



KIRKLAND TRAILS NEWSLETTER

Community | 12B Bridge Project | Tap Grant | Nature Photos

Kirkland Trails Board of Directors

Chip Bassett, President
Jim Bramley, Vice Pres.
Tom Owens, Treasurer
Sharon Williams, Secretary
Chris Ceely
Kathy Collett
Joe Gale
Nicholas Heintz
Cindy Wirene
Volunteers: Paula Balch,
Jim Frederick, Corrine
Gates, Gerry Gogel, Jim
Schreve, Ann Silversmith,
Ernest Williams



Recently Reconditioned Kirkland Trails South Section

President's Message: Kirkland Trails Leads the Charge, but Our Community and Local Government Ensure Success

In 2018 during the formation of Kirkland Trails, I discovered that the idea of building a trail along the Chenango Canal and O&W Railroad corridor is very popular. I walked around my neighborhood knocking on doors with a petition in support of the trail. Of the thirty homes I visited, just one resident refused to sign it; all the others enthusiastically signed the petition. Over the last seven years, this idea has sparked a flood of community support, and this has turned heads amongst our state and local government leaders. They have responded in a big way with both financial support and direct assistance. Kirkland Trails has been making the case about the benefits of the trail; our community has embraced the idea; and now, we are getting the government support we need to make this trail a reality.

Here's a partial list of these supports by our state and local governments:



*Pokeweed on Kirkland Trail, 19
Oct., 2025*

- In 2018, Oneida County Legislator Chad Davis helped us document that New York State owns the O&W Railroad corridor between NYS Route 315 and Route 12B – the Kirkland Trails South Section.
- In 2019, Town of Kirkland leased the Kirkland Trails South Section corridor from New York State for the Kirkland Trail.
- In 2024, Oneida County appropriated \$43,000 of NYS Department of Environmental Conservation funds to Kirkland Trails for the materials to completely resurface the northern one-mile portion of the Kirkland Trails South Section between Dugway Road and NYS Route 12B.
- In 2024, the Town of Kirkland Highway Department transformed the northern portion of the Kirkland Trails South Section from a narrow, wet, rutted trail into an inviting multi-use trail using the materials Oneida County funded.
- In 2024, New York State Department of Transportation awarded the Town of Kirkland a \$1.5 million TAP Grant to start development of the North Section Trail, which will start at Kirkland Life Church on Kirkland Avenue, cross Sherman Brook on a new bridge, proceed along the old Chenango Canal, then follow the abandoned Rome Branch of the O&W Railroad across Robinson Road up to NYS Route 5 at its intersection with Limberlost Road. (See the article on page 4 updating this development.)
- In 2024, Town of Kirkland and Kirkland Trails each contributed \$200,000 to meet the local match required for the North Section Trail TAP Grant.
- In 2024, the Town of Kirkland Highway Department agreed to help complete the work along the North Section Trail by building the portions of trail situated on the intact railroad embankment.
- In 2024, Oneida County awarded Kirkland Trails a \$73,000 ARPA Grant to purchase materials needed by the Town Highway Department to resurface the North Section Trail that's along the railroad corridor. ***We need to raise an estimated \$75,000 additional monies for these surface materials.***
- In 2025, both NYS DOT and NYS Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation pledged to extend the South Section Trail from our trailhead at NYS Route 12B over the Oriskany Creek across a new highway bridge with a dedicated and protected trail lane to Furnace Street. (See the article on page 3 describing this project.)
- In 2025, the Village of Clinton Board passed a resolution to sponsor a second possible NYS DOT TAP Grant to build trail from the intersection of Chenango Avenue and Kirkland Avenue north across McBride Avenue to the planned bridge over Sherman Brook connecting the village center and Clinton School to the planned North Section Trail. ***To meet the local share for this TAP Grant, we need to raise approximately \$150,000.***



Virginia creeper 29 Sept. 2025



Woolly Bear 19 Oct. 2025

- In 2025, the Town of Kirkland Highway Department transformed the South Section Trail between Deansboro and Dugway Road from a rough, rutted and sometimes wet trail to a wider, smoother and drier trail, much better suited for multi-use. Additional work needs to be done at the trailhead, where the vegetation has been cleared. ***To resurface this trail, we need to raise approximately \$80,000.***

As you can see, the list of government support is long, and the contributions have been generous. There have been other contributors. Hamilton College has also been a major benefactor. In fact, without the early support from the Town-

Gown Fund, Kirkland Trails would have had difficulty getting off the ground. More recently, Hamilton College students have been volunteering to clear portions of the overgrown North Section railroad corridor.

None of this would have been possible without the enthusiastic and continuous support of our community. Thank you to our annual contributors - large and small. Kirkland Trails is a volunteer organization, so all donations go toward trail development. Your driving force of support will bring us more trails.

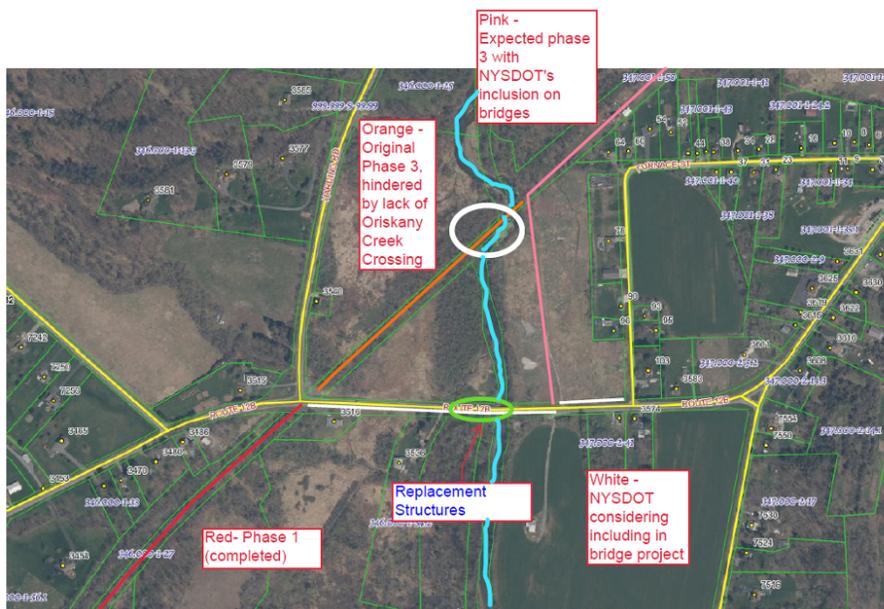
Happy Trails!

