



## WELCOME TO THE ZIM SMITH TRAIL!

A backbone of the county trail system, this 9-mile multi-use trail connects Ballston Spa to Coon’s Crossing in Halfmoon through the towns of Ballston, Malta and Clifton Park and the village of Round Lake. The trail is well maintained and is excellent for strollers, wheelchairs, and bicycles. Start your letterboxing adventure on the Zim Smith Trail at Malta’s Shenantaha Creek Park, about 2.75 miles south of the current northern terminus.

(approximately 3 miles to the letterbox). A shorter hike can be started at the parking lot in the Village of Round Lake (approximately ¾ mile to the letterbox).

### 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 write us a note about your journey. You can also take the stamp from within the letterbox and mark your PLAN Preserve Passport on the appropriate page (Passports are available from the Saratoga Plan office on Spring Street in Saratoga Springs). Once you have collected at least five stamps (or listed three species observed during each visit) 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.**

#### LETTERBOX CLUES FOR THE ZIM SMITH TRAIL

Whether you’re walking, running, riding or skipping:

- 1. Begin by heading south (if you are looking at the kiosk, with the parking lot to your back, head left). Make note of the Ballston Creek far below you on your left.**

*Shenantaha, meaning “deer water,” is the Iroquois name for the Ballston Creek, which forms the eastern boundary of the park.*

- 2. Pass several black shale deposits off the trail on your right.**

*Water running off this hillside has exposed a special rock called shale beneath. Shale is a fine-grained sedimentary rock. Black shale contains organic material that sometimes breaks down to form natural gas or oil.*

- 3. Around one mile you will pass beneath the I-87 overpass.**

*Interstate 87 is a 333.49-mile-long highway that runs between New York City and Montreal.*

**4. Cross Morris Rd. and Goldfoot Rd.**

*As you travel notice that the trail is lined by a type of honeysuckle bush which is an invasive species. Invasive honeysuckle can form very dense populations that can outcompete and suppress the growth of native plant species.*

**5. Around the 3.5 mile marker you will come to the village of Round Lake.**

*Round Lake was founded in 1868 by the Methodist-Episcopal Church. The Rensselaer and Saratoga Railroad stopped at the site, and the first church meeting that summer drew 8,000 people! The 1885 Round Lake Auditorium, at 7th and Wesley streets, is home to a 34-foot-tall, historically significant pipe organ.*

**6. A short distance past the 4.0 mile marker you will cross a bridge that passes over the creek, with houses set back on either side of the trail.**

**7. Notice an abandoned truck to the left of the trail with “American Freightways” written on its side.**

**8. On the right side of the trail, notice a large clump of trees joined at the base of their trunks, nearly in line with the truck. Investigate the spot where the trunks separate to find the letterbox.**

**GREAT WORK!**

We hope you enjoyed your letterboxing adventure on the Zim Smith Trail! Please return the letterbox as you found it. You can continue your trail adventure another 3 miles to its end, or return to Shenantaha Park.

**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).

**PLEASE RETURN CLUES TO THE KIOSK—Thank you!**