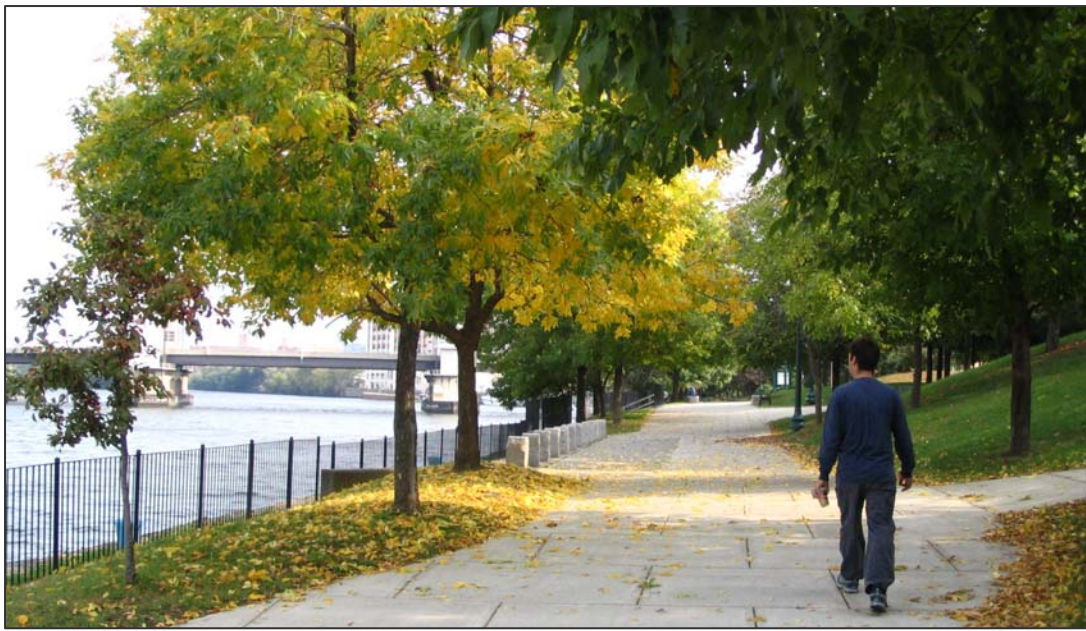


Trail Vision Plan

For Rensselaer County

Report by the Rensselaer County Alliance for Trails



Project Partners

Rensselaer Land Trust

Rensselaer County



Funded in part by the Hudson River Valley Greenway
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Trail Vision Plan For Rensselaer County

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Introduction

The Rensselaer County Alliance for Trails (RCAT) is a coalition of trail enthusiasts with the mission of advocating for a diverse system of trail opportunities in Rensselaer County. The group is non-partisan and is entirely made up of volunteers who represent trail interests in and around Rensselaer County. RCAT participants represent a diverse group of trail enthusiasts, including people and groups interested in hiking trails, biking trails, multi-purpose trails, equestrian trails, and snowmobile trails. The group recognizes that the terrain and recreational opportunities in Rensselaer County vary and therefore there are many different types of trail experiences possible.

In 2006, RCAT received a grant from the Hudson River Valley Greenway to inventory existing trails and develop a vision plan for a regional trail system in Rensselaer County. The grant was submitted by the Rensselaer Land Trust (formerly the Rensselaer-Taconic Land Conservancy) for the RCAT.

Because the plan was funded through the Hudson River Valley Greenway, special consideration was given to identifying a spine of the Hudson River Greenway in Rensselaer County and connecting other trails to this spine. The Rensselaer County Planning Department participated in the planning process and provided assistance throughout.

The first step in the planning process was to map existing and proposed trails in Rensselaer County. Mapping of existing trails was conducted with the assistance of Rensselaer County Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Department, which retains a database of trail files. We also used data from the NYS GIS Clearinghouse. Where necessary, we digitized additional trail data using maps and other geographic information.

We also sent a letter to each of the municipalities in Rensselaer County, informing them of the project and asking for their assistance in collecting data on existing and proposed trails. The RCAT members followed up with each of the municipalities to find a point of contact within the communities (often a Parks and Recreation Department Director or a town historian). They interviewed each of the contacts to collect information on existing trails, as well as any proposed trails that were identified during a planning process, such as a comprehensive plan.

With all of this information (which was an extensive pile of maps and ideas on paper), we developed a GIS map that illustrated existing and proposed trails.

