

Hyde Park Trails Newsletter



Hyde Park, NY Issue #18 Spring, 2016

Upcoming Trail Events

- **Hyde Park Trail 2016**
“WALKABOUT” Kick-off

Here comes National Park Week!
Celebrate the NPS 100th and kick off the 25th year of Hyde Park Trails with a guided hike on the original, 3.5-mile section of Hyde Park Trail between the FDR and Vanderbilt sites. We'll meet at Vanderbilt. A guided, 3.5-mile group will take a shuttle from Vanderbilt to the starting point at the FDR site. For those up for a longer walk, a guided 7.5-mile group will start from Vanderbilt and hike to FDR & back.

Date: Saturday, April 16, 2016

Time: 1:00pm

Place: Meet at the Vanderbilt parking lot

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- **Trail Maintenance 101 Workshop**

Join Hank Osborn of the NY-NJ Trail Conference for indoor/ outdoor instruction in the basics of trail maintenance. Bring lunch.

Date: Saturday, April 30, 2016

Time: 10:00 am in the auditorium. We'll start indoors, then work on the trails until about 1:30

Place: Taconic Regional Park HQ auditorium, 9 Old Post Rd., Staatsburg, NY

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- **I Love My Park Day!**

Join other volunteers to help get the Staatsburgh State Historic Site (Mills Mansion) ready for the upcoming spring and summer season. Projects range from invasive species removal to building picnic tables. Please bring gloves, sunscreen and bug repellent. *See pages 3-4 for more info.*

Date: Saturday, May 7, 2016

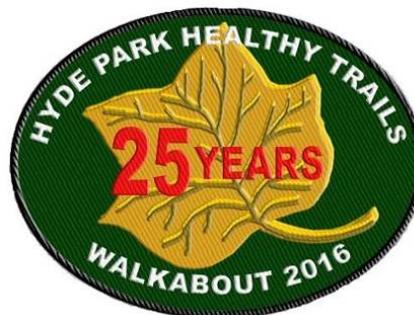
Time: 10:00am – 4:00pm

Place: Staatsburgh State Historic Site

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(Trail events continued on page 2)

Hyde Park Trails Celebrate 25 Years



The 2016 Walkabout patch commemorates our first quarter-century. What is the Walkabout? See page 4.

The first section of the

Hyde Park Trail opened officially in 1991.

Even though we are still building new trails today (THANKS to a growing number of volunteers!), it's suddenly 25 years since that first success.

The original vision was for a trail that would run along the Hudson River through the Town of Hyde Park, and link the two National Park Service sites—a distance of about 3.5 miles. It's hard to put a finger on the exact origin of the idea, but it was included in the park Master Plan for the Roosevelt and Vanderbilt Sites in 1977, and it turns up in various other plans and discussions into the 1980s.



In the late 1980s, the section of trail on the Morgan parcel needed some clearing

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More Upcoming Trail Events

- **ADK “Patch in a Day”
Hike with Mike!**

Mike Cunningham of Mid-Hudson Chapter of ADK will lead his 6th annual “Patch in a Day” hike on 5 trails. Earn your 2016 Walkabout patch by joining him on this adventure. Fast pace. Rain or shine; bring rain gear. No dogs. **Advance registration required.**

Date: Saturday, May 21, 2016

Time: 9:30am

Place: Meet at Roosevelt Farm Lane parking on Rt. 9G, opposite the entrance to Val-kill. The group will drive between hikes.

Contact: Mike Cunningham 203-748-7233 between 7:00pm – 9:00pm or e-mail him at hikermiker@yahoo.com. Any e-mails received after noon on Friday, May 13 will not be answered.

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- **National Trails Day:
6th Annual Hyde Park Trail
“End2End” Walk / Hike / Fun Run**

Nine miles from Top Cottage to Vanderbilt. Bring lunch, water and everything you need for a 9-mile walk or run.

Date: Saturday, June 4, 2016

Time: Meet at 8:30 a.m.

Place: Park at 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! Check Facebook, or call Hyde Park Recreation at 845-229-8086 for updates.

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- **National Public Lands Day:
7th Annual Seth Lyon Trail Volunteer Day**
Join us for a day of trail building & maintenance on a Hyde Park Trail. Come for all or part of the day. Work clothes and sturdy work shoes. Pack a bag lunch, water bottle, and work gloves.

