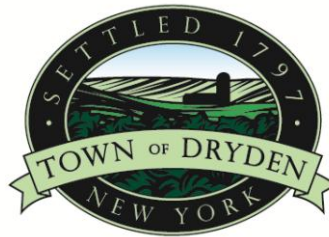


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**PRESS RELEASE**

**November 1, 2017 – For Immediate Release**

**Town Leadership and DEC Reach Breakthrough Agreement for the Dryden Rail Trail**

Dryden Deputy Supervisor Dan Lamb announced this week that the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation has confirmed they will grant the town's request to let the Dryden Rail Trail traverse state property on Game Farm Road. Securing access to this section of the trail will allow the trail to open from Game Farm Road to Route 13, and ultimately all the way to the village of Dryden. The DEC property has long been one of the two biggest obstacles for the trail; for years, local leaders have petitioned DEC to allow the trail to cross its property, but the request was never granted.

Following a year-long series of phone calls, letters, emails, and a meeting with the Deputy Commissioner, Lamb was able to convene a meeting last month at the Game Farm offices with stakeholders, members of the Rail Trail Task Force, town staff members, and the DEC. He and Supervisor Jason Leifer pitched their plan to DEC staff, who agreed to review the proposal. Last week, they agreed to negotiate an agreement with the town of Dryden. This final 2600 feet, Lamb hopes, will build the momentum needed to secure a few remaining easements near Etna, thus allowing completion of the 10.5 mile long project.

"Community members are doing everything we hoped for when we designed the initiative – and more" stated Lamb. "We have tremendous volunteers of all ages already doing brush clearing and path building, a true reflection of Dryden's can-do spirit. We are deeply grateful to all our volunteers -- and now to DEC -- for allowing this project to move forward."

"While the rail trail fits our overall plan to increase recreational opportunities and improve the quality of life for Dryden residents, it also has an important economic development component," stated Town Supervisor Jason Leifer. "Studies show that trails mean business and I am grateful that DEC recognizes how important this project is to our town's future and is committed to working with us."

"Getting trail access through DEC's Game Farm property has been a major goal of ours since I was appointed Chair of the Rail Trail Task Force," stated Freeville resident, Bob Beck. "I am delighted that we were able to work together to achieve this goal."

Over the eighteen months since the Town Board created the Rail Trail Task Force, the effort has succeeded in securing easements -- or firm pledges -- on 37 parcels of land among the 48 needed to connect the trail. This accounts for 8.1 miles of the needed 10.5 mile trail.

The Rail Trail Task Force was established by the Town Board through a unanimous resolution in the spring of 2016. The Task Force and Friends of the Dryden Rail Trail hold a joint meeting each month and welcome new members. Details are available on the Town of Dryden website.

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