



Woodstock Land Conservancy

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Immediate Release

Illegal Cutting of Saplings Continues at the Comeau

Public Trail Impacted by Destruction

Young trees continue to be cut along the public walking trail at the Comeau property, according to Town of Woodstock officials. While the illegal activity slowed last winter, it has resumed.

Last fall more than 60 young trees and shrubs were cut, and the remaining stumps became tripping hazards for those using the trails. The Woodstock Town Board is worried there could be injuries due to recent reports of unauthorized cutting.

Melissa Peterson, land acquisition and stewardship manager at the Woodstock Land Conservancy, is also concerned about the cutting of small trees. The Conservancy oversees the conservation easement on the 75-acre property and works collaboratively with the Comeau Stewardship Advisory Committee (CSAC) and the town to monitor the property.

Not only are the remaining stumps trip hazards, but the removal of the trees reduces the stability of the Sawkill Creek bank. "The sapling trees and shrubs that are being cut play an important role in helping to reduce erosion and protect water quality," Peterson said. The sapling trees are being cut and then left behind. While they look small, many of the saplings have been growing along the creek bank for a decade or more. New trees will take a significant amount of time to take root in those areas and grow.

Due to the popular use of the walking trails, town officials are stumped about the lack of information regarding the vandal or vandals.

Jeffrey Viglielmo, chair of CSAC, said the destruction of the saplings is a serious issue. He and the committee members are frustrated that someone could be engaged in such malicious actions. Woodstock Town Supervisor Bill McKenna and Peterson agree. McKenna encouraged any

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Comeau visitor who sees suspicious activity to report it to town officials or law enforcement. “Don’t confront anyone on the trail,” he said, “but report everything you see to Woodstock Police as soon as you are able to do so.”

The Town of Woodstock has owned the Comeau property since 2003, and the Woodstock Land Conservancy has overseen the conservation easement since 2009. Both work collaboratively with CSAC, the committee of volunteers who provide advice to the Town Board and WLC regarding the Comeau property and its stewardship.

About WLC

The Woodstock Land Conservancy is committed to the protection and preservation of the open lands, forests, water resources, scenic areas and historic sites in Woodstock and the surrounding area. Accredited by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, the Conservancy protects and stewards more than 1,000 acres of land in the eastern Catskills area. Learn more at <https://www.woodstocklandconservancy.org/>.

About the Town of Woodstock

Woodstock is a town of more than 6,000 residents known for its artistic history, contributions to music, hiking trails, natural beauty and the iconic Overlook Mountain. While most visitors know the town in Ulster County, New York, as the home of a music festival that did not actually take place there, Woodstock residents know it as a small community where artistic creativity continues to thrive alongside commerce, conservation and change.

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