

WELCOME TO THE GLOWEGEE CREEK TRAILS!

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 GLOWEGEE CREEK TRAILS

1. You begin your adventure at the NORTH ENTRANCE (Old Mill Road) and follow the trail markers along the field edge. Notice the young trees – each with many small stems. They reach out and lean over the path.

Most of the trees are small red oaks, and they've been mowed multiple times, which permitted them to re-sprout. They lean because they are trying to find additional light from under the high canopy trees of the fencerow.

2. Turn left and downhill as the path enters the woods. Once it flattens out, notice the tall trees of this slope. If there is no snow, look at the ground. What do you see?

Tall sugar maples reach high as a result of cool, moist, northeast-facing slope. The rock below ground is limestone, which is high in nutrients. Sugar maples do best in these conditions.

3. As you walk this old woods path, look around at the forest floor for signs of past human activity. You might see stumps, but also look for scars on trees facing the trail.

This area was logged about 10-20 years ago. The stumps remain, and the scars on trees were created as the logs were dragged out of the woods. This forest is diverse in trees and plants, with ample opportunity for wildlife. Cutting trees and having healthy forests can occur on the same site.

4. You reach a small rise and a stone wall. Examine both sides of the wall on the uphill side of the path. What differences do you see?

The side from which you came is mostly sugar maple and the ground is lumpy. It has always been woods, and never farmed. The new side has eastern hemlock (the evergreen tree), and American beech (smooth gray bark). This side of the wall was once pasture or crop field. As you walk, look at the ground – it is smooth, a result of plowing. The stone wall was a fence dividing the two.

5. Leaving the wall, notice the old wire fence on your left. The trail dips toward the stream, then rises back through another wall. Here you'll notice some large round boulders among and beyond the wall. How did they get here?

The round rocks were transported here by glacial activity, which ended in this area around 13,500 years ago. Some of these rocks are of Adirondack origin; they are speckled granitic rocks you might find around Lake George and elsewhere.

6. As you dip down toward the stream into a grove of hemlock trees, you reach a bridge and a spectacular waterfall. How would you describe these falls?

The water cascades over a series of ledges. Each ledge is a flat layer of the local limestone. Limestone is a sedimentary rock made of the remains of marine creatures. By its nature it is very nutrient rich.

7. Look among the stone wall between the bridge and the falls. It is in here you will find the letterbox – Congratulations!

From here you can continue over the bridge and along a long trail which passes yet more stone walls, old trees, rich flowers, a pond, and more, before circling back to this trail. The adventure continues!

GREAT WORK!

We hope you enjoyed your letterboxing adventure! Please return the letterbox to where you found it. From here, trace the wall back to the trail and continue on your adventure! Watch for the impressive six-stemmed red oak, just a few minutes away!

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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