

Shepherd's Run Solar Project and why it's wrong

Sensible Solar for Rural New York
www.sensibleolarny.org



Who is Sensible Solar and what is our role?

Concerned citizens of Columbia County

- Grass-roots, community based, non-partisan
- Facts, not private developer's PR
- Raise awareness
- Voice local residents' concerns & needs
- Protect upstate NY's farms, water, views, economy, resources
- Support the Town and County
- Fight for adherence to local laws must be followed, not over-ridden
- Make NYS take local interests seriously vs. private developer's interests



What is Shepherd's Run Solar?

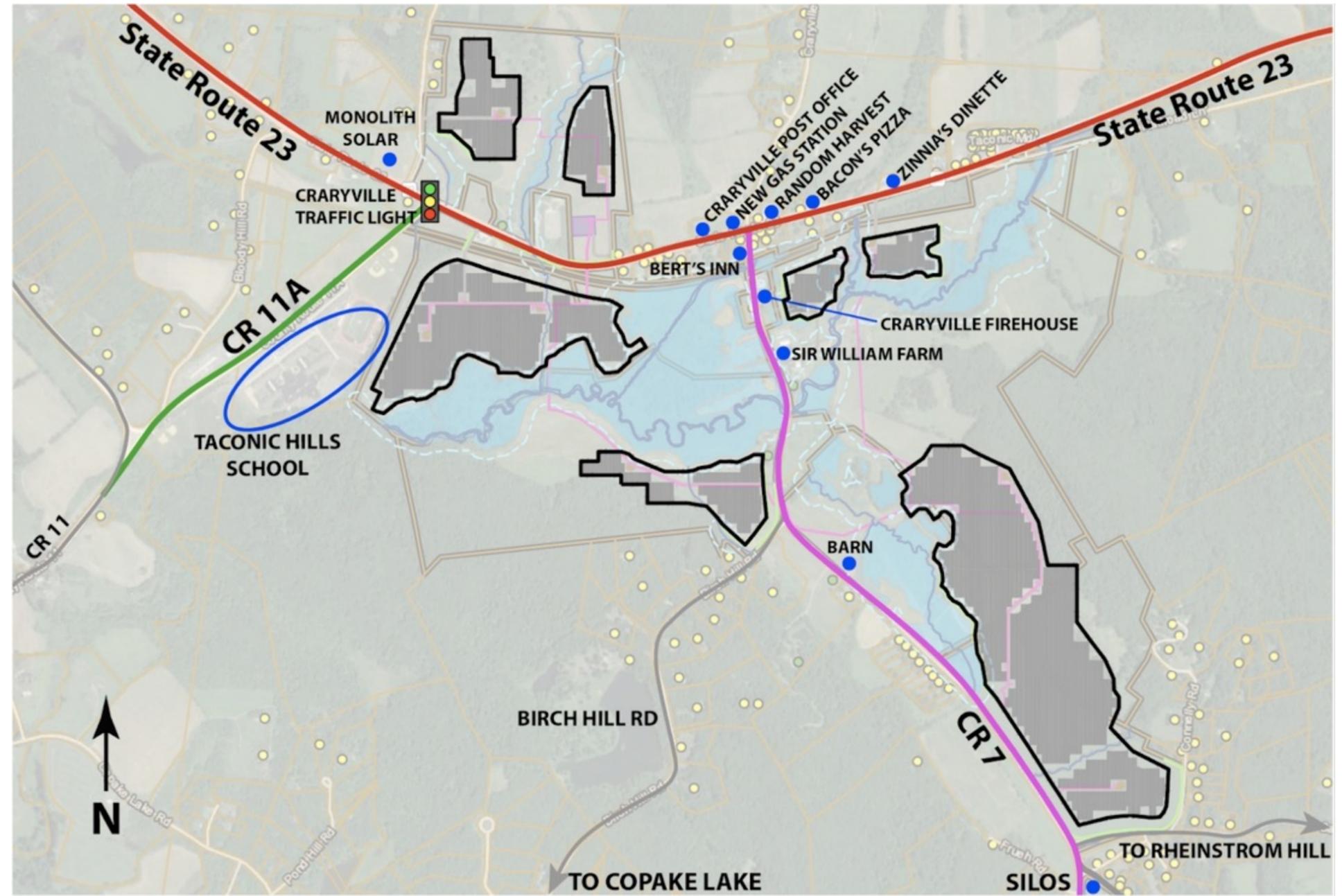
Proposed 60 MW industrial scale solar energy project

