



WELCOME TO SPRUCE MOUNTAIN TRAIL!

This 1.3 miles (one way) moderately difficult trail leads to a fire tower with sweeping 360 degree views of the Southern Adirondacks, Hudson River, the Vermont border into the Green Mountains and Southern Saratoga County. *Unfortunately, the Fire tower is currently closed.*

What is Letterboxing?

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 write us a note in the logbook with 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 SPRUCE MTN TRAIL

1. Start your journey at the trail head just off the parking area.

Notice the beautiful stream and tumbling rock formation to the left of the parking lot as you approach the trailhead. Be sure to sign into the trail at the kiosk just a short way up the trail.

2. Continue to follow the well-traveled/marked trail up a rather steep section which levels off after a short climb.

The trail follows a stream on your left for a short distance. About 33 adult paces past the kiosk, notice a small pool in the stream. If you inspect the pool, you'll see small patches of bubbling sand and water and a strong smell of sulfur as the stream bubbles to the surface from underground.

3. Continue climbing upward as the stream cuts through a low stone wall

Depending on the time of year, you'll see different animals and plants. Can you identify any of the many birds you'll hear? During the summer months, be careful not to step on a well-camouflaged toad along the trail-they're everywhere!

4. The trail continues gradually uphill.

Notice the many large boulders on the sides of the trail, which are glacial erratics, left behind by retreating glaciers thousands of years ago.

5. After roughly 45 minutes of hiking, you'll come to an area where, in the summer, large patches of ferns carpet both sides of the trail.

Look to your right to see a large stone cairn set approximately seven feet off the trail.

6. Emerge from the trail to the clearing and fire tower at the top of the mountain.

*The 73 foot fire tower (the tallest in New York State!) on the 2009 foot summit of Spruce Mountain was built in 1928 and manned until 1988. *Unfortunately, the Fire tower is currently closed.**

7. As you approach the fire tower from the trail, look to your left to see a fallen tree, scattered trunks and a stump.
8. Investigate the stump to find the letter box!

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.



Thank you for generously
funding the Passport Program!

Please return these clues to the kiosk. Thank you!