

## **Columbia County Trails Roundtable Notes**

April 9, 2013

- A group is now forming in New Lebanon to work on creating a trail on the former Rutland Line rail corridor, which also extends southwest into Chatham, and north into Rensselaer County
- The Kinderhook Trail Committee is close to a license agreement with National Grid that will enable the committee to begin work on the first segment of that trail.
- The Martin Van Buren Dutch Heritage Farming Trail opened last fall, linking the National Historic Site with the Luykas Van Alen home owned by the Columbia County Historical Society, by way of the actively farmed lands of Roxbury Farm. As farmer Jean-Paul Courtens is from the Netherlands, the trail is said to link four centuries of Dutch farming. The trail is the first segment to be opened of the envisioned Kinderhook-Stuyvesant-Stockport Intermunicipal Trail, which will largely follow the National Grid corridor. The corridor follows the old Albany-Hudson electric trolley line and old car barns can still be seen on Route 9 in Hudson where a National Grid facility stands. There is a feasibility plan for the Rensselaer portion as well. This trail can represent the power of a regional initiative.
- The Harlem Valley Rail Trail Association is fundraising to match a grant through the State Consolidated Funding Application process that will pay for engineering and design drawings for what is called the Northwest 11, referring to an 11-mile segment of the Rail Trail running from Philmont to Chatham. Drawings are completed for development of the Copake Falls to Hillsdale section and are awaiting approval by the State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, as the trail corridor is a state park.
- A Columbia County Mountain Bike Association was formed recently and is talking and/or working with New York State DEC and Columbia Land Conservancy, about trails on some of their properties.
- The Town of Taghkanic is forming a trail committee to work on a trail along the Taghkanic Creek behind their town hall, and also to look at a trail connection from Lake Taghkanic to their business center. They are also interested in establishing bicycle routes in town.
- The Town of Germantown has identified some potential trail routes including an extension of their sidewalk project that would link to the town park and a historic Parsonage, and possible open space lands beyond. There are some issues with unwilling landowners, and they have some questions about including road segments in the trail. The town also applied for funding to establish a new canoe/kayak launch which would become a piece of the Greenway water trail. The Keep Conservation Preserve is a privately owned public trail area in the town.

- Gallatin is working to create interest in a public trail corridor along the Roeliff-Jansen Kill.
- The Kinderhook-Valatie sidewalk link federally funded project is finally moving forward. The link project also ties in to the Kinderhook Trail corridor.
- Columbia County is considering a proposal to turn over ownership of a county-owned park property opposite the Martin Van Buren National Historic Site to the group Friends of Lindenwald. The Friends have been managing the property since 1985 and have constructed trails throughout, which they maintain. Boy Scouts have been involved in many of the projects, and a Boy Scout campground is located there.
- The Pine Plains trails committee is trying to put together a comprehensive plan and is seeking funding for that. They are also working on improvements on other trails in the town.
- The Columbia County Snowdrifters Club is a group organized for snowmobiling. Currently they have permission to use some private farmland in Copake. They are interested in expanding multi-use trail opportunities in the county.
- The Claverack Historic Preservation Advisory Committee is also interested in developing the Boston & Albany rail corridor for public use. One challenge is that some portions of the corridor were sold off in the past to private owners by the county. Another effort includes preservation of a significant historic arch bridge, the Shaw Bridge. The Bridge was originally located on the route of the Albany Post Road and the town wants to re-establish the relationship between the two and develop it as public space. Nearby is another opportunity worthy of preservation and interpretation, a bridge that was the first to be built of concrete in the county. The committee is challenging the opinion of some that the bridge should be torn down and replaced.
- Adam Coppola is the Northeast Regional Director of the International Mountain Bike Association (IMBA) who has relocated to Windham, Greene County, which is becoming a “hot spot” for mountain biking activity. He wants to be a resource to other groups and individuals working to establish new trails.
- The Town of Ancram is interested in establishing signage and a linkage that would connect the Harlem Valley Rail Trail with the Ancram hamlet and recognize Ancram as a rail trail community.