

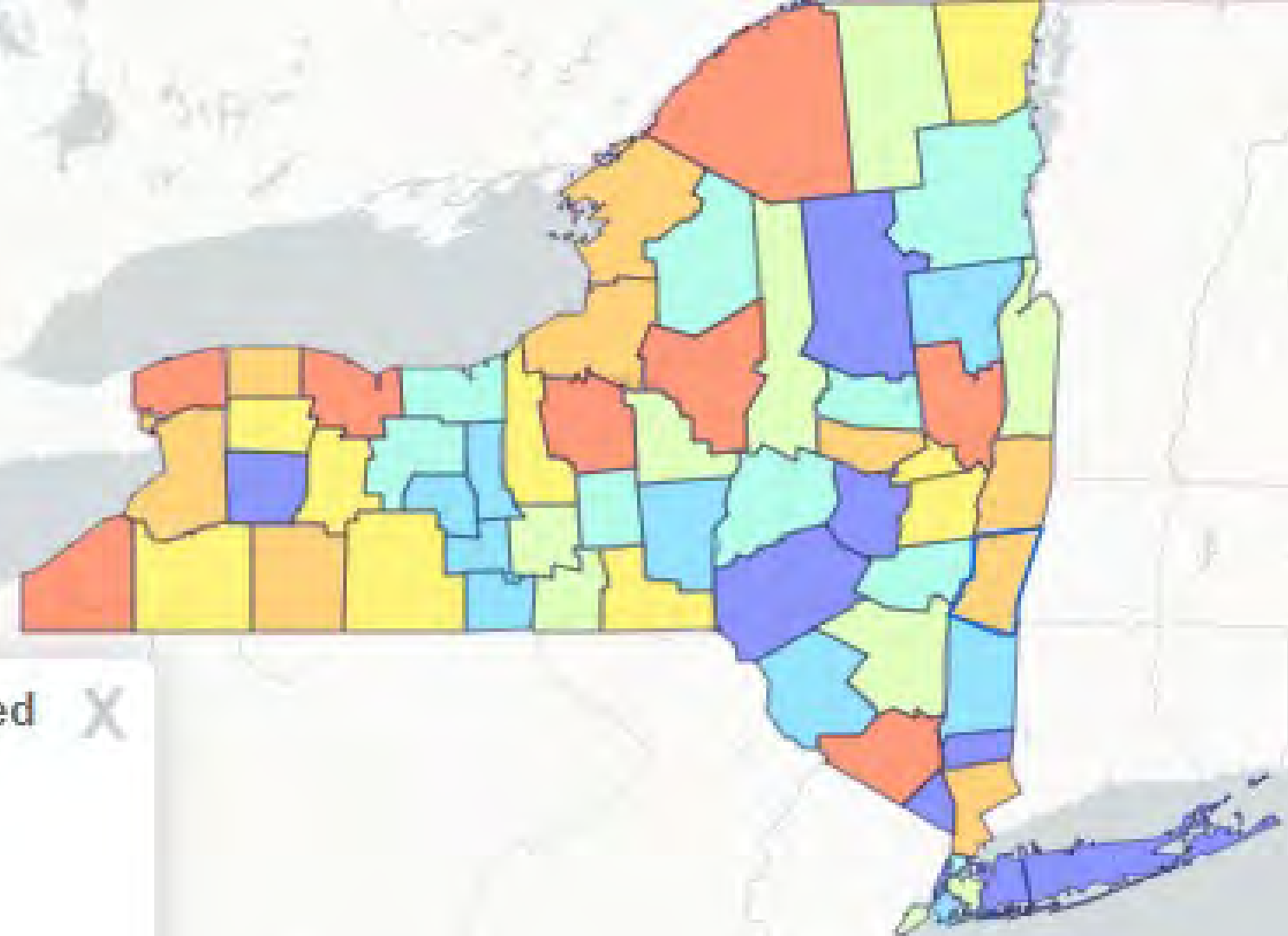
# Stories from the front line

## Case Study: Columbia County


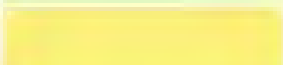
A win or conflict for wildlife, farming, and renewable energy goals?

