TOWN OF JOHNSBURG

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Barton Mines to Donate Recreational Easement to Help Expand Town's Four-Season Trail Network

New Trails Across Barton Property Will Connect North Creek Ski Bowl and Siamese Ponds Wilderness and provide new access to the peak of Gore Mountain, Helping Grow Town's Recreational Tourism Economy

JOHNSBURG, NY – For more than five years, public officials and recreational enthusiasts in the Town of Johnsburg have been working tirelessly to expand and enhance the town's network of world-class recreational trails for the benefit of area residents and visitors and to grow the town's recreational tourism economy.

Now, through the generosity of a sixth-generation local business, an important part of the town's long-term trail plan will soon be in place.

The Town of Johnsburg and Barton Mines today announced plans for a collaborative effort to create new four-season public recreational trails across a portion of Barton-owned property, connecting the town-owned and New York State-operated North Creek Ski Bowl recreational center with the state-owned Siamese Ponds Wilderness.

Barton will donate to the town a recreational easement across 200-acres of land that was part of the company's original Gore Mountain mine property (1878-1982), approximately five miles south of its current Ruby Mountain mining operation. The easement will allow the town to develop new hiking, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing trails. In addition to the more direct connection between the Ski Bowl and Siamese Ponds Wilderness, the new trails will provide improved access to the peak of Gore Mountain from the Siamese Ponds Wilderness and from the Garnet Hill trail network.

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These trail connections across the Barton property are key elements of the North Creek Recreational Trail Plan, prepared in 2019 by The Chazen Companies and Wilderness Property Management under the direction of the town of Johnsburg, the Warren County Planning Department, and a project advisory committee of community volunteers, with funding from the New York Department of State. The Plan's goal is to improve the town's recreational trail network and associated amenities to "enhance the local economy, celebrate the natural environment, bring community members together, and promote a healthy and active lifestyle." The Barton initiative complements major investments being made in the town's recreational amenities by the New York State Olympic Regional Development Authority at Gore Mountain and the North Creek Ski Bowl, as well as other private-sector investment in the town.

"This gift from Barton Mines and the Barton family provides a phenomenal opportunity for Johnsburg and North Creek to further grow our reputation as a year-round recreational destination," said **Johnsburg Supervisor Kevin Bean**. "Together with New York State's investments in Gore Mountain and the Ski Bowl, and other private-sector investments, big and small, this expansion of our trail network will help us climb to the next level of recreational tourism success."

"The Barton donation is particularly meaningful because it's one critically important business sector helping support and grow another," **Supervisor Bean** continued. "Barton has been responsibly managing an Adirondack natural resource to generate economic opportunity here for 146 years, and this project will add to that tradition in a new and exciting way."

"Barton Mines is pleased to donate this easement to the town with a goal of providing new recreational opportunities and spurring new economic growth," said **Barton Mines Chief Executive Officer Randy Rapple**. "Our sixth-generation, family-owned company has been a part of the Johnsburg community since 1878, and the community's success means a great deal to us. The town's trail network is a tremendous resource for our employees and their families and brings vacationers from across the country here to enjoy our lodgings, stores and restaurants. Anything we can do to enhance these recreational opportunities is an investment in the future of the town."

The town of Johnsburg is, geographically, the largest town in Warren County and is known for its multitude of four-season outdoor activities, including whitewater rafting, paddling, hiking, biking and mountain biking, camping, skiing, skating, and snowshoeing. The town is home to the New York State Olympic Regional Development Authority's Gore Mountain, the largest ski resort in the state; and the North Creek Ski Bowl, a town-owned recreation center operated by ORDA and the site of a major capital investment project now underway to construct a new ski lodge, chair lift and summer recreational attraction.

Barton Mines is a family-owned company that has been mining garnet and providing jobs in Johnsburg since 1878. Today, the company processes its garnet into high-quality abrasives for use by customers around the world for waterjet cutting, industrial blasting, and ophthalmic and specialty glass polishing. Barton is a major employer and economic driver in the Adirondack region. Between its Johnsburg and Indian Lake locations and its headquarters in downtown Glens Falls, the company employs approximately 100 people and has a total regional economic impact of approximately $20 million per year.