

# Register-Star

## NEWS

### **CLC, Greenway to sponsor county's first trails conference**

[Print Page](#)

Published:  
Thursday, March 17, 2011 2:07 AM EDT

Columbia Land Conservancy (CLC), in partnership with the Hudson River Valley Greenway, will sponsor the county's first trail conference, Columbia County Trails, on Saturday, April 2.

The conference will be held at Columbia-Greene Community College's Professional Academic Center from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Registration forms are available on the CLC website, [www.clctrust.org/trails2011](http://www.clctrust.org/trails2011), or by calling 518-392-5252. Registration cards are also available in town halls throughout the county as well as at Steiner's Sports stores in Hudson and Valatie. Space is limited and advanced registration is required.

The morning sessions will feature trail planning experts from across the Hudson Valley region. Jeff Olson of Alta Planning in Saratoga Springs, an internationally known trail planner, will deliver the keynote presentation. There will be a panel discussion with representatives of successful trail networks speaking on issues such as how to get started, community engagement, land planning and the value of partnerships. Local trail groups will speak about the latest developments on the Columbia County portion of the Harlem Valley Rail Trail and the new Kinderhook/Stuyvesant/Stockport Intermunicipal Trail.

The conference will build toward an afternoon "visioning" session with small break-out groups to brainstorm and map potential trail opportunities in a countywide network. Attendees will have the opportunity to share ideas and information about the full spectrum of trail uses and issues — from hiking, bird watching, running and cycling to equestrian use, mountain biking, snowmobiling, health and universal access.

The conference is designed to facilitate exchange and networking. Residents and trail enthusiasts, town volunteers and elected officials are all encouraged to attend.

"The idea for a trail conference has been germinating for a couple of years," said Ellen Jouret-Epstein, who manages community programs for CLC. "A trail project is a great way to get citizens working together, and we want this conference to be a catalyst for projects throughout the county. "

CLC has planned the conference with an advisory group that includes Karl Beard of the National Park Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program.

"We're seeing far more interest in community-based trails today than even just a few years ago," Beard said. "Trails used to be limited to larger parks, and to places like the New York State Forest Preserve. Today, local volunteers are working on trails close to home, along sections of rivers or abandoned rail beds, creating safe routes to schools for their kids or linking open space to population centers. The conference is a way to bring those interests together for strength in numbers."

The advisory group also includes Nancy Stoner, trails planner with the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation; Robin Dropkin, executive director of Parks & Trails New York; and Beth Campochiaro, trails coordinator, and Scott Keller, trails and special projects director with the Hudson River Valley Greenway.

"Community trails are important for many reasons; they help to drive the economy, improve quality of life, and connect natural and cultural resources throughout the valley," said Mark Castiglione, acting executive director of the Hudson River Valley Greenway. "The Greenway is proud to be a partner with the Columbia Land Conservancy in their efforts to provide Columbia County residents and local leaders

with the tools they need to help them realize their vision for both local and regional trail connections.”

CLC has also received considerable assistance with the conference from Columbia-Greene Community College.

The cost of the conference is \$15 for early registration (by March 23) and \$18 thereafter. The cost includes morning refreshments, beverages and lunch. Attendees will also receive a resource CD. There will be ample time for questions and discussions about resources and technical assistance needed to support local trail development.

For additional information about the conference, contact Ellen Jouret-Epstein, (518) 392-5252, extension 208, or [ellen@clctrust.org](mailto:ellen@clctrust.org).

Copyright © 2011 - The Register Star Online

**[x] Close Window**