Date: Saturday, Sept. 24

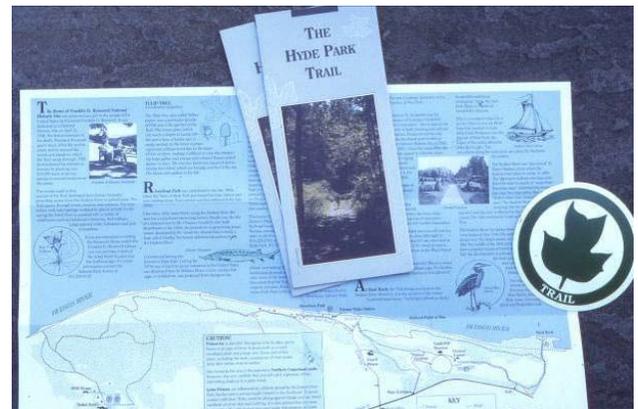
Place: TBA

Watch for updates on Facebook, or call Hyde Park Rec Dept at 845-229-8086.

(25 Years, cont’d)

In 1984, Harvey Flad’s Vassar College geography class completed a study that detailed a possible trail route, and outlined the tasks that would be required to create it. An accompanying slide show illustrated the natural and historic beauty of the potential route, as well as the obstructions. The proposed route extended from the Home of FDR to Mills-Norrie State Park.

Boosted by the Vassar study, a group soon began meeting to discuss plans for a potential trail. The core of the group was the Town of Hyde Park Recreation Dept., the Adirondack Mtn. Club Mid-Hudson Chapter, National Park Service, the Dutchess County Council of the Boy Scouts, Winnakee Land Trust and Scenic Hudson.



The first trail markers and map/brochure were printed in 1991. The trail included only the link between two National Park sites, the Home of FDR and the Vanderbilt Mansion, with the Town’s Riverfront Park figuring importantly in-between.

In 1987, the Town of Hyde Park secured a \$13,000 grant to implement the first phase of the Hyde Park Trail, between the FDR and Vanderbilt sites, and planning began in earnest.

Since much of the land between the two sites is residential, the trail would need to follow a quiet public road (River Road) through that neighborhood. But where the proposed trail left the road to follow an old woods road, it would need to cross two private properties. Fortunately, the owners of these two parcels, John and Gloria Golden and Gerald Morgan, recognized the

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(25 Years, cont'd)

benefit of the trail and were willing to provide trail easements across their land. The Scenic Hudson Land Trust holds the easement from the Morgans, and Winnakee Land Trust holds the one from the Goldens.

The trail working group set to work on designing a trail map/brochure and 3 wooden trailhead signs. They also created a trail logo that would go on the trail markers: the leaf of the tulip-tree, FDR's favorite tree species. Then, once a basic trail management plan and a collaborative management agreement were drafted and adopted by the 6 partners, and the trail route cleared and blazed, all was in place to open the trail to public.

The subject of trails was also brewing at the national level. In 1991 the American Hiking Society proposed selecting a single day each year to highlight trails and advocate for increased trail use and volunteer stewardship. They dubbed the program National Trails Day, and suggested it take place the first Saturday in June. The Hyde Park Trails Committee had already planned a June ribbon cutting, and jumped on the idea. They decided to hold the Hyde Park Trail ribbon-cutting on the first Saturday -- the day proposed for National Trails Day -- even though the official launch of National Trails Day nationally would not take place until fully two years later, in 1993.



The opening ceremony at Riverfront Park in June 1991 was well attended. Recognize anyone? (We do!)

At the state level, the legislation creating the Hudson River Valley Greenway was also signed in 1991. The Greenway Act put forward the vision of a continuous trail along or within sight of the Hudson River from New York City to the

Capital District – a vision that was partly informed by the trail work in Hyde Park. In 1992, the Hyde Park Trail became the first officially designated section of the planned Hudson River Greenway Trail. The Hyde Park Trail also added its first growth that year: the section between the Home of FDR and Val-Kill.

Many people have helped make the Hyde Park Trail into what it is today: a community trail system nearly 30 miles in length that links national, state and town parks, private nature preserves, trail easements on private lands, and residential neighborhoods – and that is enjoyed by perhaps 80,000 people a year. *If you one of those who helped, we all owe you an enormous THANK YOU!*

If you would *like to be* one of them, then give us a call or send us an email at Hyde Park Recreation: recdirector@hydeparkny.us or 845-229-8086.

