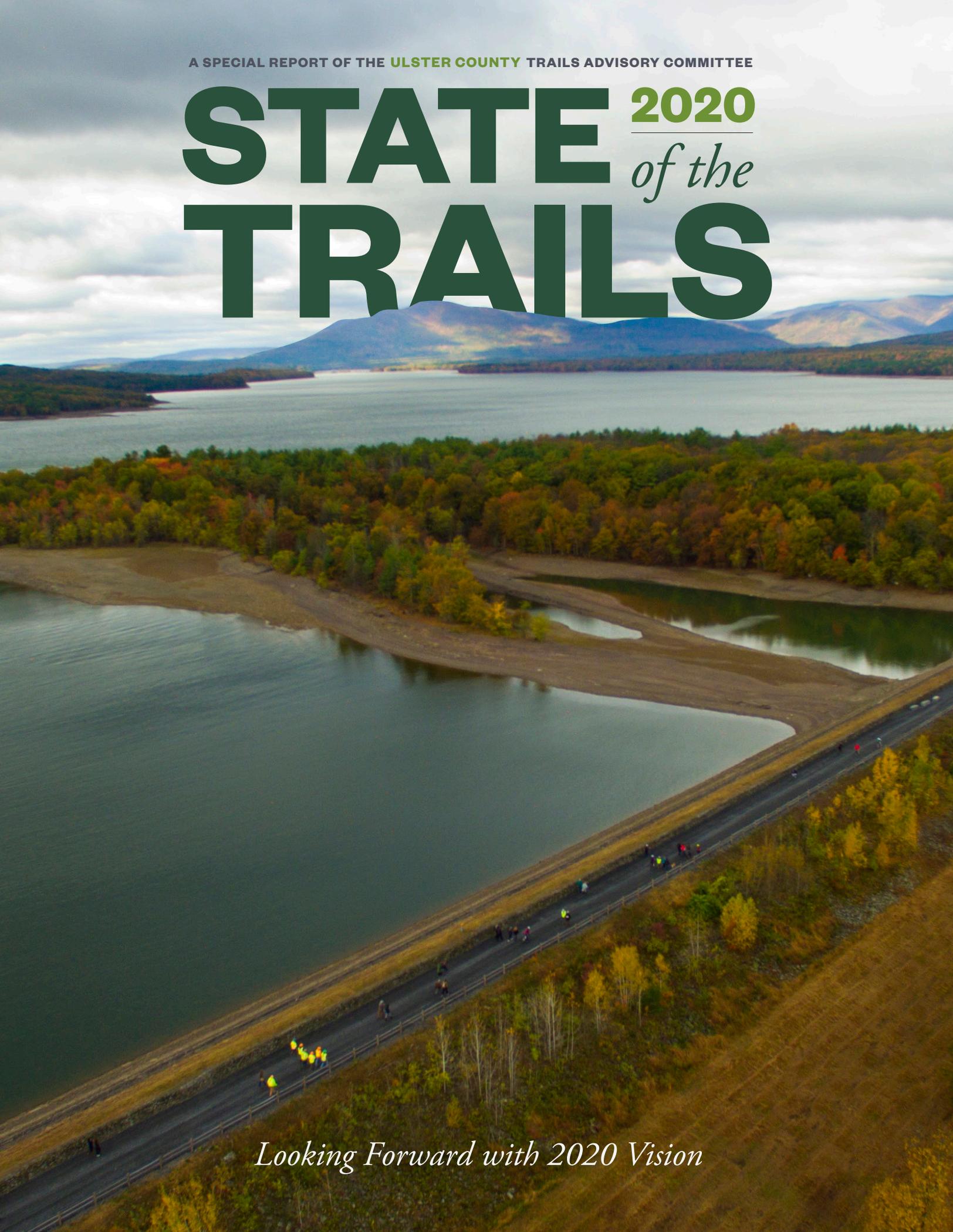


A SPECIAL REPORT OF THE **ULSTER COUNTY** TRAILS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

# STATE <sup>2020</sup> of the TRAILS



*Looking Forward with 2020 Vision*

Dear Friends,

Ulster County is being transformed – *through trails*. In 2019 and 2020, Ulster County and our partners opened 20 miles of destination-quality trails that are now enjoyed by thousands. County-wide our rail-trails receive over 600,000 visits per year, generating more than \$10 million in spending and many millions more in public health benefits, and trail use continues to grow. We are poised to complete a unified network of trails that will benefit many more Ulster County residents for generations to come.

The milestones we have achieved were unimaginable 20 years ago. We couldn't dream then that there would actually BE an Ashokan Rail Trail attracting 200,000 visitors in its first year. Kingston now hosts miles of connected rail-trails in a city-wide Greenline system. New Paltz connects directly by trail to Mohonk Preserve and Walkway Over the Hudson. The burned-out Poughkeepsie Railroad Bridge is now the world's longest bicycle-pedestrian bridge, Walkway Over the Hudson State Park. And now, Ulster County's trails are premier features on the 750-mile Empire State Trail reaching from New York City to Canada, and from Albany to Buffalo.

Until 2020, we never fully understood just how critical parks and trails are to the health and wellbeing of our County's residents. The enormous popularity of our trails during the global pandemic has provided clear proof. Our shared-use community trails are a unique blend of public health and transportation infrastructure: close-to-home places where we can run, roll, stroll, sit in nature, sightsee or even commute. Our trails weave through our communities and unify them. They support businesses, connect us to each other, and they connect us to the natural beauty that surrounds us.

Looking forward, we have the opportunity to bring even more benefits of trails to more communities. We now have 75 miles of shared-use community trails -- with a total of 120 connected miles now within our grasp. We invite you to consider how, through trails, we can do more to promote the health, wellbeing and economy of Ulster County.

Thank you,

Kevin D. Smith, *2020 UCTAC Chair*

Steven Rice, *2012-2019 UCTAC Chair*

Karl Beard, *National Park Service, Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program*



*This report was compiled with technical assistance from the Ulster County Planning Department and UCTAC. The National Park Service, Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA) provided technical assistance for Ulster County's trails from 2014-2020, and helped produce this report.*

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#### A LEGACY OF PUBLIC TRAILS

Public support for recreational trails in New York State began in Ulster County. In 1891, the State Legislature appropriated \$250 to complete a public path to the summit of Slide Mountain, the tallest peak in the Catskills, as seen in a photo by Seneca Ray Stoddard – camping on the summit of Slide Mountain – from the 1893 State of New York Annual Report of the Forest Commission.