Chip Bassett, President



Inky cap 29 Sept. 2025

NYS DOT/KT Route 12B Oriskany Creek Bridge Project



The New York State Department of Transportation (DOT) plans to replace the Route 12B Oriskany Creek bridge and extend the Kirkland Trails South Section from the current trailhead at the intersection of Route 12B and Route 233 (Harding Road) across the bridge to Furnace Street. The adjacent DOT map outlines the plan. The red line on the lower left corner of the map shows the existing north end of the Kirkland Trails South Section. This trail ends at Route 12B across from Route 233. Ideally, the trail would continue along the straight orange line, which marks the old O&W

Railroad corridor. However, it deadends at Oriskany Creek. The original railroad bridge is long gone, and replacing it with a trail bridge would be prohibitively expensive – between \$1 and \$2 million. As an alternative, Kirkland Trail members wondered if a trail bridge could somehow piggy back on the Route 12B highway bridge over Oriskany Creek. The highway bridge (See the green oval.) is just 300 yards east of the Kirkland Trails trailhead. In early 2024, Kirkland Trails learned that DOT planned to replace the bridge. Kirkland Trails representatives contacted DOT, and soon a meeting with DOT bridge engineers was arranged. They considered the request and agreed to add a pedestrian lane onto the bridge using financing from a designated DOT sustainable projects fund.

They propose to build a trail along the south side of Route 12B to the bridge (See the white line on the map). The trail will cross the bridge along a separated pedestrian/bike lane protected from traffic and then continue another 75 yards to the driveway for the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation fishing access parking lot. The trail will then cross to the north side of Route 12B and continue along the highway to Furnace Street. Whereas DOT is covering the cost of the bridge, the NYS Department of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation is contributing the funding for the trail construction along Route 12B. The pink line on the map is misleading. Eventually, Kirkland trails would like the trail to get back to the O&W railroad corridor and proceed into the Village of Clinton. However, there currently is no clear route.

This construction project accomplishes several things. It solves the problem of crossing the Oriskany Creek, brings the trail ever closer to the Village of Clinton, and furthers our goal of developing a continuous linear multi-use trail through the Town of Kirkland. It also advances and enhances our working relationship with state and local governments. These relationships are essential if Kirkland Trails is to continue developing trails for our community.

Chip Bassett

Kirkland Trails TAP Grant Project

Kirkland Trails is excited to begin development of its long anticipated North Section Trails (often referred to as Phase 2) which will eventually extend from the northern boundary of the Village of Clinton to the northern boundary of the Town of Kirkland. These trails will utilize the Chenango Canal Corridor and two branches of the abandoned O&W Railroad - the Rome Branch, which passes through Clark Mills en route to Rome, and the Utica Branch, which parallels Route 12B into New Hartford and Utica.



Meadowhawk, band-winged



Goose 29 Sept. 2025

The initial trail project, “The TAP Project” will start at a trailhead on the Kirkland Life Church property on Kirkland Avenue and cross the property to Sherman Brook, where a new bridge will be constructed. After crossing the brook, the trail will run along the abandoned Chenango Canal corridor until it reaches the Rome Branch railroad corridor. The trail will then follow the Rome Branch to Robinson Road, detour around the Indium Corporation plant, and rejoin the railroad corridor before ending at a trailhead by the intersection of Route 5 and Limberlost Rd.

The TAP Project will be largely financed by a \$1.5 million federal TAP Grant awarded to the Town of Kirkland by the NYS DOT. Kirkland Trails helped write the grant

application and provided half of the required 20% (\$374,000)

“local match” funds. The other half has been generously appropriated by the Town of Kirkland. The grant will fund the most difficult engineering portions of the project, including the bridge, the detour around Indium Corporation and the sections of trail on the Kirkland Life Church property and the canal corridor. The sections to be built on intact railroad corridor will be developed by the Town of Kirkland Highway Department using materials purchased with Kirkland Trails funds.



New England Aster

The TAP Project is currently in the design, engineering, permitting and right of way acquisition phase, which will extend through much of 2026. Construction contracts will be finalized in late 2026 and trail construction is expected to start in the first quarter of 2027. The greatest challenge so far has been in delineating the best route from both a Right of Way (ROW) acquisition and an engineering perspective for those sections not on the railroad corridor. KT is grateful for the assistance of local attorney Ted Earl in unraveling the mysteries of property titles and rights of way and for the enthusiastic cooperation of property owners along the trail route. Hamilton College has generously agreed to allow a portion of the trail ROW to “piggyback” on its waterline ROW along the canal corridor and has provided student volunteers to clear brush from an overgrown section of the railroad corridor. KT also thanks, as always, the Town of Kirkland, the NYS DOT and you, our members, for the tremendous support of recreational trail development in the town.

Jim Bramley

Reconditioned trail photo by Jim Bramley; nature photos by Ernest Williams