Troy Weldy  
Columbia Land Conservancy  
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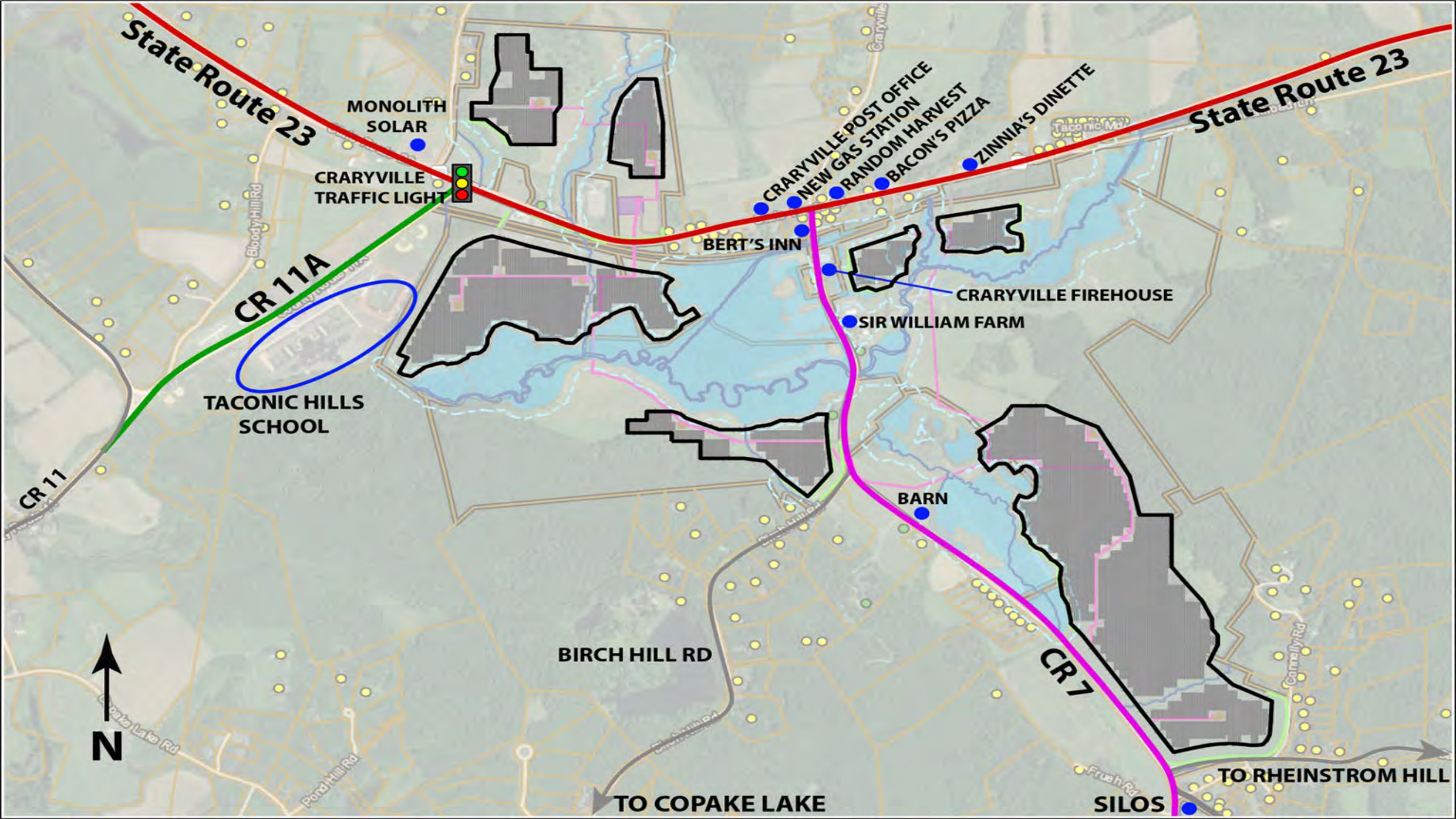




Capacity Approved Not Completed X

	12 kW
	17,697 kW
	27,717 kW
	39,481 kW
	52,873 kW
	78,603 kW
	104,768 kW





State Route 23

State Route 23

CR 11A

CR 7

BIRCH HILL RD

TACONIC HILLS SCHOOL

MONOLITH SOLAR

CRARYVILLE TRAFFIC LIGHT

BERT'S INN

CRARYVILLE POST OFFICE  
NEW GAS STATION  
RANDOM HARVEST  
BACON'S PIZZA

ZINNIA'S DINETTE

CRARYVILLE FIREHOUSE

SIR WILLIAM FARM

BARN

TO COPAKE LAKE

TO RHEINSTROM HILL

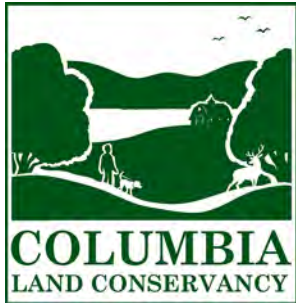
SILOS



# WORKING GROUP - WHO WE ARE

A broad-based coalition of community voices, environmental organizations, and experts representing the interests of Columbia County and the Hudson Valley.

