

Mount Beacon Incline Railway



History of the Railway

- ▶ Started by Jesse Pattee and Henry George in 1901
 - Hired Otis Elevator Company which supervised the contractors who constructed the railway
- ▶ Builders had to face inclement weather when building



Aspects of the Railway

- ▶ 2,200 feet of track
- ▶ Two electrically illuminated passenger cars
- ▶ Operated five months out of the year
 - Was able to attract 110,000 visitors annually despite its small window of operation
- ▶ Brought visitors 1,540 feet up





What was so Appealing?

- ▶ At the top of the mountain was a casino and a hotel
 - Casino was targeted towards affluent middle class families
 - Hotel was targeted towards prominent and wealthy people
- ▶ The ride cost \$1
 - Also included a steamship ride up the Hudson, a trolley ride up and down the mountain, and transportation home



What was so Appealing?

- ▶ Provided an escape from everyday life
 - Operated during the industrialization of New York State
 - People went to the mountain to escape the activities of commercial and manufacturing centers
- ▶ Coincided with the naturalist movement
- ▶ Steamships allowed more tourists to visit



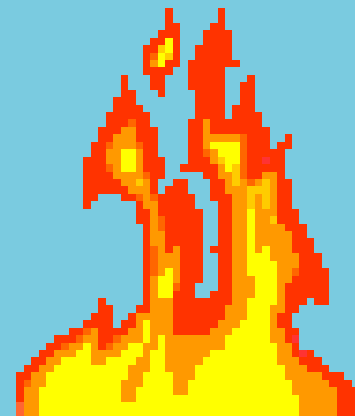
Problems with the Railway

- ▶ A fire in 1927 destroyed the infrastructure
 - There were two more fires
 - Poor land management and wild brush made it vulnerable to fires
- ▶ Great Depression of the 30s and 40s
- ▶ Rise of cars
 - Cars were a more convenient way to get away from everyday life, they provided more freedom



The End of the Railway

- ▶ NYS Department of Tourism temporarily shut down the railway because of sanitary conditions
- ▶ The land was later split and sold in a tax sale
- ▶ A 1983 fire burned the tracks that remained as well as the operating houses and buildings



Rebuilding the Railway

- ▶ 1996 Incline Society started
 - Was led by Beacon Mayor Steve Gold and Andrew Chiusano
 - It is currently led by President and CEO Anne Lynch
 - Wants to revitalize the town and sees the railway as the best way to do so
- ▶ Set a completion date of July 4, 2013



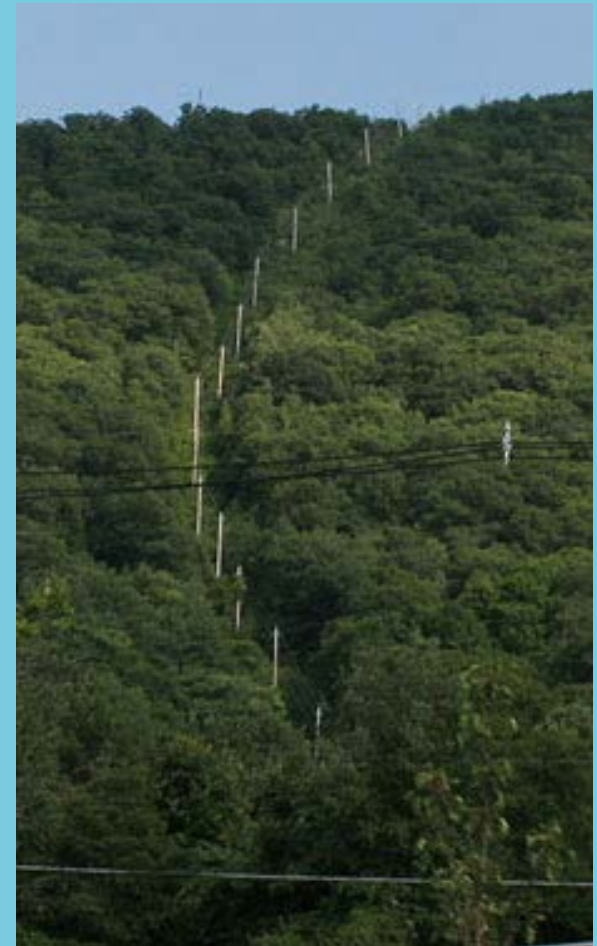
Rebuilding the Railway

- ▶ It would create more than 700 jobs
- ▶ It would be the steepest incline railway on the East Coast
- ▶ It will provide a balance between leisure and work
- ▶ It currently lacks publicity and funds
 - Estimated cost of \$14 million for construction and \$4 million for the creation of a museum



What Makes it Different?

- ▶ This time it will be more technologically advanced
- ▶ It will comply with the American Disability Association's guidelines
- ▶ Less wood will be used and a fire suppression system will be put in place
- ▶ Improved land management to ensure machine quality and visitor safety
- ▶ The goal is for it to be energy self-sufficient



What Makes it Different?

- ▶ A museum will be added
- ▶ It is safer
- ▶ The steel track will make it quiet
- ▶ It will stimulate local economies
- ▶ It will not rely on taxes for construction

Current Efforts

- ▶ Efforts are still underway for a re-opening as well as opening the museum for July 2013

- ▶ Video of the railway :

http://hudsonvalley.ynn.com/content/top_stories/505000/restoring-the-mount-beacon-incline-railway/

For More Information

- ▶ <http://www.inclinerailway.org/>
- ▶ A video of the railway in 1902
 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QLYS838WTAs>

Bibliography

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Pictorial Bibliography

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