



KIRKLAND TRAILS NEWSLETTER

New Trail Open | Tap Grant | Nature Photos

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Schreve, Ann Silversmith,
Ernest Williams

Call for Trail Stewards for 2025

In 2024, fourteen Kirkland Trails members volunteered to be trail stewards for the two-mile trail section south of Dugway Rd. The stewards' responsibility involved walking the trail for an assigned week or two, trimming back protruding vegetation, and reporting any more serious concerns, such as fallen trees.

If you'd like to volunteer for a week or two in 2025, please email me at swilliam@hamilton.edu. Thank you! Sharon Williams



Kirkland Trails new section, 10/1/2024

Kirkland Trails President's Comments

Kirkland Trails has much to be thankful for this year as we approach Thanksgiving. Foremost is our community support. We thank everyone who has answered the call when we sought help. Your support came in various forms.

Your contributions pay for surveys, legal help, office supplies, etc. And this year your contributions formed the downpayment (aka – local share) for a \$1.5 million federal grant. We still need more to cover the 20% local share, but we have enough, about one-half, to move forward with the development of the two-mile section of the Kirkland Trail extending north from the Village of Clinton. (See *\$1.5 Million TAP Grant Project* on page 4 of this newsletter.)

Besides financial support, Kirkland Trails sought your active citizen participation when we advocated for trails, sidewalks and the preservation of a local forest. Many of you attended the two Town of Kirkland Planning Board public hearings to support our opposition to clear-cutting 70 acres of forest in the flood prone Mud Creek watershed. Many again came to a Town of Kirkland

Board meeting in support of the DRI funded sidewalks. We thank you for answering the call. It makes a difference. Our town officials are our neighbors - they respond to us. The Planning Board has required the solar farm company to complete a much more exhaustive environmental study. And though the Town Board has not yet issued a decision regarding the DRI funded sidewalks, bets are some sidewalks are coming – a first for our town in a long time.

Fourteen of our members answered the call by volunteering this year to be Trail Stewards. Thank you for walking the Kirkland Trail South, clearing away brush and reporting any hazards. (See the *Call for Trail Stewards for 2025* on page 1 of this newsletter.)

Our town, county, and state governments favor trail development. For that, we are profoundly thankful. Some of this government support is the result of overwhelming community support for trails, but our current political leaders from our Town Supervisor to County Executive, to our Governor also see the intrinsic value of trails. This support is critical to developing new trails. It’s the town that adopts these trails, assumes ownership, and maintains them. It’s the county and state governments that provide technical assistance, mapping, and financing.

Personally, I wish to thank Kirkland Trails’ two former presidents, Sharon Williams and Jim Bramley, as well as our treasurer, Tom Grenier, and other board members for their dedication to our mission. Sharon got us started and keeps us going; and Jim continues to move us forward. Our board members and core volunteers bring the many skills and critical thinking essential to building our organization. Our treasurer, Tom Grenier, after many years managing our finances, is moving on, so if you know numbers, spreadsheets and accounting, plus are passionate about trails, think about joining us.

Happy Trails!

Chip Bassett, President

Celebration for new one-mile section of Kirkland Trail South



On October 1, a ribbon-cutting event was held to celebrate the completion of the final one-mile trail section of Kirkland Trail South, extending from the Dugway Rd. trailhead northward to Rte. 12B. This new section joins the existing two-mile trail extending along the old O&W Railroad corridor

from Dugway Rd. south to Rte. 315 in Deansboro. In Deansboro, the trail connects to the Town of Marshall’s three-mile Towpath Trail, extending southward to Oriskany Falls. In total, our community now has a full six-mile section of safe, scenic off-road trail for walkers, runners, bikers, nature-lovers, skiers, and snowshoers.



Mother Nature provided a glorious early fall day, and many supporters from our community and beyond came to celebrate the event. Speakers included Chip Bassett, President of Kirkland Trails; Peter Rayhill, NYS Supreme Court and former Oneida County Attorney; and Anthony Picente, Oneida County Executive. Huge thanks are due to Oneida County Executive Anthony Picente. The county provided the funds for the materials for the final section. The completion of the three-mile Kirkland Trail South is a result of the multi-year commitment and hard work of the employees of the Town of Kirkland Highway Department, especially Superintendent Jon Scott, and the support of the Town of Kirkland Supervisor, Bob Meelan.

Photos below show the heavily vegetated trail as it looked in 2018, the recent trail work, the completed trail, and the scene at the celebration (above and below). The finished Kirkland Trail South awaits your visit. Please come and enjoy!
Sharon Williams