- Will fill a whole valley in Craryville, Town of Copake
- 220,000 motor-driven solar panels on 265 acres
- Private developer, Hecate, owned 40% by Repsol (Spain's national oil co.)
- Removes prime farmland from use, clears 40 acres of forest
- Sits on top of City of Hudson's source of drinking water
- Sited on 21 wetlands, 9 protected streams
- Abuts Taconic Hills School, Copake Lake, Rheinstrom Audubon Sanctuary



What is Shepherd's Run Solar?

- Sprawling footprint
- 7 separate solar fields
- Next to 100 homes & businesses
- Taconic Hills School campus
- 10 historic properties, 4 National Register eligible with Adverse Impact Determination
- Revolutionary War cemetery
- Mohican historic site



What's Wrong with Shepherd's Run

No Benefits/Only Negatives

- No jobs
- Tax breaks reduce local revenues - a State give-away to developers.
- De minimis electricity bill reductions
- Property values go down
- Violates town zoning and local laws
- Hurts local economy which depends on agriculture & tourism



What's Wrong with Shepherd's Run, continued

No Benefits/Only Negatives

- Removes hundreds of acres of farmland
- Drills under wetlands and streams for electrical cables
- Cuts 40 acres of trees
- Soil erosion, water run-off
- Disturbs wildlife habitat and key migration paths
- Noise -during 1 year construction, and during operation
- Changes scenic views forever

