

## North Country Trail - Boonville to Forestport - *Black River Canal, Alder Pond*

This ten mile section of the North Country Trail is the "gateway to the Adirondacks", as it currently is the last "off road" section before crossing the "Blue Line" (Adirondack Park boundary). This section begins off NY 12 at the corner of Main Street in Boonville. After a short 0.15 mile road walk on busy NY 12 from the end of the last section at the gas station, the trail begins again by following the park road toward the covered bridge. Cross the covered bridge and the Black River Canal then turn right to begin to follow the Black River Canal (Forestport Feeder section).

The trail continues along the tow path of the old Black River Canal. The 77-mile long Black River Canal was an engineering marvel of the 19th century. Built between 1837 and 1855, the Black River Canal ran uphill, connecting the waters of the Erie Canal with those of Black River. The southern section of the overland canal linked Rome and Boonville, a distance of 25 miles.

Following the rugged Lansing Kill Gorge, this section of the canal rose 693 feet and required 70 locks. The northern section of the overland canal connected Boonville and Lyons Falls, a distance of 10 miles. This section of the canal descended 386 feet and required 39 locks. All together, the Black River Canal had 109 locks--still a world record.

Between Lyons Falls and Carthage, a distance of 42 miles, the Black River itself was canalized for slack-water navigation. By giving the North Country access to eastern and midwestern markets, the Black River Canal was instrumental in the region's growth and prosperity.

This ten mile section of the trail is a very easy and pleasant walk. The trail passes a few roads along the way, which allows for day hikers to do section hikes in this area. There are some few views of the Black River as the trail gets closer to Forestport. When you reach Dutch Hill Road and Alder Pond across the street marks the end of following the old canal. This begins a road walk to the Adirondack Blue Line.

Currently it's a 6.4 road walk to the Adirondack Blue Line via North Lake Road, then another 1.6 miles to the Stone Dam trailhead and the first off road section of the NCT in the Adirondacks.

