

Table of Contents

Sections		Maps & Graphics	
1 Introduction	7	Trail Concept	6-7
1.1 Executive Summary	8		
1.2 Conserved Lands	11	Conserved Lands	10
2 Existing Conditions	13	Conserved Lands	12-13
2.1 Access & Connections	15	Issues	15
2.2 Trail Conditions	16		
2.3 Educational Programing	17		
2.4 Corridor Ecology	18		
2.5 Economic Development	19	Potential Redevelopment Sites	19
2 Recommendations	21	Trail Route	20-21
3.1 Recommended Trail Route	23	Trail Route	23
3.1.1 Biking	24	Ose Road Crossing & BCSF Entrance	24
3.1.2 Paddling	25	Hiking Trail Detail	27
3.1.3 Hiking	26	Trail Access	29
3.2 Access Improvements	29		
3.3 Wayfinding & Branding	30		
3.4 Environmental Protection	31		
3.5 Land Conservation	32		
3.6 Educational Programing	33		
3.7 Revitalize Properties	34		
3.8 Develop Businesses	35		
3.9 Promotion & Outreach	36		
3.10 Summary	37		
4 Implementation	39	Trail Improvements	38-39
4.1 Planned Projects	40	Planned Projects Chart	40
4.2 Funding Improvements	41		
4.3 Implementation Timeline	43	Implementation Timeline Chart	43
A Appendicies	45	Trail Connections	44-45
A.1 First Community Meeting	47	Concept Map	47
A.2 Second Community Meeting	50		
A.3 Ose Road Bridge Concept	51	Ose Road Bridge Detail	51

*Plan Completed
April 2017*



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We would also like to thank the Steering Committee for guiding development of this plan, and to the many stakeholders and community members that participated throughout the community engagement process.

With these and many other partnerships, we will be able to complete a project that improves access to conserved land, protects local ecology, and supports economic development while highlighting the life, legacy, and natural world of John Burroughs.

Burroughs' Life

Born in 1837, John Burroughs was raised on a dairy farm in Roxbury, New York, a small farming town nestled in the western edge of the Catskill Mountains. His life among the area's farm fields and forests ignited his curiosity and passion for the nature found close to home. Later, he would recall the birds and wildlife of his youth and the simple pleasures of growing up on a dairy farm. While attending a one-room schoolhouse, Burroughs developed a love for reading and learning that overcame his family's lack of interest in education. At seventeen, Burroughs left home to take a job as a teacher to earn funds to pay for more schooling. He earned enough to attend the Hedding Literary Institute and Cooperstown Seminary before going on to teach in rural schools in Ulster County. At 20 he discovered the writing of Ralph Waldo Emerson, whose work became a great influence on the young teacher. During this time he met, fell in love with, and married Ursula North in 1857.

While teaching, Burroughs began to write and was able to place pieces in periodicals such as the weekly newspaper *New York Leader*. He left teaching in 1863 to find a higher paying job in Washington, DC, the administrative hub of the Civil War. He was hired by the United States Treasurer and served as a clerk, responsible for accounting for bank notes in one of the vaults. In Washington, he met and developed a strong friendship with Walt Whitman, who would become the famed American poet. The two exchanged ideas and supported one another in their literary efforts. Burroughs wrote the first biography of Whitman, and Whitman encouraged the young writer to find his own voice and to write what he knew.

Burroughs' bureaucratic job afforded him time to reflect on his childhood in the Catskill hills and his time teaching in the rural Hudson River Valley. The country boy was out of place in front of the iron vault and he began to write with vivid description and deep emotion. During his first year in Washington Burroughs penned his first nature essay "With the Birds," chronicling the spring bird migration he knew from his rural life. It was published as the lead piece in the May 1865 *Atlantic Monthly* and its intimate, first-person perspective launched the modern nature essay. More nature essays followed and were collected in his first book, *Wake-Robin*, in 1871.

Two years later, with the Civil War over and Whitman no longer in Washington, Burroughs and Ursula left Washington to settle in the Hudson River Valley, much closer to their childhood homes and New York City publishers. Burroughs purchased a fruit farm on a bluff on the western bank of the Hudson River in the town of Esopus. He named the property Riverby (pronounced River-bee) and cultivated table grape for the New York city market. There, he and Ursula raised their son Julian. When three years old, the youngster's activity moved his father to build a separate one-room cabin close to the main house as a refuge in which to write, referring to it as *The Study*. Covered in vertical bark siding, many consider it practice for building a larger cabin fourteen years later.

Burroughs continued to recount his observations and views of nature in vivid and accessible language and published these essays in the leading magazines of the day. Houghton Mifflin eagerly published collections of his essays in book form. Writing while the country was moving from a rural agrarian society to an urban, industrialized way of life, his personal accounts had particular appeal to those newly aware of the natural world they were leaving behind. His readers were moved to seek him out and he quickly became famous. His works were also used as primary school readers, and in 1895, they were the basis of a reading primer, *Little Nature Stories for Little People*. The book's purpose, in addition to teaching children to read, was to foster sympathy with nature. The primer was used throughout the county for several decades and served to influence generations of young readers.

Burroughs built a two-story cabin, "Slabsides," in 1895 as a writing retreat in the woodlands a mile west of Riverby. It also served as a place to entertain the growing numbers of visitors making their way to Riverby. Readers touched by his essays, including naturalists, public figures, and industrialists, made pilgrimages to Slabsides to visit the writer. They wanted to share their own nature observations and talk with the naturalist. Preservationist John Muir was an early overnight guest. Other visitors adding their signatures to the nearly 7,000 in his guest books included leading ornithologist Frank Chapman, Henry Ford, and Thomas Edison. Perhaps the most notable visit came in 1903 when President Theodore Roosevelt and Edith came to see their friend and have a lunch cooked on an open fire with the "Sage of Slabsides."

Burroughs had become a celebrity and was sought after to speak at large dinners, write book introductions, and join others traveling. In 1899 he accepted an invitation to join and wrote a narrative account of the Harriman Alaska Expedition to explore the coast of Alaska, organized and financed by, Edward H. Harriman that included twenty-five leading men of science. In 1903 Burroughs joined his good friend Theodore Roosevelt on the President's high-visibility trip to Yellowstone, and wrote an account that was later used in Ken Burn's film "Our National Parks." The friendly Burroughs was enthusiastically befriended by industrialists Henry Ford, Thomas Edison, and Harvey Firestone and went on four elaborate motor-camping trips with them from 1916 through 1920.

Still writing and publishing late into life, his health finally became a concern at 83. After spending the winter of 1920 in the warmth of Southern California, he died the following spring after returning to his Hudson River home and his family three days short of his 84th birthday. In his last words, he asked "How far are we from home." He was buried in a spot on the family farm of his childhood in Roxbury with the view of the Catskill Mountains, not far from the "Woodchuck Lodge"—a retreat he kept during his last ten summers.

Burroughs' Legacy

Though Walt Whitman died before Burroughs built Slabsides, the two close friends tramped and went on excursions in the nearby rocky land, where Burroughs would later build his cabin, during Whitman's three trips to Riverby. Burroughs came to call this land of precipitous topography and ruggedness "Whitman Land," as it embodied the dynamic nature of Whitman's personality and writing.

Today, Slabsides remains much as it did when Burroughs was last there in the fall of 1920. The John Burroughs Association was formed shortly after his death to carry on his legacy and preserve Slabsides. In 1968 the cabin was dedicated as a National Historic Landmark, and later a Hudson River Valley Greenway Site of Special Interest. Today, the Association owns and stewards Slabsides and the surrounding 200-acre John Burroughs Nature Sanctuary with its network of trails that make up a part of the broader regional Hudson River Valley Greenway Trail system.

Much of what Burroughs wrote about in his essay, "Wildlife About My Cabin," can still be experienced and enjoyed in the well-preserved Nature Sanctuary. The diverse forest that surrounds the cabin still boosts majestic hemlocks, waterfalls and a wide variety of birds and wildlife. Even the spring where Burroughs got his water for both drinking and irrigating his celery swamp still exists, where it flows from woods into Black Creek and on to the Hudson River.

Burroughs created the modern nature essay and the essays he wrote, numbering over 300 and written over a six-decade long career, served as a subtle catalyst for the early conservation movement of the late 19th early 20th Centuries. His effectiveness was in his lack of an overt political agenda that brought the public to a deeper appreciation of nature, and value its protection. The conservation movement was significantly impacted by Burroughs' works which continues to inform and influence today.

While his writing inspired internationally, the strength of his legacy can be found here in the Hudson River Valley. The John Burroughs Association, Scenic Hudson, Towns of Esopus and Lloyd, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, community organizations, and many individuals are working to preserve the lands along the Black Creek that Burroughs once called home.

The John Burroughs Black Creek Trail represents the next stage in opening these lands to the public. The continuous multimodal trail will reconnect the history of these lands with the writing, legacy, and natural world of John Burroughs while increasing access and offering an uninterrupted route from Illinois Mountain to the Hudson River.

The John Burroughs Association has been pleased to be a leader of the planning process for this trail and looks forward to implementing the vision set forth in this document. Our hope is that it will help connect a new generation with Burroughs' legacy and the land he loved—inspiring them to engage with the nature around them and value its conservation.

Joan Burroughs

Great Granddaughter of John Burroughs &
President of the John Burroughs Association

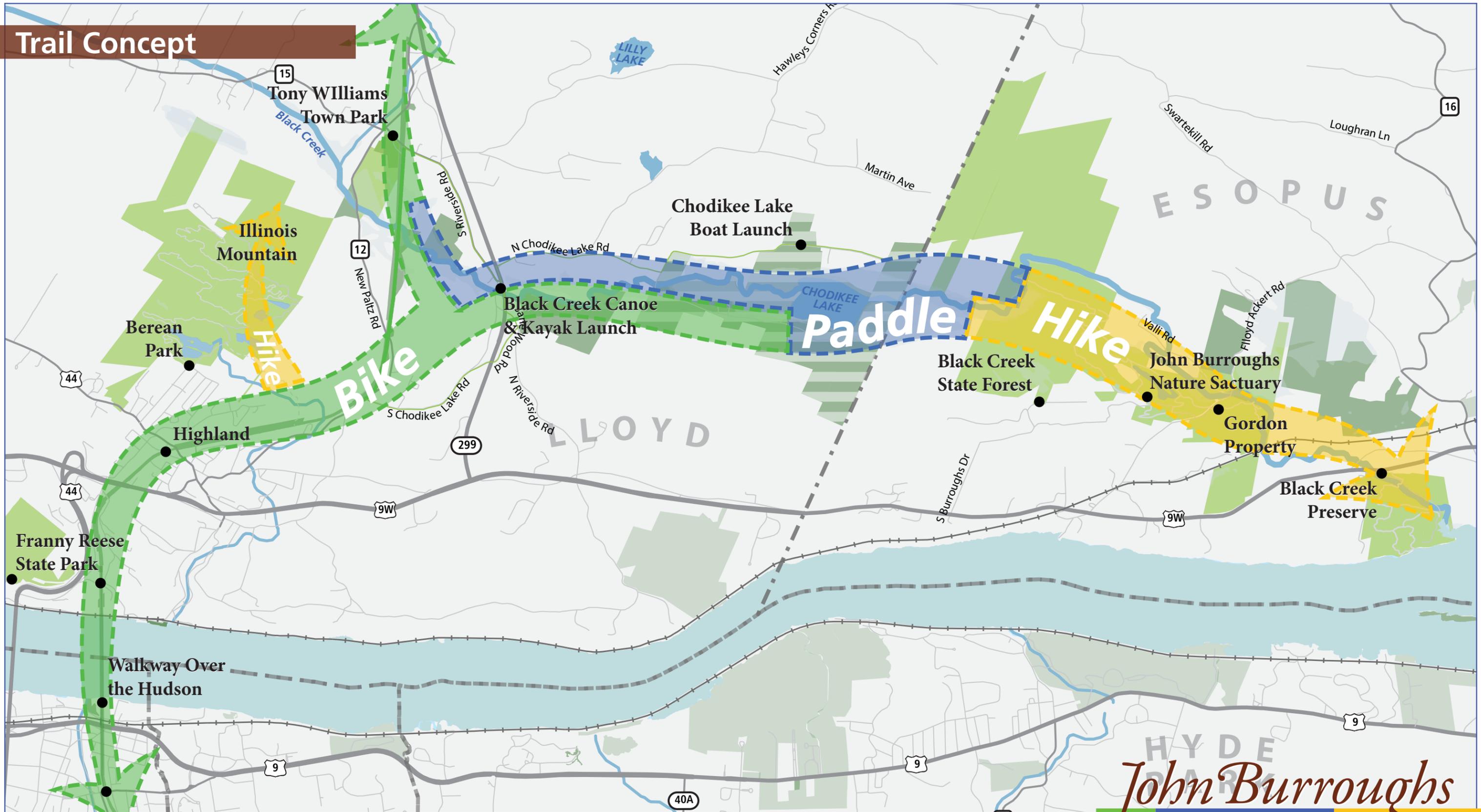


John Burroughs and Clyde Fisher at Slabsides circa 1919.



The John Burroughs Association (JBA) was created shortly after Burroughs' death to carry on his legacy and preserve Slabsides. The cabin recently underwent a restoration, but stands much the same as it did during Burroughs' last visit in the fall of 1920.

Trail Concept



Trail Segment

- - - Hiking Trail
- - - Paddling Trail
- - - Biking Trail
- Existing Access

Conserved Lands

- Publicly Accessible
- Publicly Owned
- Conservation Easement
- Not in Corridor



John Burroughs Black Creek Trail

1 | Introduction

Concept, Process, Vision & Goals

Balancing Access, Conservation, and Growth

The Black Creek corridor is a unique landscape that needs to be highlighted and protected. The low level of development in the corridor allows for a nearly continuous forest from Illinois Mountain to the Hudson River, offering a wide variety of topography and habitat within a relatively urbanized region. These features not only create a beautiful landscape that inspired one of America's great nature writers, but also support a wide variety of plants and animals. This landscape is also projected to retain diversity as it adapts to climate change.

The John Burroughs Black Creek Trail seeks to interconnect this landscape, improving accessibility while highlighting the life and legacy of John Burroughs. As this trail is developed, it is important to strike a balance between: 1) creating a regional recreation destination, 2) protecting the sensitive local ecology, and 3) promoting economic development within the Towns of Esopus and Lloyd.

1| Create a Continuous Multimodal Trail

The primary goal of the project is to create a continuous multimodal trail through the Black Creek corridor. The trail will make use of the high concentration of existing conserved properties and public right of ways. A combination of bicycle, paddling and hiking trails will physically and thematically connect conserved lands into a unified regional conservation and recreation corridor centered on the legacy of John Burroughs.

The cornerstone of this trail will be John Burroughs' cabin, Slabsides (a National Historic Landmark), which offers the unique opportunity to link one of America's great nature writers to the landscape he walked and enjoyed. Burroughs' legacy as one of the original environmental educators comes from the use of his work in public schools across the country, and served as the inspiration for many in the early conservation movement. Combined with his close friendships with influential politicians, conservationists and industrialists, means there is much to draw on to inspire the next generation to care for our natural environment.

2| Protect the Ecological Integrity

The second primary goal of the project is to protect the ecological integrity of the Black Creek corridor. While located in an urbanized region, the Black Creek offers a nearly continuous forested landscape across a variety of terrain, with over 1,400-acres currently under conservation. These features allow for a high level of local biodiversity and unique habitats. Furthermore, a study conducted by Scenic Hudson indicates that this area will continue to support a broad array of plants and animals as the climate changes and global temperatures rise—further elevating its regional importance for conservation.

Together, the ecology and long-term adaptability of the Black Creek makes it one of the most important areas to conserve in the Hudson River Valley. Design and construction of both the John Burroughs Black Creek Trail and connecting trails within the corridor will be sensitive to these precious resources, helping to preserve them for future generations.

3| Promote Economic Development

Promoting economic development within the Towns of Esopus and Lloyd is central to the project's success. Active recreational trails have been shown to provide positive economic benefits, as they attract local residents, regional tourists, and trail-supporting businesses. These businesses provide equipment rental, food and accommodations that enliven communities and expand municipal tax bases. Furthermore, the Black Creek corridor lies just 1.5 miles northwest of the Walkway Over the Hudson, and a completed trail will expand the Greater Walkway Experience—a branding, wayfinding and marketing campaign designed to draw Walkway visitors to other destinations in Poughkeepsie and Lloyd.



Three modes of travel will allow most of the trail to be completed quickly using existing rights-of-way.



The corridor supports a high amount of biodiversity.



Investors are already citing the large number of active recreational opportunities as a reason for locating projects in the area, such as this planned distillery and boutique hotel.

Planning Process

Scenic Hudson and the John Burroughs Association launched a year-long public planning process for the JBBC Trail in January of 2016. They formed a Steering Committee of key project partners and major stakeholders to help guide the process. In developing the plan, they interviewed over 15 local stakeholder groups, talked to more than 75 community members, met with local and state officials, and had countless trips to investigate the site. The resulting plan is nearly 50 pages long, and reflects countless hours of careful investigation and deliberation.

A| Steering Committee

In January of 2016, a Steering Committee was formed to initiate and guide the planning process of the John Burroughs Black Creek Trail. The committee consists of representatives from local businesses, non-profits, major property owners, and the Towns of Esopus and Lloyd. This committee, which first convened on February 8, 2016, guided development of the John Burroughs Black Creek Trail Plan and will be instrumental in its implementation. Peter Barnard, Urban Designer for Scenic Hudson, managed the project, and was assisted by Planning Intern, Nicolas Shearman, during the initial stages of the plan's development. The following is a full list of the Steering Committee members:

- John Burroughs Association- Joan Burroughs
- Scenic Hudson- Steve Rosenberg
- New York State DEC- Bill Rudge
- Town of Esopus- Diane McCord
- Esopus Business Alliance- Howard Slotnick
- Lloyd Economic Development Committee- Charles Glasner
- Lloyd Environmental Conservation Council- Jack Maguire and Bud Hossenlopp
- Walkway Over the Hudson- Elizabeth Waldstein-Hart
- Trillium Invasive Species Management- Tom Lewis

B| Stakeholders

The Steering Committee compiled a list of stakeholders at the local, regional, and state levels. Interviews of representatives from each of these groups were conducted on March 3 and March 10, 2016 in the Esopus Library and the Lloyd Town Hall, respectively. At both locations, meetings were scheduled on the hour for one-hour time periods. For those who could not attend, arrangements for separate interview dates and locations were made. The following is a list of all interviewed stakeholder groups:

- New York State DEC- Nate Ermer, Matt Paul, Mike Flaherty
- Hudson River Greenway- Mark Castiglione
- Ulster County Planning Department- Chris White
- Ulster Alive! (Ulster County Tourism)- Rick Remsnyder
- Dutchess County Tourism- Mary Kay Vrba
- Southern Ulster Chamber of Commerce William Farrell
- NY/NJ Trail Conference- Doug Senterman
- Hudson Valley Rail Trail- Susan and Alan Van De Bogart
- Fats & the Cats- Peter Nimmer, Christine Guarino
- Esopus Fire Department and Emergency Services- Will Freer
- Highland Business Alliance- Mark Elia
- Lloyd Historical Society- Vivian Wadlin
- Kayaking Group-Diane Dintruff
- Starr Estate/Star Vodka- Charles Ferri

On March 21, 2016, Scenic Hudson presented the John Burroughs Black Creek Trail project to the members of the Esopus Business Alliance at their monthly meeting. Attendees were excited about the project and supportive.

