

# Two Creeks Trail, Phase I, Grand Opening July 18, 2025 1-3 pm

Celebrate the completion of Phase I of Two Creeks Trail, the first half-mile of a three-mile loop along the Calhoun and Butternut Creeks. Truly a community effort, this project is undertaken by Butternut Valley Alliance, Morris Historical Society, Morris Rotary, Butternut Valley Garden Club and Morris Central School. The trail is another link in BVA's goal of a valley-long trail system.

The trail is easily accessible within walking distance of the village and provides:

- increased sense of community by allowing a common area to meet,
- increased pride in the community by fostering new resources,
- easy access to exercise facilities,
- improved health for residents through exposure to the outdoors,
- growth to local businesses through increased foot traffic,
- public awareness of history and environmental protection needs.



The three-mile loop starts near the MCS parking lot, within walking distance of the center of town, and runs along Calhoun and Butternut Creeks.



Two Creeks Trail is designed for environmental benefit, as well. The path is defined by an unmowed area between the creek edge and the playing fields. Student and community volunteers enhanced this berm by planting 90 flowering trees donated by Upper Susquehanna Coalition. The Serviceberry, Elderberry, Viburnum and Dogwood are native species that will provide stability to the trail edge. In addition, MCS students planted pollinator gardens with the support of Butternut Valley Garden Club and funded through a grant from Morris Rotary. The native-variety gardens, planted in tires recovered during a creek cleanup, are placed along the trail edge and provide additional support for pollinators.



Interpretative signage was developed by MCS Environmental Science students with assistance from the Morris Historical Society. The signs, funded through an Otsego County Soil and Water Conservation District grant, cover a wide range of topics. Topography of the creek and floodplains are explained as well as historical uses of the creek and surrounding area. Environmental concerns are raised such as impacts to its ecosystem and how to evaluate its health. Signage also provides recommendations for maintaining the waterway's well being such as planting and maintaining pollinator-attracting flora. Intended as an instructional device and to promote discussion, each sign poses a question about its topic. A teachers' guide is in development to be made available through use of a QR code to the BVA website.

### Factors Affecting a Creek's Health

Cool, clean, well-oxygenated water with diverse aquatic habitats is essential for a healthy ecosystem.

<b>Abiotic Factors</b> Nonliving things that affect the creek's health are abiotic factors such as water, soil, sun, fire, wind, minerals and human activity. Abiotic factors interacting with biotic factors form an ecosystem.	 <small>Photo credit: Robert Over 700 bag bones and their plastic wrappers were washed into the creek following the July 2021 flood. The stream plastic and rotting log significantly altered the health of the creek.</small>	<b>Biotic Factors</b> Living things that affect the creek's health are biotic factors such as animals, people, plants, insects, fungi and bacteria. Biotic factors interacting with abiotic factors form an ecosystem.
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What abiotic and biotic factors do you see in Calhoun's ecosystem?



Funded by Tianaderrah Foundation, Upper Susquehanna Coalition, Otsego County Soil and Water Conservation District and Morris Rotary. Trail development by Butternut Valley Alliance, Morris Historical Society, Morris Rotary, Butternut Valley Garden Club and Morris Central School. For more information visit [ButternutValleyAlliance.org](http://ButternutValleyAlliance.org)