

# Copake Waterfront and Community Revitalization Plan *for the Bash Bish Brook, Roe Jan Kill & Taghkanic Creek*

## DIALOGUE & DESIGN WORKSHOP

FEBRUARY 22, 2020

*This presentation was produced with funding provided by the  
New York State Department of State under Title 11 of the Environmental Protection Fund.*



Department  
of State



# Introductions and Thanks

- Copake Project Advisory Committee
  - Roberta Roll, Chair
- Project Sponsors
  - Town of Copake
  - NYS Department of State  
Local Waterfront Revitalization Program, Fred Landa, Coastal Resources Specialist
- River Street Planning & Development
  - Margaret Irwin, Principal
  - Monica Ryan, Christina Snyder, Amy Ferguson
- PLACE Alliance
  - Ian Law, Landscape Architect and Designer
  - Kim Case, Project Designer

## PAC MEMBERS

Roberta Roll, Chair

Lenny Barham

Andy Fisher

Alan Friedman

Tom Goldsworthy

Peter Kelly



# Today's Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions
- How did we get here?
- What is a Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan?
- Why should we do a Community and Waterfront Revitalization Plan?
- What's happening today on our waterways?
- What are the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats facing the community and waterways?
- What options are there for revitalization projects?
- What opportunities, challenges, design approaches should be considered?
- Next steps

*"Always plan ahead. It wasn't raining when Noah built the ark."*

*- Richard Cushing*



# How did we get here?

- Began with **passing NYS legislation** to add waterways to the NYS Inland Waterway List:
  - Roeliff Jansen Kill
  - Bash Bish Brook
  - Taghkanic Creek
- Copake's work **expanded access** to funding for all communities along the Roe Jan
- Work of many **committees builds a strong foundation** – your volunteerism leveraged this grant
- Sought funds in 2016 Consolidated Funding Application Round and was **awarded a \$40,000 grant**
- Doing a revitalization strategy **opens opportunities** for design and implementation funding



# What is the Revitalization Strategy & State LWRP?

- Project is funded by the NYS Department of State Local Waterfront Revitalization Program under Title 11 of the Federal Environmental Protection Fund
- Development of a revitalization plan includes:
  - **Community profile** of existing conditions
  - **Graphic master plan** of revitalization actions
  - Matrix of **projects, actions and funding**
  - Implementation strategy that can leverage public and sector investment
- Having a complete and State-approved plan **opens doors to design and implementation funding**

*“Any idea can turn into dust, or magic – depending on the talent that rubs up against it.”*  
- William Bernbach



# Progress to Date

- Project scoping, kickoff, tour with NYS DOS
- Participation plan
- Walking/driving tour of hamlets and waterways
- Review of plans and summaries
- Inventory and analysis of existing conditions
- Integrate committee research
- Community dialogue and design input
- SWOT analysis with PAC and the community

*“To accomplish great things we must not only act, but also dream; not only plan, but also believe.”*

*- Anatole France*



# Participation Plan

WATCH FOR THE WEBSITE COMING SOON

[www.copakewaterfronts.com](http://www.copakewaterfronts.com)

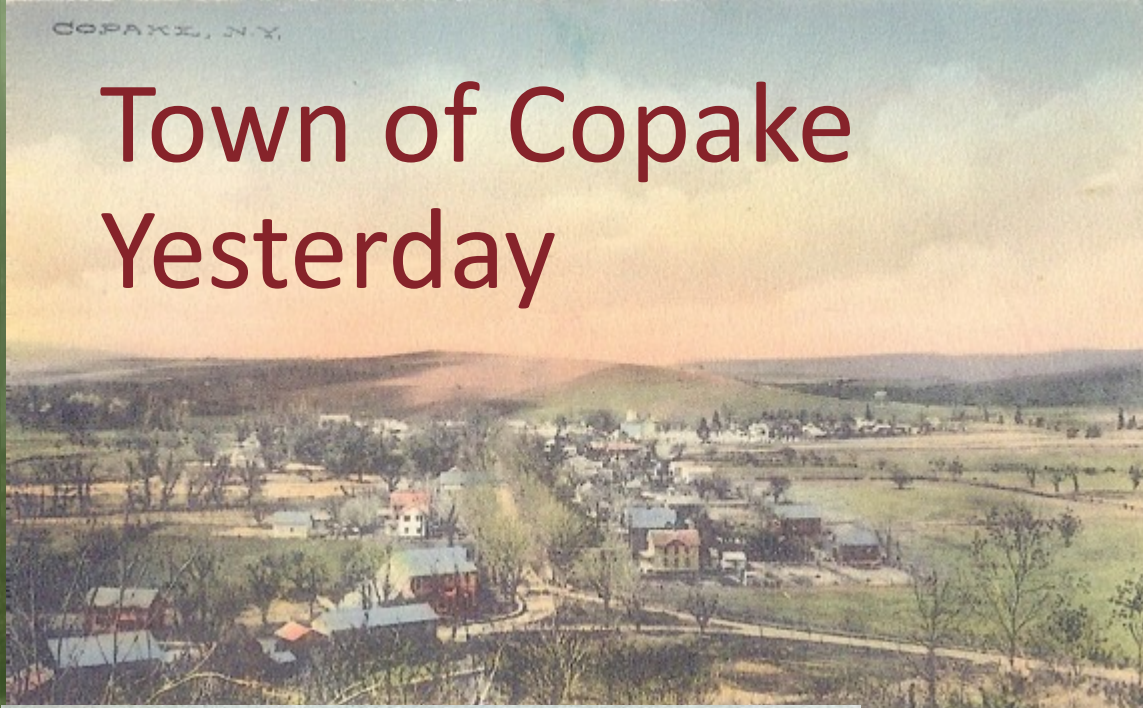
- **PURPOSE:** help the public to develop a waterfront, revitalization, recreation and tourism strategy for the waterways
- **OUTREACH:** contact list, web posts, save the date, flyers, posters, email-blast, etc. online and paper
- **SCHEDULE:** maximizes public influence in design/development
- **PRODUCTS:** include notes, outreach materials, with comments to be addressed

**SIGN UP TO STAY INFORMED**

| TASK NAME                                    |
|--|
| PAC Meetings                                 |
| Participation Plan                           |
| Volunteer Work Groups (Sign Up!)             |
| Walk & Talks                                 |
| Interviews, PAC Guest Speakers               |
| PAC: Discuss Concepts, Vision & Goals        |
| 1st Dialogue & Design Workshop               |
| PAC Design, Projects, Actions                |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> Dialogue and Design Workshop |
| Community Comments Addressed                 |
| Present Final Strategy To Town Board         |
| Post Materials On Website                    |



# Town of Copake Yesterday



HOLSAPPLE HOUSE AND  
STORE OF S.A. MCINTYRE,  
COPAKE, N.Y.



WHERE PLEASANT SUMMERS ARE SPENT,  
COPAKE LAKE.







Riding the rails on his outriggered bike,  
Phil Kohlenbusch, 1905, at Copake Falls.





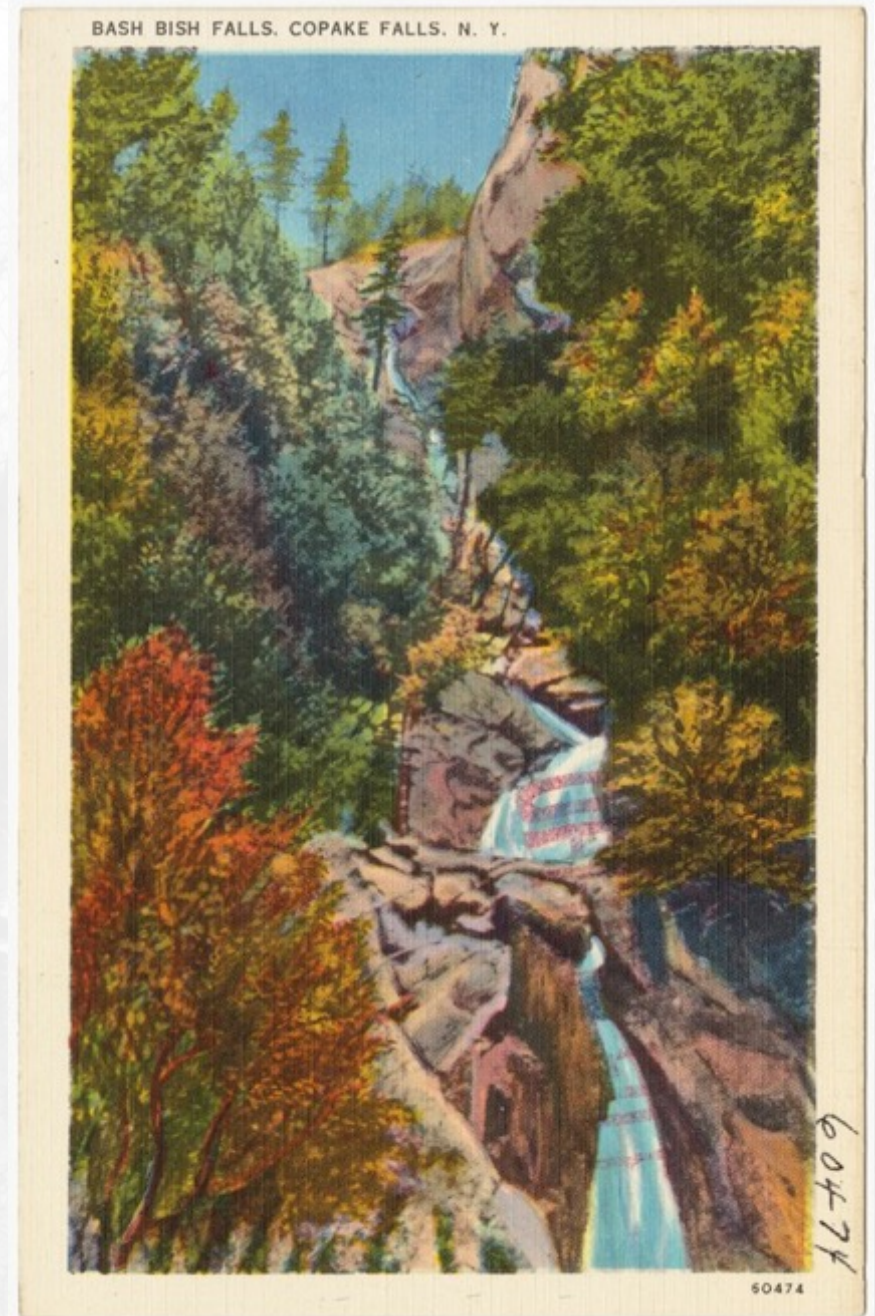
# Copake Yesterday

- Active walkable core
- Community assets
- Commerce
- Entertainment
- And BICYCLING!





