

# Hillside Woods & Park

## Forest Inventory & Management Plan



Public Meeting  
Thursday, June 7th @ 7pm  
Public Library, Hastings-On-Hudson

# Presentation Outline

Who We Are

DEC Community Forestry Program

What is Urban & Community Forestry?

Why is Urban Forestry Important?

Benefits of Trees in Urban Areas

Hillside Woods & Park History

Who's Involved

Current State of the Woods

Forest Inventory & Management Plan

People in the Park

Public Input and Opinion



# Who We Are



LBS Ecological specializes in Ecological Planning & Design.

Our team:

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Sarah Kelsen, Principal, Ecological Engineer  
Lance Ebel, Forester & Wildlife Management  
Artem Treyger, Forester & Certified Arborist

LBS Ecological is working closely with the village staff and public officials of Hastings-on-Hudson, including the Parks and Recreation Commission, the Conservation Commission, the Tree Preservation Board, and more.

# NYS DEC Urban & Community Forestry Program



The New York State Urban and Community Forestry Program is a partnership between DEC forestry professionals, public and private individuals, and volunteer organizations. It supports communities in comprehensive planning, management, and education to create healthy urban and community forests which enhance the quality of life for residents. Funding for this program is provided in part by the State of New York and the U.S. Forest Service.

The Hillside Woods & Park Forest Inventory & Management Plan is grant-funded through this program.



# What is Urban and Community Forestry?

All of the trees within a town, village, or city make up the "community forest". The community forest can include street and yard trees, parks, cemeteries, school grounds, and undeveloped green spaces.

Urban and Community Forestry is the management of community forests to establish and maintain healthy trees for air and water quality benefits, energy savings, environmental health, as well as to enhance the quality of life for urban residents. The urban and community forest also contains wildlife, waterways, built roads and structures, and people.

# Why is Urban and Community Forestry Important?

Trees provide numerous environmental, social and economic benefits for people, yet urban areas present challenging environments for trees to grow and survive in.

A **healthy forest** has a natural diversity, thick leaf litter to absorb rainwater, which maintains humidity of forest, a balance of predators and prey, multiple layers of forest including ground cover, shrub layer, mid & overstory trees.



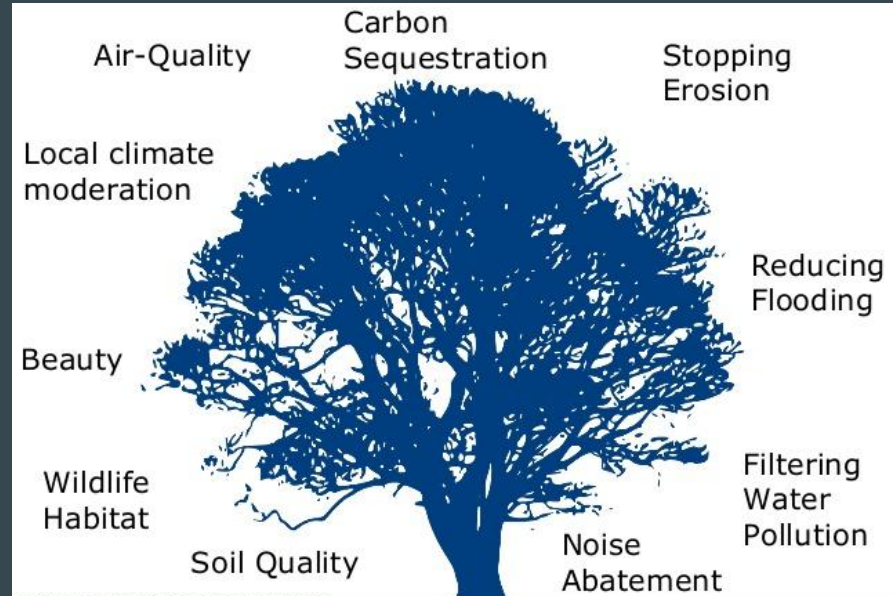
# Why is Urban and Community Forestry Important?

By actively managing community forests, we protect these valuable resources and preserve and/or enhance the resulting benefits.



# Benefits of Trees in Urban Areas

Studies show that trees improve air and water quality, reduce flooding, reduce cooling and heating energy needs, increase property values and improve the quality of life for people and wildlife around them.



# Benefits of Trees in Urban Areas

Trees remove air and water pollutants through both their root systems and their leaves. Tree canopies shade buildings, sidewalks, streets and other structures keeping them cooler in summer and can shelter buildings from cold winds in winter months, overall reducing energy costs.





# Benefits of Trees for Human Health and Well-Being

The positive effects trees have on human health and well-being are numerous. Studies have found that exposure to trees reduces the symptoms of stress and depression, can aid in the recovery from surgery, and reduce the incidence of domestic violence. People are more likely to exercise if parks are nearby. When people utilize parks and shady street trees, they are more likely to meet and establish bonds with their neighbors, which helps to create a sense of community. When people enjoy spending time in their neighborhoods, they develop pride and a sense of ownership in their communities.