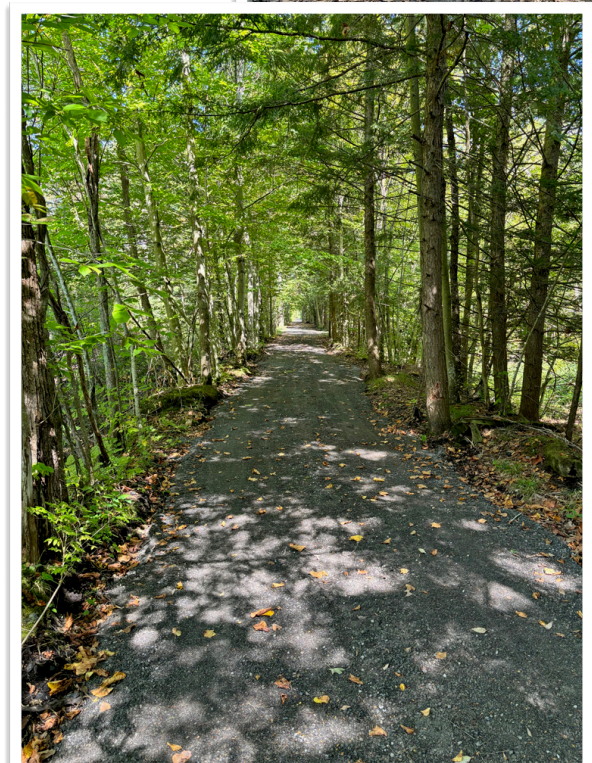
KT Phase 1N in 2018



Recent work on trail



Chip Bassett, Peter Rayhill, Anthony Picente, Brian Miller, and Bob Meelan



\$1.5 Million TAP Grant Project

The New York State Department of Transportation (DOT) has awarded a \$1.5 million Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Grant to the Town of Kirkland, working in partnership with Kirkland Trails, to begin development of our Phase 2 trail. This project will include two miles of multi-use trail north of the Village of Clinton, a pedestrian bridge across Sherman Brook, and two trailheads with parking.

The trail will start at a trailhead adjacent to the parking lot on the Kirkland Life Church property on Kirkland Avenue and connect to the bridge at the back of the property, behind Brownie Tent & Awning and the National Grid substation. On the north side of the brook, the trail will initially run on the Chenango Canal towpath, then follow the former O & W Railroad (“Rome Branch”) corridor parallel to Kirkland Avenue to Robinson Road. The trail will detour around the Indium Corporation Robinson Road campus and then rejoin the railroad corridor until it terminates at a trailhead on Route 5 in Kirkland, at the intersection with Limberlost Road.

Private contractors will be used to construct the trailheads and bridge and the sections of trail on the church property, the canal towpath, and Robinson Road detour. The total cost will be \$1.87 million, with the grant covering \$1.5 million (80%) and Kirkland Trails and other local sources providing the remaining \$374,000 (20%). The trail sections along the intact railroad corridor will be constructed by the Town of Kirkland Highway

Department. The long-term ownership and maintenance of the trail will be assumed by the Town of Kirkland. Legal agreements between New York State and the Town of Kirkland and between the Town and C&S Companies, the lead engineering consultant, are expected to be signed by the end of 2024. In 2025, acquisition of easements, engineering and environmental studies, design work and permitting will take place. In 2026, construction contracts will be finalized and construction will hopefully be completed by the end of the year.

Kirkland Trails has already raised about half of the required 20% local funding match largely through the Founders’ Campaign and annual appeals, but we

need to raise about \$200,000 MORE to meet our local share for

this grant. We are working on further fundraising efforts. We are also pursuing trail easements from affected property owners.

This project will achieve the goals of both Kirkland Trails and the TAP Grant program in providing a safe, environmentally friendly off-road transportation route for walking, running and biking. Kirkland Trails, along with trail advocacy groups in Chenango and Madison counties, envisions that this trail section will ultimately be part of a rail-trail extending from Binghamton to Utica and Rome, where it will connect with the Erie Canal Trail.



Simulation of bridge over Sherman Brook

This exciting milestone in Kirkland Trails’ progress would not be possible without the support and encouragement of our donors and of state and town government officials. We would particularly like to acknowledge Sharon Heyboer of the NYS DOT Region 2 Office, Town of Kirkland Supervisor Bob Meelan and Town Highway Superintendent Jon Scott.

Jim Bramley

Thank You

At this transition moment for Kirkland Trails, it’s time to say thank you to the many people and organizations that have contributed so much to help us succeed over the past six years:

Key board members and supporters:

- | | | |
|----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| Paula Balch | Joe Gale | Karen Sammon and Will |
| Chip Bassett | Corrine Gates | Cardamone |
| Jim Bramley | Gerry Gogel | Jim Schreve |
| Chris Ceely | Tom Grenier | Sandy Scofield |
| Kathy Collett | Bev Hayford | Ann Silversmith |
| Chad Davis | Nick Heintz | Matt VanSlyke |
| Ted Earl | George Kuckel | Dwight Vicks |
| William Elliot | Pinny Kuckel | Ernest Williams |
| Jim Frederick | Colleen Pellman | Sharon Williams |
| Angelo Gaetano | | Cindy Wirene |

And thank you to everyone’s spouses, partners and friends for their on-going support!

Organizations and agencies providing key support:

- Clinton Kirkland Improvement Corporation, Mike Debraggio, President
- Hamilton College Town-Gown Fund
- Kirkland Life Church, Rev. John Pelkey
- New York State Dept. of Transportation, Sharon Heyboer, Senior Transportation Analyst
- Oneida County, Anthony Picente, County Executive
- Oneida County, Peter Rayhill, NYS Supreme Court and former County Attorney
- Oneida County Planning Dept., Jeff Quackenbush, Deputy Commissioner and Rick Reichert, GIS Coordinator
- The Clinton Garden Club, Sharon Rippey, President
- The Community Foundation, Nick Grimmer, Director of Giving Strategies
- The Town of Kirkland, Bob Meelan, Supervisor
- The Town of Kirkland Highway Dept., Jon Scott, Superintendent

Finally, heartfelt thanks to the many community members and beyond who have thoughtfully supported our work over the past six years. We couldn’t have accomplished what we have without your support. Thank you!

October, 2024

Photographs by Kathy Collett, Ernest Williams, Sharon Williams