

Growing Greenways

West of Hudson Greenway Trails Network



Connecting Greenway Trails

OSI is playing a big role in bringing the transformative power of interconnected trail networks to communities where we work. With decades of expertise developing, reinvigorating, and repairing trails throughout New York State, now, OSI is looking to take its vision a step further and develop an interconnected trail system in the Hudson Valley that will benefit both people and wildlife.

OSI's *Growing Greenways: West of Hudson Greenway Trails Vision Plan* ("Growing Greenways Plan") outlines both completed and future steps needed to connect eight trail corridors in the region and create an off-road trail network of more than 250 miles, linking the Hudson River Valley with the Catskill Mountains, Shawangunk Ridge, and the western Hudson Highlands.

As OSI looks to the future, this goal of linking the region's impressive trail systems is within reach.



A Unified Trail System

Well-known for its rich history, cultural attractions, and lush forests, the Hudson Valley has long been recognized as an outdoor recreation destination for residents and visitors.

The Hudson Valley is replete with many state and local parks and trails that help to define this special region. Still, for all its protected land, there has long been a lack of cohesiveness or a “grand plan” that would connect these local assets, help to better serve area communities, and maximize tourist appeal.

Responding to that need, the Open Space Institute (OSI) has created a vision plan to create an off-road, world-class trail destination to improve landscape connectivity by linking eight previously unconnected trail systems.

The plan builds toward the creation of a singular, interconnected trail network in Ulster, Sullivan, and Orange counties that will span more than 250 miles, connecting more than 50 communities and landscapes for people and wildlife, alike.

OSI’s far-reaching and continuing impact in the Hudson Valley has already resulted in the protection of more than 100,000 acres of land and contributed to the development and restoration of more than 50 miles of accessible trails, including the River-to-Ridge Trail in New Paltz, the historic carriage roads of the Shawangunk Ridge, and the Wallkill Valley Rail Trail.

The *Growing Greenways Plan* is the culmination of all OSI has achieved over the past four decades working with local partners to make the beauty and majesty of the Hudson Valley more welcoming for all.

Requiring an initial \$8 million investment for foundational projects, the plan details a game-changing proposal to ensure that this unified trail system reaches its fullest potential as a shared and treasured community resource. The plan also exemplifies how connection – connected communities, connected places, and connected purpose – is a force that drives lasting and beneficial community outcomes.



Connecting & Strengthening Communities

Expanding safe, green transportation options

The Growing Greenways Plan will develop and connect a system of off-road, multi-use recreation trails. Off-road trail networks provide safe, alternative transportation options to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions by promoting non-motorized modes of transportation.

Mass transit accessibility

This vision plan also proposes improved connections to mass transit, meaning that the trail network will be accessible to those coming from the New York metro area by train and to those interested in spending a weekend, or longer, exploring trails in the Hudson Valley and beyond.

Boosting economic activity and tourism

This region contains a treasure trove of natural, cultural, and historical sites and attractions that captivate visitors and boost local economies. Longer, interconnected trail networks attract more travelers; provide visitors with incentive to stay in the area longer to explore multiple regional attractions; and provide greater value to residents, than singular trails.

It's all about connection

OSI's Growing Greenways Plan seeks to connect a fragmented series of trails. At its core, the vision plan is about connection – connecting people to each other and the places they love. The trail network will bridge gaps within and between neighborhoods and contribute to healthier and more inclusive communities.

Increasing Access to the Outdoors for Everyone

Promoting equitable access to the outdoors

Everyone should have access to the transformative and restorative benefits of nature. Trails and greenways can provide family-friendly fun and support active lifestyles for people of all ages, abilities, identities, and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Improving health & wellness

Well-maintained, easily accessible trails make communities more livable, healthy, and prosperous. Local trails support the physical, mental, and emotional health of residents and visitors.



Greenway Trails and Equity

OSI's commitment to improving access to trails and green space for everyone.

From riding a bike, gathering with family and friends, or taking a break from the stresses of everyday life, access to the outdoors provides a range of health and community benefits. Still, these universal benefits are not always universally available.

Historic conditions and practices have limited available, safe, and welcoming green spaces for low-income and marginalized communities. Trails and greenways offer new opportunities to bring parks and open space directly to people and a wide array of communities. In our pursuit of creating greenway connections, the Open Space Institute is committed to being a responsive partner and integrating equity into this highly beneficial work.

Our work creates, protects, and improves trails and greenways to support healthy lifestyles and strengthen communities; promotes inclusivity and positive outdoor experiences; and creates and sustains new transportation options and economic activity.

Through our greenway trail initiatives, OSI is bringing people closer to nature, and to each other.

The Added Value of OSI

OSI knows firsthand the skills and community support needed to create world-class recreational infrastructure that promotes health and economic prosperity. As part of this community effort, OSI is pursuing partnerships, private funds, and grants to fully achieve the ambitious *Growing Greenways Plan*.

While OSI's work started with conservation, the organization's expertise also includes making public and protected land more welcoming and easily accessible to the public. OSI is uniquely positioned to take on park and trail projects in a comprehensive manner – starting with land protection and managing the projects through design, engineering, fundraising, community engagement, construction, and stewardship.

The work proposed in this *Growing Greenways Plan* will allow OSI to provide enhanced access to trails and green space for hundreds of thousands of people; serve multiple, diverse communities; and set the stage for healthier, more vibrant futures.



