

Town of Colton, NY – Winter Tourism Tips

Updated November 18, 2014

Winterfest Weekend

The last full weekend of January is a great time to be in the Town of Colton for the annual celebration of the winter. Outdoor events draw competitors for a variety of foot and cross-country ski races, including the Higley Hustle at Higley Flow State Park. Also people take part in less competitive outdoor activities including dog sledding at Call of the Wild and recreational snowshoeing at Catamount Lodge & Forest. Indoor activities include the annual health and craft fair, food events and a concert. A real highlight for quilt enthusiast near and far is the annual quilt show held in multiple locations around town. The new 'Passport to Winerfest' activity begun in 2014 helps people explore town in winter and experience what it has to offer.

The town's Winterfest Weekend is highlighted in the WPBS TV documentary, The Raquette River Winter Experience, which is available for just \$15 from WPBS as well as the town's Tourism & Beautification Committee. It is one of a 2-part DVD which celebrates the river, its history and communities along it.

Heritage Sites

Local places of interest include the following three landmarks on the State and National Registers of Historic Places—all of which are accessible all year long.

Colton Hepburn Library (84 Main Street)—Library is named after philanthropist A. Barton Hepburn who was born and raised in Colton. The Library celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2012.

Sunday Rock Historic Site (State Highway 56 just north of the hamlet of Colton)—Sunday Rock, a large glacial erratic separating 'civilization and the woods' has been saved twice by local citizens from demolition during road construction projects. It now sits in a town park on land donated to the town by the Swift family, serving as a gateway to the Adirondacks.

Zion Episcopal Church (9 Main Street)—Historic building, made of red sandstone from the quarries of Potsdam's prominent Clarkson family, is architecturally significant. The cornerstone for the church, built as a memorial to Elizabeth Clarkson by her family, was laid in 1883.

Outdoor Places to Stay Active during Winter

The Town of Colton is a Raquette River community with many ways to experience the outdoors and the river via both private and public land. During winter two areas in particular give outdoor enthusiasts the chance to stay active and have great wintertime experiences.

Higley Flow State Park (Cold Brook Drive) – Although the park is not open for camping in the winter it is a destination for cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and other wintertime activities free of charge. Friends of Higley Flow State Park (HFSP) help the Park supervisor maintain the trails for cross-country skiing and help staff the Higley Trails Lodge during winter so visitors can warm up and use the bathroom facilities.

Stone Valley Cooperative Recreation Area (Riverside Drive) – During winter months the trails are open to snowshoers and others who want to stay active and experience the beauty of the Raquette River and its waterfalls during frosty times of the year. The rest of the year Stone Valley provides access for hiking and mountain biking as well as paddling a Class iV and V whitewater sections of the river. A map produced by Brookfield Renewable Energy in collaboration with the Adirondack Mountain Club / Laurentian Chapter shows trailheads, trails and parking areas as well as other information about land owned and managed by the Stone Valley partners.

Highlights of many other points of interest from historic, scenic, recreation and other perspectives follow, providing opportunities to stay active in winter while exploring the natural beauty of the area and all that the great outdoors has to offer.

Skating, broomball and more at Swift Field complex – Town's Pavilion at Swift Field off Sugar Bush Lane in the hamlet of South Colton is increasingly used for organized and unorganized sports by both Colton-Pierrepont Central School and the town all seasons of the year. A new rink system is maintained by Bambini ice resurfacing machine throughout the winter for broomball and skating activities. The Pavilion also includes basketball nets for both organized and unorganized activities and the field also has a new second multi-purpose field and a children's playground.

Snowmobiling – Trails in the community are open as part of snowmobile trail system maintained by the St. Lawrence County Snowmobile Association which includes 10 member clubs. Volunteers groom over 500 miles of trails during the winter.

Snowshoeing and Cross-Country Skiing – In addition to HFSP other trails in community are groomed and open for recreational snowshoeing and cross-country skiing throughout the winter, including those at Catamount Lodge & Forest.

Fishing / Ice Fishing – There are many places in town to fish year round with seasonal events including ice fishing sponsored by Racquette Valley Fish & Game.

Dogsledding – Year-round dog sledding excursions are possible through Call of the Wild, taking people out on snow during winter and on dryland during the rest of the year.

Birding / Wildlife Viewing – People can view a variety of wildlife throughout the year in their natural habitat on both land and water with some places being readily accessible and others quite remote. The town is both inside and outside the Adirondack Park with a mix of public and private land ownerships, much of which is forested providing abundant wildlife habitat.

Online links for many of the places mentioned above are available via the town website.