# In 2019, Ulster County added over 20 new trail miles in one year. With the opening of the Ashokan Rail Trail, we're continuing to transform the world of trails, here in the Hudson Valley and nationwide.

## ASHOKAN RAIL TRAIL

The 11.5-mile Ashokan Rail Trail opened in October 2019, and immediately became a major draw, serving a new part of the County and attracting 100,000 visits in its first seven months. It was recognized nationally as "Trail of the Month" by the Rails to Trails Conservancy in December 2019.

## HUDSON VALLEY RAIL TRAIL

Completion of the 7-mile Hudson Valley Rail Trail link between New Paltz and Walkway Over the Hudson closed a major trail gap and anchored Ulster County to the 750-mile Empire State Trail. Between New Paltz and New York City, only two miles of the Empire State Trail will be on road.



## RIVER TO RIDGE TRAIL

The 5-mile River to Ridge Trail connected the Village of New Paltz to the Shawangunk Mountains and the Mohonk Preserve, and became a popular scenic attraction in its own right.

## KINGSTON POINT RAIL TRAIL

The 1.5-mile urban trail connects midtown to the Rondout District, safely crossing busy Rte 9W. It is a key link in the Empire State Trail.

*Volunteer Trail Stewards on the Ashokan Rail Trail are invaluable ambassadors, greeting and orienting visitors, and monitoring conditions and activity along the trail.*

## TRAIL VITAL SIGNS & 2020 SNAPSHOT

**75 miles** of nonmotorized shared-use trails are now completed and in public use, out of a potential 123 miles.

**20 miles** of new trail were opened in 2019, on 4 different trail corridors throughout the county.

**12.4 miles** of new trail are in active planning stages, and could open by 2021.

**5 miles** of the County-owned U&D corridor between Highmount and Big Indian in the Town of Shandaken will be studied for the Corridor Revitalization Study.

**12 miles** of the Wallkill Valley Rail Trail, from Rosendale to Kingston, will be refurbished by the Open Space Institute and Wallkill Valley Land Trust.

**9.6 miles** Now, closing just 4 gaps totaling 9.6 miles would result in continuous trail from the City of Kingston to Ellenville, and from Kingston to Wallkill, connecting six new communities into the trail network, and linking to neighboring counties.

*Majestic vistas of the Catskills and Ashokan Reservoir are accessible to the public for the first time in 100 years, thanks to a landmark partnership between Ulster County and NYC-DEP.*

# Four historic rail corridors provide the spine of our County-wide network of shared-use trails.

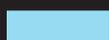
- 1 ULSTER & DELAWARE RAILROAD**  
Ashokan Rail Trail • Kingston Midtown Linear Park • Kingston Point Rail Trail
- 2 NEW YORK, ONTARIO & WESTERN RAILROAD AND D&H CANAL**  
O&W Rail Trail
- 3 WALLKILL VALLEY RAILROAD**  
Wallkill Valley Rail Trail
- 4 MAYBROOK LINE**  
Walkway Over the Hudson • Hudson Valley Rail Trail

