

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

	VISION	PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS
SCHUNNEMUNK NORTH	Establish the Schunнемunk North focus area as a new major access point and destination within the Highlands West trail and park network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construct new trails at “Schunнемunk Meadows” • Improve access and trailheads at Schunнемunk State Park • Establish new trails connecting Schunнемunk State Park to Salisbury Trail Station and Storm King Art Center
SCHUNNEMUNK SOUTH	Integrate and enhance Legacy Ridge—a new addition to Schunнемunk State Park—to support connectivity between regional trails and wildlife corridors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build the state’s first land bridge across I-87 • Improve sections of the Highlands Trail • Establish Legacy Ridge as a new area of Schunнемunk 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve sections of the Long Path and Highlands Trail • Create a new rail trail from the Village of Chester to Schunнемunk 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

GOALS FOR AN INTERCONNECTED & SUSTAINABLE LANDSCAPE



OUTDOOR RECREATION

Enhance visitor access and experiences



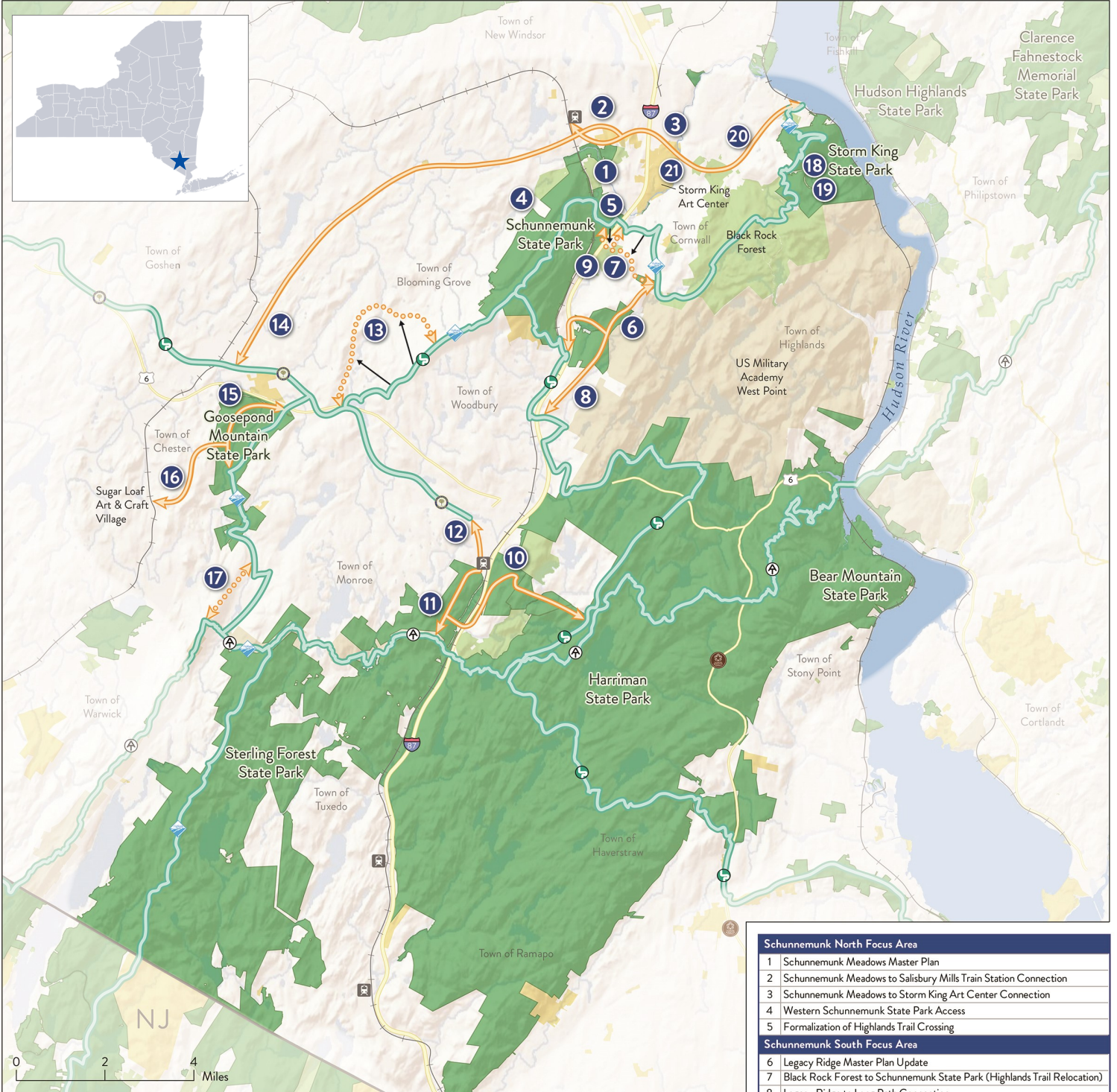
LAND CONSERVATION














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



-  State Land
-  Conservation Easement
-  Private Conservation Land
-  Federal Land
-  Access Improvement
-  New Connection/Improvement
-  Relocation of and/or Alternate Route
-  Appalachian Trail
-  Long Path
-  Highlands Trail
-  Heritage Trail
-  Roads
-  Railroad

Schunnemunk North Focus Area	
1	Schunnemunk Meadows Master Plan
2	Schunnemunk Meadows to Salisbury Mills Train Station Connection
3	Schunnemunk Meadows to Storm King Art Center Connection
4	Western Schunnemunk State Park Access
5	Formalization of Highlands Trail Crossing
Schunnemunk South Focus Area	
6	Legacy Ridge Master Plan Update
7	Black Rock Forest to Schunnemunk State Park (Highlands Trail Relocation)
8	Legacy Ridge to Long Path Connection
9	Highlands Land Bridge
Harriman Focus Area	
10	Harriman Connector Master Plan
11	Harriman Train Station Connection
12	Heritage Trail Extension (to Harriman Train Station)
Goosepond Focus Area	
13	Secure Current Long Path Route
14	Heritage Trail Long Path to Schunnemunk North Connection
15	Goosepond Mountain Summit Trail
16	Goosepond Mountain to Sugarloaf Mountain Connection
17	Reroute Highlands Trail
Storm King Focus Area	
18	Butter Hill Trailhead Improvement Plan
19	Bobcat Trail Trailhead Improvement Plan
20	Storm King Bypass (Boulevard Trail/Mountain Rd. to Black Rock Forest)
21	Hudson Highlands Nature Museum to Storm King Art Center



[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.

Funding for this project was made possible by the Open Space Institute and the Orange County Land Trust.

Photo Credits: Brett Cole (front); Greg Miller (back)