

WELCOME TO THE SARATOGA SIEGE TRAIL!

The Saratoga Siege Trail is a flat, half-mile walking trail, which follows along the south side of Fish Creek, and connects Route 4 and Evans Street. In addition to being a pleasant woods walk, the trail also possesses great historical significance. In fact, the area surrounding the Saratoga Siege Trail marks the location of a strategic American victory against the British Army during the Revolutionary War.

In the fall of 1777, American soldiers pursued British forces north and across Fish Creek, following a decisive victory at the Battles of Saratoga. It was here that the Continental soldiers surrounded the British, destroyed their provisions, outnumbered them three to one, and left them no option for escape. Trapped by superior American forces, British general John Burgoyne surrendered his entire army on October 17, 1777. This battle is often attributed as being particularly influential in the acquisition of foreign aid, swaying the French to enter the war.

What is Letterboxing?

Letterboxing is an old English tradition dating back to 1854 where people began leaving a self-addressed post card or note in a jar, hoping for them to be returned by mail by the next visitor. Today we've adapted this English tradition and put it to use on Saratoga PLAN's nature preserves and trails. Each preserve has a letterbox ranging in difficulty for participants 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. You can also use the stamp from within the letterbox and mark your PLAN Preserve Passport on the appropriate page (Passports are available at Saratoga PLAN's office in Saratoga Springs, or an online version can be downloaded at www.saratogaplan.org). Once you have collected at least five stamps (or listed three species observed during five visits) stop by PLAN's offices for a FREE Saratoga PLAN t-shirt!

We hope you enjoy your letterboxing experience on this trail. Interspersed within the clues *in italics* are observations and questions to enhance your trail experience, for example:

The Saratoga Siege Trail is part of a larger historical trail system. Be sure to check out Victory Woods across the creek to learn about the siege from the British soldier's point-of-view.

LETTERBOX CLUES FOR THE SARATOGA SIEGE TRAIL

Whether you're walking, running, or skipping:

1. **Park at the Schuyler House, and then cross Rt. 4 to begin your adventure. Three short posts sticking up from the ground mark the start of the trail.**
2. **Hike up a short hill to see Fish Creek and the first Saratoga Siege Trail historical sign on your right.**

Read the sign and imagine what it must have been like to have been a soldier in the Continental Army in October, 1777. What were you fighting for? How old were you? How did it feel to be facing the British Army? What were you wearing? What were you carrying with you?

3. **Not far from the first sign, look for a towering Oak tree (the tallest tree on the trail!)**

Try to put your arms around this tree. It's almost 12 feet around! Do you think this tree may have been a tiny sapling on this trail in October, 1777?

4. **Continue onward, heading uphill. As you walk the trail, look for signs that show birds and other animals have used the surrounding trees for food and shelter.**

What types of food might the Colonial soldiers have found in the woods along this trail?

5. **Further along the trail, you'll find a lovely spot to stop for lunch or to sit down and listen to the sounds of the forest.**
6. **Investigating the base of a nearby tree will lead you to your treasure!**

GREAT WORK!

We hope you enjoyed your letterboxing adventure at the Saratoga Siege Trail! Please make sure to return the letterbox as you found it before heading back out the way you came.

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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