



Nature Across Boundaries Conserving Trail Corridors

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Mohonk Consultations

Presented

by

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Connecting People with Nature since 1920

New York-New Jersey Trail Conference

- Mission
 - A volunteer-powered organization that builds, maintains and protects public trails in greater metropolitan New York.





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Long Distance Trails

“The Model”

Appalachian Trail

The 2,200 mile A.T. connected many existing parks and created many new parks.

“The Case Study”

Shawangunk Ridge Trail

Part of the Long Path, a 1930's landmark to landmark route that was blazed in the 1960's





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Process of Creating a Conservation Corridor

1. Ideas (So much fun)
2. Planning the Route (Many choices, many obstacles)
3. Securing the Route (Borrow or Buy)
4. Making it public land (Get in line)
5. Stewardship (Community engagement)





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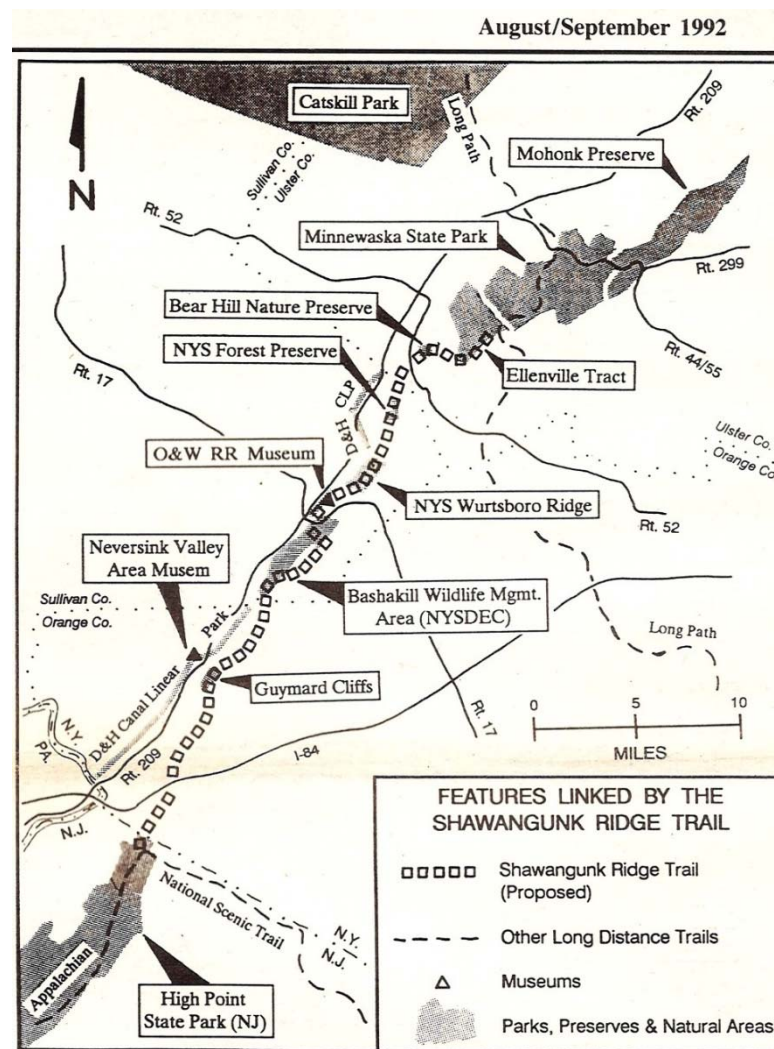
#1. Idea: “a Shawangunk Ridge Trail!”





#'s 2&3: Planning & Securing the Route

- Property by property
- Land trust partners are a must; agency and municipal partners are required.
- Negotiate a revocable access agreement – gives time to develop relationship and land owner agreement to sell. Termination and loss of invested time and effort is a risk.
- Eminent Domain is rarely an option, massive patience and diplomacy is a must





#4: Making it Public Land

Transfer property to NYS ownership involves three separate approvals from the Agency, the Attorney General and the Comptroller

1. Start with agency approval
2. Conduct quality due diligence, especially a clear title for the Attorney General.
3. Remove all environmental hazards and attractive nuisances
4. Aggregate properties into 500 acres or contiguous with existing public lands



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#5: Corridor Stewardship & Community Engagement

1. Volunteer engagement
2. Trail construction & maintenance
3. Boundary monitoring & defense
4. Monitor & manage rare and invasive species
5. Trail stewards and hotspots
6. Neighbor relations
7. Eyes & Ears





Lessons Learned

- Corridors are hard to piece together
 - The wilderness concept is a high bar
 - Private property
 - Small gaps threaten a corridor's viability
 - Public lands requirements
- Corridors are hard to manage
 - Variety of jurisdictions and management
 - Extensive property boundaries are difficult to manage
 - Narrow corridors are not conducive for overnight facilities





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What Works

- 25 years of trail has improved recreation and quality of life
- Fishers reported entering NJ via the Shawangunk Ridge.
- Over 4000 acres have been acquired and protected since 2003. 4 State Forests created and another expanded.
- Parallel trails have been helped by acquisition made for the SRT.