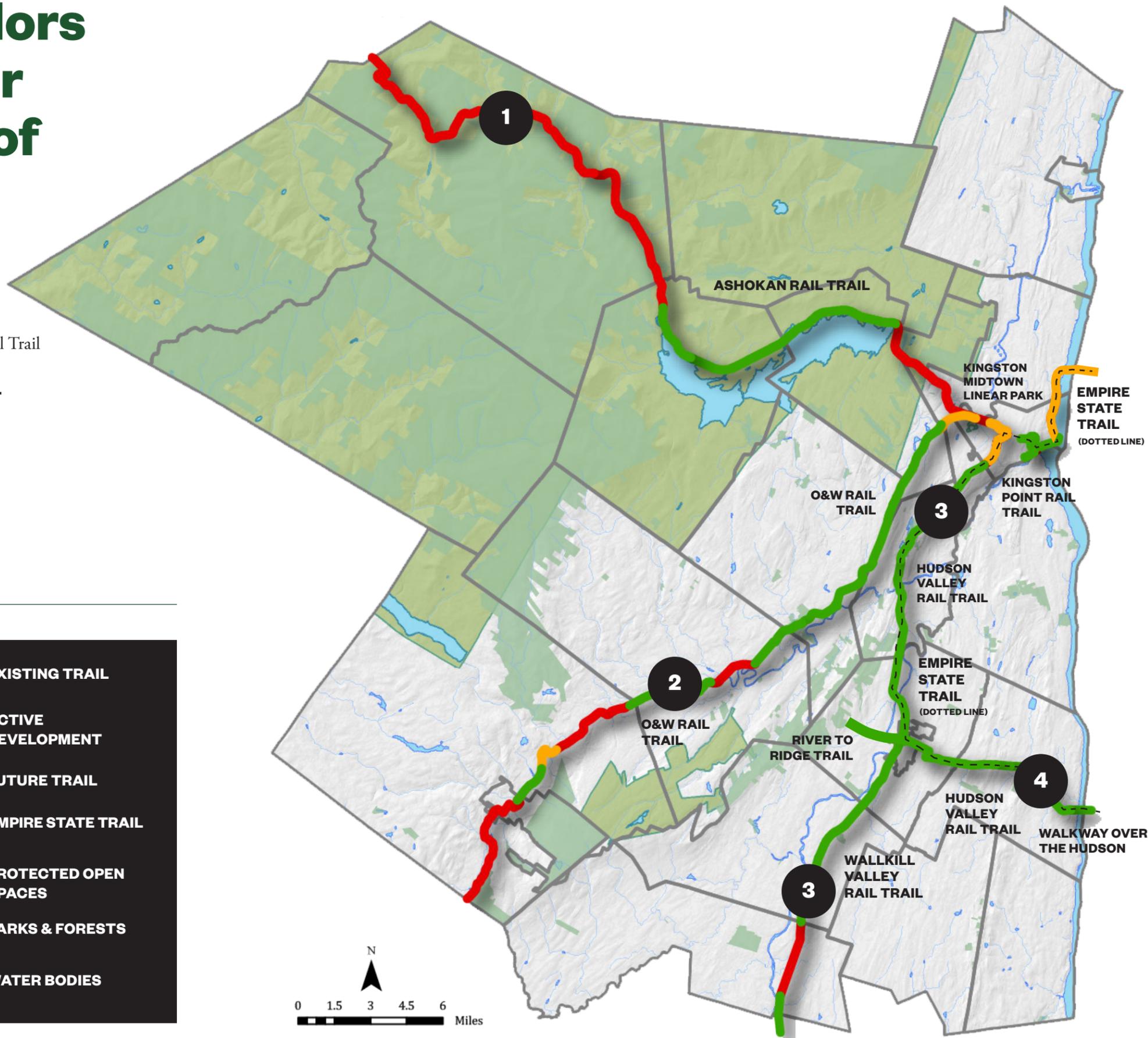
**BUILDING NEW CONNECTIONS**

The Empire State Trail will be completed in 2020. The section traversing the heart of Ulster County and the Hudson Valley is an outstanding feature of the 750-mile statewide trail, extending from New York City to Canada, and from Albany to Buffalo along the Erie Canalway Trail.

The 6-mile River-to-Ridge Trail links New Paltz and the Wallkill Valley Rail Trail to Mohonk Preserve & the Shawangunk Ridge carriage road network. It is a partnership between Open Space Institute & Mohonk Preserve.

Creating additional trail sections on the U&D corridor could extend economic and health benefits to places such as Pine Hill, Shandaken and Hurley.

	<b>EXISTING TRAIL</b>
	<b>ACTIVE DEVELOPMENT</b>
	<b>FUTURE TRAIL</b>
	<b>EMPIRE STATE TRAIL (DOTTED LINE)</b>
	<b>PROTECTED OPEN SPACES</b>
	<b>PARKS &amp; FORESTS</b>
	<b>WATER BODIES</b>



# As Covid unfolded in early 2020, Ulster County's shared-use trails provided an extraordinary refuge. The pandemic triggered an enormous increase in visitation to parks and trails.

## TRAILS ARE ESSENTIAL PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

With the closing of schools, workplaces, shopping centers and other attractions, people turned to the public spaces that remained open. Nationwide, many trails and parks reported increased usage from 200% to over 470%. Locally our trails revealed themselves as the essential public infrastructure they are, as needed refuges during a

public health crisis. The demand was so great that some trails and trailheads filled beyond their safely manageable capacity and were forced to close.

This showed us what planners and park & recreation professionals have known and argued for a long time: *We invest in parks and trails because they are critical to our quality of life, our health, and our economy. We see this firsthand in Ulster County as never before.*

And as the County and region shifts to 'reopening' our businesses and vital tourism sector, our trails and parks will be central to those efforts, as well. By the end of 2020, much of Ulster County's shared-use trail network will be open as part of New York's 750-mile Empire State Trail.

*"Connecting with Nature provides measurable benefits to health and wellbeing, whether through physical activity or quiet appreciation." (Kaiser Permanente, 2018)*



## TRAILS AS REFUGE

We invest in parks and trails because they are critical to our quality of life, our health, and our economy. We see this firsthand in Ulster County as never before.

*Heading out from Kingston's Read and Write Program, kids in YMCA's Bike It! program join Tom Polk on the new Kingston Point Rail Trail. Photo by Tania Barricklo, Daily Freeman.*

# Ulster County rail trails received over 600,000 visitors in 2019.

## ULSTER COUNTY IS HOME TO OVER 523 MILES OF TRAILS

**190 miles** are hiking trails in the Catskill Forest Preserve. Ulster County has long been an important provider of backcountry hiking experiences.

**135 miles** are carriage roads and hiking trails in the Shawangunk Mountains open space area (Minnewaska State Park, Mohonk Preserve). These destination trail areas are important drivers of Ulster County's tourism industry.

**14 miles** Lippman Bike park in Wawarsing has 14 miles of mountain bike trail. Lippman's trail system hosts events year-round, and was ranked #2 statewide by singletracks.com.

**26 miles** DEC's Bluestone Wild Forest now boasts over 26 miles of multi-use trails optimized for mountain biking as a result of a new land acquisition and public-private trail projects completed in 2019.

**22 miles** The longest completed rail-trail segment that is completely off road is the Wallkill Valley Rail Trail between Gardiner and Kingston.

# Ulster County has 75 miles of community-serving rail trails



Ulster County's growing system of rail-trails reaches Ulster County residents closest to where they live, work and shop, providing a place of connection and belonging. Rail trails provide the broadest benefits in terms of recreation, physical and mental health, bike-pedestrian transportation and fostering social interaction. The width of rail-trails, typically 10-12 feet, is well suited to shared trail uses, accessibility and social distancing.

#### CONNECTING OUR TRAILS

This system could grow to about 123 miles, serving all but two of Ulster County's largest communities!



Photo, top left: Woodstock artists enjoy plein air painting at the Ashokan Rail Trail. Photo by Abbey Semel.

Photo, left: Families enjoy a trail walk and kids' scavenger hunt during the Rock the Block Trail Party in midtown Kingston. Photo by Kingston Land Trust.



**SHARE THE TRAIL**  
Shared-use trails provide recreational opportunities close to home, school and work. Photo by Greg Miller, Open Space Institute.



# Ulster County hosts parts of 2 long-distance hiking trails, and 40 miles of the Hudson River Greenway Water Trail.

## **LONG PATH**

A section of the 358-mile Long Path runs through Ulster County's Shawangunks and Catskills. The Long Path extends from the George Washington Bridge to John Boyd Thacher State Park in the Helderberg Mountains overlooking Albany.

## **FINGER LAKES TRAIL**

The eastern end of the 580-mile Finger Lakes Trail, which extends from the NY/PA border in Allegany State Park to Slide Mountain – and the Long Path – in the Ulster County Catskills.

## **HUDSON RIVER WATER TRAIL**

Ulster County has nearly 40 miles of Hudson River shoreline, including 16 access sites on the 256-mile Hudson River Water Trail, one of New York's long-distance, overnight water trails, also designated as a National Water Trail.

## **EMPIRE STATE TRAIL**

The Empire State Trail will be a continuous 750-mile route spanning the state from New York City to Canada and Buffalo to Albany, creating the longest multi-use state trail in the nation. It connects Ulster County to the rest of the Hudson Valley, as well as to the Erie and Champlain Canal trails, and a growing network of shared-use trails statewide.

# Access to parks and trails increases residents' physical activity, supports mental health and fosters community and social interactions.



