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OUR TOWNS

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Seminary agrees to allow access to trails

By Rasheed Oluwa
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BARRYTOWN — The public will have a chance to walk the grounds of the Unification Theological Seminary thanks to a newly formed agreement with Winnakee Land Trust.

The seminary, in this Town of Red Hook hamlet, announced it will sign a pedestrian access agreement for trails on its 250-acre property. The agreement was scheduled to be

Red Hook

signed Monday.

The seminary also will add a one-mile stretch of land it owns along the Hudson River to the Greenway Riverside Communities Trail.

"We've been working for about eight months to get this approved," Henry Christopher, the seminary's director of community relations and admissions, said. "We're showing the community we want to be more involved and that

we have a lot more to offer."

The Winnakee Land Trust, based in Rhinebeck, is an organization that aims to protect the natural, agricultural, recreational, cultural and historic resources in northern Dutchess County.

The Rev. Sun Myung Moon started the Unification Church in 1954. The Barrytown seminary opened in 1975.

Historic property

The prominent Livingston and Aspinwall families owned the land in the 1800s.

In summer 1868, a 9-year-old Theodore Roosevelt visited the estate with his family for three weeks and explored Tivoli Bay. This planted the seed for his diaries and his collection of insects, birds and mammals.

His became one of the first collections in the Museum of Natural History in New York City, which his father helped found, Christopher said.

Michael Haggerty, director of the Winnakee Land Trust, said the agreement was

integral in connecting the Greenway Trail.

So far, about 198 miles of land has been designated on both side of the river for the Riverside Communities Trail. There are still holes in the trail, which officials hope will stretch from New York City to Albany.

The seminary and Bard College have extensive trail networks along the Hudson River, but they are separated from each other by the Montgomery Place historic site.

Mary Mangione, director of the Greenway Conservancy, said they were negotiating with Historic Hudson Valley, the owners of the Montgomery Place site, to continue the trail.

"Hopefully, this shows some of the other landowners that we're having some success and this convinces them to agree to an easement," Haggerty said.

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Pub crawlers