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Trails for 'Winter Wonder' can be found nearby

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ALBANY -- Parks & Trails New York, a parks and trail advocacy program, recently announced its "Seven Trails for Winter Wonder," and several of them are just a short drive away.

The selected trails will reinvigorate the body and stimulate the senses of winter enthusiasts, the organization said in a news release.

Scenic overviews, icy lakes, and frozen waterfalls are just a few landmarks which line the Trails for Winter Wonder. Such remnants as snow-topped mile markers and steel bridges still stand testimony to the historical significance of these trails, many of which are converted rail corridors.

"It's easy to forget just how beautiful winter can be after the excitement over the year's first snowfall has passed. Utilizing trails which allow for winter activities can provide that same enchanting feeling over and over again with each outing," Robin Dropkin, Parks & Trails New York executive director, said in a news release. "Plus, the flatness of multi-use trails allows for greater accessibility for winter enthusiasts of all ages and abilities."

The trails can also encourage exercise during a season that often limits outdoor opportunities. But Parks & Trails officials encourage people to embrace the elements by strapping on a pair of boots, snowshoes, or cross-country skis.

"The best part is, you can see all these wonderful sights, have a great time, and get a workout all at the same time," Dropkin said.

Information on the trails can be found on TrailFinder, Parks & Trails New York's online guide to multi-use trails across the state at www.ptny.org/trailfinder.

TrailFinder can be used to search for trails in several ways – by trail name, by attributes such as length, surface, allowable uses, and distance from a particular location, or by browsing the interactive map. Trailhead parking areas are included, as are directions to nearby bike shops and other amenities such as bed & breakfast establishments

The Seven Trails for Winter Wonder are:

- **Chautauqua Rail Trail (Western NY)** – 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. *Website:* <http://www.chaurtt.org/>
- **Clarence Pathways (Western NY)** – 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. *Website:* <http://www.classicbuffalo.com/WNYOutdoors/ClarencePathways.htm>
- **Keuka Outlet Trail (Finger Lakes)** – Located in the heart of New York's Finger Lake region 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. *Website:* <http://www.keukaoutletrail.com>
- **Boonville Black River Canal Trail (Central NY)** – 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 BREIA (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 trail is maintained by BREIA (Black River Environmental Improvement Association), which 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. *Website:* <http://www.breiax-countryski.org/>

- **D&H Rail Trail (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, New York 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 will fill up with snow this winter and serve as fine specimens of winter in the northeast.
- **Fonda, Johnstown, and Gloversville Rail Trail (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.
- **Walkill Valley Rail Trail (Hudson Valley)** – The Walkill 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 Walkill Valley Line, the trail runs along the Walkill river which flows at the foot of the Shawangunk Mountain Range. The Walkill Bridge near Springtown Road offers impressive views up and down the river. *Website:* <http://www.gorailtrail.org>

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