

Hyde Park Trails Newsletter



Hyde Park, NY

Issue #10

Spring / Summer, 2012

Mark Your Calendar for Hyde Park Trails:

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Hyde Park Trail Walkabout Kick-off: The Beatrix Farrand Garden 100th Anniversary “Inside Tour”

We will begin the day (and the trail year) with a master gardener’s tour of the restored Beatrix Farrand Garden, which turns 100 years old in 2012.

The garden is a very special gem along the Hyde Park Trail.

Immediately after the garden tour, please join us on a ranger-guided, two-mile walk on trails at the FDR site.

Date: Sunday, April 22, 2012

Time: 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Place: Meet at the Wallace Visitor Center at the Franklin D. Roosevelt National Historic Site

National Trails Day: Second Annual Hyde Park Trail “End-2-End” Hike

Nine miles from Top Cottage to Vanderbilt.

Date: Saturday, June 2, 2012

Time: Meet 8:30 a.m.

Place: Meet at Vanderbilt Parking lot. We’ll take a shuttle bus to the start, and hike the return to Vanderbilt. Shuttle capacity is limited, so watch for the sign-up! Call Hyde Park Recreation at 229-8086 for updates.

National Public Lands Day & Seth Lyon Trail Volunteer Day

Join us for a rewarding trail work party!

Date: Saturday, September 29, 2012

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

Place: Location TBA; Watch for updates!

Revitalized Beatrix Farrand Garden Turns 100 This Year



Restored Gardens in 2008 (photo by Richard Cheek)

Less well known than the Home of Franklin D. Roosevelt is its neighbor, Bellefield. This lovely yellow house adjacent to the FDR home was the country home of the Newbold family. The Newbolds’ main residence was a townhouse in New York City designed by the prestigious architecture firm of McKim, Mead & White, but in the spring and fall, the family spent time here in Hyde Park. Thomas Newbold was both a Livingston and a descendant of Thomas Jefferson, and because he was also a cousin of Edith Wharton and Beatrix Farrand, it was only natural that when the Newbolds hired Charles Follen McKim to remodel their eighteenth-century Hyde Park house, they also asked Beatrix Farrand to design the garden. Flower gardens were an essential element of the ideal nineteenth century Hudson Valley villa, and Bellefield is an excellent example of its period. It is also the only known pairing of work by the two most famous designers of the era. The garden was completed in 1912.

In 1994, following a period of serious disrepair, the National Park Service charged the Beatrix Farrand Garden Association (BFGA) with the

restoration and ongoing maintenance of the garden. The BFGA is a non-profit organization fueled by countless hours of volunteer effort, with assistance from a talented horticulturist and enthusiastic National Park Service staff.



The neglected secret gardens in the early 1990s

The flower garden was only one element in the original design of this property, which at one time included a rose garden, a long lilac and fruit tree alée and a boxwood parterre. BFGA is currently working with the National Park Service and the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation to study the entire property at Bellefield, and has plans to restore the Wild Garden that once enclosed the walled flower garden.



1929 – Garden at Bellefield in its heyday

The Garden at Bellefield reaches its horticultural apex in early June when peonies, iris and foxgloves are in bloom, but the garden contains other interesting and historically appropriate plants, and is lovely in many seasons. Rebuilt stone walls and repaired and reconstructed garden gates enhance this wonderfully restored garden leaving visitors with a lasting impression of the designer’s original intent.

Regular financial support for the garden comes from BFGA members and special events, as well as the Garden Club of America, which twice named Bellefield as first runner-up for its prestigious Founders Fund Award. The garden has also received gifts from local charitable trusts including the Jeannette F. Schlobach Charitable Trust and the Mashomack Foundation.

The Beatrix Farrand Garden Association is dedicated to preserving the Beatrix Farrand Garden at Bellefield, and educating the public about this influential American designer—the first female Landscape Architect—and her rich garden legacy.

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Did You Know?

Beatrix Farrand assisted John D. Rockefeller Jr. in the design of 45 miles of carriage trails at Acadia National Park in Mt. Desert Island, Maine. These continue to be enjoyed and admired by multitudes of hikers there every year.