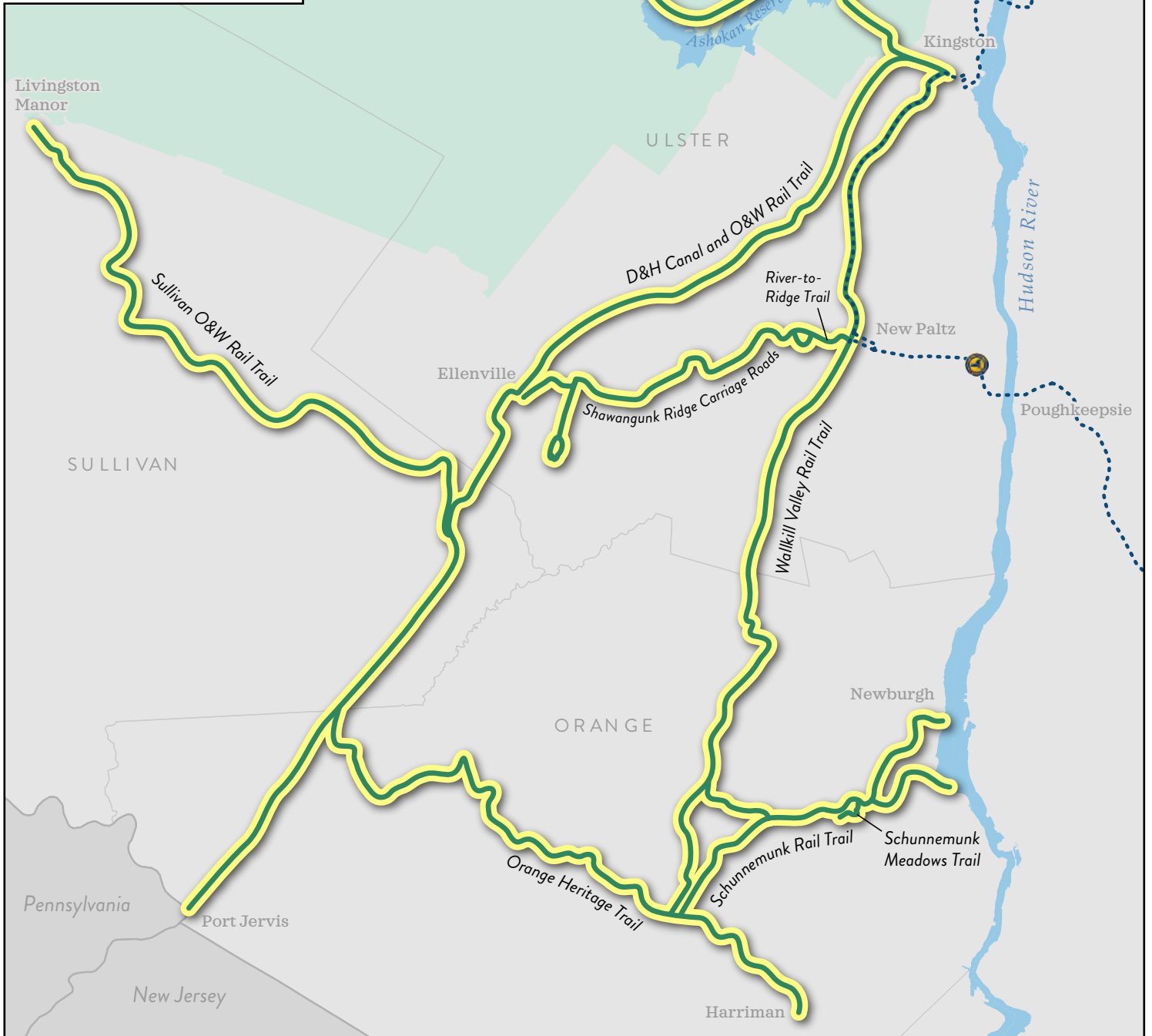
Looking to the Future

Even as OSI looks to complete the projects outlined in its *Growing Greenways Plan*, there is additional potential to expand the proposed interconnected trail system even farther. Future linkages could include:

- **Extending East** to expand the trail system across the Hudson River.
- **Extending South** into New Jersey and Pennsylvania, where there is potential to create a multi-state trail system with connections to the Delaware Water Gap.
- **Extending Southeast** to expand the trail network into the Hudson Highlands and connect six state parks.

