

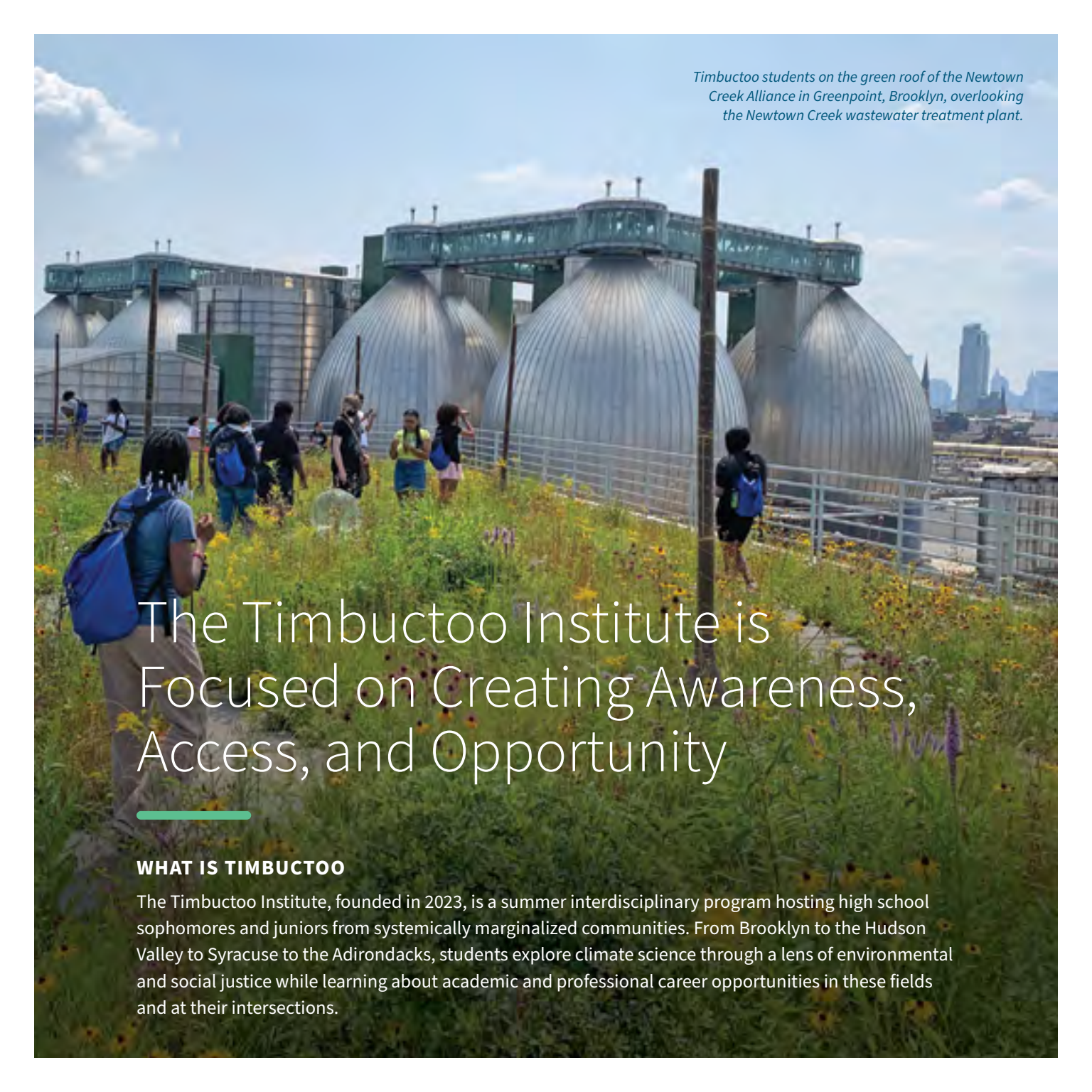


# Creating Pathways to a Broader Future

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**ANNUAL REPORT**

A group of diverse high school students are walking on a lush green roof. In the background, large industrial structures of a wastewater treatment plant are visible, with a city skyline in the distance under a blue sky with scattered clouds.