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Passing Along History ... and Plants

Iris germanica ‘Black Prince,’ a lovely deep purple-flowered iris, is listed on the original planting plan for the Garden at Bellefield, but it was not an easy plant to find. Following a lengthy search, BFGA Director Anne Cleves Symmes learned from Peggy Cornett, Curator of Plants at Monticello, that she would be willing to send a piece of the plant growing at the Thomas Jefferson Center for Historic Plants at Monticello. Anne says, “Over the last few years it has grown and bloomed beautifully in the garden and so when Peggy emailed me this spring to say that they lost all their stock of this special iris and wondered if we had managed to keep ours going, I was happy to be able to pull up a hunk from our flourishing Bellefield patch and repatriate ‘Black Prince’ (via US Mail) back home to Monticello. We have high hopes that it will thrive there once again and are ever grateful for the good karma.”

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New Audio Tour for the Beatrix Farrand Garden

This spring the BFGA is pleased to announce the opening of an Audio Tour of the Garden at Bellefield. Download the podcast from beatrixfarrand.org, or bring along your cell phone to enjoy this new garden-tour experience! Fascinating historical and horticultural facts will amaze and entertain you while you stroll the lovely borders!

The new audio tour is made possible by generous gifts from the Charlotte Cunneen-Hackett Charitable Trust and the James J. McCann Charitable Trust.

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Hyde Park Healthy Trails 2012 Walkabout Celebrates Beatrix Farrand Garden

A new year is underway, and it's time to get out and walk or hike! Our friends at the Dutchess County Department of Health remind us that walking - - preferably every day - - is a cheap and easy way to promote overall health. As part of the Hyde Park Trail Committee, they join us in prescribing Hyde Park Trails.

Each year, a free Walkabout trail patch features something special about Hyde Park. This year, we are pleased to join the **Beatrix Farrand Garden Association** in celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Beatrix Farrand Garden at Bellefield, the mansion you see at the entrance of the Franklin D. Roosevelt National Historic Site. The garden is right along the Hyde Park Trail.

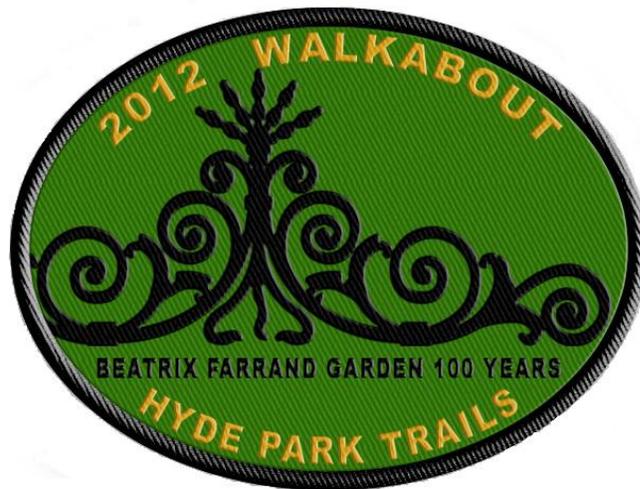
To earn this year's FREE commemorative trail patch, you will need to hike at least five of Hyde Park's eleven listed trails.

How to begin your Walkabout

On Earth Day, Saturday April 21, we'll get an "inside tour" of the garden. We'll learn about its history, the plantings, the process of restoration, and also learn about Beatrix Farrand, the

remarkable woman who created it. The tour will be led by equally remarkable crew of the Beatrix Farrand Garden Association who RE-created it. Don't miss this special opportunity!

