

Countywide Trails Initiative Notes

Tuesday, February 5, 2025, 4:00 pm

50 W. High Street, Ballston Spa, NY 12020

Chairman's Remarks

Goals document complete and approved by PLAN board. Will be posted on PLAN website (<https://saratogaplan.org/countywide-trails-committee/>)

Old Business

GIS subcommittee . Will meet (STA, county, PLAN) to agree on meta data and hosting methods – how can all trail information be made publically accessible. Date TBD.

Champlain Canalway Trail (CCT). Dave Woodin reports that CCT working group is now the Friends of the Champlain Canal Trail. This subcommittee of the CCT focuses on completing the CCT. Next meeting in March (1st Tuesdays of odd months). Same website <https://champlaincanalwaytrail.org/> Website updates in progress. CCT marketing committee focuses on promoting the trail – meets even months.

DEC Construction General Permit (CGP) regulations: GP-0-25-001. Jeff Olson (STA) gave an update on DEC action, and response to public input last fall. Thanks to 20+ trail advocates that contacted DEC. Minor wins: Rules differentiate between trail and parking land -Trails are no longer added to parking for disturbed area. 10 parking spaces is the new threshold for parking lot triggering a permit. This is less than the Greenfield planning requirement (14). Tupelo community forest will revisit parking with Greenfield. Not much new guidance/ exclusion for trail types – permit process is needed, whether mitigation is required is determined in the permit process. The full STA analysis is in Appendix B.

NYS DOT Saratoga I-87 trail crossing. Matt DeSimone says initial study of options for crossing between 9P and Jones Road is being sent up the command chain. Group confirmed that no additional documents beyond those identified in the last minutes exist. DOT will accept any new documents or relevant resolutions regarding this corridor.

Ballston- Glenville - Rexford connection. Steve Strichman (Schenectady) has examined the proposed route closely and has identified some additional route options. CWT consensus was a working group needs to be formed to keep process on track for a 2025 feasibility study. Joe Grasso and Jason Kemper to confer.

Zim Smith extension: Saratoga County continues to progress on the Zim Smith North extension from Oak Street to Saratoga Spa State Park. The project is currently in design phase and the environmental review process has been initiated. Funding has been secured for Design and Permitting for the entire trail extension and a grant has been secured to

construct portions of Phase 1 and Phase 2 (Oak Street to Malta Avenue. Phases roughly correspond to trail segments in the 2021 feasibility study).

New Business

NYS active transportation plan (ATSP). The New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) is developing a strategic plan to improve walking, biking, and using a wheelchair throughout New York State. NYSDOT's Active Transportation Strategic Plan (ATSP) will provide direction and guidance for future active transportation investments. Active transportation includes sidewalks, road crossings, bike lanes, shared lanes, shared use path, and rail trails. This is a statewide program, focused on DOT rights of way.

1st draft out in March, comments to June. <https://nysdotwalkbikeplan.com/>

CRTC Vision Zero Action Safety Plan. Set and reach the goal of a reduction of fatal and serious injury crashes to an eventual goal of zero — while increasing safe and equitable mobility. <https://www.capitalregionvisionzero.org/>. This is a capital region program – most of Saratoga, Albany, Rensselaer, and Schenectady counties – the CRTC service area. A workshop held in SS on Jan 15, 2025 focused on downtown areas. The full draft plan should be available for public review in April 2025.

Story time

Halfmoon: It has been determined that the bridge abutments on the Champlain Canal towpath at the first stream crossing north of Upper Newtown Road are in fine shape. The Town is now moving forward with the bridge design and an additional partial northward extension (per the NYS OPRHP Recreational Trails Program grant). Bridge design meetings have started. (This will enable a trail extension of 1,250 to 1,600 feet north of Upper Newtown Road).

An additional 1,200 feet of the Erie Canalway Trail is to be paved in 2025 with the assistance of a County grant.

With the assistance of a Hudson River Valley Greenway grant, the Town is exploring the feasibility of connecting the Erie Canalway Trail on Canal Road (Crescent Road Bike and Pedestrian Path) to the trail at Exit 8. See figures Appendix C

Milton: Woods Hollow nature preserve has been transferred to Milton. Milton can now proceed with making trail connections (including to Corcoran parcel in Saratoga Springs). A town center study is underway with focus on complete streets, pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure, reduced congestion and trail linkages and connections in the Rowland Str./Geyser Road area. To be complete in 2025. Appendix D.

