



Tompkins County Legislature

Governor Daniel D. Tompkins Building
Ithaca, NY 14850

Meeting: 11/14/17 04:00 PM
Department: Planning and Sustainability Department
Category: Environmental
Functional Category:

SCHEDULED

RESOLUTION NO. DOC ID: 7342

1 **Appropriating Fund from the Capital Reserve Fund for Natural,**
2 **Scenic, and Recreational Resource Protection for the West Hill**
3 **Wildway - Babcock Acquisition**

4 WHEREAS, the Tompkins County Legislature established the Capital Reserve Fund for Natural, Scenic, and
5 Recreational Resource Protection by Resolution No. 217 of 2005, and
6

7 ***WHEREAS, the current balance in the Capital Reserve Fund is \$50,023.06, and***
8

9 WHEREAS, the purpose of the Capital Reserve Fund is to support participation by Tompkins County in
10 partnerships with other levels of government and private organizations to:

- 11 • protect and preserve the natural, scenic, and recreational resources found in the Agricultural Resource Focus
- 12 Areas and Natural Features Focus Areas identified in the Comprehensive Plan;
- 13 • preserve and develop recreational trail corridors that cross municipal borders; and
- 14 • develop outdoor recreation facilities, within the focus areas, that are intended to serve all county residents, and
- 15

16 WHEREAS, the Program Guidelines identify Project Priority Criteria for use of the Capital Reserve Fund that
17 requires proposed projects to substantially further at least one of the following objectives:

- 18 • Substantially protects land within the 330-foot buffer of a perennial stream.
- 19 • Provides public access to Cayuga Lake.
- 20 • Protects land that is adjacent to permanently protected open space, including both natural and agricultural
- 21 lands.
- 22 • Protects land on an existing or potential intermunicipal trail corridor.
- 23 • Protects a high concentration of Prime Soils or Soils of Statewide Significance.
- 24 • Protects a Distinctive or Noteworthy view as identified in the Tompkins County Scenic Resources
- 25 Inventory.
- 26 • Protects corridor or habitat that can provide for connectivity between protected areas, and
- 27

28 WHEREAS, the Finger Lakes Land Trust has requested financial support from the Capital Reserve Fund for
29 the purpose of preserving the 70-acre property on Culver Road (Town of Ithaca Tax Parcel #31.-1-14.2) to connect
30 Coy Glen to Town of Ithaca conservation land, and
31

32 WHEREAS, the project meets all of the project eligibility requirements of the Capital Reserve Fund and
33 fulfills the fund's project priority criteria in that it "protects land that is adjacent to permanently protected open space,
34 including both natural and agricultural lands", and
35

36 WHEREAS, support from the Capital Reserve Fund is an important but modest component of the total funding
37 needed to complete the survey for the acquisition of the parcel, and
38

39 WHEREAS, the Interim Commissioner of Planning and Sustainability and the Planning Advisory Board have
40 recommended that the County Legislature authorize \$15,000 in funding from the Capital Reserve Fund to support the
41 West Hill Wildway-Babcock Acquisition, now therefore be it
42

1 RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Planning, Development, and Environmental Quality and the Budget,
2 Capital, and Personnel Committees, That a total of fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000) in funding from the Capital
3 Reserve Fund for Natural, Scenic, and Recreational Resource Protection be appropriated for the purpose of supporting
4 the Finger Lakes Land Trust's West Hill Wildway-Babcock Acquisition,
5

6 RESOLVED, further, That the Director of Finance be and hereby is authorized and directed to make an
7 adjustment to the Planning and Sustainability Department budget (A8027.54400 - \$15,000) from the Capital Reserve
8 Fund for Natural, Scenic, and Recreational Resource Protection,
9

10 RESOLVED, further, That the County Administrator or his designee be and hereby is authorized to execute
11 any contracts or agreements related to this project.

12 **SEQR ACTION:** Unlisted



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1
2 To: Members of the Planning, Development, and Environmental Quality Committee
3 of the Tompkins County Legislature
4 From: Scott D. Doyle, AICP, Associate Planner
5 Re: **Use of Tompkins County Capital Reserve Fund for Natural, Scenic and Recreation Resource Protection**
6 **for Support of the Black Diamond Trail Buffer-Reynolds Buffer Protection Project and West Hill**
7 **Wildway-Babcock Acquisition**
8 Date: September 28, 2017
9

Requested Action

11 Support the use of \$5,000 from the Capital Reserve Program for Natural, Scenic and Recreation Resource Protection
12 for the Black Diamond Trail Buffer-Reynolds Buffer Project and \$15,000 for the West Hill Wildway - Babcock
13 Acquisition
14

Background

16 Resolution Number 217 of 2005 (adopted by the Tompkins County Legislature on November 1, 2005) established the
17 Capital Reserve Fund for Natural, Scenic, and Recreational Resource Protection. According to the Resolution,
18 "... the purpose of this fund is to support participation by Tompkins County in partnerships with other levels of
19 government and private organizations to:

- 20 • protect and preserve the natural, scenic, and recreational resources found in the Agricultural Resource Focus
21 Areas and Natural Features Focus Areas identified in the Comprehensive Plan;
22 • preserve and develop recreational trail corridors that cross municipal borders; and
23 • develop outdoor recreation facilities, within the focus areas, that are intended to serve all county residents,"
24

25 The Tompkins County Conservation Plan (2007) establishes the priorities for expending the Capital Reserve Fund. The
26 guidelines were updated in 2017 to support the protection of lands that provide connectivity between important
27 resources or protected areas.
28

