



# KIRKLAND TRAILS NEWSLETTER

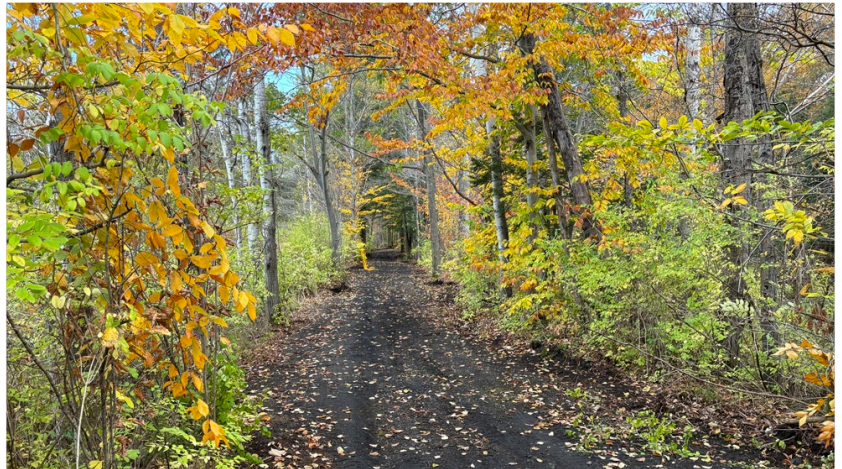
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## Kirkland Trails Board of Directors

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## Charitable Giving to Kirkland Trails

Kirkland Trails is strong today thanks to many generous supporters. To maintain our momentum, please consider making charitable contributions via the website to support trail building in our community. Another simple and tax-efficient way to support our work is thru **Qualified Charitable Distributions**. A donor age 72 and above can contribute previously untaxed assets from an IRA; such a contribution counts toward the donor's required minimum distribution and allows the donor to save on income taxes and to benefit Kirkland Trails. We encourage you to discuss your charitable giving plans with your financial advisor and family. Thank you!



*Kirkland Trail north of Dugway, October 20, 2023. Ernest Williams.*

## Kirkland Trails President's letter

For Kirkland Trails, 2023 has been a year of excitement, high hopes, hard work, anticipation, uncertainty and ... waiting. This applies to all of our core projects – the DRI proposals, construction of our trail north of Dugway Road, obtaining easements for trails north of the village and the proposed Clintonview Farms Solar Project.

The Kirkland Town Highway Department began work in October to develop the one mile railroad corridor between Dugway Road and the Route 12B/233 intersection. Kirkland Trails will use member donations to pay for the construction materials. This section will be a beautiful, accessible addition to our trail once completed, as you can see from the photos included here. We encourage you to check it out soon.

Our DRI involvement is described elsewhere in this newsletter. We are hopeful that both our Sherman Brook Bridge proposal and the Clinton/Kirkland sidewalks initiative will be selected for funding by New York State officials in the final cut. Although their chances seem good, neither is certain



*Yellow Warbler, May 14, 2023.  
Photo by Ernest Williams*

at this point, and continued vocal public support may still help.

The DRI application process has caused us to redouble our efforts to obtain “site control” (easements) across properties crucial for the proposed bridge crossing Sherman Brook and trails planned north of the village. We have made substantial progress in this effort, but it is a slow process.

The proposed solar farm project south of Rte.12B between Toggletown Road on the west and Sherrill Brook Park on the east is still being considered by the Town of Kirkland Planning Board, but it seems likely to be approved. The Kirkland Trails Board remains opposed to the project primarily because of the environmental risks of clear-cutting a mature forest and installing solar panels on a steep hillside adjacent to a stream

which has already experienced serious flooding issues. A public hearing on the project will probably be held in the next few months, and we will

inform you when it is scheduled.

We remain optimistic about the future of recreational trails in the Town of Kirkland and Oneida County. There is tremendous enthusiasm for trails at the national, state, and local levels as evidenced by the on-going development of the nearby Erie Canal Trail and the Mohawk River Trail in Rome. With your continued support we hope to someday connect with those trails and with proposed and existing trails to our south along the Chenango Canal Corridor in Madison and Chenango Counties.

