

Welcome to your
Letterboxing Adventure at

Orra Phelps Preserve



www.saratogaplan.org



OPEN AIR
SPORTS

What is Letterboxing?

Letterboxing is an old English tradition dating back to 1854 where people began leaving a self-addressed postcard or note in a jar, hoping for them to be returned by mail by the next visitor. We've adapted this tradition at Saratoga PLAN!

Follow the clues. Find a treasure. Earn a prize.



HISTORY OF ORRA PHELPS PRESERVE

The Orra Phelps Preserve was donated to the Saratoga Land Conservancy (now Saratoga PLAN) in 1996 by Mary Arakelian, niece of Dr. Orra Almira Phelps. Dr. Phelps was a well-known naturalist with a passion for birding, hiking and collecting plant specimens from around the Adirondack region. Among her many accomplishments, including service as a Navy physician during WWII and being a geology teacher, she authored several nature guidebooks and journal articles in publications such as the Adirondacks High Peaks.

That land that now makes up the Orra Phelps Preserve, was a long-time family treasure where Dr. Phelps enjoyed solitude, conducted family nature walks and endeavored to preserve rare plant species of New York State.

Now permanently protected by Saratoga PLAN, the preserve honors Dr. Orra Phelps' legacy and can be enjoyed by visitors as they travel throughout wetlands and woodland habitats, across boardwalks and down trails, and up and over hills where large old growth trees tower overhead.

Thank you,
Your Friends at Saratoga PLAN

Saratoga PLAN stewards and protects farms, forests, and waters of the Saratoga region and the southern Adirondack foothills – now and forever. To learn more, please visit us at www.saratogaplan.org.



Thank you for generously funding the Letterboxing Program!

HOW IT WORKS!

Follow the clues on the pages in this guide. As you reach each clue, complete the activity listed on the clue card. When you find the letterbox, feel free to leave a note and follow the instructions in the letterbox to redeem your prize from Saratoga PLAN!

Distance to Letterbox: 0.4 miles one way

ACTIVITY



The **GREEN** activities are recommended for Ages 3+.



The **ORANGE** activities are recommended for Ages 6+.



The **PURPLE** activities are recommended for Ages 10+.

LETTERBOXING CLUES FOR ORRA PHELPS PRESERVE

Start your journey on the trail head with the kiosk to the right, this is the White Trail.

Feel free to walk, run or skip through your adventure!

ACTIVITY



Can you find the White Trail sign? Do **some body wiggles or a different body movement** over to it!



Find 2 different objects you can roll on the ground towards the White Trail sign. Which object rolls farther? Why?



Based on your surroundings, **what type of animals do you expect might survive well in this environment?** Why?

LETTERBOXING CLUES FOR ORRA PHELPS PRESERVE

Following the White Trail, you will come to your first intersection with a trail breaking off to your left. Follow this trail.

In the springtime, red efts can be found on this path. These bright orange creatures are the juvenile stage of the eastern newt, and are frequently seen near small lakes, ponds and streams or near-by wet forests such as this one!

ACTIVITY



Can you find something **RED** or **ORANGE** nearby?



Observe the trees and plants around you. Can you find a young plant and then a larger, older version of the same plant? What are the similarities?



Explore the direction or shape in which certain plants and trees are growing nearby. Is there a connection to this and the fact that they need light and water?

LETTERBOXING CLUES FOR ORRA PHELPS PRESERVE

As the trail heads downhill, you will see a white marker with an arrow indicating a turn in the trail. Keep heading straight toward the red and blue trail markers just ahead.

ACTIVITY



Skip to the double trail marker then jump up and **give it a high five!**



What time of day is it? And how much daylight is there right now? **How might this be different at another time of year?**



Look down at your feet. **Notice how dry or muddy the trail is.** How could that change in a different season? Why?

LETTERBOXING CLUES FOR ORRA PHELPS PRESERVE

Follow the trail the rest of the way down the hill as it curves to the left and head over the wooden bridge that crosses the creek. You are now on the Red Trail.

Do you happen to see the large Rhododendron bush growing on the hillside next to the creek? Look for it as you pass over the bridge in the next clue.

ACTIVITY



How many frog hops does it take you to cross the bridge?



With one person standing at the far side of the bridge, call across to to the person on the other side of the bridge. Now turn away from each other. What's different? Why?



If you were to roll a ball or pinecone across the bridge, **how fast do you think you would have to roll it across to reach the other side?**

LETTERBOXING CLUES FOR ORRA PHELPS PRESERVE

After the trail bends to the right, you will cross over a series of boardwalks and bog bridges. The creek will be to your right.

As you walk over the bridges, you may see lots of skunk cabbage, ferns, red trillium and trout lilies depending on the time of year.

ACTIVITY



Show off your best dance moves while crossing the bridges.



Observe the plants growing near the stream compared to the plants on the left side of the trail. How are they similar? How are they different?



What are some ways that **humans can protect the natural areas around us?** Why is this important?

LETTERBOXING CLUES FOR ORRA PHELPS PRESERVE

Follow the trail up the hill until you see a bench on your right.

If you're looking for a nice place to take a break and enjoy the quiet of the woods, take a seat.

ACTIVITY



Take a seat! Have a snack, drink some water. Close your eyes. **What sounds do you hear?**



What kind of material is the bench made of? **Why was this a good choice for this location?**



Observe any shadows around you. How long are they? What direction are they going? What does this tell you about the location of the sun?

LETTERBOXING CLUES FOR ORRA PHELPS PRESERVE

Continue forward until you come to an intersection where the trail forms a loop. Take the path that heads straight, and you will see an area of sunken ground to your left.

ACTIVITY



If you were an animal that lived in this area, **what kind of animal would you be?**



Make an observation about how the plants and animals that live in this area might depend on each other for survival.



What type of internal and external structures might the animals in this environment have to support their survival, growth and behavior?

LETTERBOXING CLUES FOR ORRA PHELPS PRESERVE

Follow the trail around this sunken area and begin checking the back of the large trees on your right. Attached to one of these trees will be what you're looking for.

Please leave the letterbox attached to the tree and head out the way you came in.

ACTIVITY



You did it! **What does your best high five with the tree look like?** Feel free to draw a picture of your hike and leave it in the letterbox!"



Woo hoo! **Be sure to leave a note or draw a picture of something from your adventure!**



Congrats! **Hug the tree to congratulate it for holding the letterbox!**

CONGRATULATIONS!

We hope you enjoyed your letterboxing adventure! **Please leave the letterbox as you found it and the clue cards back to the kiosk.**

Be sure to continue your Letterboxing Adventures at more of our Saratoga PLAN preserves! **Scan the QR code below** to check them out.

Lastly, we'd love to “tag” along on your adventures. You can us on social media at:



@saratogaplan



Saratoga PLAN

