

## G3. NY Route 211 to Old NY Route 17

**Feature:** Basha Kill<sup>12</sup>

**Distance:** 9.25 miles

**USGS Map Quads:** Otisville, Yankee Lake, Wurtsboro

**Trail Conference Maps:** none

### General Description

This section begins at the intersection of Orange County Route 61 (Otisville Road) and NY Route 211. It heads north on Route 61, descending below steep cliffs on the right. The road passes over the top of the western portal of the Otisville tunnel of the Conrail Port Jervis line, and after 1.6 miles it reaches Indian Orchard Road. The trail turns right on Indian Orchard Road, which becomes South Road when it enters Sullivan County, and in a few hundred yards it turns left into the woods and reaches the Basha Kill Rail Trail. The trail follows the abandoned “Kingston Line” of the New York, Ontario & Western (O&W) Railroad.

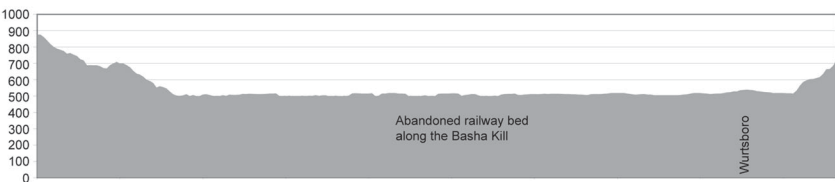
While the 5.5-mile walk along the Basha Kill is straight and level, it is a wonderful area, with many fine views across the Basha Kill, one of the largest wetlands in southern New York. In the springtime the Basha Kill fills with runoff from the nearby Catskills and Shawangunks to form a giant lake. At that time of the year, sections of the trail may be flooded. If this is the case, South Road, which parallels the Basha Kill Rail Trail nearby, can be followed to bypass flooded areas. In the summer the Basha Kill is a large wetland with many channels that are perfect for canoeing, and because it is a stop-off point on the Shawangunk migration routes, it is a splendid area for bird-watching.

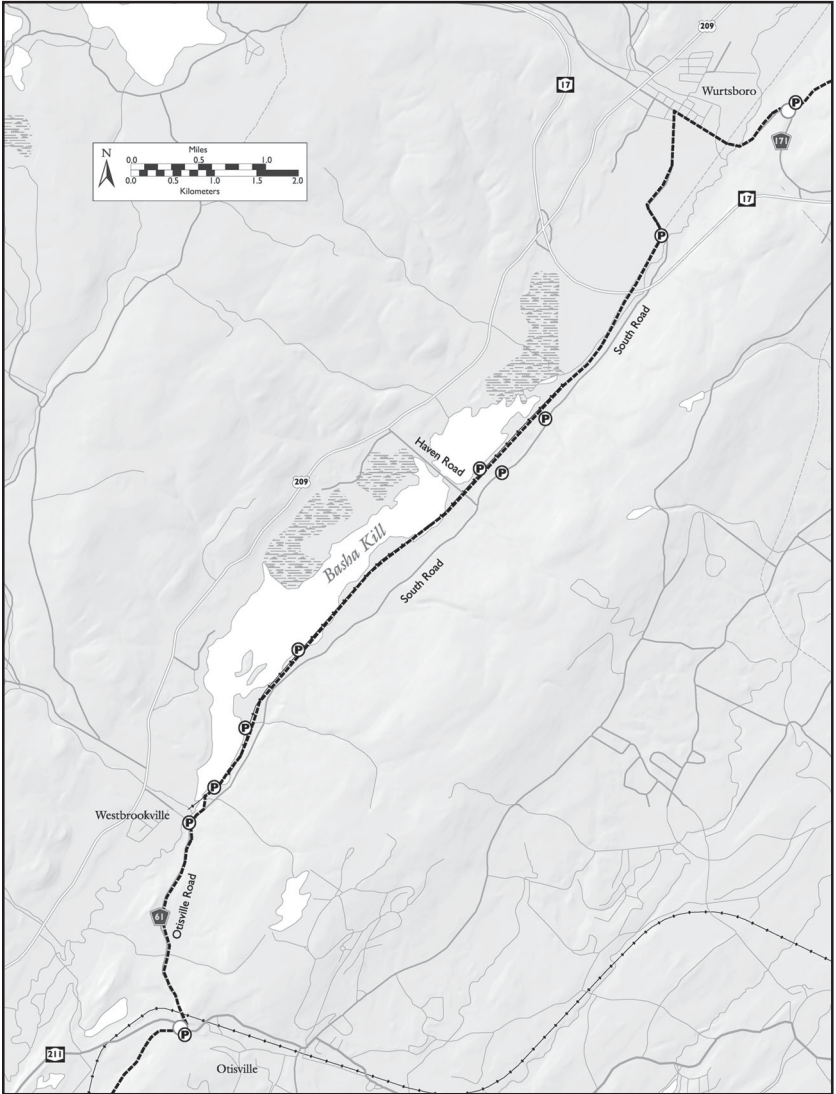
After leaving the Basha Kill the trail follows roads for about 2 miles through the Village of Wurtsboro en route to the Wurtsboro Ridge section.

### Access

Take the New York State Thruway to Exit 16 (Harriman). Take NY Route 17/future Interstate 86 west 20 miles to Exit 120, NY Route 211. Take Route 211 west through Middletown and then west 11 miles to the Village of Otisville. In Otisville, take NY Route 211 west past the ridge crest to Otisville Road (Orange County Route 61), where this section begins. Alternatively, take Route 17 west 31 miles to Exit 113, US Route 209 south. Take US Route 209 south

<sup>12</sup>The Basha Kill is also variously spelled Basher Kill, Bashakill, and other variants with approximately the same pronunciation.