# Hillside Woods & Park History

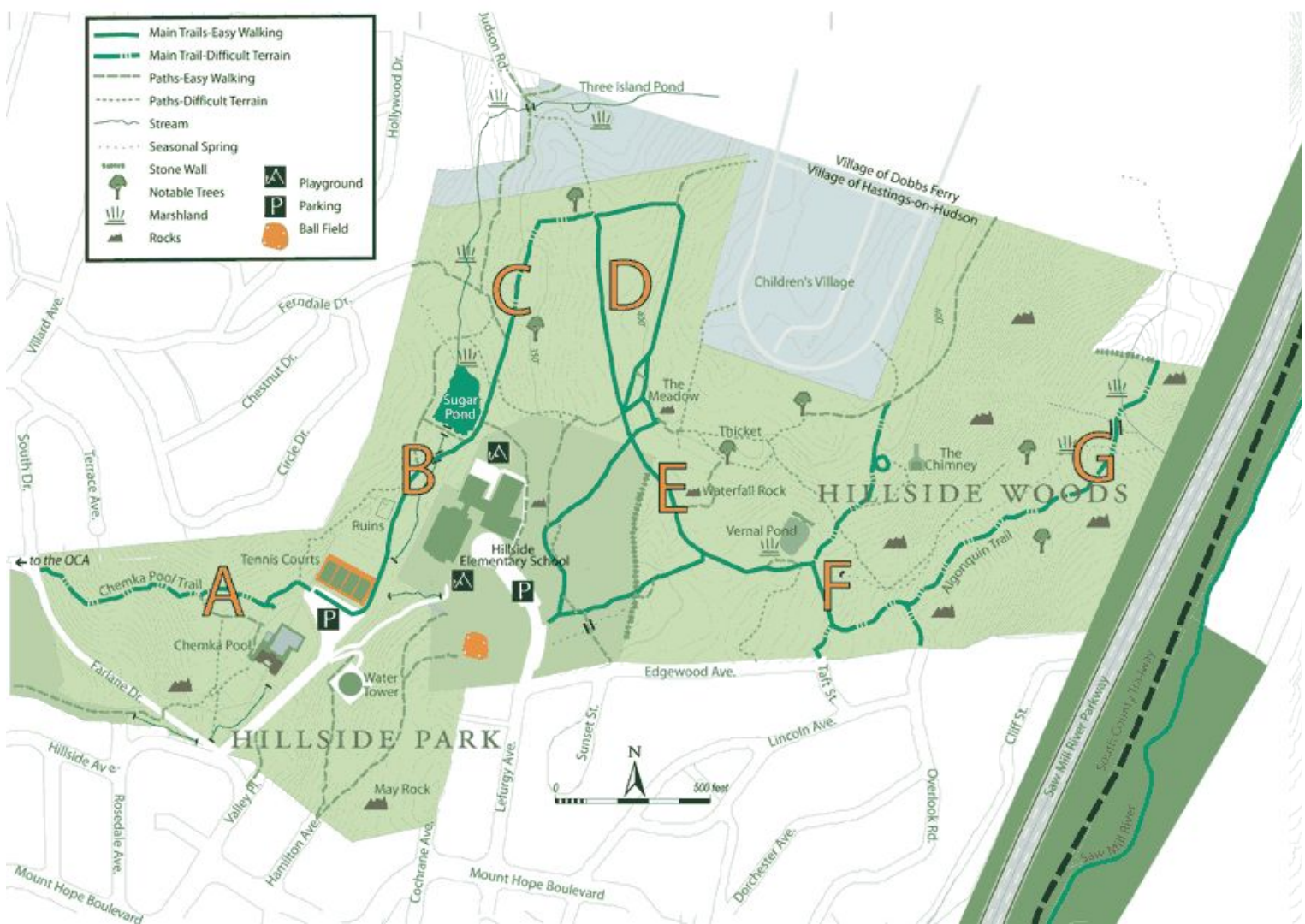
Hillside Woods ~ 52 acres & Hillside Park ~48 acres, includes Hillside Elementary School, pool, tennis courts, & Sugar Pond.

“Save Hillside Woods” Community Group formed in mid 1980’s & the Village of Hastings-on-Hudson obtained the Woods in 1993

25 years ago the parks had dense bramble and diverse vegetation at ground level, and the next generation of trees was nurtured there. In the last two decades, however, deer have decimated almost everything native from six feet high down to ground level. Resulting in little to no regeneration, leaf litter, thin soils, and non-native / invasive plant proliferation.

Need for restoration of the woods has now become abundantly clear and is becoming a priority.

