

Hudson Valley Rail Trail Assoc.

A not-for-profit organization dedicated to creating, maintaining, promoting and improving the Hudson Valley Rail Trail in Highland on behalf of the town government.

For info on activities and membership:

*Hudson Valley Rail Trail Association
12 Church Street, Highland, NY 12528
(845) 691-2066
www.hudsonvalleyrailtrail.net*



Stretching from Walkway Over The Hudson into the Hamlet of Highland and beyond . . .



. . . four miles of paved adventure through time and nature

Annual Events & Programs

January. Winter Fest, a mid-winter festival of chili tasting, wagon rides and kids games.

June. Breakfast At Black Creek, annual meeting of the Association, open to public.

September. Harvest Moonwalk, a chance to be on Rail Trail after dark and enjoy a bonfire.

September-November & April-June. 10-Week Learn-To-Run Program that teaches beginners to run 20 minutes non-stop.

Rail Trail Rules

- *Open dawn to dusk*
- *No littering - Carry in/carry out*
- *Dogs must be leashed*
- *No motor vehicles except electric wheelchairs*
- *No discharging weapons on/ or across trail*
- *Alcoholic beverages prohibited*
- *Respect private property signs - keep to trail*

Bikes must yield to pedestrians and horse riders and warn of approach

Pedestrians and bikes yield to horse riders

Story Behind The Rail Trail

The Hudson Valley Rail Trail is on an abandoned part of the New York, New Haven & Harford Line that was taken over by Ulster County for back taxes. The County sold off portions to recoup taxes and ceded a 5-mile stretch to Highland in the 1990s.

Enter Ray Costantino, a long time member of the Highland Rotary. In need of a club project, he remembered a rail trail he had walked in Lake George with his wife Claire and thought of the abandoned railroad bed in Highland. Ray presented the idea to fellow Highland Rotarians John Canino and Everton Henriques, and together they got the club's okay.

The Rotary took its rail trail proposal to the Town Board where it met resistance and stalled. Then, Ray wound up filling a vacant Board seat and, with his yes vote, the proposal passed.

In 1997, a fiber optics company eyed the old RR right of way to run an optics line from the Thruway to Poughkeepsie. It offered \$10,000 to use the right of way. Ray, then a town councilman, got the offer up to \$400,000 based on findings that using the rail bed would save the company \$1 million.

Some \$70,000 of the funds went to pave 2.5 miles from the Highland Hamlet to Tony Williams Park. The rest is in a Town reserve fund with interest going to pay for maintenance and improvements. The Highland Rotary has added amenities such as the Pavilion, bathrooms, exercise stations, etc.

In 2010, federal stimulus monies has made possible extension of the rail trail to link the Hamlet to Walkway over The Hudson, adding another 1.2 miles of paved surface.

The future? By 2012 the rail trail is scheduled to stretch westward another 2.5 miles to close to Highland's border with New Paltz. When completed the rail trail will be nearly 7 miles long.



A Passage East To West

Walkway over the Hudson is the start of a passage of varied terrain and experiences that you will not soon forget.

First, you enter a **deep canopy** of trees that in summer shades and on cold days blocks the Hudson's winds. You then come to **one of several rock cuts** that are a reminder that this was once a major thoroughfare for moving goods and materials on rails across the country.

Next, **two roads cross above** including 9W. The rail trail begins its only noticeable incline. It next bridges over Vineyard Avenue and runs along the edge of the **Hamlet of Highland** with shops and eateries accessible via Commercial Avenue.

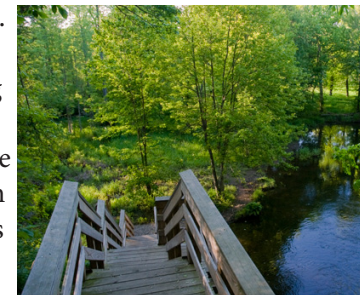
The rail trail now breaks out into **wide open terrain**. Along this stretch you find a commemorative garden for reflection and exercise stations to work your muscles.

