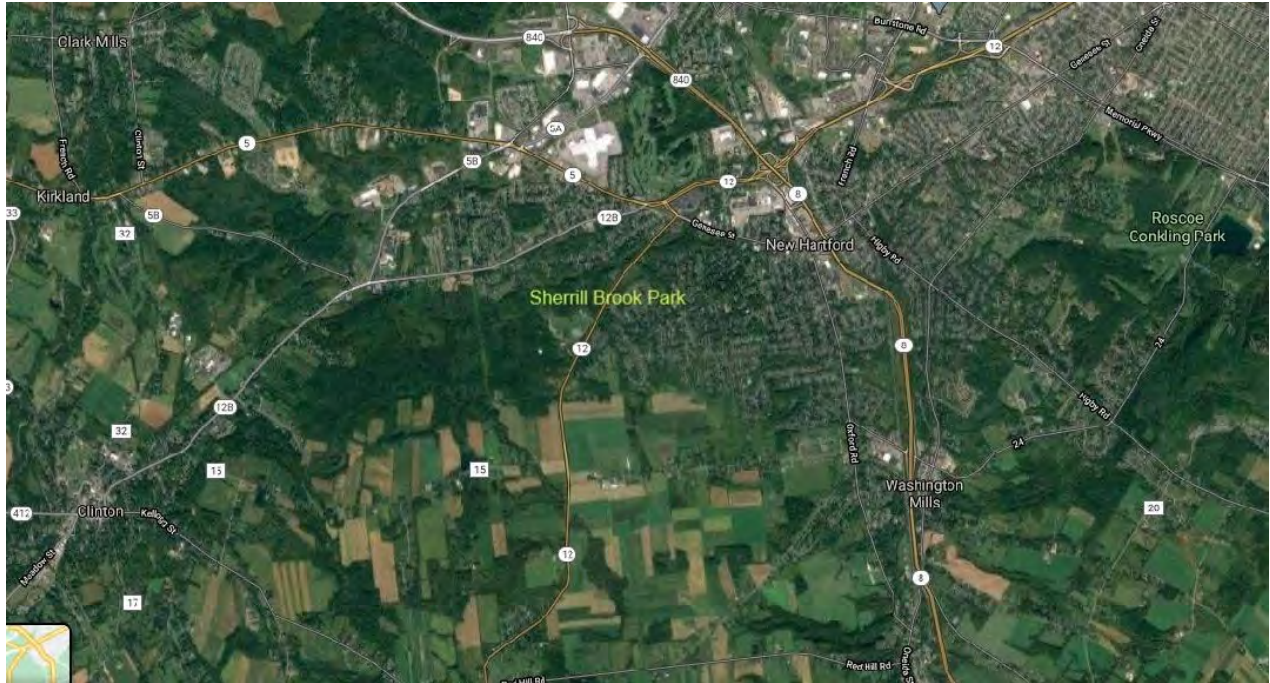
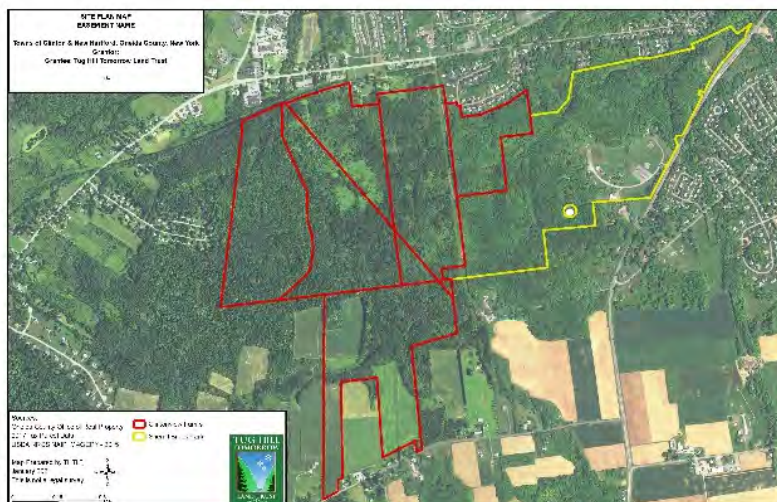


Sherrill Brook Community Forest Case Statement

If you Google New Hartford, NY, only one large green patch of forest remains in the town. Many people think it is Sherrill Brook Park, but most of this beautiful, wooded space is privately owned and it is currently on the verge of being developed...