And whoever you are, we welcome you to come out and hike at least five Hyde Park Trails this year, and earn our 25-year commemorative trail patch!

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Show How Much You Love Your Park on May 7th

All across the state on the first Saturday in May, thousands of New Yorkers will pitch in a few hours of their time to help enhance more than 100 state parks and historic sites. Now in its fifth year, *I Love My Park Day* has quickly become a popular annual tradition for volunteers who want to give back to their favorite parks and historic sites. Locally, Staatsburgh State Historic Site, in partnership with the staff of Mills-Norrie State Park, will offer projects to help beautify and improve state park land here in the Town of Hyde Park.

I Love My Park Day is sponsored jointly by NY State Parks and Parks & Trails New York (PTNY.org). It is held each year on the first Saturday in May. The day brings volunteers to

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(Love My Park, cont'd)

state parks and historic sites for projects ranging from invasive species removal to building picnic tables. The event not only helps get parks ready for the busy spring and summer season, it brings visibility to the treasures we have right in our own backyard and the needs that they face. In 2015, about 6,500 volunteers took part in projects at 95 parks and historic sites.



Last year, over 50 volunteers pitched in at the Staatsburgh State Historic Site (Mills Mansion)

For those interested in volunteering at Staatsburgh State Historic Site on May 7th, there are three projects to choose from. The first project involves removing mile-a-minute, an invasive plant, from the site's historic grounds. The second project involves weeding, mulching and beautifying the landscaping around the mansion façade. A third project will involve the cleaning of the "Tree House Garage," a structure located near the mansion.

All projects at Staatsburgh will take place from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Please bring garden gloves, sunscreen and bug repellent. All ages are welcome! Advance registration is highly recommended.

For more information on I Love My Park Day and to register as a volunteer, please visit:

www.ptny.org/get-involved/volunteer/i-love-my-park-day.

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www.facebook.com/HydeParkTrail

All About the Walkabout

No question, it's the best way to...



...in 2016.

But what is a Walkabout?

Get out! No, seriously: *get out and go for a walk.* That's what the Walkabout is all about. The Hyde Park Trails range from flat and easy strolls to ... well ... going up and down hills and clambering over rocks. You have your choice. Walk at least five of the listed Walkabout trails within one year. Keep track of your walks on a free checklist. When you have completed at least FIVE (5) trails, turn in your list to receive a reward: a free, sew-on patch.



What about the "Healthy" part?

The Walkabout is a project to promote healthy physical activity – walking on trails – while introducing you to great places throughout Hyde Park. It is an opportunity. For most people, walking is one of the cheapest, easiest and most effective ways of improving our physical and mental health. The key is to do it regularly. Health providers recommend at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity a day, at least 5 days a week. If you can't do that much, then something is always better than nothing. Do what you can. Set a reachable goal for today. Don't let all-or-nothing thinking get in the way of what you CAN do every day.

How do I start?

You can start today. We try to keep the checklist/trail map stocked at all of our trailheads. But you can also pick one up at any of the National Park Service visitor centers, at Hackett Hill Town Park, at the State Park headquarters in

(more)

(Walkabout, cont'd)

Staatsburgh, or at the River Connection, the kayaking and outdoor store on West Market St. After you have done at least 5 hikes, return to any of these places to pick up your free patch.

Can't find a hardcopy of the Walkabout map?

You can download the trail map, checklist, past newsletters and more at:

www.hydeparkny.us/Recreation/Trails/.

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After a Warm Winter, it's Time to Watch Out for Ticks

We have been hearing some early reports of ticks this season.



While we always recommend taking care while in the outdoors, this year may be a big one for ticks.

For more information about ticks and tick-borne diseases, check the website of the Dutchess County Department of Behavioral and Community Health:

www.co.dutchess.ny.us/CountyGov/Departments/DBCH/18160.htm

See especially their excellent *Science-Based Responses to Commonly Asked Questions About Tick-Borne Disease Prevention*:

www.co.dutchess.ny.us/CountyGov/Departments/DBCH/26753.htm

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Who are the Trail Volunteers? and What Do They Do?

