## Hyde Park Trails Newsletter



Hyde Park, NY

**Issue #11** Fall, 2012

#### FDR Site to Host National Public Lands / 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Seth Lyon Trail Volunteer Day

This year, National Public Lands Day falls on **Saturday, September 29.** This is a day when nationwide, volunteers of all ages give their time to restoring and enhancing America's public lands, including parks, forests, lakes, wildlife refuges, community gardens and recreational areas. It is a chance for people to have fun outdoors while contributing some rewarding community service.

Here in Hyde Park, we mark the occasion by doing trail work in memory of our lost friend and Hyde Park Trail volunteer Seth Lyon. For us, National Public Lands Day is also the **Seth Lyon Trail Volunteer Day.** Seth was an avid hiker and outdoor educator, a trail builder/ maintainer on the Appalachian Trail, an active member of and Secretary for the Ralph's Peak Hikers Cabin Volunteers Club, a Hyde Park Trail maintainer and editor of the Hyde Park Trails Newsletter.



Volunteers use a stencil to paint trail blazes

Most of our work will be along the Roosevelt Woods Trail at the FDR site. We will do some general maintenance and cleanup, sprucing up

trail markers and signs, trimming brush and improving drainage. We also hope to resolve a couple of long-term problem areas.

If you, your family, scout group or organization would like to learn more about this event, or to sign up to join us, please call the Hyde Park Recreation Department at 229-8086, ext. 5.

WHEN: Saturday, September 29, 9:00 a.m.

WHERE: Meet in the Wallace Center parking lot at the Franklin D. Roosevelt National Historic Site

**PLEASE REMEMBER:** Bring a bagged lunch. Drinks and snacks will be provided by our dedicated trail sponsors and volunteers. Don't forget to wear sturdy shoes and bring work gloves. See you there!

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### New Winnakee Nature Preserve Arboretum

Marist student and Hudson Valley native Erin Hoagland is working with Winnakee Land Trust to establish an educational arboretum at the Winnakee Nature Preserve in Hyde Park. She has selected a 1.1 mile moderately easy loop trail through the historic preserve to highlight over 30 Hudson Valley tree and shrub species.

In addition to providing beautiful examples of regionally significant trees, the new arboretum will focus on the Preserve's influence on modern forest management. Franklin Roosevelt learned about the science of silviculture at Archibald Rogers' Crumwold estate, of which the Winnakee Nature Preserve was a part. Roosevelt's impact on American forestry through the work of the Civilian Conservation Corps is well known; here visitors can

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see where FDR's interest in trees began and learn about progressive forestry in the early twentieth century.



Winnakee will also develop an app that will teach users to identify the arboretum's trees and shrubs, as well as provide interesting facts about the use, history, and health of each species. Information will also be available online to print.

The arboretum is expected to be completed and opened to the public in late 2012. Keep an eye on winnakeeland.org for information on opening events!

Erin Hoagland, sponsored by Winnakee Land Trust, is the recipient of the 2012 Barnabas McHenry Award for Tourism from the Open Space Institute. This project is made possible with additional support from Winnakee's Seth Lyon Trails Fund and the National Park Service.

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# **Lessons Learned on the Roosevelt Farm Lane**

by Peter C. Vermilyea

For teachers and students alike, the final few weeks of school often meld together into a hectic frenzy of events: review sessions, exams, grading, ceremonies, and celebrations. I often finish the school year exhausted, needing solace to recharge my batteries. This June, I turned to the Hyde Park trails for an opportunity for solitude and reflection; I found not only these, but a better understanding of the Roosevelts as well.

High school history teachers are often challenged by getting the students to have a sense of the past. Students can memorize dates or names, or even interpret documents; it is difficult for them to have a feel for the past. While this is understandable in the classroom, even on field trips it is hard to "find" the historic figure amidst the crowds. As I began my walk down the old driveway to FDR's Springwood home, it was not difficult to come to grips with this towering figure of the past.



Crossing over Route 9, the trail winds through the fields of FDR's tree farm. The map at the interpretative marker informs the hiker of the varieties in each lot. Podcasts informing visitors about topics including farming techniques, family traditions, and the natural environs, are available by cell phone.

