

Hyde Park Trails Newsletter

Hyde Park, NY

Issue #6

Summer 2010



Hike through History:

Hyde Park Trails Tell Stories
with Audio Podcasts



Hiking is taking on a new dimension with the creation of audio podcast programs for six Hyde Park Trails. In celebration of National Park Week in April, the National Park Service announced a series of free downloadable podcasts that are now posted on the website of the Home of Franklin D. Roosevelt. The podcasts cover six Hyde Park trails, including the Roosevelt Farm Lane, Eleanor's Walk at Val-Kill, the Top Cottage Trail, the Vanderbilt & Riverfront Park trail loop, Hackett Hill Town Park, and the Winnakee Nature Preserve.

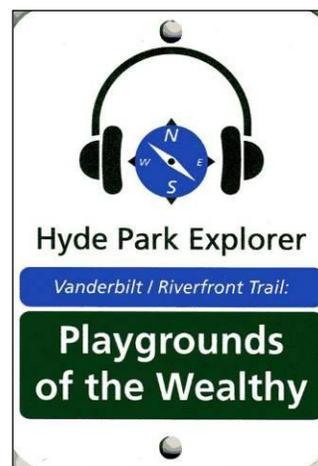
Karl Beard of the NPS Rivers & Trails Program explained, "The podcasts are a sort of ranger in your pocket. You can download them to your computer at home, and then take them out on the trails using an iPod or mp3 player. Markers placed along the trails tell you where to stop and listen to recorded sounds and stories that are special to Hyde Park's trails." The stories are told using voices of more than 25 different people from our area.

Sarah Olson, Superintendent of the Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Sites said, "Hyde Park has so many wonderful trails, and so many

stories to tell about them. We are thrilled to work with the Town of Hyde Park, Winnakee Land Trust, and many local experts and volunteers to make these podcasts available to town residents and visitors alike. We hope they will make Hyde Park's trails even more enjoyable."

The trail podcasts are the first of a larger series of multimedia programs called the "Hyde Park Explorer," hosted on the website of the Home of Franklin D. Roosevelt National Historic Site. The Hyde Park Explorer series is expandable, and offers the possibility of many other kinds of programs and information that is not easily available in other ways. The podcast project was funded by a grant from the NPS Connect Trails to Parks Program.

How to do it: Log onto the website of the Home of FDR, www.nps.gov/hofr. Once there, click on "Photos & Multimedia." You can listen online at your computer, or follow the instructions for downloading the files to your personal audio device.



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Trail-side markers like this one identify "stops" along the podcast tours.

Each stop offers an audio program a minute or two in length.

This stop, within the Vanderbilt site, highlights the artistically-designed landscape.

Remembering Hyde Park Trails Volunteer Seth Lyon

Hyde Park Trails lost a great friend in March. Trail volunteer Seth Lyon died in a severe winter storm March 14, while on a winter backpacking trip in the Catskills High Peaks.

Seth became an active member of the Hyde Park Trail committee in early 2008. He was one of our very first official volunteer trail maintainers, signing-up in March of that year. Seth's formally adopted trails were a section of the Hyde Park Trail, the trunk-line trail which unites all of the NPS sites, and also the FDR Forest Loop Trail. Since the trails he maintained are on federal land within the Franklin D. Roosevelt National Historic Site, he was enlisted under the National Park Service Volunteers In Parks or "VIP" program.

Once on-board with Hyde Park Trails, Seth quickly expanded his volunteer work to other activities. He became the writer/ editor of the Hyde Park Trails newsletter, led hikes, and was active in maintenance work wherever work was needed, including Winnakee Nature Preserve, Eleanor Roosevelt's Val-Kill and Top Cottage.

Seth spent as much time as possible in the woods and mountains and on trails. As a youth, he earned the highest rank in Boy Scouting, Eagle Scout. He was an active and incessant hiker.



Throughout his lifetime, Seth hiked parts of the Appalachian Trail, Catskills and Adirondack Mountains as well as the Blue Hills in Massachusetts. Later, as an active member of the RPH Cabin Volunteers Club, Seth became a trail builder and maintainer on the Appalachian Trail, and also served as the club Secretary. Most recently, he led a course on hiking and outdoor skills at Dutchess Community College.

