



Hunterdon Land Trust

Protecting the places you love

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A VIRTUAL WALK IN THE WOODS

New Hunterdon Land Trust Interactive Map Lets Everyone Share County's Best Recreational Places

The Hunterdon Land Trust's interactive community map takes one of the world's oldest forms of recreation – a walk in the woods – and adds a new twist.

Developed by New Brunswick-based Vertices LLC, the new mobile application encourages hikers, bikers, locavores and all nature lovers to share information about the county's most beautiful places directly from a smartphone or iPad. The map highlights the Land Trust's preserves and stewardship programs, its Farmers' Market at the Dvoor Farm on the route 12 circle in Raritan Township, and the location of the market's farmers and vendors who support our local food system.

"A birder can share information about where a rare species was observed, upload a photo and leave a comment," said Patricia Ruby, executive director of the Hunterdon Land Trust. "A Farmers' Market customer can note what products are available or how they were used to create a healthy meal."

This free app can be accessed at www.hltcommunitymap.com. By clicking on the colored icons on the map, users will learn about the preserved land and view photos uploaded by others. They can also click on various map overlays to see how the county has developed over the years, starting with the 1930s.

To share information or photos, users can sign in if they choose, and follow a few simple instructions. Everyone is encouraged to visit the site and add information about their favorite trailheads, points of interest and scenic vistas, and then share their finds with friends on Facebook, Instagram and other social media outlets.

Founded in 1994, Vertices developed its Mapper platform, a web-based interface and mobile application that uses interactive mapping to visually display information. The Mapper application, tailored to create various community maps, has helped people find gas in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, avoid potholed roads in New Jersey and locate clean restrooms in New York City. Most recently, Vertices created an app to map reported cases of the Ebola virus.

With this new effort, Vertices hopes the HLT interactive map will encourage Hunterdon County residents to share valuable information about the area's environment, recreational sites, farms and more.

"We're extremely excited about sharing the HLT Community Map, not only because it is one of the first in our latest version of the Mapper engine, but because it is for an excellent cause," said Dr. Wansoo Im, founder of Vertices LLC. "When community members create a visual inventory of their knowledge and memories about a place, they are truly engaged with the task of keeping its natural and community assets alive. We're excited to see how this crowd-sourced information will help HLT continue with its mission of preserving and protecting the county. We hope viewers will see the value of this tool and participate."

The Land Trust sees this new interactive map as a tool to entice more people to explore the county's beautiful places, and to contribute their knowledge and skills to enhance the stewardship of natural and cultural resources.

"We hope the interactive community map will engage new audiences and inspire them to help us preserve, steward and enjoy all that we love about Hunterdon County," Ruby said. "By sharing information in this forum, we build a more informed network of citizen stewards motivated to safeguard clean drinking water, local food, diverse wildlife, scenic landscapes and recreational opportunities."