Project Eligibility Criteria

30 The proposed project must meet all of the following minimum requirements:

- 31 ▪ The property owner is a willing participant in the project.
32 ▪ The County cost will be no more than half of the total project cost.
33 ▪ Another party will be responsible for property management and stewardship, except for the addition of land
34 adjacent to a county forest.
35 ▪ The project is located in a NFFA or ARFA as identified in the Tompkins County Comprehensive Plan or
36 serves as a potential link to connect resources within these areas.
37

Project Priority Criteria

39 The proposed project must substantially further at least one of the following objectives:

- 40 ▪ Substantially protects land within the 330-foot buffer of a perennial stream.
41 ▪ Provides public access to Cayuga Lake.
42 ▪ Protects land that is adjacent to permanently protected open space, including both natural and agricultural
43 lands.
44 ▪ Protects land on an existing or potential intermunicipal trail corridor.
45 ▪ Protects a high concentration of Prime Soils or Soils of Statewide Significance.

- 1 ▪ Protects a Distinctive or Noteworthy view as identified in the Tompkins County Scenic Resources Inventory.
- 2 ▪ Protects corridor or habitat that can provide for connectivity between protected areas.

3 Process

4 Project proposals will be accepted by the Tompkins County Planning and Sustainability Department on an on-going
5 basis. Projects that meet the Project Eligibility Criteria and at least one of the Project Priority Criteria will be brought
6 to the Planning Advisory Board (PAB) for evaluation. The project will also be presented to the town, village or city in
7 which the project is located (unless the project is sponsored by the municipality). The PAB evaluation of the project
8 will include consideration of how the project would contribute to implementing the Tompkins County Conservation
9 Plan (2007), as well as any input provided by the local municipality. Projects that are recommended by the PAB will
10 be brought to the relevant committee of the Tompkins County Legislature and, ultimately, to the full Legislature for
11 approval.

12 **Proposed Projects**

13 **Black Diamond Trail Buffer-Reynolds Buffer Project:** The first request is to assist the Finger Lakes
14 Land Trust in purchasing a 12-acre portion of a parcel from the Reynolds family in the Town of Ulysses to
15 ensure the long-term protection of woodlands bordering the Black Diamond Trail (BDT) and the Cayuga
16 Lake Scenic Byway (State Route 89). Acquisition of the property will ensure the protection of mature
17 hardwood forest located in close proximity to Cayuga Lake within the EMC-designated Glenwood Ravine &
18 Lake Slopes Unique Natural Area (UNA-91). This property is further located within the County-designated
19 Lakeshore Natural Features Focus Area (NFFA). \$5,000 from the Tompkins County Capital Reserve Fund
20 for Natural, Scenic and Recreational Resource Protection will help the Land Trust acquire the property for
21 \$90,000 with long term plans to sell at a reduced rate to New York State's Office of Parks Recreation &
22 Historic Preservation to serve as a buffer to the BDT. The project fulfills each of the eligibility requirements
23 of the Capital Reserve Fund and further satisfies the priority criteria for that fund as it "protects land on an
24 existing or potential intermunicipal trail corridor." The Tompkins County Planning Advisory Board (PAB)
25 met on September 27th to consider this proposal and has recommended the use of \$5,000 in Capital Reserve
26 Funds to support this acquisition.

27 **West Hill Wildway-Babcock Acquisition:** The second request is for the West Hill Wildway-Babcock Acquisition
28 that buffers and connects Coy Glen. Located on Culver Road, this 70-acre property owned by the Babcock family is a
29 key link between Cornell's holdings at Coy Glen and Town of Ithaca conservation lands located on Culver Road. The
30 property serves to connect two EMC-designated Unique Natural Areas (UNAs): Coy Glen (UNA-139) and the Culver
31 Creek Ravine & Woods (UNA-140). Coy Glen is also the only New York State designated Critical Environmental
32 Area (CEA) within Tompkins County. The property further falls within the County-designated Gorges Natural
33 Features Focus Area (NFFA). The Land Trust has secured a contract to purchase the property for its estimated fair
34 market value of \$180,000. Based on conversations with representatives of the Town of Ithaca, the Land Trust
35 proposes to sell the more pristine western half of the property to the Town of Ithaca as an addition to its adjacent
36 conservation lands. The Land Trust intends to sell the eastern portion of the property to a private buyer subject to a
37 perpetual conservation easement that will limit development to a single residence and prohibit subdivision. The Land
38 Trust seeks a grant for \$15,000 from the Tompkins County Capital Reserve Fund for Natural, Scenic and Recreational
39 Resource Protection to cover costs associated with the project. The project meets all of the project eligibility
40 requirements of the Capital Reserve Fund and fulfills the fund's project priority criteria in that it "protects land that is
41 adjacent to permanently protected open space, including both natural and agricultural lands". The Tompkins County
42 Planning Advisory Board (PAB) met on September 27th to consider this proposal and has recommended the use of
43 \$15,000 in Capital Reserve Funds to support this acquisition.

44 **Budget Implications**

45 The Capital Reserve Fund balance is currently \$50,023.06. This project proposes to utilize \$5,000 of those funds to
46 support the Black Diamond Trail Buffer-Reynolds Buffer Project and \$15,000 for the West Hill Wildway-Babcock
47 Acquisition which would bring the fund balance to \$30,023.06.

Contact Information

2 Scott D. Doyle, AICP / 274-5560 / sdoyle@tomkins-co.org <<mailto:sdoyle@tomkins-co.org>>

3

4 **Attachments**

- 5
 - Proposed West Hill Wildway - Babcock Acquisition Support Materials and Maps from the FLLT