All who worked and hiked with Seth were impressed by his knowledge of trails, hiking and natural history. He seems to have walked all of our trails, since he submitted detailed notes and suggestions for trail maintenance needs throughout the Hyde Park Trails system.

As part of the Hyde Park Trails Committee, Seth also provided input into the Town of Hyde Park's Trails Master Plan, based on his detailed knowledge of the landscape. He helped us think about ways to extend the benefits of trails to more people. In many ways, his influence and inspiration continue to be with us.

Donations in memory of Seth, in support of Hyde Park's trails can be made to:

Winnakee Land Trust,
P. O. Box 610, Rhinebeck, NY 12572
Be sure to note "Seth Lyon Trails Fund" in your check's memo line.

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Seth Lyon Volunteer Trail Day at Winnakee Nature Preserve September 25

Saturday, September 25, is National Public Lands Day, the nation's largest hands-on volunteer effort to improve the public lands we all enjoy. America's public lands, which make up 30 percent of the nation's land area - almost 700 million acres total - are experiencing the effects of climate change. Increased flooding, storms, droughts, wild fires and an influx of invasive species could alter the ecosystems within our nation's parks, forests, refuges and

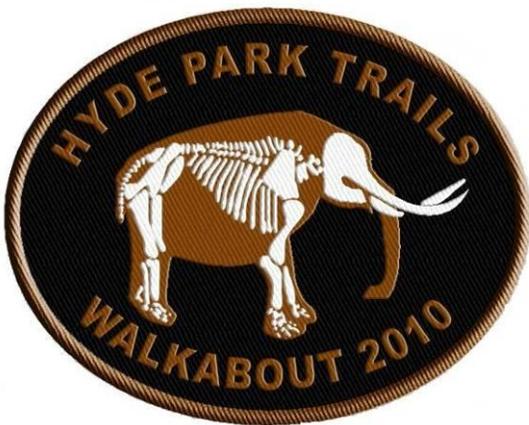
shorelines. Changes in climate could create new pressures on plant and animal communities, and in the absence of adaptation, lead to a loss of these irreplaceable natural resources. Public Lands Day is our chance to lend a hand.

At 10:00 a.m. Saturday September 25, the Hyde Park Trail Committee invites trail volunteers and supporters to gather at the Winnakee Nature Preserve's Van Dam Road trailhead of for a tree planting ceremony in honor of the late Seth Lyon, one of our dedicated trail volunteers.

After the tree planting, we will also work on some trail improvement projects at the Winnakee Nature Preserve, that Seth had earmarked for our "to do" list. Please join us and volunteer on this day. Please also bring a dish or drink for the "Pot Luck" luncheon. Don't forget your work gloves, water bottle, hand tools and favorite tick repellent! See you there!

Parking is available behind Pete's Famous Café, off Rte. 9 and Van Dam Road.

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Trail Patch Commemorates Hyde Park Mastodon

Ten years ago, Hyde Park resident Larry Lozier hired an excavator to deepen his backyard pond on Haviland Road. A week later, when the excavator had finished, Larry and his wife Sheryl noticed what they thought was a log lying beside the pond. When they examined it more closely

they found it was an enormous bone (an upper forelimb) of what is now known as the Hyde Park Mastodon.

The Paleontological Research Institution in Ithaca, NY was notified and in the summer of 2000, staff from the institution and volunteers eventually retrieved a complete mastodon skeleton in the bottom of the pond.

The excavation lasted six weeks, with the help of hundreds of volunteers from Vassar College, Cornell University, Dartmouth College, Mount Holyoke University, SUNY New Paltz and the Boston Museum of Science, among others. Ninety-five percent of the bones were recovered, including both tusks, the skull and all major limb bones. The excavation was a community spectacle that received almost daily press coverage and drew a steady stream of visitors. It was also featured on national television, by the Discovery Channel.

The mastodon's new home, after 15,000 years in a swampy hole, is a nice dry building in Ithaca, New York. You can also see a full-size cast of it in the Children's Museum in Poughkeepsie.

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Special One-time Offer: Earn All Five Years of Trail Patches at Once!

It is hard to believe, but the Hyde Park Healthy Trails Walkabout is five years old. For those not familiar with the Walkabout, it is a project to promote healthy physical activity – walking on trails – while introducing you to great places throughout Hyde Park. Hike 5 trails, and you can earn a free patch. The Walkabout patches commemorate special things about Hyde Park.