# Bash Bish Falls





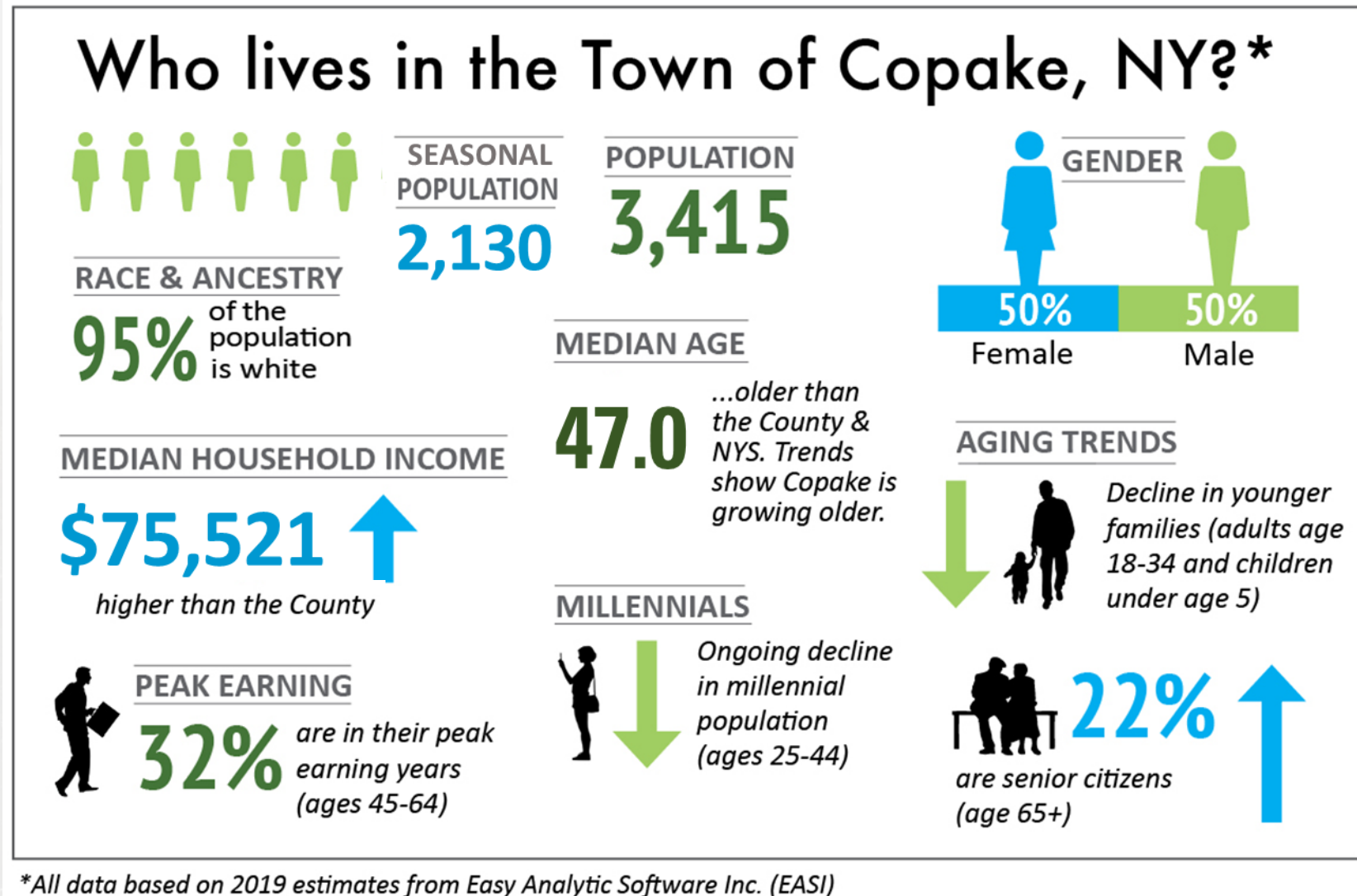
# Town of Copake Today





# What's Happening Today In Copake Today?

- Population - 3,485  
2018 estimate
- Year round population **declining gradually**
- 2,357 Housing Units
  - Gain of 48 units
  - Occupied units up 4.2%
- **890 estimated seasonal units**
  - Up by 7.4%
- Estimate **2,130 seasonal residents**
- Combined population **around 5,800**





# Town of Copake Today

The Town contains 41.2 square miles (26,112 acres) and **1.3 square miles of water**

Copake maintains assessment data on close to **3,000 parcels** that contain about 25,429 acres

- Approximately 8% of the assessed land area is **tax exempt**
- Residential uses including single and multi-family homes occupy **68% of total parcels**
- Vacant land makes up 25% of total parcels
- Commercial and agricultural parcels each occupy **roughly 2% of total parcels**
- All other categories combined occupy the balance, with no category occupying more than 1% of total parcels





# Town of Copake Today

The County Hazard Mitigation Plan reports on flooding:

- declared flood disaster in 2000
- winter storms in 1997, 2002, 2004
- early winter freeze in 2005
- damaging high wind events in 1996 and 2006

The plan also indicates that the Town might consider:

- establishing a budget line-item to fund **pre-disaster mitigation projects**
- use the Haz-Mit plan's risk assessment to guide **emergency response planning**





# Town of Copake Today

- **Four Main Street Hamlet Cores:** Craryville, West Copake, Copake, Copake Falls
- Copake hamlet is largest and has opportunities to create an **ideal pedestrian environment**
- Arts and entertainment: Taconic Theatre Company, The Two of Us Productions, Copake Auction are here, among others
- Copake composes a large part of the New York section of the **Berkshire Taconic Landscape**
- Designated by the Nature Conservancy in 1998 as one of its “**Last Great Places**” throughout the world due to its significantly large, healthy and **highly diverse blocks of forest**





# Employment: Today and Tomorrow

## EXISTING CONDITIONS EMPLOYMENT

### **2019 employment largely in:**

- health care
- social assistance
- retail trade
- construction
- educational services
- agriculture/forestry/  
fishing & hunting
- professional/scientific &  
technical services

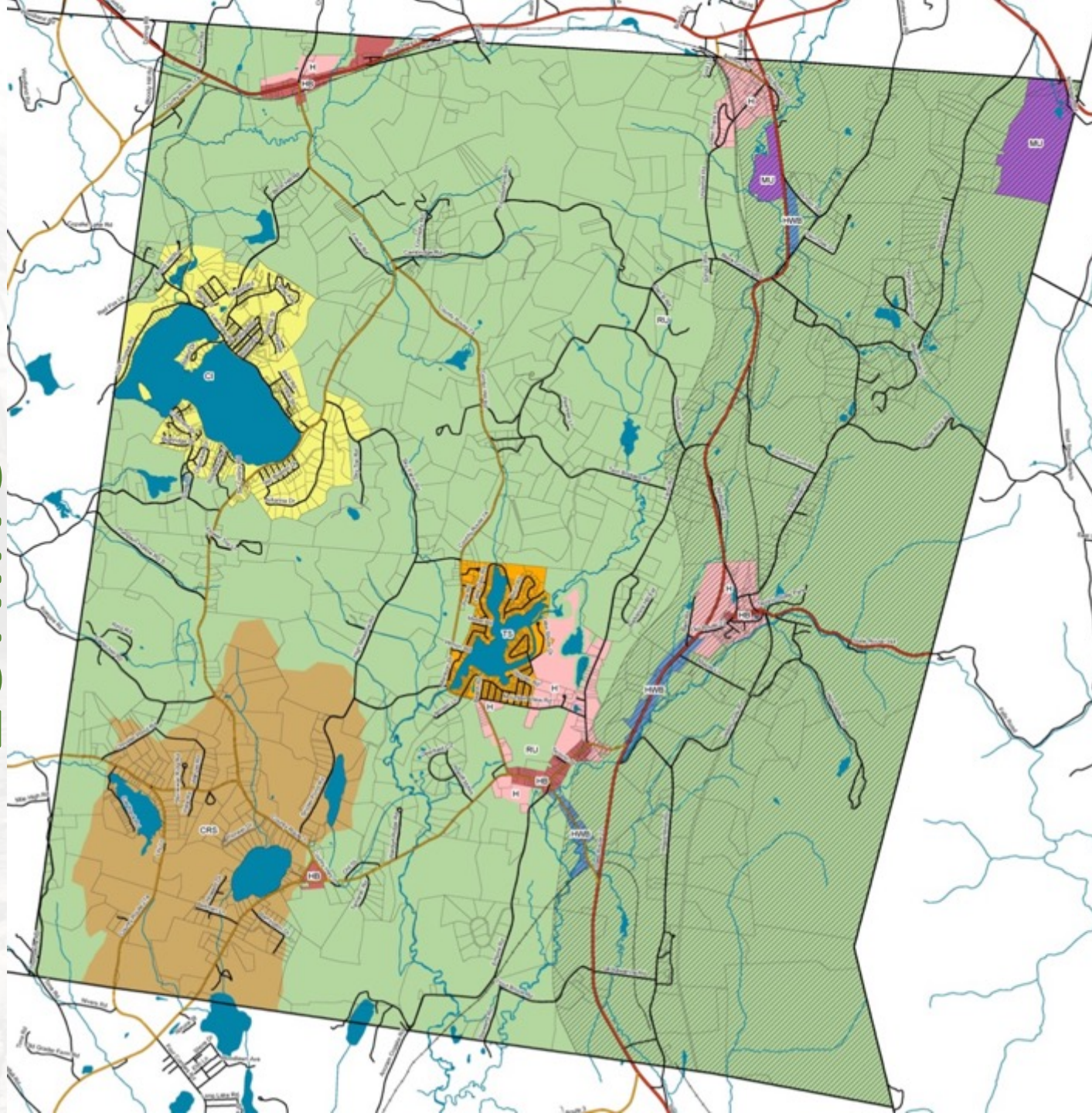
### **Growth forecasted in:**

- real estate/rental and  
leasing
- professional/scientific  
and technical services
- arts/entertainment  
and recreation
- agriculture/forestry/  
fishing and hunting

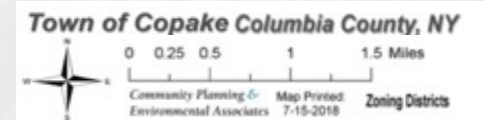


# EXISTING CONDITIONS

## ZONING



- Zoning update in 2018
- Largest zones are Agriculture and Rural Residential
- Small zones include Hamlet and Highway Business Hubs
- Lakes and ponds
- Scenic corridor overlay





# Town of Copake Today

- Assessed value for **waterfront parcels is significantly higher** than other land:
  - **\$168,000** per parcel higher overall
  - **\$178,000** per parcel higher than residential land not in the water

