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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Ceremony to mark opening of Lake Hopatcong Trail**

LAKE HOPATCONG, N.J. - The official opening of the first leg of the Lake Hopatcong Trail will be marked with a ribbon-cutting ceremony and short hike Saturday, Sept. 23, 10 a.m., at the Hopatcong Senior Center, 32 Lakeside Blvd, Hopatcong.

Months of planning and hundreds of hours of volunteer labor have culminated in the completion of the first leg of the Lake Hopatcong Trail, a 40-mile trail system that will encircle the lake when complete.

Dozens of volunteers came out regularly to contribute their time, energy and occasionally their own tools, to the multi-community project. Many volunteers received training in trailblazing and trail maintenance by the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference.

“We’re gratified by the broad support we’ve received for this regional project,” said Donna Macalle-Holly, acting executive director for the Lake Hopatcong Foundation. “We’re especially grateful to the devoted and enthusiastic volunteers who joined us for weekly trail workdays throughout the spring and summer. Their hard work prepared this first trail leg for all to enjoy.”

The first phase of the trail, in the Borough of Hopatcong, traverses approximately nine miles, beginning on the Morris Canal Towpath across from Hopatcong State Park in Landing. With access from 13 different locations, the trail winds through Hopatcong Borough, ending near the Prospect Point Preserve in Jefferson Township, where the next phase of the trail is planned.

This first phase of the Lake Hopatcong Trail was funded by the Federal Highway Administration’s Recreational Trails Program, through the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection. Mapping and trail-marking for the project was completed by The Land Conservancy of New Jersey.

Trail maps will be available at the ceremony and online at [lakehopatcongfoundation.org](http://lakehopatcongfoundation.org) following the ceremony. A second state DEP grant application is pending for the next phase of the trail in Jefferson Township.

The Lake Hopatcong Foundation is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with a mission of “improving Lake Hopatcong for all, now and in the years to come.” Launched in 2012, it aims to improve and enhance the lake experience and environment. Initiatives include invasive species prevention, lake education and safety improvements. For more information, visit [lakehopatcongfoundation.org](http://lakehopatcongfoundation.org).

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