

## A “Whole Different Experience” at Windham Path

By Michael Ryan      8/28/2025

WINDHAM - There is yet another reason to visit the Windham Path, an emerald in a small town already known as the Gem of the Catskills.

Over the past decade, after being christened in 2013, the Path has become famous as a hiking/biking trail amidst panoramic rural splendor, located along Route 23 on the east side of Windham.

It is a unique spot, attracting folks who live here and those who come for a few hours, a weekend, a week or any length of stay, drawn by the surrounding beauty, the internationally-recognized skiing and more.

The smooth-stone Path was envisioned and created by the Windham Area Recreation Foundation, making a 1.5 mile circle around what was once farmland and hayfields, set alongside the meandering Batavia Kill.

Birds nest in the high grasses in the center of the round route. Thousands of people consider it a spring, summer, fall and winter haven.

Sometimes it feels, taking it all in, that time somehow stands still at the Path but something has most assuredly changed.

A year or two ago, an idea was hatched by Windham Foundation president Paul Mutter and Windham town supervisor Thomas Hoyt.

Plans were underway to possibly create little league baseball fields at the Path, addressing a community need.

The fields would be built adjacent to a pretty piece of property owned by the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).

Doing what dreamers do, Mutter and Hoyt wondered if DEP would be willing to allow their wooded lands to somehow be tied into the Path.

It was a long shot. DEP real estate is specifically reserved for non-development but nothing ventured, nothing gained so...

DEP was approached and, “right away, they were amenable,” Hoyt says, although things had to be done DEP style, not disturbing the habitat.

No problem and, in fact, perfect. A 1.7 mile trail has been carefully woven into the woods, keeping it pristinely natural (save for trail markers).

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The new trail, called the Dent Loop, is easily accessible at four entry points along the eastern boundary of the Path, and immediately impactful.

“It is a whole different experience,” Mutter said, recently moseying with Hoyt through a hemlock grove that envelops walkers in quiet.

The trail passes beaver ponds and deer who raise their heads to see who is in their house, otherwise returning safely to their nibblings.

Meanwhile, the baseball fields will be built elsewhere, on a 34-acre parcel outside the nearby hamlet of Hensonville purchased by

the Windham Foundation and turned over to the town for multiple uses.

Another idea is being hatched to ultimately link the Path to that site, materializing the original mission of community cohesiveness.

“We want to connect one jewel to another jewel,” Hoyt said, noting the new trail is for gentle foot traffic only (no horses, bikes, machines etc.).

While the Dent Loop does not belong to the Path, what matters most is that those who enter, leave it as untouched as when they arrived.

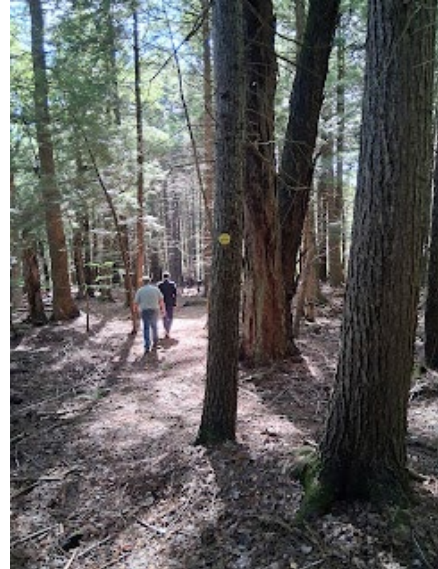


*One of two woodsy ponds serves as a respite spot on new trail adjacent to the Windham Path for Windham town supervisor Thomas Hoyt (right) and Windham Foundation president Paul Mutter, forming a community-minded partnership, working with the Department of Environmental Protection.*

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*Hemlock grove, just inside one of four entryways, peacefully envelops hikers, temporarily leaving behind the Windham Path's wide open spaces, rejoining them after a 1.7 mile, tree-shrouded saunter.*



*Families and friends safely stroll The Windham Path's new link which is off-the-beaten-trail and "well-blazed," said a quartet of visitors.*

*The Windham Path was envisioned and created by the Windham Area Recreation Foundation, on land owned and maintained by the town, becoming a beacon for the tourism-based community.*