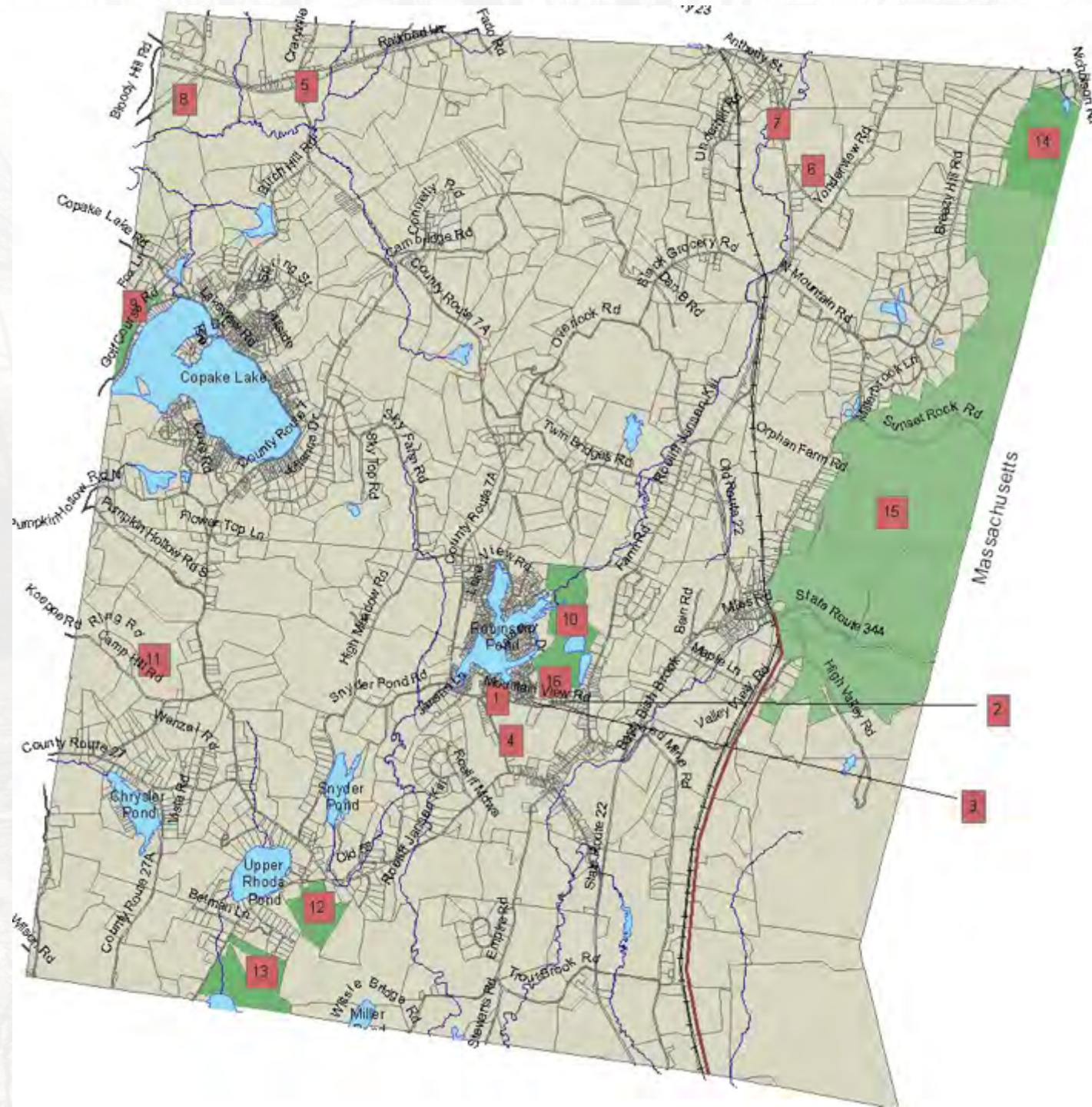
## Assessed Value Per Parcel

| Total Parcels Townwide       |              |
|------------------------------|--------------|
| All Parcels                  | \$275,000.00 |
| Residential Parcels          | \$317,000.00 |
| Vacant Parcels               | \$90,000.00  |
| Waterfront Parcels           |              |
| All Parcels                  | \$420,000.00 |
| Residential Parcels          | \$465,000.00 |
| Vacant Parcels               | \$100,600.00 |
| Parcels Excluding Waterfront |              |
| All Parcels                  | \$252,000.00 |
| Residential Parcels          | \$287,000.00 |
| Vacant Parcels               | \$88,000.00  |



# EXISTING CONDITIONS

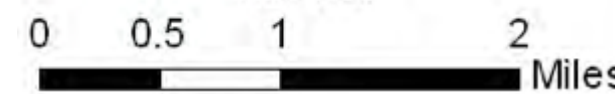
## RECREATION



## Recreation and Community Services

- 1 - Town Hall
- 2 - Police Department
- 3 - Community Rescue Squad
- 4 - Copake Fire Department
- 5 - Craryville Fire Department
- 6 - Town Highway Garage
- 7 - Roeliff Jansen Community Library
- 8 - Taconic Hills Central School District
- 9 - Copake Country Club
- 10 - Camp Waubeeka
- 11 - Camp Hill Village
- 12 - Oleana Campground
- 13 - Camp Pontiac
- 14 - Catamount Ski Area
- 15 - Taconic State Park
- 16 - Copake Memorial Park

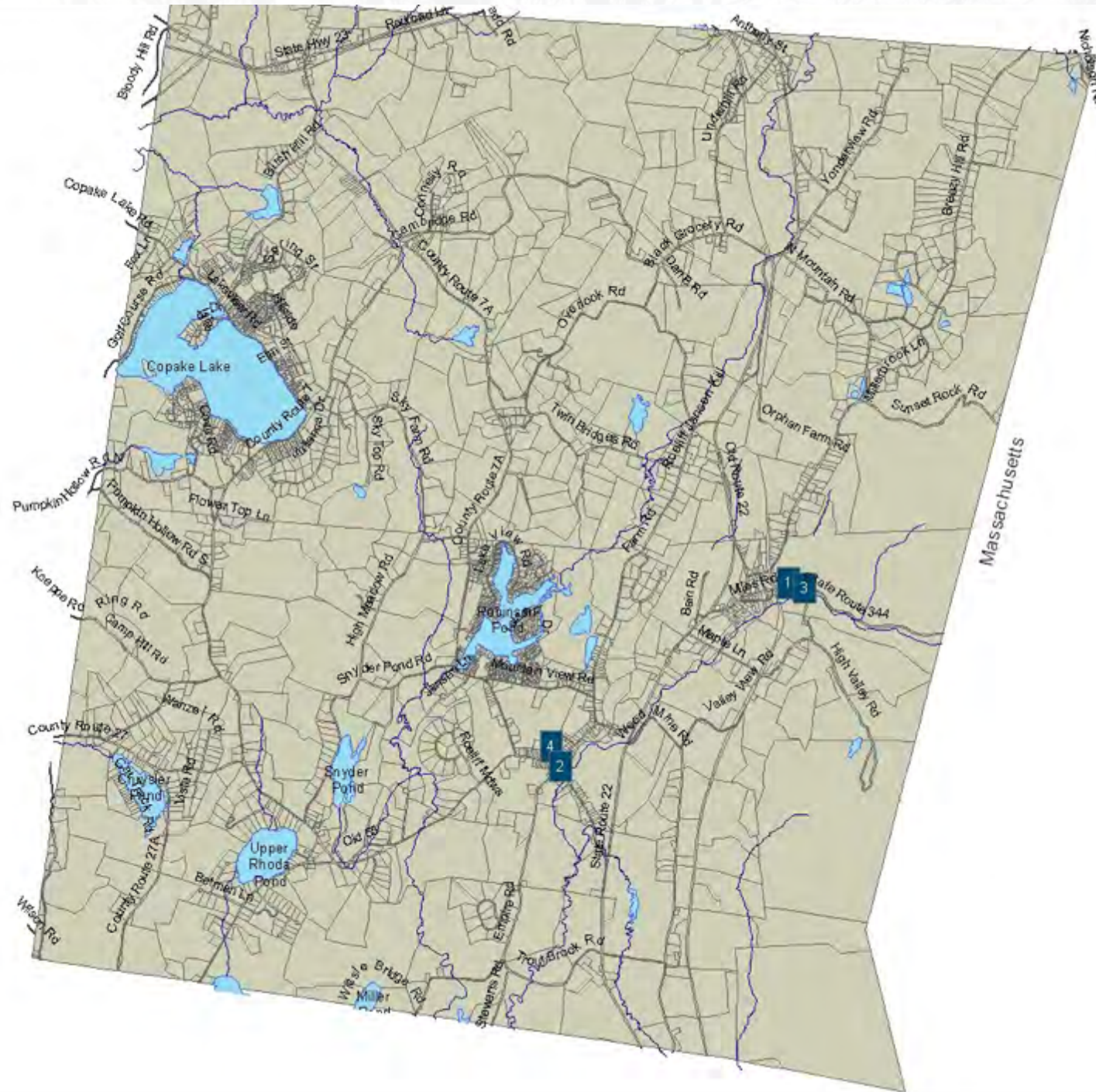
- Parks
- Waterbodies
- Lakes and Streams
- Roadways
- Railroad
- Harlem Valley State Rail Trail





# EXISTING CONDITIONS

## HISTORIC RESOURCES



### Historic and cultural resources:

- Church of St. John in the Wilderness
- Copake Iron Works
- Copake Grange Hall
- Copake United Methodist Church and Cemetery
- Copake Station
- Roe Jan Library
- Roeliff Jansen Historical Society Museum



# The Roeliff Jansen Kill

- The Roeliff Jan Kill bisects Copake from north to south – **it's one of the largest tributaries of the Hudson River**
- Its headwaters combine in southern Columbia County, draining a **212 square-mile watershed** that comprises roughly one-quarter of Columbia County
- **The stream extends over 54 miles** between Hillside and Germantown, passing through the towns of Copake, Ancram, Gallatin, Clermont, and Livingston
- Robinson Pond, a lake located just north of the Copake Town Hall, hosts Taconic Shores, a private lake community and is known for its ample **fishing opportunities for bass, sunfish and trout**



<https://www.topozone.com/new-york/columbia-ny/lake/robinson-pond-15/>



# Robinson Pond and Copake Lake

- **Most high-intensity development** is situated near Copake Lake and Robinson Lake, which has potential to lead to **significant water quality impacts**
- At Robinson Pond the Citizens Statement Lake Assessment Program (CSLAP) Later Quality Summary indicated that it has:
  - **moderate water clarity**
  - **high algae levels** and high nutrient levels, especially phosphorus
  - high susceptibility to **harmful algal blooms**
  - shoreline algal community exhibits **periodically high toxin levels**
- Copake Lake (432 acres) is a **popular year-round fishing spot** with a boat launch, swimming, boating, fishing and water-skiing. – but offers no public access
- Both lake communities have **high amounts of impervious cover**
- **Impervious cover includes** surfaces where precipitation is prevented from reaching the soil such as driveways and parking lots



# The Bash Bish Brook

- Originating in Massachusetts and flowing through the Bash Bish Falls, the Bash Bish Brook is the **most prominent stream in Taconic State Park**
- It is known for excellent trout fishing
- The brook drains a roughly 13-square-mile basin into the Roeliff Jansen Kill watershed
- Bash Bish Falls is the **highest single drop waterfall in Massachusetts**, just across the border from Taconic State Park in New York
- Accessible from a hike from the Copake Falls trailhead within the Park
- This scenic resource, located at the mouth of a deep gorge in a northern hardwood forest, was the **catalyst for establishing Taconic State Park** along with the Village of Copake Falls and the extension of the Harlem Valley Rail Road
- The falls empty into **Bash Bish Brook** which drains into the Roeliff Jansen Kill watershed



# The Taghkanic Creek

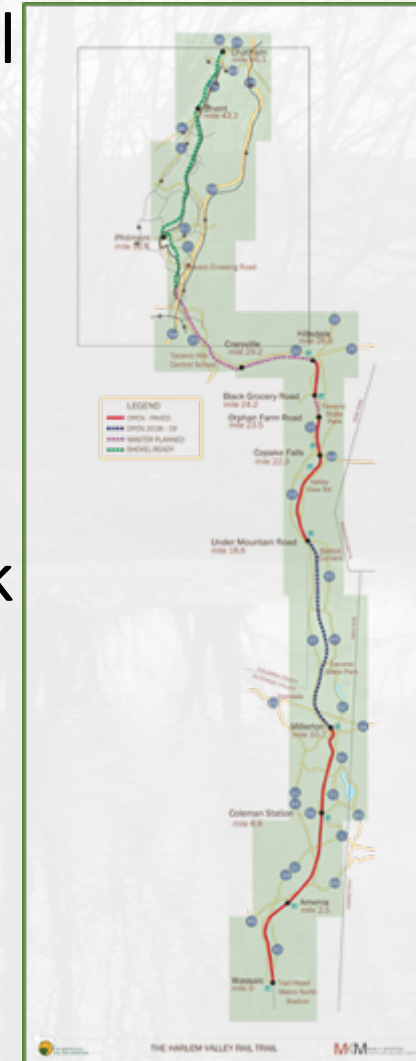
- Taghkanic Creek, a roughly 30-mile **tributary to Claverack Creek**.
- It begins in the town of Hillsdale, **flowing through the town of Copake** to the north and west of Copake Lake before joining Claverack Creek in Greenport.
- Taghkanic Creek is listed as a **'Threatened Waterbody' in the Lower Hudson River Basic Waterbody Inventory and Priority Waterbodies list**.
- The creek is the drinking water source for Hudson, NY
- It's also a productive trout stream with plentiful brown and brook trout





# Town of Copake Today

- Trails, including Harlem Valley Rail Trail
- Lakes
- Taconic State Park
- Bash Bish Falls
- Rheinstrom Hill Wildlife Sanctuary
- Copake Memorial Park
- Roeliff Jansen Community Park
- Undermountain Golf Course
- Copake Country Club