We invite everyone to come out and volunteer for the Hyde Park Trails. Our volunteers are our most important resource and we hope to attract you and keep you as part of our group for as long as possible. And most important, we hope to make it worth your while! Why might you want to volunteer? Maybe to gain knowledge about trails, or spend some more time outdoors. Or spend "quality time" with friends or members of your

family. Or to make new friends. Or just to get out of the house. Maybe to gain new skills, or to feel a special sense of accomplishment. Or to just plain have fun ...these are all great reasons.

Don't know how? We'll help you learn. We provide training days, group work-parties, individual work projects, and recognition fun days, too. There is a variety of tasks, so you can pick one that fits your liking -- be it trail work, helping with events, writing, marketing...



So here's a fun poem for you:

*Who are the trail volunteers and what do they do?
They're your partner, your daughter, your sister, your son,
Your brother, your mother, your father, your friend,
The Cub Scouts, the Girl Scouts, the Boy Scouts, the club,
The runners, the hikers, the walkers, your bub.*

*We go out in the sun, the rain and the wind,
We put on our boots, long pants, and a hat,
To keep us from scrapes, sunburns and all that.
Work gloves will help keep your blisters at bay,
And this is important: use DEET in a spray.*

*We pack a bag lunch and lots of water,
To keep up our strength, so as not to falter.
Try out some loppers, a rake, and a mattock, too;
I'm sure you'll find something you'd like to do!*

*We have a trail plan that keeps us on track,
Divide up in groups and bring along the map.
Clearing, brushing and making new trails,
Cutting and filling, building berms and swales,
Water bars and drains, and foot bridges, too,
You'll be happy to know you're our best crew!*

* * *

Trail Blazing at Mills-Norrie State Park

Volunteers from the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference have been out re-blazing trails at Mills-Norrie State Park. The project began this past winter and, as of mid-March, it was expected to be completed in spring 2016.



Pictured on a March reblazing outing are, left to right, Trail Conference volunteers Jeanine Nearing, Dave Webber, and Bob Bullions. Photo by Georgette Weir

Several trails have new blaze colors that now align with the park's already-published trail map. The trail routes and colors were determined in the 2013 park master plan. Park managers turned to the Trail Conference for help in updating the markings of trail routes and ensuring the approved trails are open and safe for hikers.

The Trail Conference expects to continue to assist the park in maintaining trails in the park, and welcomes new hands to join hike-and-work outings. Volunteer Trail Supervisor Georgette Weir will be happy to let you know what is involved in this outdoor community service program. Contact her at georgette.weir@gmail.com.

*A workshop, **Introduction to Trail Maintenance**, is scheduled to take place at Mills-Norrie State Park on Saturday, April 30. It is open to all. For more info, visit nynjtc.org/view/workshops. Scroll to find this workshop among the listings.*

Since 1920, the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference has partnered with parks to create, protect, and promote a network of over 2,100

miles of public trails in the New York-New Jersey region

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NPS Turns 100 This Year

And it's time to celebrate. How?

By going to your parks!

A park can be many different things to many different people. The **Find Your Park** campaign can help you every step of the way (step...trails... get it?). Anyway, here are just a few ideas:



1) Find a park experience:

Go to <http://findyourpark.com/find> and learn about a host of different activities at parks nearby, or anywhere in the country.

2) Share your story:

Go online at <http://findyourpark.com/share> to view a gallery showing how people all across the country experience parks. Then share what a park is to you in whatever way you think best: a song, a photo, a painting, a poem, a dance, a video – anything you want.

3) Every Kid in a Park:

Fourth graders nationwide can visit the new **Every Kid in a Park** website www.everykidinapark.gov to complete an activity and obtain a free entry pass voucher to more than 2,000 federal recreation areas, including national parks. Fourth graders can then exchange their voucher for a plastic pass at any NPS visitor center.



4) You can also find a State Park at:

<http://www.naspd.org/>

* * *

Try Geocaching, a Family-friendly Activity

By Carley Kiernan

What is Geocaching?

Geocaching is a real-world, outdoor treasure hunting game using GPS-enabled devices. Participants navigate to a specific set of GPS coordinates and then attempt to find the geocache (container) hidden at that location.