C| Public Meetings

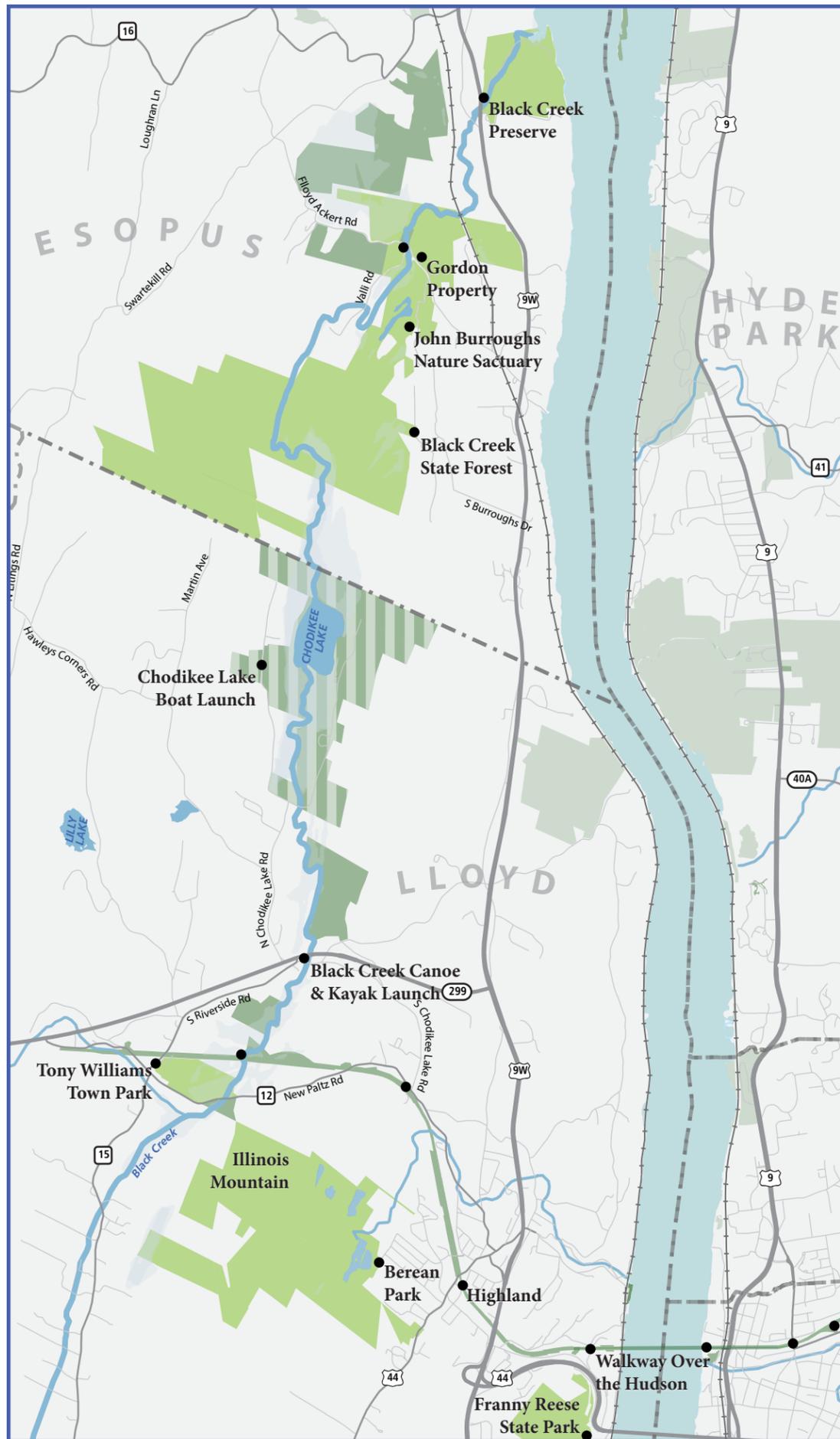
A series of public meetings was hosted throughout the planning process. The project concept was presented at a public meeting on March 31, 2016, that was attended by more than 65 community members. Feedback from this meeting and major stakeholders was used to develop the recommendations, which were presented to the Town Boards of Lloyd and Esopus on October 4, 2016 and November 17, 2016, respectively. The full draft plan was presented at a final public meeting held on February 16, 2017. The plan was presented to the Town Boards on April 19, 2017 and April 26, 2017, where it received resolutions of support.



Over 30 stakeholder groups were interviewed as part of the planning process. The ideas and information gained from these conversations created the foundation for the development of the John Burroughs Black Creek Trail Plan.



Over 65 people came to the first public meeting to hear about the project and share their thoughts and ideas. Along with the Stakeholder meetings, the information they provided shaped the recommendations and implementation projects.



Scenic Hudson Black Creek Preserve

The Black Creek Preserve is a 130-acre park that sits along the Hudson River at the mouth of the Black Creek. The preserve features a dramatic suspension bridge spanning the creek that connects the entrance to several miles of hiking trail loops on top of a hill. The park provides stunning views of the Hudson River, and allows visitors to get down to the waterfront, where there are several small pebble beaches where Kayakers rest at low-tide.

Scenic Hudson's former Gordon Property

The Gordon Property is a large forested area just north of the John Burroughs Nature Sanctuary. Scenic Hudson recently extended one of the Sanctuary's trails across the property to connect Slabsides with a series of waterfalls where Burroughs is known to have brought guests in his day. The trail follows a historic commercial road before wandering through a hemlock forest to reach the creek. It is one of the easiest sections to hike in the whole corridor.

John Burroughs Nature Sanctuary

The John Burroughs Nature Sanctuary is a 200-acre preserve that surrounds Burroughs' cabin, Slabsides. The cabin was hand-built in the late 1800s as a retreat from the hustle and bustle of the Hudson River, and is largely preserved as Burroughs' left it upon his death in 1921. It has since been designated a National Historic Landmark. The surrounding property informed much of Burroughs' writing, and now features a well-developed network of hiking trails.

DEC Black Creek State Forest

The Black Creek State Forest is the largest conserved landscape in the Black Creek corridor, with nearly 600-acres. The forest lies directly south of the John Burroughs Nature Sanctuary at the northern end of Chodikee Lake. While it has no formally designated trails, the Department of Environmental Conservation does allow hiking, kayaking, fishing, hunting, and no-trace camping.

DEC Chodikee Lake Boat Launch

The Chodikee Lake Boat Launch lies west side of the lake, across from the Highland Recreational Facility—a New York State Juvenile Justice facility. The launch was created over 30 years ago to provide access for anglers (fishermen) interested in the lake's Largemouth Bass and Panfish. It also provides kayakers and canoers with access to the most level section of the Black Creek, offering 2.5 miles of unencumbered paddling.

Black Creek Canoe and Kayak Launch

The Black Creek Canoe and Kayak Launch is a roadside access point for non-motorized boats. Located immediately adjacent to Highway 299, the launch was developed by the Lloyd Environmental Conservation Committee as part of the Black Creek Water Trail.

Tony Williams Town Park

Tony Williams Town Park is the Town of Lloyd's major recreational facility. It offers basketball and tennis courts, baseball fields, a playground and picnic areas—making it a major destination for residents. The park also currently serves as the western end of the Hudson Valley Rail Trail, establishing it as an excellent destination for runners and cyclists.

Illinois Mountain/Berean Park

Illinois Mountain is a 280 acre park approximately 3/4 mile from the Hudson Valley Rail Trail. This park features over three miles of trails, and is a favorite destination for mountain bikers. The Town of Lloyd's Berean Park lies at the foot of the mountain, and offers swimming, picnic areas and special programming.

Hudson Valley Rail Trail

The Hudson Valley Rail Trail is a paved 4-mile long trail running from the Walkway Over the Hudson in the east to Tony William's Town Park in the west. This trail is very popular with walkers, runners and cyclists, and provides a critical connection between the hamlet of Highland and Tony Williams Town Park. The trail is currently undergoing a 1.75-mile extension that will bring it to the intersection of 22 and 299, across from a Lowe's Home Improvement store. Eventually, the trail will extend all the way to New Paltz, where it will connect with the Walkkill Valley Rail Trail and eventually reach Kingston. These two trails are critical segments of the broader Hudson River Valley Greenway Trunk Line and the Empire State Trail.

Franny Reese State Park

Franny Reese is a 250-acre State Park 1/2 mile south of the Walkway in the Town of Lloyd. This natural landscape overlooks the Hudson River and the Poughkeepsie Waterfront, and lies along the 3.5-mile Walkway Loop Trail. The park itself provides an additional 2.5 miles of hiking and mountain biking trails for active recreation within easy reach of residents and Walkway visitors.

Walkway Over the Hudson State Park

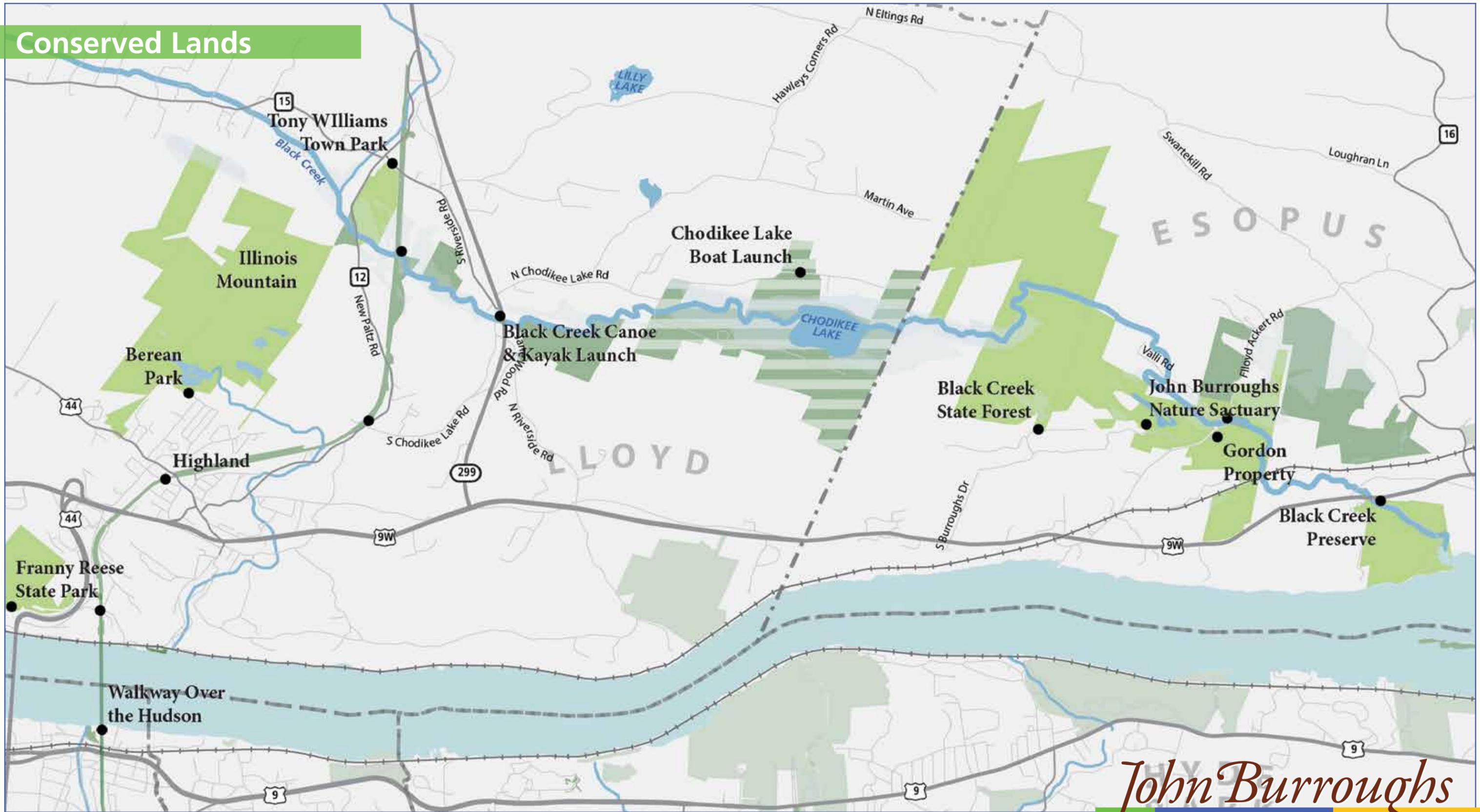
Walkway Over the Hudson State Park is the region's premiere destination park, attracting hundreds of thousands of visitors every year to walk, run or bike over the Hudson. The Walkway draws people to its stunning views of the Hudson River Valley and wide variety of unique special events keeps them coming throughout the year. The Greater Walkway Experience campaign has been successful in drawing many of these visitors into Highland and Poughkeepsie, where they have helped to drive local economic development.

Conserved Lands

- Publicly Accessible
- Publicly Owned
- Conservation Easement
- Not in Corridor



Conserved Lands



Conserved Lands

- Publicly Accessible
- Publicly Owned
- Conservation Easement
- Not in Corridor



John Burroughs Black Creek Trail

2| Existing Conditions

Conservation, Access, Programing & Economic Development

John Burroughs Black Creek 2.1 | Access & Connections

Connected Landscape, Disconnected Trails

Conserved and publicly owned properties create a nearly continuous natural corridor along the Black Creek. The lack of a continuous trail, however, means that it is difficult for visitors to make use of the whole corridor. Similarly, access is inconsistent across the different parks and preserves, with some featuring full parking lots and trail heads, while others only have pull offs along the side of the road. The three main issues along the corridor are missing connections, lack of formalized trails and limited access points.

A | Missing Connections

The corridor is missing many of the connections that are needed to complete the John Burroughs Black Creek Trail (JBBC Trail). The following pairs of parks are either missing a direct connection or have proposed trails that have never been built:

- Illinois Mountain and the Hudson Valley Rail Trail are missing a direct connection to each other despite their proximity. A hiking and mountain biking trail has been proposed but has not been built, even though a public access easement has been secured.
- Tony Williams Park and the boat launches are connected by public roads but have no off-road or road-side link.
- The Gordon Property and the Black Creek Preserve are separated by the historic stone barns. There is currently no linking trail or public access easement.

B | Lack of Formalized Trails

The Black Creek State Forest currently does not have any formalized trails. An informal trail on an old commercial road connects Chodikey Lake with the John Burroughs Nature Sanctuary's (JBNS) red trail, but is difficult to follow due to lack of adequate signage. Other informal, unmarked trails exist on the property, but do not take into account sensitive habitats or rare species.

C | Limited Access

Several of the parks have limited access due to a lack of parking or formal trail heads.

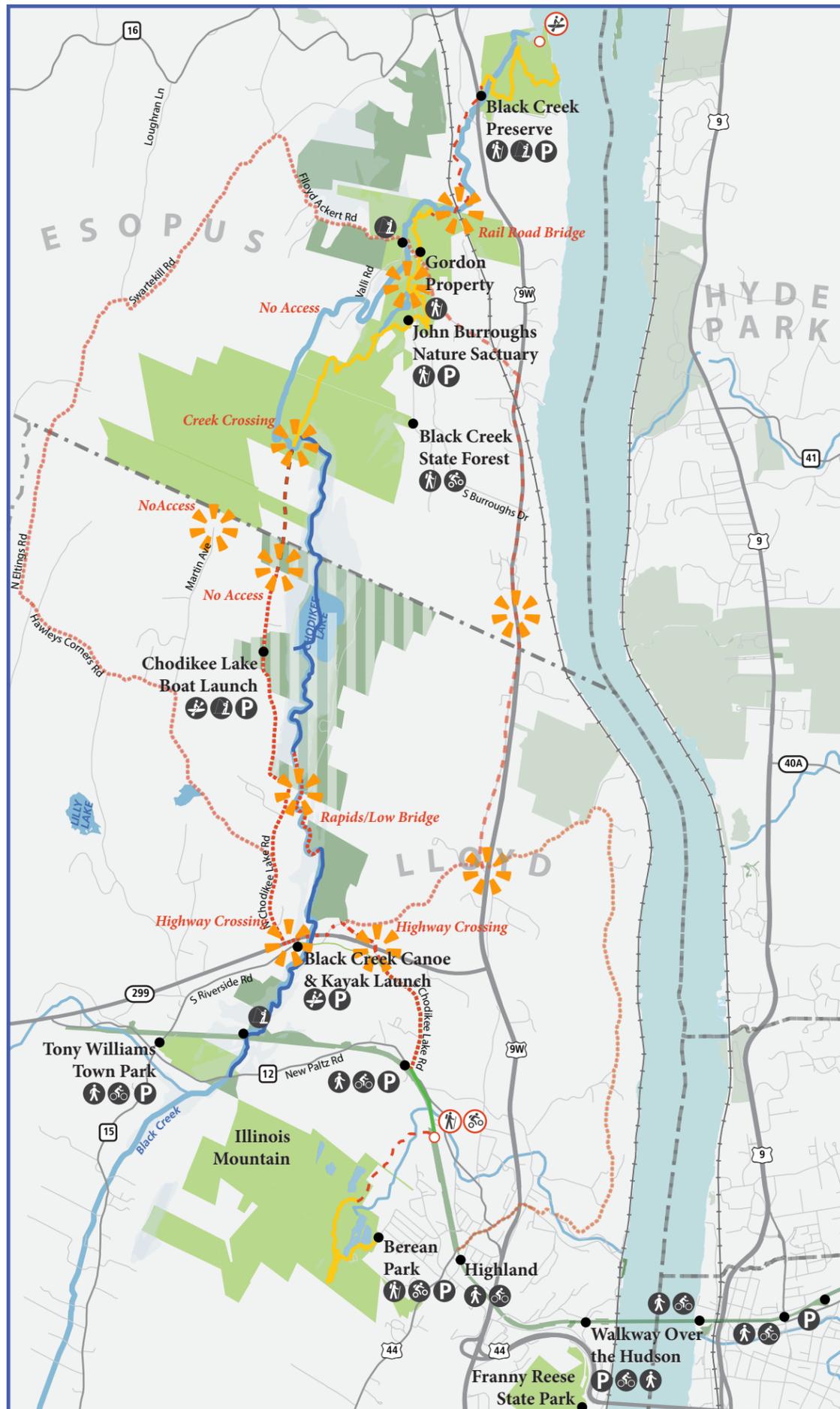
- The Black Creek State Forest currently lacks a parking lot and only has one entrance from a public road. This entrance is on the eastern end of the property, and visitors must navigate wetlands to get to the main section of the park.
- The John Burroughs Nature Sanctuary currently does not have a formal parking lot. One section of the road has been widened as a turn-around and visitors park along John Burroughs Drive—making the JBNS difficult to access on days with many visitors.
- The Gordon Property does not have a parking lot. Visitors park along Floyd Ackert Road.