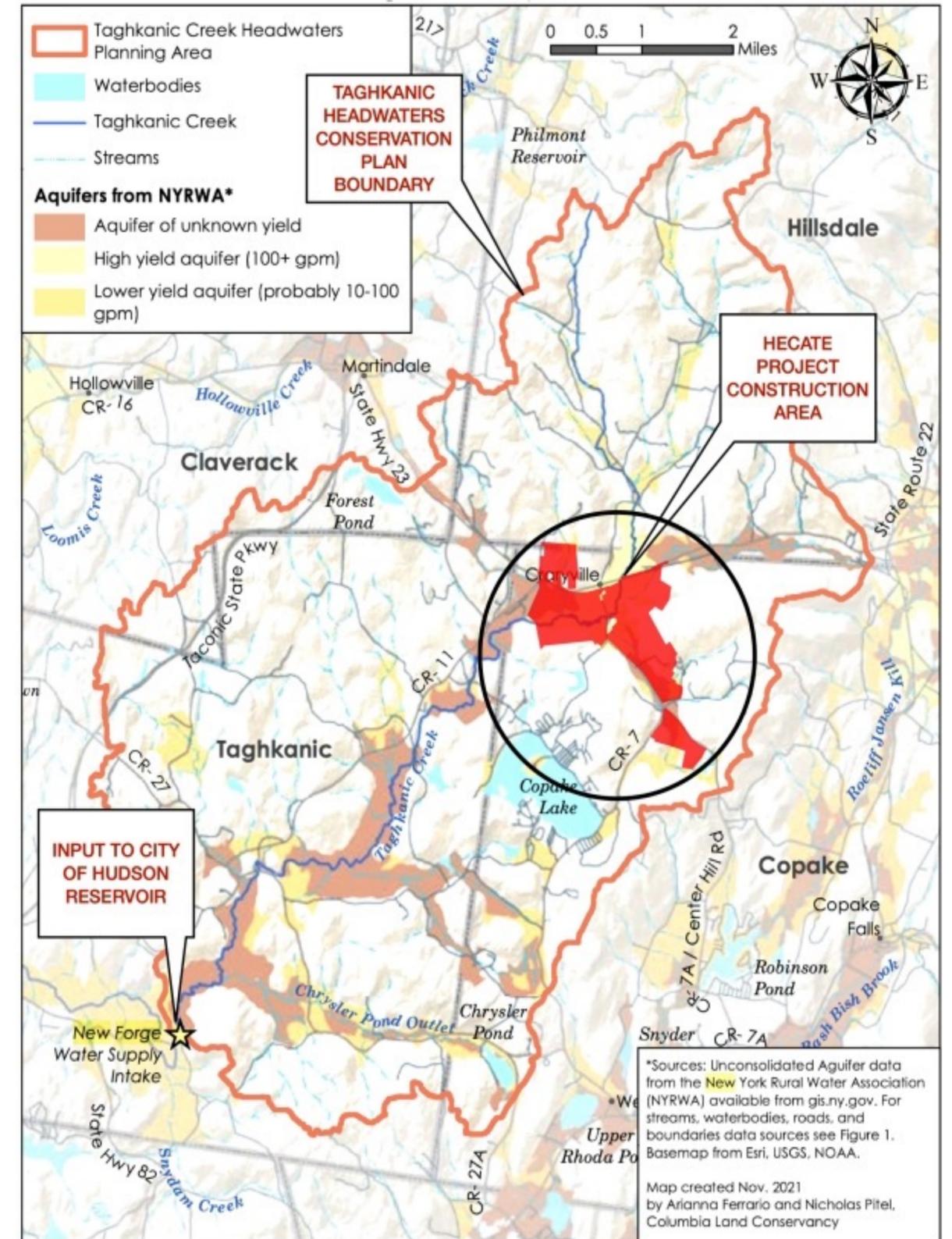


Dangers to Water

EPA: “these facilities must be planned and built in compliance with all environmental laws, including those that prevent the discharge of sediment into local waters during construction.”



Runoff from the AL Solar project in Chambers County, Alabama



NYS One-Sided Permitting Process (“94-c”)

