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7 trails for winter hiking in and around Central New York

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Photo By Frank Ordonez / The Post-Standard

Carol White gets in plenty of winter hiking. She is the author of several books on hiking in the Adirondack Peaks High Peaks and the high peaks in Vermont.

Need some reinvigoration to get through winter? The **Parks & Trails New York** organization offers these seven multi-use flat trails:

* **Chautauqua Rail Trail, in Western New York** - The main and Portage trails combine for a total distance of 28.5 miles, running north to south between interstate routes 90 and 86, just below Lake Erie with a portion following along the top of Chautauqua Lake.

Marvel at the frozen waters of Lake Erie at one of the scenic vistas located along the Alison Wells Ney portion of the trail between Bliss and Thayer roads. Of the

Great Lakes, Lake Erie is the most likely to freeze during the winter due to its shallow waters.

You may also, perhaps, bear witness to a ghostly specter on that same portion of the trail near Prospect station at the site of the **1872 Christmas Eve Train Wreck**, where a train derailed, killing 23 people. When the trail reaches the Mayville Lakefront area, you may also see a frozen Chautauqua Lake.

* **Clarence Pathways, in Western New York** - Near the town of Clarence just outside Buffalo, the Peanut Line and the Clarence-Akron trail merge at Akron Junction to form the Clarence Pathways. The Peanut Line (8.3 miles) gets its name from the small portion of rail which it once covered on the famous New York Central Railroad, which runs from East Amherst to the Akron Junction. The Clarence-Akron Trail (8.6 miles) runs from Akron to Harris Hill.

These two Western New York trails are sure to be filled with plenty of fresh winter snow.

* **Keuka Outlet Trail, in the Finger Lakes region** - Located between the villages of Penn Yan on Keuka Lake and Dresden on Seneca Lake, the Keuka Outlet Trail includes seven miles of converted rail bed that once lay atop the towpath separating the Keuka Outlet Creek from the Crooked Lake Canal.

The partially frozen waterfalls of the creek are but a few of several winter beauties which you might encounter along the way.

* **Boonville Black River Canal Trail, in Central New York** - A premier destination for cross-country skiers, the Boonville Black River Canal Trail is located north of Rome and close to the Adirondacks and is maintained by the Black River Environmental Improvement Association. The 6.25 mile trail runs along the Black River Canal, which once connected the Erie Canal to the Black River, opening up the North Country to eastern and midwestern commerce.

The association grooms the trail specifically for the purpose of cross-country skiing during the winter months. The warming hut located at the northern trailhead even rents skis for a small donation.

* **D&H Rail Trail, in the Capital-Saratoga District** - The D&H Rail Trail offers nearly 12 miles of open trail extending through New York and into Vermont. The trail begins at Depot Street in the village of Granville in Washington County and continues for 3.5 miles through the colored slate capital of the world before crossing the Vermont border, where it runs between West Pawlett and West Rupert for a total of 8 miles. Both portions serve as fine specimens of winter in the northeast.

Fonda, Johnstown, and Gloversville Rail Trail, in the Southern Adirondacks - The FJ&G Rail Trail covers eight miles of converted rail bed from Johnstown to Mayfield through Gloversville. The FJ&G line once served as a means of transportation for the workers of glove manufacturing companies which once existed in Gloversville. Located just south of the Adirondacks, this trail exists as a reminder of New York's industrial past.

Wallkill Valley Rail Trail, in Hudson Valley - The Wallkill Valley Rail Trail spans 12.2 miles from the southern border of Gardiner to the northern border of New Paltz - a popular college town with many pleasant shops and restaurants. Formerly the railroad for the Wallkill Valley Line, the trail runs along the Wallkill river which flows at the foot of the Shawangunk Mountain Range. The Wallkill Bridge near Springtown Road offers impressive views up and down the river.

Source: **Parks & Trails New York**

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