Thank you for your past generous investment in local trails. *Jim Bramley, President*



*Kirkland Trails members look at Sherman Brook, October 25, 2023. Photo by Kathy Collett*

## **Downtown Revitalization Initiative**

The \$10,000,000 New York State Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) grant awarded earlier this year to Clinton/Kirkland is an exciting economic development opportunity for our community. Preparing DRI proposals and following through on requests for more information has taken a lot of Kirkland Trails’ focus this year. In early July, we wrote two DRI proposals: the sidewalks portion of the Village’s Complete Streets proposal and the proposal, submitted under our name, for a pedestrian bridge to cross Sherman Brook.

Expanding sidewalks in our community directly relates to Kirkland Trails’ mission statement: “to develop a network of connected multi-use trails, paths, and bike lanes in the Town of Kirkland, NY, to provide...safe routes for recreation and transportation.” The focus of the DRI sidewalk proposal is to develop and expand well-used community walking routes in the DRI zone by providing sidewalks where most needed. The key sidewalk sections are 1) Meadow St./Franklin Ave. (Meadow St. sidewalks to be done in 2024 by NYSDOT); 2) Elm St./Norton Ave./Kirkland Ave. loop; 3) Chenango Ave North, connecting College St. and Kirkland Ave.; 4) Kirkland Ave./McBride Ave./Taylor Ave.; and 5) McBride Ave. to the Kirkland Life Church parking lot, where a trailhead for Kirkland Trail north can be situated. Note that although the DRI zone is primarily within the village, the zone was expanded to include the proposed sidewalks along Franklin, Elm/Norton and Kirkland/McBride that are in the town, not the village.

Our community has strongly supported adding sidewalks along

well-used community walking routes.

The Town of

Kirkland has demonstrated its support for sidewalks over the past three years of DRI applications. In addition, in 2021, the Town of Kirkland Town Board passed the Complete Streets resolution, committing to streets that are safe for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, people with strollers, and people with disabilities (see <https://www.dot.ny.gov/programs/completestreets> for NYS information). Town residents have also voiced strong support for sidewalks, as demonstrated in the strong support registered by the recent DRI surveys of top priorities for the community. Residents were able to participate in the surveys of DRI priorities both in person at the KAC and on-line, and sidewalks ranked at the top, just below public restrooms in Lumbard Hall.

Kirkland Trails is the official sponsor for a second DRI proposal: to construct a pedestrian bridge over Sherman Brook. With a pedestrian bridge in place, Kirkland Trails will be able to extend our planned recreational trail system north of the village along the abandoned Chenango Canal and railroad corridors, past scenic ponds and wetlands, and eventually connect with trail systems in neighboring communities. We expect the bridge to be located on the northwest (Kirkland Ave.) side of the old Chenango Canal, crossing where



*White Trillium, April 25, 2023.*

*Photo by Ernest Williams*



*Work on the Kirkland Trail north of the Dugway trailhead, 10/19/2023. Photo by Jim Bramley*

the National Grid power lines cross the brook adjacent to the Kirkland Life Church property. The precise siting of the bridge will depend on discussions with National Grid and the church as well as a bridge engineering study. The original DRI bridge cost estimate of \$450,000 has been revised to \$305,000 after consultation with a bridge engineering sub-consultant made available to us by the DRI staff.

The DRI grant is an amazing opportunity for the Clinton/Kirkland community, and Kirkland Trails is happy to be part of the effort to make our community a healthier and safer place to live.

*Sharon Williams*

## Volunteer Opportunities

Anyone who is interested in joining members of the Kirkland Trails board in seasonal trail cleanup activities, please contact [kirklandnytrails@gmail.com](mailto:kirklandnytrails@gmail.com) for more information about possible opportunities.



*Walking on Kirkland Trail Phase 1 North, October 20, 2023. Photo by Ernest Williams*

*Updated map of Kirkland Trails' Phase 2 plans, courtesy of Rick Reichert, Oneida County Planning Department*

