



History lives along the trail

All along the Harlem Valley Rail Trail, activities of historical interest have occurred since before Europeans arrived here in the late 17th and 18th Century. We invite you to explore our website (hvrt.org) and other sources to gain an appreciation of our historic heritage.

Historic Amenia

Amenia's early history centered on steel-making as this community along with others in the region were part of the "Arsenal of the Revolution," making weapons for George Washington's Army. As a crossroads between New England and New York, Amenia has always had interesting brushes with history, including the founding of the NAACP here in 1916.

Coleman Station

The arrival of the New York and Harlem Railroad in 1852 and the ability to deliver fresh milk to New York City changed the way folks made a living in the area and dairy farms came to dominate the local economy. Sheffield Farms, one of the world's largest milk producers, operated here at nearby Hiddenhurst Farm and in Amenia and Dover Plains into the 1950s.

Millerton

When railroad construction reached here in 1851, Millerton was founded and became a regional commercial center, a role it continues to this day. Millerton's historic downtown and active civic groups combine with weekenders and visitors from nearby Connecticut to give the impression that the village is larger than its less than 1,000 residents would suggest.

The Bridge to Nature

This is the working title of a project HVRTA is undertaking to create a unique trail attraction on the bridge over the Webatuck Creek in the Village of Millerton. With compelling visual displays designed with trail users of all ages in mind, the Bridge to Nature will focus on water ecology, natural and social history, birds, bugs and other topics. The bridge at the center of this project lies just a short stroll north of Main Street and once had two railroad tracks crossing it. Now, one side is part of the rail trail and the other half of the bridge will contain part of our natural education exhibit which we hope to install in 2023-2024.

Taconic State Park - Copake Falls

In Columbia County, the HVRT is part of the beautiful Taconic State Park, established in 1927. Here, you can connect to the South Taconic Trail, hike to Bash Bish Falls, camp out, swim in an ore pit, or just wander in the Park's bountiful scenery. The forest here has nearly 15,000 contiguous protected acres - one of the largest unbroken forests from Maine to Virginia.

Hillsdale

Established in 1788, Hillsdale has been a significant crossroads between eastern New York and New England since the American Revolution. With its 82 historic buildings, the hamlet of Hillsdale is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Revitalization in recent years has attracted new businesses and brought fresh energy to this beautiful settlement.

Chatham or Bust!

It has been decades since trains rolled between Wassaic and Chatham. HVRTA's goal is to see a trail completed between these places that is useful and compelling to locals and visitors alike. Even when the currently funded sections are completed, we will have a long way to go. Please enjoy the finished sections of trail and communicate your support for the trail's completion to your elected representatives.



**The Harlem Valley
Rail Trail Association
Welcomes you!**

Trail use guidelines

- This is a carry-in, carry-out trail: No littering.
- No horses or motorized vehicles are permitted.
- Bikes and skaters must yield to walkers.
- Stop at all road crossings. Dismount for safety.
- When passing, alert others as you approach.
- Keep right - allow for others to pass on your left.
- Keep all animals leashed. Clean up after them.
- No cutting or removing of vegetation.
- Do not disturb or feed the wildlife.
- No camping or fires allowed on the trail.
- Stay on the trail and be quiet near residences.
- No hunting on the trail.
- The trail is open from dawn to dusk.

Who we are

The Harlem Valley Rail Trail Association is a non-profit, educational, activist and membership organization that advocates for the completion of a rail trail between Wassaic and Chatham, New York. HVRTA recruits volunteers for simple trail maintenance, secures grants for trail development and helps install amenities such as trailside benches.

Our quest began in the mid-1980s when, after railroad abandonment, the concept of a 46-mile trail on the old rail bed was proposed in Columbia and Dutchess counties.

In 2020, Dutchess County built the link between Millerton and Boston Corners and the Town of Amenia finished a link from the MetroNorth Station to the hamlet of Wassaic. The trail is now complete between Wassaic and the Taconic State Park in Copake Falls.

Next, a trail will be built to connect Copake Falls with a section of trail HVRTA built in Hillsdale in 2017. This connector will include a new pedestrian bridge over Rte. 22. HVRTA facilitated the grants making the design and construction of this section possible.

Rail trails provide safe off-highway recreation for walkers and bicyclists of all ages. The Harlem Valley Rail Trail has the additional benefit of traversing the impressive rural landscape of eastern New York.

Enjoy your time on the trail!



Green - completed and open
 Yellow - pre-planning
 Blue - final design and permitting stage
 Red - in pre-planning stage
 Orange - 2023-24

Trail Sections-South to North

Wassaic hamlet to MetroNorth Station

This new section provides a short link for railroad passengers and trail users into the vibrant community in Wassaic, now the southern terminus of our rail trail.

MetroNorth Station to Millerton

Passing through historic Amenia and Coleman Station, the trail here provides sweeping view of farmland, streams and forest-covered hills. Nearly 11 miles of varied vistas lead to the Village of Millerton.

Millerton to Boston Corners

This eight-mile section, completed in 2020, traverses stunning scenery through wetlands below the Taconic Mountains where the states of Connecticut, Massachusetts and New York meet. No environmental laws kept the New York & Harlem Railroad from putting a railbed here in 1850. Today's trail users get to experience this unique wild landscape.

Boston Corners to Copake Falls

Here, the trail enters the Taconic State Park with its campsites, cabins and recreational opportunities. The nearby Copake Iron Works Museum and Bash Bish Falls are highlights of the historical and natural wonders here. Just a mile north of the Park entrance at Orphan Farm Meadow, the trail is briefly interrupted as we work on building the next section.

Orphan Farm Meadow to Black Grocery Road

This complex, one-mile section of trail has been designed and a grant has been awarded for construction that will include a bridge over Rte. 22. Construction is anticipated in 2023-24.

Black Grocery Road to Hillsdale hamlet

With the help of grants and matching funds from the local community, HVRTA built this section of trail in 2017. The rail trail has become one of the key elements in the ongoing renaissance in beautiful Hillsdale.

Hillsdale hamlet to Craryville

This section is in the early planning stage. When completed it will bring the trail to the Taconic Hills Central School.

Craryville to Philmont

This challenging section will involve crossing beneath both Rte. 23 and the Taconic State Parkway, as trains once did. This is likely to be the final piece completing the trail.

Philmont to Chatham

HVRTA was awarded a grant in 2023 for the final design and engineering on this section. Construction is not yet funded but will be a "shovel-ready" project as soon as funding is secured.

Become a member of HVRTA

The Harlem Valley Rail Trail Association, Inc. is a non-profit 501(c)3 membership organization. We invite you to join at dues rates that have not changed since our effort began in 1986. With membership, you will receive an occasional e-newsletter and an invitation to our annual meeting. Your donations support the work we do to promote the trail, including raising matching funds for grants that have helped us both design and build portions of the trail.

Please complete and return the form below to:

HVRTA
 P.O. Box 356
 Millerton, NY 12546

Name _____

Address _____

Email address _____

Membership levels:

\$15, Single \$25, Family

Other levels of support:

- \$50, Conductor
- \$100, Stoker
- \$250, Engineer
- \$500, Trail Blazer
- \$750, Super Trail Blazer
- \$1000, Mover & Shaker
- Other \$ _____

You can also join at our website, www.hvrt.org. There you will find more about the trail and our organization.

For further information, please stop in at our office at 1 John Street in Millerton or call us at (518) 789-9591.

Our email address is hvrt@fairpoint.net

To donate online: →