We then conducted visioning sessions in four different areas within Rensselaer County. The agenda was the same for each visioning session - only the location changed. We selected locations in various areas of the County to allow for diverse participation. We

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published press releases and worked with each of the municipalities to get the word out. The meetings were held on the following four dates and locations:

- Tuesday, April 15th 2008: East Greenbush Library
- Wednesday, April 23, 2008: Troy RPI Hefner Alumni House on People's Avenue
- Wednesday, April 30, 2008: Stephentown Fireman's Meeting Hall
- Wednesday, May 7, 2008, Hoosick Falls Armory

For each meeting, we printed large-format versions of the map and made them available for working groups. We gave a brief overview of the project and the existing and proposed trail information collected to-date. We then asked participants to work in small groups on the agenda that follows. Each group had a facilitator who was familiar with the project and the county trail map.

- What are the issues or challenges for creating regional trails in Rensselaer County? What are the barriers?
- What are the trail needs or opportunities in the county? Are certain trail types (such as hiking or equestrian) needed?
- Which of the existing trails should be priority?
- Identify other desired regional trail connections.

After the visioning sessions were complete, the RCAT met several times to discuss the results of the meetings and developed this vision plan.

The Purpose of a Vision

There are many phases in the development of a trail. Long before a trail is mapped out or constructed, a vision must be developed. Having a vision for a trail is the first step - and the vision may be as simple as connecting a school to a park, or allowing public access along a waterway. Without the vision for a trail, it is impossible to see what might be.

Visions are important because they help to guide both public and private investment. A great example is the Dutchess Rail Trail in Dutchess County, which is being constructed in tandem with planned infrastructure improvements (public investment). As the vision began to materialize, private businesses in the villages and hamlets along the corridor realized that the trail could also be beneficial to them - and they too started to invest in properties along the trail.

Another important aspect of a vision is that it can help to coordinate what might otherwise be fragmented planning initiatives. For example, two adjacent communities may be planning a similar trail concept and there may be an opportunity to connect them to create a much larger trail.

There are many visions for trails in our region already in place. There is a vision for a greenway along the Hudson River from Battery Park to Albany. New York State is currently in the process of developing a trail plan for the entire state. The Capital District Transportation Committee developed a greenway concept plan for the Capital Regional called Tech Valley Trails (2007). It includes some trail concepts in Rensselaer County. The Trail Vision Plan for Rensselaer County has considered all of these state and regional trail concepts while creating a vision that is specific to Rensselaer County.

Trail Planning Principles

Before beginning the Rensselaer County Trail Vision Plan, the RCAT established a set of principles that would guide our work, and future work, of planning and developing trails in Rensselaer County. These principles are consistent with the input that we heard at the public visioning sessions and other conversations we have had while developing this report. The principles are listed in the text box below.

Trail Planning Principles

- The trail planning process should maintain a diversity of trail uses and types, including (but not limited to) hiking trails, biking trails, multi-purpose trails, equestrian trails, snowmobile trails, and water trails
- The trail planning process should respect private property rights
- The trail planning process should respect municipal home rule
- Future trails should respect the natural environment

Trail Needs and Concerns

Many different needs and concerns regarding trails were raised throughout this planning process. While we can not discuss each in detail, we have highlighted some of the most frequently-cited topics below.

Tourism and Economic Development

Possibly the most frequently-mentioned opportunity at the public meetings was to integrate trail systems into a larger plan for economic development in the County. Economic development opportunities associated with trails in developed areas - such as the City of Troy, or the many villages and hamlets in the county - were all discussed. Trails bring people to these areas, providing a great setting for restaurants, bed and breakfasts, cafes, outdoor outfitters and other similar businesses.

The opportunity to connect Rensselaer County to Columbia and Dutchess Counties by trails was desired by many participants. Also mentioned was the idea of connecting the Village of Hoosic east to Bennington, Manchester, and other areas of Vermont. Regional trails were viewed not only as a source of tourism but also as a venue for events that can promote economic development. For example, a historic barn tour or art walk could be organized along a trail corridor.

Trail Maintenance and Management

Once a trail is built, ongoing maintenance and management is needed to ensure that the trail is properly taken care of. Participants were concerned that some of the communities in Rensselaer County may not have the resources to maintain trails adequately. Various options for maintenance were discussed for regional trails ranging from intermunicipal agreements to a private “friends of” group. With each regional trail that is planned in Rensselaer County, options for trail maintenance and management will need to be identified.

Property Ownership

There are many private landowners in Rensselaer County who may, for one reason or another, not be interested in assisting with the development of the trails identified in this vision plan. The rights of these landowners should be respected. When planning trails, individual landowners should be contacted and their concerns and wishes should be respected. In some cases, a detour may be necessary to comply with a landowner’s wishes or to protect a sensitive land use (such as farming) from public access.