Non-Automotive Access

The Black Creek corridor is not easily accessible for cyclists or public transit riders. While the Hudson Valley Rail Trail provides excellent off-road access to the Black Creek, there are no bicycle routes connecting riders to northern parks, and none of the parks have bicycle racks. Similarly, the UCAT bus system has two lines, one on 299 and the other on 9W, that pass close to the corridor but do not have formal stops. Users can request to get off anywhere along the line and can request a pick up if they call ahead or use a new mobile app.

D | Current Project

Ulster County and Hudson Valley Rail Trail are currently working to extend the trail to New Paltz. Once there, it will connect with the Wallkill Valley Rail Trail that ends near the Stockade District in Kingston. Phase 3 is currently funded and under construction.



Trail Type

- Hiking Trail
- Paddling Trail
- Biking Trail

Trail Issues

- ✦ Conflict Point
- ⋯ Missing Trail

Conserved Lands

- Publicly Accessible
- Publicly Owned
- Conservation Easement
- Not in Corridor

1 Mile



Connected Lands, Disconnected Trails

Many parks in the Black Creek Corridor feature well-developed and maintained trails, but others lack formal trail infrastructure. This unevenness makes it difficult to create a continuous themed trail.

A| Extensive Trails

Black Creek Preserve features a well-developed trail network. A steep entry trail leads from the parking lot and suspension bridge to a pair of looped trails on top of the hill. These trails bring hikers within viewing distance of delicate vernal pools and gravel beaches along the river, while providing stunning views of the Hudson River. The trails are maintained regularly by Scenic Hudson Staff and volunteers. As one of Scenic Hudson's most used parks, it is constantly being improved and maintained.

The John Burroughs Nature Sanctuary also has an excellent trail network. Several of the trails were improved and a connector trail added as part of Phase One of the Sanctuary restoration. Efforts have been made to make the trails accessible to a variety of people with different abilities and interests. Each trail's difficulty level has also been clearly labeled on the Sanctuary's Trail Guide. The John Burroughs Association (JBA) plans to add a new trail close to the Black Creek as it flows through a ravine, bringing visitors into close, sustained contact with the creek. Phase Two will also include the restoration of two stone stairways, at least one of which was built by Burroughs' himself, and the restoration of three other trails. The Nature Sanctuary will also be expanded by 10 acres through the purchase of land that was formerly part of the Slabsides holdings. These improvements will be complemented by the addition of entrance gates, signage, and formal parking lots.

Illinois Mountain has a good network of hiking and mountain biking trails. Fats in the Cats, a mountain biking advocacy group, has been instrumental in building out these trails. The trails are generally in good condition, and are maintained regularly by Scenic Hudson Staff and volunteers. There are no plans to expand the network at this time.

The Hudson Valley Rail Trail is a 12-foot wide rail-to-trail conversion that is in excellent condition. The trail is well maintained by the Town of Lloyd, and is currently undergoing a planned extension that will eventually connect to New Paltz.

B| Limited Trails

The Black Creek State Forest currently does not have formalized trails. Several informal trails exist on old logging or commercial roads though out the forest, but a lack of signage or wayfinding can make them difficult to find or follow. The main entrance off Timberline Trail is separated from the main portion of the forest by terrain and wetlands, and does not have a connecting trail.

C| Gordon Property

Scenic Hudson's former Gordon Property only had informal trails along old commercial roads until recently. Scenic Hudson has worked to build a hiking trail connecting the existing network in the John Burroughs Nature Sanctuary to a series of waterfalls, ending at a calm bend in the creek. This trail was completed in the fall of 2016 thanks to volunteers from the John Burroughs Association, but stops short of the CSX rail line to prevent conflicts with trains or private property owners on the other side of the track. Plans to loop the trail back to Burroughs Drive are being considered.



The John Burroughs Nature Sanctuary and Scenic Hudson Black Creek Preserve both have extensive trail networks.



The Black Creek Watertrail was created by the Lloyd Environmental Conservation Council and is well used.



The DEC Black Creek State Forest (BCSF) has many amazing natural features, but has limited access and does not have any formal trails.

Critical Issue
The ecological sensitivity of the Black Creek corridor means trail expansion should be carefully considered, and that visitors should be directed away from sensitive areas such as endangered species habitat and vernal pools.

Attracting Visitors and Connecting to Nature

One of the major draws to existing parks and conserved lands in the Black Creek corridor is educational programming. Special activities, such as guided nature hikes, attract new visitors, and encourage others to return while encouraging everyone to relate to the preserved land in a new way. These activities encourage people to return. The Black Creek Preserve and John Burroughs Nature Sanctuary have all seen tremendous success thanks to their unique programming, helping the properties to be among the best used conserved lands in the corridor.

A| Scenic Hudson Black Creek Preserve

Scenic Hudson features a wide variety of special programming in their parks throughout the Hudson Valley. Some feature monthly tours focusing on the history and preservation of the site, others are focused more on family-friendly activities, live music or guided nature tours. The Black Creek Preserve is unique among these thanks to a Citizen Scientist initiative hosted there each spring. This initiative monitors the recovery of the endangered American Eel by the juvenile or "glass" eels as they migrate to Hudson River tributaries from the Sargasso Sea where they are born.

Scenic Hudson staff trains and works with community members to monitor the eels' arrival in the Black Creek using large nets, and adds their results to data collected from ten other sites in the Hudson River Valley. This kind of cross-generational activity helps make the preserve one of the best used parks in Scenic Hudson's network.

B| John Burroughs Nature Sanctuary

The John Burroughs Association offers a broad array of special programming at the John Burroughs Nature Sanctuary (the Sanctuary) throughout the year. Nature walks include birds (migrating and nesting), ferns, wildflowers, mosses, dragon flies, and open discover. Two of the most popular are the geology walk and the winter tree identification walk. On the tree walk, hikers are guided on how to identify different species of trees without relying on their leaves. These hikes highlight the variety of species withing the corridor and changes to the local ecology. Other events include trail building, picnics, and guest speakers during summer months, as well as regional programing including Path Through History, Hudson River Rambles, and Smithsonian Museum Day.

The hallmark event, dating to the 1940's, is the twice-annual Slabsides Open House days. These biannual events feature prominent guest speakers and docents that bring John Burroughs to life. His iconic structure, Slabsides, and its setting offer a unique perspective on Burroughs' life when he was host to devoted readers, prominent friends, and national leaders. These conversations, in combination with his writings, helped launch the conservation movement.

Many other tours are held throughout the year to connect visitors with the naturalist, his writing, his legacy, and the landscape about which he wrote. Programs are held free of charge, except the annual "In John Burroughs' Front Yard" benefit lunch—which helps to raise funds for maintenance and future improvements.



The eels' migration pattern makes the juveniles easy to catch and count every year, and growing numbers show the river is recovering. The Black Creek has the second highest number of any sampling site—demonstrating its health and importance.



The expansion of these special activities in recent years has helped to attract renewed interest in the sanctuary and Burroughs' connection to the area—helping to increase visitation and awareness of Slabsides in the community.

A Unique and Varied Landscape

The Marlboro Mountains and the Black Creek Corridor harbor some of the most ecologically intact and biologically important lands along the Hudson River. It is a landscape with a remarkable concentration of habitats and species—some rare—amounting to some of the highest conservation values in the Hudson River corridor and the larger region. The area contains large and diverse forest patches which, with the exception of the Hudson Highlands, are relatively rare along the Hudson’s shorelines. These patches are part of a large forest and wetland core area that is critically important for regional habitat connectivity and climate change resilience. Black Creek’s high water quality, protected in part by conserved lands in its watershed, supports spring runs of river herring and American eel. Due to these characteristics, land uses related to the development of a multimodal trail must limit and carefully consider impacts at both the site scale (species, habitats) and the larger landscape context.

Historic preservation, recreational access and conservation of scenic character are primary goals of several conservation organizations throughout the Hudson Valley. These shared goals must be balanced with concerns about sustained ecological integrity of the Marlboro Mountains, which includes Illinois Mountain in the Town of Lloyd, and the Black Creek Corridor. At the heart of the John Burroughs Black Creek Trail Plan is a potential recreational trail. Such trails, and the construction needed to create them, can negatively impact rare and sensitive species. This is especially true in wetland, wetland buffer, and forest interior areas with high biodiversity and significant ecological functions. Trails are known pathways for the introduction and spread of invasive plant species, for their seeds are inadvertently carried and transported by hikers, bikers, and other trail users. This must be taken into account in planning future trails and access improvements, as areas relatively free of invasive species should be protected from degradation.

Roads and trails fragment habitats. Large intact patches are needed to maintain vibrant ecosystems, particularly for forest habitats. Additionally, as species shift their ranges in response to climate change, unfragmented and contiguous habitats like those in the Black Creek Corridor and the Marlboro Mountains are necessary for regional ecological resilience. Some trails and new uses in this area’s conserved lands have preceded the completion of park and forest management plans, causing disturbances to areas not yet comprehensively surveyed for rare/sensitive habitats and species or evaluated for their contribution to the larger landscape context.

The area, however, has been the subject of several less-comprehensive studies, including:

- Trout Unlimited’s water temperature survey;
- Cornell/DEC’s Herring Study;
- DEC’s annual Glass Eel Survey; and
- Black Creek Survey.



The Black Creek Corridor has been identified as a “special area” in the New York State Open Space Plan in large part due to the quality of its intact habitats.

Highland

The hamlet of Highland has seen renewed interest in its urban core in recent years. New businesses, such as Underground Coffee and Ales and a new brewery, are opening up, and a sense of vibrancy is coming back. However, the hamlet still has a large number of vacant storefronts that could become home to new businesses only blocks from the Hudson Valley Rail Trail that leads to the Walkway Over the Hudson.

Esopus Historic Estates

Esopus is home to a large number of historic estates, religious properties, and significant holdings, including several convents and monasteries. Many of the Orders that have occupied these are now shrinking, and properties are being sold. Several properties are being renovated to accommodate new uses, such as hotels and institutes, while others do not have a clear path forward.

A| Raymond Rich Institute for Leadership Development

The Raymond Rich Institute for Leadership Development is a 60-acre property featuring a stunning 42,000 square foot palazzo overlooking the Hudson River. The estate was designed and built in the early 20th century for Oliver Payne, a Civil War veteran who was successful in the oil industry.

The property was donated to Marist College in 2009 by Raymond Rich, a wealthy businessman and industrialist, and found a new life as the Raymond Rich Institute for Leadership Development. The Institute focuses on leadership training for business, government, and non-profit sectors.

B| Christian Brothers Monastery|Star Estate

The Christian Brothers is an Italianate villa built in the late 19th century. The original building was expanded to include a school and dormitory, and a larger building was built further up the hill when the local branch of the order was growing. In recent years, the number of monks at the monastery has been shrinking and has been less able to maintain their large estate.

The monks recently sold the original building and portion of the property east of Route 9W to the owner of a luxury vodka brand, Star Vodka. The new owner is converting it into a boutique hotel and distillery, and developing plans to expand into other distilled spirits. The project has received strong support from state and local governments, and construction started in 2017.

C| Saint Cabrini Home

The nearly 500 acre Cabrini property has long operated as a convent, and expanded to include school and summer camp facilities. The property is currently for sale, but the large number of existing buildings makes it a challenging property to reuse. The western portion of the property is largely undisturbed and connects into the DEC Black Creek State Forest.

D| Colonel Payne Estate Stone Barns

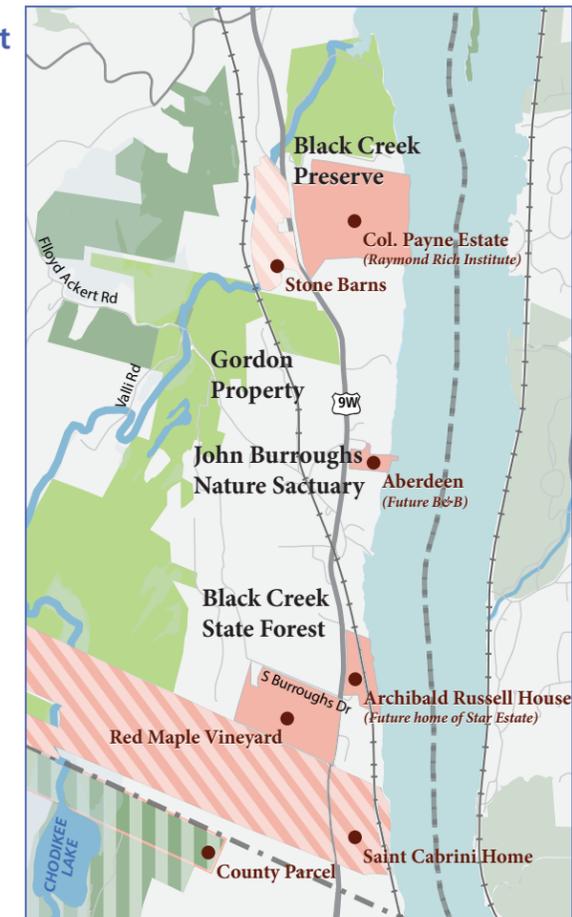
A series of dramatic stone barns occupy a site between Gordon Property and Black Creek Preserve at a critical juncture in the corridor. These buildings were originally part of the Payne estate across Route 9W, and despite interest from developers, they have yet to be redeveloped.

E| Aberdeen

A superb example of antebellum architecture, the Aberdeen property had been a private residence until several years ago. The current owners have planned to convert the property into a bed and breakfast or small hotel.

F| Red Maple Vineyard

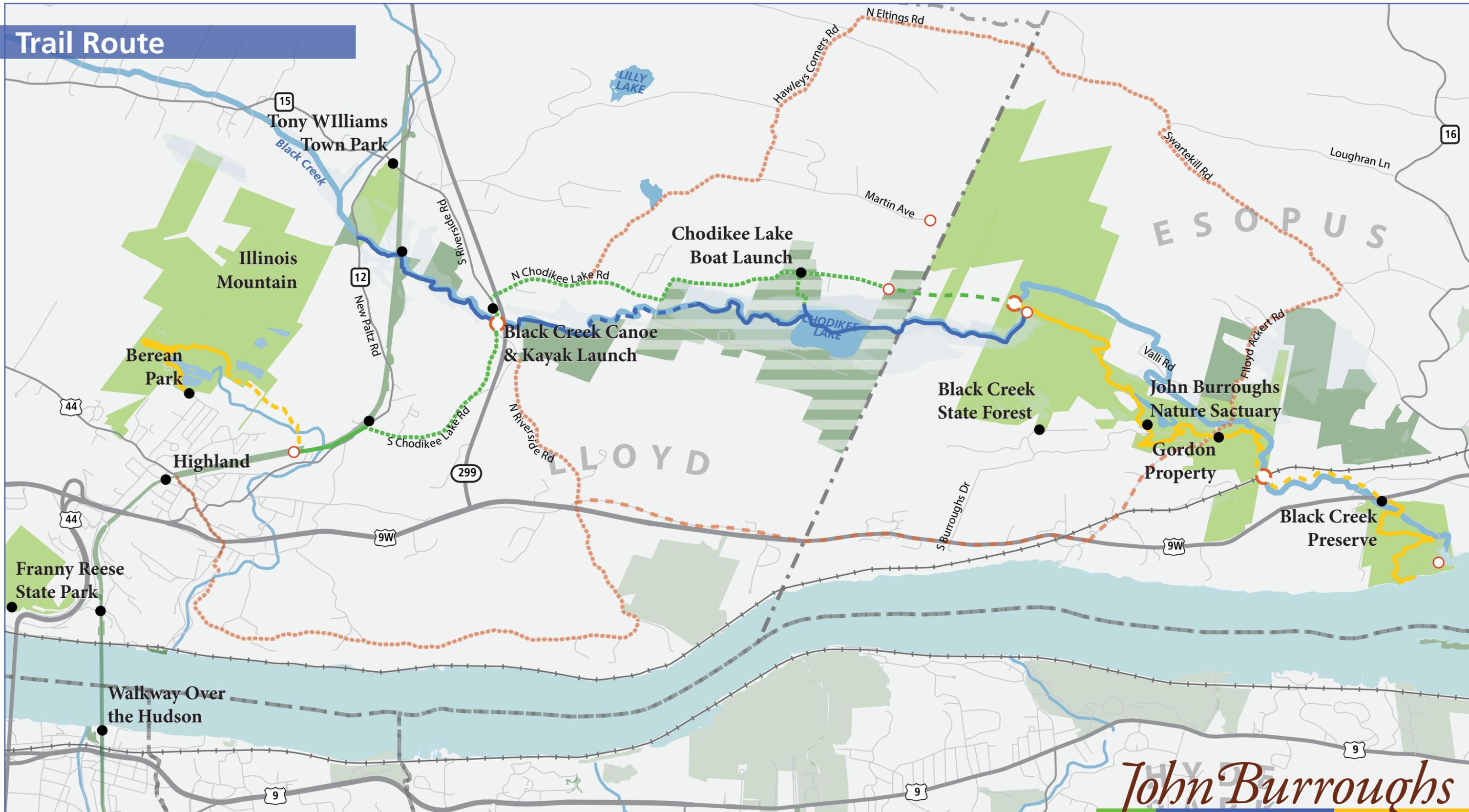
The old West Park Vineyard has been remade into Red Maple Vineyard. The property has become a successful wedding venue, and is fully booked a year in advance. The first wines from the venture should be issued shortly.



Potential redevelopment properties near Black Creek.

Critical Issue
The religious orders have long been good environmental stewards. There is a need to protect undeveloped portions of the property and find new use for older buildings in order to balance ecological conservation and economic development.

