



Ulster County Rail Trail Project: “Ashokan Rail Trail”

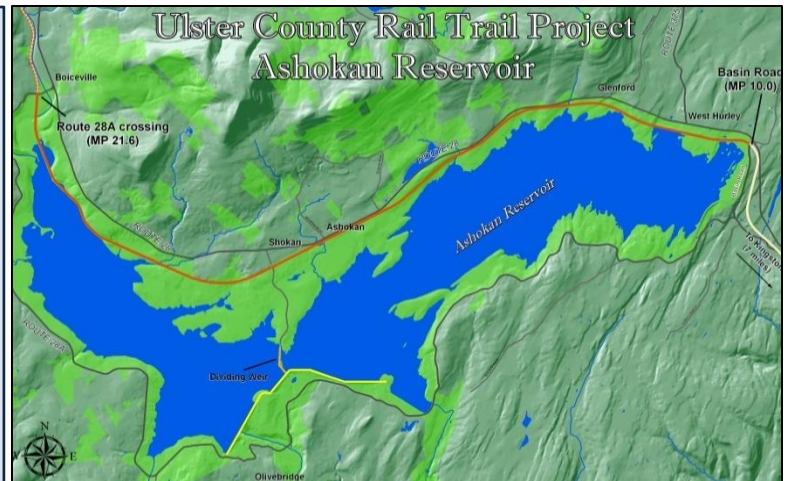
Ulster County Department of Planning- December 2016- Fact Sheet

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

Proposed in 2012 by County Executive Mike Hein, the *Ashokan Rail Trail (ART)* will create an 11.5-mile recreational trail along the northern edge of the Ashokan Reservoir between West Hurley and Boiceville. The ART will be developed on the County-owned Ulster & Delaware (U&D) Railroad Corridor pursuant to Ulster County Legislative Resolution No. 488 of December 2015 and in cooperation with the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). The ART segment of the U&D has not been used for train service in 40 years and was delineated for conversion to a rail trail as part of the County’s segmented “rail-with-trail” policy, which also allowed tourism rail operations in the Kingston and Mount Tremper segments of the U&D corridor.

Planning, preliminary engineering design, and environmental review for the ART began in June 2016 and construction is slated to begin in late 2017. The ART will be 10 to 12 feet in width and surfaced with a compacted crushed stone surface. The project includes drainage improvements, regrading of the former railbed, installation of signage and fencing, development of trail amenities, and connection to three major trailheads, which are being designed and constructed by the DEP. The construction will include replacement of the destroyed Boiceville Trestle and replacement of the failed major culvert at Butternut Creek as well as measures to protect water quality in the Ashokan Reservoir. The ART will also include interpretive signage regarding the history of the Ashokan Reservoir, Esopus Valley communities, U&D Railroad and Catskill Park.

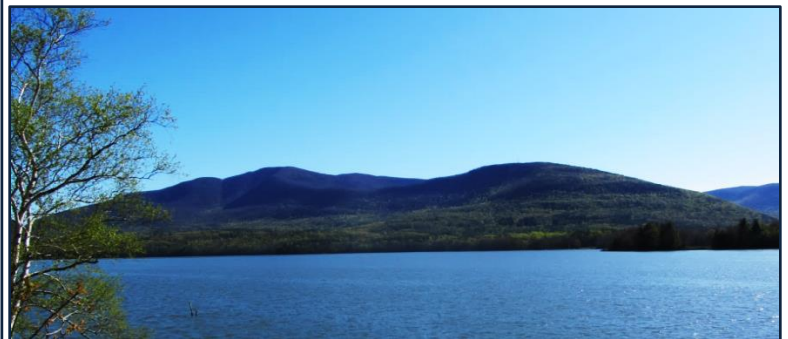
Once completed, the ART will be open to the public dawn-to-dusk, year-round for non-motorized uses, such as hiking, bicycling, running, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing. The ART will provide the first public access to the incredibly scenic northern shores of the Ashokan Reservoir without a special DEP permit in more than a century. The ART will also be a key component of a developing interconnected rail trail system linking the Walkway Over the Hudson to the Catskill Park.



PROJECT GOALS:

The ART is part of Ulster County’s initiative to develop its growing rail trail network into a world-class trail system extending from the Walkway Over the Hudson to the Ashokan Reservoir and Catskill Park. The goals of the ART include:

- *Promoting tourism and economic development*
- *Expanding outdoor recreational opportunities*
- *Improving public health through exercise*
- *Linking communities to open space and nature*
- *Providing trail opportunities for persons with disabilities and limited mobility*
- *Improving fishing/ hunting access on DEP lands*
- *Enhancing the quality of life in Ulster County*



**PUBLIC COMMENTS ARE
WELCOMED AND CAN BE SENT TO:**

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