Greenfield: Signage at the Town of Greenfield Nordic trails (Brookhaven) excellent. Appendix E. [Get source / vendor of map](#)

Model town laws: Erica Schneider (PTNY) pointed us to a town code from Sunbury, OH.

<https://sunburyohio.org/DocumentCenter/View/1178/Zoning-Ordinance--2021>

All but one zoning district (central Business district) has specific language requiring multiuse trails in the site plan.

- i) Multi-Use Trails - Multi-Use Trails shall be included within the design and layout of all developments in accordance with S81.16.25.

Almost all the zoning districts have open space requirements – and in most cases required connectivity of open space. The code also has a “development standard” that specifies requirements for arterial and connector trails.

Steve Strichman (Schenectady) indicated that Schenectady has a similar provision for waterfront district (section 264-14-C3):

A single multi-use pedestrian and bicycle trail shall be constructed by the applicant with the following construction and design standards (other trails may be built without the following standards):

- [\(a\)](#) The trail shall have a width of at least 10 feet along the length of the Mohawk River shoreline and shall endeavor to be located reasonably adjacent to the undeveloped shoreline wherever practicable.
- [\(b\)](#) There shall be an additional two feet of graded area on either side of the trail and an additional ten-foot buffer between the trail and the river.
- [\(c\)](#) The trail shall be constructed of asphalt, synthetic composite, concrete, pavers, or other materials as approved by the Planning Commission.

Outreach: A possible opportunity to influence state policy/laws. From PTNY website: “PTNY is building a “big tent” network of advocates, planners, engineers, designers, champions, and public health professionals plus representatives from local businesses and economic development teams who recognize the power of greenway trails to transform communities”. <https://www.ptny.org/our-work/advocate/greenway-trails#/>

County wide trail plan: We are trying to gather information on how other municipalities have created region-wide multiuse path plans. This plan, from Ulster County, NY, shows what a plan might look like, if not how to get there.

https://ulstercountyny.gov/sites/default/files/nonmotorizedtranplan_finalplan.pdf

Ulster County also hosts an interactive (recreation) web based map that might be a model for Saratoga County:

<https://ulstercountyny.gov/maps/recreation/>

Saratoga County Board of Supervisors: 2025 Trails and Open Space committee:

Dave Ball – Chair (Town of Waterford)
Joe Grasso – Vice Chair (Town of Charlton)
Eric Connolly (Town of Ballston)
Ed Kinowski (Town of Stillwater)
Michelle Madigan (City of Saratoga Springs)
Matt Veitch (City of Saratoga Springs)
Mo Wright (Town of Hadley)

2024 County trails grants: The county awarded \$148000 in grants to 14 towns to support trail development in 2024. These grants roughly broke down as follows :

- (7) Trail restoration/maintenance (e.g. see Halfmoon/Appendix C)
- (2) Trail design and feasibility
- (7) Amenities – signage, landscaping, toilets, parking lots, trail markers
- (4) Park trail improvements and/or additions

See appendix F for details

Trails with power lines: The Albany Hudson Electric Trail (AHET) slated for completion in 2025 is about 85% along NG power line ROW. <https://hudsongreenway.ny.gov/albany-hudson-electric-trail>. This could be a model for trail concepts in Wilton, Halfmoon and Clifton Park. Possible NG contact jennifer.schlegel@nationalgrid.com, (518) 530-7257

See map appendix G.

For other trails with power lines: <http://www.pedestrians.org/topics/row-gallery.htm>

Appendix A: Attendees:

Bechtel, Bill	Town of Ballston, Town of Ballston Trail committee	wiltbec@gmail.com
DeSimone, Matthew	NYS DOT, region 2, trail coordinator	matthew.desimone@dot.ny.gov
Dietershagen, Paul	ADK Mt. Club, Saratoga - Glens Falls Chapter	d2hagen@yahoo.com
Funk, Michael	Chair of the Town of Malta Open Space, Agricultural and Trails Committee (OAT)	funk.195650@gmail.com
Grasso, Joe	Supervisor, town of Charlton, county board trails chairman	supervisor@townofcharlton.org
Herman, Bill	Chair, Town of Halfmoon Trail and Open Space Committee, PLAN board, CWT chairman	wherman1@nycap.rr.com
Kemper, Jason	Saratoga County, Planning director	jkemper@saratogacountyny.gov
Kerr, Barbara	Town of Milton councilwoman	bkerr@skidmore.edu
Lambert, Kim	Saratoga county planning	Klambert@saratogacountyny.gov
LaSalle, Teresa	Capital Region Transportation Council	tlasalle@capitalmpo.org
Miczek, Matthew	WWPP, Saratoga Stryders	miczekm@verizon.net
Morgan, Mary Ann	Town of Milton	mamstax@nycap.rr.com
Olson, Jeff	STA	jeffolson@the3rdmode.com
Osborn, Bella	Wilton Wildlife Preserve & Park Outreach Coordinator	bella@wiltonpreserve.org
Roberts, Tori	PLAN conservation director	torir@saratogaplan.org
Strichman, Steven	Affiliation: Schenectady Metroplex	sstrichman@schenectadymetroplex.org
Way, Sallie	Friends of Saratoga Horse Trails	salway@nycap.rr.com
Williams, Jeff	Saratoga county Planning	jwilliams@saratogacountyny.gov
Woodin, Dave	Town of Waterford, director of planning, Champlain Canalway liaison	woodind@town.waterford.ny.us

Appendix B: STA analysis of DEC action.

Understanding SPDES and the New 2025 Construction General Permit (CGP) DEC GP-0-25-001

A Message from Saratoga Trails Alliance (STA)

Introduction

Saratoga Trails Alliance (STA) is pleased to share an update on the SPDES process and the new Construction General Permit (CGP) for Stormwater Discharges from Construction Activity. As many of you know, SPDES is designed to protect water quality by regulating stormwater discharges from new construction projects. However, while these regulations are vital for our environment, they have imposed disproportionate burdens on community-driven trail projects—projects that are essential for public access to nature and outdoor recreation.

Background on SPDES and the CGP, in relation to trail construction

Historically, any construction activity that disturbed one or more acres of soil required the owner or operator to undergo SWPPP and SMPs under the SPDES General Permit. For trail projects, this process was traditionally interpreted to mean that if a *parking lot associated with a trail system disturbed less than one acre*, no Stormwater Management Practices (SMPs) were necessary. More recently, however, the DEC interpreted trail projects differently: if a trail project exceeded the one-acre threshold, the associated parking lot, regardless of their size (typically trail parking lots disturb far less than 1 acre of soil) are now required to implement SMPs.

In August 2024, as the previous permit expired in January 2025, the DEC opened a public comment period while redrafting the 2025 SPDES permit process. On January 29, 2025, a new permit (GP-0-25-001) became effective and will remain in force until January 28, 2030.

STA's Advocacy for Trail Projects

Trail projects in New York are often driven by philanthropic landowners, land trusts, conservation trusts, and nonprofit organizations with limited financial resources. As we know, these projects provide public access to natural areas, encouraging outdoor recreation, and preserving open spaces. Yet, when subjected to the same stormwater mitigation measures as large commercial developments, they become financially burdensome—jeopardizing the feasibility of the project. Recognizing this challenge, STA actively engaged with the NYSDEC through public comments and advocacy efforts to call for exceptions that better reflect the unique nature of *trail projects with small parking lots*.

Summary of Our Public Comments to DEC

In our August 2024 public comments, STA submitted the following key points to the DEC:

- **Disproportionate Impact:** We argued that imposing the same post-construction stormwater management practices (SMPs) on trail projects as on large commercial developments is both financially prohibitive and arbitrary. Trail projects, which generally involve natural, permeable surfaces and modest parking areas, do not warrant such stringent requirements.
- **EPA Flexibility:** The federal EPA allows states to tailor SWPPP requirements. We urged the DEC to use this discretion to exempt trail projects from full SMPs, particularly when the associated parking lot disturbs less than one acre of soil.
- **Comparative Precedent:** We highlighted that athletic fields are allowed to include impervious surfaces—up to 5% of the disturbed area—without additional SMPs. For example, an athletic facility in Niskayuna with roughly 9 acres of disturbance can have a 0.45-acre

parking lot (about 70 spaces) without extra requirements. In contrast, a similar disturbance from a 5-mile trail could trigger costly measures for even a small parking area.

- **We Recommended the following Changes:**

1. *Exemption for Parking Lots Under One Acre (Table 1):* Trail projects should be exempt from cumulative disturbance calculations for associated parking lots that disturb less than one acre.
2. *Amendment to Parking Lot Language (Table 2):* SMPs should be required only when the parking lot itself exceeds one acre of disturbance.

