



TOWN OF ULYSSES

10 Elm Street, Trumansburg, NY 14886
townofulyssesny.gov

Town Supervisor (607) 387-5767, Ext 232 • supervisor@townofulyssesny.gov
Town Clerk (607) 387-5767, Ext 221 • clerk@townofulyssesny.gov

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING: DESIGNATION OF SMITH WOODS AS A CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL AREA

Please take notice that the Ulysses Town Board will hold a Public Hearing at the Town Hall (10 Elm St., Trumansburg NY 14886) on Tuesday, Sept. 22, 2026 at 7pm for the purpose of receiving comments on the Proposed Designation of Smith Woods as a Critical Environmental Area (CEA) pursuant to the State Environmental Quality Review Act and its implementing regulations, including 6 NYCRR § 617.14(g).

Smith Woods is located near the intersection of NYS Rt 96 and Falls Rd within the Town of Ulysses and may possess one or more characteristics warranting this designation, including exceptional or unique natural settings, ecological sensitivity, and recreational and educational value. Smith Woods is currently a private park consisting of approximately 31.75 acres. The exact boundaries of the proposed Smith Woods CEA are more specifically identified within a survey and its associated legal description on file with the Town Clerk. The environmental characteristics warranting this designation include, but are not limited to, the following:

The subject site is an area which is a benefit to human health, and which is an old growth forest of natural setting, and which has social, recreational, and educational values, and which has inherent ecological sensitivity to change that could may be adversely affected by any change for the following reasons: documented history suggests that no logging or agriculture occurred on the site. The forest contains excellent examples of pit and mound topography, branches emerging high in the canopy, and very large trees. Outside of light gaps, the primary saplings are shade-tolerant beech and sugar maple. The dominant overstory trees are beech, sugar maple, and hemlock. Yellow poplar also is a significant overstory species. Twenty-three species of trees have been documented in Smith Woods. This species mix is characteristic of old growth forests, and it would appear Smith Woods could be designated as an old growth forest per State definition. The New York Natural Heritage Program has determined that this site may contain rare plants, animals, and/or significant ecological communities; there appears to be a beech-maple mesic forest and a red maple-hardwood swamp, and there is at least one plant species designated as rare or scarce at the state and local levels per The Nature Conservancy, the New York Natural Heritage Program, Tompkins County EMC, and the Cornell Plantations. A hemlock tree that blew over in 1989 was professionally aged at SUNY ESF and was estimated to have germinated in 1663. Several oak trees are estimated to be 250 years old based on their circumference. Tomkins County has designated the area as a Unique Natural Area, and it has been designated as a park by the Town. The forest is within walking distance of local public schools allowing students to walk there for field trips. It is across the road from a fairground facilitating public access. The topography is relatively flat making it accessible for those with limited physical abilities.



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Much of the soil in Smith Woods is a well-drained Arkport sandy loam – one of the most fertile soils in New York State. While three sides of the subject site are buffered by improved Rights-of-Way, adjacent private property to the east and southeast could be developed in the future which could negatively impact the ecology of the area.

A full description of the reasons for designating this site as a CEA is contained within a report prepared by the Town Planner dated May 7, 2026, which is on file with the Town Clerk. The proposed CEA designation would require future discretionary actions by state or local agencies that may affect Smith Woods to consider the environmental characteristics for which the area was designated. The designation itself does not alter ownership of the property or independently impose land use restrictions.

Members of the public may join the hearing in person or remotely via Zoom videoconference at <https://zoom.us/j/183862745> or +16465588656,,183862745#.

Please take further notice that at the aforementioned time and place, all interested residents (or their agents/representatives) will be afforded an opportunity to submit written and/or oral comments. Comments may also be sent in advance to the Town Clerk at 10 Elm St., Trumansburg NY 14886 or via e-mail to clerk@townofulyssesny.gov by 5pm on Sept. 22, 2026. Written comments received by the deadline will be made part of the public hearing record.

The full resolution and supporting documents, including the proposed CEA map, survey, legal description other materials can be found on the town's website at townofulyssesny.gov, or by contacting the Town Clerk at (607)387-5767 or clerk@townofulyssesny.gov.

Any person requiring special assistance to participate in the public hearing should contact the Town Clerk at least 48 hours prior to the hearing.

By order of the Town Board,
Carissa Parlato, Town Clerk 8/13/26