Every \$1 investment in trails for physical activity provided \$2.94 in direct medical benefit, from a study in Lincoln, Nebraska. (Wang, 2005) Persons who reported living near a trail were 49% more likely to meet recommended levels (walking 30 minutes 5 times a week) compared to those not living near a trail. (Pierce, 2006)

## TRAILS REDUCE OBESITY & CHRONIC DISEASE

Community environments that include trails and bike-ped facilities reduce obesity and chronic diseases by increasing physical activity. Ulster County's Community Health Improvement Plan embraces these strategies to help reduce the County's rates of obesity, heart disease and diabetes (Ulster County CHIP, 2019-2021) – conditions which also appear to increase peoples' risk of mortality from coronavirus.

*The City of Kingston and Kingston Land Trust partnered to reclaim a long-neglected rail corridor as the Kingston Point Rail Trail, part of the Kingston Greenline. Here, Mayor Steve Noble at 2019's opening ceremony. Photo by Kevin Smith.*

A group that calls itself 'Strong as a Mother' loves coming out to the Wallkill Valley Rail Trail because it is an easy excuse to get outside.



*Photo by Cara Gentry*

**REALIZING THE VISION:  
THE ROSENDALE TRESTLE ON  
THE WALLKILL VALLEY RAIL TRAIL**

In 2013, the Wallkill Valley Land Trust and Open Space Institute completed a 4-year, \$1.5 million restoration that transformed the Rosendale Trestle into a regional highlight, and created a continuous 22+ mile trail between Kingston and Gardiner. In 2020, their continued partnership resulted in improvements to the northern 9.5 miles of the Rail Trail, including safer road crossings, widened trail and directional signage.

Our rail-trails enhance the quality of life by boosting recreation, economic activity, active transportation, tourism and public health.

# Trails make communities more attractive places to Live, Work & Play.

When considering where to move, homebuyers rank walking and biking paths as one of the most important features of a new community (*National Association of Homebuilders, 2015*). Trails provide low or no-cost recreation to families at costs lower than other recreational services that could be provided by government. In fact, 82% of repeat visitors to Walkway Over the Hudson reported improved quality of life due to Walkway's existence. (*Mid-Hudson Pattern for Progress, 2019*)



## ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

For people who don't have cars, trails in communities provide access to shopping, jobs, schools, culture and essential services. In Kingston alone, over 1,600 households (17.4%) have no car, often forcing reliance upon alternatives. In Ulster County as a whole, over 5,200 households do not have a car (*Ulster County Transportation Council, 2020*). The WalkScore rating for Kingston is 57/100, described as "somewhat walkable." Some errands can be accomplished on foot." Its BikeScore rating is 53/100.

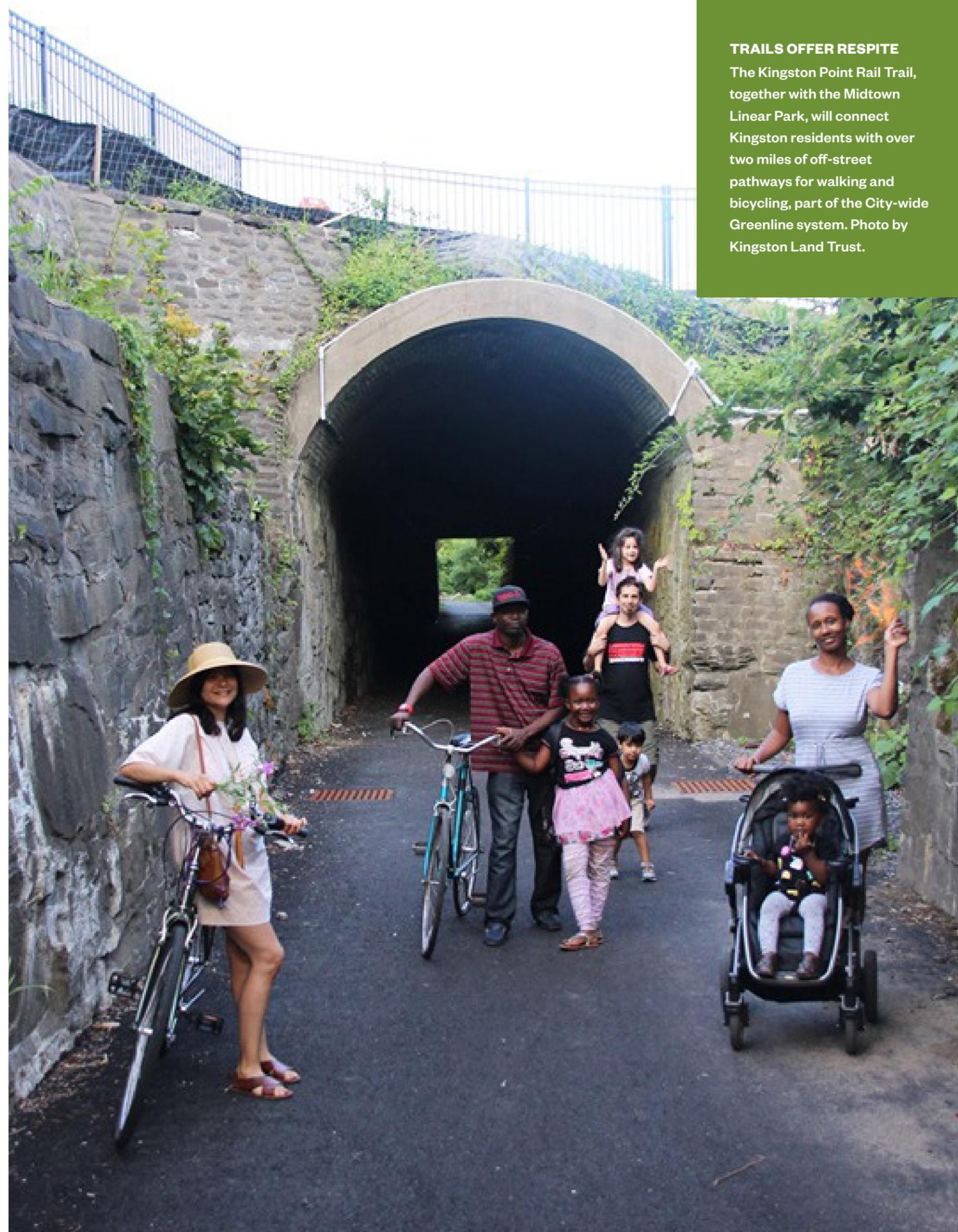
## SAFETY

Shared-use trails create safe places for people to walk and bicycle with limited exposure to traffic, whether for recreation or for simply going from place to place. Trails accommodate a wide range of people, from children to older adults, and people of all abilities.