West of Hudson Greenway Trail Network Vision Plan

Orange, Sullivan, and Ulster counties, NY

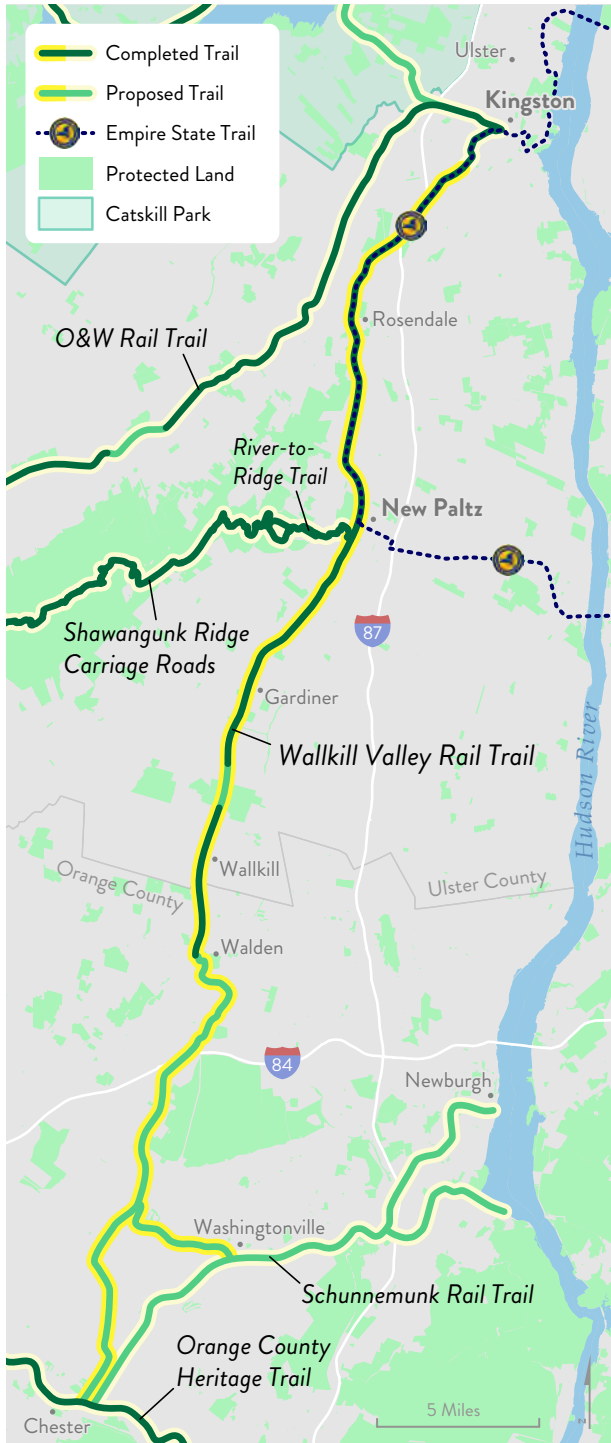


 Catskill Park  Empire State Trail

0 5 10 Miles



Wallkill Valley Rail Trail



Location

Ulster County and Orange County

Trail Length Vision

38 Miles

Communities to be Served

Kingston, Ulster, Rosendale, New Paltz, Newburgh, Gardiner, Wallkill, Walden, Washingtonville, and Chester.

Trail Will Connect With

Catskill Mountain Rail Trail, Empire State Trail, River-to-Ridge Trail, Shawangunk Ridge Carriage Roads, Schunemunk Rail Trail, and the Orange County Heritage Trail.

Immediate Funding Goals

- \$1.5 million for efforts to rehabilitate the trail from Gardiner to Wallkill.

The Wallkill Valley Rail Trail currently runs from the City of Kingston to Gardiner, and is envisioned to extend as far south as the Village of Chester. It runs through the scenic Binnewater Hills, the northern reaches of the Shawangunk Ridge, and scenic farmland, and includes a 940-foot-long trestle and pedestrian walkway over the Rondout Creek in Rosendale.



Rosendale Trestle

OSI History

In 2010, OSI partnered with the Wallkill Valley Land Trust to acquire more than 11 miles of the northern Rosendale and Ulster sections of what is now the Wallkill Valley Rail Trail and, in 2013, the organizations raised nearly \$1.5 million to restore the Rosendale Trestle. Then, between 2018 and 2023, OSI raised another \$3 million to fully restore nearly 19 miles of the trail from the City of Kingston to Main Street in Gardiner.

Impact

The Wallkill Valley Rail Trail functions as a major engine for tourism activity in the communities along its route. A section of the Wallkill Valley Rail Trail is part of New York's Empire State Trail.

Current Projects

- Extending the Wallkill Valley Rail Trail further south into Orange County to connect with the Schunemunk Rail Trail and Orange County Heritage Trail.

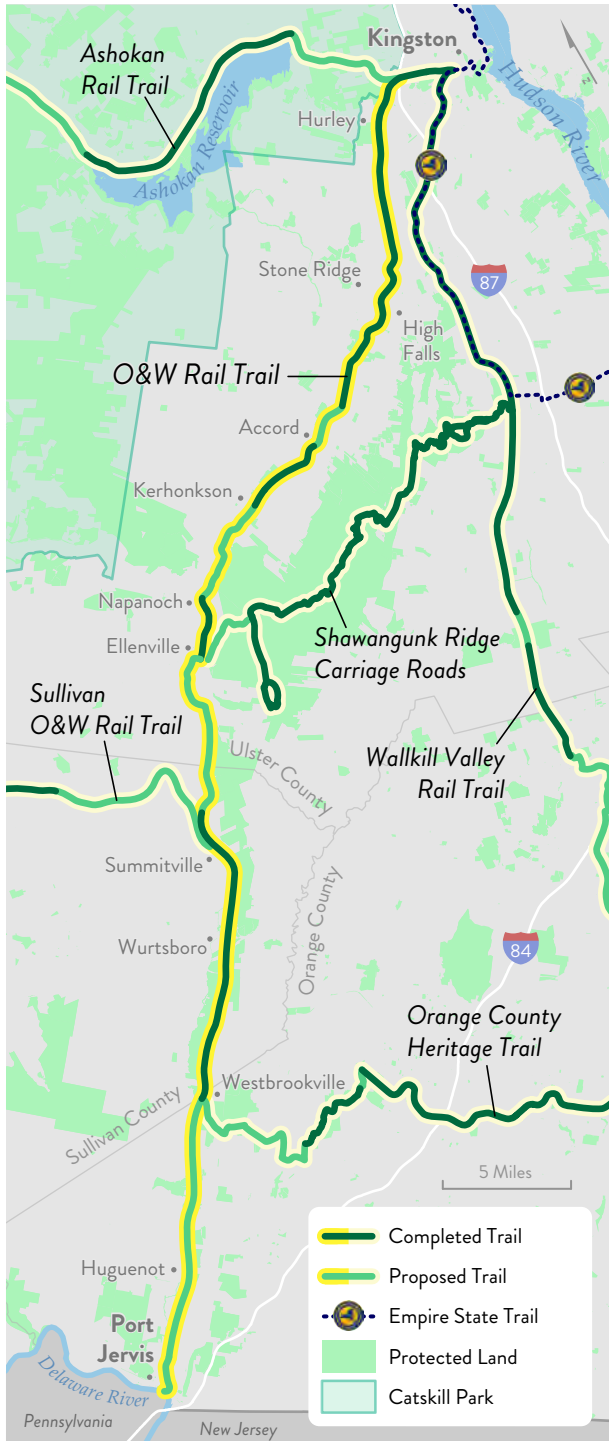
Trail Partners

Wallkill Valley Land Trust, New York State Parks, Palisades Interstate Park Commission, Hudson River Valley Greenway, Ulster County, Orange County, Village of New Paltz, and Towns of Ulster, Rosendale, New Paltz, Shawangunk, and Gardiner.

