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THE HARLEM VALLEY RAIL TRAIL

The Harlem Valley Rail Trail is a paved bicycle/ pedestrian path built on the railbed of the old Harlem Line of the New York Central Railroad that connected New York City and the town of Chatham. It is ideal for runners, bicyclists, walkers, roller-bladers, cross-country skiers, wheelchair users, hikers, and dog walkers who enjoy combining the quiet beauty of rural landscapes with healthy exercise.



MAGNIFICENT VISTAS

The Harlem Valley Rail Trail stretches 46 miles on its right of way from the passenger-rail station at Wassaic in Dutchess County well into Columbia County. The completed, paved portion covers 14-plus miles in two sections. The trail cuts through some of the Harlem Valley's most scenic land including historic farms, teeming wetlands, beaver ponds, wooded mountains and rolling pastures.



TRAIL FEATURES

The Trail is paved with asphalt to a width of 10 feet. It follows a gentle grade overall – uphill as you head north – with many shallow dips and rises. It fords local trout streams numerous times and passes through several deep, fern-filled rock cuts draped in perpetual shade. Every one-half mile a pillar marks the distance from the rail bed's origin in Manhattan.

CONVENIENCES

Free parking is ample in seven places along the trail: at the four trailheads, at Coleman Station (mid point of the south section), and at Under Mountain and Valley View Roads (north section). The Wassaic Station trailhead has free parking on weekends, parking for a small fee during the week. All trailheads also have portable latrines. Cell phone service along most of the trail is reliable, depending on your carrier. Picnicking in designated areas is welcome, but please remove or properly dispose of all trash. Road crossings are well marked; ignore the posted signs at your peril.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Harlem Line trains carried passengers and freight starting in the 1850s. They stopped running north of Dover Plains in 1976. Three years later, the tracks from Wassaic to Chatham were removed. In 1989, New York State purchased 22 miles of right-of-way from Wassaic to Copake Falls to build, in cooperation with Dutchess County and volunteer organizations, a linear park. A portion of this park lies within the Taconic State Park System in Columbia County.



BECOME A MEMBER

Your membership donation to the Harlem Valley Rail Trail Association helps support our volunteer trail maintenance program, and our efforts to speed completion of the trail from Wassaic to Chatham. Please join the Rail Trail community by becoming a member. You will receive our newsletter and timely updates.

ANNUAL DUES

- \$15 (Individual)
 - \$25 (Family)
 - \$50
 - \$100
 - \$200
 - Other \$_____
- Check here if you would like to volunteer along the trail, in the office, or at events.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

EMAIL _____

PHONE _____

Make checks payable to HVRTA and mail with completed form to:

P.O. Box 356, Millerton, NY 12546
or P.O. Box 99, Copake, NY 12516

Thank you for your support. Enjoy the Trail!



HARLEM VALLEY RAIL TRAIL ASSOCIATION, INC.
518 789 9591 www.hvrt.org

HVRTA, Inc. is a not-for-profit 510(c)(3) corporation. Contributions are fully tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Metro North Wassaic Station to the Village of Millerton: 10.7 miles. Open.

Main St. Millerton to Undermountain Road/Ancram: 8.0 miles. Undeveloped and closed.

Undermountain Road/Ancram to the Taconic State Park/Copake Falls: 4.0 miles. Open.

Copake Falls to Chatham: 22.5 miles. Privately and State owned. Undeveloped and closed.

POINTS OF INTEREST ALONG THE TRAIL

A Taconic State Park, Route 344, Copake Falls. A preserved ore bed, furnace and exhibits explaining the history of the Copake Iron Works, all near the Trail. Swimming, fishing, picnicking, hiking, campsites and children's swim area. A vigorous one-mile hike ascends to glorious Bash Bish Falls in Massachusetts.



B At Copake Falls the former railroad station is now a deli and convenience store.

C A concrete marker says "NY101" just north of Under Mountain Road, indicating that you are 101 miles north of Grand Central station in New York City.