Trail Route



Trail Type	
	Hiking Trail
	Proposed (Short-Term)
	Proposed (Long-Term)
	Paddling Trail
	Proposed (Short-Term)
	Proposed (Long-Term)
	Biking Trail
	Proposed (Short-Term)
	Proposed (Long-Term)
	Biking Loop
	Proposed (Short-Term)
	Proposed (Long-Term)

Access & Use	
	Existing Access
	Proposed Bridge

Conserved Lands	
	Publicly Accessible
	Publicly Owned
	Conservation Easement
	Not in Corridor

John Burroughs Black Creek Trail

3 Recommendations
Physical Improvements, Ecological Preservation & Economic Development

John Burroughs Black Creek Trail 3.1 | Recommended Trail Route

Trail Route

Trail Type

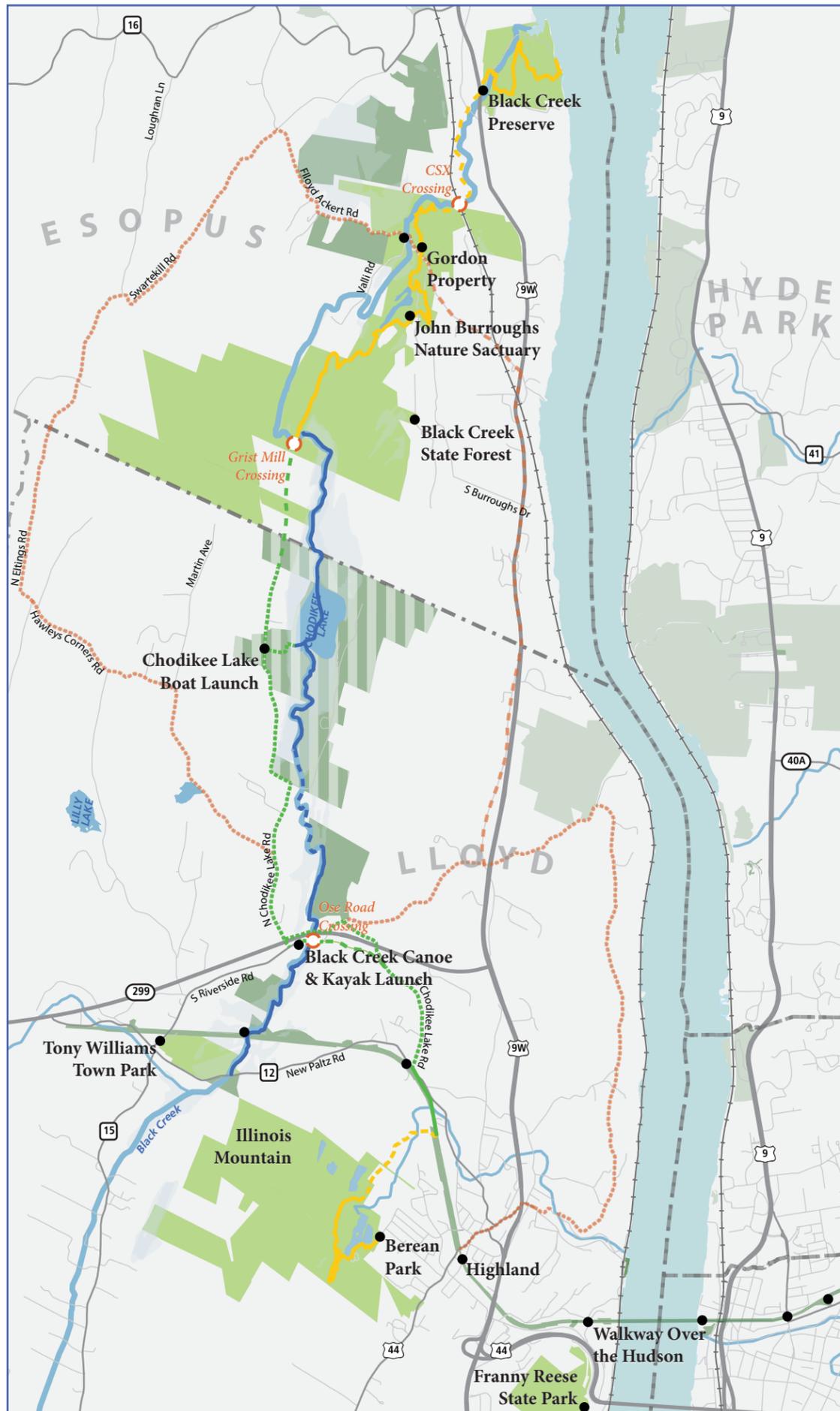
- Hiking Trail
 - - - Proposed (Short-Term)
 - Proposed (Long-Term)
- Paddling Trail
 - - - Proposed (Short-Term)
 - Proposed (Long-Term)
- Biking Trail
 - - - Proposed (Short-Term)
 - Proposed (Long-Term)
- Biking Loop
 - - - Proposed (Short-Term)
 - Proposed (Long-Term)

Access & Use

- Existing Access
- Proposed Bridge

Conserved Lands

- Publicly Accessible
- Publicly Owned
- Conservation Easement
- Not in Corridor



Connecting the Corridor

The goal of the John Burroughs Black Creek Trail (JBBC Trail) is to create a continuous multimodal trail from Illinois Mountain to the Hudson River through the Black Creek Corridor. The route will follow existing public rights-of-way, and will be implemented by creating key connections between existing conserved lands through a combination of biking, paddling and hiking trails. The resulting multimodal trail will complement the Greater Walkway Experience. Completion of the trail will expand high-quality recreational options for residents and visitors while supporting ongoing economic development in the towns of Esopus and Lloyd.

A key component to successfully implementing the trail will be combining the physical connections, branding and wayfinding to link conserved lands with the life, legacy, writing, and natural world of John Burroughs. This famed naturalist drew inspiration from the area and helped launch the conservation movement. Highlighting his legacy and connection to the Black Creek will not only attract visitors to the corridor but inspire the next generation of conservationists.

A | Speeding Implementation

The JBBC Trail is designed to be implemented quickly and cost-effectively to ensure the trail is completed within the next few years. To accomplish these goals, the trail will rely on existing conserved lands, hiking and bicycling trails, and public rights-of-way (ROWs) in the Black Creek Corridor. This approach will allow the project to progress without time-consuming and budget-busting tasks, but will require connecting biking, paddling and hiking segments to complete a continuous trail.

It is important that the JBBC Trail route alignment avoid the need for additional land acquisition, road widening or expensive infrastructure. These time consuming and capital intensive tasks would delay the implementation of the project, and currently lack community support.

B | Recommended Multimodal Design

The Black Creek Corridor has a high concentration of parks, preserves and public trails, but gaps exist between clusters of conserved properties. These gaps prevent the creation of a single multi-use trail through the entire corridor. However, by combining existing hiking, bike/ped, paddling and public rights-of-way with new trails and improvements, the parks and preserves can be connected by a continuous multimodal trail using individual hiking, bicycling and paddling segments.

This multimodal design will create a unique user experience in the Hudson River Valley. Cyclists coming from Poughkeepsie, Highland or New Paltz will be able to access hiking trails and kayak/canoe launches that will allow them to make use of the entire length of the corridor by switching from one type of active recreation to another.

Alternatively, visitors and residents will be able to do the trail in segments. This may mean coming for one activity or doing some combination of biking, paddling and hiking without doing the whole trail. This flexibility will broaden the appeal of the Trail and encourage repeat visitation—making the Corridor a destination for active recreation.

This multimodal approach will allow the trail to be completed without the need for additional land acquisition or public access easements. This will speed implementation of the trail while limiting impact to private property owners and the ecology of the Black Creek caused by new infrastructure.¹

The current project will be implemented over two to five years. A full chart of trail projects can be found in the first section of the Implementation chapter (4.1 | Planned Projects).

¹ Future improvements to the corridor could include a continuous multi-use trail after the current multimodal version is completed. This new trail alignment, however, would require additional ecological assessment and community planning as it is beyond the scope of the John Burroughs Black Creek Trail Plan.



Three different modes of active recreation will allow the John Burroughs Black Creek Trail to be completed within the existing public rights-of-way.

Expanding Bicycle Access

The John Burroughs Black Creek Trail (JBBC Trail) will intersect the existing Hudson Valley Rail Trail (HVRT), providing excellent access for cyclists, runners and walkers. This connection will help make the trail a new destination for visitors to the Walkway Over the Hudson, and be particularly attractive to cyclists coming through the Poughkeepsie Train Station that are looking for new places to explore in the Valley. The HVRT will also provide excellent non-automotive access to local residents through its connections to the existing William R Steinhaus Dutchess Rail Trail (DCT) and future Poughkeepsie Waterfront Greenway (PWG) in the east, as well as the future extension of the HVRT to New Paltz in the west. Furthermore, the bicycle section of the JBBC Trail will cross the broader Hudson River Valley Greenway Trunk Line and Empire State Trail, making it an unique close-to-the-river piece of the New York State trails infrastructure.

The biking segment of the JBBC Trail will run from Illinois Mountain to Chodikee Lake. This segment will use the existing HVRT, but add a new on-road bicycle route to bring the trail from the HVRT Rotary Club Caboose to Chodikee Lake and the Black Creek State Forrest. This is the longest section of new trail and will be one of the first segments completed.

A| On-Road Route

The JBBC Trail will run from the HVRT and follow South and North Chodikee Lake Road to the DEC Chodikee Lake Boat Launch. Initially, the trail will follow South Chodikee Lake Road before crossing Route 299 to follow Jane Wood Road and then running along 299 to North Chodikee Lake Road. From there, the Trail would follow North Chodikee Lake Road to the DEC Chodikee Lake Boat Launch.

This trail alignment has the advantage of being shorter and flatter than if it followed South Riverside Road. Additionally, this alignment offers longer sight-lines and more pastoral landscapes, ensuring cyclists are visible to traffic and enjoy a pleasant ride.

However, this alignment has not been paved recently and requires crossing Route 299 twice. These negatives can be addressed by:

1. Repaving South and North Chodikee Lake Road;
2. Replacing an old bridge over the Black Creek on Ose Road;
3. Creating a dedicated crossing point at Route 299; and
4. Adding bike racks at key locations along the trail.

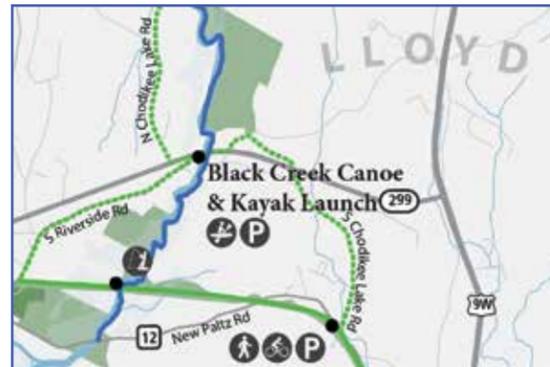
These improvements will simplify the trail route and improve safety. They will be part of a second phase of trail improvements once the first phase is underway due to a greater need for study and coordination among partners.

B| Trail Design

The on-road segment of the JBBC Trail will be identified by a combination of trail-route markers, shared use signs, and sharrows (shared-use arrows). Dedicated Bikelanes or an off-road trail will not be used because of the narrow width of the existing public rights-of-way (ROW).

C| Mountain Biking

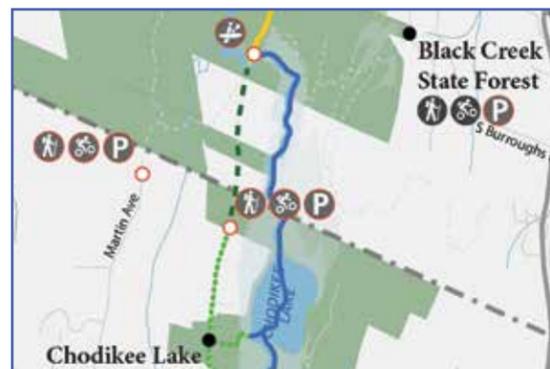
There is community support for expanded mountain biking opportunities in the Black Creek Corridor. However, mountain biking can have negative impacts on local ecology, and trails need to be carefully sited. Mountain bike access will be added from the south into the DEC Black Creek State Forest. This trail would likely use the historic commercial/logging road, which is already semi-hardened and unlikely to suffer from erosion. The segment of the JBBC Trail from John Burroughs Nature Sanctuary to the Hudson River will likely not allow mountain biking due to the sensitivity of these landscapes. The ecological survey (recommendation section 3.4|A) will help determine if and where mountain biking is appropriate.



Signs will direct bikes along the on-road segment of the trail.



Concept plan for crossing, kayak launch and bike bridge.



Potential trail extension is highlighted in dark green.

Kayak and Canoe Access

The Town of Lloyd’s Environmental Conservation Committee dedicated many years to developing the Black Creek Water Trail (BCWT)—a kayaking and canoing route already in use by visitors and residents. Portions of the John Burroughs Black Creek Trail (JBBC Trail) will use the same route of the BCWT to complete connections between the DEC Chodikee Lake Boat Launch and the DEC Black Creek State Forest. The portion of the BCWT south of Chodikee Lake will also be designated as part of the JBBC Trail, overlapping the on-road bicycle segment between the HVRT and Chodikee Lake Boat Launch.

This paddling trail will be the second major section of the JBBC Trail. The BCWT will be upgraded with additional signage and targeted infrastructure improvement to incorporate it into the broader JBBC Trail.

A| Infrastructure and Signage

The two existing kayak and canoe launches along the Black Creek already feature identifying signage and basic infrastructure. These features will make it easy to incorporate the existing trail into the JBBC Trail without the need for significant expenditure. Instead, the focus will be on improvements to the water segment that make the water trail clearer and easier to use. These include:

1. Directional signage for JBBC Trail on Hudson Valley Rail Trail;
2. Identifying signage for Black Creek Kayak/Canoe Launch on 299;
3. Improving the boat launch at the Kayak/Canoe Launch on 299;
4. Clearer signage for the DEC Chodikee Lake Boat Launch;
5. Improving the parking lot at Chodikee Lake Boat Launch;
6. Adding a boat pull out or tie-off at DEC Black Creek State Forest;
7. Adding signage at portage points to discourage trespassing; and
8. Adding educational kiosks to launch points highlighting Burroughs.

B| Chodikee Lake

The Black Creek widens at Chodikee Lake, making it one of the best sections for kayaking/canoing, fishing, and experiencing nature within the corridor. Critically, it offers a paddling connection between the end of the bike trail and the DEC Black Creek State Forest, creating a link between the bicycling and hiking portions of the trail. The Chodikee Lake Boat Launch will serve as the primary launching point for users looking to complete the entire length of the JBBC Trail or for people interested in combining hiking and paddling. To facilitate this use, a boat pull out or tie-off will be added to the stream bank just south of the rapids in the Black Creek State Forest.¹

Increased use of this segment will have a relatively low physical impact on the environment, but may require renegotiating the access agreement with NYS Youth and Family Services. DEC’s existing agreement only allows for fishing access, and while the launch is used for recreational kayaking and canoing, it is not broadly advertised. Increased awareness of the launch could increase traffic. Therefore, the project partners will reach out to Youth and Family Services to see if a new or expanded agreement is necessary.

Major Considerations

The paddling segment has several issues that should be addressed through implementation of this plan. One of the chief environmental concerns is the high number of beaver dams. Care and management of these structures should be worked into the proposed Environmental Management Plan.

Additionally, BCWT runs along private property. While the public has the right to use the waterway and portage when necessary, they do not have the right to trespass. Signage is need to make kayakers aware of portaging rules and to avoid trespassing where appropriate.

¹ The design of the pull-out will be carefully considered to prevent erosion from frequent use.



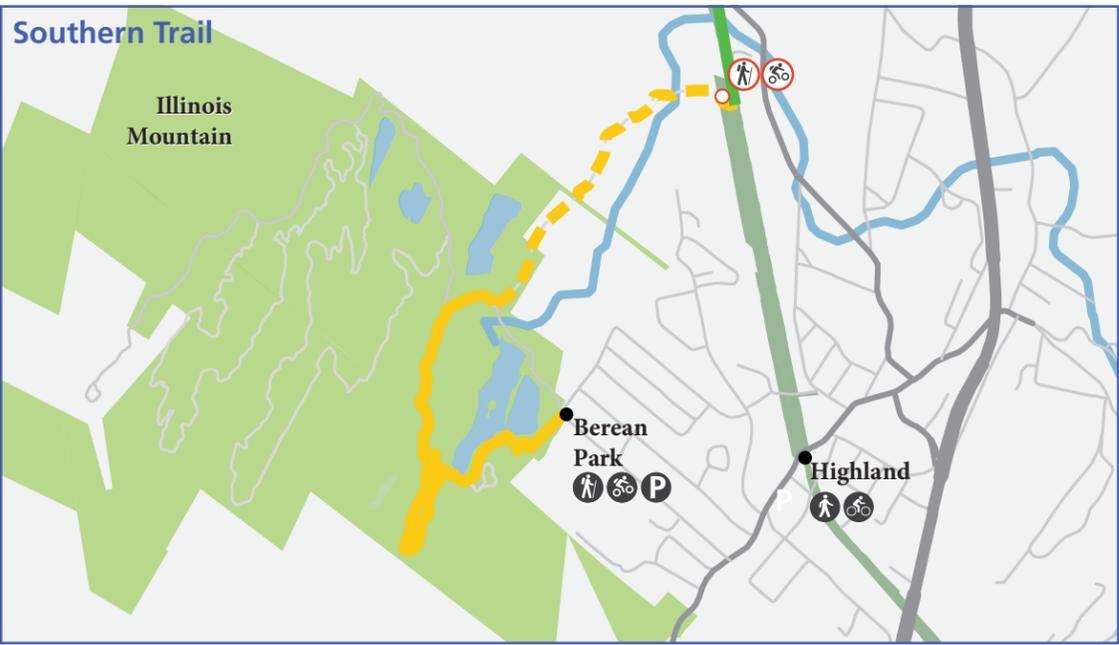
The only existing water trail sign is small and hard to read.



Chodikee Lake has an existing boat launch for fishing.



A kayak pull-out is needed at the northern end of the lake.



Hiking Trails

Trail Type

- Hiking Trail
- Proposed (Short-Term)
- Proposed (Long-Term)

Access & Use

- Existing Uses
- Proposed Use
- Existing Access
- Proposed Access

Conserved Lands

- Publicly Accessible
 - Publicly Owned
 - Conservation Easement
 - Not in Corridor
- 1 Mile

John Burroughs Black Creek Trail 3.1.3| Hiking

Linking Trails and Conserved Lands

The hiking segments of the John Burroughs Black Creek Trail (JBBC Trail) will link the most number of conserved lands in the Black Creek Corridor, especially in northern half. Large portions of this trail infrastructure already exist, but there are gaps caused by missing connections and informal trails. Implementing the JBBC Trail Plan will require physically connecting these individual pieces into two continuous trail segments that will integrate with the biking and paddling segments of the trail. These new and improved hiking trails will feature similar trail quality, consistent signage and branded wayfinding that highlights the legacy of John Burroughs and his connection to the Black Creek.

A| Northern Trail

Large sections of the Northern Trail are already complete, including the hiking trails through the John Burroughs Nature Sanctuary (JBNS) and the Scenic Hudson Black Creek Preserve (BCP). These trails provide access to Burroughs' cabin, *Slabsides*, and the Hudson River. Scenic Hudson has completed the Middle Falls Trail—a half-mile hike through the Gordon Property just north of JBNS that brings hikers to a series of waterfalls once frequented by John Burroughs and his guests. The corridor also includes an unmarked trail through the DEC Black Creek State Forest from Chodikee Lake to the southern boundary of JBNS. Completing the northern hiking trail will require:

1. Formalizing the trail through the DEC Black Creek State Forest,
2. Improving existing trails on the John Burroughs Nature Sanctuary,
3. Extending the Middle Falls Trail (MFT) to the CSX rail line,
4. Connecting the MFT trail under the CSX rail line,
5. Continuing the trail from the Gordon Property to 9W,
6. Crossing 9W to the Black Creek Preserve.