Along the trail - which follows FDR's old farm lane - one can look beyond the vegetation that has grown in over the decades to see the historic landscape and find the ruins of the house inhabited by FDR's farm manager, Moses Smith. It doesn't take much to visualize Roosevelt himself behind the wheel of his famed hand-operated car on the same road, inspecting that year's crop of Christmas trees.

The hiker comes to Route 9G, and Eleanor comes into view at the end of the Val-Kill driveway. Amidst the pond, playhouse and stone cottage, one also can discern the old swimming pool, where the King of England relaxed with the

Roosevelts. The trail resumes at the back of the parking lot, where the old farm lane again enters the woods, runs along a stream, and finally climbs a steep hill. Here the hiker finds himself alone with FDR's unfilled retirement dreams. Here also is the solitude to contemplate this extraordinary family and the effect that this wonderful landscape may have had upon them.

Over the three miles or so back to my car, I thought about my students for next year and how we could use these resources. I envision an interdisciplinary lesson with our agriculture education department to provide students with the opportunity to read a landscape for clues to its past uses. The cell phone interpretative sites will provide excellent context as the students engage as historians to uncover this seldom seen side of our 32nd president. Already, it seemed, the hustle and bustle of the end of one score year had evaporated, and the solitude of FDR's woods already had me energized for another!

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#### Trees for Tribs at Winnakee Nature Preserve

On May 15, Winnakee Land Trust and the NY Department of Environmental Conservation led a group of volunteers in planting almost 60 native shrubs and trees near the entrance of the Winnakee Nature Preserve in Hyde Park. The plants were donated as part of DEC's Trees for Tribs program, which aims to restore native vegetation to stream buffers in the Hudson Valley.

Volunteers from Hyde Park Rotary, Marist College, and the Hyde Park Trails Committee, along with members of the public put in buttonbush, shrub willows, river birch, and other Hudson Valley natives. Once established, these new plantings will help slow down and filter runoff, decreasing erosion and improving water quality for this tributary of the Hudson River. Thank you to our volunteers, and to Beth Roessler and Danielle Laberge from DEC for their time

and expertise. Together we can enrich the Hudson Valley, one stream at a time!



Trail Improvement on Scenic Hudson's Golden Property

It was a warm and sunny spring day on Saturday, May 5, when members of the Hyde Park Trail Committee gathered on Scenic Hudson's Golden Property, which is home to a key section of the Hyde Park Greenway Trail, to lend their hands for some much-needed trail improvements. Seven volunteers representing organizations including the Town of Hyde Park Recreation Department, the National Park Service, Scenic Hudson, and Winnakee Land Trust came out to generously lend their specialized skills on several trail improvement projects.

These trail improvements included a group effort to utilize several large stones on the site to create a stepping stone stairway through the trail head and a raised stepping stone walkway through a recurrently wet and muddy area of the trail. Trail improvements also included the installation of a new way finding sign post. The materials for the post were donated by Scenic Hudson and the routing work was donated by National Park Service.

Visit Hyde Park Trails online: www.hydeparkny.us/recreation/trails

Progress...



While on site, efforts were also made to clean out and armor all of the culverts in order to prevent flooding. We also created drainage swales along the trail to prevent erosion. We did a thorough cleaning of the site and removed litter and some old tires and a couch that had been illegally dumped on site.



...and the final result

This project was a coordination of several different organizations belonging to the Hyde Park Trail Committee. A total of 35 volunteer hours was committed to this project. It is a wonderful example of what the committee can accomplish as a whole when we combine all of our efforts. It is the product of successful networking with Hudson Valley agencies and local volunteers and I look forward to what our group can accomplish for the Hyde Park Greenway Trail in the future.

by Carley Maneely Park & Trail Coordinator, Scenic Hudson

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#### Roosevelt Farm Lane Trailhead Update

Improvements to the Roosevelt Farm Lane west trailhead are about two-thirds complete. The parking lot, connecting trail, bridge and boardwalk are complete. Footing for the pedestrian shelter and bike racks are in. The information kiosk has been moved to its new location. Still to be completed is the installation of the new traffic signal, construction of a storm water detention basin, and some minor improvements at the Route 9G trailhead.



The newly-completed boardwalk over a wetland on the new connecting trail to Roosevelt Farm Lane.