*Glenford resident and Accessibility Advocate Deborah Mellen & Winter taking a break on the Ashokan Rail Trail. Photo by Maxanne Resnick, Woodstock Land Conservancy.*

## TRAILS OFFER RESPITE

The Kingston Point Rail Trail, together with the Midtown Linear Park, will connect Kingston residents with over two miles of off-street pathways for walking and bicycling, part of the City-wide Greenline system. Photo by Kingston Land Trust.



# In 2019 alone, Ulster County derived more than \$10 million from spending by rail-trail users.



*Studies from across the country have found that:*

### TRAILS BOOST THE LOCAL ECONOMY

Local trail users spend \$3 - \$15 per day. Non-local day users from other counties spend \$15 - \$35 per day (add cost of gas, lunch, etc.) Overnight visitors from other counties and states spend \$100 - \$300 per day (add cost of dinner and overnight stay.)

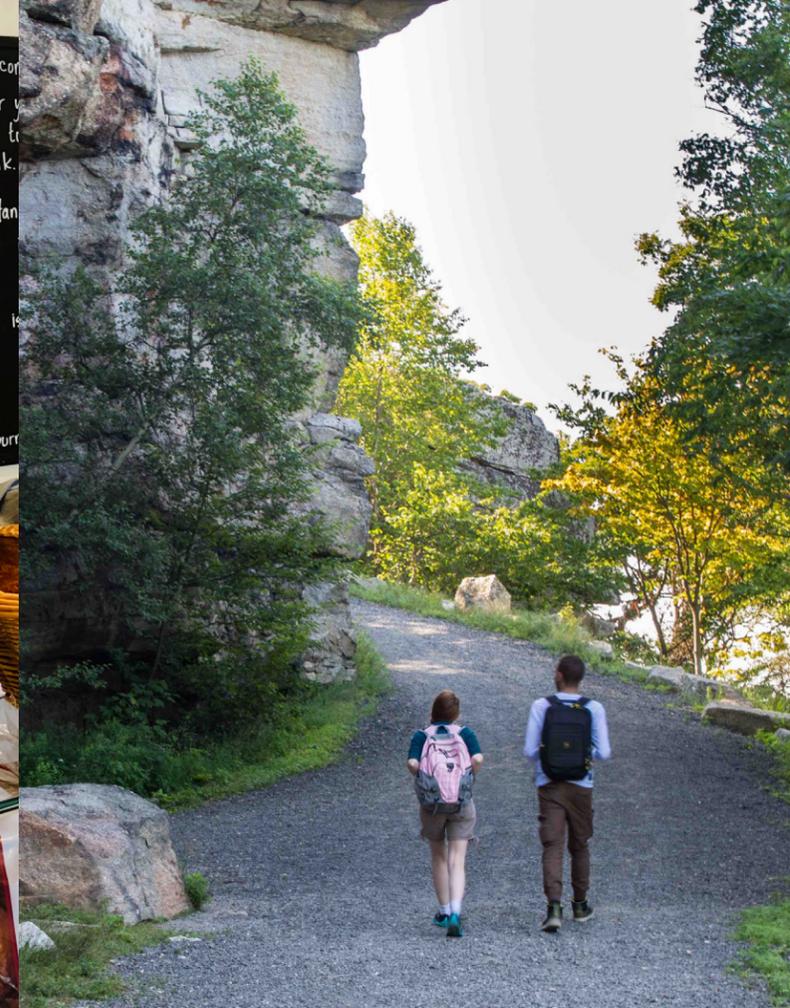
### TRAILS BOOST LOCAL BUSINESS

Communities along trails, or 'trail towns,' benefit from trail users visiting restaurants, snack shops and other businesses. Destination-quality trails and trail networks like ours attract visitors from other places, generating additional spending at businesses such as hotels and outdoor providers.

### TRAILS CREATE MORE JOBS

Construction projects on multi-use trail construction create more jobs per million dollars than highway construction: 9.6 vs 7.8 jobs per million for road construction (*Garret-Peltier, 2011*).

*The design and construction of the Ashokan Rail Trail supported dozens of well-paying jobs in engineering, construction and associated trades.*



## TRAIL ECONOMICS

### MINNEWASKA & MOHONK

Trails at Minnewaska State Park and Mohonk Preserve together attract at least 800,000 visitors per year, bringing an additional economic impact of \$25 million to the local area.

### SHARON BURNS LEADER, BREAD ALONE

"Since the Ashokan Rail Trail opened, we've seen a big jump in business at our Boiceville Café & Bakery. Overnight and day hikers stopping for tasty provisions on their way to and from the trail. It is a big impetus for our upcoming expansion in Boiceville."

### PAUL COVELLO, HOTEL DYLAN & SANTA FE WOODSTOCK

"We expanded the Hotel Dylan before the Ashokan Rail Trail's opening, taking a bet on its future arrival. We thought that exploring the Catskills on a safe trail with the backdrop of mountains and the reservoir was not to be missed. Now others seem to agree. Our occupancy has been up 15-20% while the Rail Trail has become the most sought-after attraction for guests."

# Local communities are pursuing the benefits of trails and trail connections.

Some envision trails that will connect to the network of rail-trails, while others are finding linkages to important community features. A few examples include:

## HIGH FALLS

Two projects, the D&H Canal Five Locks Walk Extension and the High Falls Creek Walk, are in planning stages, and the community is exploring bicycle-pedestrian connections from the hamlet center to the nearby O&W Rail Trail.

## NEW PALTZ

The 56-acre Nyquist-Harcourt Wildlife Sanctuary has provided nature trail and boardwalk access to the Wallkill River oxbow for years; nearby, the 134-acre Mill Brook Preserve is currently developing trails and neighborhood access.

## SAUGERTIES

The 164-acre Esopus Bend Nature Preserve and Scenic Hudson's 149-acre Falling Waters Preserve provide open space for the local community, offering over 5 miles of footpaths and nature trails.