Scenic Hudson's Black Creek Preserve (BCP) is the final northern destination for the JBBC Trail. This property is currently not accessible from the existing trail network, and either additional land acquisition or a public access easement is necessary to connect the Gordon Property to the BCP. After this easement is secured, CSX will be approached about routing the hiking trail under the rail line (see major considerations below). These two components will allow for the completion of the northern end of the JBBC Trail. Planned looping trails will expand the network and user experience.

B| Southern Trail

Illinois Mountain, a prominent ridge at the southern end of the Black Creek Conservation Corridor, will serve as the geographic anchor of the JBBC Trail. The mountain features an extensive hiking and mountain biking trail network on a significant amount of conserved land that is open to the public. However, these lands have no direct connection with the Hudson Valley Rail Trail (HVRT), limiting its ability to be integrated as part of the JBBC Trail and access to cyclists coming from Poughkeepsie Train Station.

The Town of Lloyd is currently working to fund a proposed trail connecting the HVRT and Berean Park at the base of Illinois Mountain. The route will make use of a public access easement on a property currently under development. This connecting trail is an essential link that will complete the southern end of the JBBC Trail.

Major Considerations

CSX, a railroad company, has an active rail line adjacent to the Gordon Property. They have stated that they do not want trail users crossing over their tracks using an at-grade crossing. Therefore, completing the trail will require a route that goes underneath the tracks to connect the Gordon Property with the historic stone barns and Hudson River. The design of this connection will be challenging due to topography, access, confined space and the need to limit conflicts between trail users and trains. However, this connection is an essential component to completing the JBBC Trail.

Critical Issue: Sustainability

Increased trail use in ecologically sensitive areas of the Black Creek Corridor could have adverse environmental impacts. To ensure continued integrity of the Black Creek's upland and wetland ecosystems, the hiking segment of the JBBC trail should:

- Direct the trail's route around sensitive areas,
- Control uses to maintain ecological integrity,
- Minimize erosion through sustainable trail design.

In addition to these design considerations, full implementation and promotion of the trail should not be completed before an Environmental Management Plan is agreed to by the Department of Environmental Conservation, John Burroughs Association and Scenic Hudson.



Trail blazing will be standardized along the JBBC Trail and complement existing Scenic Hudson and John Burroughs Association trail blazing (above). Design of the trail blazing will be completed as part of the integrated signage and wayfinding design.

John Burroughs Black Creek Trail 3.2 | Access Improvements

Trail Access

Trail Type

- Hiking Trail**
 - Proposed (Short-Term)
 - Proposed (Long-Term)
- Paddling Trail**
 - Proposed (Short-Term)
 - Proposed (Long-Term)
- Biking Trail**
 - Proposed (Short-Term)
 - Proposed (Long-Term)
- Biking Loop**
 - Proposed (Short-Term)
 - Proposed (Long-Term)

Redevelopment

- Active Site
- Potential Site
- Concentrated Redevelopment

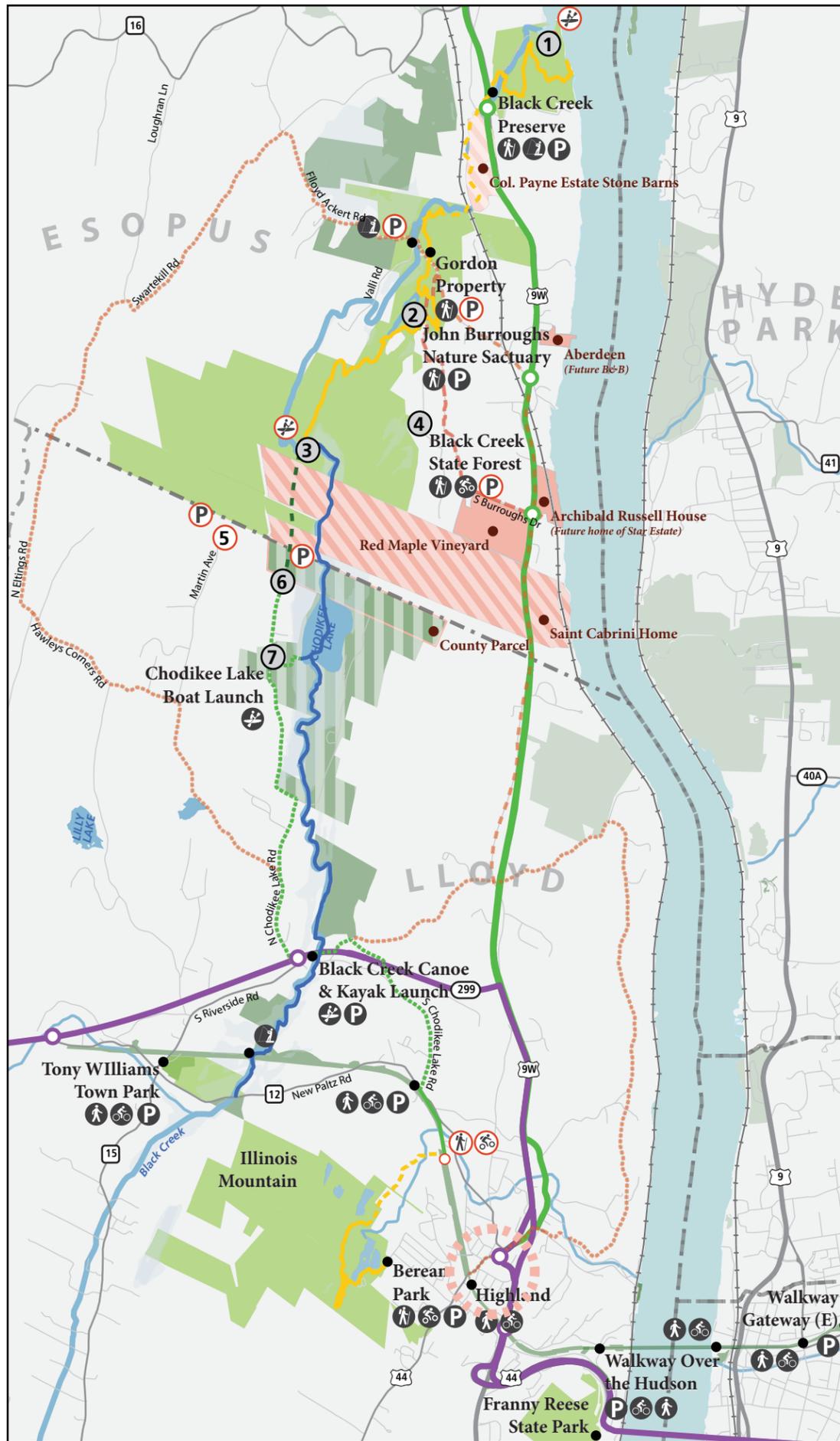
Improvements

- Existing Uses
- Proposed Use
- Existing Access
- Proposed Access
- Proposed Bus Stop
- New Paltz UCAT
- Kingston UCAT

Conserved Lands

- Publicly Accessible
- Publicly Owned
- Conservation Easement
- Not in Corridor

1 Mile



Improve Existing Access and Parking

One of the major obstacles to using the Black Creek Corridor is the lack of access to many of the conserved lands. Currently, the majority of the parks and preserves are only accessible by car, and only a few have formal parking lots and adequate trail-heads. Many are getting by with ad-hoc, road-side parking solutions, and few have any facilities that support cyclists or transit riders. Some, such as the DEC Black Creek State Forest (BCSF), have no formal access points. These issues discourage use and diminish the ability of visitors and residents to enjoy the corridor as a whole.

Significant improvements to access points need to be made to ensure the success of the John Burroughs Black Creek Trail (JBBC Trail). These improvements will vary between upgrading or formalizing existing access points while adding new ones at important junctions in the trail. Other improvements will include a new on-road bicycle route to Slabsides, a road-side walking trail, and coordination with Ulster County Area Transit (UCAT) buses¹ that will add new non-automotive options for accessing the Black Creek Corridor—greatly expanding the usability of the JBBC Trail.

A| Access Points and Parking Lots

The most critical improvements will be seven new access points and four new parking lots that are recommended for the properties along the JBBC Trail. Five of these projects are recommended for the BCSF in order to increase access to the largest conserved property in the corridor. Additionally, improvements, such as clearer signage and trail-heads, need to be made at several existing locations.

The recommended new or improved access points and parking lots include:

1. Black Creek Preserve kayak/canoe tie-off;
2. JBNS gateway signage and parking;
3. BCSF Chodikee Lake kayak/canoe tie-off;
4. BCSF Timber Line Trail biking trail-head and parking;
5. BCSF Martin Avenue trail-head and parking;
6. BCSF N Chodikee Lake Road hiking/mountain biking trail-head; and
7. Improve Chodikee Lakes Boat Launch parking.

Several of the recommended access points will require new easements to secure public access before they are implemented. Others will require asserting established or historical easements. A full chart of these projects can be found in the Implementation chapter (4.1| Planned Projects).

B| Bicycle Routes

A new bike route will provide direct access to JBNS and the Gordon property from the HVRT. The new route branch off from the bike segment of the JBBC Trail and head west on Hawley's Corner's Road, before turning north on N Eltings Corners Road and Swartekill Road, and then finally head east on Floyd Ackert Road to JBNS. A return route will follow Route 9w south to Red Top Road, before following Belleview Road south until the hamlet of Highland. Route signage will warn drivers to be aware of cyclists, and preserves along this route will add bike racks to accommodate their arrival. Directional signs will guide cyclists.

C| Walking Route

A new walking route will connect the Star Estate Distillery and Hotel with BCSF and JBNS via South Burroughs Drive. Route signage will warn drivers to be aware of walkers.

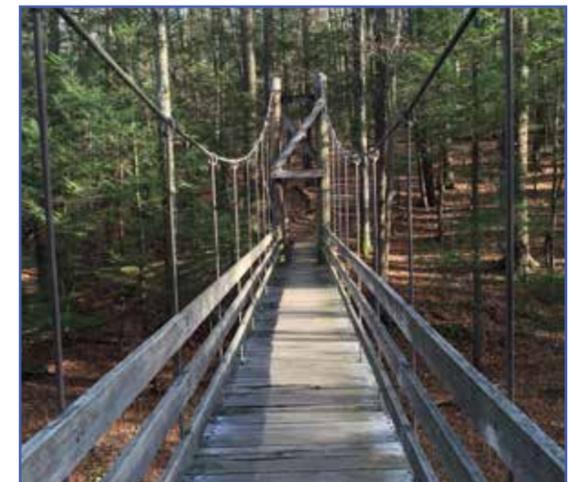
D| Public Transportation

UCAT has two existing bus lines that intersect the JBBC Trail. Formal stops with posted schedules will be added at or near access points along the trail. These stops will both improve access for area residents without cars and visitors coming from the Poughkeepsie Train Station. These stops will also provide a way for exhausted trail users to return to their starting point.

¹ All UCAT buses are currently equipped with bike racks, promoting integration with the trail.



Parking and trail-head improvements, such as the ones recently completed at High Banks Preserve (above) are needed throughout the corridor.



A bridge over the creek would connect the two sides of the DEC Black Creek State Forest. The above example is from the Black Creek Preserve at the northern end of the creek.

John Burroughs Black Creek Trail 3.3| Wayfinding & Branding

Highlighting the History and Legacy of John Burroughs

Creating an identity that associates the trail with John Burroughs and encourages people to discover the beauty and ecological diversity of the Black Creek Corridor will be key to the success of the John Burroughs Black Creek Trail (JBBC Trail). The multimodal design of the trail will make it difficult for users to complete the entire trail in a single visit; however, executing compelling branding, clear wayfinding and informative signage will create a thematic link that reinforces the trail in users' minds and encourages repeat visits. This system also offers an opportunity to highlight the writing, legacy, and natural world of Burroughs, and his connection to the Black Creek through his cabin, *Slabsides*—a National Historic Landmark. Together, this system will help direct and inform visitors, while connecting them to the local landscape and inspiring the next generation.

A| Wayfinding and Informational Signage

The JBBC Trail will use a mixed system of unified trailblazing, directional signs, interpretative/educational panels, and informational kiosks to help users navigate the trail and connect with the landscape. The trailblazing system will use consistent markers throughout the trail, and will complement existing signage on Illinois Mountain, Hudson Valley Rail Trail (HVRT), John Burroughs Nature Sanctuary (JBNS), the Gordon Property and Black Creek Preserve (BCP). This system will be complemented by directional signage at key intersections and turns in the JBBC Trail. Finally, informational kiosks at parks and preserves along the trail will provide a narrative that helps to connect users to the landscape.

These kiosks will highlight:

- John Burroughs' connection to Esopus and the Black Creek;
- John Burroughs' writing and his contribution to conservation; and
- Ecological stewardship and climate change adaptation.

These kiosks will also feature maps of the JBBC Trail that highlight access points, parking opportunities, recreational activities, connected trail networks and points of interest along the trail.

Additional attention will be paid to trespassing signage, particularly along the Black Creek Water Trail (BCWT) where kayakers and canoers are likely to portage.

B| Regional Wayfinding

All the branding and wayfinding will be integrated into regional systems. These functional and stylistic connections will allow cross-promotion of the JBBC Trail and the many parks and preserves it runs through via print, digital and social media. The most important regional systems include:

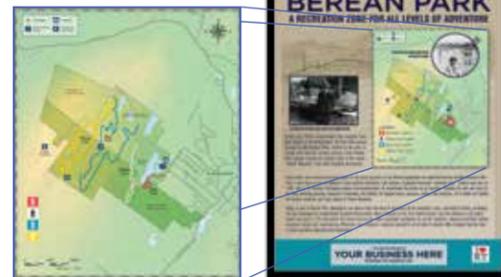
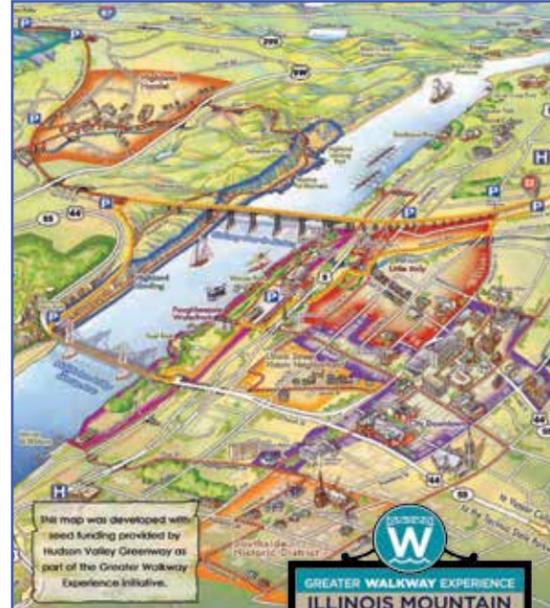
- Greater Walkway Experience/Walkway Over the Hudson;
- Hudson Valley Rail Trail;
- John Burroughs Nature Sanctuary;
- Scenic Hudson Parks;
- New York State Department of Environmental Conservation; and
- Hudson River Valley Greenway.

C| Maintenance

The blazing, directional signage and informational kiosks will require regular maintenance, periodic updating and occasional emergency repairs. The various project partners for the JBBC Trail will deliver a maintenance plan and agreement that establishes clear roles and responsibilities prior to the installation of signage. This step is essential because the trail crosses multiple properties with different owners and operators, and no one entity currently has the authority to maintain the signage throughout the corridor.

D| Multi-Lingual Signage

The Hudson Valley is increasingly becoming multi-ethnic and multi-lingual. Making the trail accessible to non-English speakers—particularly major immigrant groups—through multi-lingual signage will encourage greater use and help connect under-served groups with nature.



The Greater Walkway Experience (GWE) system of signs is an example of regional branding, wayfinding and informational signage that ties together multiple locations with a common theme. This system serves as a local case study for the John Burroughs Black Creek Trail (JBBC Trail). While the JBBC Trail's own signage should be distinct from this system and highlight the unique qualities of the corridor, it should also complement the GWE system to prevent visual clutter.

John Burroughs Black Creek Trail 3.4| Environmental Protection

Preserving the Corridor for Future Generations

The Black Creek Corridor is one of the most intact natural landscapes along the mid-Hudson region. Its varied terrain supports a high diversity of plants and animals, and will likely enable this landscape to maintain its variety as the climate changes. While the John Burroughs Black Creek Trail (JBBC Trail) can be implemented with minimal negative impacts to the natural resources of this landscape, future expansion of trail networks, parking lots and other visitor amenities could have adverse effects on the natural environment that draws people to the corridor. It is important to preserve the unique qualities of this landscape in the face of the increased access and use created by the JBBC Trail in order to ensure its continued health and to provide an enduring, high-quality place for future generation to enjoy nature.

A| Ecological Survey

Scenic Hudson, John Burroughs Association (JBA) and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) will collaborate on a detailed ecological survey of the conserved lands in the Black Creek Corridor. The survey will help identify important natural resources and ecologically sensitive areas—such as rare species habitat and wetlands—that new trails and access improvements should avoid. This survey will also identify areas of least impact where desired improvements and uses are more appropriate. The results of the survey should inform an integrated management plan, as well as the implementation of the JBBC Trail Plan.

B| Integrated Natural Resource Management Plan

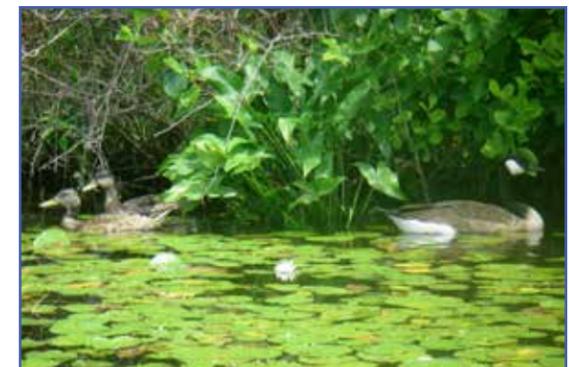
A critical step in creating a balance between use and preservation will be the creation of an integrated Natural Resource Management Plan for the whole corridor, which is based on existing and future ecological information. The goals and priorities of landholders in the Corridor should be aligned in order to protect environmentally sensitive areas and rare species, and to avoid creating confusion for Corridor Trail users. The DEC is planning for Black Creek State Forest through its New England-West Unit Management Plan (UMP) (which includes several other properties in the state's Region 3), while JBA is developing a management plan for its John Burroughs Nature Sanctuary. The ongoing nature of these planning processes creates an opportunity for coordinating management practices throughout the corridor. The three major landholding entities will strive to integrate the best available ecological information into an integrated plan, and mirror its goals and priorities in their respective plans.

Important pieces of the JBBC Trail Plan to incorporate into an Integrated Natural Resource Management Plan include:

- Align JBBC Trail to avoid sensitive areas;
- Collaborative ecological stewardship across conserved lands;
- Coordinate on identifying appropriate uses within the Corridor;
- Collaborate on additional land conservation efforts in the Corridor.



The Black Creek is home to several beaver dams.



A variety of waterfowl call Chodikee Lake home.



A kayak pull-out is needed at the northern end of the lake.