D Near the trailhead on Under Mountain Road a foot trail rises steeply up Alander Mountain. At the top you can hike north to Bash Bish Falls or connect to the South Taconic Trails.

E A steep half-mile ascent from Deer Run Road (off Route 63) leads to a fairly flat, one-mile hike to Brace Mountain, elevation 2,311 feet. It is the highest point in Dutchess County.

F Taconic State Park, Rudd Pond, Millerton. Lakeside beach and bathhouse, fishing, picnicking, rowboat rentals, campsites, children's play area, cross-county skiing and sledding.

G The Irondale Furnace, just north of Millerton, is a good example of a form of industry that once dominated this region.



H The Millerton railroad station, now occupied by local businesses, was once the locus of the village.

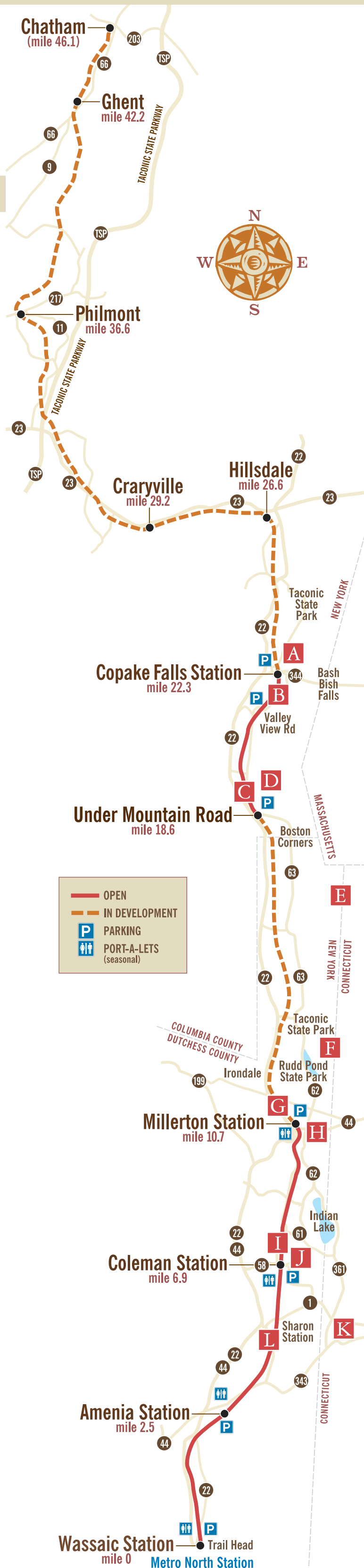


I Between the bridge over Mill Road and the crossing with Sharon Station Road lies the Coleman Station Rural Historic District, a 1,200-acre community of largely intact and adjacent farmsteads, some of which stem from the late 18th century. To get the full effect of rural life little changed in two centuries, leave the trail and explore on local roads.

J Coleman Station. The railroad station east of the parking lot is almost gone. Stop at the Diana K. Temple Memorial Garden and enjoy its tended plantings.

K The Sharon Lyme Kiln, a restored furnace, stands east of the Trail, 1.5 miles away via either Coleman Station Road or Sharon Station Road; it's an eighth of a mile past the New York/Connecticut border.

L The 1870 railroad station at Sharon Station (a private home) has been restored to its original appearance.



- Keep to the right
- Pass to the left; call out or audibly signal when passing
- Bikers and skaters yield to walkers
- Keep dogs on a short leash and clean up after them
- Do not litter—carry in, carry out
- Stop at all road crossings
- No motorized vehicles of any kind (does not apply to powered wheelchairs or electric scooters)
- Do not cut or remove vegetation
- Do not disturb or feed wildlife
- Park only in designated areas
- Respect our Rail Trail neighbors: stay on the Trail and observe quiet near residences
- No alcoholic beverages, camping or fires
- No hunting on the Trail

RAIL TRAIL FACTS

OVERVIEW

- Wassaic to Millerton: 10.7 miles
- Under Mountain Road to Copake Falls: 4.0 miles
- Typical grade: 0.8 percent
- Typical cross slope: 1.0 percent
- Typical paved width: 10 feet
- Trail surface: asphalt
- Open year round
- Patrolled by sheriff officers on ATVs

HAZARDS AND OBSTRUCTIONS

- Bollards at some crossings – 37 inches apart.
- Warning: You might encounter temporary obstructions – fallen limbs or trees, leaf piles, rubble, mud – from time to time. Proceed with caution.