Liability

In discussions with private landowners about trails, liability is always a primary concern. And many landowners are concerned about lawsuits from people who might wander off of a trail even if it does not cross their property. Landowners do have some protection through homeowner's or commercial farm insurance and the New York State General Obligations Law § 9-103 also provides some protection for landowners. However, in

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some cases this is not enough liability coverage for some landowners to be comfortable. The Greenway Conservancy for the Hudson River Valley has a commercial liability insurance policy that is available to local groups for this purpose. More information about the greenway's liability coverage can be found at:

<http://www.hudsongreenway.state.ny.us/conserv/insure.htm>

Trail Etiquette

Understanding how to act on a trail may not seem complicated but it can sometimes be - especially when a trail is frequented by many different users. Visioning workshop participants shared many different accounts of improper trail etiquette, including trail users who do not stay on the trail; users who did not properly yield; and unleashed dogs. These types of problems can often be solved with signage that is visible at main trailheads and parking areas.

Leveraging Multiple Interests

An opportunity that is of particular interest to the RCAT and workshop participants is to leverage multiple interests when developing trails. For example, there may be some areas where rights-of-way already being used as a snowmobile trail may also be used as a three-season hiking trail (recognizing that there are also many areas where this is not appropriate). Another example of bringing multiple interests together is where a history trail might convene a partnership of trail and history enthusiasts. Multi-purpose trails should be encouraged because they leverage volunteers, funding, and many other aspects such as shared maintenance and upkeep.

Local Support

One of the most important needs identified in our visioning meetings was to build local support for regional trail concepts. Local support can come in a variety of ways but ideally would include the inclusion of the trail corridors in a local comprehensive plan or plan update, as well as familiarity of the trail concepts by the planning board and recreation departments of a community. Including the trail concepts in local plans helps to bolster state and federal funding decisions. A local champion (such as a dedicated volunteer or a town board member) is also important to steer the development of the trail.

Regional Trail Concepts

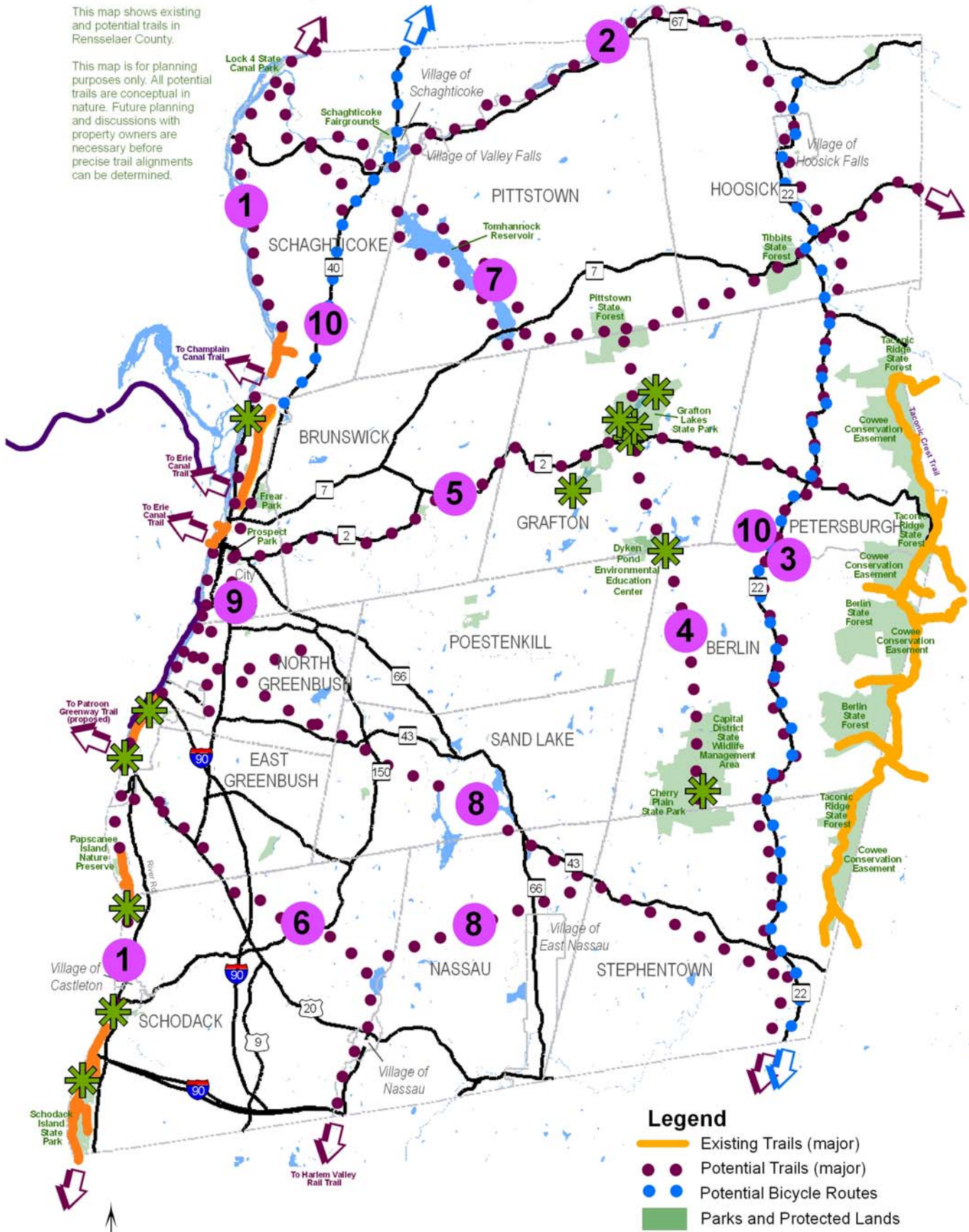
This plan identifies ten regional trail concepts for Rensselaer County. Each concept is illustrated in the map on the next page.