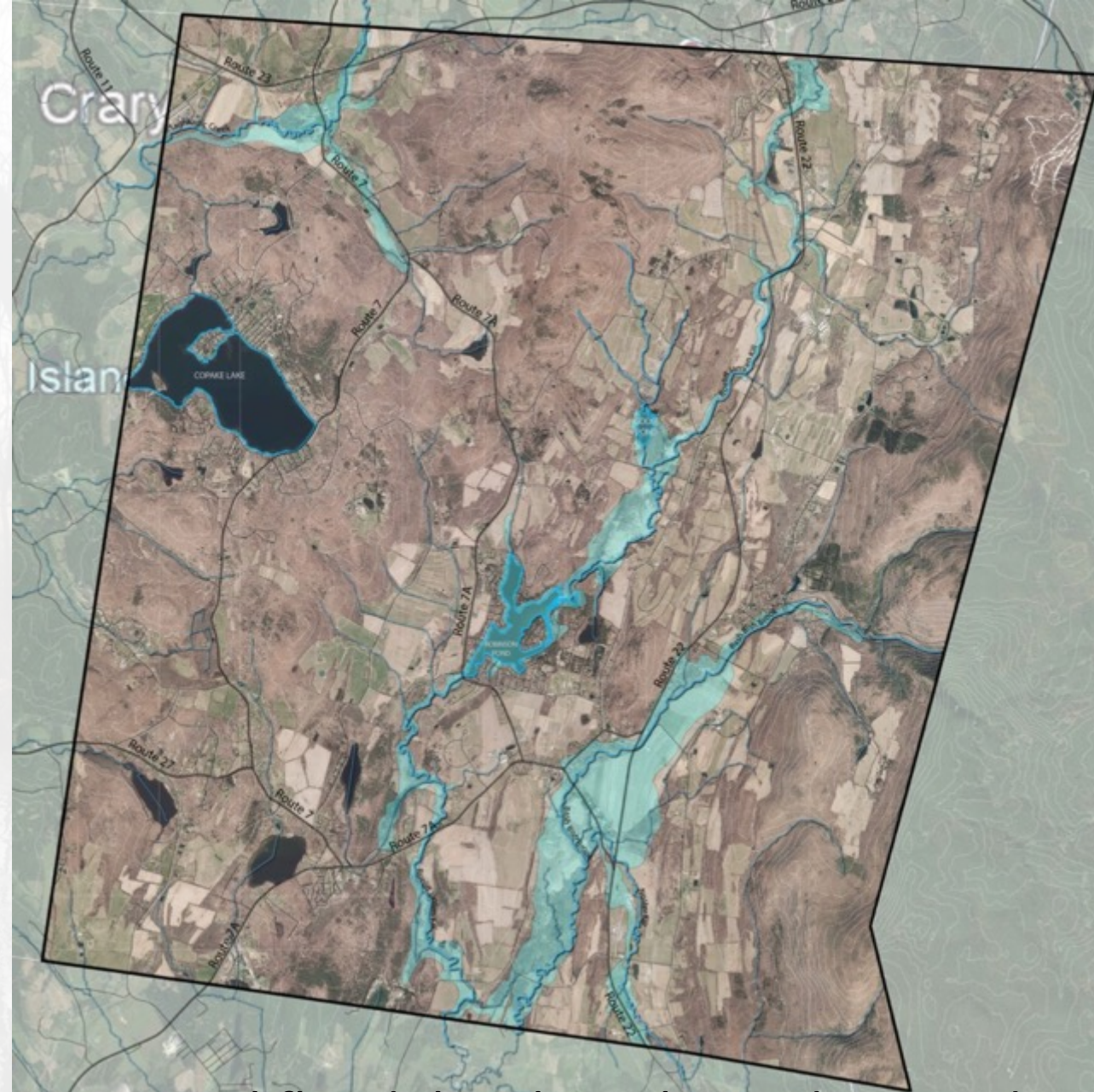
# Town of Copake Today - Waterways





# What's Happening on these Waterways?

- There is **little land within municipal control** for potential projects
- Partnerships with landowners will be needed for access projects
- Reuse of some structures like **the school** may be an option
- Partnering with **the library** might be a “win-win”

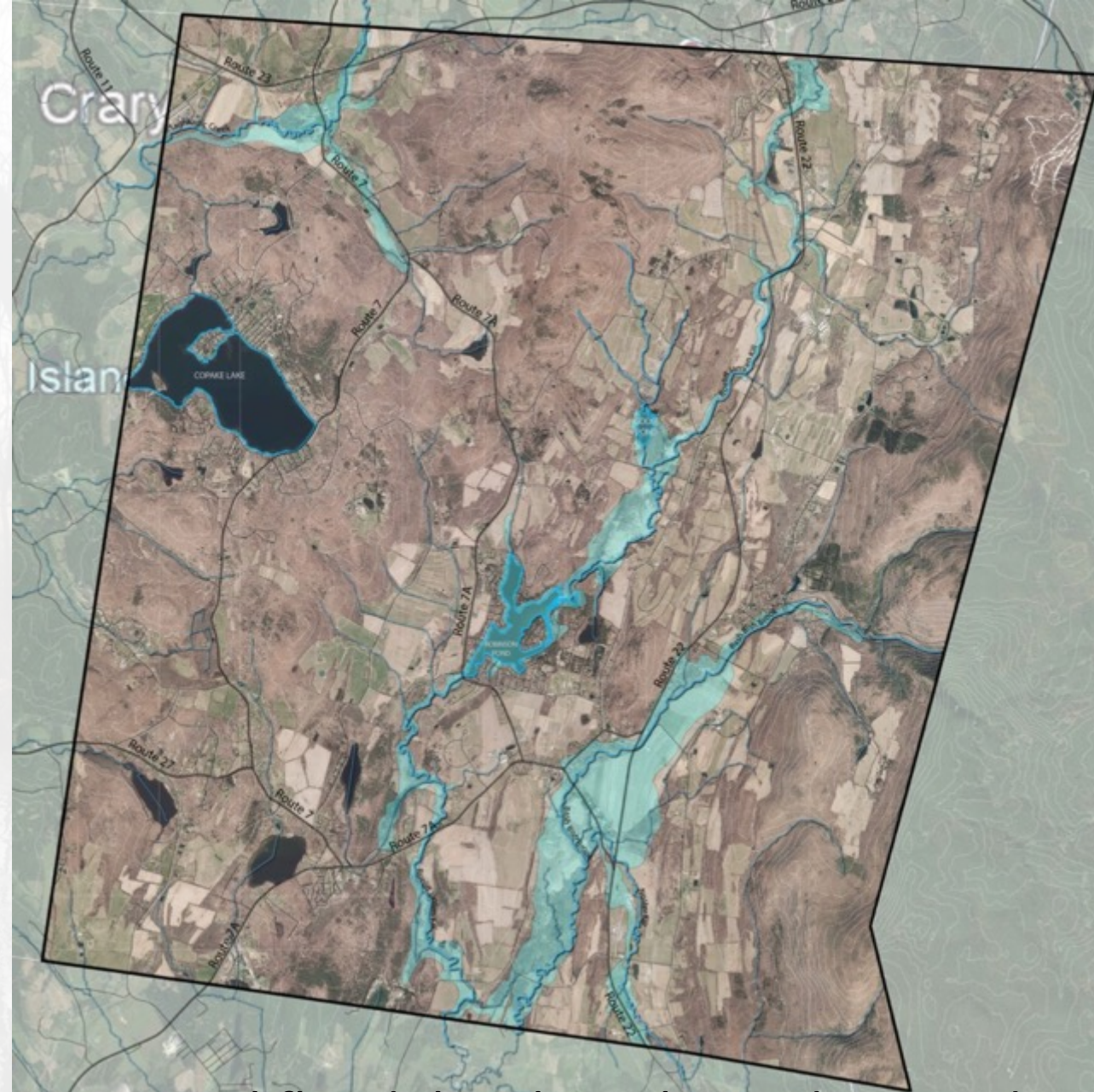


Natural floodplain have been disrupted in places encouraging flooding



# What's Happening on these Waterways?

- The Taghkanic Creek, Roeliff Jansen Kill and Bash Bish Brook include small areas of **legacy floodplain forests**
- These are forests that have remained uncleared for the past 85+ years and provide **unique biodiverse habitat**



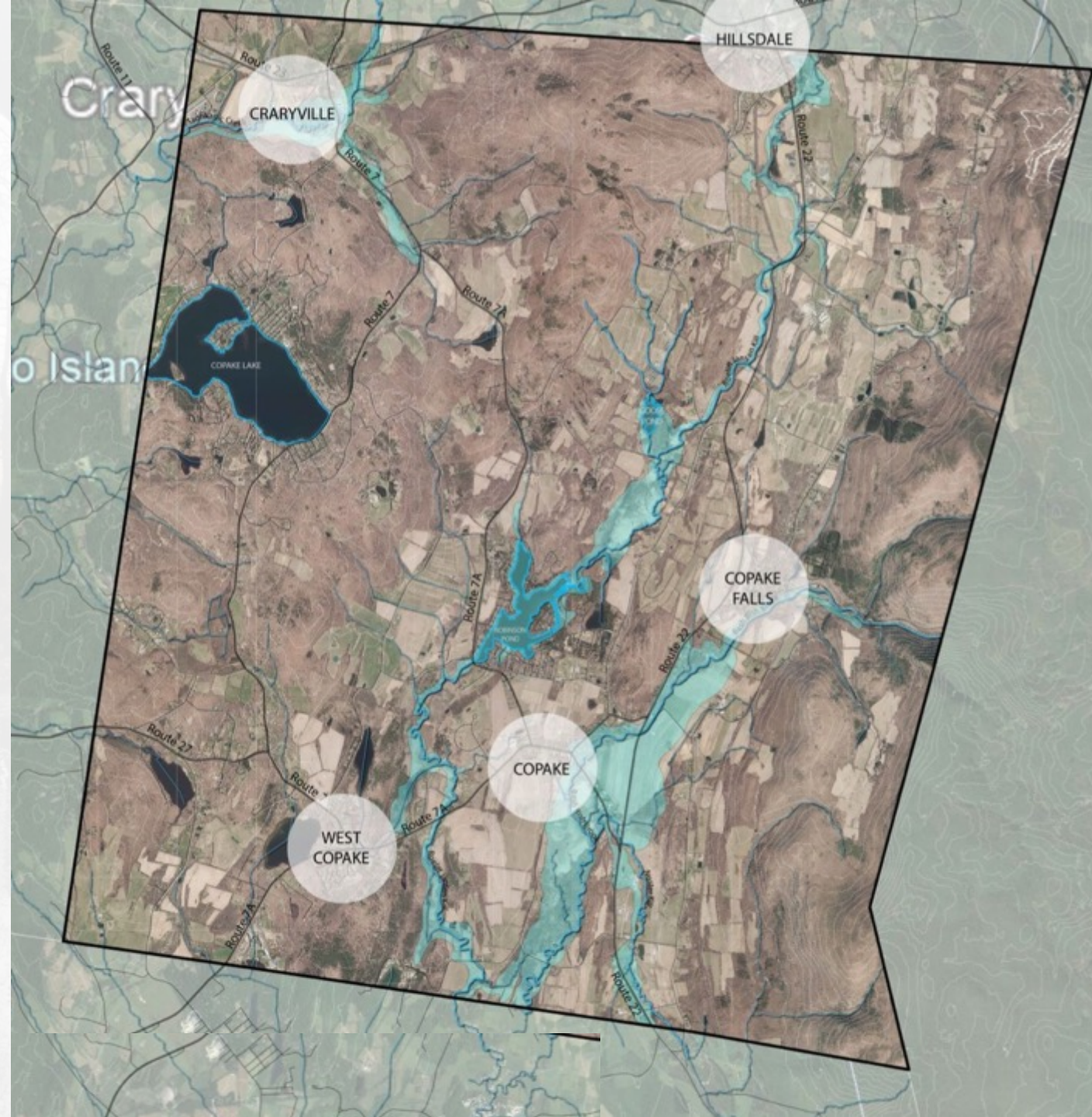
Natural floodplain have been disrupted in places encouraging flooding



# Hamlets

The plan will consider ways to strengthen **connections between the waterways and hamlets:**

