NYSHC Trail Grant Final Report

Report to the Board of Directors, NYS Horse Council
Sara Chevako, 12/5/2009, updated 12/09/09

History:

In 1999, then-State Senator Nancy Larraine Hoffmann, wishing to support equine trail activities in New York State, gave a "Member Item" grant to the New York State Horse Council. The purpose was to encourage the development of trails, especially those connecting State lands. The original concept was to foster partnerships between landowners, equine groups and the State.

A slow and arduous period of concept development followed, during which the NYSHC developed the "ground rules" for creating grants to equine not-for-profits and municipalities. Not only was the Dept. of Environmental Conservation the State government Agency responsible for administering these funds, but it was the major Agency controlling the lands involved in the equine trails. Connector trails and equine trails on State lands were required to conform to the local Unit Management Plans, and it was necessary for the grantee groups to have signed an Adopt-A-Natural Resource Agreement with the DEC in order to be able to perform volunteer work on state land.

An initial request for proposals was distributed, and four worthy propositions were submitted. The proposals were evaluated, and a Board vote was taken in Dec. 2006 to allocate the funding to them.

Memoranda of Understanding were signed by two of the grantees, and work was begun in 2007. The other two grantees were unable to fulfill their proposals. In one case, the grantee was unable to obtain use of the property proposed for the trail. In the other case, the grantee decided not to follow through on its proposal. These grants were declined by the organization and subsequently rescinded by the NYSHC. The funds then became available for re-granting -- $10,000 in early 2007 and $29,000 in November 2007.

Another request for proposals was sent out and five worthwhile plans were received. Each of the five proposals was examined by the NYSHC Board, and a ballot vote was taken in April 2007. Two grants were awarded, using the $10,000 portion. Following the November 2007 availability of the $29,000 grant, three more grants were awarded, based on the April ballot vote.

And finally, in early 2009, requests for proposals were sent to the active grantees, which had not been fully funded in prior rounds. Small grants were made to two grantees, using the last of the available monies.

We are now very close to closing out the grant process. The details of the grants are given below. The total disbursed to date is $75,000 of NYS funds; also NYSHC contributed and disbursed $4244, and there is $600 remaining to be distributed.

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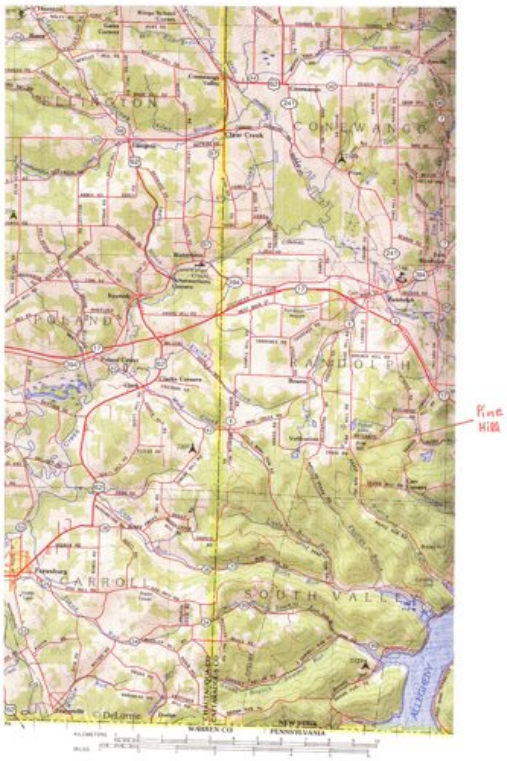
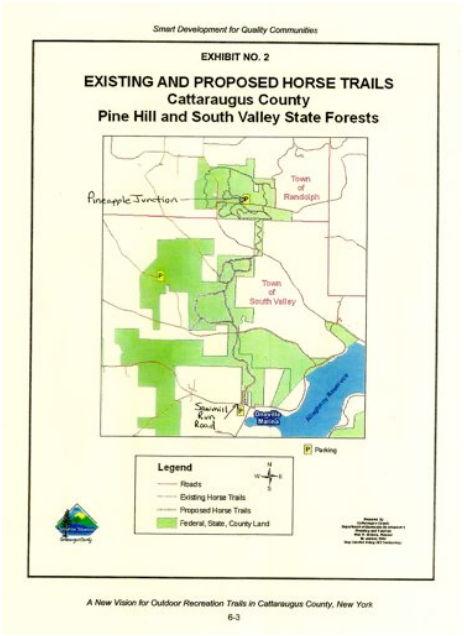
Grants Given:

Approximate sites of grant projects

Catt/Chaut Chapter NYSHC:



Pine Hill, in Cattaraugus County



Pine Hill Trails Map

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Pine Hills Trails: $29,000, MOU signed 4/15/07

In early November of 2004, the Cattaraugus-Chautauqua Chapter of the NYSHC approached the NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation, Forestry Division, with the idea of building horse trails in the Pine Hill / South Valley State Lands. After negotiations, they signed a five-year Adopt-a-Natural Resource Agreement with the DEC for the project. It was a three-phase project, consisting of:

- Building over 10 miles of horse trails
- Building an additional 7 miles of horse trails
- Extend the trail south to County-owned land at Onoville Marina

During their two-years' work on these trails, Catt/Chaut discovered the need for a camping area suitable for trucks and horse trailers. Also, some of the trails needed hardening with geo cloth, geo textile and gravel, in order to make them environmentally sustainable. A significant cash outlay for machinery and materials would be required, in addition to the already formidable number of volunteer hours contributed. They submitted a detailed plan of work and budget for this proposal.

The NYSHC Board of Directors voted to allocate $29,000 of the grant money to this project, and a Memorandum of Understanding was signed. The project consisted of developing a campsite and parking area at a Pine Hill area known as Pineapple Junction, and road rehabilitation. The project used an excavator and operator for stump removal and grading, a tri-axle dump truck to haul out stumps and waste, and a 15-ton roller and operator for compacting the road and entrance.

In addition, some of the funds were used to prepare another site off Sawmill Run Road for a parking area. Trees and stumps have been removed and some grading completed. This is not finished, but is a good start.

There are seven camp sites and 60' x 100' day parking.

The bulk of the work was paid for in several checks, the last contractor check being 11/06/2007. A very small "remainder" check was paid 10/22/2008.

Pineapple Junction parking area

Pineapple Junction parking area

Pineapple Junction parking area

Pineapple Junction parking area

Pineapple Junction trail from the parking area

Sign at the parking/camping area

Other signage at Pine Hill

Detail of sign at Pine Hill

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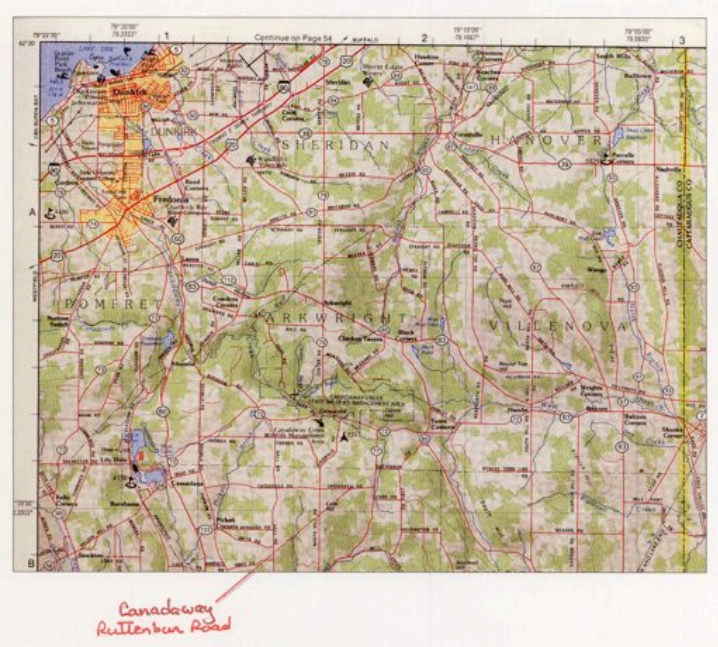
Boutwell-Canadaway Creek: $8,030, MOU signed 11/10/07



Canadaway State Forest

The original plan for this area in Chautauqua County encountered difficulties with trail easements, but then a different area became available, which did not require any improvements.

Subsequently, a three-part action plan was developed to improve parts of three trails, which are multiple-use, especially horses in the summer and snowmobiles in the winter. This plan utilized the equipment owned and operated by the Cherry Creek Sno-Goers, for work on the following sites:

- Trail crossing Sanford Road: Remove stumps, relocate trail on higher elevation and grade it, consult with Forester and remove “leaner” trees (also known as “widow-makers,” for good reason) and dead trees, mow trail-side brush.

