

Hyde Park Trails Newsletter

Hyde Park, NY

Issue #12

Spring, 2013



Upcoming Trail Events

- **Hyde Park Trail 2013**
“WALKABOUT” Kick-Off

The Walkabout year begins April 20, with the Hudson Valley History Reading Festival at the Henry A. Wallace Center. The full program runs from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. (more info at: www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu). Of note to hikers, from 11:00 to noon, Hartwick College Geologist Bob Titus and his wife Johanna will speak on their book, *The Hudson Valley in the Ice Age: a Geological History and Tour*. Afterward, at 1:30, join us for a ranger-guided 2.5-mile trail walk at the FDR site.

Date: Saturday, April 20, 2013

Time 11:00 a.m. - Lecture
(Lunch: BYO or Mrs Nesbitt's café)
1:30 p.m. - Hike

Place: Park at the Wallace Center at the Franklin D. Roosevelt National Historic Site. The hike departs at 1:30 from the bus turnaround on the Wallace Center's north side.

- **5 Hyde Park Trails**
Patch-in-a-Day Hike

For the past 3 years, Mike Cunningham of ADK has led a club trip to hike 5 trails and earn a Walkabout patch in a single day. Now you can join him. Fast pace. Rain or shine; bring rain gear. No dogs. **Advance registration required.**

Date: Saturday, May 18, 2013

Time: 9:30 a.m.

Place: Meet at Roosevelt Farm Lane parking on Rte 9G, opposite the Val-Kill entrance. **We will need to drive between hikes.**

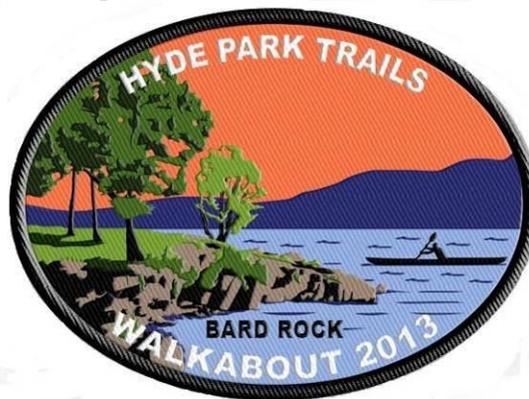
Call Mike Cunningham (ADK) at 203-748-7233 between 7 p.m. - 9 p.m. or e-mail him at hikermiker@yahoo.com. Any e-mails received after noon on 5/16 will not be answered.

Hyde Park Healthy Trails 2013 Walkabout Celebrates Bard Rock

But what is a Walkabout?

The Walkabout program is entering its eighth year, and about 200 people complete it each year. But just what exactly is a Walkabout? Is it a rite of passage? A journey in the wilderness to rekindle our spiritual roots? Is it a time apart from everyday life, to reconnect us with ourselves and to the world around us? These things are told in Australia, and in a smaller way they are also true here in Hyde Park. The Hyde Park Walkabout leads to the special places and stories that run throughout the Town's landscape. It just might nourish your body and lift your spirits. It can start nearly anywhere, and it never really ends.

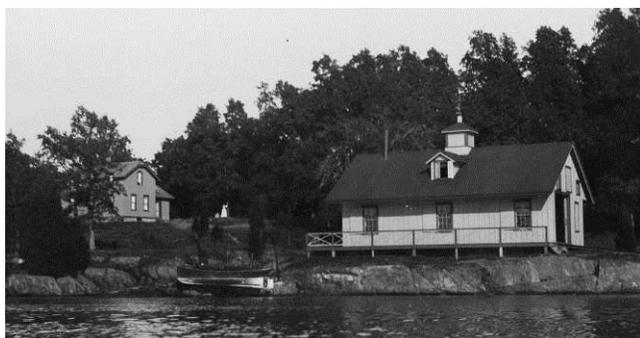
It is really very simple. The Walkabout invites you - - yes, this means you - - to walk at least five of Hyde Park's trails within the year. Keep track of your walks on a free checklist, and when you have completed at least five trails, turn in your list to receive a reward: a free, sew-on patch.



