



Enfield Rail Trail Quest

Enfield, New Hampshire

Special Features: Natural, Historical, Overlook

Physical Difficulty: Easy

Duration: 1:30

Bring: Bicycle, Compass

To get there: Take I-89 to Exit 17. Take Rte. 4 east four miles to Enfield. Take the second right past the Enfield Garage (High St.) just as Rte. 4 makes a sharp left into town. At the first stop sign, go straight through the intersection. Take the first left onto Depot Street. Park at the end of Depot St. in the parking lot to the left of the red building. This building is the old Enfield railroad depot, and now houses the town ambulances. Make sure not to block the emergency vehicles in any way.

Clues:

1. In Eighteen hundred forty seven,
Enfield folk thought they'd gone to heaven.
To this depot they and their cargo could now roll
To ride the brand new Northern Railroad.
2. Whistle stops and train rides are long gone,
Victims of highways and air travel throngs.
Out of sight are rotting ties and rusty rails,
Now there is gravel and the Northern Rail Trail.
3. Enfield Village is your first destination,
Hiking or biking, get on with exploration!
Head to the right or, with a compass, go west!
All aboard on this historical Rail Trail Quest!

Before the railroad came, this area, it is said,
Was mostly farms and a few homesteads.
The train was a magnet for prosperity,
Thus the shops, mills and village that you see.

4. Next stop is the bridge over the Mascoma River,
The bridge or the rapids might make you quiver.
Instead think back to how water helped fill a hole
Left behind by a glacier before humans strolled.

5. On the left is Mascoma Lake, long and deep,
Named after an ancient Squakheag Indian Chief.
His village was in Mass., far away in those days,
But his tribe hunted this far North, anyway.

6. The trail up ahead appears flat and straight,
But look to the sides, you are gaining height.
You're on top of what's called an embankment
Built for the railroad's advancement.

This area was once marsh, soggy and wet,
With no place to run a train through...yet.
Rail workers piled dirt high across this wet spot,
Until it was set and their backs were in knots.

7. To the right of this bank, is a rich habitat,
A wetland home for many a duck, in fact.
Explore a little and you may see
A frog, a turtle, a heron...lucky thee!

8. The next bridge makes us stop and wonder:
Who built this so cars take turns going under?
The Shakers built the big bridge across the lake
To get to the rail depot without effort great.
Did they tunnel under here and thus this bridge?
Give a friendly wave to those who way give.

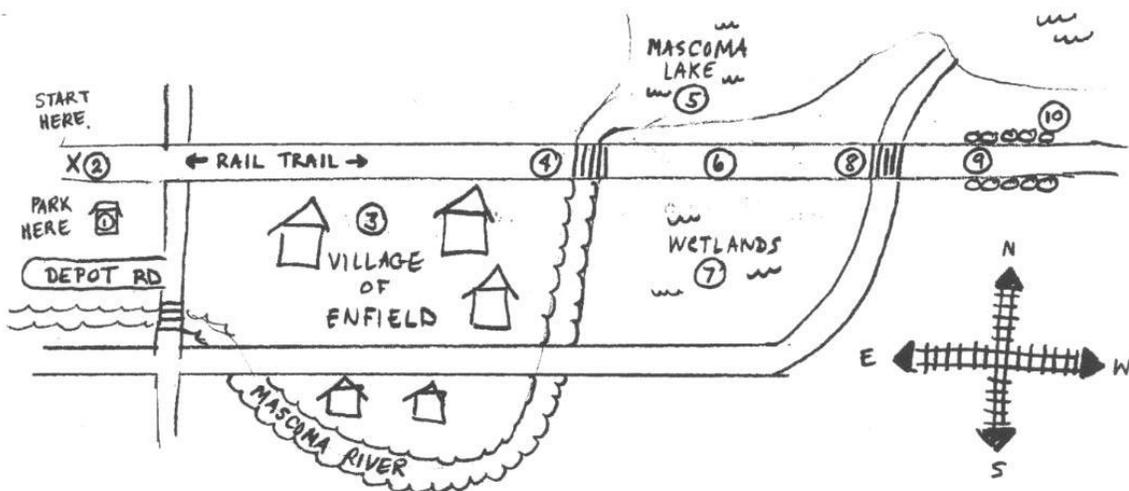
9. The Quest is over, when rock walls appear.
"Ledges Pass" they are called, the end is near.
Two gangs of workers, forty men, they say,
Took a year to carve this cut, with nary a stay.
Gas or steam engines were not yet the rule,
Hand drills and explosives their only tools.

10. Upon these walls are etched names and dates,
By workers whose sweat this passage did make.
At the end of the pass on the left is a rock,
Behind "1893" you will find the Quest box!

Please don't assume to look right behind,
Cross the path to a twin oak find.
Root around as you look for the box
The goal of this Quest is not for lost.

"Questers" please note: At the far end of the pass, there is a trail that leads to the shore of the lake. Once you are on the trail, you are on the private property of Mr. Earl Farnham. Please respect his beautiful property, and be aware that you are passing at your own risk.

This Quest was created by the home schooling family of Dale Shields, John Auble and their kids Cecilia, Nathan and Devin in 2000.



Please be a good steward of the land: leave it better than you found it and pack out any trash you find.



Valley Quest is a collection of treasure hunts that share and teach the natural gems and cultural heritage of the Upper Valley with children, families, adults, and visitors. It is a program of Vital Communities, a regional nonprofit working to engage citizens, organizations, and communities in creating solutions to our region's challenges. Learn more at vitalcommunities.org.

Have a suggestion, question, comment, or idea for us? We'd love to hear from you. Reach us at valleyquest@vitalcommunities.org or 802-291-9100.