

## WELCOME TO SPRING RUN TRAIL!

During the Victorian era, a railroad operated between downtown Saratoga Springs, Saratoga Lake, and beyond. Passengers experienced a wilderness adventure through the wetlands of Spring Run and Bog Meadow Brook. Today, the Spring Run Trail is an off-road, two-mile pedestrian and bicycle path situated on that very same railroad. The Spring Run Trail is paved and provides safe off-road pedestrian bicycle and handicapped accessible access in downtown Saratoga Springs. The trail links downtown High Rock Park (the site of the summer Farmer's market), the City's indoor recreational facilities, and the commercial area surrounding Wilton Mall. Longer term plans include linking the trail to the Bog Meadow Brook Nature Trail across Route 29.

The Spring Run Trail is owned and maintained by the City of Saratoga Springs.

### 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, you can feel free to take a postcard, and mail it back to us with your comments about your journey. You can also take the stamp from within the letterbox and 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!

**We hope you enjoy your letterboxing experience on this trail. Interspersed within the clues *in italics* are natural history observations for those interested, for example:**

*During the warmer seasons, along the right side of the trail there are hundreds of very tall reeds called Phragmites. It is a perennial grass that grows in wetlands. It has a fluffy top that may remind you of a paintbrush. Sadly this plant is an invasive species.*

### LETTERBOX CLUES FOR SPRING RUN TRAIL

Whether you're walking, running, biking, or skipping:

1. **Start your journey on East Avenue where the sign marks the trailhead just to the right of the parking lot.**
2. **Follow this paved path as it curves and winds with the wooden fence on your left.**
3. **You will cross over a wooden bridge.**

*Depending on the season there may be visible wildlife in the pond on the left side of the bridge.*

4. **Up ahead you should see a bridge titled "Spring Run Trail" that you will go under.**

*As you approach the bridge you may see a tall, lonely dead tree on your right. Woodpeckers search for food in these trees; keep a lookout for woodpecker holes in other trees on the trail!*

5. **Once you are through the bridge and are heading uphill, another access to the trail will come in from the right, but you must stay on your current trail heading LEFT to find the letterbox.**
6. **Going downhill, you will come to a 2<sup>nd</sup> wooden bridge.**
7. **After you cross the bridge, you will walk between 2 very large stone walls.**

*In the springtime, during this next straightway, the trail is often full of Red-Winged Blackbirds!*

8. **On the left you will pass a short section of wooden fence.**
9. **Continuing on, you will go under a 2<sup>nd</sup> bridge.**
10. **On your left, notice a Stone Marker with the numbers 204/19 etched in.**

*This stone marker is a remnant from the old railroad system.*

11. **Next on your left is a small section of wooden fence.**
12. **Just past the fence you will see the ground rise up, this is your destination!**
13. **You are now searching for the letterbox, carefully leave the trail and head up this little rise.**

### GREAT WORK!

We hope you enjoyed your letterboxing adventure at the Spring Run Trail. Please keep in mind that the trail continues on a little farther to a turnaround point, otherwise, please return the letter box as you found it, and head out the way you came in.

**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](http://www.saratogaplan.org).