You next come to the **Rotary Pavilion** with restrooms, covered picnic tables and a circa 1915 caboose. Just ahead is a **rickety farmers' bridge** built to give them access over the tracks to fields and orchards. Here the trail goes through **an extensive rock cut** that glistens with ice formations you can enjoy since the rail trail is regularly plowed during the winter.

From this point evidence grows of the **trail's previous life as a railroad**. You come to several **train signal towers**.

Also, the trail runs on a **half mile long earthen viaduct** built high above the surrounding marsh to keep train tracks from flooding in spring. Below you

is **Black Creek** that you can descend to by stairs. Just ahead is **Tony Williams Park** with ball fields, children's area and restrooms. Here is a broad view of the back slope of **Illinois Mountain**, the highest point on the Hudson River.





Highland

The commercial center of the Town of Lloyd, Highland is a rural, family-oriented community featuring apple orchards and plenty of open space with Illinois Mountain as a backdrop and the beautiful Black Creek Corridor accessible via the Hudson Valley Rail Trail. From waterfront dining to hiking and everything in between, Highland offers a small-town feel, yet it is in close proximity to everything.

Other Parks in Highland

For a small town, Highland has an impressive number of parks to enjoy. All have free parking:

Walkway over the Hudson. This popular state park is 1.28 miles long and 212 feet above the Hudson offers spectacular views. The Highland side is closer to nature and links to our rail trail.

Franny Reese State Park. This 247-acre park looms high on Highland's bluffs that overlook the Hudson. The park has 2.5 miles of woodland trails, ruins of former estate buildings and a river overlook with a natural stone bench.

Bob Shepard Highland Landing Park. This town-owned 1.8-acre park provides the only public access to the Hudson for miles along the western shore. Car-toppable boat launch, a place to dip your toes in the water, restrooms and picnic benches.

Johnson-Ioro Park. This vest pocket town park is dedicated to Highland's Vietnam War dead. It is next to the Mid-Hudson Bridge. Picnic benches, spectacular views.

Berean Park. This 6-acre town park is at the eastern foot of Illinois Mountain. Children's area, lakefront beach, amenities.

Tony Williams Park. This 18-acre town park has several ball fields, tennis and basketball courts, amenities and children's area.

Points of Interest on Hudson Valley Rail Trail (distances in miles)

- 0.0: Parking Lot at 75 Haviland Road. Free parking for xxx cars and information booth.
- x.x: One of several rock cuts for the railroad.
- x.x: Bridges for 9W and Mile Hill Road. Pedestrian access at 9W Bridge.
- x.x: Site of old Pratt Lumber Yard. Most recently was Vintage Village, now closed.
- x.x: Vineyard Avenue Bridge. Replaces old RR bridge that was torn down in the 1980s.
- x.x: Commercial Avenue Parking Lot. Site of a railroad turntable is in the woods on the left.
- x.x: Start of Exercise Stations.
- x.x: Rotary Pavilion and Caboose.
- x.x: Old steel bridge for farmer access to fields.
- x.x: Long rock cut for railroad.
- x.x: New Paltz Road Bridge

- x.x: Original route of railroad. On right is the original route the railroad took before the later one on which the rail trail is built. In winter the old route can be seen on a berm on the left as you go further along the rail trail.
- x.x: First of two RR signal towers on the right. A second one is further along on left.
- x.x: Start of viaduct on which railroad and rail trail later was built. It stands 20 feet above marsh.
- x.x: Original route of railroad comes under current viaduct on the right and goes off on the left through the marsh.
- x.x: Black Creek access. Wooden steps lead down to the water and small beach.
- x.x: Tony Williams Park. Town park with facilities, ball fields, tennis courts and children's area.

Directions to Rail Trail

- Walkway Start:** From 9W turn on Haviland Road to parking lot on left (75 Haviland Road).
- 9W Pedestrian Ramp:** Ramp is on westside of 9W, 100 yds. north of Tillsen Ave.
- Commercial Ave Access:** Vineyard Ave. to Commercial Ave, 1st road on left.
- Rotary Pavilion:** From Route 299 take North Chodikee Road to New Paltz Road, make right to 101 New Paltz Road on left.
- Tony Williams Park:** From Route 299 turn on to Riverside Road. Park is on Left.

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