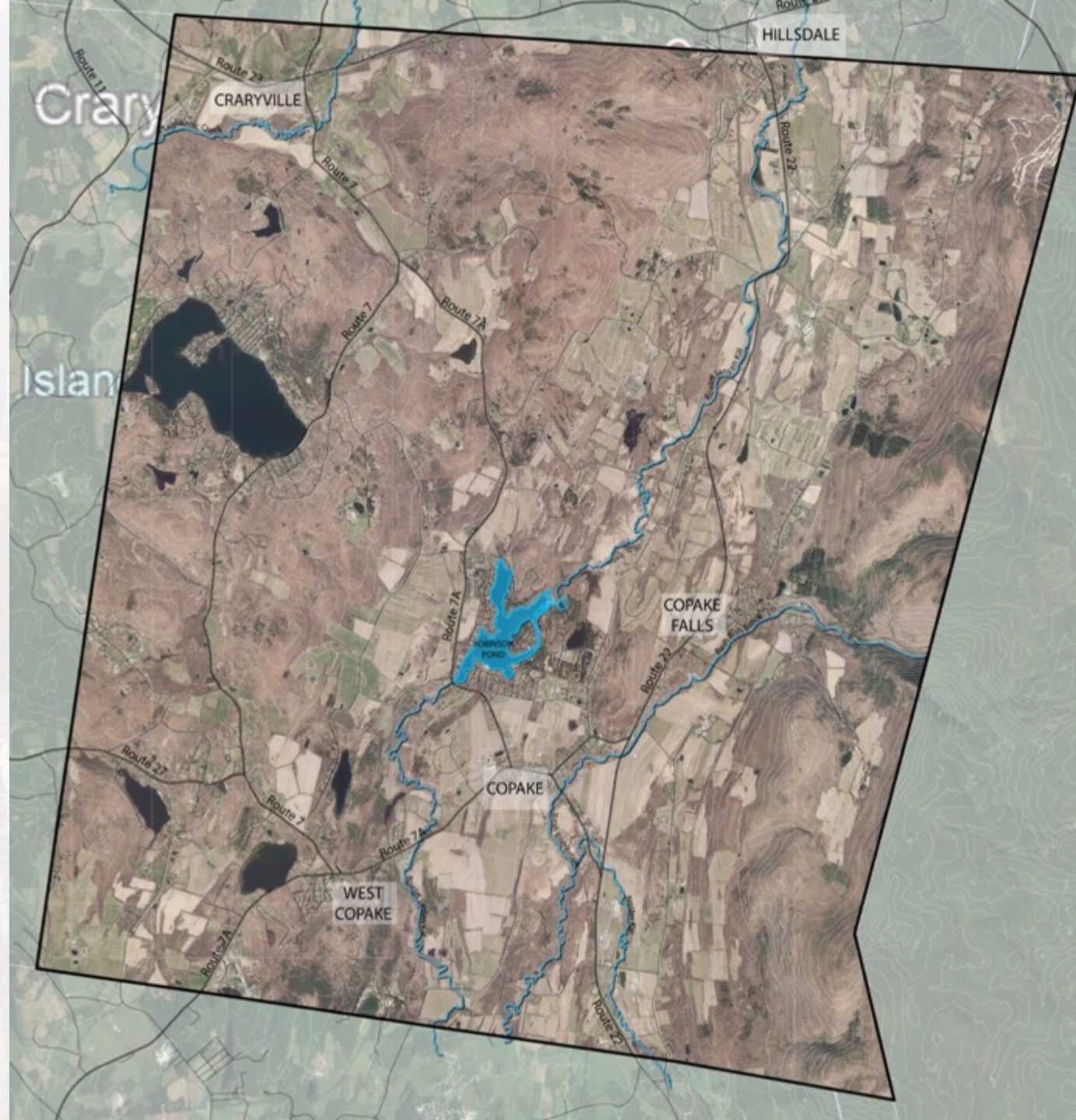
- Copake
- Copake Falls
- Craryville
- West Copake



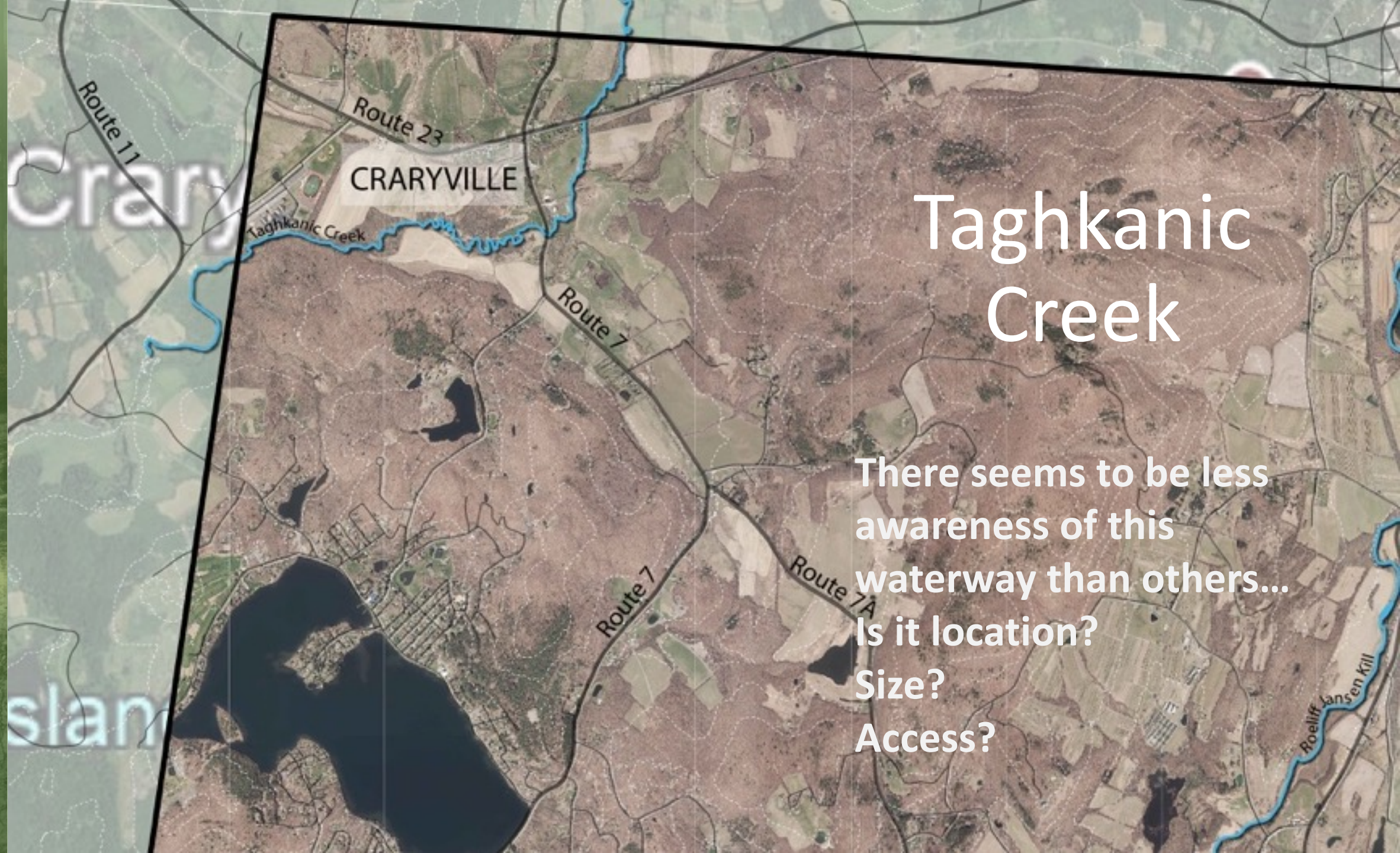


# Which Waterways can be designated?

- Designated waters **eventually reach the Hudson River**
- Copake Lake isn't designated but can still benefit
- Designated:
  - Roeliff Jansen Kill (flows through Robinson Pond)
  - Bash Bish Brook
  - Taghkanic Creek



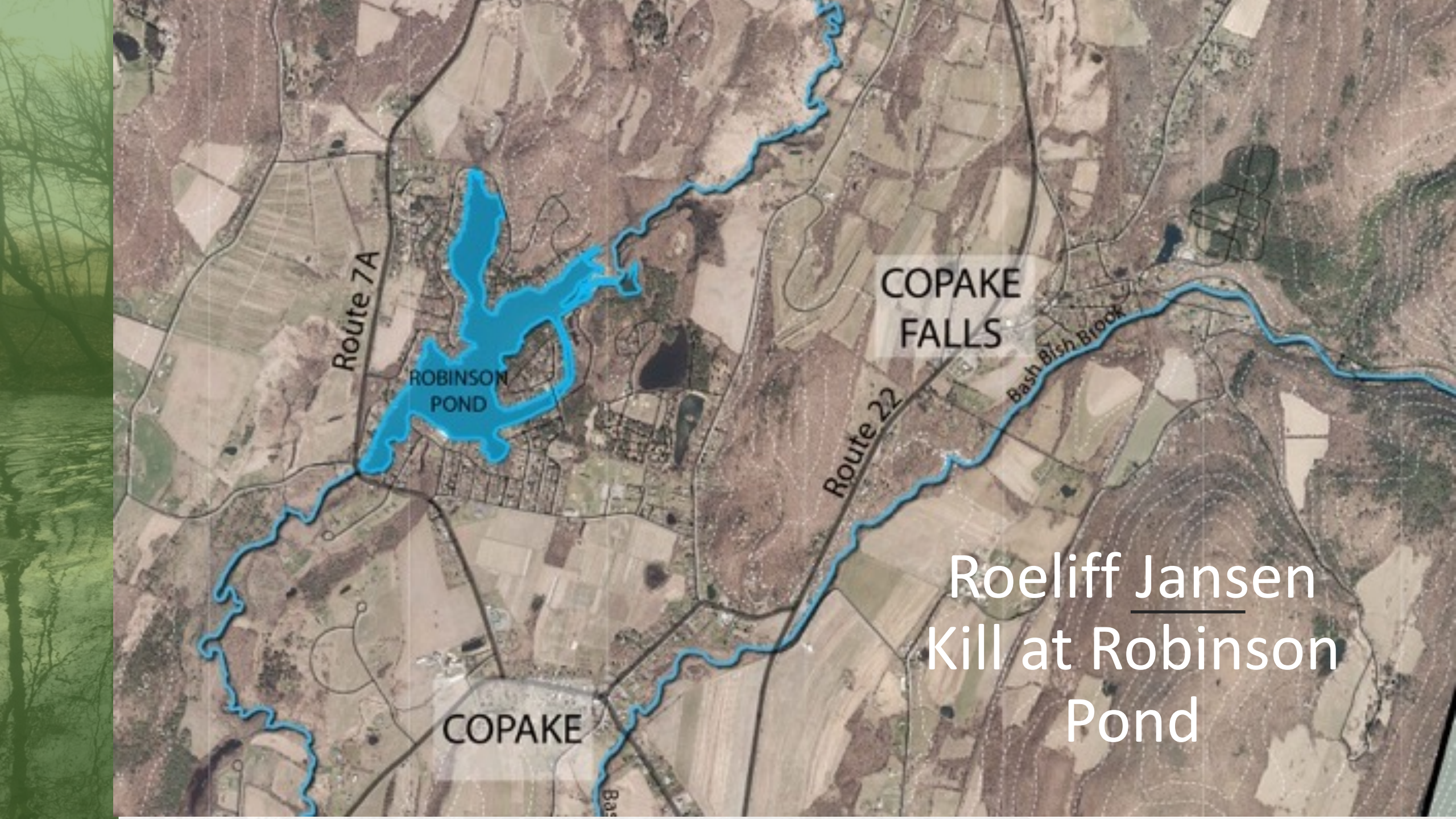




# Taghkanic Creek

There seems to be less  
awareness of this  
waterway than others...  
Is it location?  
Size?  
Access?





