



Hudson Highlands Fjord
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 23, 2023

Breakneck Trailhead to reopen on July 1, 2023

Completion of work at Upper Overlook to repair erosion, improve access, and construct a new Trail Steward Station marks the launch of Phase 1: Breakneck Connector & Bridge of the Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail project

Fishkill, NY – Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail, Inc., the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP), and the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference (NYNJTC) announced today that the work at the Upper Overlook area of the Breakneck Trailhead will be completed on schedule. The Breakneck Trailhead, which has been closed since work began on March 1, 2023, will reopen to the public on Saturday, July 1.

The scope of this work includes the relocation of the Breakneck trailhead farther up Breakneck Ridge, repair of eroding trail surfaces, improved stormwater management along the trail, and installation of stone steps leading up to the Breakneck ascent, performed by Tahawus Trails, LC and Jolly Rovers Trail Crew, as well as the construction of a new Trail Steward Station by Gray Organschi Architecture and Heitmann Builders. Concept design for Upper Overlook was completed by SCAPE Landscape Architecture.

This initial work at Upper Overlook marks the launch of Phase 1: Breakneck Connector & Bridge of the Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail project. When completed, the Breakneck Connector & Bridge will provide the New York City Department of Environmental Protection with access to its drainage chamber, Metro-North with an enhanced train station, and will improve safety along Route 9D, a priority of the New York State Department of Transportation.

The Breakneck Trailhead property was donated to OPRHP by Metro-North Railroad to facilitate this work in the most efficient and timely manner.

“This project will greatly improve the public’s experience on this beautiful and challenging trail, help keep hikers safe, and protect the surrounding natural resources,” said Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Commissioner Erik Kulleseid. “I’m grateful to our partners at Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail and the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference for their work on the project and look forward to future steps to improve safety and better manage visitation at Breakneck Ridge and Hudson Highlands State Park.”

“Unsafe conditions in the area of the Breakneck Trailhead were a key driver of why the Fjord Trail project was envisioned,” said Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail Executive Director Amy Kacala. “Managing visitation in a way that both ensures safety for people and protects the natural resources along existing hiking trails is central to our purpose and design. These improvements at the Breakneck Trailhead illustrate how we can protect habitat while welcoming and educating visitors.”

“The location of the new Trail Steward station will no longer be directly on Route 9D,” said Hank Osborn, Director of Programs for the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference. “It will now be positioned at a safe distance from the highway to provide a more enjoyable orientation experience for visitors. Without the noise of high-speed traffic rushing past within feet of the old trailhead, we predict orientations to become even more effective at preparing hikers to travel safely and protect the natural resource they’re there to enjoy.”

The complete scope of work for the Breakneck Connector & Bridge phase of the Fjord Trail, which completed its SEQRA environmental review process in December 2022, will take place in the area just north of the tunnel on Route 9D to the Metro-North Railroad Station in the Town of Fishkill, NY. Slated to begin in winter 2023/2024, the remainder of work at Breakneck will include the construction of a shared use trail parallel to Route 9D from the Breakneck Ridge train station, new and improved parking areas, enhanced crosswalks, two trail bank areas, stormwater management enhancements, new ADA-compliant restroom facilities, and a comprehensive ecological restoration of the area with a native plant palette.

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About HHFT

Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail, Inc. (HHFT) is a subsidiary nonprofit of Scenic Hudson, Inc., an organization devoted to protecting the natural beauty of the Hudson Valley. HHFT oversees the direct planning and construction of the Fjord Trail, which is slated for completion in 2031. HHFT’s mission is to create and steward a 7.5-mile linear park along the Hudson River that solves existing safety concerns around visitation, provides welcoming access to people of all abilities, restores and protects natural resources, and enhances quality of life for local communities. The Fjord Trail, envisioned by locals nearly two decades ago, aims to address safety, manage visitation, and respect the landscape. It will add organized parking, public restrooms, trash/recycling collection, and distribute users of the park along a 7.5-mile route with six main access points. For more information, news, and timely announcements on the Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail, [please visit hhft.org/news](https://www.hhft.org/news).