Risk – One of the last large undeveloped, forested properties in the Towns of New Hartford and Kirkland is at risk to being permanently lost as an open space and recreational resource for the community. The 400-acre piece, directly adjacent to the Sherrill Brook Town Park is for sale, and most likely will be sold for development. This property is mainly forested with several deep gorges. An informal network of trails is used by hikers, mountain bikers, snowshoers and cross-country skiers. The current landowner graciously allows the property to be used for these non-motorized recreational activities, this will most likely not be the case if it is sold for development.



Sherrill Brook Community Forest Coalition

Goal – The goal of this project is to acquire 400 acres of this property for the purpose of preservation, conservation and public recreation. This primarily forested open space is directly adjacent to Sherrill



Brook Park in New Hartford, NY and Kirkland, NY.

The current informal trail system on the property will be improved to include a primary trail connecting the towns of Kirkland and New Hartford, and secondary recreational trails throughout the forest. The property is a tremendous asset for the Mohawk Valley community, and as we all have experienced with COVID, people see that getting outside is

critical to their health and wellbeing. This has resulted in a surge of interest in finding trails, and the realization that we need to create more trails, close to home.

Description – The 450-acre property for sale is owned by Clintonview Farms LLC and comprises five large connected parcels. Currently there is a purchase option for 50 acres of the property for a potential solar farm, leaving 400 acres available for purchase. Most of the property is open space and forested with a portion used for agriculture. The property is adjacent to the existing Town of New Hartford, NY property which includes the Sherrill Brook Town Park. On the north the property runs parallel to Route 12B and includes potential access points. On the south the property has two access points on Brimfield Street in the town of Kirkland. Tributaries to Mud Creek with deep wild gorges traverse this picturesque woodland. Sherrill Brook Park is a popular community park with a limited forest trail system. It is used by a diverse range of community members throughout the year for hiking, biking, cross country skiing and enjoyment of its natural setting so close to home. People using the park frequently travel beyond the park boundary to this private property which the landowner has informally permitted, over many years.



Benefits –

- Provide a significant community forest preserve with close proximity to heavily developed and populated towns of New Hartford, Kirkland, Whitestown and the city of Utica.
- Provide an extensive trail system for biking, hiking, cross country skiing and other outdoor recreational activities.
- Provide a trail between the towns of New Hartford and Clinton with anticipated connection to other trails within Oneida County and the Erie Canal Trail.
- Provide the land for extension of Sherrill Brook Park to preserve and protect open spaces that are currently informally used by members of the community.
- Contribute and protect local woodlands to help reduce the impact of climate change.
- Protect feeder tributaries which flow into the Sauquoit Creek trout stream watershed.

Sherrill Brook Community Forest Coalition

Budget Requirements – TBD

Pre-acquisition – surveys, appraisal, site planning, grant preparation,

Acquisition – asking price \$1,600,000

Trail development and maintenance – Phase 1 - \$100,000

Annual maintenance, insurance, and taxes?

Fund Raising

Potential Sources-

Community Forest Grant – Federal \$600,000 (THTLT)

Additional grantsA

Individual support and community organizations

Local governments

State of New York

Sale or lease of the agricultural parcel



Process (Some concurrent)

1. Prepare a case statement.
2. Enlist support of local community members, organizations, and governments.
3. Initiate discussion with current landowner to provide an option to purchase the property.
4. Site review, survey, appraisal, and planning
5. Raise the necessary funds for the acquisition of all or some of the property via pledges, grants and donations and government support.
6. Acquire the property.
7. Develop the plans for initial trail system.
8. Create formal permanent conservation protections.
9. Trail and trail access development.
10. Donate a portion of the property to the towns of New Hartford and Kirkland for park extension.
11. Determine best use of existing farmland on the property for continued funding.

Current Participating Organizations –

Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust – Lead role

Kirkland Trails

Adirondack Foothills Trail Alliance

Tramp and Trail Club

GE Ski Club

Mohawk Valley Bike Club

Sherrill Brook Community Forest Coalition

Here are some ways to support the project:

- Join the coalition as an active participant.
- Express your support to the towns, county, and local organizations and encourage them to work with the coalition and allocate financial resources to help make it happen.
- Get the word out to your friends and neighbors to help support the effort.
- Participate in one of the anticipated community awareness activities as they happen.
- Fund raising activities are just getting started. If you are interested, THTLT can give more insight on the ways to pledge support based on the success of the project.

Contacts for more information-

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