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Speak up on the Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail and impact on habitat



Riverkeeper has voiced its concerns about the proposed Fjord Trail and its potential impacts on Hudson River habitat. You can do the same: The Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation is accepting comments on the Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail until Friday, November 18, 2016. [Click here to learn more and comment.](#)

The Fjord Trail is a proposed shared-use trail that would be located in a critical reach of the Hudson River from Cold Spring to Beacon. Over the years, this area of the Hudson has been severely impacted by industrial and recreational development. Rail lines run on both shores and several heavily polluted locations have only been partially remediated. Tourists and hikers already flock to the area to enjoy the scenic beauty of the Hudson Valley, adding to the strain on the environment and local roadways.

The Fjord Trail will have significant, negative impacts on the Hudson River, local streams, and wetlands. For example, one stretch of the Trail, from Little Stony Point to Breakneck Ridge, will involve either pile-supported structures out over the Hudson, or shoreline widening. Neither of these are good options. Pile-supported structures will disturb the river bottom and shade important shoreline ecosystems. Shoreline widening will significantly impact fish habitat. Other segments of the trail will involve stream crossings and structures over wetlands, which raise similar concerns about disturbances and habitat shading.

“From the vantage point of our patrol boat, it’s easy to see that virtually all of the shoreline in this section of the River has already been taken for human use – whether by rail lines and riprap directly along both shores, or public parks, boat clubs or the military academy. There’s no shortage of locations from which to enjoy the beauty of the Highlands, or launch a kayak, or go boating, or stroll. What is missing is significant, original, natural shoreline and shallow water habitat. The Fjord Trail could provide a wonderful recreational and scenic opportunity for the public. However, a route for the trail should be selected which eliminates any in-water and shoreline construction. The river has given us enough, and we should ask no more of it. That is especially true here, in the very shadow of Storm King, cited by all as the birthplace of American environmentalism.”

– John Lipscomb, Riverkeeper patrol boat captain and vice president for advocacy

The Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation must undertake a thorough and comprehensive review of the environmental impacts associated with the Fjord Trail.

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Riverkeeper urges OPRHP to reevaluate all viable alternatives, and make every effort to eliminate impacts to the River and its aquatic ecosystems. [Click here to read Riverkeeper's comments on the State Environmental Quality Review Draft Scoping Document.](#)

Let's enjoy the natural beauty of the Hudson Valley without causing further damage to the River.

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