The 2012 Walkabout trail patch is taken from decorative ironwork of the garden gates



The Walkabout program has run every year since 2006, and about 200 people complete it each year. 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. The map and more information are also posted on the web, at www.hydeparkny.us - - just click on "Recreation." Use the brochure to check off your completed trails, and return your completed checklist at any of the visitor centers to collect your patch. *Come join us on the trails!*

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Making Your Hike Count

On some of Hyde Park's trails within the National Park Service sites, automatic trail counters are used to gain an estimate of trail use. Data are collected each month, verified, and posted by e-mail to interested parties. (To get on the mailing list, contact dave_hayes@nps.gov)

Trail count data have been collected since 2008. The results are tallied on an hourly basis. (We ignore counts taken outside daylight hours to avoid counting wildlife.) The counts are not perfect. For example, a dog walked on a long

leash will result in one count for the person and another one for the dog. Likewise, two hikers walking abreast will only count as one. But the counts do give us a general idea of trail use, and they certainly indicate trends. On average, Saturday and Sunday numbers are higher than the five weekdays combined. If you crave solitude, your best bet is to hike a Wednesday in December, when counts are lowest. To join a throng, hike on a Sunday during May.

**YEAR-BY-YEAR COMPARISON
OF TRAIL COUNTS, 2008 - 2012**

TRAIL LOCATION	YEAR				2012 Jan-Mar Only
	2008	2009	2010	2011	
Vanderbilt	4663	1430	12344	9378	1289
FDR Home	3428	359	4675	4084	421
Farm Lane	1627	2067	16018	13344	2129
Val-Kill	1775	470	2304	2088	
Top Cottage	4		1879	2073	285
Total	1496	4400	37220	30966	4495

Here are some other things to consider as you read and interpret these data:

- There were no counters in service from August thru October in 2008.
- The Top Cottage counter was first installed late in the day on 12/31/2008. Four New Year's Eve celebrants apparently came out.
- The *Walkway Over the Hudson* opened in October 2009.
- Since opening in November of 2008, Farm Lane has consistently had the highest trail counts of any NPS trail.

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Get your "Hyde Park Trails-Hike Through History" All-cotton HAT



Keep cool this summer and wear yours with pride! One size (adjustable) fits most. \$10 each from Hyde Park Recreation at the Hackett Hill office, located on East Market Street. Your purchase helps support Hyde Park's trails.

Thomas Jefferson, 3rd President of the United States (1743-1826) said,
"Walking is the best possible exercise. Habituate yourself to walk very far"

Where: Hyde Park Healthy Trails Walkabout

How many of these trails have you walked?

1. Vanderbilt Loop
2. Bard Rock Trail
3. Pinewoods Nature Trail Loop
4. Hackett Hill Park Trails
5. Winnakee Nature Preserve Trail
6. Roosevelt Woods Trail
7. Roosevelt Farm Lane Trail
8. Eleanor's Walk
9. Top Cottage Trail
10. Mills-Norrie Blue Trail
11. Mills-Norrie White Trail

Take your family for a walk today.

www.hydeparkny.us/recreation/trails

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New Rte 9 Trailhead for Roosevelt Farm Lane to Open Summer of 2012

If you have driven Route 9 recently, you have probably noticed new clearing and construction at the site of the Hyde Park Drive-In Theater. A new parking area and connecting trail are being built, and should be completed this summer. The existing Farm Lane parking area on Route 9 was always planned as a short-term measure until permanent parking could be constructed. The new parking and trail access will enable the continued operation of the Drive-In while providing several key improvements:

- Increased parking capacity (the previous 6 spaces will expand to 40)

- Alignment of the Drive-In entrance with the entrance to the Home of FDR NHS
- Installation of a traffic-actuated signal at the crosswalk
- Pedestrian walkways connecting from the parking area to Farm Lane
- Sidewalks along Route 9
- Removal of the interim parking area adjacent to the Hyde Park Steakhouse.

The Roosevelt Farm Lane trail will remain open throughout the time of construction.



The Route 9 trailhead and parking for the popular Roosevelt Farm Lane trail is being relocated and expanded

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Share Your Trail Stories

The Hyde Park Trails Newsletter wants your trail stories! **Do you have a story or a poem - - or even a photo or sketch - - that somehow relates to any of our trails?** What do you see or hear or think about while you are out walking? Or do you know a bit of something about local ecology, geology, or history that relates to our trails, or the great places our trails pass through? **If you have something you might like to share, please drop us an e-mail: karl_bead@nps.gov**

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



You Can Help Make Hyde Park Trails Even Better

-- Out in the Field, or Even at Home, from Your Computer!