5 miles to Westbrookville. Turn left on Otisville Road and follow it for 3 miles to the intersection with Route 211, where the trail begins.

## Parking

- 0.00** NY Route 211 and Otisville Road (limited). (18T 537237E 4591746N)
- 1.70** DEC parking area, Otisville Road and Indian Orchard Road. (18T 537384E 4594290N)
- 1.95** DEC parking area. (18T 537632E 4594639N)
- 2.45** DEC parking area. (18T 538019E 4595332N)
- 3.10** DEC boat launch parking area. (18T 538539E 4596224N)
- 5.10** Main Basha Kill parking lot. (18T 540869E 4598279N)
- 5.65** DEC parking area; side trail 0.1 miles to Basha Kill. (18T 541574E 4599031N)
- 6.00** Another DEC parking area; side trail 0.1 miles to Basha Kill. (18T 541876E 4599445N)
- 7.35** South Road, just to the right of the trail. (18T 542956E 4601268N)
- 9.25** Old Wurtsboro High Line O&W Rail Station. (18T 544473E 4602729N)

## Trail Description

**0.00** At the intersection of NY Route 211 and Otisville Road (Orange County Route 61) the Shawangunk Ridge Trail crosses Route 211 and follows Otisville Road, descending below steep cliffs on the right. The trail passes over the top of the western portal of the former Erie Railroad's Otisville Tunnel. This line is still used daily for both passenger and freight service.

**1.60** The trail turns right on Indian Orchard Road, which will become South Road in Sullivan County, and passes a parking and fishing area on the left side of the road.

**1.75** The trail turns left into the woods just past the parking area, and reaches the Basha Kill Rail Trail in about 0.1 miles.

**1.85** The trail turns right on the Basha Kill Rail Trail. The rail trail is the remnants of the Port Jervis to Kingston branch of the New York, Ontario & Western Railroad (O&W). Built in direct competition to the D&H Canal, which was on the western side of the Basha Kill, it was abandoned when the O&W went bankrupt in the early 1950s. The trail is unmarked except for occasional Long Path aqua blazes or Long Path discs. There are also a few yellow DEC discs. The Basha Kill Wildlife Management Area is a huge wetland in the floodplain of the Basha Kill stream. The walk along the Basha Kill is a beautiful one. While the trail is level, there is much to see along the way. There are views across the Basha Kill toward the Catskills and east to the Shawangunks. The Basha Kill is home to many migratory birds and there are bird-feeding stations along the way. One can put a canoe into one of the many channels for a lazy trip through the wetland, or to find a location to fish. In the springtime, the Basha Kill fills up with the runoff from the mountains and becomes a large, shallow lake. In the summer, it is a green wetland, a rich home to aquatic life.

**1.95** The trail passes a DEC parking area on the right.

**2.45** The trail reaches another larger DEC parking area across a bridge to the right. To the left are several short nature trails that lead to a point in the Basha Kill. The trail continues ahead. It passes a house on the right, and then passes another nature trail that heads left. The trail crosses a small bridge where there are views across the Basha Kill. Beyond here, the trail passes through a white birch forest.

**3.10** The trail crosses a large parking area with a boat-launching site to the left. From here one can launch a canoe or other nonmotorized boat in a side channel of the Basha Kill. From the side channel there are many interesting routes to either canoe or fish. The trail continues ahead along the edge of the Basha Kill. In this section there are many views across the open expanse of water and marshlands, as well as many bird feeding stations on the Basha Kill, making it a good area for bird-watching.

**4.85** The trail crosses Haven Road. Haven Road crosses the Basha Kill on a causeway and is the only road crossing along the Basha Kill Wildlife Management Area. You will see many people fishing along the causeway. The trail continues straight ahead on the rail bed, which for this section is a gravel road that leads to the main parking area in the Basha Kill.

**5.10** Reach the main parking area. The trail passes through a gate and reverts to the abandoned rail bed.

**5.50** A nature trail leads left 0.1 miles to a raised platform with a spectacular view across the Basha Kill and the mountains beyond. Along this nature trail, markers identify the different trees along the way. Near the platform are several signboards that show pictures of the various flora and fauna found at this location. Unfortunately, the signs have been vandalized.

### *Basha Kill railway bed*



JAKOB FRANK





*Basha Kill railway bed*

**5.60** The trail passes the north end of the nature trail. In another 300 feet, a side trail leads right 0.1 miles to a parking area.

**6.00** The trail passes another side trail that leads 0.1 miles to a parking lot.

**6.30** The trail passes a resort (Paradise II) on the right along South Road. There are views to the Shawangunks from here. Beyond this point, the Basha Kill changes from open marshland to a stream with multiple channels that run through the forest. The trail crosses some of these channels on a series of bridges.

**6.80** The trail crosses under NY Route 17 (Quickway) in a culvert and continues north.

**7.35** The abandoned rail bed turns into a dead-end street with houses on both sides. The Shawangunk Ridge Trail turns left off the rail-trail onto South Road. South Road becomes Pennsylvania Avenue, which the trail follows into the Village of Wurtsboro. On the left is the Mamakating Little League Field, a charming small-town baseball stadium.

**8.30** The trail turns right on Sullivan Street in Wurtsboro by the firehouse. To the left is the Village of Wurtsboro, with several stores and restaurants in this section. Sullivan Street was part of the original NY Route 17 before the Quickway was constructed.

**8.70** On the right is the Wurtsboro train station on the Port Jervis–Kingston O&W branch. The train station is now a private house and the owner has turned it into a private O&W museum, complete with old signs, a caboose and other railroad memorabilia. The trail continues uphill on Old Route 17 (Sullivan County Route 171).

**9.25** The trail turns left here. The trail reaches the abandoned O&W High Line right-of-way, where this section ends.