A Nation-Leading Climate Win: In an important leap forward in the fight against the climate crisis, this summer Governor Cuomo signed New York’s historic Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA). The nation’s most ambitious economy-wide climate law, the CLCPA mandates that electricity production in New York be greenhouse gas emission free by 2040, and the state reduce all human-caused climate emissions to 85% below 1990 levels by 2050. It also calls for at least 35% of all climate funding to benefit disadvantaged communities. Mountainkeeper led the way with our partners at NY Renews to draft and pass the CLCPA, and we are now working to make sure the law delivers on its promise to build a clean energy future rooted in climate and environmental justice, while demonstrating how aggressive climate action at the state level can drive broader change.

Bringing Clean Energy to the Catskills: In its second year, Mountainkeeper’s HeatSmart Ulster•Sullivan campaign, a partnership with NYSERDA, is advancing clean energy solutions in the Catskills. The campaign is fast-tracking the adoption of clean heating and cooling technology—like geothermal systems and mini splits (aka air-source heat pumps), energy efficiency, and weatherization improvements—in these two Catskill counties. Learn more and sign up: renewableny.org

From Pollution to Solution: Mountainkeeper and our allies scored a big win against plans by Glidepath to build a 20 MW fracked gas powered “grid support” plant in Ulster County. Thanks in part to our work to galvanize public opposition and encourage the company to eliminate the project’s gas component, it has been transformed into a battery-storage facility, with zoning and energy management approaches that are a model for our emerging renewable energy system.

Documenting Fracking’s Health Impacts: June 2019 saw the release of the sixth edition of the Compendium of Scientific, Medical and Media Findings Demonstrating Risks and Harms of Fracking, co-authored by Mountainkeeper Sr. Research Director Kathy Nolan, MD. This collection of articles, news stories, and government reports is an important resource for anti-fracking allies, and the underpinning for all of Mountainkeeper’s fossil fuel work.

Building a Stronger Movement: Mountainkeeper helped organize the 9th Extreme Energy Extraction Collaborative (E3C) Summit, held in May 2019 at the Colby Ranch in California’s Angeles National Forest. Attended by diverse stakeholders from groups fighting extreme energy across the country, this gathering helped build cooperation and collaboration to grow a more effective movement.
Fighting Illegal Dumping: Mountainkeeper’s ongoing campaign against an illegal construction and demolition debris dump in Saugerties continues to ratchet up the pressure on New York State to stop illegal dumping. Our efforts spurred a state investigation of the dumping site that found nearly 40 violations and resulted in a stop work order. However, the site's owner continues to violate the law by bringing in truckloads of new waste daily. New York's Department of Environmental Conservation and Attorney General's office have stepped in, and Mountainkeeper is gathering evidence to support their work. We're also building a larger movement to fight illegal dumping by reaching out to towns in the same boat to share information and coordinate strategies.

Keeping Onteora Lake and Bluestone Wild Forest Pristine: Mountainkeeper helped hold back efforts to permit a big steel and concrete fabrication plant right next to Onteora Lake and Bluestone Wild Forest. Our coalition convinced the Town of Kingston Planning Board to revoke its misguided Negative Declaration of Environmental Impact for the project, and we are advocating for a thorough environmental review and opposing efforts to rezone the land for industrial use.

A New Rail Trail for the Catskills: Following years of advocacy by Mountainkeeper and our allies, the vision for a new multi-purpose trail in the Catskills became a reality when the first completed segment of the 11.5 mile Ashokan Rail Trail officially opened to the public in October. In addition to preserving habitat along the old rail corridor, the project will add jobs to the region, generate new economic spending, and encourage people to be active outdoors.

Protecting Pollinators: Mountainkeeper is fighting the use of neonicotinoid pesticides, a leading cause in the crash of pollinator populations. In 2019 we supported the Birds and Bees Protection Act, which bans the use of neonicos for five years while their impacts are studied. The bill stalled, but our efforts set the stage for the 2020 state legislative session. We also produced a soon-to-be-released film about pollinators in the Catskills, and added pollinator-friendly gardens to our edible school garden program.

A Spotlight on Mountainkeeper's Backyard: This summer, Mountainkeeper launched a TravelStorys audio tour of our own special corner of the Catskills. The Gateway to the Catskills: Livingston Manor, Roscoe, and More! tour is a great way for locals and visitors to explore and learn about our wild places, history, attractions, and communities. You can access this driving and walking tour via the free TravelStorys app. To preview the tour, go to: http://bit.ly/2My2Flf