If you missed out on any of the last five years of patches, here is how to collect them all:

1. Walk ALL ELEVEN trails listed on the Walkabout scorecard. The Walkabout year begins in April, so you have until April 2011.

But our supplies of patches are limited (about 100 sets), so don't put it off.

2. Turn in your completed scorecard at the Town Recreation office at Hackett Hill.
3. The cost is \$5.00 for all five patches from the years 2006 – 2010. The collected funds will help support Hyde Park's trails.

Pick up a Walkabout map/guide and scorecard at any trailhead, or download one from our website: www.hydeparkny.us/recreation/trails

See great places, get great exercise, and sew your collection of patches onto your favorite backpack! This offer includes this year's mastodon patch, along with the previous four:



See you on the trails!

* * *

Piano Concert Benefits Seth Lyon Trails Fund

About 25 supporters attended a piano concert benefit for the Winnakee Land Trust Seth Lyon Trails Fund on Sunday, June 27th. Prior to the concert, a wine and cheese reception was hosted by Lois and Michael Skelly at their home in Hyde Park.

Featuring pianist Michael Skelly, accompanied by oboist Zoe Hilbert and soprano Emily Dake, strands of music by Claude Debussy, Francis Poulenc, Maurice Ravel, Aaron Copland, Ricky Ian Gordon and Franz Schubert filled the air.

Michael has been a member of the piano faculty at Columbia University since 1985. He has performed in many concert halls in New York City including Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall and Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall. In his spare time, Michael can be found maintaining

the Top Cottage Trail, which connects Eleanor Roosevelt's Val-Kill with Franklin Roosevelt's Top Cottage.

Emily is a 2009 Vassar graduate while Zoe is a Columbia student who studies oboe at Julliard.

A successful event and great performances made for a very enjoyable afternoon. We are very grateful to the Skellys, the musicians, Winnakee Land Trust and all who attended for their wonderful support.

* * *

New Trail Building

On Saturday, May 22nd, volunteers began building a new section of the Hyde Park Trail south of Mills-Norrie State Park. Led by Scenic Hudson's Jill Sprance and Winnakee's Raphael Notin, seven very enthusiastic volunteers as well as staff from Scenic Hudson and Winnakee Land Trust put in some serious sweat equity to build about 150 feet of solid bench cut trail, craft some



attractive stone steps and clear vegetation. All who attended worked very hard and should be proud of the work accomplished.

This section of trail traverses Anderson Center and Scenic Hudson land, and is an important step toward connecting the Hyde Park Trail between Mills-Norrie State Park and the Vanderbilt National Historic Site. The actual trail construction is but the latest step in a long process of planning that included Winnakee Land Trust and The Town of Hyde Park securing trail easements on Scenic Hudson and the Anderson Center's parcels.

Want to Help? Trail construction will continue throughout the season. Youth volunteers from Mill Street Loft's Project ABLE will also pitch in for two days of trail building in July. For upcoming dates, check the Scenic Hudson website: www.scenichudson.org, pull down "Things to do" and click on "Events." Or call Jill Sprance at 473-4440 x 251.

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Summer/Fall Trail Events

**Sunday, September 12, 2010 - Lions Club
2nd Annual Roosevelt 5K Trail Run,
Roosevelt Farm Lane Trail**

8:00 a.m. at the Hyde Park Brewing Co. and
Steakhouse, on Rte 9

For information and pre-registration, call
229-2120

**Saturday, September 25, 2010 (National
Public Lands Day), Winnakee Nature
Preserve**

10:00 a.m. Seth Lyon Trail Volunteer Work
Day at Winnakee Nature Preserve – tree
planting in memorial to Seth Lyon, and trails
maintenance. Pot-luck lunch is planned.

Bring a dish to share, your work gloves and
hand tools. Call Winnakee Land Trust at
876-4213 for more information.

Parking behind Pete's Famous Café, Rte 9

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Hyde Park Trails Wins National Achievement Award

- Kathleen Davis

In early May, State Parks Grants Administrator Ron Rader called to inform me that the national Coalition for Recreational Trails makes awards for excellent projects funded by the Recreation Trails Program. Hyde Park Trails had received a Recreational Trails Grant in 2003, and he

thought that we would be a prime candidate. Nominations were due May 15. This didn't give me much time to submit a nomination.

