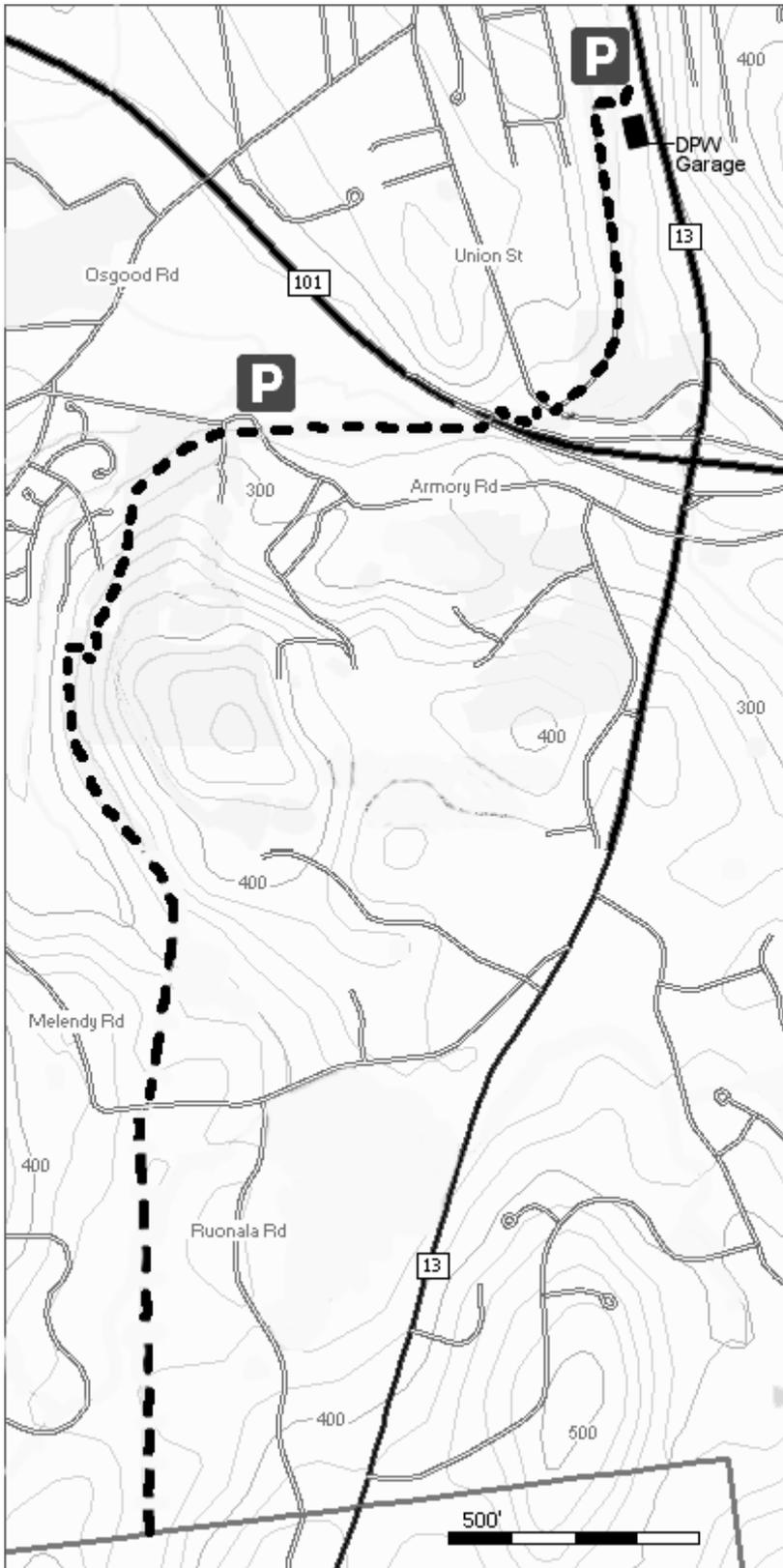


# Granite Town Rail-Trail, Milford, NH



**Surface:** Cinders/organic debris

**Use:** Foot, bike, ski

**Trailhead:** West side of Rt. 13,  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile south of Milford's downtown, at the Public Works Garage.

**Contact:**

Conservation Commission,  
1 Union Square, Milford, NH  
603-249-0628,  
concomm@milford.nh.gov

**What to Expect:**

Mile 0.0 - DPW Garage – Cross the bridge in the parking area, the trail starts behind the fence, crossing over Great Brook on a old dam.

Mile 0.53 - After crossing Union St. you will come to a concrete span over Great Brook.