Need For Conservation

The Black Creek Corridor is a largely intact natural landscape with minimal development and fragmentation, despite being in a relatively urbanized region. These conditions contribute to the corridor’s ecological importance. The amount of natural land helps insulate the corridor against invasive species and makes it more adaptable to future climate change. These features will also protect long-term biodiversity in the region. Due to these factors, it is important to preserve the integrity of the corridor and prevent future development that could cause fragmentation and degradation of the natural environment.

Land conservation is one of the most important tools in protecting ecologically valuable areas. Acquisition of property or conservation easements reduce development pressure and preserve the natural landscape. The focus of future acquisitions in the Black Creek Corridor will be on areas with high ecological value or critical connections needed to complete the John Burroughs Black Creek Trail (JBBC Trail). Areas that have been highly disturbed by prior development have a low conservation value and should be returned to active use as housing or commercial use that complements the of the Black Creek Corridor.

A| History of Land Conservation

The ability to create the JBBC Trail is possible due to previous land conservation efforts by Scenic Hudson, the John Burroughs Association (JBA), the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), Ulster County and the Towns of Esopus and Lloyd. These efforts have resulted in the preservation of hundreds of acres of forest and wetlands that make the corridor a desirable destination for both residents and visitors. Several of the parks and preserves that have been created include:

- Black Creek Preserve;
- Gordon Property;
- John Burroughs Nature Sanctuary;
- DEC Black Creek State Forest;
- Easements on private property; and
- Illinois Mountain.

The JBBC Trail is designed to use these conserved lands and existing public easements to minimize the need for additional property acquisition.

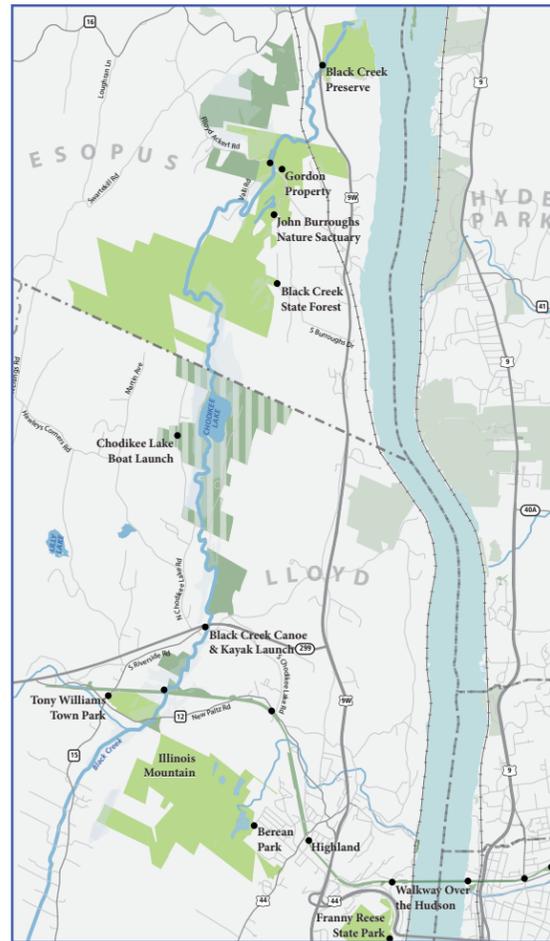
B| Future Conservation

Several of the properties along or near the Black Creek are owned by religious organizations that have effectively preserved much of the natural landscape. These properties have historically been off the tax rolls and several have recently come up for sale, making them attractive options for both conservation and development. Balancing between conservation and development is important to meeting ecological and economic development goals in Esopus and Lloyd.

Undisturbed areas of the properties have high conservation value, while other parts of the properties that contain existing buildings or complexes are excellent opportunities for new uses that can drive economic development. Conservation easements or subdividing the property offer sound ways to protect natural areas while encouraging redevelopment of areas with high economic value by lowering the cost of the property for new owners. These strategies should be explored when appropriate.

C| Securing A Critical Connection

The largest gap in the right-of-way for the JBBC Trail is between the Gordon Property and the Black Creek Preserve. None of the project partners controls land, easements, or rights-of-way connecting these two properties. A public access easement under the CSX line and across private land are needed to make the JBBC Trail continuous. Once these are secured, an underpass and connecting trail can be built to complete the trail.



The John Burroughs Black Creek Trail makes use of the high concentration of conserved lands to complete a continuous multimodal biking, paddling and hiking trail. The Trail will significantly improve access to these lands, and is designed to be completed without requiring significant additional land acquisition. This approach will allow the trail to be completed quickly and affordably.

Educating the Public

John Burroughs was one of the country’s first environmental educators. His writing was not only widely read by adults but also became central to children’s reading education in the early part of the 20th Century, inspiring generations of conservationists. This legacy of environmental education lives on in the work that the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), John Burroughs Association (JBA) and Scenic Hudson conducts in the Black Creek Corridor today.

Expanding this environmental education will be a major component of the John Burroughs Black Creek Trail (JBBC Trail). The goal will be to inspire the next generation of conservationists while connecting them to the history of the conservation movement. John Burroughs’ writing and legacy will be the cornerstone of this program, and the conserved lands along the Black Creek will serve as a laboratory and example of his legacy in action. This programing will be multi-generational and multi-lingual, and will cover both local ecology and how it adapts to changing climate. By making Burroughs’ legacy come to life, this programming will pass his passion for observing nature to the next generation.

A| Multi-Generational Education

Many age groups already use and access the Black Creek Corridor. New programing and informational kiosks along the JBBC Trail will build on this foundation by taking a multi-generational approach to education. Classes, brochures and maps at different levels will help kids, teens, adults and seniors connect with nature and learn importance of preserving these landscapes for future generations. These activities and materials will also work to promote interactive learning between generations, which has been shown to have social and cultural benefits.

B| Multi-Lingual Education

The Hudson Valley is increasingly a destination for both Latin American immigrants and international tourists. Bringing non-English language nature programming and signage to the corridor will help broaden the appeal of natural areas to these important groups. Promoting the writing, legacy, and natural world of John Burroughs among these communities will help inspire the next generation of environmental conservationists.

Brochures, signage and wayfinding along the JBBC Trail will be in both English and Spanish so that it can serve the two largest local language groups. Project partners will also explore ways of incorporating additional languages into the trail though apps, audio books, podcasts or other digital media.

C| Local Ecology and Climate Change

Educational signage and programming along the JBBC Trail will highlight the diversity of the local ecology, as well as the impacts caused by invasive species and climate change. This information will demonstrate how landscapes change over time, and how conserved natural corridors are important maintaining long-term biodiversity.

Signage and programming will also teach users to avoid leaving designated trails, minimizing environmental impacts and preserving sensitive habitats.

D| Slabsides and the Nature Sanctuary

John Burroughs’ hand-build cabin, Slabsides, is a National Historic Landmark and a significant resource that helps connect residents and visitors to both the writer and the landscape he loved. The John Burroughs Association will work to open the cabin more frequently to the public sensible visitors to know and understand his history, legacy and connection to the Black Creek. The Association will also expand facilities on the Sanctuary to better accommodate group visits and multi-generational programming.

Citizen Scientists

Citizen Scientist campaigns are already an important component of educational programing along the Black Creek. Every year, community members participate in monitoring the recovery of the American Eel by capturing and counting young, so-called “glass-eels.”

These kinds of community-based monitoring and observation programs should be expanded to help conservationists and environmental organizations understanding the Hudson River’s recovery from industrial pollution and adaption to climate change.



The Black Creek already serves as an multi-generational educational tool. Expanded programing will highlight the life, work and legacy of John Burroughs.

Reusing Historic Properties

The Black Creek Corridor runs through an area with a high concentration of historic estates and religious institutions overlooking the Hudson River. Several of these properties are currently vacant or underutilized, and several have recently come on the market. Restoring these properties to active use offers a great opportunity for economic development. Redeveloping them as housing or commercial ventures will expand the municipal tax base by converting tax-exempt parcels to revenue generating properties. Bringing these properties back to life is a local priority that should be incorporated into economic development and comprehensive plans within the Town of Esopus.

Returning these properties to active use will also benefit the John Burroughs Black Creek Trail (JBBC Trail) by increasing visitation. New homeowners or visitors attracted to new local businesses may be interested in the educational or active recreational opportunities provided by the Trail and conserved lands. Conversely, people attracted to the region by the Trail may be interested in buying a home, renting a hotel room, visiting a restaurant or touring a distillery. This potential symbiotic relationship will be a key to the successful implementation of the JBBC Trail.

A| Boutique Hotel Cluster

One of the great economic development opportunities in the area is the potential for new boutique hotels and supporting businesses. Economic studies done as part of planning projects for nearby municipalities have identified a regional demand for high-quality hotel rooms. Dividing these rooms among smaller properties, rather than one large facility, has the potential to not only make use of many of the historic properties in the area, but to also distribute risk while building the region's reputation as a high-quality tourism destination.

B| Redevelopment Proposals

Several boutique hotel projects have already been proposed for historic estates in Esopus, and are currently going through development review or securing funding. Other properties are currently for sale and have a high potential for redevelopment thanks to their unique buildings, stunning views and connections to the Hudson River. The most prominent of these properties include:

- Archibald Russell House (Former Christian Brothers Monastery);
- Aberdeen Estate;
- Colonel Oliver Hazard Payne Estate Stone Barns; and
- Saint Cabrini Home.

C| Connections

Many of the potential redevelopment projects are near the JBBC Trail, offering opportunities to connect boutique hotels or other types of redevelopment to active recreation and natural areas. Connecting pedestrian and bicycle trails will help promote symbiotic relationship where both the trail and developers benefit from cross-promotion.

The integration of regional trails with economic development directly builds on the Mid-Hudson Regional Economic Development Council's concept of "Napa-East" in the region. This vision seeks to connect the kinds of outdoor activities offered by the JBBC Trail with the region's growing agrotourism, wineries, breweries and distilling operations to build a world-wide reputation that promotes destination tourism within the Hudson Valley.



The Stone Barns on the former Colonel Payne Estate are some of the most striking buildings in the region.



The Archibald Russell House, the former home of the Christian Brothers Monastery, is undergoing redevelopment into the Star Estate—a 30 to 35 room boutique hotel and restaurant that is anchored by a full-line distillery. The project will restore the historic Italianate Villa and landscape, while fully renovating the later addition. The property lies close to the JBBC Trail and offers a great stopping point for the Hudson River Greenway Water Trail. Construction began in April of 2017.

Rendering Courtesy of Star Vodka.

Attracting Active Recreation Rental Businesses

Completion of the John Burroughs Black Creek Trail (JBBC Trail) will attract many people interested in active recreation. Significantly improved access and awareness of the conserved lands along the Black Creek Corridor will be particularly attractive to people looking for new adventures after visiting Walkway Over the Hudson and the planned boutique hotels. Visitors can already set up bicycle and kayak rentals for tours with pre-planning. However, the Towns of Esopus and Lloyd currently lack businesses that would allow day-trippers or overnight guest to easily rent outdoor equipment without making prior arrangements.

The Towns and their partners will work to fill this gap by attracting a new business that will provide rental equipment for biking, kayaking/canoing and hiking. This business will be ensure residents and visitors are able to use the entirety of the JBBC Trail and connected network, and should be located in a place easily accessible for those not traveling by car. Together, these features will be particularly beneficial for the large volume of visitors that arrive to the region by train and encourage repeat trips to the region.

A| Option 1: Attract an Existing Business

The Towns of Esopus and Lloyd should work with their Economic Development Councils, local business groups and Ulster County Economic Development Alliance to attract an outdoor recreation outfitter or guide service. This may be an existing business looking to relocate to be close to the Walkway Over the Hudson and the JBBC Trail, or an existing business interested in setting up a new location. The business may even be an existing outfitter without a formal storefront

This option would likely require the least amount of work for partnering agencies they should assist the new business in finding space, lining up financing and leverage local knowledge and connections in order for it to have a strong foundation for long-term success.

B| Option 1: Expand an Existing Business

Economic Development partners can also work with established local businesses to expand into outdoor recreation rental. Businesses such as sandwich shops, tourism centers or ice cream parlors are often great locations for visitors to rent bikes or kayaks or hiking equipment because they already have a natural draw and are usually conveniently located.

This option will likely require a higher level of work for partnering agencies because it would require expanding an existing business beyond their area of expertise. Economic development partners can aid this process by providing connections, funding and business planning expertise.

C| Option 3: Develop a New Business

An alternative option would be for economic development partners to search for a potential owner within the local community and help them develop a business plan. This methodology would require significantly more logistical support to establish a successful business, but is a form of grass-roots economic development that is more empowering for local communities. New owners of such businesses already have regional ties and are more likely to hire local, benefiting the community as a whole.

D| Optimal Locations

The ideal location for an outdoor recreation rental or guide service would be a place that is close to regional outdoor destinations, near established local businesses, and easy for both tourists and visitors to reach by walking or driving. Given these factors, the best options are downtown Highland, within the Walkway Gateway District, or within the Black Creek Corridor. A business in one of these locations would have a logical location, natural draw and support existing establishments.



Examples of bike and outdoor recreation rentals in the region.

Effective Cross-Promotion Campaign

The John Burroughs Black Creek Trail connects many different places—from parks and preserves to future hospitality and distilling operations. Many of these destinations already have their own web pages and promotional campaigns, but greater success of both the current destinations and future JBBC Trail can be achieved by leveraging these relationships to create an effective cross-promotion campaign. This campaign will build both local and regional awareness of the variety of destinations and activities in the Black Creek Corridor, and promote the Mid-Hudson Regional Economic Development Councils vision of the Valley as “Napa-East.”

Core partners in this cross promotion campaign will include:

- Ulster Alive;
- Walkway Over the Hudson;
- Hudson Valley Rail Trail;
- JBBC Trail;
 - NYS Department of Environmental Conservation
 - John Burroughs Association
 - Scenic Hudson
- Chambers of Commerce;
- Highland/Esopus Business Groups;
- Wineries/Breweries/Distilleries; and
- Hotels and Restaurants.

A | Web Pages

A core component of the cross-promotion campaign will be shared advertising on individual organizational web pages. Campaign participants will meet together to discuss how to include information about other organizations, businesses or activities on their web pages. This may include small articles or blurbs about other opportunities in the area, or may take the form of a more formal advertisement. Participants will help each other update the information on their web pages when major changes happen.

B | Social Media

A natural extension of cross-promotion on web pages is social media. Campaign participants will share special events each organization is hosting via Facebook, Twitter and other platforms. This sharing will help make residents and visitors more aware of ongoing activities in the corridor.

C | Print

Similarly, many campaign participants already have a place for their print materials, such as pamphlets and brochures. These areas will feature materials from different partner organizations, highlighting dining, cultural, hospitality and outdoor recreational opportunities. Campaign participants should also explore opportunities for a marketing brochure that can provide a shared map and contact information in one pamphlet.

While not all organizations will need to promote each other, the greater the amount of cross promotion, the easier it will be to build the Mid-Hudson Valley’s reputation as a destination for food, wine and active recreation.

D | Greater Walkway Experience

The JBBC Trail will start where the Greater Walkway Experience (GWE) ends at Illinois Mountain. The GWE campaign already works to encourage repeat visitors to the region by encouraging them to explore Poughkeepsie and Lloyd. Incorporating the JBBC Trail into the GWE signage would give a natural boost in recognition. Similarly, the JBBC Trail signage should recognize the GWE as another regional system for visitors to explore.



The “With Love, Philadelphia XOXO” advertizing campaign and Walkway Over the Hudson brochures are excellent examples of cross-promotional campaigns. These efforts help build public awareness and regional identity while highlighting specific activities, places or products from the area. A similar campaign centered on the John Burroughs Black Creek Trail can highlight the region’s high-quality active recreation opportunities, growing restaurant scene and emerging botique hotel businesses to promote the corridor as a destination for residents and visitors alike.

Recommendations

Scenic Hudson and the John Burroughs Association launched a year-long public planning process for the JBBC Trail in January of 2016. They formed a Steering Committee of key project partners and major stakeholders to help guide the process. In developing the plan, they interviewed over 15 local stakeholder groups, talked to more than 75 community members, met with local and state officials, and had countless trips to investigate the site. The resulting plan is centered around nine recommendations aimed at creating a successful project.

A | Physical Improvements

Physical improvements form the core of the John Burroughs Black Creek Trail Plan. Many improvements are necessary to create a continuous multimodal trail through the Black Creek corridor. The trail will make use of the high concentration of existing conserved properties and public right of ways. A combination of bicycle, paddling and hiking trails will physically and thematically connect conserved lands into a unified regional conservation and recreation corridor centered on the legacy of John Burroughs.

The recommendations within the economic development category are:

1. Complete the trail
2. Improve access to parks and preserves
3. Create a comprehensive branding, signage, and wayfinding system

B | Environmental Stewardship

The key to attracting visitors to the area is protecting the ecological integrity of the Black Creek corridor. While located in an urbanized region, the Black Creek offers a nearly continuous forested landscape across a variety of terrain. These features allow for a high level of local biodiversity and unique habitats. Furthermore, a study conducted by Scenic Hudson indicates that this area will continue to support a broad array of plants and animals as the climate changes and global temperatures rise—further elevating its regional importance for conservation.

The recommendations within the economic development category are:

4. Develop an environmental protection plan
5. Carefully consider future land conservation
6. Expand educational programming

C | Promotion and Economic Development

Promoting economic development within the Towns of Esopus and Lloyd is central to the project’s success. Active recreational trails have been shown to provide positive economic benefits, as they attract local residents, regional tourists and trail-supporting businesses. These businesses provide equipment rental, food and accommodations that enliven communities and expand municipal tax bases. Furthermore, the Black Creek corridor lies just 1.5 miles northwest of the Walkway Over the Hudson, and a completed trail will expand the Greater Walkway Experience—a branding, wayfinding and marketing campaign designed to draw Walkway visitors to other destinations in Poughkeepsie and Lloyd.

The recommendations within the economic development category are:

7. Revitalize historic properties
8. Develop outdoor recreation businesses
9. Create a comprehensive cross-promotional campaign

1) Complete the Trail

- Multi-modal Trail
 - Biking Trail
 - Paddling Trail
 - Hiking Trails
- Use Existing Rights-of-way
 - Use existing infrastructure.
 - Minimize need for acquisition.
 - Speed completion of the trail.

2) Access Improvements

- Better Trail-Heads
- Expanded Parking
- Non-Automotive Access
 - Biking and walking routes.
 - Public transportation stops.