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#### **Hyde Park Trail End2End**

There was rain in the forecast, a better than 70% chance. "Great," we thought, "What else does anyone expect for a scheduled Hyde Park Trail event?"

It was National Trails Day, June 2<sup>nd</sup>, and the date of our second annual Hyde Park Trail End-2-End hike & run. Once a year, the National Park Service provides shuttle bus service for a nine-mile trek from Top Cottage to Vanderbilt.

As a hike or a run, either way, it is a great way to take in the main "trunkline" route of the Hyde Park Trail that links four National Park sites.

In the early morning, the National Weather Service radar website showed a massive blotch of intense color over the Catskills, headed our way. Behind it trailed a band of thinner clouds, followed by another band of showers, perhaps an hour behind the first. But it was still early, and the rain bands seemed to be forming and reforming. Who could really guess how the rest of the day would pan out?

Part of the answer came as we slugged coffee and set up the pop-up tent at the Vanderbilt parking lot, the place where hikers and runners would soon gather to board the shuttle bus to Top Cottage. The sky grew dark again, as if it had completely changed its mind about starting a new day. And then the bottom fell out of the clouds, and it poured.

Some were discouraged, and understandably so. Turnout was already low because of the gloomy forecast. Even after the worst of the downpour had passed, the iffy-looking skies and the prospect of slippery footing caused a few more to decide against starting. But despite everything,16 stalwart hikers and runners signed in at the Vanderbilt check-in table and boarded the bus headed for the drop-off point at Top Cottage.

That's when Hyde Park began to work its funny magic. The skies stayed heavy, but over the next hour or so, the rain tapered into a light drizzle. The temperature remained comfortable; neither cold and dank nor hot and muggy. The trail runners, who mostly finished the 9 miles in less than two hours, reported that they had to be careful on the steep, cobble-strewn sections near Top Cottage, but that they had a great and enjoyable trail run overall. Those of us who hiked the route took twice as long (or more, including lunch). But by the time we finished, the skies had lifted and we were comfortable hiking in t-shirts.

Along the way, we took in the quiet calm of Top Cottage and Val-Kill, and hustled between tree drips along Roosevelt Farm Lane. We stopped to chat with Bill Ring at the water stop by the Wallace Center at the FDR site. Somewhere near

River Road, a big crawdad accosted us, standing defiantly in the middle of the wet trail. We enjoyed lemonade at the Riverfront rest stop, manned by Lance Nealon.

An umbrella did the trick in the light rain



Thanks

also to volunteers Joe and Sheila Prince, Bob Arata, Dave Kehoe and NPS intern Graham Humphrey for keeping track of our hikers and runners from the Vanderbilt check-in station. And thanks again to NPS for providing the shuttle bus, opening the Vanderbilt Pavilion so early, placing special event markers along the route, getting traffic safety devices for the highway crossings, and helping to ensure our safety along the way.

All in all, the second *Hyde Park Trail End2End* was a success. Those who completed the trail that day loved it. We remain clear that we'd like to do it next year and every year, rain or shine.

National Trails Day always falls on the first Saturday in June. So mark your calendar today for Saturday June 1, 2013. The forecast for that day will be for rain. And unless the storm is horrific, we plan to do the Hyde Park Trail End2End once again

The Story of Beatrix Farrand's Garden Now Told by Podcast

The Beatrix Farrand Garden Association has made an important new addition to the telling of Hyde Park history. Their new audio podcast series tells the story of this remarkable woman and her Hyde Park garden, which is located at Bellefield, part of the Franklin D. Roosevelt National Historic Site.



Born Beatrix Newbold Jones in 1872, Beatrix Farrand grew up amidst wealth and connections, but at a time when it was highly unusual for a woman to have a professional career of any kind. She began with a powerful personal interest in gardening and natural landscapes. At the time, there was no organized field of study for such things, but she sought mentors, studied such things as botany, garden design and engineering, and extensively toured notable gardens throughout Europe. She would eventually become the only woman among the founders of the American Society of Landscape Architects.

