

# Mid-Hudson Valley: Extending the Wallkill Valley Rail Trail

In an exciting partnership, Wallkill Valley Land Trust and Open Space Conservancy acquired 11.5 miles (65 acres) of the former Wallkill Valley Railroad in Ulster County. The August 2009 acquisition has almost doubled the length of the Wallkill Valley Rail Trail which occupies the former railroad bed. The highlight of this purchase is the iconic 940-foot-long railroad trestle, perched 150 feet over the Rondout Creek in Rosendale, originally constructed in 1895. The acquisition of the land was the first step; and now Wallkill Valley Land Trust (WVLT), along with Open Space Conservancy (OSC) and the local communities have quite a bit of work ahead. The project will involve repairing the 114-year-old trestle's steel infrastructure, and installing wooden decks and railings in order to open up the entire trestle for public use. In addition, the trail bed needs erosion control measures, trash removal, brush clearing, regrading, and widening.

Once completed, this project creates a total of almost 24 miles of continuous rail trail, connecting the Town of Gardiner, the Town and Village of New Paltz, the Town of Rosendale, and the Town of Ulster! This linear park will benefit Mid-Hudson Valley residents in many ways. It will fill in the most important "missing link" in one of the best networks of rail trails in the Hudson River Valley, and will encourage new economic



development along the trail. The expansion of the trail will present trail users with a scenic route through many hamlets and towns along the trail plus woodlands, open fields, and farmlands. Residents and tourists alike will be able to bike, walk, run, bird watch, horseback ride and cross country ski while they discover a wide variety of birds, other wildlife and the panoramically beautiful views of the Shawangunk Ridge and the Wallkill River. In short, the restored Rosendale extension of the Wallkill Valley Rail Trail will be a recreational and cultural resource that will provide users with an unparalleled recreational experience.

WVLT and OSI have applied for several large and small grants in order to raise the funding needed to complete the decking across the trestle and open it up to public use, as well as to repair the trail itself. A preliminary engineers' report for the trestle, and several other trail condition evaluations of the rail bed outline the various repair and restoration needs of the 11.5 miles of acquired trail and the trestle. Cost estimates for this work range from \$500,000 to nearly \$1,000,000. As daunting as those estimates seem, we are confident that with the support of the local communities, in-kind donations, grants, collaborative efforts with other organizations, and volunteer dedication, we will be able to achieve the trail and trestle repair and restoration.

The WVLT, OSI, the Town of Rosendale, the Town of Ulster, and the Wallkill Valley Rail Trail Association are working closely to move forward on this project, BUT WE NEED YOUR HELP!

You Can:

- Make a donation for the restoration of the trestle in Rosendale through the WVLT.
- Join the WVLT Town of Rosendale/ Ulster extension of Wallkill Valley Rail Trail email list.

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Wallkill Valley Land Trust is a not-for-profit organization focused on land conservation in Southern Ulster County. Please contact us to make a donation, join our email list, receive our newsletter, and to ask any questions you might have:

(845)255-2761 [info@WallkillValleyLT.org](mailto:info@WallkillValleyLT.org) [www.WallkillValleyLT.org](http://www.WallkillValleyLT.org) and find us on Facebook!

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