



Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail
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The Harris Poll Finds Wide Support for Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail Across Project Area and Surrounding Hudson Valley Region

87% of residents who have heard of the project support it, both within the Fjord Trail project area and surrounding Hudson Valley region

Supporters in the project area cite project's environmentally conscious design, accessibility for residents of all abilities, positive impact on local economy, improved safety for hikers, and improved quality of life for residents as top reasons for supporting Fjord Trail

New York, NY – A survey conducted by The Harris Poll and commissioned by the Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail, Inc. (HHFT) found overwhelming support for the planned 7.5-mile linear park connecting Hudson Highlands State Park Preserve trailheads from Beacon to Cold Spring. The Fjord Trail project is supported by 87% of residents who have heard of the project and live in the project area: Cold Spring, Beacon, Philipstown, and Fishkill, and 87% of residents who have heard of the project and live in the surrounding Hudson Valley region also expressed their support for the Trail.

The Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail project, a private-public partnership between the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) and the nonprofit HHFT, Inc., is designed to help better manage tourism in the region, increase safety for hikers along the narrow shoulders of New York State Route 9D, and restore the landscape's ecological resilience.

Reasons for Supporting the Fjord Trail

Among residents from the project area of Cold Spring, Beacon, Philipstown, and Fishkill, the top four reasons cited for supporting the Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail were: it is designed in an environmentally conscious and resilient way (46%), it will allow residents of all abilities to enjoy the outdoors (45%), it will make their community safer for hikers (41%), and it will be good for the regional economy (41%).



**Reasons to Support the Trail
(within the Project Area)**
*Among respondents who support the project
Allowed to select more than one*



Current Outdoor Recreation and Hiking Conditions in Hudson Highlands Create Concerns

When asked about the impacts of outdoor recreation and hiking in the Hudson Highlands, the top three concerns among project area residents were: littering and trash management (42%), crowding of current public spaces (40%), and safety of pedestrians on busy roadways (e.g., 9D) (37%).

**Concerns About Outdoor Recreation and Hiking
in the Hudson Highlands (within Project Area)**
Allowed to select more than one



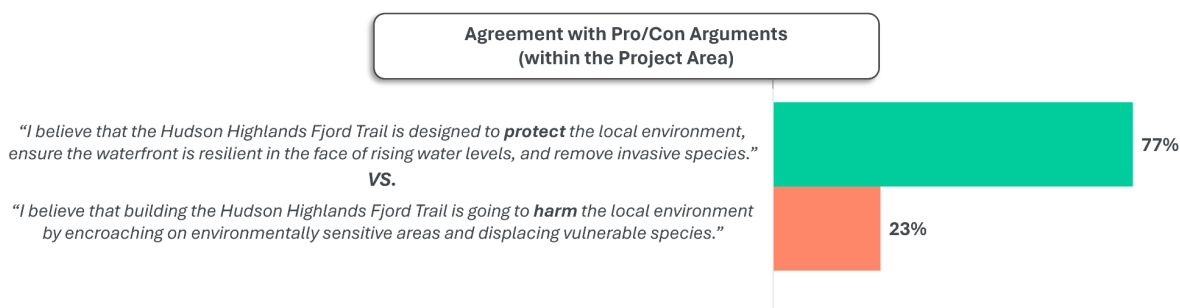
A Solution to Better Managing Tourism vs Attracting More Tourists and Burdening Communities

Residents from the project area of Cold Spring, Beacon, Philipstown, and Fishkill were more likely to believe that the Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail would be a solution to better manage tourism for the Hudson Highlands State Parks to ensure no one community bears the burden of visitors (77%) than they were to believe that the trail would attract even more visitors to the region, overburdening an already stretched community (23%).



Protecting the Environment vs Hurting the Environment

With respect to environmental protection, 77% of residents in the project area of Cold Spring, Beacon, Philipstown, and Fishkill believe the Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail is designed to protect the local environment, ensure the waterfront is resilient in the face of rising water levels, and remove invasive species, compared to 23% who believe that the project would harm the local environment by encroaching on environmentally sensitive areas and displacing vulnerable species.



“Residents from Cold Spring to Beacon and beyond see the benefits of this project and recognize that the Fjord Trail meets the region’s growing needs around tourism management, expands accessibility so that everyone can enjoy the beauty of the Hudson Highlands, and protects the landscape’s ecological resilience,” **said Amy Kacala, Executive Director of HHFT.** “With the vast majority of residents expressing support for the project, it’s clear that the region is ready to embrace the Fjord Trail – a project that has been carefully crafted with valued input from community partners. We look forward to continuing to work with our state and local partners to bring this project to fruition.”

Survey highlights from the surrounding Hudson Valley region encompassing communities between Croton-on-Hudson and Wappinger Falls, include:

- 87% of residents who have heard of the Fjord Trail project across the region support it.
- 83% acknowledge the importance of the Fjord Trail project to the Hudson Valley region and 80% acknowledge its importance to themselves personally.
- 79% believe that the Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail will provide more access for everyone to experience and enjoy the Hudson River and Hudson Highlands State Park Preserve.
- 82% believe that the Fjord Trail project is a solution to better manage tourism for Hudson Highlands State Parks, to ensure no one community bears the burden of visitors.
- 83% believe that the Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail is designed to protect the local environment, ensure the waterfront is resilient in the face of rising water levels, and remove invasive species.
- 79% believe the Fjord Trail will provide additional park facilities and resources needed by the communities in the project area.
- The top reasons for supporting the Fjord Trail project include allowing residents of all abilities to enjoy the outdoors (43%), its perceived positive impact on the regional economy (37%), how it will

improve the quality of life for residents (36%), the increased access it will provide to the river (36%), and that it is designed in an environmentally conscious and resilient way (35%).

About the Research

The Harris Poll conducted a survey online in the U.S. on behalf of Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail, Inc. among 400 Cold Spring, Philipstown, Beacon, and Fishkill (i.e., project area) residents, and 400 residents from additional communities in the Hudson Valley region (i.e., service area), ages 18+. Taken together, the project area and service area are referred to as the “surrounding Hudson Valley region” or “total region”. The survey was conducted April 3-25, 2024.

Data are weighted where necessary by age, by gender, race/ethnicity, education, and marital status, as well as county for the service area subgroup, to bring them in line with their actual proportions in the population.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in Harris Poll surveys. The sampling precision of Harris online polls is measured by using a Bayesian credible interval. For this study, the sample data is accurate to within ± 6.0 percentage points for the surrounding Hudson Valley region and ± 8.4 percentage points for the project area, using a 95% confidence level.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to other multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including, but not limited to coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments.

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About The Harris Poll

The Harris Poll is one of the longest-running surveys in the U.S., and has tracked public opinion, motivations, and social sentiment since 1963 to uncover essential insights about society. Every year, the Harris Poll surveys millions of people on the trends that are shaping our modern world across a variety of sectors. Its research is widely used by businesses, media, politicians, and researchers to understand public sentiment, win elections, pass legislation, and inform critical decision-making.

About HHFT

Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail, Inc. (HHFT) is a subsidiary nonprofit of Scenic Hudson, Inc., an organization devoted to sustaining and enhancing the Hudson Valley’s inspirational beauty and health for generations to come. HHFT’s mission is to plan, build 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, which is planned to be completed in 2031, 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, visit hhft.org.