



## WELCOME TO THE GRAPHITE RANGE COMMUNITY FOREST!

The Graphite Range Community Forest is a multi-use, community managed forest owned by Saratoga County, with Saratoga PLAN as the designated land manager. Stretching across 200+ acres, this new community forest is a recreational hub for the surrounding communities and a space for environmental education and economic opportunity – all while helping to permanently protect the ecological value and resilience of the southern foothills of the Adirondacks.

### 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 in the logbook telling us 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!

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

*The Graphite Range Community Forest features over 5 miles of trails for hiking and mountain biking, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing.*

### LETTERBOX CLUES FOR THE GRAPHITE RANGE COMMUNITY FOREST

- 1. Starting at the Route 9 Trailhead Parking area, head up hill on Old Mine Road (Black Trail)-farthest to the left as you face the hill.**

*Please note at times you will be sharing the trails with mountain bikers.*

- 2. As you enter the wooded area at the top of the hill, you will hear a stream to your left. A short distance further, the stream will come into view.**

*Take note of the steep incline on the opposite side of the stream in this area. The bedrock underlying the embankment supports an abundance of vegetation including large trees and attractive undergrowth.*

- 3. A wooden fenced overlook allows a safe place to stop and enjoy the stream below.**
- 4. Soon after the overlook the Black Trail divides to the left and right. You will head Left to continue on Upper Works Road.**
- 5. The stream will begin to level out closer to the trail and you will be walking under hemlock, maple and beech trees on both sides with trillium and ferns in the undergrowth. Two blue Adirondack chairs just off the left side of the trail provide a place to rest and appreciate your surroundings.**

*As you enjoy the Adirondack chairs, you will spot an old bucket perhaps used at the mine on an old stump near the stream.*

- 6. You will reach "Chris' Crossing" with a wooden bridge across the stream.**

*Before crossing this bridge take a few minutes to read the sign that describes this special spot dedicated to the memory of a young child from the community.*

7. **As soon as you step off of the bridge, look for Trail 8- Red (Boss' Flume) on your left. You are now walking along the opposite side of the stream. The trail is very narrow at this point.**
8. **You will notice chunks of quartz embedded in the trail. Once this quartz begins to disappear from under your feet, you may spot a large canker about 10 feet up on the side of a yellow birch to the left of the trail.**

*A canker is a dead section on the main trunk or branches of a tree.*

9. **A large wall of bedrock will begin to appear on the right side of the trail. As you reach the end of this bedrock wall, the trail moves very close to the wall. At the point you are closest to the wall, look in the crevices in the rock. It is here that you will find the letterbox.**

*Congratulations! Now stamp your Passport, write your name in the notebook, , and place the letterbox back I the crevice where it was found.*

10. **Continue on this beautiful quiet part of the trail. On one point you will feel as though you are in a "bamboo" forest as an abundance of smooth-barked young beech trees surround you. You will note no old growth beech trees seem to be growing in the area.**
11. **On your right look for a maple tree and a hemlock tree that are joined at the roots. The stream that was so close to the left side of the Boss' Flume trail at the beginning is now down a deep ravine as you climb. The trail leads you into an area of large moss-covered bedrock with a wall of this bedrock in front of you. Eventually the trail will bring you to the end of the wall. When you walk the final few steps to the top of the ridge, you will be rewarded with a sunny and restful place to stop and sit for a few moments before you begin your descent.**
12. **A short distance farther is a large stone block Memorial. At this point turn right onto Trail 7 – Purple (Over Yonder) cutting between two large outcrops of mossy bedrock. This trail will lead you to the bridge at Chris' Crossing. Follow your original route back to the kiosk to return the Letterbox clues.**

### **GREAT WORK!**

We hope you enjoyed your letterboxing adventure at the Graphite Range Community Forest. If you'd like to continue exploring the trails, feel free to do so. 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](http://www.saratogaplan.org).



Thank you for generously  
funding the Passport Program!

**Please return these clues to the kiosk. Thank you!**