



Granite Mountain Preserve

A Legacy Landscapes Project of the Hudson Highlands Land Trust

Project Overview: HHLT has recently acquired three adjoining parcels totaling 358 acres to create the Granite Mountain Preserve in the Town of Putnam Valley. This project will provide residents with a large connected natural area in the heart of the town that will serve as both public park *and* preserve. The Granite Mountain Preserve will offer many opportunities for passive recreation including hiking, birding and cross-country skiing along a network of scenic, well-defined trails. The Preserve will also serve to protect important natural resources, including wildlife and plant habitat, and water quality.



Recreation: The Granite Mountain Preserve will be open for public enjoyment. As part of an initial management plan, HHLT will improve access, creating a safe and convenient parking area off the public road. An already existing network of trails will be mapped, improved and blazed for ease of use. The entire network will consist of more than five miles of maintained, marked trails through rich rocky woodland to rugged hilltops with panoramic views. The Preserve will provide recreational opportunities for families, outdoor enthusiasts, and birders alike, as well as serve as an excellent setting for community environmental education programs.

Water Resources: Through the conservation and sound management of a connected assemblage of 358 acres of land in the heart of the Peekskill Hollow Brook watershed, HHLT will help maintain stormwater management in this area of Putnam Valley. Certain planned mitigation measures, like closing abandoned well caps on the property, will benefit residents of Putnam Valley through better protection of their aquifer. Erosion control and riparian buffer enhancement along tributaries will also benefit Hudson River habitat. Furthermore, conservation of this large swath of undeveloped land in the watershed will help ensure that drinking water for the residents of the neighboring City of Peekskill and Town of Cortlandt remains readily available and safe.



Habitat Protection: Identified as part of the Hudson Highlands Significant Biodiversity Area, the Granite Mountain Preserve is one of the largest connected natural spaces in Putnam Valley, providing ideal habitat for important species of birds, reptiles and amphibians, as well as several common species of mammal. With two peaks at above 900 feet, the preserve boasts some of the highest elevation in the Peekskill Hollow Brook watershed, making the tributaries, wetlands and intermittent streams that run through it unusually free of pollutants and ideal habitat for the grey tree frog and the Fowler toad. In spring, this rich network of wetlands, watercourses, and vernal pools provide breeding areas for species like the Eastern

(Red-Spotted) Newt. Water resources on both the eastern and western boundaries of this intact northern mesic hardwood forest also create a wonderful home for several bird species including the ovenbird, wood thrush, worm-eating warbler, and red shouldered hawk, as well as reptiles like the wood turtle. The Preserve is also an ideal habitat to a species-rich collection of flora, including waxflower shinleaf, trout lily, Dutchman's breeches, wake-robin trillium, and the threatened wild hydrangea.

For more information on the Granite Mountain Preserve project, or HHLT's other land conservation work, please contact Michelle Smith or Katrina Shindledecker at 845-424-3358.