Route 7A

ROBINSON  
POND

COPAKE  
FALLS

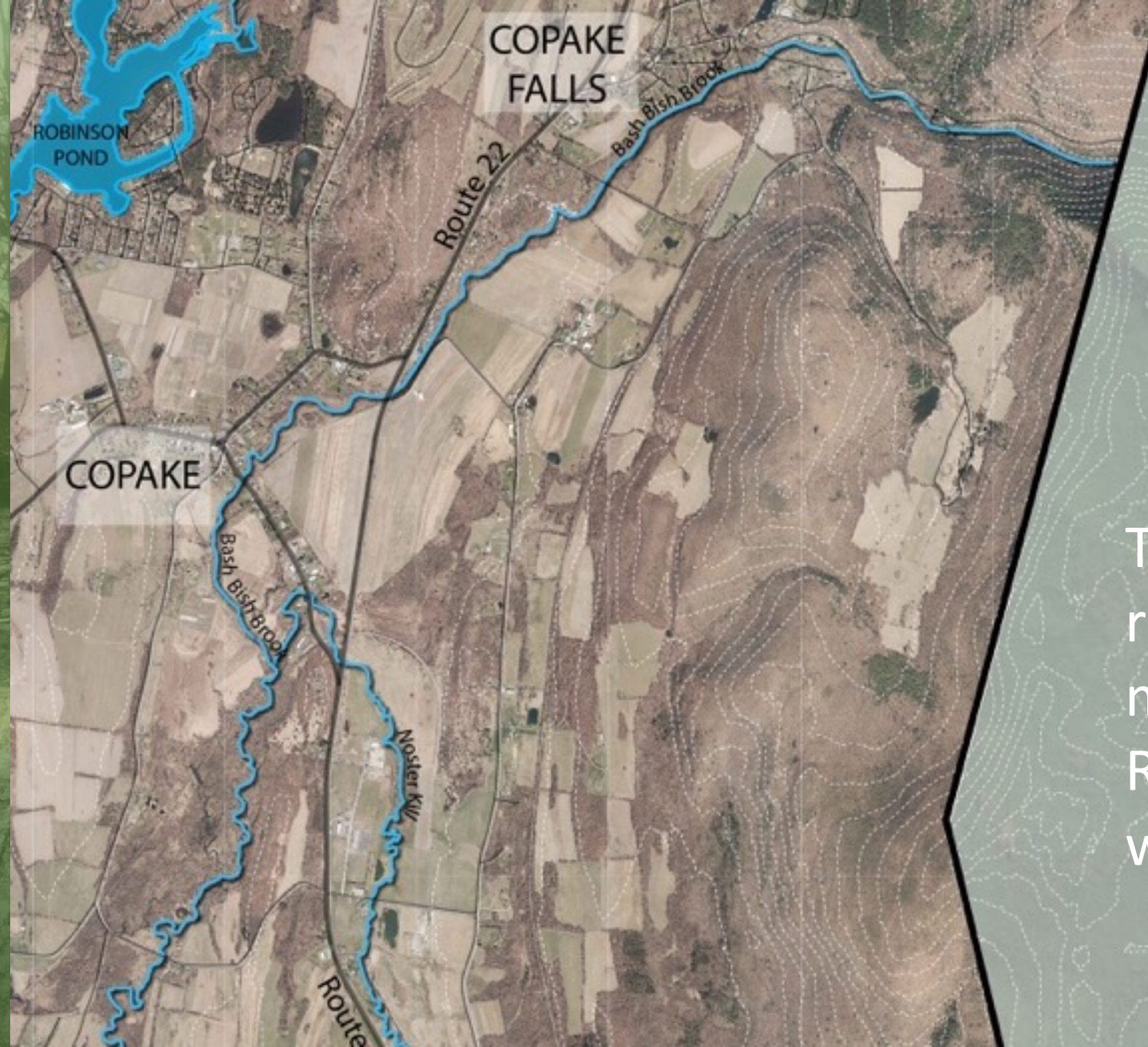
Route 22

Bash Bish Brook

COPAKE

Roeliff Jansen  
Kill at Robinson  
Pond





# Bash Bish Brook

The brook drains a roughly 13-square-mile basin into the Roeliff Jansen Kill watershed.



# What's Happening Today on these Waterways?

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

### LAND USE

- Healthy residential base, occupying **nearly 70% of total parcels** - primary land use
- Significant percentage of lands remains in **active or passive agriculture**
- As an industry, agriculture has shown **minimal growth since 2010** and its contribution to the local economy is projected to decrease
- Vacant land accounts for 25% of parcels
- Abundant forest cover remains
- Walkable pedestrian scale hamlets
  - Copake has potential to create an **ideal pedestrian environment**
- Most of Copake has low amounts of impervious cover
- **Highest density development** is near lakes surrounded by residential communities of part-time and year-round residents
- Potential **impacts of development** include habitat fragmentation, alteration of stream channels, water quality issues, shrinking of riparian and wetland buffers



# Water Quality and Agricultural Runoff

## EXISTING CONDITIONS WATER QUALITY

- Small lakes or ponds can face:
  - Sediment loading
  - Nitrogen/phosphorous contamination
  - Agricultural runoff/algae growth
  - Loss of riparian edge (from overplanting)
  - Invasive species
  - Controlling water levels
  - Flooding
- Negative impact of older septic systems
- Urban/storm runoff from impervious surfaces is source of pollutants
- New housing development
- Other construction activities



# Discussion of the Waterways

## Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats

- **Strengths** are things the Town excels at, are important or unique
- **Weaknesses** are roadblocks to achieving Town goals and vision
- **Opportunities** help distinguish the Town and make it competitive
- **Threats** could harm the Town or derail projects

*“Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It’s not.”*

*- Dr. Seuss*



# Strengths are the things the Town excels at, are important or unique

- **Scenic** beauty
- **Rural** atmosphere
- Small town feel
- Recreation opportunities
- **Friendly** people
- Lakes and streams
- Restored clock
- Land Trust **easements**
- Increasing **trail network**
- Growing biking destination
- Active **seasonal residents**
- Resilience (especially Copake Hamlet)
- Rheinstrom Hill Audubon Society
- **Farm to table** activity
- Copake Agricultural Center (farmland in the hamlet)
- **Central to NYC and Boston**
- Cultural and community resources
- Clean air
- Dark skies
- **Clean water**
- Camps and organization
- Catamount
- **Volunteerism**



# Weaknesses are roadblocks to achieving goals

- Lack of/distance from amenities
- Rundown character of downtown
- **Auto dependency**
- Not enough employment opportunities
- Small business support/tax breaks
- **Protection of historic resources**
- Roads and bridges improved
- No municipal infrastructure in hamlets
- New recreation is privately owned
- **Need public access to waterways**
- People go to the Berkshires for cultural activities
- Difficulty recruiting first responders
- Lack of affordable and senior housing/density incentives, rehab.
- Increase job opportunities/training
- Cell /broadband services (improving)
- Need B&B's, hostel, inns and hotels
- Safe **walkable hamlets**
- Parking - especially Copake Falls and around the park swimming area
- Decay of Rail Trail asphalt
- Vacant store fronts (which could be pop-up business)
- **Accessibility**



# Opportunities help distinguish Copake and make it competitive

- Maintain rural character
- Improve the Town park
- Recruit “green” businesses
- Buy local campaign
- **Reuse Roeliff Jansen School**
- Retain local businesses
- DOT investment downtown
- **More beautification**
- Preserve history: Iron Works, railroad buildings, Roe Jan School, churches, homes
- Support Agriculture: marketing, tax breaks, CSA’s, farmers market
- **Enhance cultural resources:** art, performance, music
- **Improve recreation:** rail trail, other trails, bike routes
- Commercial opportunities in the service sector (also retail, but not as strong)
- Transportation (opportunities for a business)
- Marketing the town
- **Fishing and other recreation**
- Pop-up businesses
- **Signage along the waterways,** especially at the bridges
- **Linkages to hamlets**



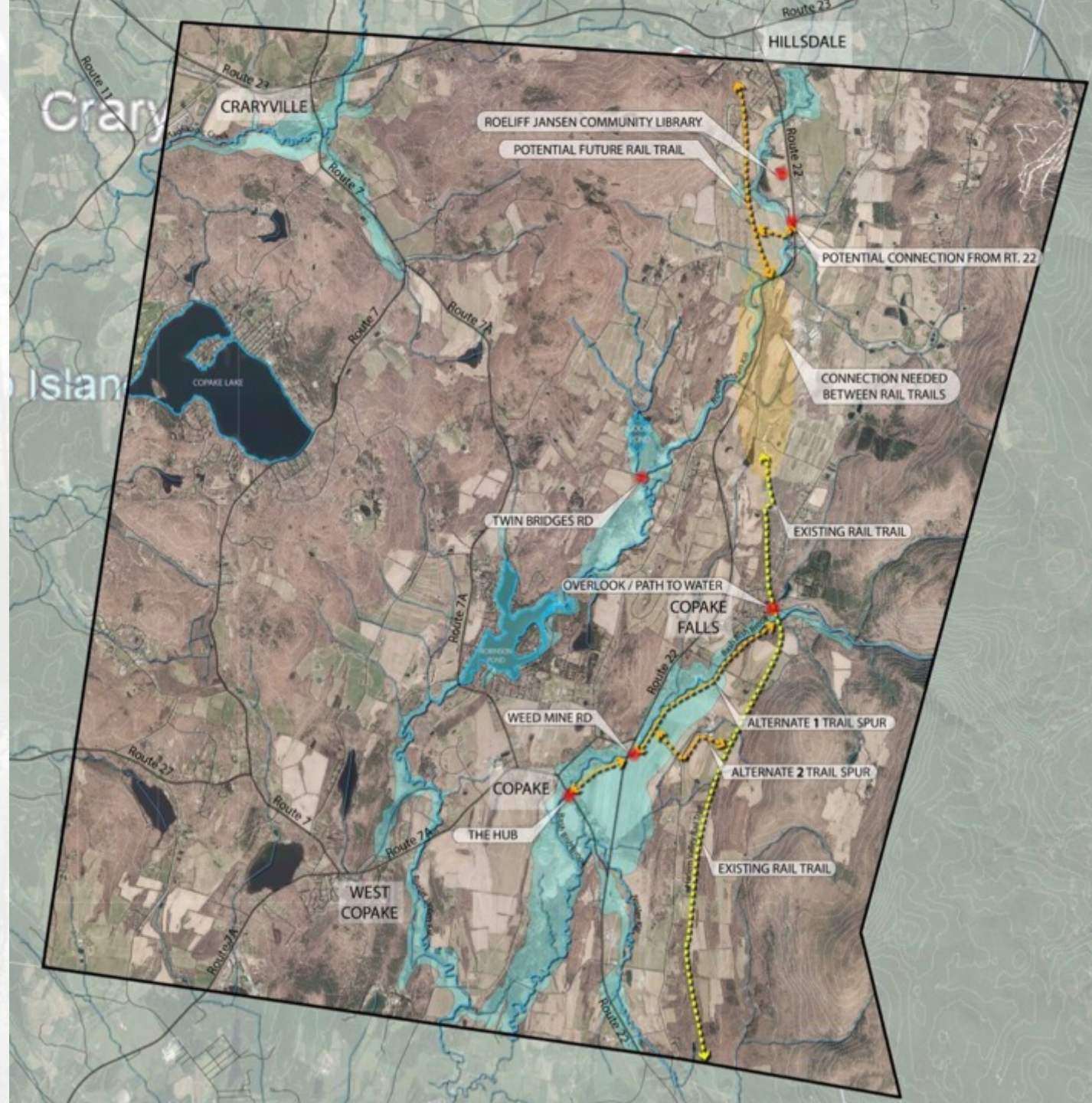
# Threats could harm the Town or derail projects

- High taxes
- Lack of employment /job diversity/living wage jobs
- Limited cell service
- Limited broadband service
- **Pressure on open space and agricultural lands**
- Rising land /home costs
- Housing is not affordable
- **Pressure on ground water/aquifer**
- Not attractive enough to young families: need more to do
- **Flooding**
- **Climate change**
- Aging population
- Lack of services