*Timbuctoo students on the green roof of the Newtown Creek Alliance in Greenpoint, Brooklyn, overlooking the Newtown Creek wastewater treatment plant.*

# The Timbuctoo Institute is Focused on Creating Awareness, Access, and Opportunity

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## **WHAT IS TIMBUCTOO**

The Timbuctoo Institute, founded in 2023, is a summer interdisciplinary program hosting high school sophomores and juniors from systemically marginalized communities. From Brooklyn to the Hudson Valley to Syracuse to the Adirondacks, students explore climate science through a lens of environmental and social justice while learning about academic and professional career opportunities in these fields and at their intersections.



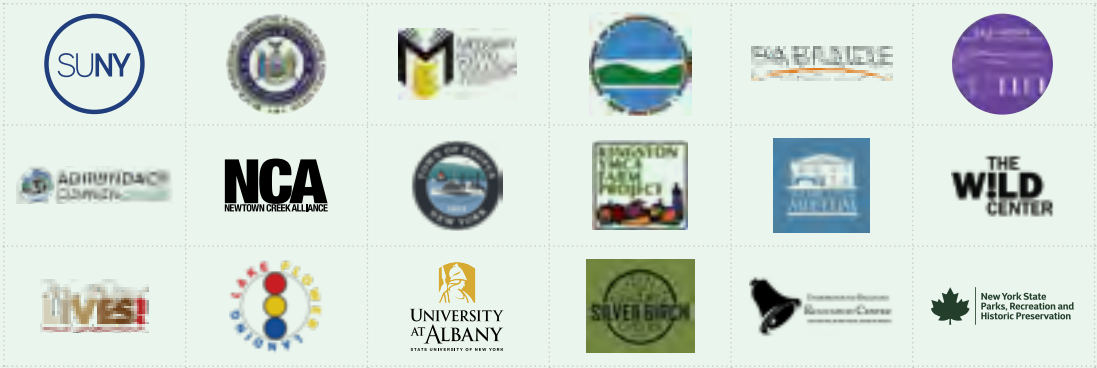
# Director's Message

The Timbuctoo Institute was inspired by an 1846 “scheme of justice” granting land to free black men in order to create equal access to the vote. 180 years later, the Timbuctoo Institute is designed to provide equal access to careers, and the paths to prepare for those careers. We cannot hope to solve the challenges facing our society if we are not including the best and the brightest in our efforts to change our world for the better. And if we are not creating pathways for all to access the career fields at the forefront of addressing climate science, and environmental and social justice, then we can never hope to truly create a more equal and just society.



**Paul Hai**  
Director of the Timbuctoo Institute

## OUR PARTNERS



# The Timbuctoo Institute Experience

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Students begin their journey in Brooklyn, NY. They follow the Hudson River to Kingston and from there they travel to Syracuse before making their way north to spend a week in the Adirondack Mountains.

Over two weeks, students are immersed in hands-on activities, experiential learning, and guided exploration, all under the mentorship of college faculty, researchers, staff, and students from SUNY ESF and CUNY Medgar Evers College (MEC), the core institute partners.



## What We Have Accomplished

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In the first two years, Timbuctoo hosted 88 students from across all five Boroughs. Over those two years, we increased applications by more than 100%, and increased participation from 41 of 48 spaces in the inaugural year to 48 of 48 in our second. Our second year also expanded our reach, and Timbuctoo Institute has now hosted students from 45 different high schools, representing connections to almost 10% of NYC high schools.



**88**

**STUDENTS  
HOSTED**



**45**

**DIFFERENT  
HIGH SCHOOLS**



**5**

**BOROUGHS  
SERVED**







“

**This opportunity was very helpful towards my future. I met people who showed me the light towards my path.**

Testimonial, 2023

*Participants hiking along the Sojourner Truth Trail over Shaupeneak Ridge, south of Kingston, N.Y.*

# People and Places

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Timbuctoo focuses on creating both awareness and access for all participants. We achieve this in part by introducing students to like-minded peers, near-peers, faculty in many different departments at three separate colleges and universities, and more than 60 different career professionals, each of whom represent a potential contact, mentor, and role model for a pathway to a career they are now inspired to pursue.

