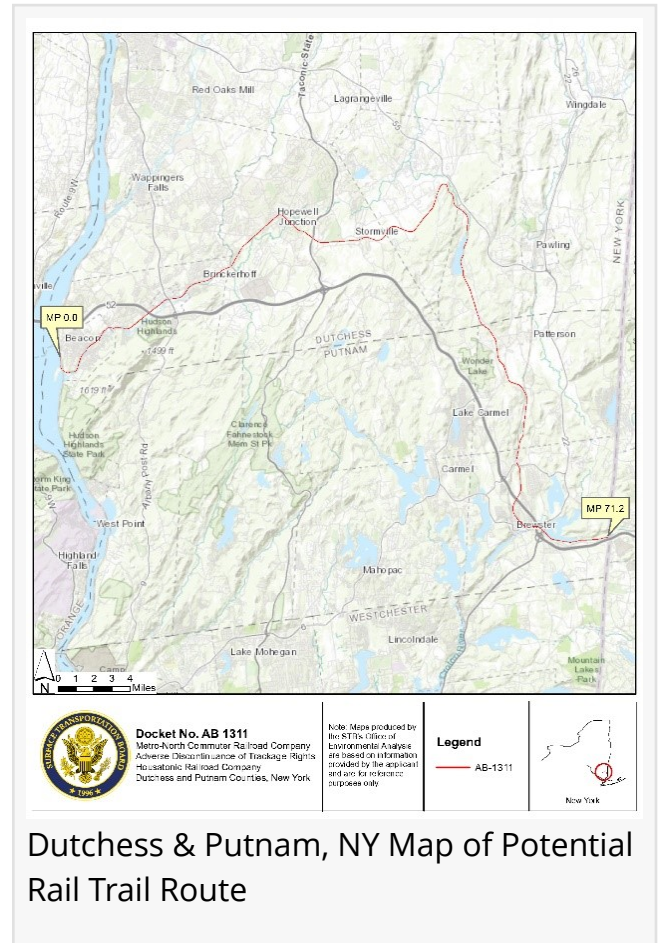


New York Landowners Bring Suit in Federal Court over Rail-Trail Extension in the Hudson Valley

HOPEWELL JUNCTION, NEW YORK, UNITED STATES , February 12, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Stewart, Wald & Smith ("SWS"), the nation's leading and only fully dedicated Rails-to-Trails law firm, has filed a lawsuit on behalf of landowners in Dutchess & Putnam Counties, New York against the federal government. This suit was filed in the United States Court of Federal Claims because of the extension of the [Empire State Trail](#) rail-trail conversion. The federal lawsuit captioned: Patrick Snee, et. al. v. United States, Case No. 24-00199, was filed on February 9, 2024.

The landowners named in the suit own land adjacent to a 41.1-mile stretch of abandoned railroad in Dutchess and Putnam Counties, New York. For some time now, government entities from Dutchess and Putnam Counties along with the Metropolitan Transportation Authority ("MTA") and the State of New York have been devising a plan to turn the inactive Metro-North railway from Beacon to the border of New York and Connecticut into a hiking trail or linear park. On February 8, 2024, the United States Transportation Board ("STB") gave its approval to convert the abandoned rail line to a recreational trail. This trail will run along the abandoned railroad, starting at the Beacon waterfront and heading east. It will go through Beacon, Fishkill, Hopewell Junction, Stormville, and into Putnam County. This would connect with the Dutchess Rail Trail, and the 750-mile Empire State Trail.

SWS has been meeting with landowners who adjoin the railroad corridor to discuss the rail-trail plans and implications on their property rights since 2021. The Trails Act permits the conversion of abandoned railroad corridors into nature and hiking trails, which simultaneously preserves the rights of way for future use. The practice is known as railbanking and prevents the land within the abandoned railroad from reverting to the adjoining landowners. It grants the trail



sponsor a new easement, thereby blocking the rights of the landowner to reclaim the property within the corridor.

SWS currently represents over 200 landowners along this planned rail-trail corridor.

Steven Wald of Stewart, Wald & Smith will be holding informational meetings for interested landowners on February 22, 2024, at 8:30 a.m., 12:00 p.m. & 5:00 p.m. and February 23, 2024, at 8:30 a.m. at the Hyatt House in Fishkill, NY.

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SWS is neutral to the trail. “This lawsuit seeks to obtain compensation for landowners for having their land taken, which is their right under the 5th Amendment of the United States Constitution. It has nothing to do with trying to stop the trail,” said attorney Steven Wald. Any lawsuit filed on behalf of a landowner is solely against the federal government and does not affect the trail project. SWS believes there are over 200 landowners who are not yet represented that still have the opportunity to bring a claim, and hopes these landowners will [contact the firm](#) to have a no-obligation conversation.

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Steven Wald

About Stewart, Wald & Smith: Stewart, Wald & Smith is a leading law firm in rails-to-trails litigation. The firm ensures the rights of landowners are protected in the complex taking of land in rail-trail conversions across the country. For more information, visit www.swslegal.com.

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