

#### **HISTORY** OF THE O&W RAILROAD

The former O&W Railroad, or the "New York, Ontario & Western Railway (NYO&W)," stretched from Weehawken, N.J. to Oswego, N.Y. From its start in the late 19th century until its bankruptcy in the 1950s, the route was mainly used for transporting people, coal, and dairy to and from rural communities across New York and the New York City metropolitan area. The rail line experienced financial strains when the coal industry wavered during the 1920s and persisted to decline through the mid-20th century. The railroad went bankrupt and liquidated its assets in 1957.

## THE SULLIVAN O&W RAIL TRAIL INITIATIVE

Build out of the O&W Rail Trail in Sullivan County has been a decades-long effort, spearheaded by multiple individuals, municipal governments, and grassroots organizations, all with a common goal of connecting communities along the trail and providing an important recreation and transportation asset to residents and visitors alike.

These efforts are spearheaded by the **Sullivan O&W Rail Trail Alliance**, a committee of trail municipalities, community residents, businesses, and civic organizations that have all joined together to coordinate maintenance, promotion, and development of the O&W Rail Trail in Sullivan County. The Alliance is fiscally sponsored by Catskill Mountainkeeper Inc. (a nonprofit tax-exempt public charity) as part of its Fiscal Sponsorship Program, and is governed by a committee charter.

# **ABOUT** THE SULLIVAN O&W RAIL TRAILS

## PARKSVILLE RAIL TRAIL

The **1.3-mile unpaved trail** looks down upon the scenic Little Beaver Kill and is easily accessible from New York State Route 17. From the trailhead, you can walk, bike, or ride horseback under the lush tree canopy and admire the views of the stream below. At the southern end of the trail, the small hamlet of Parksville offers food and convenience retail. The trailhead features accessible parking and informational signage.

## LIBERTY RAIL TRAIL

At over **2.7 miles** in length, this **multi-surfaced trail** accommodates biking, hiking, and cross-country skiing. The trail is a short walk from the Village of Liberty's historic business district, and the outdoor recreation experiences of Walnut Mountain Park. The gravel trailhead offers parking and informational signage. The trail ends at the northern abutment of the long-gone Ferndale trestle.

#### **HURLEYVILLE RAIL TRAIL**

Known locally as "The Milk Train Trail," the Hurleyville segment of the O&W spans 6.4 miles, including 3.5 miles of paved ADA-compliant trail, extending in each direction from the center of the hamlet. To the west, approximately 1 mile of wooded trail extends into the Town of Liberty. To the east, **1.9 miles of gravel-surface** trail connects Hurleyville to South Fallsburg. The fast-revitalizing hamlet of Hurleyville contains a variety of venues for arts, cuisine, and culture in a walkable and universally accessible streetscape.

## **SOUTH FALLSBURG RAIL TRAIL**

This trail segment includes the **1.1 mile** long "Tunnel Bypass Trail," designed to bypass the Fallsburg Tunnel, a 1,123-foot brick railroad tunnel constructed in 1886 that has since partially collapsed. The bypass trail

is not flat like the rest of the O&W Rail Trail, so be prepared to tackle several hills and moderately steep grades. There is a picnic area at the halfway point, and the trailhead features a dog park with ample parking. Future plans include railroad bed improvements from the tunnel entrance to a proposed pedestrian bridge over the Neversink River that will connect all 13 miles of rail trail from one end of Fallsburg to the other.

## **WOODRIDGE RAIL TRAIL**

This **1.7-mile length of multi-surface trail** connects the Village of Woodridge with the Neversink River to the west. Woodridge offers opportunities for dining and re-supply, some of them seasonal.

## **MOUNTAIN DALE RAIL TRAIL**

A replica of the Mountain Dale Depot building anchors the trailhead for this **2.6-mile cinder-paved** segment connecting Mountain Dale with Woodridge. It features a display of historic photos, along with public restrooms, parking, picnic tables, and a basketball court. A trailside bike shop offers rentals as well as sales and repairs. In the hamlet, trail users can grab a bite to eat and browse a growing number of shops and galleries.

#### MAMAKATING RAIL TRAIL

The O&W in Mamakating is part of a system of intersecting trails that have been developed along former rail lines and canal towpaths. Stretching from the Orange County border at the bottom of the Bashakill Wildlife Management Area up to the residential hamlets of Summitville and Phillipsport, surface conditions vary, making these 14.1 miles of trail suitable for all non-motorized activities, year round. At the center is the Village of Wurtsboro, with main street restaurants, shops, and amenities.

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by bike, and (in certain areas) horseback. history, and culture of Sullivan County by foot, the perfect opportunity to explore the beauty, grades of these former railroad beds provide historic rail towns to trail towns. The gentle Sullivan O&W Rail Trail transforms these villages at the gateway to the Catskills. The and connects many hamlets, towns, and through the scenic heart of Sullivan County, & Western Railway (NYO&W) runs for 50 mile The main line of the former New York, Ontario

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