I checked the nomination form online, and at first it looked pretty simple. I read back through the 2003 Grant Application to grab the project description. But when it came to listing additional accomplishments that had been generated by the grant project, the list of initiatives and accomplishments began growing. I called my trail mentor, Karl Beard for help. We backtracked through our records, and the list grew even more. We were amazed, and began to wonder if Ron Rader could be right about our chances.

Since 2003, 14 Eagle Scouts have completed projects on our trails. Dozens of BOCES students have helped build 5 kiosks and fabricate over 100 trail signs. An SCA Intern with the NPS Rivers & Trails Program worked with the Hyde Park Trail Committee for nine months, creating our first newsletter, enlisting volunteers to adopt trails, offering programs for school children during Spring break, and distributing the new trails brochure (10,000 copies were printed) to doctors' offices, schools, and scout groups.

The Dutchess County Health Department helped us develop the "Healthy Trails Walkabout" initiative, offering a free annual patch for those who complete five trails each year, and increasing our outreach to schools and scout groups. At least 200 people have completed the Walkabout in each of the last 5 years.

All this must have struck the Coalition for Recreational Trails in a good way. They granted us an award under the category of "Youth Conservation/ Service Corps."

In fact, the Recreation Trails Program grant we received was a huge catalyst. The Hyde Park Heritage Greenway Trail is a unique and collaborative effort by the Town of Hyde Park, National Park Service, Scenic Hudson Land Trust, Winnakee Land Trust, two County Departments and several interested individuals.

The grant helped us link 18 miles of trails within the National Park Service sites, the Winnakee Nature Preserve and a number of Town parks. It provided the public the opportunity to walk or bike through beautiful historic sites and protected woodlands on designated trails and safe walkways.

I traveled by train to Washington, D.C. in early June to accept the award on Capital Hill, along with six other trail organizations from across the United States.



Kathleen Davis accepts one of only seven national Recreation Trail Program Achievement Awards from Marianne Fowler (Rails-to-Trails Conservancy) and Derrick Crandall (American Recreation Coalition).

It was an honor to accept the Award on behalf of the Town of Hyde Park and the Hyde Park Heritage Greenway Trail Committee. Coming home on the train, I could reflect on how fortunate I am to live in and work for the historic Town of Hyde Park - - as much as I reveled in walking the historic streets and grand avenues of Washington, D.C., and visiting my alma mater, Trinity University.

“POUGH-KEEP-SEEE!!” the station master cried. It was half-past midnight, and I felt as if I’d been rolled over by the train. But it was especially good to be home.

* * *

What do young people say about Hyde Park Trails?

Many people write helpful feedback on their Walkabout scorecards. Here are some notes that we *think* came from youth - - judging by the look of the handwriting, which is sometimes just as fun as the things they say!

We found a firefly. - Jacob

You have great trails. - Joshua

I enjoyed all the flowers. Their was too much mud. (sic) - Kate

Trails are cool! - Anonymous

Fun Trails....Glad I hiked them. - Hayley

It was great. - Alessia

I found many interesting things. - Tiger

Trails very tiring (sic) - Mary-Erin

I like the trails, especially Top Cottage. - Maya

These trails are fun – Sam

Want to get involved with Hyde Park Trails?

Think about adopting a Hyde Park Trail. Or a trailhead kiosk. No experience is necessary, we will train you or your group to trim branches, blaze trails (paint markings), and other light maintenance tasks. All that’s needed from you is a commitment to inspect your trail 2-3 times a year, or more if you are able. Please contact Hyde Park Recreation at 229-8086 or by email at recdirector@hydeparkny.us

The Hyde Park Trails Partnership:

The members of the Hyde Park Trail committee and many dedicated volunteers have worked since 1988 to build and promote trails in Hyde Park. They include: Town of Hyde Park; Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Sites; Scenic Hudson Land Trust; Winnakee Land Trust; Dutchess County Department of Planning and Development; Dutchess County Health Department; Adirondack Mountain Club, Mid-Hudson Chapter; National Park Service *Rivers & Trails* Program