10/2023

O&W Rail Trail

including the D&H Canal



Location

Ulster County, Sullivan County, and Orange County

Trail Length Vision

57 Miles

Communities to be Served

Kingston, Hurley, Stone Ridge, High Falls, Accord, Kerhonkson, Napanoch, Ellenville, Summitville, Mamakating, Wurtsboro, Westbrookville, Cuddebackville, Huguenot, and Port Jervis.

Trail Will Connect With

Shawangunk Ridge Carriage Roads, Orange County Heritage Trail, the Delaware and Hudson Rivers, Sullivan O&W Rail Trail, Catskill Mountain Rail Trail, and D&H Canal.

Immediate Funding Goals

- \$200,000 for feasibility analysis and community outreach along the full corridor.
- \$800,000 to complete the acquisition of a critical trail gap in Otisville.

The abandoned bed of the Kingston-Port Jervis branch of the Ontario & Western Railroad runs for 57 miles, and along much of its route it is paralleled by the historic Delaware & Hudson Canal. Running through the scenic Rondout and Neversink Valleys and traversing numerous protected landscapes, it has the potential of becoming the longest “feeder” trail to the Empire State Trail.



Greg Miller

O&W Rail Trail

OSI History

West of the Shawangunk Ridge, OSI has acquired more than 17 miles of rail corridor and transferred more than 14 miles to the Town of Wawarsing, the Town of Mamakating, and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

Impact

The O&W Rail Trail serves as the main trail that will eventually reconnect the cities of Kingston and Port Jervis.

Current Projects

- OSI is leading a Comprehensive Feasibility Study of the 57-mile O&W Rail Trail corridor, including portions of the D&H Canal corridor, to inform development of a continuous, shared-use trail from the City of Kingston in Ulster County to the City of Port Jervis in Orange County.
- Restoration of a three-mile stretch of the O&W Rail Trail connecting the hamlets of Accord and Kerhonkson.
- Restoration of a 2.1-mile stretch of the O&W Rail Trail from Ellenville to Napanoch.
- OSI is working in partnership with the Town of Wawarsing to restore a bridge crossing and improve trail access at Port Ben.
- Restoration of a six-mile stretch of the O&W Rail Trail between Canal Street and Ellenville, north to Foordmore Road in Wawarsing.

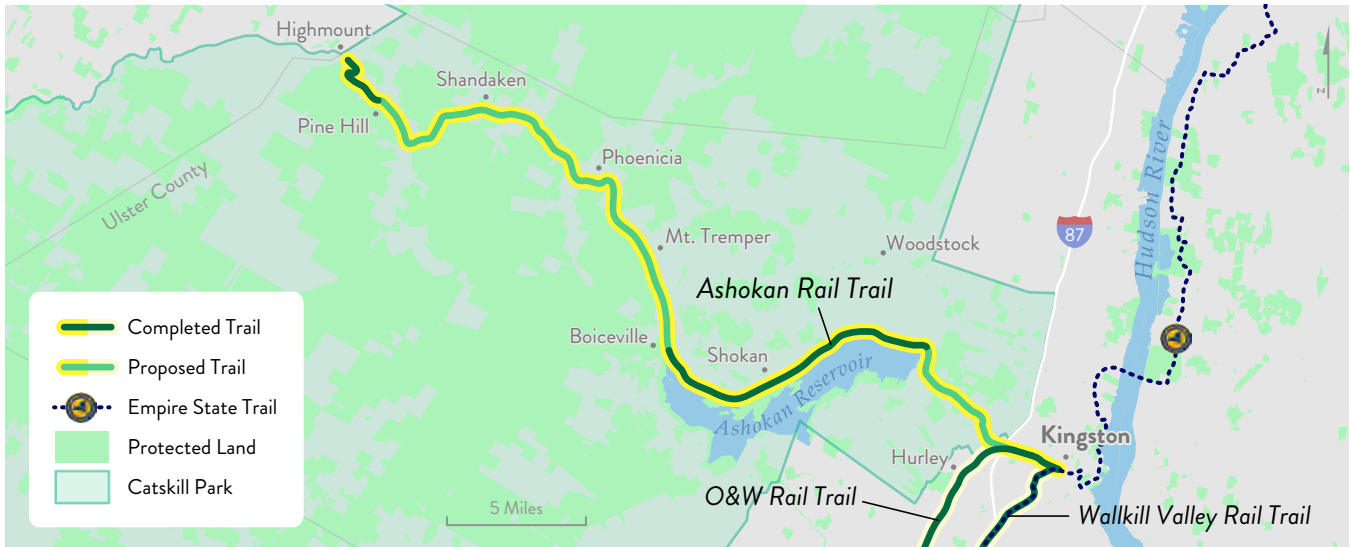
Trail Partners

Ulster County, Sullivan County, Orange County, Cities of Kingston and Port Jervis, Towns of Hurley, Marbletown, Rochester, Wawarsing, and Mamakating, and Villages of Ellenville and Wurtsboro. Sullivan O&W Rail Trail Alliance, New York State Parks, Palisades Interstate Park Commission, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, New York-New Jersey Trail Conference, and the O&W Rail Trail Coalition.