Mile 0.66 - Trail users cross under Rt. 101 in a tunnel 110' long and 6'6" high. We have heard three very differing reasons for this 'tunnel': an over-flow culvert for Great Brook, a snowmobile passage and a bunny tunnel.

Mile 1.2 – South of Armory Rd. the trail leaves the RR grade and passes through private property on a trail easement. Please respect the rights of the landowner and stay on the trail.

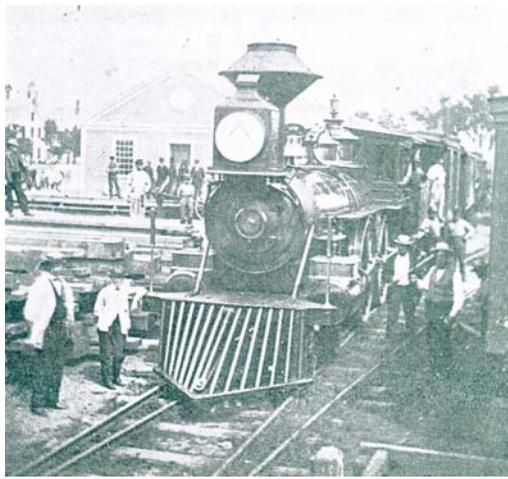
Mile 2.17 - The trains used to pass under Melendy Rd. The road cut was filled sometime in the 1940's.

Mile 2.95 – Town Line. The rail-trail continues another 4 miles in Brookline.

Last Updated 2009

## RAILROAD HISTORY

Train traffic began coming to Milford from Nashua in 1850, and by 1852, continued on to Wilton. The station was located on South Street. A new station on Garden Street replaced it in 1853.



Huge quantities of ice were being shipped to Massachusetts on the Brookline-Pepperel Railroad. The ice was cut during the winter months from Lake Potanipo and stored in mammoth houses near the lake. In January, 1893, gentlemen from Milford petitioned the state of New Hampshire for permission to build a railroad line running south to join with this rail line. The new line would give Milford businesses another means to ship goods manufactured here to other markets.

The state agreed in February and work began later in the year. The formal

opening was celebrated November 15, 1894. The town shut down all work so all could enjoy the parade, complete with music by the local Cornet Band, a cannon, and a reception for 400 people at the town house. The new line was known as the Brookline & Milford Railroad or the Fitchburg Line..



A new station was built that year on South Street. It served passengers coming and going from local hotels and also freight. By 1900, 8 trains a day ran on the Brookline & Milford Line. There was both a roundhouse and a turntable just east of the station opposite Lincoln Street.

## GRANITE INDUSTRY

Since the early 1800's, granite has been quarried at many places in town. Huge blocks, some as large as 10 tons, were carried by multi-horse drawn wagons to the finishing sheds and up to the Nashua rail line. Spur lines laid to some of the granite quarries heading south along Great

Brook, enabled these companies to transport granite much more quickly, easily and cheaply.

Fine Milford granite from some of the 15 commercial quarries, such as Lovejoy, Kittredge, and Tonella, came in shades of gray, pink, and blue. The granite was used mostly for paving and edging of streets and for building stones. Milford granite was used in at least one building at the West Point Military Academy. Thirty pillars, weighing ninety tons each, were quarried in 1908 at the Lovejoy Quarry. The pillars were used in the U.S. Treasury building in Washington, DC to replace deteriorating sandstone pillars. Skilled stone carvers came here from Europe to work with stone, creating beautiful monuments, large and small, to be placed in cemeteries and parks. "In the year of 1900, fifty thousand tons of granite were shipped from Milford."



Just as the railroads put the stagecoach lines out of business in the 1800's, so autos and trucks took most of the

railroad's passengers and freight. Trains on the Brookline & Milford Branch and the main Fitchburg Line stopped running passenger trains in 1926, forcing people to ride on mixed freight/passenger trains. In September, 1931, the last train ran on the Fitchburg line.

The steel rails were taken up for scrap to help the war effort in 1941-42. As late as 1978 the Barretto Granite Company was still using a small section of the line from the cutting shed on Oak Street north to the Nashua Line.

## THE TRAIL

The Milford Conservation Commission would like to thank the following individuals for their cooperation with our efforts to bring this trail to reality. Without their generosity you would not be enjoying the Granite Town Rail-Trail.

Thank you,  
Steven Desmarais  
Tai-Deh Hsu  
John F. Barretto  
Celia Cerulli Pashe  
Frank Gavin  
Stephen Talarico

The trail corridor averages only 66 feet wide. This land is surrounded by private property. PLEASE STAY ON THE TRAIL.