Farrand began by working on residential gardens, including the Hyde Park home of her cousins, the Newbolds, which she designed in 1912, exactly 100 years ago. While working on the design of the Bellefield garden, Farrand also began working on designs for the Princeton University campus, and soon afterward, the grounds of the White House under President and Mrs. Woodrow Wilson. Her career included many other major designs, including the first landscape design and plantings for the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C., the campuses of Yale University, University of Chicago, and California Institute of Technology, and the carriage road system at Acadia National Park. Her most famous design is the Dumbarton Oaks estate in Washington D.C.

The podcast program is narrated by Broadway actor and film star Kathryn Walker. The script was written by authors Nancy Berner and Susan Lowry, whose beautiful book, *Hudson Valley Gardens*, includes Farrand's Garden at Bellefield among many others. You will find their book in the bookstores at the FDR and Vanderbilt sites.

You can visit the garden and take the audio tour free of charge. To take the audio tour, call 845-475-3819 (preferably while standing in the garden). At the end of the introduction, type in the stop number posted on the garden marker (#100 to 106). Learn more on the Beatrix Farrand Garden Association website,

www.beatrixfarrandgarden.org

The audio tour was made possible by seed money from the Orange and Dutchess Garden Club and generous gifts from the Charlotte Cunneen-Hackett Charitable Trust and the James J. McCann Charitable Trust.

### **Hyde Park Patch in a Day**

For the second year in a row, Mike Cunningham from Mid-Hudson Chapter ADK led a club trip to hike five Hyde Park trails - - and earned a trail patch - - in a single day. Their selection of trails totals 6.1 miles, and Mike appropriately billed the trip as a "fast pace."

Congratulations go to the four people who completed the task this spring. We hope they'll all also hike the rest of Hyde Park's great trails - - and return again next year!



#### Facebook.com/HydeParkTrail

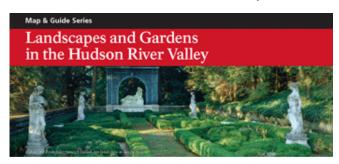
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#### University in the Garden

A flock of people suddenly flowed in through the Beatrix Farrand Garden gate. A few stopped just inside the gate, turning around to admire and discuss the handiwork in stone, wood and iron. The rest immediately scattered throughout the garden, snapping pictures of flowers and features, and seeking various vantage points to shoot from. They pointed animatedly and consulted with each other, gesturing in the air about lines, forms and areas. All the while, they busily took notes and close-up pictures, and doodled in sketchbooks. It was the garden-appreciation version of a SWAT or CSI team.

So naturally this called for some investigation.

Turns out they were a group from the University of Montreal, a busload of garden designers, landscape architects and architects. They were spending 16 days in the Hudson Valley visiting gardens and sites, studying the roots of landscape architecture and landscape design. For that afternoon, the Beatrix Farrand Garden was to them both textbook and field laboratory.



Get this: Sixteen days visiting the place we call home. They were guided by an excellent fold-out map-guide about gardens and landscapes in the Hudson River Valley. This is one of a series of free map-guides produced by the *Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area*. You can pick up your free copy at any of the National Park sites, or download or order it from the National Heritage Area website. Go to <a href="https://www.hudsonrivervalley.com">www.hudsonrivervalley.com</a> and click on "*Explore the Heritage*."

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#### Walkabout spotting

Ann Roos, a Museum Tech with National Park Service, carries an especially stylish handbag. We know it is special because it boasts Walkabout patches from two years of enjoying Hyde Park Trails. We obtained her exclusive permission to show it to you.



# Mark your calendar for these upcoming ranger-guided walks

Sunday, Sept 9, 1 pm Roosevelt Farm Lane hike (Hudson Valley Ramble #57)

Saturday, Sept 15, 12:30 pm Eleanor Roosevelt to Top Cottage hike (Hudson Valley Ramble #68)

Third Sundays: Sept 16, Oct 21 Vanderbilt Mansion landscape and garden tours. NPS with Frederick W. Vanderbilt Garden Association.

For more information on these hikes (and other park programs), call the Vanderbilt Mansion visitor desk at 845-229-7770, or check the park websites:

For the Home of FDR site: <a href="www.nps.gov/hofr">www.nps.gov/hofr</a>
For the Vanderbilt Mansion: <a href="www.nps.gov/yama">www.nps.gov/yama</a>

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