# Key Sites

- Roeliff Jansen Community Library
- Rt. 22 access
- Twin Bridges Rd
- Connection from Weed Mine Road to the Hub
- Overlook/water access at the Depot

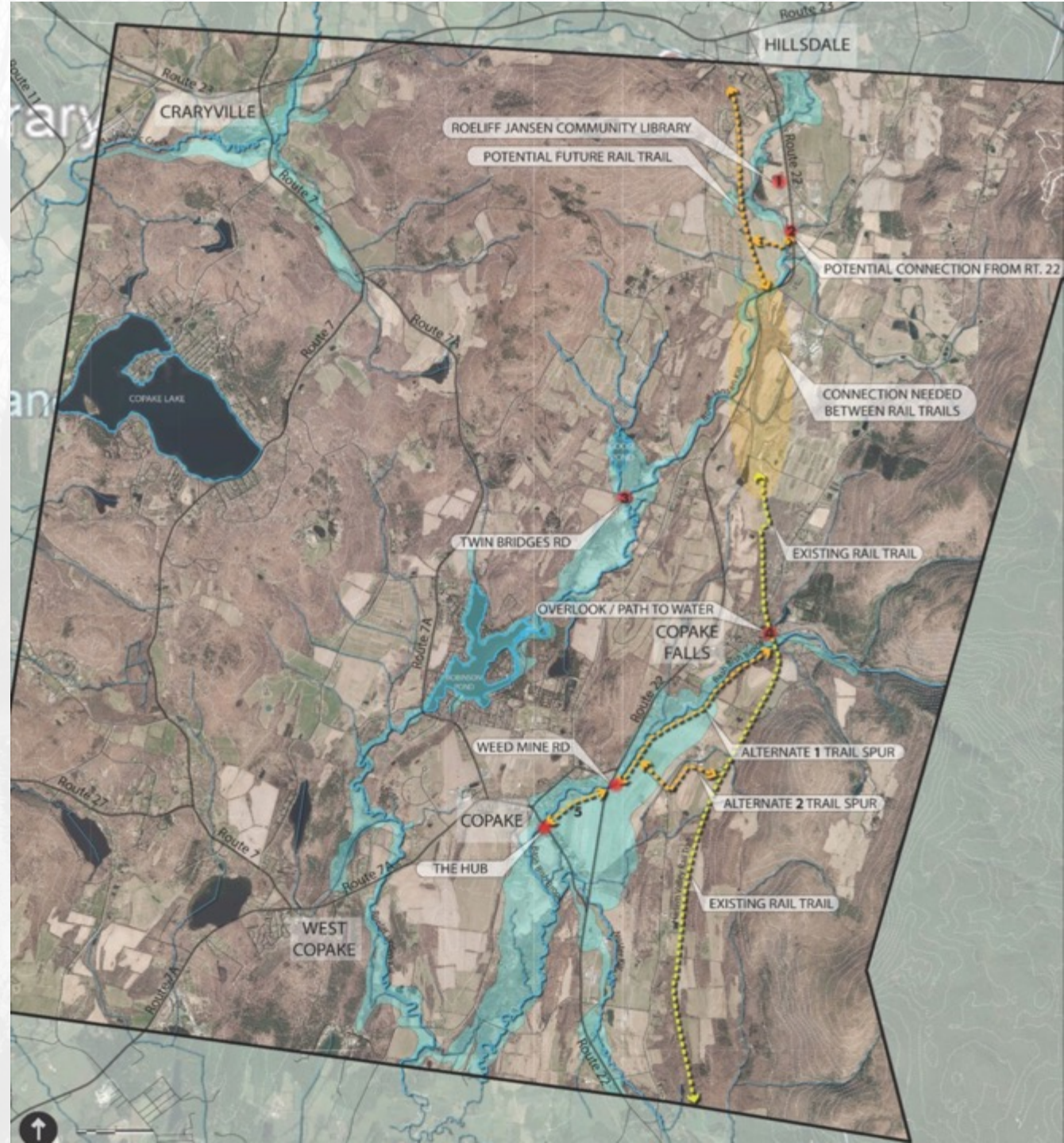




# Key Connections

The proposed Copake Spur would connect multiple assets:

- The spur trail connecting the existing Rail Trail across Route 22 (at Weed Mine Rd) continuing into the Copake Hamlet by the Hub (and Rte. 7A)
- A trail along Bash Bish Brook from Copake Falls to Weed Mine Road, continuing along the spur into Copake Hamlet
- Future linkages along the spur via the library and on to Hillsdale





# Key Spots - Library

- Water access?
- Playground?
- Signage?





# Key Spots – Route 22 Access

- Water access?
- Trailhead to future rail trail?
- NYPA lands (protected Area)





# Key Spots – Twin Bridges Road

- Water access?
- Fishing access?





# Key Spots – Bridge Over Bash Bish

- Water access?
- Improved Overlook?





# Key Spots – Weed Mine Rd

- Potential connections?
- Water access?





# Key Spots – The Hub

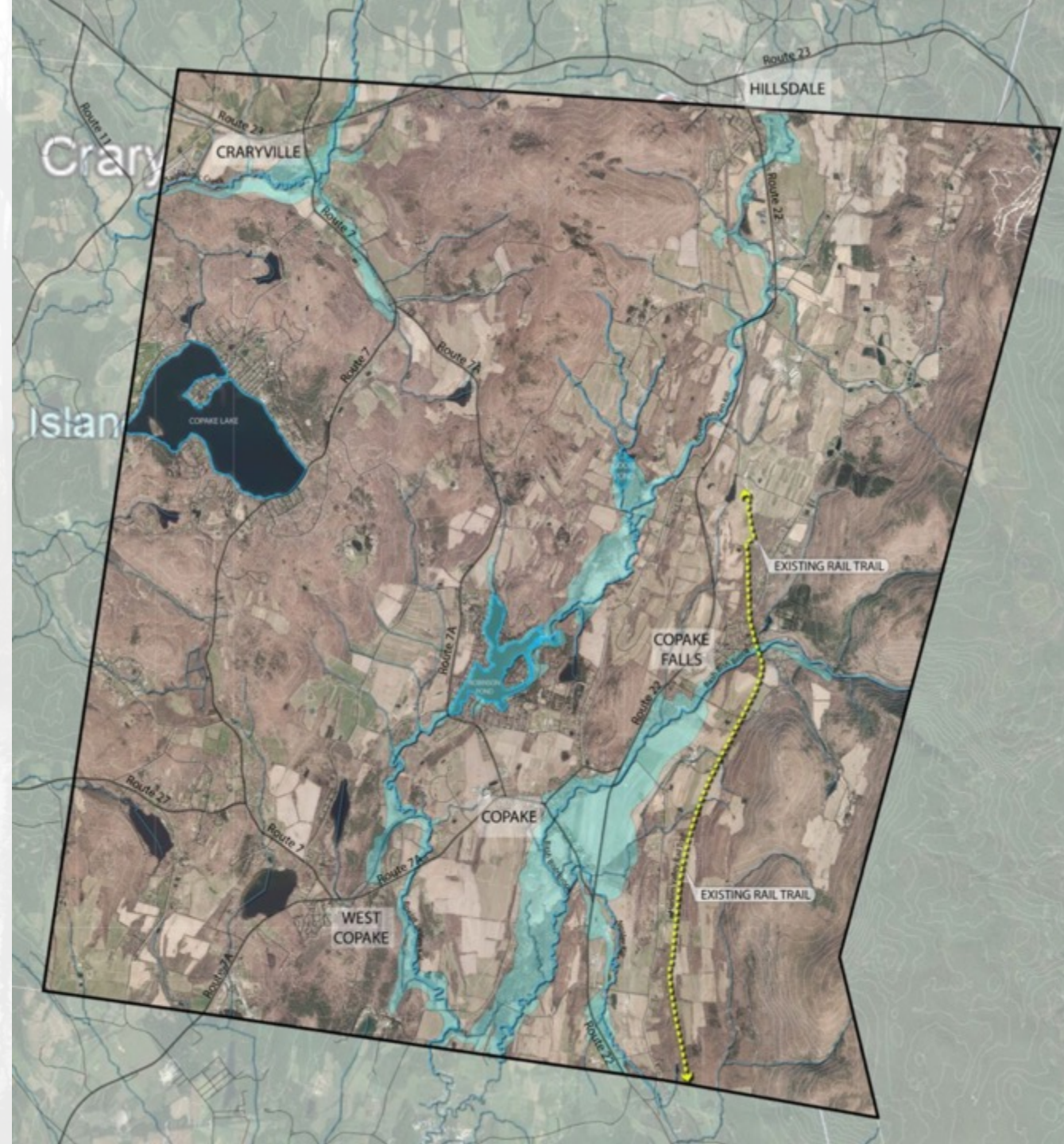
- Trail head?
- Potential connections?





# Existing Rail Trail

- Copake Falls to Millerton





# The Copake Spur

- The Copake Spur is a proposed waterfront revitalization project to **link Harlem Valley Rail Trail** at Valley View Road and network of other bike trails to the hamlet via a roughly half-mile trail
- This will help make Copake “**a bicycle destination**” and expand related economic opportunities
- Potential route would travel along the Bash Bish Brook, cross Route 22 and enter the hamlet near the northern County Route 7A access route, ending somewhere near the old Hub restaurant
- **Crossing Route 22 presents the greatest challenge**, with options ranging from an at grade crossing, installing a new tunnel, using an existing cow tunnel under the road
- NYS DOT will be **invited to engage** in the waterfront revitalization plan



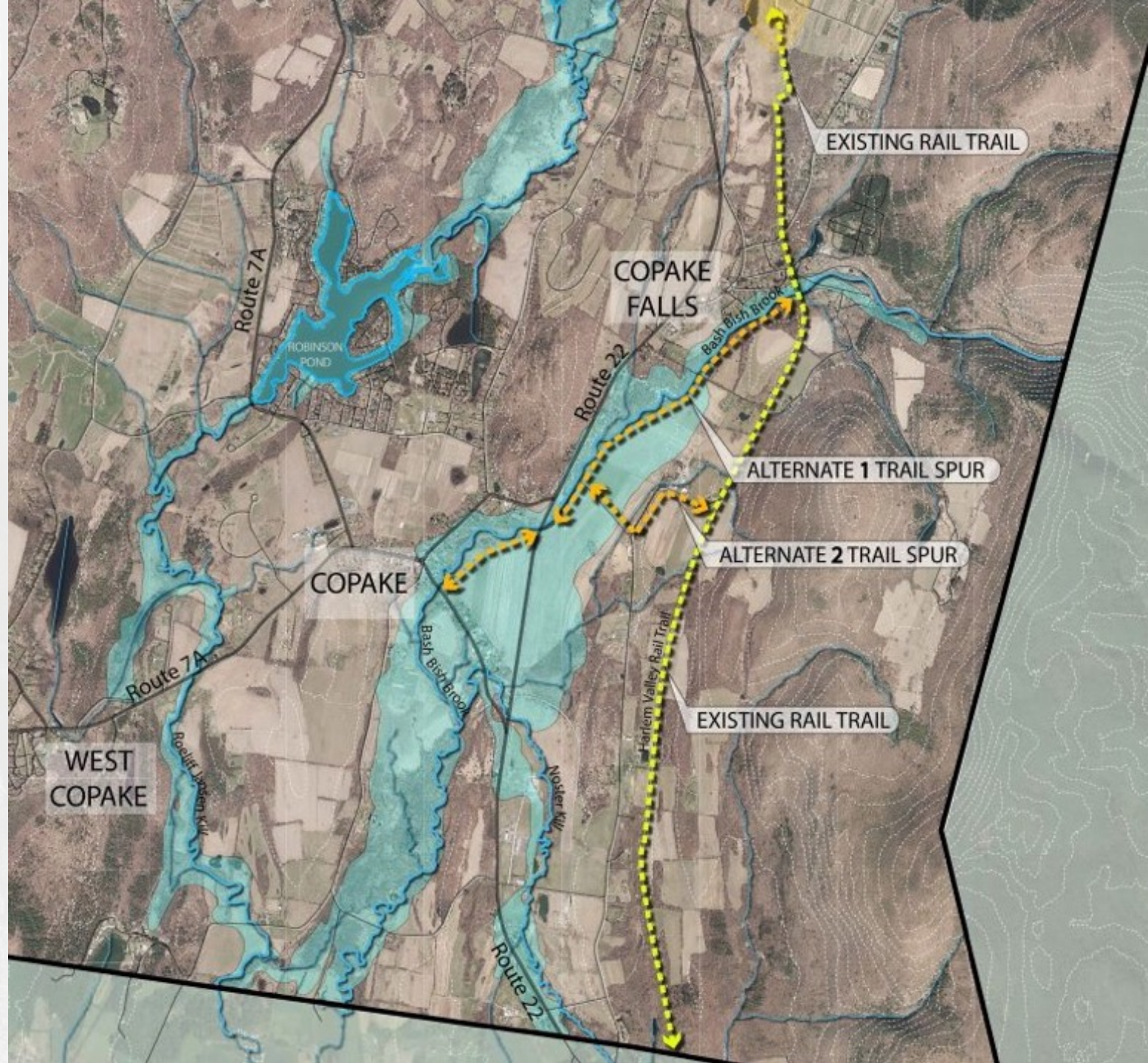
# Potential Spur Trail





# Potential Spur Trail

- Alternate trail spurs
- Connects Copake Hamlet to Copake Falls
  - Alternative one follows Bash Bish Brook
  - Alternative Two follows Weed Mine Road and Valley View Road
- Challenges
  - Land ownership
  - Crossing Route 22