This definition is from the geocaching.com website, where you can find all kinds of additional information. Geocaching is a great activity to get the family outdoors for a little fun. It's kind of like a scavenger hunt that everyone can get excited about as you try to locate an object that has been hidden by other geocachers. The geocache can vary in size and appearance and can be anything from clear plastic containers, film containers, to metal tins, etc. They usually contain a log book and all kinds of trinkets or items left as "treasure" for you to find.

The golden rule is that, if you take something from the container, leave something of equal or greater value in its place. Seasoned geocachers like to use a trademark item that they leave in the caches they have found to identify themselves. Some examples I have seen are a small plastic dinosaur, toy soldiers, toy erasers, and a variety of other trinket-type items.

How do I find a geocache? You will need a GPS handheld unit or a smartphone. The coordinates for geocache locations are listed online at www.geocaching.com, where you can select the specific areas or towns where you want to search. The website gives you latitude and longitude coordinates that help guide you (via GPS) to the cache location.

If you have a smartphone, there are downloadable applications (including some for free) that help you do this, and some will even give you real-time hints while you are in the field. When you find the cache, sign the logbook and return it to the cache. Take something and leave something if

you would like, and return the cache to exactly where you found it, ready for the next treasure hunter.

Who hides geocaches? Members of the geocaching community hide and maintain all of the geocaches listed on the website. You and your family can get involved and hide one too. How? Everything you need to know about it is on the geocaching.com website. *Just make sure you get permission from the property owner first, before placing anything! For example, both State and National Parks require special permission to place geocaches.*

Did you know? There are *many* geocaches hidden along the Hyde Park Trails. With warmer weather approaching, wouldn't it be fun to get out on the trail with your family, to explore nature and look for hidden treasure? Choosing a trademark item that represents your family to leave in the caches you find can be a fun family activity. Perhaps bring along a field guide and learn to identify some wildflowers or songbirds.

* * *

On the Watch for Spring Ephemeral Wildflowers

The saying goes: "April showers bring May flowers," and while that may be true in our home gardens, forest wildflowers are on a very different schedule.



Round-leaved violet

There is an array of native wildflowers that take advantage of the warm sunny days of spring before the trees and shrubs awaken from their winter slumber. The entire life cycle of these

(more)

(Wildflowers, cont'd)

flowers, referred to collectively as spring ephemerals, occurs between the spring thaw in late March until the leaf-out of trees. Among the spring ephemerals are sharp-lobed hepatica (*Anemone acutiloba*), which is among the earliest to appear, followed by red trillium (*Trillium erectum*), trout lily (*Erythronium americanum*), squirrel corn (*Dicentra canadensis*), wild ginger (*Asarum canadense*), and many species of violet (*Viola* spp.) -- to name just a few.

The keen timing of spring ephemerals takes advantage of the unhindered access to sunlight that's available before the forest canopy closes in for the summer. But it affords them other advantages as well. Mid- to late March is when the first native bees begin to emerge and forage for food. Spring ephemerals take advantage of these early pollinators by avoiding the greater competition that comes with the higher diversity of flowering food sources that crowd the summer season. In return, the bees receive pollen and nectar to feed the first broods of bees that then grow and support the cycle of bee generations throughout the summer.



Red Trillium is a rare treat to find (but NOT pick)

Furthermore, spring ephemerals are an important part of an ecological process called vernal damming. In early spring, when the ephemerals are out, but the trees and shrubs have not yet broken dormancy, these amazing little wildflowers take up a number of important nutrients that would otherwise be lost during

spring melt and rains (there's those pesky April showers again). As the weather continues to warm, the spring ephemerals die back, releasing these stored nutrients back into the soil -- just as the trees and other summer plants are coming alive, and beginning to take up nutrients through their own roots.

If you would like to see and learn more about these amazing, yet short-lived, native wildflowers join Winnakee Land Trust's Land Projects Manager, Tierney Rosenstock, for a spring ephemeral walk at Winnakee Nature Preserve. The walk is tentatively scheduled for 10 am on April 16th. Please like Winnakee Land Trust and Hyde Park Trails on Facebook for confirmation and details.



Trout lily nearly carpets some woodlands

If you go out on your own to see the spring ephemerals, please remember they are an important part of a delicate ecological system, and many are protected on public lands.

Take only photos, leave only footprints.

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www.facebook.com/HydeParkTrail