

Task Force consideration of an alternative route for the Dryden Rail Trail between Pinckney Road and Route 13

Between spring 2016 and summer 2017, the Rail Trail Task Force gave consideration to the possibility of routing the portion of Dryden Rail Trail from Pinckney Road west to Route 13 away from the former Lehigh Valley rail bed in order to closely parallel Fall Creek and to use the Fall Creek bridge underpass at Route 13.

At that time, Bob Beck “bushwhacked” through that wild stretch which has no paths or hiking trails. What he found was that he had to cross two steep-sided ravines, several small streams and a sizable low wetland area.

Recognizing,

(1) that the potential route was ecologically-sensitive and located within a Cornell Botanic Gardens protected Natural Area (a part of the Monkey Run Natural Area and designated as a Tompkins County Unique Natural Area);

(2) that Cornell Botanic Gardens had indicated approval would not be granted there for construction of our 10'-wide multi-use trail; and

(3) that a ready-made direct route, favorably passing through a developing commercial node and protected from encroachment by the Town's sewer and water easement, already existed on the former rail bed,

further consideration of the Fall Creek route was ruled out.

Soon thereafter, for the chosen route,

(1) the Town received donated trail easements from Hanson Aggregates LLC and from Pro-Lawn LLC (neither, traversing their driveways or used portions of their properties), assuring trail access between Pinckney and Hall Woods Roads, and

(2) encouraged by NYSDOT, a Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grant, NYS Multi-Modal grants and a County Tourism Program grant, totaling over \$2 million, were received for design and construction of a pedestrian bridge over Route 13.