- Trail east of Lewis and Ruttenbur Road: Dig culverts and complete drainage ditches, consult with Forester to designate & fell dead trees, level trailhead and fill low area, chain saw downed trees, install 12” culvert for trail drainage.

- Trail south of and parallel to Ruttenbur Road: Relocate trail and install new road approach and 36” culvert, with stump removal, grading, leveling and filling.

The work was complete and paid for 5/19/2008.

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(Insert photos of work in progress, and completed areas.)

Pineapple Junction Hi-Tie Pole Area: $3000, action plan approved 3/6/09

This project was in the new trailhead and parking area at Pineapple Junction. They removed 12" of soil in a 20' x 20' area under the high lines on 8 sites (for horse tethering), replaced it with 16" of #2 screened gravel, and leveled and compacted it. The project was completed 10/09.

Pineapple Junction Hi-Line hardening site

Pineapple Junction trail sign

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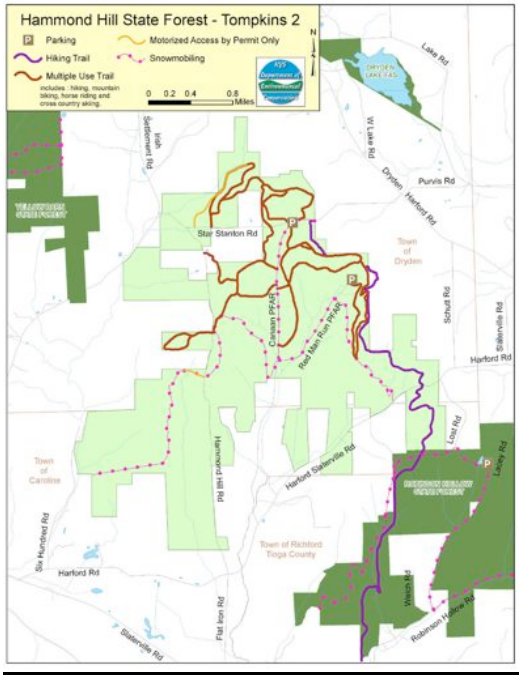
Friends of Hammond Hill:

Hammond Hill State Forest



Hammond Hill Trail Map

Trail Tread Improvement: $8,000, MOU signed 6/23/08

Hammond Hill State Forest is a well-used area of 3,6618 acres and 19 miles of multi-use trails in the central southern tier. Two trail sections were especially in need of hardening. These areas were:

- 1400 linear feet on Yellow One trail
- 800 linear feet on Yellow Six trail

The DEC created the work plan and supplied the materials, including geotextile and gravel. The grant was used to pay the machinery work and operator. Work on Yellow One trail included 5 new waterbars and restoration of 2 existing waterbars. Then geotextile and gravel were put down. Also, 20" of 15" culvert was installed at a trail intersection. 120" of new ditch was constructed west of the culvert.

The Yellow Six trail required only geotextile and gravel to cover spruce tree roots.

The completed work was paid for 11/24/2008.

Hammond Hill Trail

Hammond Hill Trail

Hammond Hill Trail

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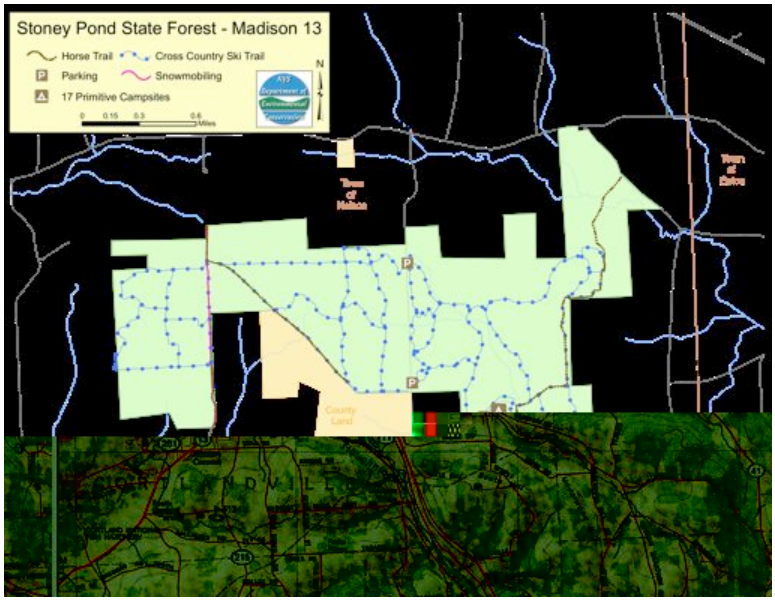
Madison County:

Jones Road Parking Lot & Trailhead: $6,020, MOU signed 4/21/09

Stoney Pond, Jones Road Parking & Trailhead



Stoney Pond Trails Map

This project is a trailhead and parking area on Madison County property, adjacent to Stoney Pond State Forest, where the trails have been approved by the DEC for horseback riding. The area was forested, and is part of a section scheduled for lumbering by the County. The area can serve as a staging area for the lumbering operation, and be a permanent parking area afterwards.

Jones Road stump pulling

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Tuller Hill Horse Trails

Tuller Hill State Forest is a 3000-acre forest in the Town of Virgil, south of Cortland (and near Greek Peak ski area). It contains many multi-use trails, but they had not been maintained for several years, and significant numbers of "blow-downs" had rendered them unusable. Approximately 12 miles of trails have been cleared with 3 small sections requiring major clearing to be completed. The NYS Plantation Walking Horse Club obtained an "Adopt-A-Natural Resource" agreement for Site #10 with the DEC, to clear and restore the trails.

It became immediately apparent that an off-road parking area for trucks and horse trailers was needed. A site at the corner of Clute and Vinnedge Roads was chosen. The grant involved clearing the selected area, removing stumps, removing topsoil, filling and compacting the hard-pan sub-base, installing culverts under the two entrance drives, laying geotextile fabric and shale, compacting, and topcoating with Item #4, for a 33' x 300' parking area and trailhead.

The work was paid for in several segments, with the most being paid 6/10/2008, and an overrun paid on 3/30/2009 .

Tuller Hill Future Trailhead

Tuller Hill, clearing the way

Tuller Hill entrance to parking area/trailhead

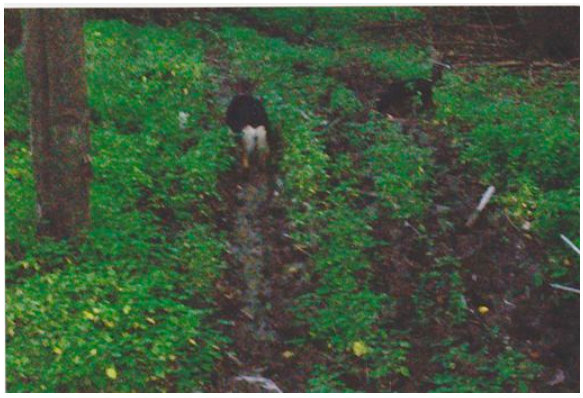
Tuller Hill sign at entrance to parking area/trailhead

Tuller Hill Trail Improvement: $3,000, Action plan approved 3/6/09

This grant addressed a major wet area in the main trail leading from the parking area to the trail system. The contractor dug trenches and installed 4" perforated

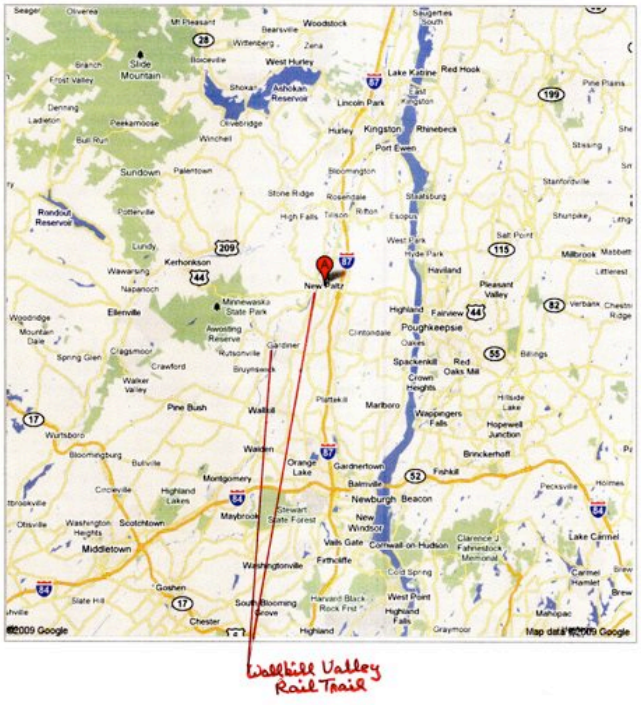
pipe, and bedded it in #2 stone. He installed 5' wide Geo-tex fabric over the excavated area, and laid down 8" of Item #4 over the fabric. He also cut and shaped shallow diversions to remove spring water from the trail above the tiled area.