- Main Trails-Easy Walking
- Main Trail-Difficult Terrain
- Paths-Easy Walking
- Paths-Difficult Terrain
- Stream
- Seasonal Spring
- Stone Wall
- Notable Trees
- Marshland
- Rocks
- Playground
- Parking
- Ball Field



# Who's Involved



Several village entities:

Parks and Recreation Commission

Conservation Commission

Tree Preservation Board

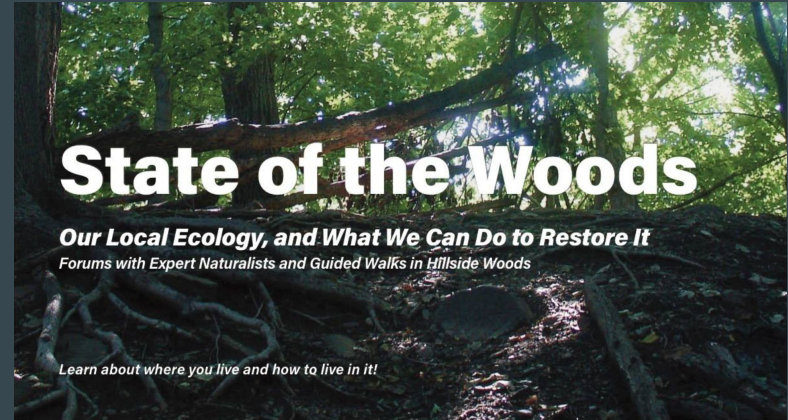
**Numerous Community Groups:** Hastings Historical Society, Hastings High School Environmental Club, Hillside Nature Guides Program, The Hastings Vine Squad (trained by Groundwork Hudson Valley), Hudson River Audubon Society, Dobbs Ferry Conservation Advisory Board & more.

# Current State of the Woods

2017 “State of the Woods” public meetings

Identified Challenges in Hillside Woods:

1. Climate change, higher temps, water stress, oak hickory forest migrating northward, maple-beech-birch retreating; Invasives moving in; Dead / dying trees (i.e. ash, hemlock, beech)
2. Deer (& earthworms) impact forest regen. & soil greatly, lack of understory shrubs & herbs, deer in poor condition overcrowded, people injured in deer-car collisions & sick from tick-borne disease; Invasives moving in; Understory bird species decreasing
3. Trash & dog waste, need to build respect & ecological literacy for the forest



# Current State of the Woods

2017 “State of the Woods” public meetings

Identified Opportunities:

- Bobcat, fisher, & beaver are returning
  - wolf, black bear, mountain lion, hunters?
- Vine Squad, Haven from Conservation Commission
- Deer Sterilization program underway
- Deer exclosures (2 erected in 2014) & monitoring program
- Community involvement, regular cleanup & informational programs
- More comprehensive perimeter fence w/ maintenance protocol? Maintain areas without invasives within the woods? Thin young trees in gap?





# Forest Inventory & Management Plan

Goals: Forest Regeneration, Restoration of Native Ecology, Maintain Public Safety & Enjoyment of the Woods

As part of the **NYS DEC Community Forestry Program**, this project will develop a long-term action plan that contains information, recommendations, and strategy to effectively and proactively manage Hillside Woods. The goals of the Forest Management Plan are to regain a healthy forest, including habitat creation, reduced stormwater runoff, improved air quality, recreation, visual screening and reduction of noise pollution, protecting private property values, limiting residential sprawl, public enjoyment of the woods, and to enhance students' educational experience.



# Hillside Woods Tree & Forest Inventory

TREE INVENTORY - Risk survey for all hazard trees along trails & perimeter



FOREST INVENTORY - delineate forest stands, 30 plots across stands, measure trees, shrubs & herbs to extrapolate data for entire forest.



# Hillside Woods Forest Management Plan

Background and Resource Inventory, a Forest Assessment and Inventory, Wildlife Habitat Assessment, and Management Recommendations

Consider Public Input and Involvement for most of these Recommendations





# People in Hillside Park & Woods

Part of all of this planning includes the people of Hastings-on-Hudson because Hillside Woods and Park is an urban park. We need to consider programming in the human use and enjoyment of the forest. This is exactly why we are hosting this presentation this evening! We hope to both educate and solicit public opinion.



# Public Input

What do you want to see accomplished in Hillside Woods & Park?

Signage, wayfinding

Deer Exclusion Fence

- protect seed sources and genotypes

Dogs?

Cleanup

Community Opportunities for restoration of the ecology of the forest

Tree planting, vine lopping, invasive plant removal

# Thank You!

Please reach out if you've got any future questions, comments, or thoughts you'd like to share with us. If you see us in the forest say hello!

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# Survey

Please take a moment to sign up on our emailing list before you go, or take note of this web address to go to the survey directly:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SMZGMZ7>

Thanks!