- 1. Hudson River Greenway Trail and River Crossings**
- 2. Hoosic River Trail**
- 3. Corkscrew Rail Trail**
- 4. Rensselaer County Plateau Trail System**
- 5. Poesten Kill/Route 2 Connector Trail**
- 6. Albany Hudson Electric Trail**
- 7. Tomhannock Reservoir Loop**
- 8. Powerlines in Southern County**
- 9. I-90 Connector**
- 10. Bike Route System**

Rensselaer County Trail Vision Map

This map shows existing and potential trails in Rensselaer County.

This map is for planning purposes only. All potential trails are conceptual in nature. Future planning and discussions with property owners are necessary before precise trail alignments can be determined.



- Legend**
- Existing Trails (major)
 - ⋯ Potential Trails (major)
 - Potential Bicycle Routes
 - Parks and Protected Lands
 - ★ Boat Launches



This project is supported in part by a grant from the Hudson River Valley Greenway

Regional Trail Concepts

Disclaimer: This is a conceptual discussion of potential regional trails in Rensselaer County. This is not meant to be used as guide for construction of trails. Before any of the trail concepts in this document are developed further, feasibility assessment is necessary, including discussions with landowners, potential funders, trail user groups, local municipalities, and other stakeholders.

1. The Hudson River Greenway Trail and River Crossings

Location

This trail runs along the Hudson River in Rensselaer County from Columbia County to Washington County. It is part of the statewide plan to develop a trail running the entire length of the Hudson River to New York City. Part of the Greenway Trail is in existence. There are roadways and paths along almost the entire length of the Hudson River that one could walk or bike along.

This trail would provide a western spine for connections to many other trails including the Tech Park Trail system, Troy walking trails and proposed trails such as the Postenkill/Route 2 trail system, Albany Hudson Electric Trail and Hoosic River Trail. The Greenway is also promoting a water trail that would access various points along the eastern shore of the Hudson River along the trail.



This active section of the Hudson River Greenway in Albany could be connected to the greenway trail in Rensselaer County.

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Description

This trail has been in use for millennia by indigenous people and includes some of the earliest roads used by European settlers. Parts of the trail exist off road in final form. Portions of the trail can use existing roads, although there are parts that would require appropriate signage. A plan has been developed for a section between the cities of Troy and Rensselaer and funding is being sought to complete this portion (Mickey Mahar Memorial Waterfront Trail – 3.5 miles).

The trail links Hemstreet Park, Pleasantdale, Troy, Rensselaer and Castleton-on-Hudson and provides links to the Schodack Island State Park, Papscaenee Island Nature Preserve, Rensselaer Riverfront Park, Rensselaer Boat Launch, Troy Riverfront Park, Powers Park, and two Lock Parks. The trail would also pass near Castleton Historic District, Staats House (oldest in the County), Fort Crailo, Historic Bath Neighborhood and Patroon Agent's House, Burden Iron Works Office, several downtown Troy Historic Districts, Herman Melville House, Lansing's Ferry Landing, and the Knickerbocker Mansion.

Ownership

Many different owners, both public and private.

Other Information

Various projects are being planned along the river which may impact this trail, including a multi-use waterfront development and marina in Rensselaer, a convention center with marina in the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute Technology Park, and the Hudson River Estuary Center North in Troy. A crossing over the Hoosic River would be needed to allow the trail to continue north into Washington County.



