



# KIRKLAND TRAILS NEWSLETTER

Grants | Chenango Canal Trail Kirkland South Section | Nature Photos

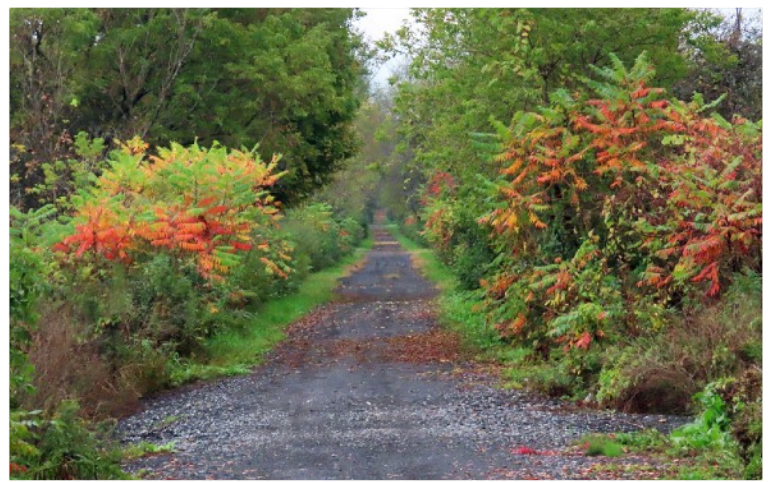
## Kirkland Trails Board of Directors

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## Grant Applications and Funding

This year, Kirkland Trails has applied for grants from two grant-giving agencies. We are very appreciative of the financial support received from the Hamilton College Town-Gown Fund for materials to further develop the Kirkland Trails South section. The Town-Gown Fund also provided support for a professional grant writer, in preparation for possible larger grant requests in the next few years as we begin trail development north of the village.

*Continued on page 3*



*Kirkland Trail South in fall. All photos by Ernest Williams.*

## Kirkland Trails President's letter

The Kirkland Trails Board and other members have been active since the February newsletter and have had some notable successes, both visible and behind the scenes.

Our Chenango Canal Trail South Section from Dugway Road to Deansboro has continued to see a high volume of use over the summer. The Town of Kirkland Highway Department did extensive work (not yet complete) to expand the trailhead parking area on Dugway Road, and we took delivery of a beautiful and unique trailhead kiosk, custom-built by a regional craftsman. We also installed four attractive and durable polywood benches along this section. KT members and students from Ms. Callahan's CCS Environmental Studies class participated in a project to control invasive Japanese Knotweed in the trailhead area by first cutting it and then covering it with tarps. In collaboration with the Kirkland Town Library and Waterville Library, a Story Walk was set up on the trail and drew many young visitors and their families. Most recently New York State Senator Rachel May included the trail in her route for a bike tour of the Town of Kirkland.

Development of the trail between Dugway Road and the Routes 12B/233 intersection has seen a long delay awaiting a survey crucial for guiding the trail construction. The town highway department recently retained a new surveyor, who has previously worked with KT, to complete the survey. We are hopeful that the survey will be finished before year's end, allowing trail construction to proceed.

KT recently received the results of a survey encompassing the Chenango Canal and O & W Railroad Corridor north of the village between McBride Avenue and Robinson Road. We can now accelerate



*Jim Bramley talking to NYS Senator Rachel May by trail kiosk*

planning of this section of the Phase 2 trail and commission property title research in order to obtain the necessary trail easements. We also continue to partner with the Sherrill Brook Community Forest Coalition in an effort to connect our Phase 2 trail with the Town of New Hartford and its Sherrill Brook Park along the same canal and railroad corridor.

Lastly, see the separate article in this newsletter describing recent work done to apply for grant funding for our projects.

Thank you for your continued interest in and support for safe multi-use trails in our community. Stay safe and enjoy the trails!

*Jim Bramley, President*

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## Sherrill Brook Community Forest Coalition

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The Kirkland Trails Board continues to support the Sherrill Brook Community Forest Coalition (SBCFC) and its goal to preserve the privately owned 450-acre forested property adjacent to the Town of New Hartford Sherrill Brook Park for open space and trail use. The property, in both the Towns of New Hartford and Kirkland, has been for sale for over a year. SBCFC over this past year has had to shift its strategy. At first it attempted to purchase the entire property. The owner rejected that purchase offer, so the Coalition made a second offer for a portion of the forested area. In a letter emailed to Kirkland Trail members on July 12, 2021, KT President Jim Bramley explained the reasons for our support and described developments up until the time of SBCFC's second offer. Subsequently the owner also rejected that offer. Two solar farm companies have also expressed interest in the property. One offered to buy the entire 167-acre portion in New Hartford but later backed out citing connectivity issues. The other solar farm company apparently has submitted a purchase option for 50 acres out of the 286 acres in the Town of Kirkland portion of the property. Given these developments, the Coalition is now focused on urging representatives from both towns and the two solar farm companies to work with SBCFC to preserve as much of this beautiful area as possible.

