



ARRT SCAVENGER HUNT PASSPORT



The trail you are now riding on was once a former railroad track for the Marlboro to Hudson line which was constructed in 1848-1855. That means it is about 157 years old. The Marlboro branch connected the towns of Marlboro, Hudson, Stow, Maynard and Acton. Prior to railroads, people traveled by horse, foot or boat travel. Railroads were how people were able to travel and how factories shipped their products around the country. Once the automobile was invented and people could start to afford them, people relied less on trains. The Hudson-Marlboro branch was abandoned in 1980.

The scavenger hunt can be done from either direction, however the instructions are given as if you were starting the trail from Hudson where the trail begins on Wilkins Street just East of Cox Street and ending in Marlboro. Take a trail map with you to help! There are 14 items to locate on the trail. Good Luck!

Place a check mark next to each description:

1) Stone Abutments

Start from the beginning of the trail at Wilkins Street in Hudson and head west toward Cox Street where you will approach two stone abutments. This used to be a former bridge that allowed another railroad line to cross over the railroad trail you are now riding on. The N. Cambridge to N. Hampton line (now known as the Mass. Central Branch) used to cross overhead on a steel trestle bridge constructed sometime after 1872. The Concord, Maynard and Hudson trolley ran along side of these tracks.

2) One Arm Signal

You should now be on the look out for two one arm signals. After passing by the stone abutments you will see one on the right and one on the left. They look like upside down hockey sticks. They indicated to the train to proceed ahead with caution. At one time, there were animal crossings and cattle guards in this area dating back to the 1800's.

3) Mile Marker

When you reach Main Street, you will need to take the sidewalk to Priest Street where you can cross over Main Street. (This is a temporary crossing until the Main Street Bridge is rebuilt with accommodations for the trail.) Once you rejoin the trail, if you go back eastward towards the old RR bridge, you will see a granite post called a mile marker. This indicated to the train how many miles it was to reach Marlboro and to Acton.

4) Caboose

After you find the mile marker, turn back in the westbound direction. Just ahead, you will approach a Caboose. This was donated to the ARRT by Edaville Railroad.

5) Telltale

Telltale were warnings given to the brakeman that a bridge was up ahead. Brakemen often rode on top of the train and could be easily knocked off and seriously injured or killed if they weren't aware about the upcoming bridge. Suspended from the top bar of the telltale were ropes that would dangle down and touch the brakeman, alerting him to duck his head. Be on the lookout for a large metal pole about 20 feet tall. It's shaped like an upside down "L". It is hard to spot because it is partially hidden by trees. It's located on the right side just as you enter the trail after crossing over South and Broad Street.

6) Trestle Bridge



You will come to a historic wrought iron trestle bridge built sometime after 1887. There aren't many of these bridges left because they were often used for scrap metal during WWII. Hudson is very lucky to still have one and it is one of only a handful of wrought iron bridges left in New England.

7) Stone Abutments



After crossing over Washington Street traveling westbound towards Marlborough, you will ride on the trail for less than a mile and approach two stone abutments. These once supported a wooden bridge that was used by farmers to cross their animals safely over the train tracks. The land belonged to G.B. Brigham, a prominent Hudson figure. We think this bridge was constructed some time after 1855.

8) Telltale



Right after the stone abutment, you will see another telltale on your left side. Remember, this warned the brakeman to duck his head!

9) Town/City Line



The Town of Hudson and City of Marlborough were major shoe industries that used the railroad to transport their goods around the country. The two communities were always linked when the railroad was running. Now, they are linked again with a recreational path connecting these two communities that share much history. Can you find where these two communities meet??

10) Imagine the Bridge Over Fitchburg St.



The railroad crossed a small stream called Flagg Brook and then had to cross Fitchburg St. To keep the trains going fast, the trains often crossed above or below roadways to help keep cars and trains safe from each other. A high train bridge used to be located over Flagg Brook and Fitchburg Street. Find Flagg Brook and look up to imagine a bridge spanning across the brook and Fitchburg St.

11) Ft. Meadow Reservoir



Imagine riding on the train and looking out the window and seeing the beautiful view of Ft. Meadow Reservoir. The reservoir was created by a dam to provide water for the textile mills down stream in Maynard, MA. Can you see the reservoir today? Find this scenic overlook.

12) Cattle Crossing



The forest around you used to be fields and farm land through which the trains traveled. The cows would get hit if they crossed the tracks, but they needed to get to the other side of the tracks. Find the tunnel they crossed under between Ash Street and Fairbanks Blvd.

13) Blasted Rock



To save energy and allow railroads to move more quickly, ledge areas were blasted out to make way for the trains. Can you find such a location on the section between Hudson and Ash St.?

14) Factory Railroad Loading Dock



All along the old railroad were factories that would load and unload goods and materials directly from the trains. A few buildings along the tracks had track spurs that allowed the train to roll right up to the side of the buildings. Can you find the spot at one of the buildings between Lincoln St. and Hudson St?