10/2023

Catskill Mountain Rail Trail

including the Ashokan Rail Trail



Envisioned as a multi-use trail, this trail runs the breadth of the Catskill Park, passing by scenic farmland, the Ashokan Reservoir, and numerous Catskill hamlets and villages. Three segments of this trail – the Ashokan Rail Trail, Kingston Point Rail Trail, and Kingston Midtown Linear Park – have been developed for public recreational use.

Location

Ulster County and Catskill Park

Trail Length Vision

39 Miles

Communities to be Served

Kingston, Hurley, Woodstock, Shokan, Boiceville, Mount Tremper, Phoenicia, Shandaken, Big Indian, and Highmount.

Trail Will Connect With

Empire State Trail, Walkkill Valley Rail Trail, O&W Rail Trail, and the Hudson River.

Immediate Funding Goal

- \$750,000 for OSI to develop a design and conduct community engagement for the six-mile Ashokan Rail Trail Phase II that would connect the City of Kingston to the Ashokan Reservoir and the larger Catskill Park.



Roger Rosenbaum for Ulster County

Ashokan Rail Trail

OSI History

In 2015, OSI funded a feasibility study that leveraged more than \$17 million from Ulster County to construct the nearly 12-mile long Ashokan Rail Trail in 2019. The trail extends from Basin Road in West Hurley to Route 28A in Boiceville.

Impact

Since opening in October 2019, the Ashokan Rail Trail has welcomed more than 200,000 visitors each year. The opening of the trail marked the first public access to the land in more than a century.

Current Projects

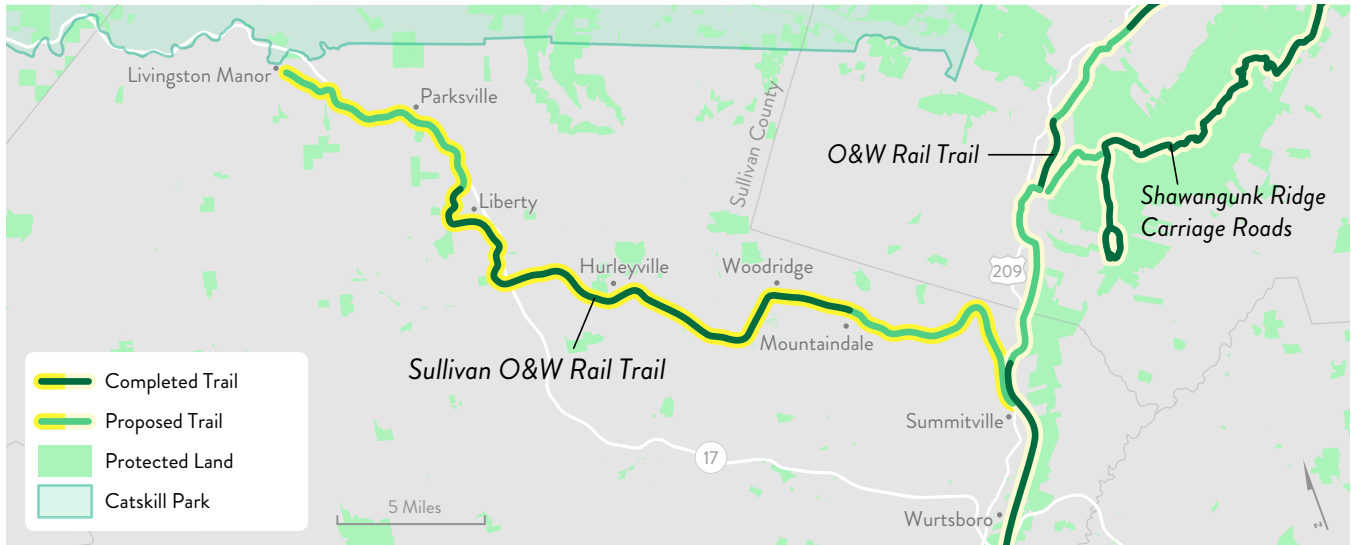
- OSI is actively fundraising to complete an engineering and feasibility study and economic impact assessment for the six-mile Ashokan Rail Trail Phase II that would connect the City of Kingston to the Ashokan Reservoir and the larger Catskill Park.

Trail Partners

City of Kingston, Ulster County, Woodstock Land Conservancy, Catskill Mountainkeeper, Ulster County Trails Advisory Committee, and New York City Department of Environmental Protection.

10/2023

Sullivan O&W Rail Trail



The main line of the former Ontario & Western railroad runs 50 miles across the breadth of Sullivan County, connecting hamlets, towns, villages, parks, preserves and scenic farmland. Numerous segments have been developed as multi-use trails, and the long-term plan is to unify these segments into a nearly continuous trail running from the Village of Wurtsboro to Livingston Manor.

Location

Sullivan County

Trail Length Vision

50 Miles

Communities to be Served

Wurtsboro, Summitville, Mountaintale, Woodridge, Mamakating, Rockland, Fallsburg, Hurleyville, Liberty, Parksville, and Livingston Manor.

Trail Will Connect With

The O&W Rail Trail corridor into Sullivan, Ulster, and Orange counties.

Immediate Funding Goal

- \$400,000 for OSI's efforts to complete targeted acquisition of parcels essential to connectivity.



Brett Cole

Hurleyville Rail Trail

OSI History

In 2014, OSI acquired nine miles of railbed to develop a trail starting near Route 17 near the village of Liberty and running east to Main Street in South Fallsburg. It is now a fully renovated rail trail known as the Hurleyville Rail Trail. OSI also acquired four miles of railbed in Wurtsboro and conveyed it to the Town of Mamakating.