Several segments of the Hudson River Greenway already exist in Rensselaer County, including Troy's waterfront trail pictured here.

2. Hoosic River Trail

Location

The Hoosic River Trail was first proposed by the Hoosic River Watershed Association in the early 1990s to run along the entire Hoosic River from its headwaters in Massachusetts to the Hudson River. Some of this trail already exists in Massachusetts. The proposed trail would go through the historic villages of Schaghticoke, Valley Falls and Hoosick Falls and hamlets of Johnsonville, Buskirk, Eagle Bridge and North Petersburgh.

The trail could be developed as a loop running on both sides of the river for many miles. It could provide connections between the Hudson River Trail, the Route 22 Bike Route, the Corkscrew Rail Trail and the Taconic Crest Trail (in North Pownall in Vermont), and possibly the Rensselaer Plateau Trail. This trail could be part of a three-state trail running from Pittsfield, MA to Stillwater, NY.

Description

In Rensselaer County, the trail could be a combination of riverside trail, trail located on abandoned railbeds, and along roadways, either next to or parallel to the Hoosic River.

The proposed trail passes the Knickerbocker Mansion, the Buskirk Covered Bridge, Grandma Moses House, Delaney Hotel and Hoosac School. A water trail also exists with landing spots above and below hydro dams.

Ownership

Right-of-ways could be on state, county and local roadways, abandoned rail beds, DEC fishing access areas, and private property. As the trail runs through large portions of agricultural areas, there are surprisingly few private owners along the river. Several problem areas may need to be addressed, such as the hydro plants in Schaghticoke, Johnsonville and North Hoosick. There is development on some of the abandoned railbeds in some areas.

Other Information

Some of the views can be found in Grandma Moses' pictures.

3. Corkscrew Rail Trail (with connections to Harlem Valley Rail Trail)

Location

The Corkscrew Line of the Lebanon Springs Railroad traverses the eastern side of Rensselaer County in a north-south direction, paralleling Route 22 for most of the way. It runs through the towns of Stephentown, Berlin, Petersburg and Hoosick. In the Town of Hoosick the railroad runs east to Bennington. This “rail trail” would follow the rail bed, where feasible, and use the roadways and off-road opportunities to fill gaps.

Description

The “Corkscrew Rail Trail” was originally the rail bed of the Lebanon Springs Railroad. It started in 1852 and was purchased by the Rutland Railroad in 1931, and connected Chatham, NY with all the Rutland lines running from Bennington to Canada. The name “Corkscrew Division” got its name because of the twisty, windy 57 mile path between Chatham and Bennington. Besides passenger service including students traveling from their home town to centralized schools, the trains carried milk and other produce from local farmers.

Ownership

Closed in 1952 the rail bed was sold mostly to adjacent landowners. A number of small sections are open and used by the public with permission of the property owners.



The Stephentown railroad station along the Corkscrew line of the Lebanon Springs Railroad.

4. Rensselaer County Plateau Trail System

Location

The Rensselaer plateau consists of 105,000 acres in the Towns of Berlin, Brunswick, Grafton, Hoosick, Nassau, Petersburg, Pittstown, Poestenkill, Sand Lake and Stephentown. The plateau comprises about 25% of the land area the County. The Rensselaer County Plateau Trail System would be primarily located in the Towns of Stephentown, Berlin, Grafton, and Pittstown, connecting several major state parks and land holding together using existing trails where feasible.

Description

The Rensselaer Plateau is one of the most ecologically significant areas in New York State. The elevation of the plateau is much like the Adirondacks and is the 5th largest forest in New York State. The plateau holds three state forests, two state parks and an environmental center, all described in further detail below.

Pittstown State Forest: The state forest has many trails that wind through the landscape. It connects with a power line that runs north to Hoosick or south to Eagle Mills area. To the south, there are trails that connect to Grafton Lake State Park using old town roads to connect Kings Rd to North Long Pond Rd., or Ward Hollow to Shaver Pond Rd. The trails are used for recreational purposes such as horseback riding, hiking, mountain biking, and snowmobiling.

Grafton Lakes State Park: The state park has about 25 miles of trails. The trails are shared with horses, hikers, cross county runners, mountain bikers, cross country skiers, fisherman, and snowmobiles.

Dyken Pond Environmental Education Center: This 425 acre conservancy and recreation area is used for ecological education and low-impact recreation. There are some trails for non-motorized use only that are enjoyed by hikers, bikers, skiers, and for snow shoeing. There are snowmobile trails to the east of Dyken Pond, but are across private land and closed most of the year. There are large tracks of land heading south owned private land owners. There are also many old town roads and old carriage trails across the area.

