HIGHLANDS WEST
Trail Connectivity Plan

A VISION FOR AN EXEMPLARY PARK AND TRAIL SYSTEM

The Hudson Highlands West region is primed to become a premier destination for accessible outdoor recreation — drawing residents and visitors to an integrated, multi-use park and trail system that celebrates the region’s unique recreational and natural assets.

The Highlands West Trail Connectivity Plan establishes a vision for an interconnected trail system linking more than 93,000 acres of protected land to enhance recreational experiences, safeguard natural resources, and support local, sustainable development within Orange County, NY. This plan recommends 21 conceptual trail and connectivity projects to connect the region’s state parks, long-distance trails, downtowns, destinations, and public transportation centers. Projects range from basic upgrades at existing trails and trailheads to new, innovative trail projects, including ambitious proposals for developing a new multi-use rail trail and constructing a land bridge crossing the New York State Thruway. This plan reflects many years of collaboration with local and regional partners, and serves as the basis for future planning and action to enhance and improve access to the region’s stellar network of parks and protected lands.

Highlands West is one of America's premier scenic and ecological landscapes, offering:

* Dramatic views of the Hudson River Valley
* 93,000+ acres of protected land, including six state parks, that support recreation, wildlife, and watersheds
* 500+ miles of trails, including four long distance trails
* Renowned natural, cultural, and historic sites, including Storm King Art Center, Black Rock Forest, the U.S. Military Academy at West Point
* Easy access from NYC and the region’s vibrant rural and urban communities, including public transportation options
* Ecological resilience that allow animals and plants to adapt to climate change
## PLAN OVERVIEW

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<th>VISION</th>
<th>PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS</th>
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| **SCHUNNEMUNK NORTH** | Establish the Schunnemunk North focus area as a new major access point and destination within the Highlands West trail and park network | • Construct new trails at “Schunnemunk Meadows”  
• Improve access and trailheads at Schunnemunk State Park  
• Establish new trails connecting Schunnemunk State Park to Salisbury Trail Station and Storm King Art Center |
| **SCHUNNEMUNK SOUTH** | Integrate and enhance Legacy Ridge—a new addition to Schunnemunk State Park—to support connectivity between regional trails and wildlife corridors | • Build the state’s first land bridge across I-87  
• Improve sections of the Highlands Trail  
• Establish Legacy Ridge as a new area of Schunnemunk State Park featuring a dramatic ridge-line trail and new connection to the Long Path |
| **HARRIMAN** | Establish the Harriman Train Station as a central access hub and expand recreational trail opportunities within Harriman State Park | • Establish trails from the train station to Harriman State Park, the Appalachian Trail, Heritage Trail, and the Long Path  
• Construct new trails in Harriman State Park |
| **GOOSEPOND** | Integrate Goosepond Mountain State Park and nearby protected lands and trails into the regional trail network by securing existing routes, establishing new connections, and prioritizing additional land conservation | • Improve sections of the Long Path and Highlands Trail  
• Create a new rail trail from the Village of Chester to Schunnemunk State Park  
• Formalize a summit trail at Goosepond Mountain State Park  
• Develop new trails on Sugar Loaf Mountain that connect to the Arts and Crafts Village |
| **STORM KING** | Enhance the Highlands West trail network’s access points, with connections to the Hudson River and beyond | • Improve safety of trailheads within Storm King State Park  
• Create on and off-road improvements to connect the banks of the Hudson River to local parks and other destinations |

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### GOALS FOR AN INTERCONNECTED & SUSTAINABLE LANDSCAPE

- **OUTDOOR RECREATION**
  - Enhance visitor access and experiences

- **LAND CONSERVATION**
  - Protect land for safeguarding habitats and recreational corridors, protecting and improving water quality, promoting climate resiliency, and maintaining carbon-capturing forested lands

- **ECONOMIC PROMOTION**
  - Support local economies and sustainable development opportunities connected to open spaces
Read the full Highlands West Trail Connectivity Plan online.
For questions or comments, email HighlandsWest@osiny.org

The Highlands West Trail Connectivity Plan was spearheaded by the Open Space Institute and facilitated by The LA Group in coordination with the Orange County Land Trust, and the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference, and in consultation with New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and the Palisades Interstate Park Commission.

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