Coalition President Stu Miller has given informational presentations to officials in both towns. First, on July 14<sup>th</sup> he addressed the Kirkland Town Board. About a dozen community members attended this meeting to show their support. Then, on August 23<sup>rd</sup>, he presented the Coalition's mission to the Town of New Hartford Planning Board, whose members seemed very supportive. And, just recently on Monday, October 25<sup>th</sup>, he met with the Town of Kirkland Planning Board to update them on SBCFC's on-going efforts to preserve the forest or at least to ensure accommodations for trails. Supporters were

again in attendance. The Kirkland Planning Board members expressed their support and indicated that they would do what they can to urge trail development but that their influence is limited. For more information about the Coalition and its effort to preserve this scenic area, visit its Facebook Page – Sherrill Brook Community Forest.

*Chip Bassett*

### Grant Applications, continued

Our second grant request is part of the pending Town of Kirkland and Village of Clinton application for a New York State Downtown Revitalization Initiative grant (DRI). If received, the DRI grant would provide our community with ten million dollars to invest in a wide range of significant improvements, including infrastructure upgrades, downtown beautification, support for small businesses and for cultural organizations, and recreational opportunities.

The Kirkland Trails’ portion of the DRI application includes several proposals. A main proposal is for the construction of sidewalks and bike lanes in the downtown area, allowing residents to walk and bike safely to key community destinations. Sidewalks and bike lanes in the village also would provide a link between our existing trail south of the village and anticipated trails north of the village and thus would be an essential portion of a complete Chenango Canal Trail corridor through our community. Other portions of our application include funding for a pedestrian bridge over Sherman Brook and for a small trailhead park in the village. Look for information concerning the status of the full DRI application in the next few months.

We are continually grateful for the wonderful, ongoing support we have received from so many members of our community. Thank you!! KT Board members and core volunteers are committed to our long-term mission of developing trails and bikeways throughout our community. It is exciting to see so many people out using the trail between Dugway and Deansboro. We hope that other parts of the trail system will be just as popular by next summer. Once again, we deeply appreciate everyone’s generous support; this is a true community effort.

*Sharon Williams*



*South trail benches at 100-yard markers, photos by Ernest Williams*

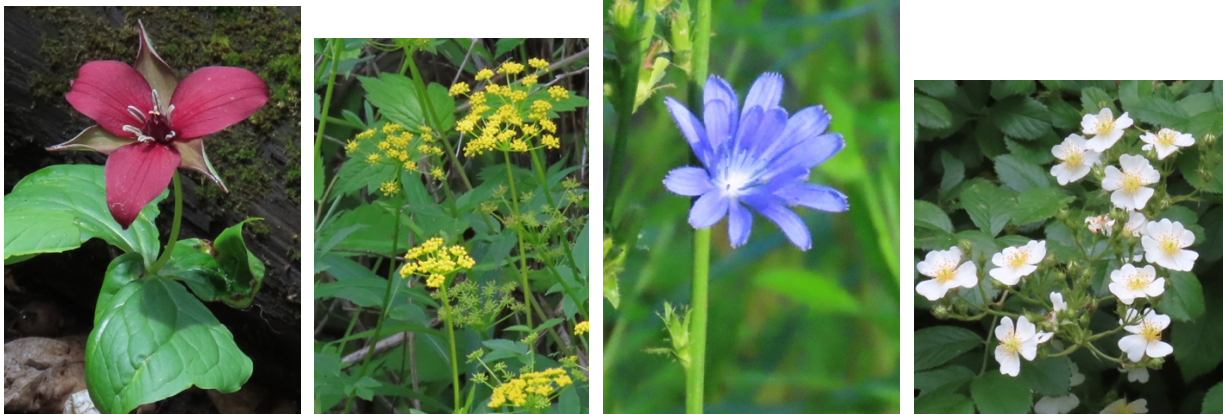
### Nature along the Kirkland Trails in 2021

E.H.Williams 17Oct2021

Visitors to the trail have had a many special sightings this past spring and summer. The most common birds have included song sparrows, yellow warblers, and catbirds (shown here). We've also found evidence of a local fairy community, though the fairies themselves have escaped being seen.



The plants in flower have changed monthly, giving regular turnover in colors; shown here are red trillium, golden Alexanders, chicory, and multiflora rose. In total, more than 150 species of plants have been identified along the trail!!



The pond has been a wonderful place to sit (second bench!) and keep an eye on nearby activity, e.g., beaver, green heron, and wood ducks.



What sightings will 2022 bring? Visit the trail, and we'll find out.....