DIRECTIONS

BY TRAIN

From NYC, take MetroNorth's Harlem Line to the final stop, Wassaic. The trailhead is between the station and Route 22. For train schedule call 800-METRO-INFO; in NYC 212-532-4900.

BY ROAD

South Section (10.7 miles)

• From Points South to Wassaic Station: Take Route 22 north out of Dover Plains about four miles to the first light. Turn right into the Wassaic Station parking lot. The Trail begins at your turn-in from the highway.

• From Points South to Amenia: Take Route 22 north out of Dover Plains into Amenia. At the light turn right on to Route 343. Turn right at the first street, Mechanic Street. Find the trailhead after about a quarter of a mile. Ample parking.

• From Points North to Millerton: Pick up Route 22 and continue into Millerton. At the light turn left. Find the trailhead almost immediately, just past Gilmore Glass and Harney's Tea. To park turn right at the next intersection, South Center Street; look for Rail Trail parking signs on the right.

• From Points East or West: Find your way Wassaic Station, Amenia or Millerton and proceed as directed.

North Section (4.0 miles)

• From Points South: Pick up Route 22 headed north of Millerton. Drive about four miles to Under Mountain Road, the next turn after Boston Corners Road/Old Route 22, and turn right. Find the trailhead and parking after a mile on your left.

• From Points North: Pick up Route 22 headed south of Hillsdale. In four miles find Route 344 Taconic State Park and turn left. Proceed about half a mile to the triangular green. Bear to the left to the stop sign. Proceed straight about a third of a mile to the entrance of Taconic State Park; ask the attendant where to park.

• From Points East or West: Find your way Millerton or Hillsdale and proceed as directed.

Please park only in areas designated for the Rail Trail.



The natural rhythms of the seasons coupled with the wonders of nature make the Harlem Valley Rail Trail an inviting, enjoyable trail year round. It offers a wonderful opportunity to observe a variety of animal species and plant life in their undisturbed habitats.

Animals you might see include many species of birds (notably the blue heron), beaver, raccoons opossums, woodchucks, deer, coyotes, foxes, bobcats, hawks, owls, turtles and other amphibians. You can see signs of animals all along the Trail: active nests, fresh tracks, scat, beaver dams, turtle eggs and fox dens.

The plant life is breathtaking. Spring comes with marsh marigolds, jack in the pulpits and flowering dogwoods. In the summer joe pie weed waves in the trail's margins, cattails cluster in the marshes and as the terrain varies you'll see poppies, golden yarrow, lavender hyssop,



wild onion, columbine, cornflowers and butterflyweed. Depending on the day you'll enjoy queen anne's lace, black-eyed susans and forget-me-nots. In fall see bursting milkweed, lilies, vivid firebush and the woods transformed into every shade of scarlet, yellow, orange and umber. In cold months take in the stark, unadorned beauty of winter.

The next piece to be completed will extend five miles north from the Taconic State Park/Copake Falls to the Hamlet of Hillsdale, providing the north section an intact stretch of 9+ miles.



Also in the works is the 19-mile section between Hillsdale and Chatham. It is hoped that portions of this section will open soon as a foot trail. Paving will follow.

Work on the eight-mile section between Millerton and Under Mountain Road/Ancram is challenging and has not been scheduled. It traverses an extensive wetland and needs detailed engineering work, an elevated trail bed, boardwalks, bridges and protective measures for the endangered bog turtle.