To earn this year's free commemorative trail patch, you need only hike five of Hyde Park's eleven listed trails.

Each year, a new Walkabout trail patch features something special about Hyde Park. This year, it is Bard Rock, the beautiful promontory on the Hudson River. If you haven't been there lately, a great trail goes right by it.

Would it help if the trails had stories to tell? Six of our trails have free, downloadable podcasts that tell the stories of the people and places of the landscape, told by park rangers, scholars and people from the Hyde Park community. Download them from the web (www.nps.gov/vama and click on "Photos and Multimedia"). Or listen by cell phone, right from the trail.



A photo from about 1895 shows the boathouse and caretaker's cottage at the south end of Bard Rock.

Why a "Healthy Trails" Walkabout?

We all know that walking is good for health. And those of us who *can* walk should probably be doing it more. Every major health organization agrees that regular walking is one of the simplest ways to help slow or prevent such common ailments as heart disease, stroke, diabetes, overweight, osteoporosis, arthritis, depression, and even cancer. Walking is cheap, and the risks are relatively small. The benefits increase if you walk fairly regularly, meaning most days a week.

Will completing the Walkabout improve your health? If you have any health issues, you should talk to your doctor before starting any new exercise. And true, the Walkabout requires only five walks, hardly enough for a year of fitness. But think of it as a door prize

for a party you are going to enjoy anyway. We hope that once you get out on any of the Hyde Park Trails, you will return many times.

How to begin your Walkabout

The official start of the Walkabout year is National Park Week, in mid-April (around Earth Day). But you can start anytime. Pick up a Walkabout brochure at any of the National Park Service visitor centers, at Hackett Hill Town Park, or at the State Park headquarters in Staatsburgh. We also try to keep brochures available at each of our trailhead kiosks. Or you can download the map and see more information at www.hydeparkny.us; click on "Recreation."

The most important step is to get out and walk at least 5 of the 11 listed trails. Not a big deal; you have all year. Check off your completed trails on the map/brochure, and return your checklist at any of the visitor centers to collect your patch. *See you on the trails!*

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New Hyde Park Trails T-shirt Features Col. Archibald Rogers



Here are the facts:

- 1) You're going to need one of these.
- 2) The all-cotton t-shirt features an historic photo of Col. Rogers.
- 3) They are for sale at the Hyde Park Recreation office for \$15.00 each.
- 4) Proceeds support Hyde Park Trails

More Upcoming Trail Events

- **National Trails Day:
3rd Annual Hyde Park Trail
“End2End” Hike / Fun Run**
Nine miles from Top Cottage to Vanderbilt.

Date: Saturday, June 1, 2013

Time: Meet at 8:30 a.m.

Place: Park at the Vanderbilt Parking lot.
We'll take a shuttle bus to the start, and hike (or run) the return to Vanderbilt.

Shuttle capacity is limited, so watch for the sign-up! Call Hyde Park Recreation at 845-229-8086 for updates.

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- **Seth Lyon Trail Volunteer Day/
National Public Lands Day**
Join us for a rewarding trail work party!

Date: Saturday, Sept 28, 2013

Time: 10:00 a.m.- 4:00 p.m. (Join us for the morning or a full day)

Place: TBA – watch for updates!

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Winnakee's New Educational Arboretum Guide: Learn Local Trees and Shrubs

Winnakee Land Trust is planning the spring debut of a new, self-guided educational arboretum tour at the Winnakee Nature Preserve in Hyde Park.

The arboretum tour begins at the Van Dam Road entrance to the Preserve, and takes visitors on a 1.1-mile loop through the historic forest. An app-based guide for the tour will be available for download from the Winnakee Land Trust website (www.winnakeeland.org) in time for the arboretum's public opening this spring. The guide is full of pictures, and includes tips for identifying trees and shrubs,

interesting facts about their history and uses, and stories illustrating the evolution of forest management in the Hudson Valley.

The arboretum tour was developed with the help of Marist student Erin Hoagland, winner of a Barnabas McHenry Award from the Open Space Institute. The McHenry Award supports student projects in environmental conservation, historic preservation, the arts and tourism. Additional support and assistance was provided by the Seth Lyon Trails Fund and the National Park Service.