3) Branding, Wayfinding and Signage

- Branding Highlights Burroughs
- Shared Wayfinding System
- Informational Kiosks

4) Environmental Protection

- Detailed Ecological Survey
- Environmental Management Plan
- Integrate with DEC UMP

5) Land Conservation

- Secure Critical Connections
- Promote Economic Development

6) Educational Programing

- Expand Programing
- Multi-Lingual Approach
- Highlight Climate Change

7) Revitalize Historic Properties

- Promote Reuse
- Boutique Hotel Cluster

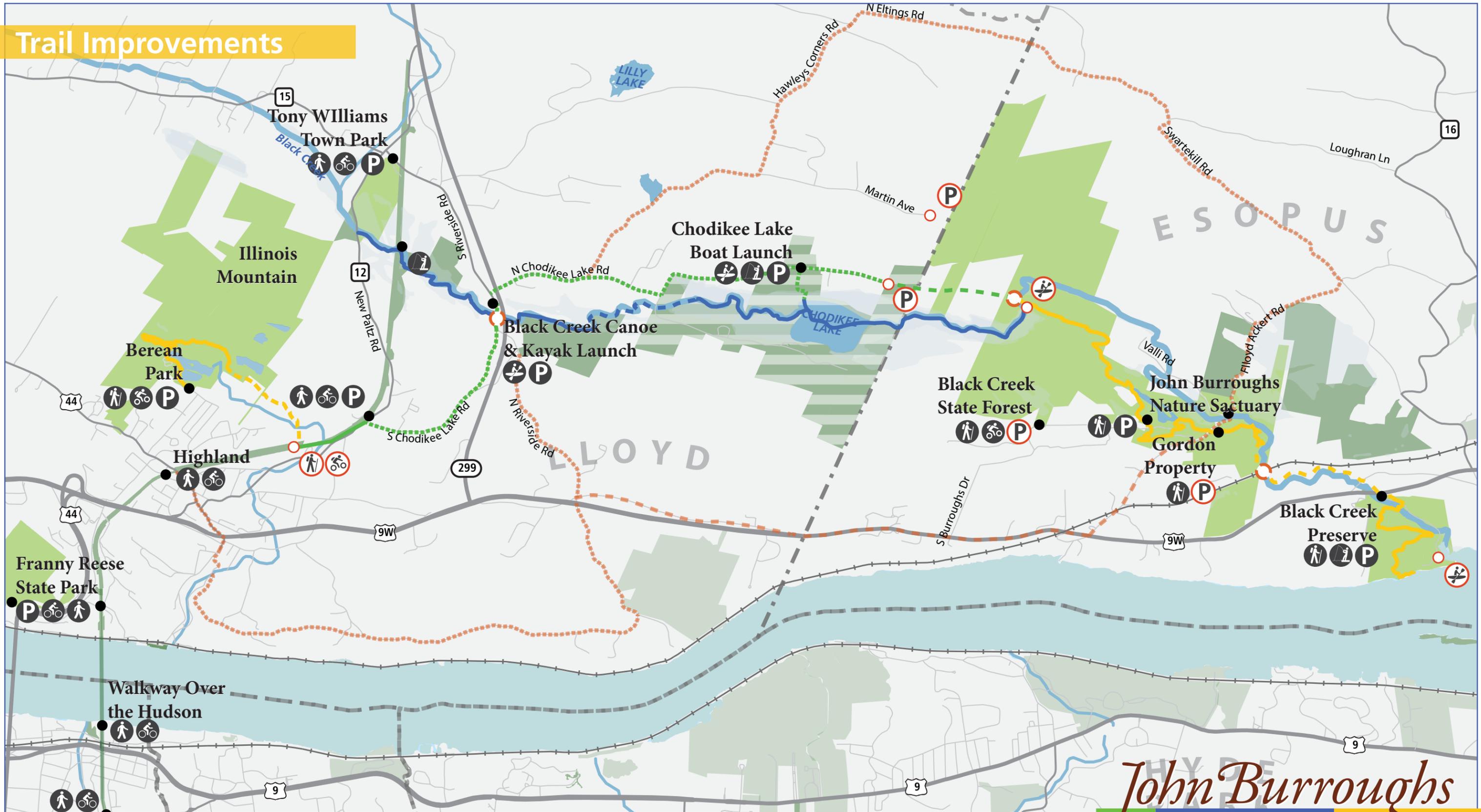
8) Develop Businesses

- Outdoor Recreation Rental
 - Attract;
 - Expand; or
 - Create.

9) Promotion and Outreach

- Cross Promotional Campaign
 - Web pages;
 - Social Media; and
 - Print Media.

Trail Improvements



Trail Type

Hiking Trail	Biking Trail
Proposed (Short-Term)	Proposed (Short-Term)
Proposed (Long-Term)	Proposed (Long-Term)
Paddling Trail	Biking Loop
Proposed (Short-Term)	Proposed (Short-Term)
Proposed (Long-Term)	Proposed (Long-Term)

Access & Use

Existing Access	Existing Uses
Proposed Access	Proposed Use
Proposed Bridge	

Conserved Lands

Publicly Accessible
Publicly Owned
Conservation Easement
Not in Corridor

John Burroughs Black Creek Trail

4 | Implementation

Improvements, Timeline & Funding

Completing the Trail

Implementing the John Burroughs Black Creek Trail (JBBC Trail) involves making many improvements to existing parks and preserves, and acquisition of a critical public access easement. Individual project partners will take leading roles in completing different aspects of the project and will collaborate on shared tasks, such as a cohesive signage and wayfinding system. The map to the left and the chart below outline the major tasks needed to complete the trail.

Property	Access Point	Trail Improvements							Signage			Other			Notes
		Hiking Trail	Biking Trail	Paddling Trail	Mount. Biking	Bike/Ped Bridge	Boat Launch	Trail Blazing	Trail Head	Info Kiosk	Parking Lot	UCAT Stop	Access		
Scenic Hudson Black Creek Preserve	Creek Mouth	○	○	●			●	●		●	○	●	●	Scenic Hudson Black Creek Preserve has many existing improvements. A kayak/canoe launch would broaden its use.	
	Pedestrian Bridge	○													
	9W Entrance	○						●	●	●	○	●			
Payne Estate Stone Barns	9W Crossing	●						●	●	●				Payne Estate Stone Barns are the critical gap in the JBBC Trail. A hiking trail will be added after an easement is secured.	
	Public Access Easement	●											●		
	CSX Crossing	●				●		●							
Scenic Hudson Gordon Property	CSX Crossing	●				●		●						Scenic Hudson Gordon Property has one existing trail that will be extended. Looping trails and parking are recommended.	
	N Burroughs Drive	●									●				
	Pond Road	○						●	●	●					
John Burroughs Nature Sanctuary	Pond lane	◐	●				●	●	●	●				The Nature Sanctuary has many high-quality trails, but lacks formal parking areas, gateway signs or bike racks. JBA also wants to expand and improved the trail network.	
	Slabside	◐	●					●	●	●	●				
	S Burroughs Drive	●										●			
	DEC BCSF	●	●												
NYS DEC Black Creek State Forest	JBNS	●						●						Improving access and connection within the Black Creek State Forest is critical to the success of the JBBC Trail. New trail heads, parking lots, formalized trails a kayak/canoe pull out, and a bike/ped bridge are recommended.	
	Timberline Trail	●							●		●				
	Black Creek Crossing	●		●	●	●	●	●	●						
	Martin Avenue	●							●		●		●		
NYS DEC Chodikee Lake Boat Launch	N Chodikee Lake Road	●	●		●			●	●	●	●			The Chodikee Lake Boat Launch needs improvements to parking and signage.	
	Route 299 Entrance		●	○	●	●	○	●	●	●	●	●	●	A new bike/ped bridge and crossing at 299 would improve connections for the JBBC Trail.	
Hudson Valley Rail Trail	Tony Williams Park									●	○			Hudson Valley Rail Trail has many existing improvement. A connection to Illinois Mountain would complete the southern portion of the JBBC Trail.	
	Black Creek Crossing		◐	○											
	Rotary Pavilion		◐					●	●	●	○				
	Illinois Mountain	●	●		●			●	●	●			●		
	Highland									●	○	●			
Illinois Mountain & Berean Park	Hudson Valley Rail Trail	●	●		●			●	●	●			●	A connection to HVRT would complete the southern portion of the JBBC Trail.	
	Reservoir Rd Entrance	○	◐					●	●	●					

● New ◐ Improved ○ Existing

Potential Funding Sources

The John Burroughs Black Creek Trail (JBBC Trail) is a complex project that crosses multiple properties that are owned by different nonprofits, municipalities and state agencies. Each organization operates individually and makes their own capital improvement plans. Completing the JBBC Trail will require collaboration between these organizations for find money for desired improvements and apply for grant funding from regional, state and federal sources. Together, they will be able to keep the project moving forward by implementing the short-term, mid-term, and long-term phases of the JBBC Trail.

Grant Opportunities

(A) New York State Consolidated Funding Application

The Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) is the largest opportunity for grant funding from New York State. The grants are usually open in late spring, are due mid-summer, and awards are announced late in the fall. The variety and size of grants available makes this one of the best opportunities for packaging multiple projects together into a single application. Applicants need to start planning early because most of these grants require a 50/50 match. Municipalities, Non-Profits, and For-Profits can all apply for these funds, depending on the specific grant.

(B) Hudson Valley River Greenway

The Hudson Valley River Greenway offers small to medium sized grants several times a year. These grants usually have a 50/50 match requirement, but have relatively short applications and quick turn around, making them an excellent opportunity for smaller projects or if a small source of matching funds become available. Municipalities and non-profits can both apply.

(C) Land Trust Alliance

The Land Trust Alliance is a national organization that offers grants to Land Trusts in New York State through a partnership with the Department of Environmental Conservation. These grants are medium sized, have a 75/25 match requirement, and are usually due in early December with award noticed coming early in the spring. Grants are only available to Land Trusts.

(D) Hudson River Tidal Estuary

Hudson River Estuary grants are aimed at conserving or improving clean water quality and habitat of the Hudson River. These grants are medium sized, and are usually due in the spring. Grants are available to non-profits or municipalities.

Potential Direct or Matching Funds

(A) Partner Organizations

Each of the major project partners has their own capital and operational budgets. Much of this money has been already allocated towards specific improvements or operational expenses and is not directly available for implementing the JBBC Trail; however, this money can often serve as matching funds for grant applications, allowing them to be leveraged into successful grant applications.

(B) Volunteer and Donated Services

Volunteers and donated professional services are excellent opportunities for in-kind matching funds. Volunteer community members can often help install improvements, but most grants limit the number of hour that qualify. Professional services are the best source of match because the reduce the overall budget of the project.

(C) Cash Donations

Cash donations are the second best source of funding after donated services. While they don't reduce the overall budget of the project, they are the most flexible form of matching fund and are often preferred by grant funding agencies.

(D) Crowd-Sourced Funding

Crowd-sourcing has become a major avenue for fundraising in recent years. Go-Fund Me and Indiegogo have made it easy to collect small donations for specific projects or products from interested community members, but has not been broadly used to match grand funding. Non-profits can also run small-dollar funding campaigns. Both can take a long time to raise funds.

Grant Funding

Grants are a type of financial award given by one organization to another without the requirement of repayment. Federal, state and local governmental agencies, non-profit organizations, and private foundations typically give grants to enable local decision making and implement a wide variety of projects. Most grants come with restrictions, fund a specific project, and require a report on how and/or where the money was spent.

Matching Funding

Most grant agencies are only willing to fund a portion of the overall cost of a project. The gap between the overall cost and the amount offered by the grant must come from another source, and is referred to as the "matching requirement" or simply the "match." Matching funds can come in the form of cash, donated services or materials—often called "in-kind" donations—or other grants.

The JBBC Trail project partners will work together to identify existing or planned projects, services, or potential sources of cash that can serve as matching funds and align them with potential grant applications.

John Burroughs Black Creek Trail 4.3| Implementation Timeline

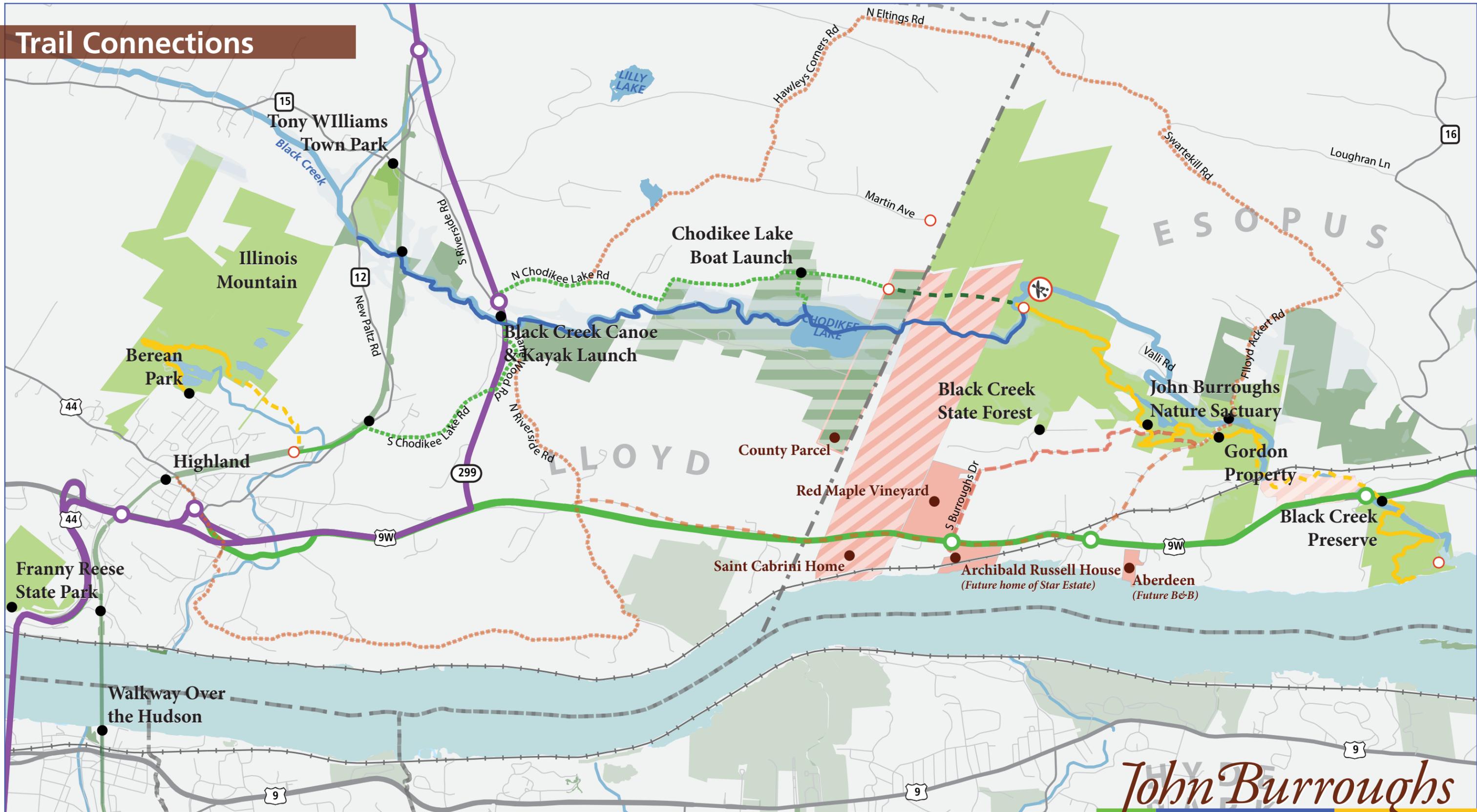
Roadmap to Success

The Implementation Timeline lays out an aggressive plan for designing, funding and completing the JBBC Trail.

Hiking Trails		Notes	2017					2018												
			J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Illinois Mountain to Hudson Valley Rail Trail	Apply for CFA 2017 Funding to Implement		█																	
	Award Notification	*Dependent on CFA 2016 award.						█	█											
	Sign Contract	*Dependent on CFA 2016 award.														█	█			
	Select Contractor	*Dependent on CFA 2016 award.															█	█		
	Construct Trail	*Dependent on CFA 2016 award.																█	█	
John Burroughs Nature Sanctuary	Apply for CFA 2017 Funding to Implement		█																	
	Apply for Funding	*Dependent on CFA 2016 award.						█	█											
	Award Notification	*Dependent on CFA 2016 award.															█	█		
	Sign Contract	*Dependent on CFA 2016 award.															█	█		
	Construct Trail	*Dependent on CFA 2016 award.																█	█	
Biking Trails		Notes	2016					2017												
			J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Chodikee Lake Road Connection (Hudson Valley Rail Trail to DEC Chodikee Lake Boat Launch)	Apply for HVG Grant Funding to Implement	Part of Wayfinding System; must wait for design to be finalized.								█	█									
	Award Notification	****Dependent on HVGG award.																		
	Sign Contract	****Dependent on HVGG award.																		
	Select Contractor	****Dependent on HVGG award.																		
	Intall Signs	****Dependent on HVGG award.																		
Western Connector (N Chodikee Lake Road to John Burroughs Nature Sanctuary)	See Above	Trail can be designated and marked at same time as above.																		
Paddling Trails		Notes	2016					2017												
			J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Chodikee Lake Road Connection (Hudson Valley Rail Trail to DEC Chodikee Lake Boat Launch)	Incorporate into DEC Unit Management Plan	Depends on DEC's timeline for UMP.						█	█											
	Apply for Hudson Valley Greenway Grant	Trail section will need to wait for UMP process to finish before being implemented.																		
	Award Notification	****Dependent on HVGG award.																		
	Sign Contract	****Dependent on HVGG award.																		
	Intall Signs	****Dependent on HVGG award.																		
Signage and Wayfinding		Notes	2016					2017												
			J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Branding, Wayfinding and Signage Design	Develop RFP	Begin process once plan presented to communities.						█												
	Select Consultant	LTA 2015 Grant Secured.																		
	Develop Design	LTA 2015 Grant Secured.																		
	Finalize Design	LTA 2015 Grant Secured.																		
Unified Blazing	Apply for LTA/HVG Grant to implement	Blazing design part of Wayfinding system.						█												
	Award Notification	***Dependent on HVGG award.																		
	Sign Contract	***Dependent on HVGG award.																		
	Select Contractor	***Dependent on HVGG award.																		
	Install Signs	***Dependent on HVGG award.																		
Unified Signage and Interpretive Kiosks	Apply for CFA 2017 fundign to implement	Could use LTA grant if budget is low enough.																		
	Award Notification	*Dependent on CFA 2017 award.																		
	Sign Contract	*Dependent on CFA 2017 award.																		
	Select Contractor	*Dependent on CFA 2017 award.																		
	Construct Signs	*Dependent on CFA 2017 award.																		
	Install Signs	*Dependent on CFA 2017 award.																		