## Organizations



**SENSIBLE SOLAR**  
for Rural New York



**Friends of  
Columbia Solar**



**SCENIC  
HUDSON  
.ORG**

## Consultants/Advisors

- **NYS Assemblymember** Didi Barrett
- **American Farmland Trust**
- **Cornell University**, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences – David Kay, Senior Extension Associate
- **Landscape Architects** Gail Wittwer-Laird, Mark Strieter
- Rheinstrom Hill **Audubon** Sanctuary

# WORKING GROUP - PERSPECTIVES & PURPOSE

Following Hecate's public presentations in Nov 2021, the working group came together to speak with a collective, community voice. Group members brought unique perspectives on the project:


- **Columbia Land Conservancy** sought to preserve the ecology of the site, including natural resources, wetlands, the Taghkanic Creek and wildlife habitat.
- **Friends of Columbia Solar** supported the grid-scale project as an indispensable solution to climate change, while pushing Hecate to do more for Copake.
- **Scenic Hudson** championed “smart solar siting,” with the goal of promoting solar energy while protecting local environments.
- **Sensible Solar for Rural New York** opposed the project's scale, siting and effect on the local environment, agriculture and economy, and advocated for more local control.

*We all agreed on **one goal**: Hecate's Shepherd's Run must be the best it can be for Copake's **environment, agriculture, residents, and economy** – while contributing significantly to New York State's goal of **100% clean power by 2040**.*




# OUR PROPOSAL - A RE-ENVISIONED SHEPHERD'S RUN

In response to community **concerns**, we propose the following **improvements** to Shepherd's Run:



## 1. Protecting the Environment

-  **New community-accessible green space**
-  **Rail Trail extension**
-  **No clear-cutting trees**
-  **Wildlife-friendly fencing**





## 2. Protecting Homeowners

-  **Scenic screening** to integrate panels & views
-  **Compensation** for nearby homeowners
-  **Decommissioning panels**

## 3. Protecting Agriculture

-  **Farming and grazing** under the panels
-  **Educational programs** with Taconic Hills, local schools and colleges

## 4. Benefiting the Community

-  **Lower electric bills** for local residents
-  **Solar panels** for Taconic Hills
-  **Full property taxes** for county, town, schools
-  **Buy and hire local**

**Subscriber Only**

Opinion  
[Francis  
Wilkinson](#)

# The Solar Farm That Almost Destroyed Copake, N.Y.

Residents of a small upstate town were bitterly divided over a planned development — until they weren't.



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# STOP

HECATE FROM  
RUINING COPAKE





**Prime Farmland - County Route 7**



# HOW DO WE GET BACK ON TRACK?

To make this vision a reality, we need a **large-scale partnership** among:

- Hecate Energy
- The Town of Copake
- Taconic Hills Central School
- Project landowners
- Local farmers
- Columbia Land Conservancy
- Audubon Society
- Harlem Valley Rail Trail Association
- Area residents
- and others

**If we do this right, Shepherd's Run will be a model for the nation.**

# WHAT WILL WE GET?

By **partnering** with local organizations to address the **concerns of the community** and implementing the **Working Group's recommendations**, Shepherd's Run will bring **significant community benefits**:

- **For residents and tourists:** hundreds of acres of **new community-accessible green space**, protecting land, increasing tourism, creating extensive trails and paths, supporting property values, and more.
- **For farmers, researchers, and students:** job opportunities to **pioneer agrivoltaics**, produce healthy food, and develop the field.
- **For homeowners: fair compensation** for those impacted by the project.
- **For Taconic Hills School:** increase **revenue, electric buses**, and **advanced curricula**.

# A WIN-WIN FOR CLIMATE, COPAKE, COLUMBIA COUNTY, NEW YORK STATE, AND HECATE ENERGY

A community-based **partnership** will allow us to achieve **climate-scale solar and support New York State's renewable energy goals** while:

- 1. Protecting Copake's Environment**, including wetlands and waterways, forests, wildlife habitat and rural viewsheds
- 2. Protecting Homeowners**
- 3. Protecting Copake's Prime Farmland and Farmers**
- 4. Benefiting the Community Economically** through increased tax revenue, lower electric bills and local jobs.
- 5. Becoming A Model For Large-Scale Rural Renewable Facility Siting**, which can be replicated across New York State for the benefit of local communities.



# LEARNED LESSONS & NEEDS:

1. **State Vision:** Map of statewide vision including equitable distribution that factors in protection of natural resources, prime ag lands, and open space
2. **Financial Incentives:** Provide local communities with \$\$\$ to create and encourage local, meaningful solar siting AND provide more incentives to developers to place solar on already built infrastructure and/or encourage true dual-use with solar and ag.
3. **Financial Disincentives:** Developers want to develop on the cheapest lands possible. Put in disincentives and mitigation to protect active ag lands, forests, and other natural areas.
4. **Community Involvement:** People want a say in their communities.



# CONTACT INFORMATION

Visit

**[www.CraryvilleGateway.org](http://www.CraryvilleGateway.org)**

for more information

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Columbia Land Conservancy

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