

BUTTERNUT CREEK

STREAM RESTORATION

In this location, a concrete culvert carried the Ulster & Delaware Railroad over Butternut Creek. This structure collapsed in the 1980s. As part of the Ashokan Rail Trail project, a new truss bridge was built over the creek in 2019. Removal of the culvert “daylighted” the natural stream bed, restoring habitat for fish and other aquatic organisms. In so doing, the project has also helped support an important fishing area.

Ashokan means “place of fish” in the language of the Esopus people, a local indigenous group associated with the larger Lenape population that lived in the region.

Rainbow and brown trout move between Ashokan Reservoir and creeks that feed it. Creeks are used as spawning and nursery areas. Riffles are important fish habitat characterized by shallower, faster-moving sections where rocks are at the water surface. Prime trout waters are clear, clean, and cold, consisting of an array of riffles and pools, submerged wood, boulders, undercut banks, and aquatic vegetation.



Butternut Culvert before daylighting



SHOKAN HAMLET



F.W. Beers Map, 1875.

The hamlet of Shokan was located near this spot before the area was submerged for the creation of the reservoir (1907–1915). The community included two churches, a school, a hotel, and numerous farms, businesses, and industries. Its main street ran along the north side of Butternut Creek.