## MARLBOROUGH

The Town has leased 32 acres from Tilcon Corporation in the hamlet of Marlboro, with plans to develop woodland trails and access to the tidal confluence of the Lattintown and Jew's Creeks.

## WAWARSING

Conceptual plans would link the local community with Lippman Park, the O&W Rail Trail and trail networks in the Shawangunks and Catskills.

## KINGSTON & TOWN OF ULSTER

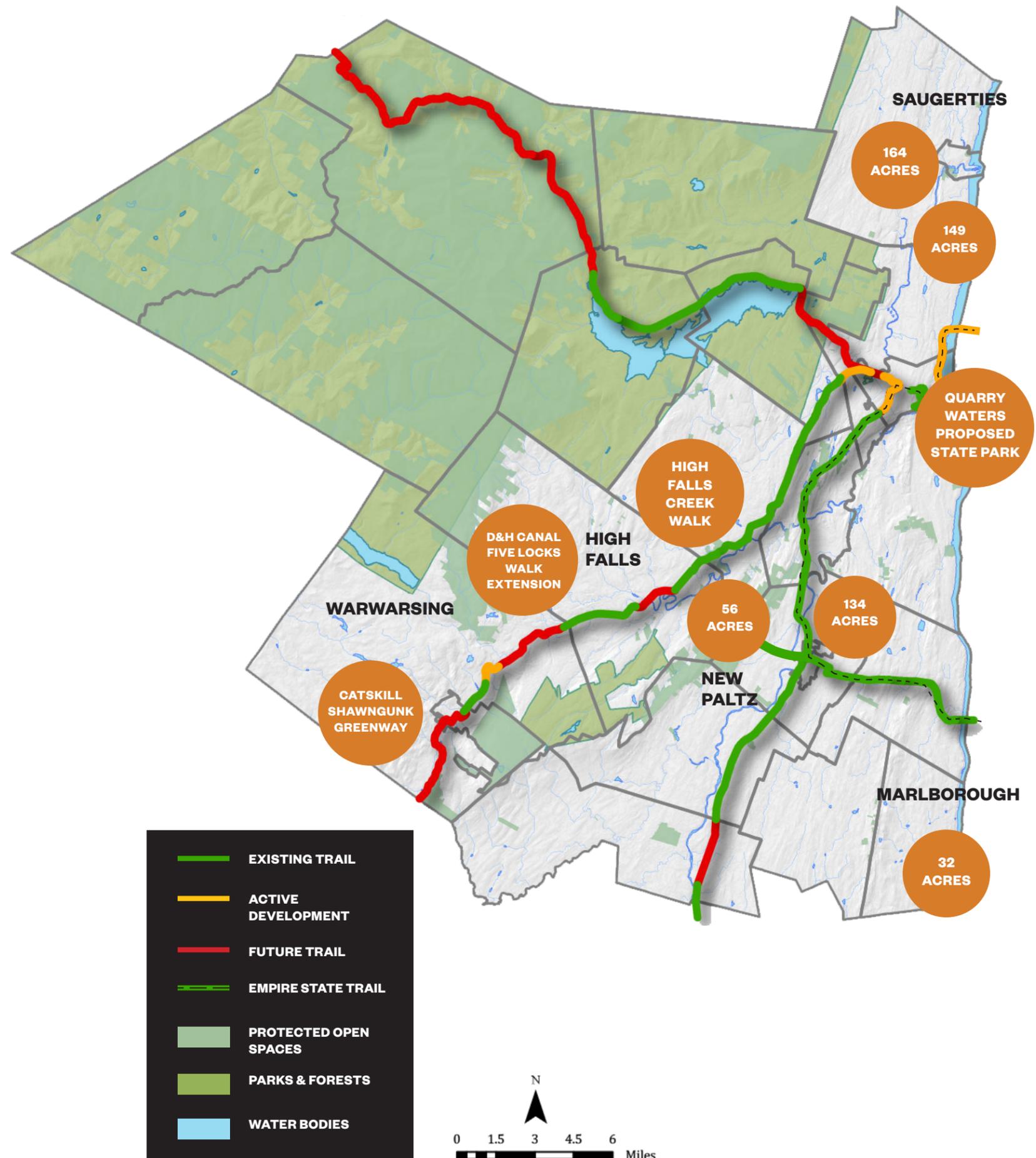
Scenic Hudson acquired 500 acres for the creation of Quarry Waters, a proposed state park extending for a mile along the Hudson River shoreline. The Hudson River Brickyard Trail through the property is part of the Empire State Trail.

## LLOYD AND ESOPUS

The John Burroughs Black Creek Trail will combine hiking, biking and paddling trails, potentially extending from Illinois Mountain to the Black Creek Preserve on the Hudson River.

## ESOPUS CREEK CORRIDOR

A citizen working group is establishing a water trail along with increased public access along the Lower Esopus Creek.



# To have a healthy and vital trail system in Ulster County, next steps include...



*The River-to-Ridge Trail in New Paltz, opened in 2018, now welcomes nearly 200,000 visitors per year.*

## **1. CONNECT AND COMPLETE OUR UNIFIED TRAIL NETWORK**

All Ulster County residents deserve to benefit from close-to-home access to trails. Closing just four key gaps totaling 9.6 miles will connect 6 new communities with trails, parks and other destinations throughout Ulster County. Plan to extend the trail network to include towns such as Saugerties, Marlborough, Shawangunk and Shandaken.

## **2. PROMOTE AND COORDINATE TRAIL USE AND MANAGEMENT COUNTY-WIDE**

Some trails are highly popular and even overcrowded, while others could benefit from support and stimulus. As our trail system grows in its extent and sophistication, so must our approach to management. We must work toward more coordinated approaches to signage, mapping, information, promotion and stewardship. To provide consistent benefits county-wide, we must gradually upgrade the trails to a set of standards that meet the expectations of local trail users and visitors alike.

## **3. CAPTURE TRAIL ECONOMIC BENEFITS**

Trail-related spending is an important return on investment that is important to our near-term economic recovery as well as our long-term economic vitality. A “Trail Town” approach can help build stronger economic bonds between trails and their host communities. Collaboration on things like ‘gateway community’ connections, signage, advertising, parking and/or shuttle buses, bike racks, landscaping and physical connections can all help energize the trail-related economy, whether at an individual business or county-wide.

