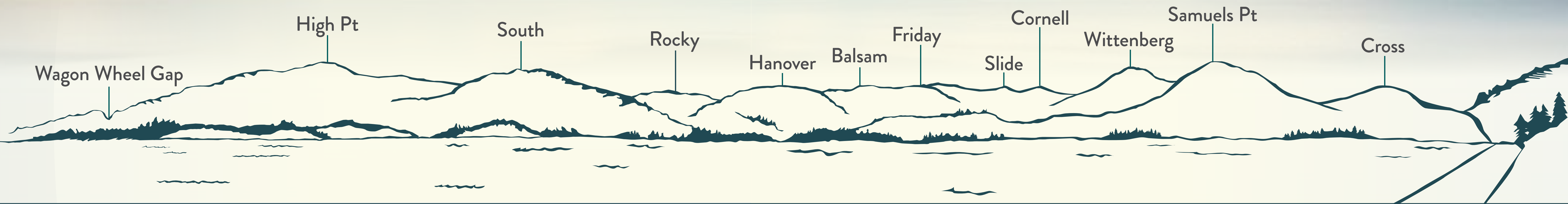


THE CATSKILLS

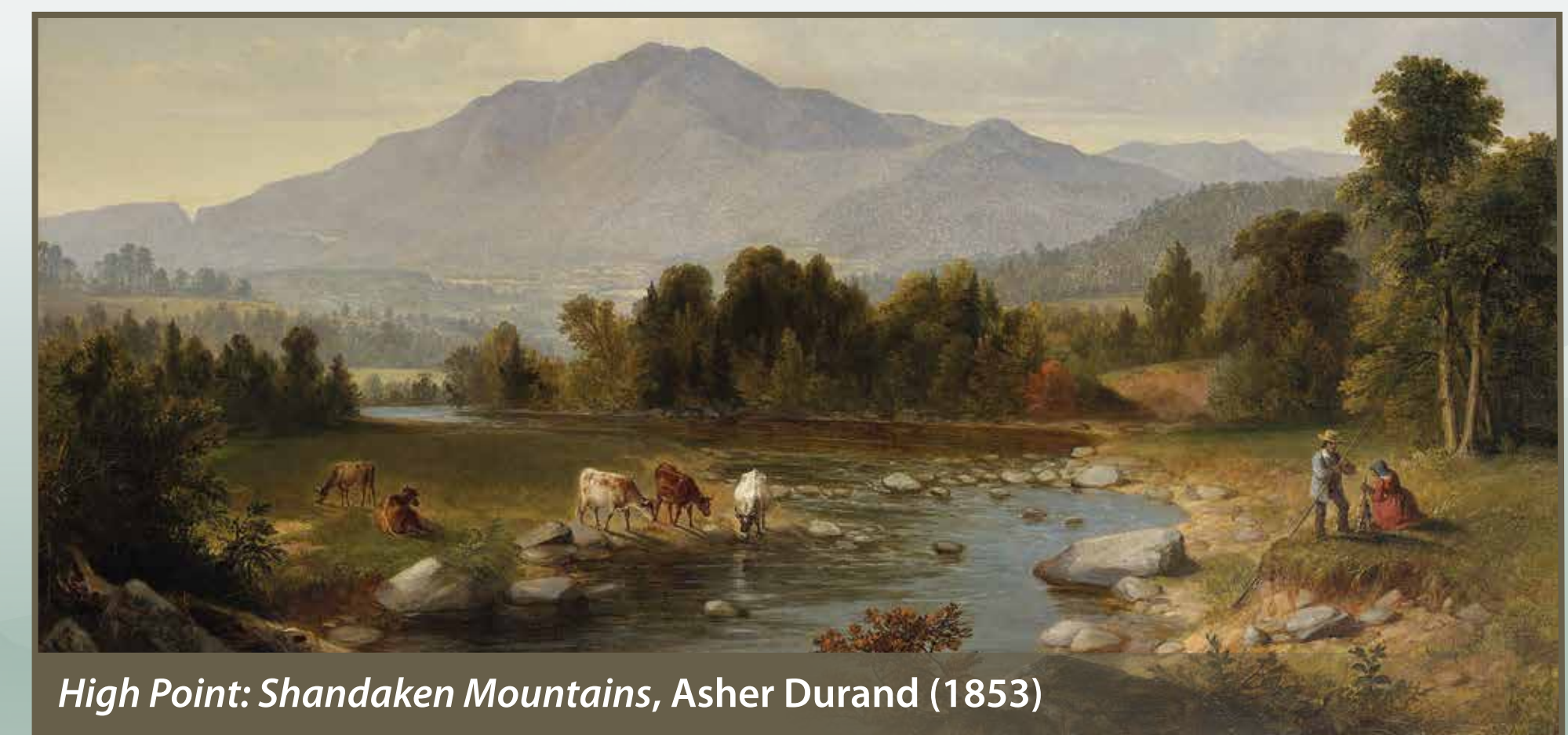


The Catskills are a physiographic province of the larger Appalachian Mountains. What was formerly a flat area covered with sedimentary deposits changed into more mountainous terrain with valleys that were formed by the scraping action of glacial advances and retreats happening thousands of years ago. The area is now part of the Catskill Park, a 700,000-acre area spanning portions of Ulster, Delaware, Greene, and Sullivan Counties, protected from many forms of development under New York State law.

The first inhabitants of this area were the Esopus people, an indigenous group associated with the larger Lenape population. Beginning in the eighteenth century, the area was settled by families of largely European descent, who engaged in industries such as logging, bluestone quarrying, and farming.

The unique landscape of the Catskills has long been an inspiration to artists and an attraction to tourists. Beginning in the 1820s, painters such as Thomas Cole (1801–1848) and Asher Durand (1796–1886), were drawn to the Catskills and the Hudson River Valley to celebrate the grandeur and romance of the untamed American wilderness. These artists, who came to be known collectively as the Hudson River School, awakened the country to the value of scenic landscapes throughout the country, and would in turn lay the groundwork for the American conservation movement and the creation of the national parks.

Early Catskill resorts attracted artists and tourists alike. With the coming of the railroad in the 1860s, boarding houses and hotels proliferated in Esopus Valley hamlets such as West Hurley and Shokan. The beauty of the landscape that surrounds Ashokan Reservoir continues to draw visitors and inspire artists.



High Point: Shandaken Mountains, Asher Durand (1853)



Samuel's Point, Kate McGoughlin (2016)