Impact

The rail trail passes through farms, woods, and wetlands, and will eventually connect to the main O&W Rail Trail and D&H Canal near Summitville. The trail has the potential to rejuvenate remote communities and serve as an engine for tourism activity in the locales along its route.

Current Projects

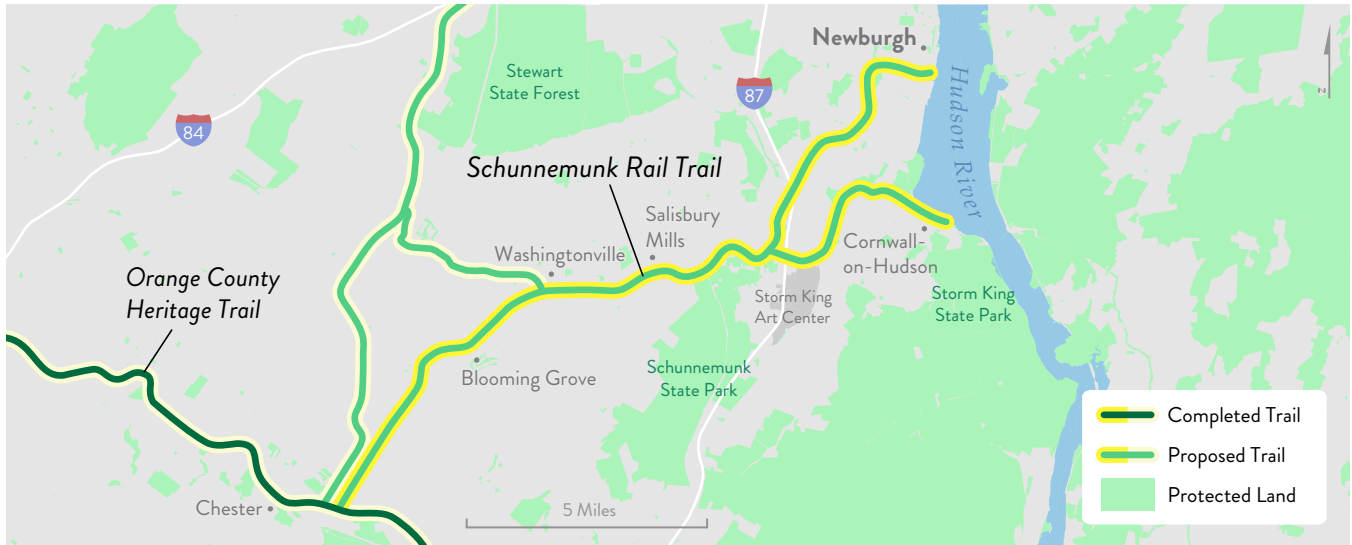
- OSI and local partners are working to protect the rail trail near Livingston Manor and Summitville.

Trail Partners

Sullivan O&W Rail Trail Alliance, Catskill Mountainkeeper, Center for Discovery, Sullivan County, and Towns of Fallsburg, Rockland, and Mamakating.

10/2023

Schunnemunk Rail Trail



The 10-mile long Schunnemunk Rail Trail runs from Chester to Salisbury Mills in Orange County, and crosses and re-crosses the Moodna Creek on six historic bridges. The scenic trail, which starts in the black dirt region of Orange County and connects villages to extensive parkland, is envisioned to extend easterly towards the Hudson River and the City of Newburgh.

Location

Orange County

Trail Length Vision

22 Miles

Communities to be Served

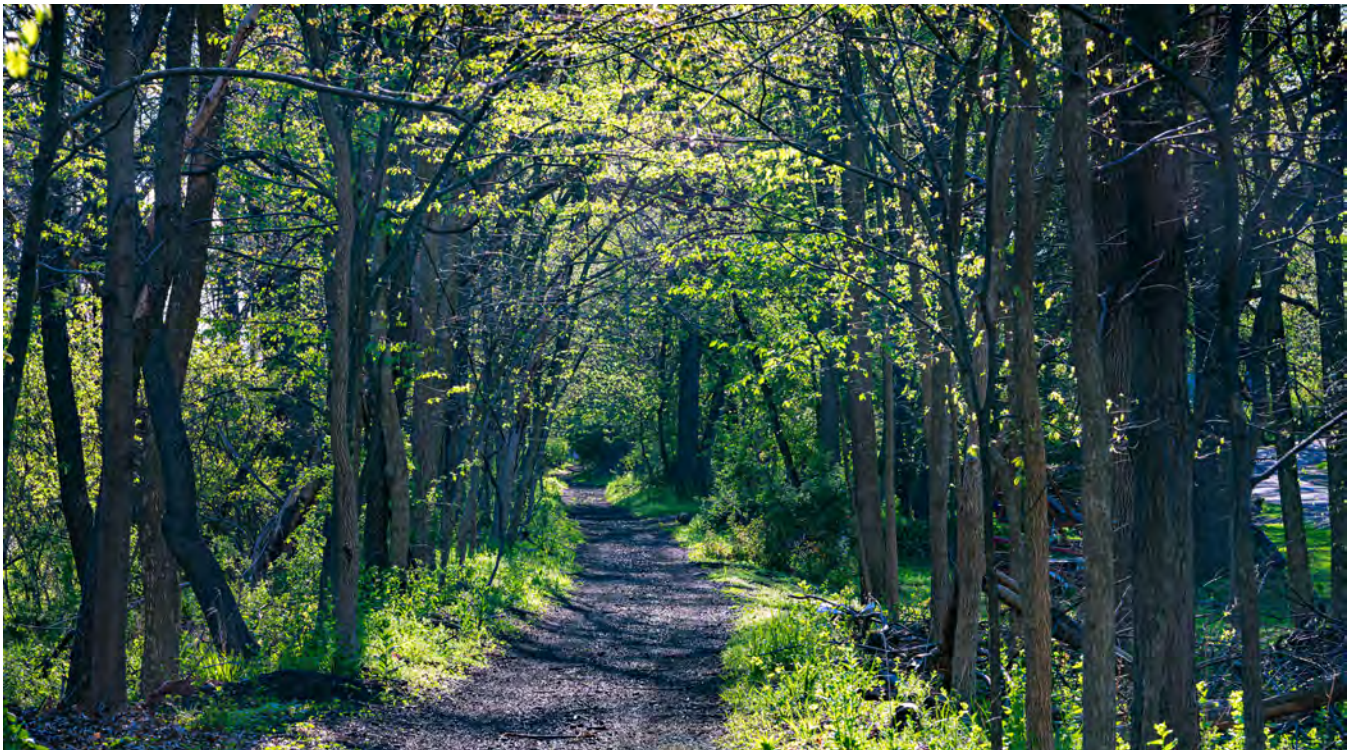
Chester, Washingtonville, Salisbury Mills, Blooming Grove, Cornwall, Cornwall-on-Hudson, and Newburgh.