# Potential Spur Trail



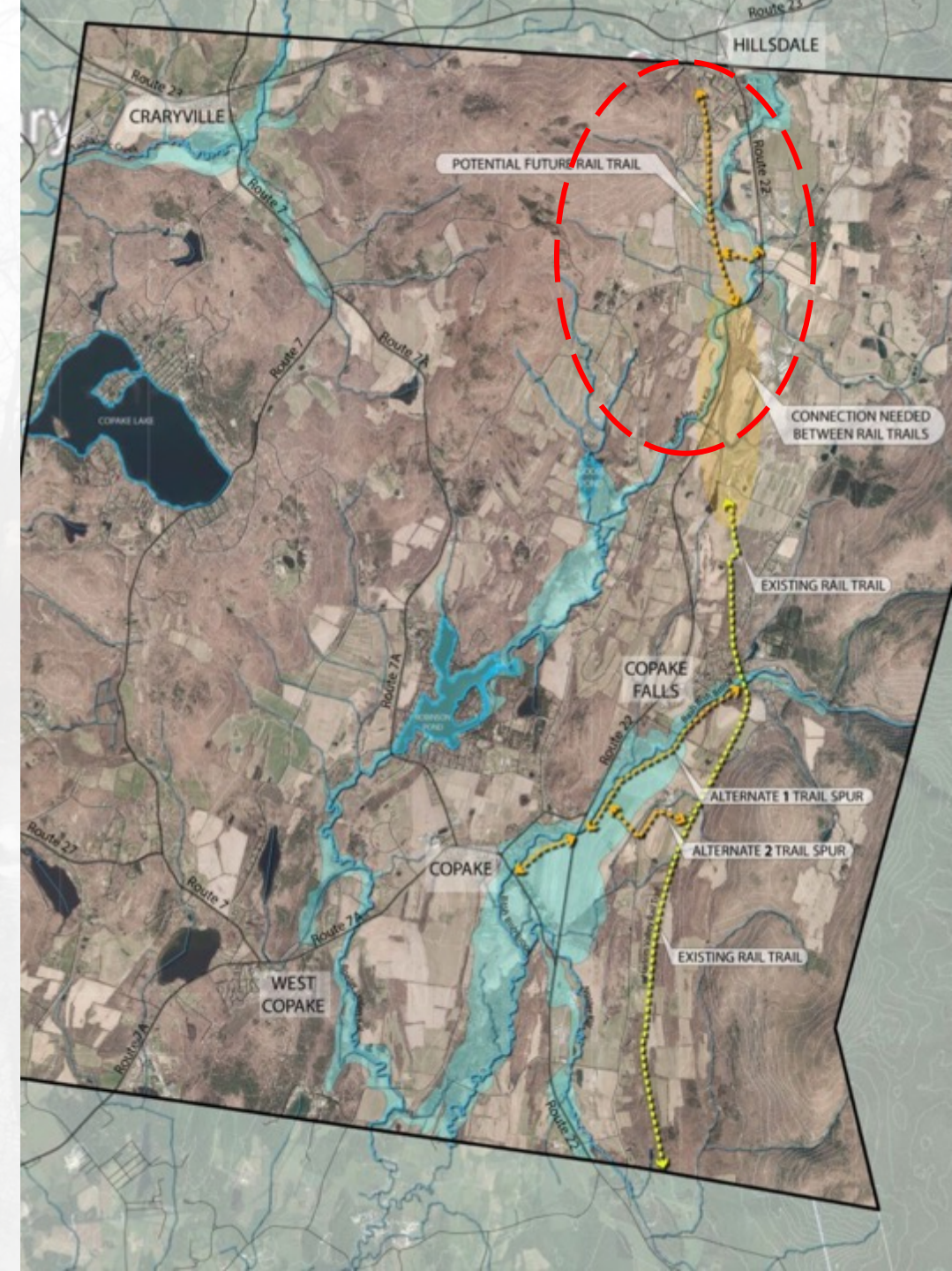
Crossing Rt. 22



Ending at the Hub property



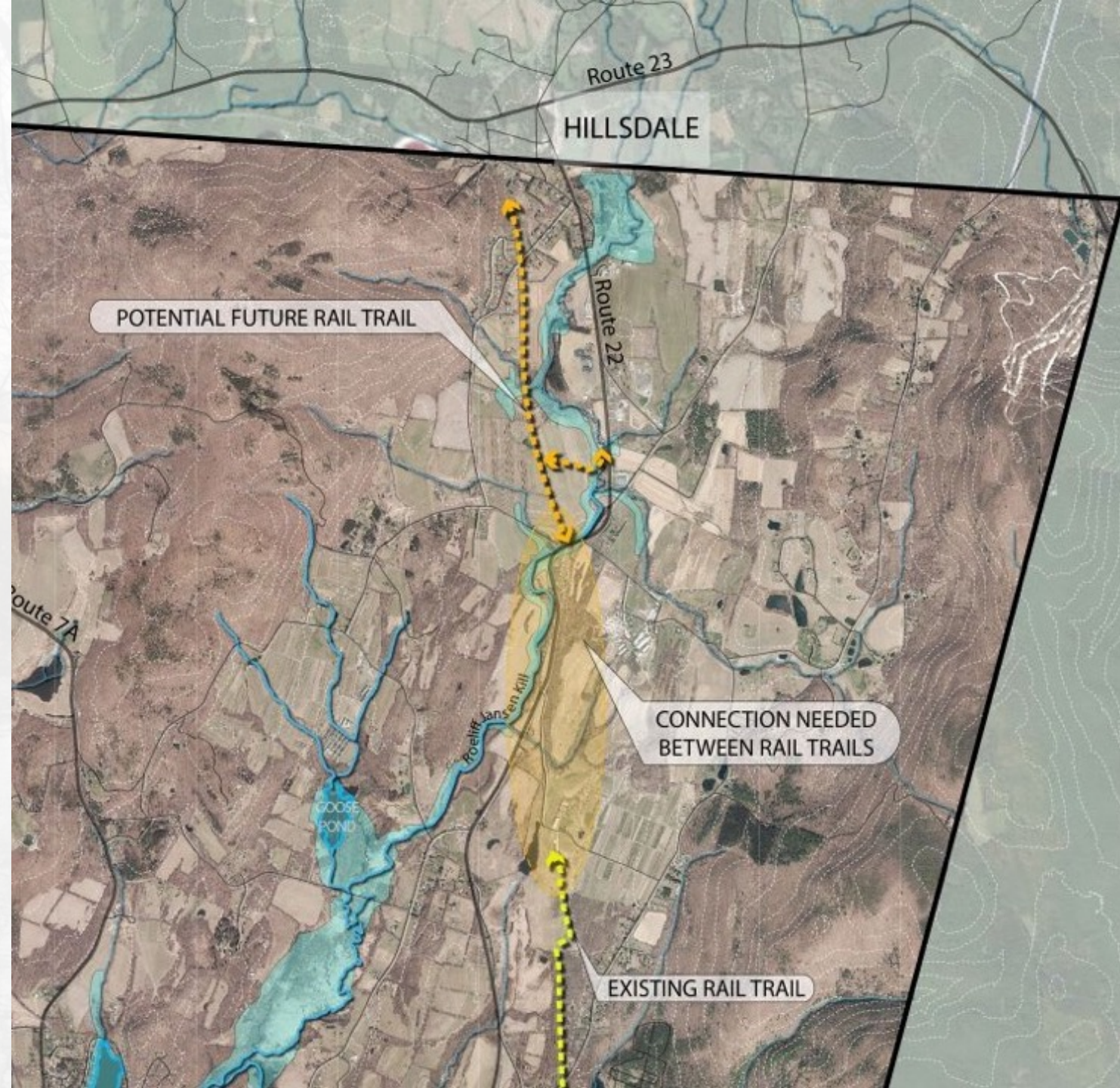
# Potential Future Rail Trail





# Potential Future Rail Trail

- Connects to Hillsdale
- Challenges
  - Land ownership
  - Crossing Route 22
  - Connecting existing and future rail trail
  - Grade change
  - Crossing Roeliff Jansen Kill





# Potential Future Rail Trail



Crossing Rt. 22 and Roeliff Jansen Kill



Grade Challenges



# Planned Projects: Transportation

- County Route 7A Reconstruction and Preservation
- 2020-2023 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)

## Potential Projects Listed for Copake:

- Valley View Rd/Bash Bish Brook Bridge Rehabilitation: Replace superstructure
- **NYS OPRHP: Harlem Valley Rail Trail at Rte. 22 – Construct multi-use trail and bridge** from Orphan Farm Road to Black Grocery Road

<https://www.dot.ny.gov/programs/stip/files/R8.pdf>





# DOT Road Work: County Route 7A Reconstruction & Preservation, Town of Copake

*Goal: Improve the highway to improve conditions and enhance safety for all County Route 7A users.*

- Led by **local advisory committee** and community; preliminary scope
- Area: 1.75-miles from CR 7A from Center Hill Rd. to Rte. 22 North and South
- Construction Start Target: **Summer 2022**
- Anticipated cost approximately **\$4.5 million**

## **Preliminary tasks:**

- Resurface or reconstruct pavement
- **Add drainage, curbing and sidewalk**, wider shoulders (as possible)
- Consider **parking reconfiguration** with local support and funds
- Evaluate designs for **three legs of CR 7A** around the clock



# Dialogue

- What is your relationship to the waterways?
- Are you familiar with each one?
- What do you use them for?
- Do you own property along the waterways?
- What challenges do you see to gaining public access?
- What challenges do you see?
- What opportunities do you see?

*“Vision without action is a dream. Action without vision is simply passing the time. Action with vision is making a positive difference.”*  
-Joel Baker



# What's Next?

- Complete inventory and analysis/community profile
- Draft vision statement and goals
- Identify strategies, projects and other actions necessary to implement the vision and goals
- Community workshop to discuss potential projects
- Develop the draft and final plan document
- Conduct a workshop to present the draft

*“Look at life  
through the  
windshield, not the  
rear-view mirror.”*

*-Byrd Baggett*



## Don't Forget:

- **Sign in** so we can contact you about events
- Watch for the **new website**:  
[www.copakewaterfronts.com](http://www.copakewaterfronts.com)
- Send us your **favorite pictures** of the waterways and hamlets

# THANK YOU!

Questions?

Roberta Roll, Chairperson

Project Advisory Committee

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