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June 26, 2009

Supervisor Ryan Courtien
Town of Dover
126 East Duncan Hill Road
Dover Plains, NY 12522

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TOWN CLERKS OFFICE
TOWN OF DOVER

Dear Supervisor Courtien:

Jane Geisler and I, representing the Dutchess/Putnam Appalachian Trail Management Committee, attended the public hearing June 3, 2009, and addressed the Town Board regarding the DEIS submitted by the Dover Knolls Development Company as it pertains to the Appalachian National Scenic Trail. The comments made on June 3, as well as additional points the Board should take into account, are attached.

Those involved with the AT welcome questions from the Town Board and are anxious to work with you and the developers.

Respectfully yours,



James P. Haggett
Chair, Dutchess/Putnam Appalachian Trail Management Committee

cc: Ms. Sarah Bransom, Appalachian Trail Park Office, National Park Service
Ms. Karen Lutz, Regional Director, Mid-Atlantic Region Appalachian Trail Conservancy
Ms. Christie Ferguson, NY East Hudson Representative, NY/NJ Trail Conference
Mr. Ronald Rosen, Regional Partnership Committee, NY/NJ Trail Conference
Ms. Jane Geisler, Dutchess/Putnam AT Management Committee
Mr. Frank Dogil, Dutchess/Putnam AT Management Committee

Knolls of Dover DEIS Comments

(based upon documentation submitted to the Town of Dover dated 4-27-09)

Dutchess/Putnam Appalachian Trail Management Committee

- 1) The DEIS makes a number of statements (see pages III A-12, III A-24&25, III F-7, and Exhibit II-13) about a trail that would connect the Dover Knolls community to the Appalachian National Scenic Trail that lies to the east. This is a misconception and presumptuous. The AT strives to provide an environment that gives the hiker a sense of remoteness and detachment from civilization so nature can be truly enjoyed. To this end, requests to build connecting trails are granted only after thorough environmental reviews to ensure that the Appalachian Trail experienced is not compromised and that any side trails serve to enhance the experience for A.T. visitors. Consideration of such a request could not be entertained until after the project is complete and its population settled in.
- 2) Most of the maps in the DEIS show Askins Road being continuous from Duell Hollow Road, across federal AT easement land, on into the Dover Knolls property. This is incorrect and its delineation should be removed. Most of the road, and all of it on federal easement, was abandoned after a 1955 flood. What remains is not passable or even distinguishable.
- 3) To prevent unauthorized access to the AT easement it is requested the developers install substantial and effective barricades at potential entry points into lands under federal easement. One such point is what remains of Askins Road which in past years has been used by ATV riders.
- 4) The Dover Knolls developers indicate that a large amount of property will be conserved which is greatly appreciated. The DEIS states that a Home Owners Association will manage the open space (pages III F-14 & 15). It is a mistake to leave management of forested areas to a group that may lack the expertise needed and possibly take actions based upon fleeting opinions and pressures and be detrimental in the long run. Donation to a recognized conservation organization such as Dutchess Land Conservancy is recommended.

The particular areas of concern are labeled "Upland Forest Preserve" and "Woodland Preserve" located near the reservoir (see Exhibit III N-1). A large portion of these areas are also designated "Reservoir Watershed Area" which should surely mandate they receive the appropriate management.

Knolls of Dover DEIS Comments, continued

- 5) Finally, the visual impact of the development as it affects the AT should be considered. Along the height of land in Pawling the AT passes a point known as Cat Rocks which provides the trail's premier vista in all of Dutchess County. From this point the beauty of the Harlem Valley shines. The Dover Knolls project site is clearly visible to the north. To mitigate the project's affects to this scenic asset it is requested that one, the construction process preserve as many mature trees as possible and not bulldoze a clear swatch as is done so often by builders and two, employ architecture and exterior colors that will enable the structures to blend in with the environment. For example, use earth tone paint schemes.

The absolute best option would be to avoid building on the upslope just below the reservoir. This suggestion, for a variety of reasons, was put forth by several speakers at the June 3 public meeting.