Capital District Wildlife Management Area/ Cherry Plains: This area has limited amount of marked trails but has some dirt roads and old trails. The trails are primarily used for hiking, horse riding, biking, and snowmobiling.

Other Information

For more information on the Rensselaer Plateau, go to the website of the Rensselaer Plateau Alliance at: <http://rensselaerplateau.org/RensselaerPlateau/default.aspx>

5. Poestenkill/Route 2 Connector Trail

Location

This would be a long-distance trail that would follow the Poesten Kill (river), as well as existing road rights-of-way from Troy east through the Towns of Brunswick, Grafton and Petersburg.

This trail would begin where the Poesten Kill meets the Hudson River Greenway, and continue up from South Troy along the future Hudson River Estuary Center following Canal Ave. to

Spring Ave. Then it could either go up Linden Ave to the Poestenkill Gorge Overlook Park, or to Hill Street up into Prospect Park in Troy.

If the Linden Ave. route is taken, a bridge must be built across the Poesten Kill. The trail then would head up on the southern end of Prospect Park to

Route 2 using either Cypress St or a direct connection. The trail then would follow Route 2 with sections along the creek where landowners are amenable to the trail. The trail would continue to the Rensselaer Plateau, past the Grafton Lakes State Park crossing Route 22 and the proposed Corkscrew Rail Trail at the hamlet of Petersburg, before climbing up into the Petersburg Pass, where it crosses the Taconic Crest Trail, before going into Massachusetts.

An alternative route would follow Creek Road to Spring Ave Ext. to NY Route 355 to County Rte. 40/Plank Road. The trail would cross the Poestenkill before climbing the Rensselaer Plateau to Dyken Pond. This route would go by the hamlets of Poestenkill, Barberville and East Poestenkill, and would pass the Barberville Falls and end at Dyken Pond, the home of the Dyken Pond Environmental Education Center.



Looking down the Poestenkill. Photo by Julie Rose

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Description

The proposed trail would pass the Gasholder Building, Mt. Ida Falls, Poestenkill Gorge, Prospect Park, many smaller waterfalls, Garfield School, Grafton Lakes State Park and Petersburg Pass. It would also pass near several other National Register listed properties.

Ownership

Much of the trail would be located on publicly owned property, including roadways and parks. Right of way along this trail would include city roads, city parks, two private owners between the Hudson River and Canal Street. If the trail used the connection from Hill Street that would not need a bridge, one private property would be crossed. If the connection from Prospect Park was not from Cypress St, one to three private properties would be crossed. Other off-road sections would require one to multiple private properties, National Grid right-of-way, state park lands or a combination.

Other Information

Route 2 has been proposed as a Scenic Byway that would ultimately connect with other Scenic Byways in Massachusetts. Federal Scenic Byways require the ability to facilitate pedestrians and bicyclists. Off road possibility in Brunswick could connect populated areas with schools and playing fields.



The Poestenkill with spring rapids. Photo by Julie Rose

6. Albany Hudson Electric Trail

Location

The trail begins in Rensselaer County in the Town of Nassau and runs north along the Valatie Kill, parallel to Route 203 through the Village of Nassau to Nassau Lake. It then goes west, parallel to Route 20, through the Towns of Schodack and East Greenbush. It ends in the area of the Hudson River in the City of Rensselaer, where it could connect to the Hudson River Greenway Trail. The proposed trail also has the potential to connect with the Harlem Valley Rail Trail to the south in Columbia County.

Description

The trail is in the right of way of the former Albany Hudson Electric Trolley line. In some areas it is used informally for recreational purposes (walking, biking, snowmobile, ATV, etc.). It is relatively flat with a gravel surface which is overgrown in some parts. There are bridges missing in some sections.

Ownership

National Grid is the sole owner.

Other Information

This trail was discussed as a possible bike trail as part of the review of the redesign of Route 9 & 20 in the Town of East Greenbush.

7. Tomhannock Reservoir Loop

Location

The Tomhannock Reservoir is located 6.5 miles northeast of the City of Troy in the Town of Pittstown and is 5.5 miles long. The Tomhannock Reservoir was formed by Tomhannock Reservoir Dam on Tomhannock Creek and construction of the reservoir was completed in 19905. The reservoir provides drinking water for much of Rensselaer County and portions of Albany County and is owned by the City of Troy.

Description

The proposed trail would loop around the Tomhannock Reservoir, providing public access to wildlife and scenic vistas around the reservoir.