Accelerated Renewable Energy and Community Benefit Act

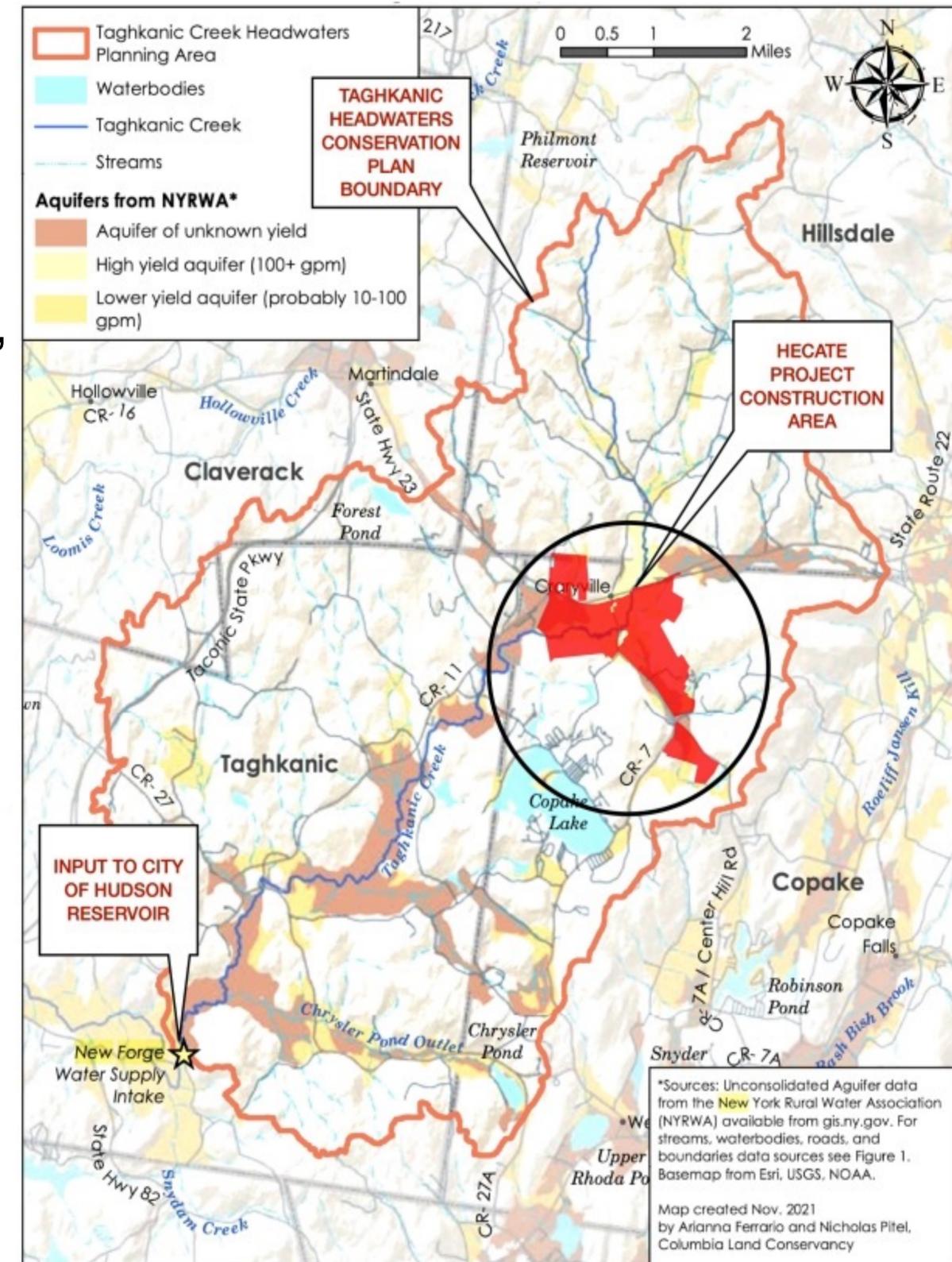
- Created in 2020 as part of budget
- Private developer friendly rules written by industry lobbyist
- Created Office of Renewable Energy Siting (“ORES”) reporting to Governor
- ORES can overrule Town & County laws - ignores “Home Rule”
- Taxes are charged based on State formulas
- ORES not required to reply or respond to any public input
- “Fast track” process



Concerns are Mounting

Issues have not been addressed

- Resolutions of Columbia County, Hudson, Copake, Hillsdale, Taghkanic and Claverack oppose this project as it stands now
- Water quality is threatened. Taghkanic Headwaters Conservation Plan has not been addressed or considered
- Developer plans to sell out, so who will be responsible?
- End of project life – what happens?
- A lasting negative impact on the environment



Where We Stand

Shepherd's Run is ill-conceived

We stand with the Town of Copake and oppose Shepherd's Run as proposed because:

- It's enormous.
- It's poorly sited.
- It overrides "Home Rule" and Town authority
- Conflicts with our community determined goals and objectives set forth in Copake's conservation plans of 2005, 2011, 2014 and 2022
- Industrialization of our rural landscape = net loss to us.
- No benefits/only negatives.
- Profits generated to Hecate will leave the community.



What Needs to Happen



- NYS must honor Home Rule, respect upstate Towns' priorities
- Permit application process is flawed, and must be changed
- ORES having sole authority is problematic
- More emphasis is needed on community protection; the governing law is the Climate Leadership and *Community Protection Act*
- NYS must create a state-wide Master Siting Plan that protects farmland, water, historic properties & neighborhoods from bad developments
- Stay informed. Stand with local leaders, not Albany
- Must voice our concerns to political representatives and to ORES
- Awaiting ORES response expected week of 3/27/23