## **4. COUNT TRAIL USAGE ON MORE TRAILS, YEAR-ROUND**

“You can’t manage what you don’t measure.” Our limited number of trail counts has already revealed high demand for trail use. Expanding trail counts can help document trail use and travel patterns, demonstrate the value and popularity of trails, and inform trail management strategies.

## **5. PROMOTE HEALTHY, SAFE AND SUSTAINABLE TRAIL USE**

Now more than ever, people want to be outdoors, using parks and trails to keep physically and mentally healthy. We need to develop new management strategies and messaging to encourage new norms for trail use in ways that avoid contagion, such as social distancing, masks, and trail passing etiquette.

## **6. DEVELOP MORE VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS**

The Gunks Mountain Biking Association (GUMBA) and the Trail Stewards program on the Ashokan Rail Trail have proven that effective visitor management can be delivered economically through public-private partnerships and volunteers. Through personalized contact, they enhance the visitor experience and visitor safety while also promoting appropriate trail etiquette and helping to minimize resource impacts. These types of approaches should be considered for broader application County-wide.

## RESOURCES

### TRAILS & HEALTH

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National Assn of Homebuilders. 2015. Home Buyer Preferences survey. Washington, DC.

PeopleForBikes. How does Biking Contribute to your Local Economy? [www.peopleforbikes.org/economictemplates](http://www.peopleforbikes.org/economictemplates)

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The Progress Fund. 2016. The Trail Town Guide: Revitalizing Rural Communities with Bike Trail Tourism. [www.trailtowns.org/guide](http://www.trailtowns.org/guide)

### TRAILS IN ULSTER COUNTY

Camoin Associates. 2013. Catskill Mountain Rail Trail: Economic & Fiscal Impact Analysis. Commissioned by the NY-NJ Trail Conference. [www.nynjtc.org/sites/default/files/CatskillMtnRailTrail.EconomicFiscalImpactAnalysis.pdf](http://www.nynjtc.org/sites/default/files/CatskillMtnRailTrail.EconomicFiscalImpactAnalysis.pdf)

Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress. 2018. Walkway Over the Hudson Quality of Life Impact Study. Walkway Over the Hudson. [www.walkway.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/WOTH-QoL-Impact-Study-FINAL-1.pdf](http://www.walkway.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/WOTH-QoL-Impact-Study-FINAL-1.pdf)

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Ulster County Transportation Council. 2008. Ulster County Nonmotorized Transportation Plan. [www.ulstercountyny.gov/sites/default/files/nonmotorizedtranplan\\_finalplan.pdf](http://www.ulstercountyny.gov/sites/default/files/nonmotorizedtranplan_finalplan.pdf)

### EMPIRE STATE TRAIL

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Empire State Trail Program website. Maps, Activities, Documents and Resources. [empiretrail.ny.gov](http://empiretrail.ny.gov)

### ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

National Park and Recreation Assn. Active Transportation, Parks and Public Health. Fact Sheet. [www.nrpa.org/contentassets/4db5df14a30e49ef853101af360cf1a1/active-transportation-parks-public-health.pdf](http://www.nrpa.org/contentassets/4db5df14a30e49ef853101af360cf1a1/active-transportation-parks-public-health.pdf)

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WalkScore: Walkability information on Cities & Neighborhoods. [www.walkscore.com/cities-and-neighborhoods](http://www.walkscore.com/cities-and-neighborhoods)



## TRAIL STORIES

Opposite page: The Renegades Mountain Bike Club assembled a footbridge over a canal sluiceway on the O&W Rail Trail in Wawarsing in 2019.

Above left: Lou is a retired US Army LTC who competed in triathlons until he was diagnosed with Huntington's Disease. Now he and his friend Jack exercise on the Walkkill Valley Rail Trail in Gardiner about 3 times a week.

Above right: Ian, Steph and their dog Carlo enjoyed a biking getaway weekend. Originally from London and Sydney, they now live in NYC. They brought their folding bikes and Carlo on the train to Poughkeepsie, crossed the Walkway and toured Ulster County on trails. Carlo loves riding in the pack.

Left: A young family recently bought a home in New Paltz. They love the safe bike commute from their home to the pool and local shops like Village Pizza along the Walkkill Valley Rail Trail. The kids' favorite spot on the trail is the bird observation platform in New Paltz.

## MORE TRAIL STORIES

The family pictured below came out to find solace on the trail during the spring COVID spike. Afterward, they offered these thoughts, as translated from Spanish:

“We are going through very difficult moments, moments full of sadness and pain. Just a while ago we all had a job, we had health, we had the opportunity to leave home without fear that something bad could happen to us. The streets were filled with happiness and smiles. But in the blink of an eye we realized that everything can change. Little by little, a virus is attacking millions of people. Little by little, we began to lose our jobs – thousands of businesses had to close, and we didn’t know what we were going to do without working. That’s when we realized how important it is to work, how important it is to save in order to feed our families. The world is no longer the same, and will never be the same again. As the days passed, more people ended up in the hospital. Many of us ignored this until someone close to us tested positive. Time has passed, and now fewer people are hospitalized. Finally! We have to take this as a very big lesson in life, a lesson where not only in the good moments we must be together, but also in the bad ones.”

*Photo courtesy @eddie\_photo\_and\_video, eddiephotoandvideo.com*



## TRAIL STORIES

Opposite page, top: Gargantuan (right) is an off-track rescue horse who loves to use the Wallkill Valley Rail Trail with his buddy Norman (left) and their humans. The trail offers them the chance to work on distance training because they can really open up and get a good trot going. *Photo by Cara Gentry*