Ownership

The Tomhannock Reservoir is owned by the City of Troy, which requires permits for fishing and other access to the reservoir. There are many owners of the land surrounding the reservoir and the trail could also take advantage of public roads, which are primarily narrow two-lane country roads.

Other Information

The Tomhannock is home to many animal and bird species, in addition to being a popular fishing destination. Because of its use for drinking water, boating is not allowed in the Tomhannock.



The Tomhannock Reservoir. Photo courtesy of the Rensselaer Land Trust.

8. Powerlines (southern part of county)

Location

Opportunities for an east-west trail across the middle of the County are limited due to the nature of the terrain and lack of roads and rail lines in this part of the County. The option that arose from public input was the potential for using existing utility lines that traverse the central part of the County from the Town of North Greenbush, through the Towns of Sand Lake and Stephentown (with a possible connection to the Town of Berlin). Such a trail would connect proposed east-west trails in North Greenbush with the proposed Corkscrew trail and the Taconic Crest Trail in the eastern part of the County.

Description

The proposed trail follows power lines across the center of the County. Uses for the trail would need to be compatible with the power lines and poles, and the adjacent land use (some areas are used for farming). There is the possibility of a connection to Cherry Plain State Park in Berlin. Another Power line right of way in the Town of Nassau could connect to the Albany Hudson Electric Trail.

Ownership

The power lines and rights of way are believed to be owned by National Grid.

9. I-90 Connector

Location

The I-90 connector trail would be part of a long-term land use and transportation project in the Town of North Greenbush planned to connect I-90 approximately three miles northward from Washington Avenue (near Defreestville) through Rensselaer Technology Park and north near Hudson Valley Community College (HVCC). As part of this project, bicycle and pedestrian facilities are being considered.

At the visioning meetings for this plan, participants also considered northern connections of the I-90 trail, extending from HVCC along roadways to Prospect Park, Beman Park, Frear Park and ultimately connecting to the Uncle Sam Rail Trail. Because this is a highly-developed area, this trail would require more study to determine a feasible route, however it would serve a large number of people and therefore would be a priority.

Description

Traversing some of the most populated areas in Rensselaer County, the I-90 Connector trail would serve as an important commuter route for students at HVCC. If extended north it could link together several major parks in Troy, creating a large greenbelt. Because many of the parks it would connect are located atop hills, the trail would offer spectacular vistas and scenery.

Ownership

Although further study would be necessary to determine an appropriate route, it is likely that the trail would primarily be located within existing road rights-of-way and public parks.

10. Bike Route System (Rt. 40 and Rt. 22)

Location

These bike routes would extend the length of both Route 22 and Route 40 through Rensselaer County. Route 22 is a north-south road in the eastern part of the county traveling through the Towns of Stephentown, Berlin, Petersburgh and Hoosick. Route 40 connects the City of Troy (Lansingburgh) with the Towns of Brunswick and Schaghticoke. The bike routes could continue along the roads into the adjacent counties.



A section of Route 22 in Petersburgh.

Description

Bike routes provide a safe, designated area for bikers to travel, and are especially good for long-distance rides. Route 40 and Route 22 are both lesser-traveled country roads in the County that would make ideal bike routes, with interesting and challenging terrain. Because these are both state roads, The New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) would be involved in the planning and implementation process.

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It should be noted that there are two state bike routes already existing in Rensselaer County - State Bike Route 5 and State Bike Route 9, which both meet in Rensselaer. For more information, see:

<https://www.nysdot.gov/divisions/operating/opdm/local-programs-bureau/biking>

The NYSDOT website says the following about state bike routes:

“State Bicycle Routes are intended for experienced adult bicyclists who can share the road with motorized traffic and are primarily for transportation purposes. These routes are not recommended for children or inexperienced bicyclists due to the speed and volume of traffic generally encountered on most state highways. It is recommended that inexperienced adult bicyclists, families and children utilize the region's bike paths, rail trails, trailways and lower volume / lower speed bicycle routes or roadways. Additional State bicycle routes will be designated over time. New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) designates state bicycle routes through its regional or Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) or at the request of local municipalities. A state designated bike route is signed with a bike route number that generally corresponds with the number of the state highway route it follows in locations where the bike route meets NYSDOT standards.

Over time, as state bike routes and other related transportation facilities are rehabilitated or reconstructed, various types of bikeways (wide shoulders, bike lanes, wide travel lanes, alternate routing, bike paths, etc.) will be developed as needed along these bicycle routes by NYSDOT in consultation with local governments and interested parties. In some cases both on-road and off-road parallel bicycle/pedestrian facilities may be built to meet the demands of the range of users.”

Ownership

Both roadways are primarily within NYSDOT right-of way.