A growing number of people are helping to improve and expand Hyde Park's trails. How can you help? Here are some ideas:

You can sign up to adopt a trail. Walk your adopted trail a few times during the season, to monitor its condition. Clip back any brush, pick up litter, and watch for puddling and erosion. Let us know if there are any fallen or dangerous limbs that might need to be removed by chainsaw, or if there are other problems that might benefit from a bigger trail crew. Check the trail signs and markers, to make sure that trail users can find their way. Do any markers need sprucing-up, repair or replacement? We'll show you what to do and how.

Help build, maintain and repair trail signs and trailhead kiosks. One of our kiosks got clipped by a tree and still looks pretty sad. We need new trail signs where we have new trails or relocated trails, and at some places where trail users or trail adopters have let us know that an additional sign would be useful. You can join a small work crew, or learn how we make trail signs.

Help transcribe our audio podcasts to make them more useful to others.

Have you heard the audio podcasts for our trails? We hope so, but maybe you haven't. People with hearing disabilities don't get the full benefit of the audio podcasts for our trails. We also found that students like to use them, but have a hard time using quotes from the recordings. We want to remedy these problems by providing full written transcripts of the podcasts online, so that people can download and read them in addition to being able to hear them. We have partial scripts, but we need help getting them completed. You can even do this on your computer at home.

Join us for a rewarding trail work party. Saturday, September 29, 2012 is National Public Lands Day and our own Seth Lyon Trail Volunteer Day.

(Help Hyde Park Trails, cont'd.)

During the season, we will choose an area of Hyde Park Trails to work on during that day. Stay tuned for more details.

You may have an idea of your own. Let us know. If you would like to explore the possibilities, please call the Town of Hyde Park Recreation Office at 229-8086 ext. 5 or e-mail Kathleen Davis at recdirector@hydeparkny.us. Come help us build a world-class system of community trails.

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My Daughter's Seasons in the Woods

- Nell Boucher

In 2005 my daughter was born, and while she napped, I read Richard Louv's book *The Last Child in the Woods* in which he coined the phrase "Nature-Deficit Disorder." If I needed reasons to bring my child outside, Louv would have given me plenty. I was ready to take my babe into the woods.

I remember watching her as an infant when she first felt the sun on her skin, the wind in her hair and the texture of the grass she crawled through. On hikes with other new mothers we carried our children in packs and slings. When we sat them down on the ground to rest, we were horrified when they shoved fistfuls of dirt in their mouths, but we assured each other of the old adage that proper development requires "eating a pound of dirt."

In pursuit of our pound of dirt, I began to organize hikes with other parents and kids. It is fun to get into nature, and it's at least twice as fun to do it with friends. Out of this grew an email list to which I post upcoming hikes and a blog where I chat about specific hikes we've taken (<http://freshairparent.wordpress.com/>).

Last year I blogged about our pursuit of the Hyde Park Healthy Trails patch. We hiked all eleven trails and earned a patch! It was very fun to discover new trails and visit old favorites. The Hyde Park trails are suited to family hiking because they are short, gentle and offer a variety of points of interest, from Hudson River vistas to

bubbling streams, swampy areas, tangled underbrush, tall majestic trees, an abandoned orchard and the occasional historic building.



Finding the woods - - rain or shine - - at Val Kill

Although I have been lucky to have had the opportunity to enroll my daughter in schools where she could have an introduction to the natural world, I have not left her education to chance. Like many of the parents I know, I believe that when my child observes plants and creatures struggling to survive, she begins to understand the interrelation of things, and the effects of organisms on their environment. Louv calls the result of this kind of learning "an intimate, familial attachment to the land and water." My hope is that her observations will not only help her to gain knowledge, but to develop her spirit.

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Northern Dutchess Trail Conference at Marist April 21

Winnakee Land Trust will host the first Dutchess County Regional Trails Conference at the Marist College Cornell Boathouse on Earth Day weekend.

The conference will bring together towns, villages and trails groups from across the county to learn from each other, share resources, and help envision the kinds of trails and connections that would together result in a truly regional system of trails.

Contact Winnakee at 845-876-4213
or info@winnakeeland.org