Sample page:

35. **Mockernut Hickory**   
Carya tomentosa

 The Latin name *tomentosa* - "hairy" - refers to the thickly furred twigs, petioles, and leaves which set mockernut apart from other hickories. It has received the common name "mockernut" because its large, thick-shelled nuts contain very little meat.

 Dutchess County is at the very northern edge of mockernut hickory's home range. They are fairly uncommon here as a result, though they are considered the most common hickory species in America when more southern populations are included.

Identification	
Bark	Gray. Wavy network of smooth, diamond-shaped ridges.
Branching	Alternate
Leaves	Compound leaves with 7-9 unevenly sized leaflets. Leaflets and petiole hairy. 8-20" long.
Fruit	Oval nut with a thick husk and thick shell.

 Native Plant  Non-Native/Invasive Plant  Under Threat

The arboretum tour highlights over 30 regionally important trees and shrubs, and also describes how this particular forest, as part of Archibald Rogers' Crumwold estate,

played a role in forming President Franklin D. Roosevelt's interest in forest management.

Come visit the arboretum to learn more about our local landscape and shared history -- as taught by trees.

For information on opening events and guided tours, find Winnakee on Facebook:

www.facebook.com/winnakeeland

Share photos of yourself, friends and family out in the forest!

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What Do Trail Volunteers Do? (and is it true I could do it?)

People who hike our trails sometimes notice a problem along the way: a fallen limb, some erosion, or a worn-out sign or trail blaze. Or they may think of something else that could help Hyde Park Trails do better. And *just maybe* they get interested in “answering the call” in some way, as a trail volunteer. There are any number of tasks, both small and large, that help keep the trail system up and running.

Probably the most important task is keeping the trails clear. This generally means picking up fallen branches and trimming the brush that grows into the way, across the trails. One or two hikers can usually take care of a short trail, and it makes for a great social outing.

Whether you are a local neighborhood walker, a scout group or some other organization, we encourage you to “Adopt-a-Trail” at one of our local parks or preserves.

Two of our Town-owned parks (Hackett Hill Park and Pinewoods Park) have trails that need to be adopted. Another neighborhood hiking area that could use help is the Winnakee Nature Preserve; a quick look at the *Walkabout* trail map/brochure shows at least five different colored trails there! You can choose any one of these trails that are in need of care.



Hyde Park’s trails may look completely natural and untouched, but that is actually because of the unseen work of our wonderful trail maintainers!

A trail maintainer should generally pick up branches and trim brush along a trail twice a year, in spring and fall. It is also a good idea to do a monthly walk-through, to monitor the trail, and maybe go through again after a major storm. This simple schedule helps keep our trails (and you) in tiptop shape! A well-maintained trail is a source of real pride for the maintainer as well as the community.

The Town Recreation Department has some simple hand tools for use by trail maintainers: loppers, rakes, shovels, and trail marking tools.

You say you’ve got more questions? Perhaps you are worried about making a commitment? Or you don’t know what to do? Don’t worry. We will show you what to do, and how. You can become an expert in no time.

Call Kathleen Davis today, at 845-229-8086, to learn more about adopting a Hyde Park trail. Or email her at recdirector@hydeparkny.us. It is never too late to take the first step!

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NPS to Launch Trail-based Geocache Program

In June, Roosevelt-Vanderbilt NHS will launch a geocaching program, as an innovative way to interpret the area’s rich history, and benefit from this rapidly-growing form of outdoor recreation. With excellent assistance from volunteers, plans by NPS staff include concealing ten geocaches along the Hyde Park Trail between Top Cottage and Vanderbilt Mansion NHS.

Geocaching is the modern day equivalent of a treasure hunt, using satellite technology to locate hidden containers, called geocaches. Getting started in geocaching requires a handheld Global Positioning System (GPS) device, or a smartphone plus a \$9.99 geocaching app, and a free membership at www.geocaching.com.