Other Information

NYSDOT Website, Bike Routes:

<https://www.nysdot.gov/regional-offices/region8/other-topics/Bikeways%20and%20Trailways>

Conclusions

1. **Each Regional Trail Concept needs a sponsor.** Each of the regional trail concepts needs to be adopted by a municipality, not-for-profit organization or volunteer group in order to be shepherded from a concept to reality. Many communities along the Hudson River Greenway are taking steps to implement local segments because the Greenway Conservancy exists to provide the vision, coordination, funding and technical assistance needed. Additional organizations such as the Greenway must be established to coordinate and steer regional trail concepts. Options range from informal “friends of” groups to nonprofit organizations to intermunicipal partnerships.
2. **Local communities should consider regional trail concepts in planning and development activities in the following ways:**
 - Regional trail concepts should be included in local plans such as a town master plan (also called a comprehensive plan).
 - Planning Boards should be familiar with regional trail concepts and work with developers to consider the inclusion of trails when reviewing major subdivisions and other planning projects.
 - Local and county highway departments should be familiar with the regional trail concepts and consider including trails in improvement plans for roads, bridges and other related projects.
 - Town Boards should be familiar with regional trails concepts and connections should be considered when infrastructure improvements are being made such as water line extensions.
 - County trail concepts should be included in regional transportation plans.
3. **Communities should explore intermunicipal agreements and funding sources to conduct trail feasibility studies.** Feasibility studies explore options for a trail concept, bringing them from vision to reality. A feasibility study should include public input, communications with potentially affected landowners, and communications with possible user groups. A feasibility study may seek to answer questions such as:
 - What are the physical constraints (such as wetlands or stream crossings) of developing a trail?
 - What are the ownership patterns and options for acquiring land or easements for trails?
 - Who are the potential trails users and what is the desired experience?
 - What types of management and maintenance options exist?
 - What are the potential costs of developing the trail?

Trail Vision Plan for Rensselaer County

A feasibility study often provides a few options for a trail alignments based on costs and other constraints. It may also provide general advice on trail design, use, and management.

4. **One person should be identified at Rensselaer County to serve as a resource for communities interested in implementing the trail concepts in this plan.** This person could be available to answer questions and could also provide notice of funding for trail planning and development in the county. Rensselaer County is already doing this, but it should be formalized.
5. **Local and county authorities should explore options to integrate economic development initiatives with trail concepts.** This might be as simple as developing a brochure that highlights bed-and-breakfasts, restaurants, and shopping areas along an existing stretch of trail.
6. **Local and county authorities should prioritize the completion of the Hudson River Greenway trail to serve as a spine for the connecting trails.** The Hudson River Greenway and Parks and Trails New York offer grants and technical assistance that should be utilized to help complete segments of the greenway.
7. **Rensselaer County and the associated municipalities should work cooperatively with the Hudson River Valley Greenway to designate the following trails as connectors:**
 - Albany Hudson Electric Trail
 - Poesten Kill/Route 2 Connector Trail
 - I-90 Connector Trail
 - Hoosic River Trail

For More Information

Reports:

Parks & Trails New York and Hudson River Valley Greenway. June 2004. Getting Started: A Guide to Planning Trails in New York State.

<http://www.ptny.org/publications/index.shtml>

Saratoga County Heritage Trails Committee. (Date not specified). Saratoga County Heritage Trails Handbook for Action.

Hudson River Valley Greenway. June 2004. Draft Hudson River Valley Greenway Trail Vision Plan.

[http://www.hudsongreenway.state.ny.us/Greenway%20Trail%20Vision%20Plan%20-%20gov%20update%20\(reduced%20file%20size\).pdf](http://www.hudsongreenway.state.ny.us/Greenway%20Trail%20Vision%20Plan%20-%20gov%20update%20(reduced%20file%20size).pdf)

The Capital District Transportation Committee. 2007. Tech Valley Trails (A Greenways Concept Plan for the Capital Region).

<http://www.cdtcmpo.org/rtp2030/c-greenways.pdf>

Websites:

Hudson River Valley Greenway: <http://www.hudsongreenway.state.ny.us>

Parks & Trails New York: <http://www.ptny.org>

Rensselaer Plateau Alliance: <http://rensselaerplateau.org>

Rensselaer Land Trust: <http://www.renstrust.org>

Capital District Transportation Committee: <http://www.cdtcmpo.org>

Grafton Trail Riders: <http://www.graftontrailriders.com>

Hoosic River Watershed Association: <http://hoorwa.org>

New York State Parks: <http://nysparks.state.ny.us/parks>

Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor: <http://www.eriecanalway.org>

