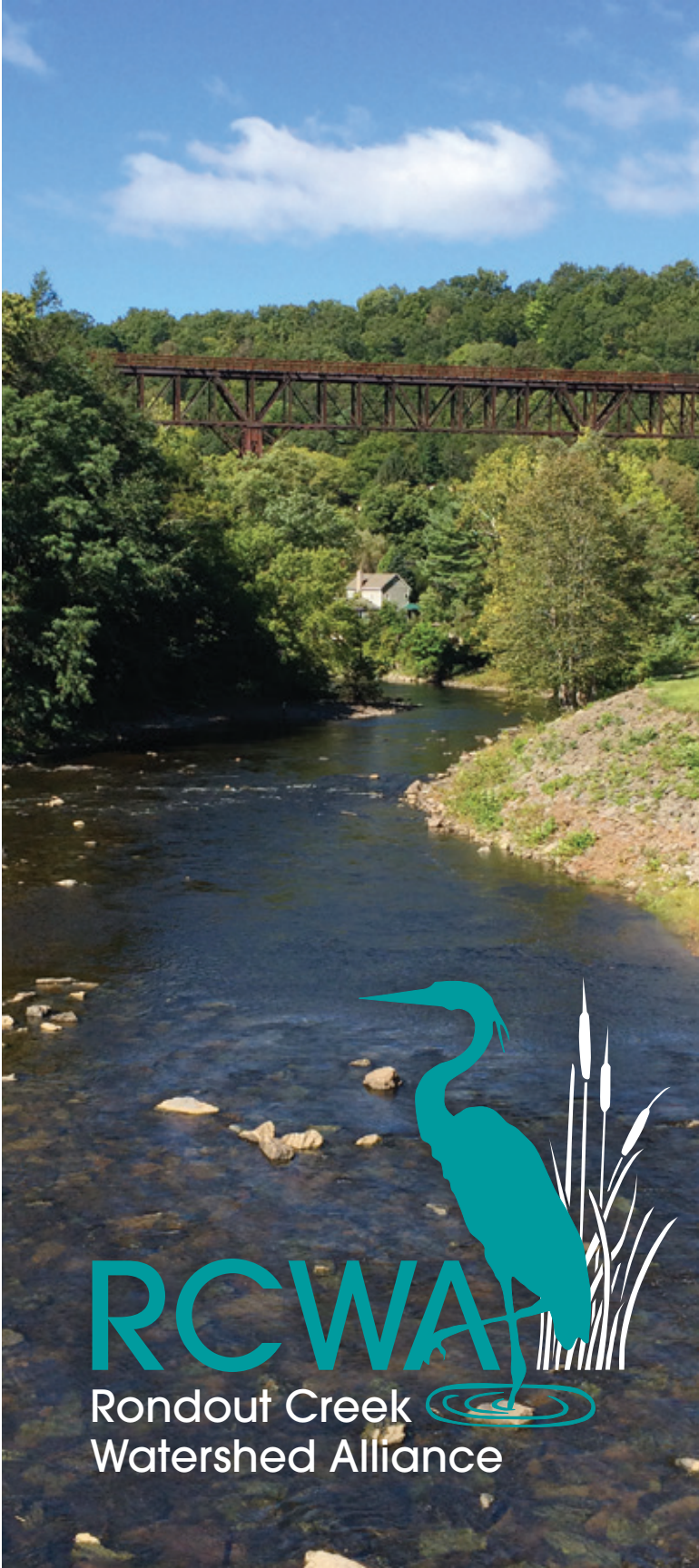


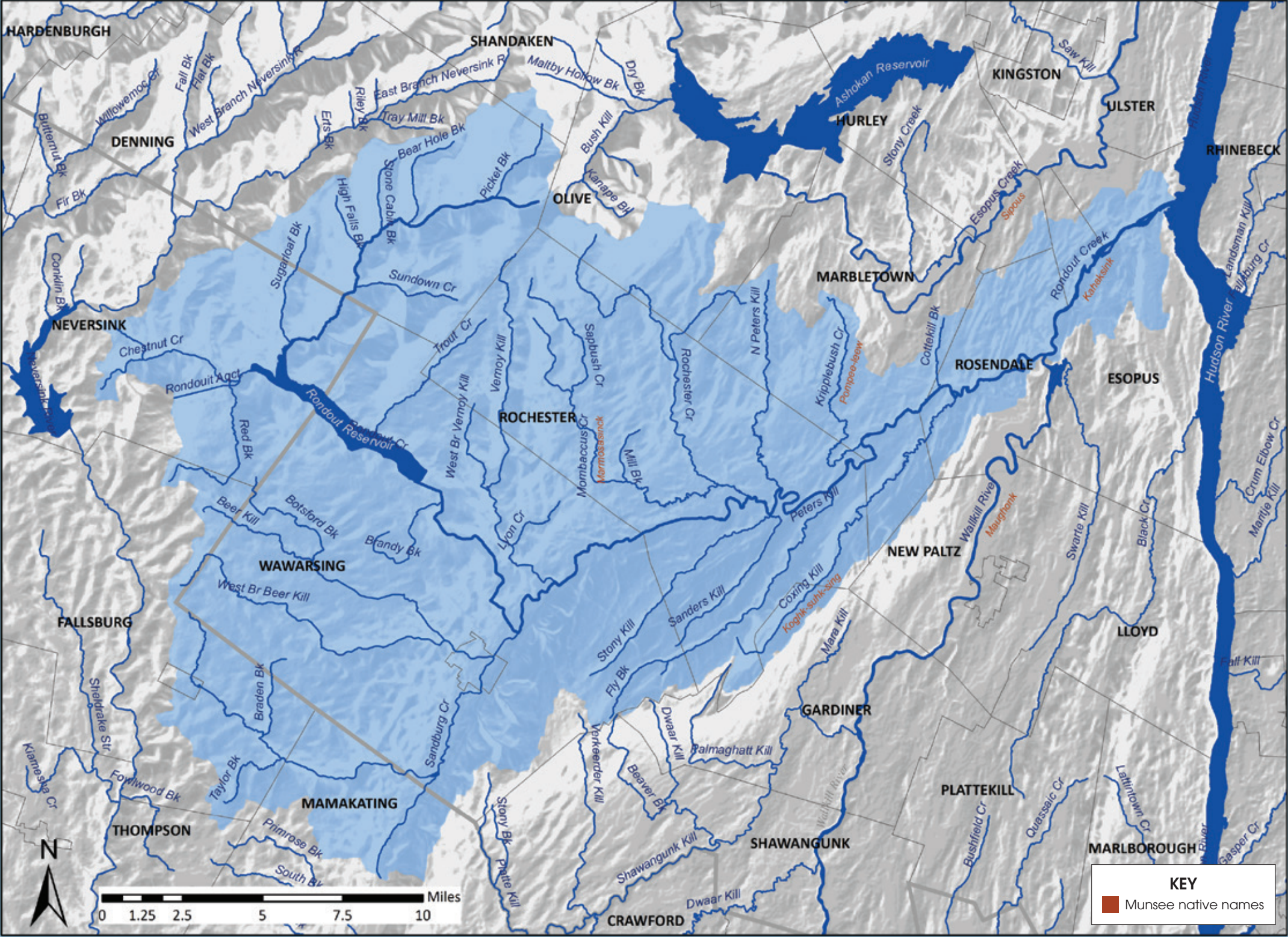
Photo courtesy of Hartwick College, Stevens-German Library.

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 redoubt, or fort (*reduyt* in Dutch), near the mouth of the creek.

The Rondout Creek became economically important in the 19th Century when the Delaware & Hudson (D&H) 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.



Rondout Creek Watershed



SNOWY RONDOUT IN ALLGERVILLE



NEVERSINK RESERVOIR



SUNSET ON THE RONDOUT IN ROSENDALE



TREE PLANTING ON THE COXINGKILL



WAWARSING W.A.V.E. TRAINING



CREEK WEEK CLEAN-UP IN MARBLETOWN



THE FALLS AT HIGH FALLS



MISTY RONDOUT IN ACCORD



CITY OF KINGSTON SLEIGHTSBURG MARSH

A creek that we can swim in
and fish in is both our right
and our responsibility.