Geocachers obtain latitude and longitude coordinates for a geocache's exact location from the geocaching.com website. But finding a cache in the field is not always simple. Some are offset from the coordinates, and require solving puzzles or answering questions about an area's history or natural resources to find the actual geocache container.



Coming soon to a trail near you; Geocache containers are often weatherproof plastic boxes or ammo cans.

Traditional geocaches contain a logbook or logsheet to sign. Larger geocaches may contain items for trade, usually toys or trinkets of little monetary value. Geocaching etiquette holds that you trade something of equal or greater value, and that you return the geocache to its original location. Geocaches may also contain "trackables"-- coins or tags bearing a tracking code, which allows geocachers to follow the items' travels.

Geocaching is a great way to explore the outdoors and learn more about an area. NPS ranger Janell Bonawitz, who is heading-up the project, is an avid geocacher. She points out that Hyde Park already has more than thirty geocaches, so there's a good chance one is hidden within walking distance of your favorite trail, park or restaurant.

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www.facebook.com/HydeParkTrail

Can You Name It?

When you visit Bard Rock, or anyplace else along the Hudson River, you often find these strange-looking things washed up along the shore.

They are a major reason why swimming barefoot in our part of the Hudson is never a good idea, and why paddlers are strongly recommended to wear sneakers or thick-soled sandals. Their sculpted shape and sharp spines have earned the name "devil's heads."



This alien invader did not arrive from another planet (although it looks the part). Rather, it came from another continent.

It is the nut-like fruit of the Eurasian water chestnut, *Trapa natans*, a highly invasive species that was introduced from Europe in the mid-1800s. It is not related to the water chestnut used in Chinese foods. The term "invasive" means that it out-competes native vegetation. Where it gets established, it tends to take over, greatly changing the function of the aquatic ecosystem. It forms dense mats of floating leaves that limit the passage of light into the water. It reduces oxygen levels in the water, changing the habitat for fish and aquatic invertebrates. Floating mats of the plant grow so densely that many previously-fished bays are now inaccessible, and the long tangles of stems and roots make boating through it difficult.

Learn more about water chestnut and other invasive species at

www.dec.ny.gov/animals/50121.html

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Where Were You on the BIG NIGHT?

If you were out after dark on March 12, you might have seen groups of people walking along the road in the rain with flashlights and thought, "What are they *doing*?" Chances are good they were volunteers assisting some of the thousands of frogs and salamanders that were out and about during this spring's first Big Night.

What is Big Night?

Big Night is the most important night on the amphibian calendar! When spring warmth and rain come to the Hudson Valley, the clock starts ticking for frogs and salamanders to breed and deposit their eggs in temporary spring pools. Many travel to their natal forest pool on the same night, ready to get the next generation of amphibians growing before spring pools dry out. It can be a dramatic spectacle. That is the Big Night.



They use the road, too! Dozens or hundreds of frogs and salamanders get help at crossing "hotspots" on roadways.

Frogs and salamanders can travel nearly a mile from their upland homes to the woodland pools where they were born. Roads constructed through their habitat have made the journey dangerous for these relatively slow-moving animals. At many places near woodland pools, they cross roads by the dozens, hundreds or

sometimes even thousands, traveling by night, most often in the rain - - and many never reach their destination. Luckily, you can help!



A spotted salamander gets help across a nighttime roadway. Spotted salamanders grow to 9 inches in length, and can live more than 20 years. That is a lot of road crossings!

How can I help?

We're already beginning to plan for Big Night 2014. In order to help frogs and salamanders cross roads safely, we need to know where they are. If you've seen signs of amphibian crossing on a road in your area, please let us know! More than one frog or salamander in the road (live or not) is a good indication of a possible crossing point.

Winnakee helped dozens of volunteers assist hundreds of frogs and salamanders cross roads safely this spring. If you're interested in seeing animals that are usually hidden from sight, and you are willing to help shepherd them out of harm's way on a spring night, send us your email address. We'll make sure you're contacted when the next Big Night is expected, so that you and others can get out there and do your part!

Questions? Contact Winnakee Land Trust at landprojects@winnakeeland.org or 845-876-4213 ext. 3.

You can find more information on our website at www.winnakeeland.org.

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