The work was completed and paid for 10/01/2009.



Tuller Hill trail prior to work being done.

Wallkill Valley Rail Trail Association:



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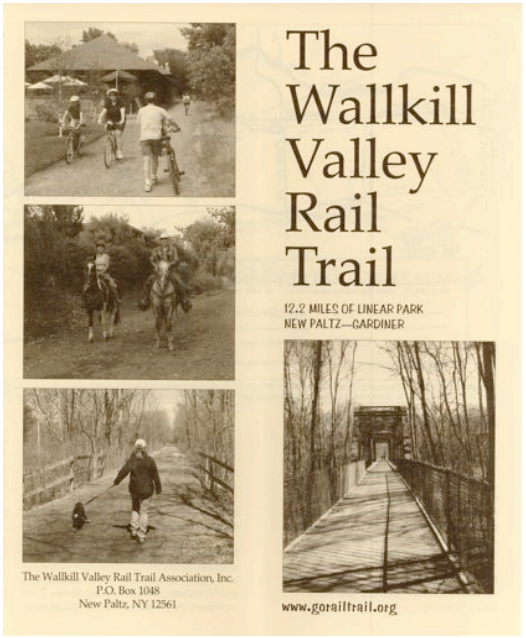
Wallkill Valley Rail, between New Paltz and Gardiner

Ulster County Rail Trail Signage: $1,970, MOU signed 10/1/07

This grant request was different in that it sought funds to improve signage and brochures for the existing 12-mile, multi-use trail running through the Town and Village of New Paltz and Gardiner. Although it had always been a multi-use trail, it was desired to emphasize equine use, both in the ten fixed signs and in the 5000 new brochures.

The work was completed and paid for 1/30/2008.

We have heard further from the Association that they have acquired an additional 11.5 miles of rail road bed, so the Wallkill Valley Rail Trail will (in a few years after repairs and bridges are added) will be an equine friendly trail for 23.7 miles!



BECOME A MEMBER & SUPPORT THE RAIL TRAIL

The Wallkill Valley Rail Trail Association, Inc. is a tax exempt, not-for-profit organization, dedicated to maintaining, promoting and improving the Wallkill Valley Rail Trail for the benefit of the public.

Please help by joining, or renewing your membership, and volunteering your talents. Your membership includes a newsletter to keep you up to date on progress and news.

- ❑ $10
- ❑ $25 individual ❑ $40 family
- ❑ $60 benefactor ❑ $100 business/organization
- ❑ Additional tax-deductible contribution to support WVRT_____
- ❑ My employer makes matching contributions. Please contact me.
- ❑ New Membership ❑ Renewal

We will not share your name with other organizations.

Please send checks payable to:
Wallkill Valley Rail Trail Association, Inc.
P.O. Box 1048, New Paltz, NY 12561-1048

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State ___ Zip _____

Phone: Home _____

Work _____

Email _____

I would like to volunteer for:
- ❑ trail maintenance ❑ publicity
- ❑ special events ❑ newsletter
- ❑ fund raising

TRAIL SAFETY & ETIQUETTE

The Wallkill Valley Rail Trail is a multiuse trail, welcoming hikers, joggers, bicyclists, horseback riders, dog-walkers, and, in the winter, snowshoers and cross-country skiers. For everyone's safety and enjoyment we ask you to observe the following rules and treat other trail users courteously.

Equestrian users: Please make sure your horse has the temperament and training for riding safely on public trails and don't exceed a moderate speed appropriate for multiuse trails. Please announce your intention to pass other users, and pass only on the left.