SUNY ESF  
Medgar Evers College  
Adirondack Council  
NYS Senate  
NYS Assembly  
NYS BPHA Caucus

Green Tech Solutions  
YMCA Kingston Farm  
NYS DEC  
Newton Creek Alliance  
Onondaga Nation  
Erie Canal Museum

The Wild Center  
SUNY Albany  
NYS OPRHP  
Underground Railroad  
Education Center

Participants are exposed to geographically diverse spaces, including:

## **Brooklyn** |

- Medgar Evers College, Bedford-Stuyvesant
- Newtown Creek Alliance, Greenpoint

## **Kingston** |

- YMCA Kingston Farm
- Sojourner Truth Monument, Town of Esopus
- Shaupeneak Ridge, Town of Esopus
- Pine Street African Burial Ground

## **Syracuse** |

- ESF Campus
- SU Campus
- Erie Canal walking tour ('23)
- I-81 Corridor walking tour ('24)
- Ska Nonh Center and Onondaga Nation programs

## **Newcomb** |

- ESF Newcomb Campus field sites
- ESF Newcomb Campus, Goodnow Mountain
- The Wild Center, Tupper Lake
- John Brown Farm, Lake Placid
- Paddle trip, Rich Lake to Hudson River (5 miles)

## **Albany** |

- SUNY Albany
- Atmospheric Sciences Research Center
- Underground Railroad Education Center, Arbor Hill
- NYS Parks, Schuyler Mansion
- State Capitol







# Valuing Time Too

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Recognizing many students use summer break to earn money for college and not wanting to diminish that important effort, the Timbuctoo Institute provides a stipend to every participant who successfully completes the program. The stipend of \$1,280 for 40 hours in each of two weeks matches the minimum wage rate for NYC.



# Lasting Connections

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The bonds we build with participants during each session extend beyond the time we are together, and the Institute is committed to being more than just a two-week summer experience. We strive to maintain a connection to alumni, sharing local opportunities to be engaged, facilitating connections with contacts from summer, and creating events bringing together alumni and former staff around comradery, content, and careers.

**The Timbuctoo experience impacted me in such a positive way and these are some of my favorite memories.**

Testimonial, 2023



# Alumni Events

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New this past year, in September we organized for alumni to attend a Climate Education conference in Lower Manhattan during Climate Week. Over the winter months we host an Institute Reunion, drawing well over 50% of alumni, and we organized an Albany Excursion also drawing a high level of participation. The excursion is a two-day trip where we visit SUNY Albany and their Atmospheric Sciences Research Center, meet with professionals from NYS Parks and the Underground Railroad Education Center, and spend a day in the State Capitol learning the civic process while meeting with legislators.



# Measures of Success

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We are very interested in understanding if the Institute is meeting our mission, vision, and goals. How do we know how we're doing?

- So many smiles
- Student testimonials
- Continued engagement through alumni events
- Interest and applications to return as Institute staff
- Requests for letters of reference
- Results of pre- and post-participation surveys demonstrating knowledge gain and increase in learning outcomes (formal results of two-year research project expected spring '25)





*Martha Swan, Ex. Dir. of John Brown Lives!, discussing Brown's role in the Timbuctoo settlement, of which his farm was a part, at the John Brown Farm outside Lake Placid, N.Y.*





## FURTHERING CONNECTIONS

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The Timbuctoo Institute is committed to ensuring everyone who aspires to create positive change and improve our world has access to academic and professional careers preparing them to be the next generation of critical thinkers, problem solvers, and leaders. As we reflect on the Institute's first two years, our participants and their experiences guide us forward as we design the Institute's pathway to a broader future.



**FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO GET INVOLVED** | [timbuctooinstitute@esf.edu](mailto:timbuctooinstitute@esf.edu)