

WELCOME TO THE BOG MEADOW TRAIL!

From 1881 to 1956, a passenger and freight railroad operated between downtown Saratoga Springs, Saratoga Lake, and Schuylerville. Today, the Bog Meadow Trail in Saratoga Springs, NY is an off-road path situated on that very same railroad bed and was one of Saratoga PLAN's earliest accomplishments. This two-mile path, great for warm season walks and cold season snowshoeing, is a favorite among nature lovers. The Bog Meadow Trail is owned by the City of Saratoga Springs and maintained by the generous supporters of Saratoga PLAN.

What is Letterboxing?

Every PLAN preserve has a letterbox hidden along the trail, containing postcards, and a stamp and ink. Letterboxing is an old English tradition dating back to 1854, when people began leaving a self-addressed post card in a jar, hoping for them to be returned by mail by the next visitor. Today we've adapted this English tradition to use on Saratoga PLAN's nature preserves and trails. Each preserve has letterbox clues ranging in difficulty and gives each type of adventurer an exciting opportunity to explore our preserves and have fun while doing so. When you find the letterbox, feel free to take a postcard, and mail it back to us with your comments about your journey. Use the stamp inside the letterbox to mark your PLAN Preserve Passport on the appropriate page. Once you have collected at least five stamps (or listed three species observed during each visit) stop by PLAN's offices in Saratoga Springs for a FREE Saratoga PLAN t-shirt!

LETTERBOX CLUES FOR BOG MEADOW TRAIL

1. **Start exploring from the Lake Avenue (Route 29) Bog Meadow Trail parking lot. Turn to the left and take the graveled Bog Meadow Trail.**

You are walking the same route the train took to Schuylerville, Saratoga Lake and Mechanicville.

2. **The path leads you through a vibrant wetland.**

Count how many different bird songs you can hear. This wetland provides refuge for birds like Red Winged Blackbirds, Chickadees, Swamp Sparrows, Downy and Pileated Woodpeckers, and more.

3. **Cross many small culverts (covered channels that carry water under a road or path).**

Note how old, discarded railroad ties are reused to frame the path over the culverts.

4. **Soon, the 0.25 mile marker appears on your right with a bench on your left.**

Beavers love wetlands, and the landscape changes frequently based on their activity. Look for pointed stumps of small trees beavers have felled. See our "beaver deceivers:" wire grates partially surrounding some of the culverts to prevent beavers blocking them.

5. **Shortly after this, on your right, is the Wetland Meadow Habitat sign. To learn more about the area, stop and read the sign.**
6. **Next, you will come upon a large wooden bridge with some great views of the wetland! Read about the wetlands on the sign here, or have a seat on the bench to your left to hear the rapids.**

A submerged culvert prevents beavers from damming this waterway. The bridge uses the supports from the old train line. Look to the right of the bridge to see the exposed large rectangular cut rocks of the supports.

7. **Continue your walk over the bridge and see a large pond to your left. About mid way of the bog pond is a bench on your right.**

Look for Canada Geese, Great Blue Herons, and Mallards.

The markers and benches were donated as a part of an Eagle Scout Project. Many of the improvements that you may see on Saratoga PLAN's nature preserves are the result of some form of partnership with other community organizations!

8. **The trail becomes increasingly bumpy from the old railroad ties, partly buried deep to moss and tree roots.**
9. **On your left, you will find a sign about the Saratoga and Schuylerville Railroad. Shortly after the sign, note the 0.75 mile marker, and bench.**
10. **Continue to the 1.0 mile marker and bench. Stop here, turn, and walk off the left side of the trail directly across from the mile marker. The letterbox that you seek is hiding in this area!**

GREAT WORK!

We hope you enjoyed your letterboxing adventure at the Bog Meadow Trail. Please close and return the letterbox to where you found it, so the next adventurer can enjoy the reward. If you would like a longer hike, the trail continues for another 1.25 miles to a second wetland overlook section, and eventually ends at Meadowbrook Road, where you can walk the path of the old railroad switch where the trail either turned south to the Lake, or East to Schuylerville.

Thank you!

Your Friends at Saratoga PLAN

The mission of Saratoga PLAN is to preserve the rural character, natural habitats and scenic beauty of Saratoga County so that these irreplaceable assets are accessible to all and survive for future generations. To learn more, please visit us at www.saratogaplan.org.

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