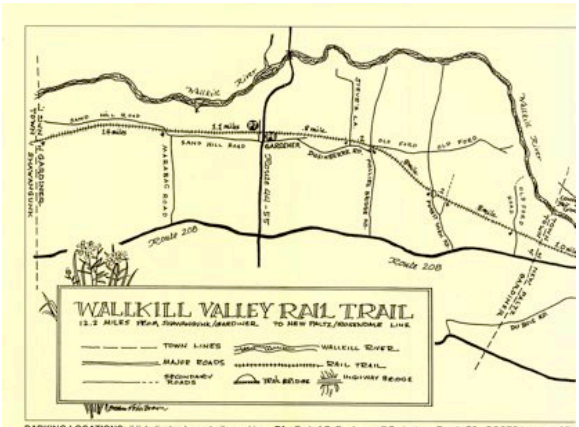
Cyclists: You are required to yield to all other trail users and to ride at a moderate speed. Please alert other users when you are approaching from behind, reduce your speed, and pass only on the left. Be especially careful not to spook or startle horses.

Walkers and joggers: Please move to the right of the trail to allow other users to pass. Always yield to equestrians. Dogs must be leashed at all times and on a short leash around horses, other dogs, and children.

All users: Be alert for small children and respectful of wildlife and the environment. Please clean up after your animals and carry out your litter. Use caution at road crossings. The trail passes through private property, so be polite to our neighbors and stay on the trail. The trail closes at dusk.

Except for vehicles for the handicapped, motorized vehicles, including ATVs and snowmobiles, are not allowed on the trail. Starting fires and discharging firearms on or next to the trail are strictly prohibited.

Report problems to us at gorailtrail@yahoo.com. In case of emergencies, call 911.



PARKING LOCATIONS: (H) *Indicates horse trailer parking* **P1**—End of Coffey Lane off Springtown Road **P2**—BOCES lot west of Ro north of Route 299 (H) **P5**—Sojourner Truth Park on Plains Road near intersection with Rail Trail **P6**—East side of Rail Trail just north

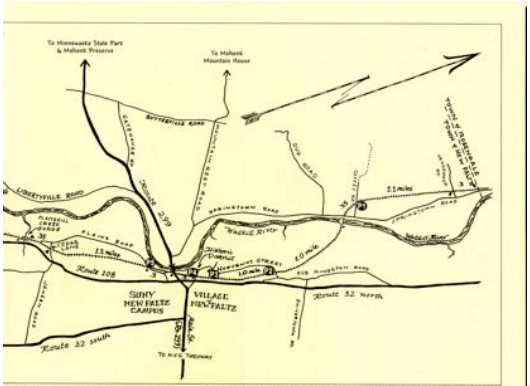
ABOUT OUR RAIL TRAIL

In the late 19th century, the Wallkill Valley Railroad carried fresh produce and dairy products from the farmlands of Ulster County to the streets of New York City. It also served as a passenger railroad for more than half a century. Besides supporting regional business and tourism, the railroad provided jobs and a critical economic link between upstate and downstate.

By 1933, however, only one passenger train ran daily each way, and only four years later all passenger service came to a halt.

Over the next few decades, numerous stations along the Wallkill line closed. In 1977 the Wallkill Valley Railroad, then owned by Conrail, took its last freight run. Like other American rail systems, it had fallen victim to increased competition from automobiles and trucks.

In 1983, after Conrail removed all the ties and rails, local community leaders visualized a plan for a linear park in Gardiner and New Paltz. Community members organized the Wallkill Valley Rail Trail



...te 32 **P3**—Huguenot Historical Society lot on Broadhead Avenue west of Route 32 **P4**—Village of New Paltz lot off Huguenot Street ...f Route 44/55 **P7**—Town of Gardiner lot at intersection of Rail Trail and Farmers Turnpike (H)

Association and, with the help of many other volunteers, transformed the old rail bed into a trail and repaired the steel bridge over the Wallkill River.

The Wallkill Valley Rail Trail opened officially in October 1993, as the 17th rail trail in New York State. In 2001 it was recognized as part of the Hudson River Greenway Trail System, and in 2007 it was designated a National Recreation Trail by the National Park Service and the U.S. Department of the Interior.

The Wallkill Valley Rail Trail extends for 12.2 miles from the southern border of Gardiner to the northern border of New Paltz. The town of Gardiner and the Village and Town of New Paltz each own their respective sections of the trail. The Wallkill Valley Land Trust holds a conservation easement on the entire Rail Trail, while the Wallkill Valley Rail Trail Association manages, promotes, and improves the Rail Trail.