Our comments stressed that these adjustments are necessary to ensure that trail disturbances are not unfairly counted toward triggering the CGP and to protect community-driven trail initiatives.

DEC's Response and Permit Changes

In response to the public comments, the DEC revised GP-0-25-001. Notably, changes include:

- **Clarification in Part III.C:** A second paragraph was added to clarify the application of multiple sub-headings in Appendix B when more than one bullet applies to a project.
 - **Part III.C. Required SWPPP Components by Project Type**
 - Owners or operators of construction activities, identified in Table 1 of Appendix B, are required to prepare a SWPPP that only includes erosion and sediment control practices designed in accordance with Part III.B.1. Owners or operators of the construction activities, identified in Table 2 of Appendix B, must prepare a SWPPP that also includes SMPs designed in accordance with Part III.B.2 or 3.
 - *For the entire area of disturbance, including the entire common plan of development or sale if applicable, the owner or operator must evaluate every bullet from Appendix B Table 1 and Table 2 separately. If bullets from both Table 1 and Table 2 apply, the SWPPP must include erosion and sediment control practices for all construction activities but SMPs for only those portions of the construction activities that fall under Table 2 bullet(s).*
- **Revisions to Appendix B:**
 - The Table 1 bullet for “Cross-country ski trails and walking/hiking trails” was updated to include “mountain biking trails.”
 - Additionally, specific conditions were set for parking lots associated with these projects—such as a maximum of 10 parking spaces sized for passenger cars (as defined by the NYSDOT Vehicle Classification Code).
- **Interpretation and impact of new language**
 - Although modifications were made, *they do not go far enough.*
 - Stormwater Management Practices (SMPs) are still required for small parking lots associated with any trail system that disturbs more than one acre of land—*unless the parking lot is limited to a maximum of 10 spaces.*
 - For any trail, regardless of size, small parking lot construction with 10 or fewer spaces would not require SMPs. For instance, if Tupelo Community Forest in Greenfield reduces its parking lot from 14 spaces to 10 spaces, it could potentially avoid SMP requirements entirely. This is a small win.
 - The criterion of 10 parking spaces is arbitrary. Ten spaces arranged in a single row might cover a larger area than two rows of five spaces. An area-based threshold (e.g., 10,000 square feet) would have been a more logical and consistent measure.
 - When concerns are raised about the high costs of SMPs or the feasibility of non-impervious options like porous pavement, the DEC often claims that there are simple

solutions. However, these solutions frequently do not address the practical and financial challenges that trail projects face.

- While specifying mountain bike trails is acceptable, it raises questions about other trail user groups—such as snowshoe trails. Must all multi-use trails, regardless of their specific use, be subjected to the same SWPPP and SMP requirements for new trail construction?

While these changes represent progress, they fall VERY short of supporting trail development in NY State. STA remains engaged with the DEC to ensure that future adjustments align with the needs of community and conservation stakeholders. We have asked for a formal interpretation from the DEC - STA will let you know how they respond.

Acknowledgements

We wish to extend our heartfelt thanks to the 22 individuals who contributed their voices by submitting versions of the STA letter during the public comment period from August to October 2024. Forty-nine individuals/businesses submitted public comments in total, and *almost half of the total SPDES comments* were advocating for changes to allow for more trail building. Your dedication and unified advocacy made a difference in shaping these changes, and we are deeply grateful for your support.

Thank you to: Adirondack Mountain Club, Will Aldrich, Town of Ballston, Barkeater Trails Alliance (BETA), Friends of Saratoga Horse Trails, Andrea Glogowski, Kurt Kimmel, Scott Miller, Open Space Institute (OSI), Parks & Trails New York (PTNY), Saratoga County Board of Supervisors, Saratoga Mountain Bike Association (SMBA; David Walter & Sharon MacDonald), Saratoga PLAN, Anna Laloe, Celia Darling, Michael Cusick, Andrew Schneller, David Vanier, Shanna Wiggins, Wilton Wildlife Preserve.