Access Improvements		Notes	2016					2017												
			J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
DEC Black Creek State Forest and Gordon Property Access Improvements	Add projects for DEC Unit Management Plan.	Depends on DEC's timeline for UMP.						█	█											
	Expendature Plan	**** Dependent on UMP.																		
	Design	**** Dependent on UMP.																		
	Construct	**** Dependent on UMP.																		
Public Transit Access Improvements	Negotiate official transit stops with UCAT.	Start Negotiations after Towns adopt JBBC Trail Plan.																		
	Add stops to UCAT maps																			
	Install Signs																			
John Burroughs Nature Sanctuary Access Improvements	Apply for CFA 2017 fundign to implement																			
	Award Notification	*Dependent on CFA 2017 award.																		
	Sign Contract	*Dependent on CFA 2017 award.																		
	Select Contractor	*Dependent on CFA 2017 award.																		
	Construct Signs	*Dependent on CFA 2017 award.																		
	Install Signs	*Dependent on CFA 2017 award.																		
Environmental Management		Notes	2016					2017												
			J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Black Creek Corridor Environmental Management Plan	Add project to DEC Unit Management Plan	Depends on DEC's timeline for UMP.						█	█											
	Environmental Survey	**** Dependent on UMP.																		
	Write Plan	**** Dependent on UMP.																		
	Adopt Plan	**** Dependent on UMP.																		
Historic Property Reuse		Notes	2016					2017												
			J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Incorporate Reuse of Historic Properties into Comprehensive Plan	Add plan to scope.	Esopus will take lead after Town adopt JBBC Trail Plan.																		
	Advise																			
	Write Plan																			
	Adopt Plan																			
Active Rcreation Business		Notes	2017					2018												
			J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Attract Active Recreation Business to Lloyd or Esopus	Apply for HVG grant to develop business plan.	Business groups or Towns apply for grant.																		
	Award Notification	***Dependent on HVGG award.																		
	Sign Contract	***Dependent on HVGG award.																		
	Select Contractor	***Dependent on HVGG award.																		
	Develop Plan	***Dependent on HVGG award.																		
	Market Plan	***Dependent on HVGG award.																		
Secure Business	***Dependent on HVGG award.																			
Advertizing and Outreach		Notes	2018					2019												
			J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Advertizing and Outreach Plan	Apply for HVG grant to fund implementation.	Promotional grant after completing wayfinding instalation																		
	Award Notification	***Dependent on HVGG award.																		
	Sign Contract	***Dependent on HVGG award.																		
	Select Contractor	***Dependent on HVGG award.																		
	Develop Plan	***Dependent on HVGG award.																		
	Market Trail	***Dependent on HVGG award.																		

Trail Connections



Redevelopment Access & Use

- Active Site
- Potential Site
- Concentrated Redevelopment
- Existing Access
- Proposed Access
- A Existing Uses
- B Proposed Use
- Proposed Bus Stop
- New Paltz UCAT
- Kingston UCAT
- Bicycling Loop
- Walking Route

Conserved Lands

- Publicly Accessible
- Publicly Owned
- Conservation Easement
- Not in Corridor

John Burroughs Black Creek Trail

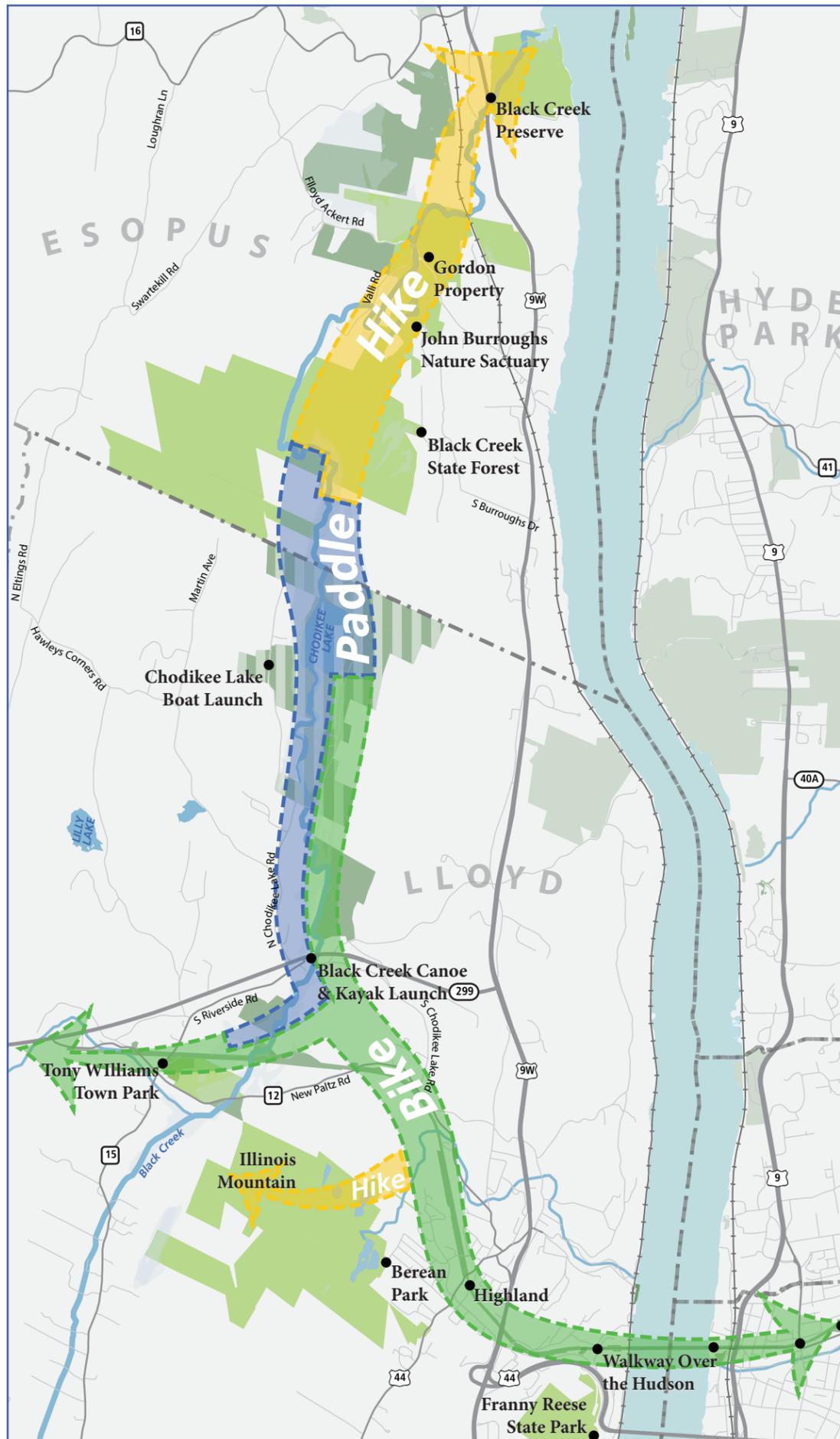
Appendices

Community Meeting Summaries

John Burroughs Black Creek First Community Meeting

Concept Map

-  Hiking Trail
-  Paddling Trail
-  Biking Trail



Conserved Lands

-  Publicly Accessible
-  Publicly Owned
-  Conservation Easement
-  Not in Corridor

1 Mile



Presenting the Concept

The first community meeting was held to publicly present the concept of the John Burroughs/Black Creek Trail, and receive some initial feedback to inform the plan. This public meeting was held at the Esopus Town Hall on Thursday, March 31, 2016. The meeting was attended by 65 people from the two Towns and surrounding areas. This strong turnout included many new faces that had not been included in the earlier rounds of stakeholder meetings, demonstrating strong community interest in the trail and effective promotion by the Steering Committee members.

The community meeting was organized into two segments: a presentation and an interactive workshop. Several students from Marist College also attended as part of a class on City Planning, and lent assistance to the project team throughout the evening.

Presentation

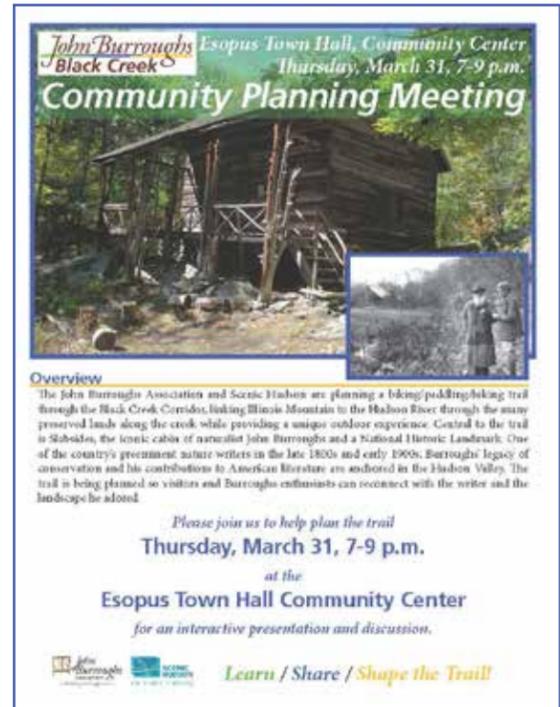
The meeting kicked off with opening remarks and an oral history of John Burroughs' legacy and connection to the area. This overview then led into a presentation of the trail's concept, where the project currently stood, and a road map for future phases. The following question and answer segment was extremely positive, and focused on the breadth of activities that would be supported by the trail and how quickly the project could be advanced. The one major concern raised during this session was over ecological impacts to the corridor due to increased interest and activity.

Community Workshop

After the presentation of the project, attendees were asked to answer a series of multiple questions to help inform the planning process. These questions were multiple choice and were presented on four posters located around the room. Attendees were asked to mark their responses to the questions on the posters, and were also encouraged to leave question or comments. Not all attendees participated, and not all participants responded to all the questions, which may have been due to a lack of interest in participating or may have been due to a large number of sidebar conversations that sprung up after the presentation.

Responses that were received were normalized based on the number of respondents to that particular question, ranked based on response rate and placed into five categories: High, Moderately High, Moderate, Moderately Low and Low interest. The full analysis can be found in the following section, but this process helped to tease out several key takeaways after the community meeting:

- Parks with good access are well used, parks with limited access are not, and parking was a major issue.
- People were most interested in hiking, bicycling and kayaking, but some also supported mountain biking.
- Web pages were almost always looked at prior to using a trail, but only few used phone apps.
- People were most interested in learning more about Burroughs' local connection, but not his writing.
- Environmental impact of increased activity needs to be carefully managed.



The meeting was cross-promoted via email, Facebook and fliers placed around town by the Steering Committee members and the project team. This promotional period was started three weeks prior to the meeting, and included several email and social media blasts. The Esopus Business Alliance also included the meeting in their newsletter, and the Fats in the Cats, a local mountain biking group, ensured that their network was well-represented.



Over 65 people attended the first community meeting.

Five Major Take-Aways

Access Improves Use

Access to conserved lands is inconsistent along the corridor. Unsurprisingly, conserved areas with good access--lands with parking lots, trail heads and proximity to major roads-- are well used by respondents, while areas with limited access are not. Parking was highlighted as a major issue at the John Burroughs Nature Sanctuary and DEC Black Creek State Forest, and there was moderate support for improving parking throughout the corridor.

Interestingly, the John Burroughs Nature Sanctuary was a major destination for respondents, despite limited parking and a lack of signage. These responses indicate that the Sanctuary would attract even higher use with better facilities.

Let's Go Hiking!

People were most interested in hiking, bicycling and kayaking in the region. These activities correspond to the three main activities planned for the John Burroughs/Black Creek Trail. However, there was also strong support mountain biking in the region.

While mountain biking is more impactful than the other activities, it would also allow users to conceivably do the whole corridor with one mode of transit. Given the interest among respondents, opportunities for sustainable inclusion of mountain biking as an activity should be explored.

People Don't Use Apps (Yet)

All respondents reported looking at web pages and many checked out brochures either before or at the trail prior to using it, but only few used phone apps. These responses indicate that the project should prioritize developing a trail web page, integrating the trail into Google Maps and developing a comprehensive brochure should be prioritized over more expensive, technologically driven ways of attracting users.

What did John Burroughs do?

Respondents were largely familiar with John Burroughs as a person and had some degree of familiarity with his writing, but were not very interested in learning more about either. What they were most interested in learning about was Burroughs' local connection; where he went, where he wrote, and what he thought about Esopus and Lloyd were the most intriguing.

Given that the John Burroughs/Black Creek Trail will run through his "historic back yard," completing the trail offers a great opportunity to connect locals and visitors to where he went and what he thought about the land around him.

Protect for Future Generations

The only major concern about the project that was voiced during the community meeting was that increased activity could negatively impact environmental integrity of the corridor.

Give this concern, impact of increased activity needs to be carefully managed to protect and preserve the landscape.

Questions and Responses

What do you like to do in nature?

- Hiking
- Biking
- Kayaking/Canoeing
- Mountain Biking
- Birding
- Trail Running
- Fishing
- Hunting
- Group Trips
- Photography
- Swimming

Response

- High
- High
- Moderately High
- Moderate
- Moderately Low
- Moderately Low
- Low
- Low
- Low
- Low
- Low

Comments

Respondents expressed a high level of interest in hiking, biking and paddling in nature--the three main activities intended for the JBBC Trail, showing strong support for the initial trail concept.

Respondents also signified a strong interest in Mountain Biking, indicating that this activity should be incorporated into trail planning where appropriate. They expressed some interest in birding, trail running and fishing, but little interest in hunting, group trips, nature photography and swimming. This community meeting, however, was not well-advertised to these user groups.

Where do you access the trail now?

- Black Creek Preserve
- John Burroughs Nature Sanctuary
- Tony Williams Town Park
- DEC Chodikee Lake Boat Launch
- Walkway over the Hudson (West Gateway)
- Black Creek Canoe and Kayak Launch
- Illinois Mountain
- Franny Reese State Park
- Hudson Valley Rail Trail
- Walkway Over the Hudson (East Gateway)
- DEC Black Creek State Forest
- Gordon Property

Response

- High
- Moderately High
- Moderately High
- Moderately High
- Moderately High
- Moderate
- Moderately Low
- Moderately Low
- Moderately Low
- Moderately Low
- Low
- Low

Comments

Major properties were all well used by respondents and attendants, despite access and parking issues at some locations, such as John Burroughs Nature Sanctuary. Respondents only lightly use DEC Black Creek State Forest, likely due to lack of parking and direct access. Southern conserved areas were less well used, generally, likely due to the large number of Respondents from Esopus.

What would make using the trail easier?

- Parking
- Trail Guide
- Kayak Rental
- Boat Launches
- Public Transit
- Bike Racks
- Mountain Bike Trails
- Programming

Response

- Moderate
- Moderate
- Moderately Low
- Moderately Low
- Low
- Low
- Low
- Low

Comment

Respondents highlighted a moderate demand for additional parking and a cohesive trail guide for the entire corridor. Some respondents felt it would be good to have a kayak rental within the corridor, but not for additional boat launches. Few respondents felt public transit or bicycles would improve access, as all owned a car. Respondents also mentioned more access points, Mountain Bike Trails and programing would enhance public use.

Are you familiar with John Burroughs?

- History
- Local Connection
- Legacy
- Writing

Response

- High
- Moderately High
- Moderately High
- Moderate

Comment

Respondents were very familiar with John Burroughs history, legacy, writing and local connection. The local Esopus library features a large reading section dedicated to Burroughs, and several reading groups exist. However, Respondents were least familiar with Burroughs writing.

Would you like to learn about his?

- Local Connection
- Writing
- Legacy
- History

Response

- Moderately High
- Low
- Low
- Low

Comment

Respondents expressed a strong urge to learn about Burroughs connection to the local area. They would like to know his favorite spots, where he brought visitors and where he spoke - his life and work interpreted locally and made relevant to visitors and residents. There was a low level of interest in his history, legacy or writing, though some Respo

What do you look at before using a trail?

- Website
- Brochure
- Phone App
- Just go!

Response

- High
- Moderate
- Moderately Low
- Moderately Low

Comment

Respondents reported using websites the most when planning a trip outdoors. Many also used Brochures, and some people looked at phone apps. Few people went without looking at anything.

What phone apps do you use for trails?

- Google Maps
- Trail Specific
- All Purpose (such as Map My Ride)
- Other

Response

- High
- Moderately Low
- Low
- Low

Comment

Respondents reported using Google Maps the most for trails. Very few reported using phone apps, though the most popular were Map-My-Ride and Strava (a cycling and running app).

Will increased use impact enjoyment?

- Positively
- Negatively
- Not at All!
- Other

Response

- High
- Moderately Low
- (No Responses)
- (No Responses)

Comment

Respondents felt that increased use of the corridor would positively affect their appreciation of the natural areas. However, Respondents also highlight the need to study wildlife and habitats to ensure increased use does not damage the local ecology. Conservation could also be worked into the programing, signage and wayfinding.

John Burroughs Black Creek Second Community Meeting

Presenting the Recommendations

The second community meeting was held to publicly present the recommendations for the John Burroughs Black Creek Trail Plan, receive comments from community members, and help prioritize implementation items. This public meeting was held at the Esopus Town Hall on Thursday, February 16, 2017. The meeting was attended by 12 people from the two Towns and surrounding areas. This group included a few new faces, but mostly included people from the earlier rounds of stakeholder meetings. The low turnout was likely due to the weather, and due to three previous presentations of the recommendations at the Town Boards for both the Town of Lloyd and the Town of Esopus, as well as a presentation at the Town of Esopus Library.

The community meeting was organized into two segments: a presentation and an interactive workshop. Several Steering Committee members were on hand to help facilitate.

Presentation

The meeting kicked off with opening remarks from Joan Burroughs on the national attention the corridor received from National Geographic in their December issue. The presentation kicked off with an overview of the concept, process, where the project currently stood, and a road map for future phases, before launching into an overview of the nine recommendations. The following question and answer segment was positive. Some questions were raised about why economic development was included among the recommendations aspects in the recommendations, as well as whether additional land acquisition was currently being planned. The project team explained that the economic development aspects were aimed at improving usability and regional recognition of the trail, and that no major land acquisition projects are currently planned.

Community Workshop

After the presentation of the project, attendees were asked to rank the recommendations in order of priority. Details of the recommendations were located on five posters located around the room. Attendees were asked to mark their ranking on one of the posters, and were also encouraged to leave question or comments. Not all attendees participated, and none of the participants ranked all the recommendations. In talking to participants, it was revealed that many felt bad giving a low ranking to any of the recommendations because they were all seen as important. However, their responses did reveal that the following recommendations were viewed as the most important and should happen first:

1. Create an environmental management plan
2. Complete the hiking and biking trail segments
3. Conserve natural areas
4. Improve access to parks and preserves
5. Create a comprehensive branding, wayfinding, and signage system



The meeting was cross-promoted via email, Facebook and fliers placed around town by the Steering Committee members and the project team. This promotional period was started three weeks prior to the meeting, and included several email and social media blasts. The Esopus Business Alliance also included the meeting in their newsletter.

John Burroughs Black Creek Ose Road Bridge Concept

Crossing 299 & the Black Creek

New York State Route 299 is the largest and most hazardous obstacle in the whole John Burroughs Black Creek Corridor Trail. While cycles can and do ride along the shoulder of the highway, the speed of the adjacent traffic makes it very uncomfortable for many riders. Crossing the route is also an issue as many potential crossing points have short sight-lines. Routing the trail along Ose Road and crossing the Black Creek via an abandoned bridge, and creating a formal crossing point would directly address these challenges and make use of underutilized infrastructure. The Ose Road Bridge is still intact, though an engineering assessment is needed before directing riders across it. This assessment and a preliminary site plan for the 299 crossing will be included as part of the traffic impact study for the bicycling segment of the trail. Funding for these improvements will be sought after the study is complete and as part of a second phase of trail improvements.