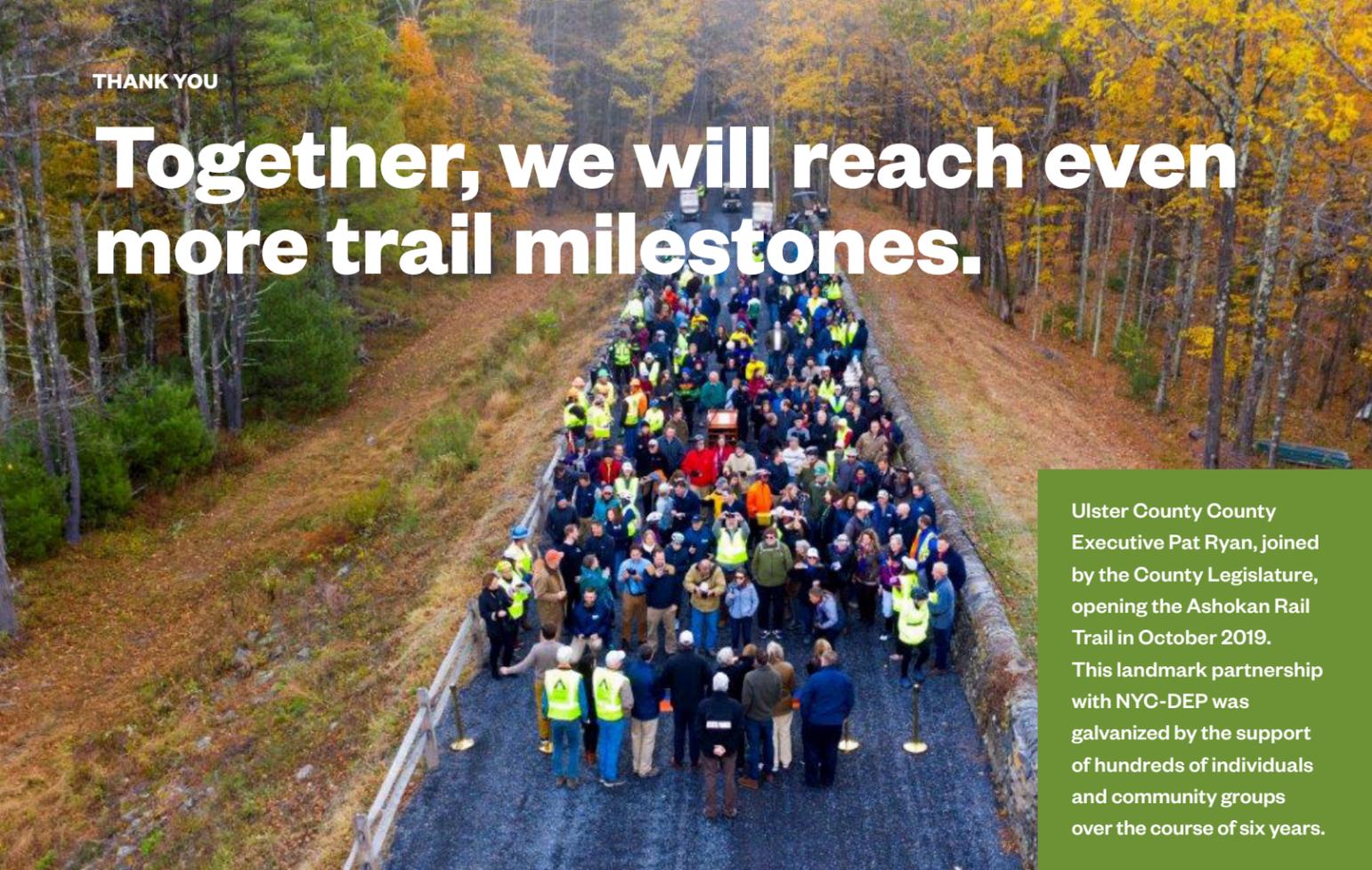
Above left: A Coalition of Municipalities coordinates trail maintenance and promotion for the O&W Rail Trail. Volunteers are placing 28 mile markers along the trail. *Photo by Carl Pezzino*

Above right: Our shared-use trails are enjoyed year-round. In addition to walking and dog-walking, winter activities include cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and fat-biking. *Photo by Nick Mercurio*

Left: Marletown Trails Committee volunteers run regular work parties, cutting back brush, cleaning up debris and whacking down weeds along the O&W Rail Trail. *Photo by Carl Pezzino*

THANK YOU

# Together, we will reach even more trail milestones.



Ulster County County Executive Pat Ryan, joined by the County Legislature, opening the Ashokan Rail Trail in October 2019. This landmark partnership with NYC-DEP was galvanized by the support of hundreds of individuals and community groups over the course of six years.



It would be impossible to thank all who have contributed to the vision and realization of our Ulster County trails, and to thank all who are helping to create a network of shared use trails that has become significant statewide and nationally. Our trail visionaries and boosters include municipalities and government agencies, land trusts, and conservation & trails organizations large and small. Nor is it possible to list all of Ulster County's stellar volunteers past and present who have donated extraordinary commitments of time and expertise over many years on behalf of the trails and all who use them.

The members of UCTAC extend our deepest gratitude and appreciation to them all.

## 2020 UCTAC MEMBERS & NON-VOTING REPRESENTATIVES

- Kevin Smith, 2020 UCTAC Chair
- Steven Rice, 2019 UCTAC Chair
- Legislator Abe Uchitelle
- Legislator Jim Delaune
- Legislator Craig Lopez
- Mike Baden, Town of Rochester Supervisor, Liaison to Ulster County Association of Town Supervisors & Mayors
- Peter DiSclafani, Town of Shandaken Town Board
- David Dukler, Town of Gardiner Town Board
- Hank Alicandri
- Cara Gentry
- Tenny Gravatt
- Kathy Nolan
- Mary McNamara
- David Toman
- David Corrigan, NYS DOT Representative\*
- Paul Lenz, NYC DEP Representative\*
- Karl Beard, National Park Service, Rivers & Trails Conservation Assistance Program\* (\*denotes non-voting members)

## ULSTER COUNTY'S HIKING & BIKING TRAIL GUIDE

A great package of information on the county's rich diversity of trails. Scan the QR code for a direct download, or find it online at:



[ulstercountyalive.com/sites/default/files/ULS\\_HikeAndBikeBrochure\\_V11\\_WEB.pdf](http://ulstercountyalive.com/sites/default/files/ULS_HikeAndBikeBrochure_V11_WEB.pdf)



## TRAIL STORIES

Above: A vibrant mural by local artist and Hurley native Cindy Gill Lapp (pictured) now brightens the O&W Rail Trail in Hurley.

Above left: The Kingston High School cross-country team enjoys running on the Wallkill Valley Rail Trail, and it's easy for most students to get to. Reports are that they looked strong out there. *Photo by Cara Gentry*

Left: Ten-day-old Jozie was our youngest visitor on the newly-opened Ashokan Rail Trail in 2019.

Bottom left: Staff from the Marbletown Highway Dept mow along the town's 8.7-mile section of the O&W Rail Trail from April through October. *Photo by Carl Pezzino*

Back cover: The Hudson Valley Rail Trail.



*Thanks to all our trail partners  
for going the distance.*