Trail Will Connect With

Orange County Heritage Trail, Empire State Trail, and the Hudson River.

Immediate Funding Goal

- \$1.5 million for OSI to acquire critical gaps.



Greg Miller

Schunнемunk Rail Trail

OSI History

OSI purchased nearly 10 miles of the former Erie Railroad Line to leverage funding from Orange County for trail development, setting the stage for the future construction of the Schunнемunk Rail Trail. The property starts in the Town of Cornwall at the Moodna Trestle, traverses the towns of Blooming Grove and Chester, and ends at Orange County's Camp LaGuardia.

Impact

This trail will connect the Hudson River in Newburgh and Cornwall-on-Hudson to Schunнемunk State Park, Goosepond Mountain State Park, and the Orange County Heritage Trail, and link to both the Salisbury Mills-Cornwall and Harriman train stations of the MTA Port Jervis Line.

Current Projects

- Extending the Schunнемunk Rail Trail to Storm King Art Center and Salisbury Mills-Cornwall Train Station.

Trail Partners

Orange County, Orange County Land Trust, Moodna Creek Watershed Intermunicipal Council, New York State Parks, and Palisades Interstate Park Commission.

10/2023

Orange County Heritage Trail



The Orange County Heritage Trail is a paved multi-use trail that runs through diverse landscapes, connecting numerous growing towns and villages in Orange County to each other and to open farmland, nature preserves, and historic sites. It is envisioned that this trail will run from the Harriman Train Station, to where it will connect to west of the City of Middletown.

Location

Orange County

Trail Length Vision

35 Miles

Communities to be Served

Harriman, Monroe, Chester, Goshen, the City of Middletown, Otisville, and Westbrookville.

Trail Will Connect With

Schunnemunk Rail Trail, O&W Rail Trail and D&H Canal, Middletown Reservoir Trails, Long Path, Highlands Trail, and the Shawangunk Ridge Trail.

Immediate Funding Goal

- \$1.25 million for OSI to complete the acquisition of critical parcels connecting to the Harriman Train Station and the Schunnemunk Rail Trail.



Bill Amos

Orange County Heritage Trail

OSI History

OSI acquired 10 miles of the Schunnemunk Rail Trail to connect with and expand the Orange County Heritage Trail.

Impact

Critical properties were permanently protected just east of Harriman, at Goosepond Mountain State Park, and along the Shawangunk Ridge.

Current Projects

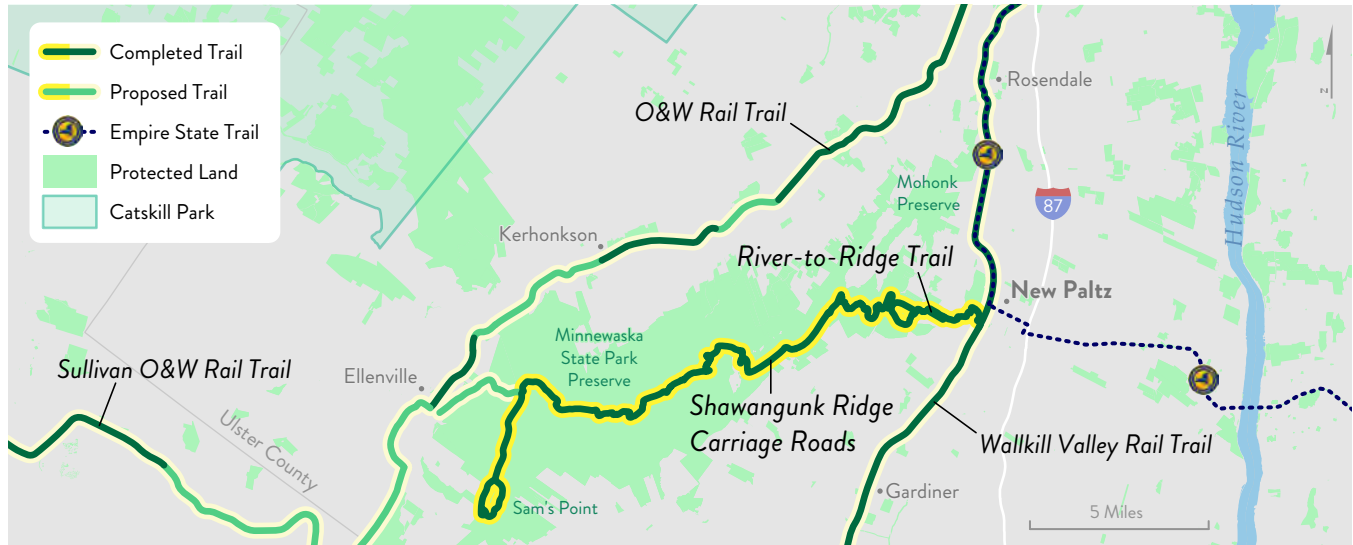
- OSI is working on the Harriman Station connector parcel, a 1.5-mile-long section of disused rail corridor linking the eastern end of the Heritage Trail with Harriman Station.
- Orange County is working to designate Camp LaGuardia as a county park to connect OSI's planned Schunnemunk Rail Trail and the Orange County Heritage Trail.

