Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail, Inc.
14 Coris Lane
Beacon, NY 12508
hhft.org

Contact:
Lori Moss, Communications Manager
lmoss@hhft.org / 845-625-3301

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Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail, Inc. Names Aaron Leonard Vice President, Operations & Organizational Development

Beacon, NY --- Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail, Inc. (HHFT) announced today the appointment of Aaron Leonard as Vice President, Operations & Organizational Development. Leonard brings a long history of executive leadership with experience in nonprofit management, public safety, the military, and outdoor programs to this new role at HHFT.

A Village of Cold Spring resident, Leonard has been a longtime supporter of the Fjord Trail and its mission. The last decade of Leonard's career has been focused on removing barriers to experiencing the outdoors and its benefits, particularly for veterans, military families, and first responders. In leadership positions with Sierra Club's Military Outdoors and, most recently, as CEO of Beacon-based Guardian Revival, Leonard has helmed initiatives to expand outdoor access—including to New York State Parks and other public lands and waters—and build outdoor experiential programs that strengthen connection, resilience, and community among veterans and first responders.

"For much of my career in the outdoor adventure field, I've seen what happens when people are given meaningful opportunities to connect with nature and with each other," Leonard said. "In my work with veterans and first responders, many of whom may be living with PTSD and other effects of repeated exposure to stress and trauma, I've seen healing, reductions in loneliness, and a renewed sense of belonging. I've also seen barriers to access that have prevented some of our nation's heroes from exploring our parks and public lands, the very places that they swore an oath to defend. I truly believe that the Fjord Trail will provide meaningful access to nature for people of all ages and abilities."

Leonard is a retired U.S. Army officer and combat veteran whose service included four combat tours. Following his military career, he continued that commitment to service through nonprofit leadership, where he has led organizations through growth and change, managed multi-million-dollar budgets, and built programs and led teams focused on service and community impact. His commitment to the Hudson Highlands community also extends beyond his professional work. Since 2021 he has served as a volunteer firefighter with Cold Spring Fire Company No. 1, and since 2025 has led Cold Spring's American Legion Post 275.

In his new role, Leonard will focus on organizational development, operations, staff support, internal systems, and helping HHFT build the capacity needed for the Fjord Trail's future.

Leonard lives with his wife Leslie in Cold Spring. Together, they have eight children and two grandchildren.

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Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail, Inc. is a subsidiary nonprofit of Scenic Hudson, Inc., an organization devoted to sustaining and enhancing the Hudson Valley's inspirational beauty and health for generations to come. HHFT's mission is to create and steward a 7.5-mile linear park along the Hudson River that solves existing safety concerns around visitation, provides welcoming access to people of all ages and abilities, restores and protects natural resources, and enhances quality of life for local communities. The Fjord Trail will add organized parking, public restrooms, trash/recycling collection, and distribute users of the park along a 7.5-mile route with six main access points. For more information, visit hhft.org.