Reach out to Anna Laloë with any comments/questions: Anna@SaratogaTrails.org

Appendix C: Halfmoon Trail Projects

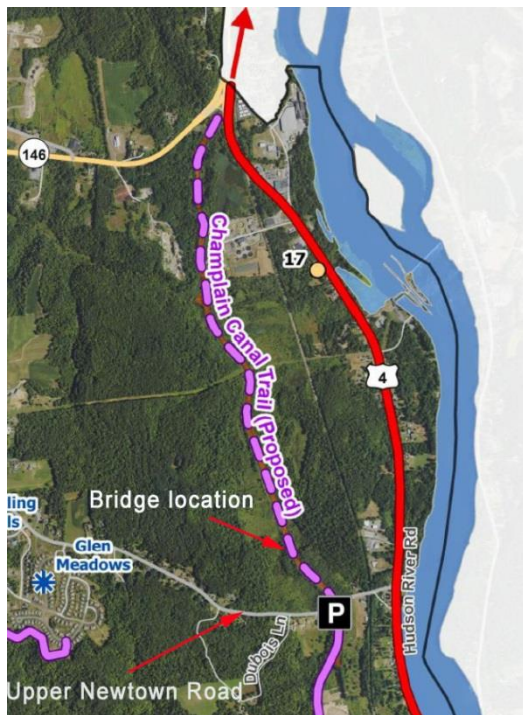


Figure C 1: Upper Newtown Road CCT extension

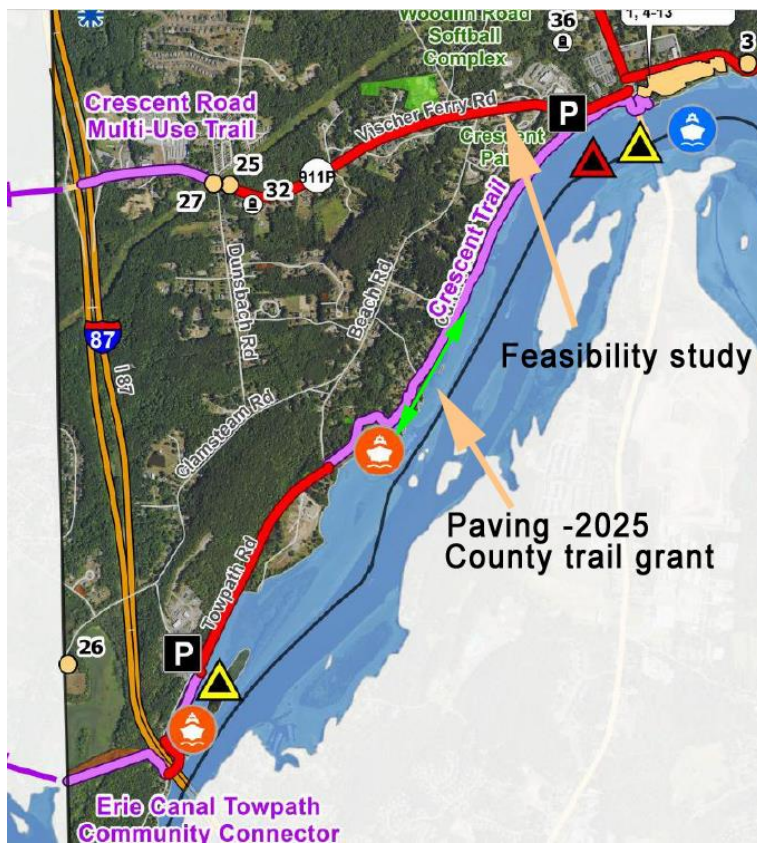


Figure C 2: Erie Canalway trail projects

Appendix D: Milton Town center study area



Appendix E: Greenfield Nordic Trail map

This sign was printed on a 3.5 mil adhesive vinyl (Drytac polar grip: PGM54150). It was then applied to aluminum plate. The design was done in PPT and printed on the vinyl. Drytac says 7 year life outdoors. Don't know what inks were used for printing – needs to be outdoor compatible.



Appendix F: 2024 County trail grants

RESOLVED, that the Saratoga County Board of Supervisors authorizes the payment under the 2024 Trails Grant Program of the sum of one hundred forty-eight thousand dollars (\$148,000) to the following municipalities for the purposes stated, upon condition that each municipality provide matching funds or services in-kind:

1. Town of Ballston: The amount of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) to be applied toward the Jenkins Park Trail Extension and Existing Trail Restoration to include the construction of 885 ft. of trail extension on the existing 2.5-mile trail network within the existing town-owned, 43-acre multi-use recreational park, and restoration of 2,450 Lf. Of the existing trails with resurfacing and drainage repairs.
2. Town of Charlton: The amount of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) to be applied toward the LaRue Creek Covered Bridge Replacement to include replacement of a covered bridge that expands LaRue Creek and is part of the Saratoga County Snowmobile Trail Network. The bridge will be replaced with a 50 ft. x 8 ft. x 7 ft. covered bridge.
3. Town of Clifton Park: The amount of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) to be applied toward the Trail Boardwalk Restoration: Brookhaven to Park Lane Estates to include a repair/restoration of the existing 17-year-old pedestrian boardwalk section of the existing trail route that traverses wetlands on the south side of a steel bridge that expands the Dwaas Kill. This trail connects with other local trails that connect residential neighborhoods with public parks, school areas, and commercial ventures in town.
4. Town of Corinth: The amount of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) to be applied toward the Trail Network/9N property to include funding for Phase I of the town's Master Plan of town-owned property to be utilized as a recreational park. Phase I will include the design, layout, and possibly material for 1.6 miles of planned trails in the park.
5. Village of Corinth: The amount of eight thousand dollars (\$8,000) to be applied toward the Upgrade Corinth Recreational Area Trails to include funds for a feasibility study and trail amenities, such as a new kiosk in the parking lot, benches along the trail, new trailhead markers, and new trail identification markers along the village's existing Upper Reservoir Trail Network.
6. Town of Hadley: The amount of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) to be applied toward the Tennis Court/Basketball Course Refurbishing to refurbish existing tennis and basketball courts and replace some fencing surrounding the tennis courts in the town park.
7. Town of Halfmoon: The amount of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) to be applied toward the Erie Canalway Trail Paving to pave a portion of the town's Mohawk Towpath Scenic Byway - or more specifically, 1,200 Lf. of existing stone dust trail from Whites Lane to the Crescent Boat Club.
8. Town of Malta: The amount of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) to be applied toward the Malta Community Park Trail Restoration to refurbish a 0.62-mile nature trail of the 22.69-acre Malta Community Park with engineered wood fiber and replacing existing wayfinding signage with new signage.

9. Town of Moreau: The amount of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) to be applied toward the Big Bend Trail Phase I Completion: Trail Amenities to include providing an accessible kayak launch into the Hudson River from the town's Phase I of the Big Bend Trail.

10. Town of Northumberland: The amount of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) to be applied toward the Meadow in the Sky Trail - Hudson Point Crossing (Phase II) to include funding for the provision of over fifty (50) understory, native species of plants in between the oaks that will provide ecological benefits to the area. In 2023, Hudson Crossing Park completed Phase I of Meadow in the Sky Trail with a segment of "Allee of Oaks" of seven (7) different varieties of oak trees.

11. Town of Saratoga: The amount of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) to be applied toward the townwide Restoration and Maintenance Project to include resurfacing of several trails, including trails connected to the Siege Trail, the Champlain Canal Trail, the town's Boat Launch Trail, and one more that connects to the Town of Stillwater with stone dust and fine rubble with emphasis on maintenance where trails are worn or washed out.

12. City of Saratoga Springs: The amount of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) to be applied toward the Bog Meadow Brook Nature Trail Improvements to include the following: fix parking lot pot holes on both Route 29 and Meadowbrook Road parking lots, repair drainage issues in the Route 29 parking lot as well as Gilbert Road, perform maintenance on culverts and/or add new culverts between the Route 29 parking lot and the bridge over the Bog Meadow Brook, and replace or refurbish aging trail identification signs throughout the trail. The original improvements for the existing Trail Network date back to 1993, making them over thirty (30) years old.

13. Village of South Glens Falls: The amount of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) to be applied toward the Betar Byway Public Restroom (Upper Trailhead) to include placing an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-compliant portable toilet facility that connects to municipal water and sewer. The proposed restroom facility will be placed on the village's DPW lands in the upper section of the existing trail.

14. Village of Stillwater: The amount of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) to be applied toward the Village of Stillwater Pedestrian Park to include construction of a Village Overlook Park on property neighboring the Stillwater Blockhouse. The project will include the creation of walkways, an expanded parking area, and a Hudson River Overlook constructed of Alaskan Cement Slab with stainless steel posts and cables.

15. Town of Wilton: The amount of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) to be applied toward the Northern Pines Road Fishing Access Parking and Trail to include providing a parking lot and trail access to the Snook Kill off Northern Pines Road to provide fishing access to the Veterans Housing Community as well as to the general public. Funds will be used to provide grading of raw land and purchase of parking and trail construction materials.

Appendix G: AHET route