Trail Partners

Orange County, Orange County Land Trust, and the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference.

10/2023

Shawangunk Ridge Carriage Roads



Minnewaska State Park Preserve and the Mohonk Preserve contain a historic and highly scenic network of shale Victorian-era carriage roads, which are ideal for walking, hiking, biking, and cross-country skiing. These carriage roads total more than 80 miles in length, and span a variety of landscapes on the Shawangunk Ridge as they run from New Paltz to Ellenville.

Location

Ulster County

Trail Length Vision

80 Miles

Communities to be Served

Gateway communities of New Paltz and Ellenville as well as all communities adjacent to the Shawangunk Ridge.

Trail Will Connect With

Empire State Trail, Walkkill Valley Rail Trail, Minnewaska State Park Preserve, Sam's Point, Mohonk Preserve, O&W Rail Trail and D&H Canal, Long Path, and Shawangunk Ridge Trail.

Immediate Funding Goals

- \$50,000 for OSI's completion of engineering and design of the Smiley Carriage Road to Ellenville.
- \$1.25 million for OSI's work to rehabilitate the Lake Awosting Carriage Road.



Peter Nelson

Hamilton Point Carriage Road

OSI History

OSI has protected more than 36,000 acres of land on and around the Shawangunk Ridge, including more than doubling the size of Minnewaska State Park Preserve. Since 2014, OSI has invested more than \$4 million to rebuild more than 15 miles of Minnewaska's carriage roads and raised more than \$3 million to create the Lake Minnewaska Visitor Center, which opened in 2020. In total, OSI has spent north of \$100 million on land acquisition, trails, and visitors center improvements along the Shawangunk Ridge.

River-to-Ridge Trail: On the eastern side of the Shawangunk Ridge, OSI spent \$5 million to protect, construct, and now manage the River-to-Ridge Trail, a six-mile loop trail that offers hikers, cyclists, and cross-country skiers a safe connection between the Village of New Paltz and the Shawangunk Ridge.

Impact

Minnewaska State Park Preserve is visited by more than half a million adventurers each year, while OSI's River-to-Ridge Trail welcomes 200,000 visitors per year. Both sites are well-known for wide, multi-use gravel paths, which make them accessible to the widest range of visitors.

Current Projects

- OSI has begun active planning and design of a 3.3-mile section of the Smiley Carriage Road connecting down to the Village of Ellenville.
- OSI has finished engineering and has applied for state funding to complete the remaining 2.6 miles of the Lake Awosting Carriage Road.

Trail Partners

New York State Parks, Palisades Interstate Park Commission, New York-New Jersey Trail Conference, Mohonk Preserve, Village of New Paltz, and the Town of New Paltz.

10/2023

Schunnamunk Meadows Trail



The Schunnamunk Meadows Trail will meander over gently rolling hills along the Moodna Creek at Schunnamunk State Park. The trail expands recreational access, and creates an accessible, four-season outdoor recreation experience in the western Hudson Highlands to accommodate walkers, runners, hikers, bikers, anglers, cross-country skiers, and snowshoers.

Location

Town of Cornwall, Orange County

Trail Length Vision

2.7 miles total in two phases

Communities to be Served

Cornwall, Salisbury Mills, Washingtonville, Blooming Grove, Chester, Cornwall-on-Hudson, and Newburgh.

Trail Will Connect With

Schunnamunk Rail Trail, Orange County Heritage Trail, the Hudson River, Salisbury Mills-Cornwall Train Station, and Storm King Art Center.

Immediate Funding Goal

- \$400,000 for OSI to complete work to finish the first 1.7 miles of the trail.



Greg Miller

Moodna Viaduct

OSI History

OSI created Schunnemunk State Park in 2003 and has steadily added more of the incredible surrounding lands to the park over the past 20 years. Permanently protected by OSI and transferred to New York State Parks, the northern meadows offer breathtaking views of Schunnemunk Mountain and the picturesque Moodna Viaduct – the second-highest and longest steel railroad bridge east of the Mississippi River.

Impact

The Schunnemunk Meadows Trail will establish a new gateway, destination, and connection into Schunnemunk State Park for park users. The project will open access to the most recent additions to the park, connecting some of the most scenic and treasured open spaces in the western Hudson Highlands. Envisioned as a graceful carriage road, the Meadows Trail will provide a family-friendly, broadly accessible recreation opportunity.

Current Projects

- OSI is leading the initiative to design and build the Schunnemunk Meadows Trail that would provide tremendous recreational opportunities with incredible scenic views.
- OSI is working on land acquisitions to extend the emerging Schunnemunk Rail Trail toward Storm King Art Center, the City of Newburgh, and Village of Cornwall-on-Hudson.
- OSI is entering year five of a 10-year stewardship agreement with New York State Parks and the Palisades Interstate Park Commission (PIPC) to actively manage the lands surrounding Schunnemunk Mountain.
- OSI has completed a new steel frame trail bridge in collaboration with the U.S. Military Academy at West Point (USMA) Cadets in preparation for the future Schunnemunk Meadows Trail.

Trail Partners

New York State Parks, the Palisades Interstate Park Commission, USMA Civil Engineering Cadets, and the Orange County Soil & Water Conservation District.

10/2023