

Hyde Park Trails Newsletter

Hyde Park, NY

Issue #14

Spring, 2014



Upcoming Trail Events

- **Hyde Park Trail 2014**
“WALKABOUT” Kick-Off

The Walkabout year will begin April 19, with a guided walk at the Winnakee Nature Preserve, to experience Winnakee’s new Arboretum tour. Distance about one mile.

Date: Saturday, April 19, 2014

Time: Meet at 1:00 p.m.

Place: Park behind Hyde Park Florist on Rt. 9

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- **Winnakee Nature Preserve**
Educational Arboretum Ribbon-Cutting

The Winnakee Educational Arboretum on Van Dam Road will be formally opened on May 9th. County Executive Marcus Molinaro will lead the ribbon-cutting ceremony, which will be followed by a guided trail walk. Distance about one mile.

Date: Friday, May 9, 2014

Time: 11 a.m.

Place: Park behind Hyde Park Florist on Rt. 9

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- **Dedication of Bard Rock as Hudson River Water Trail Access Site**

Some kayakers will join us to dedicate Bard Rock as one of nearly 100 access sites on the Hudson River Greenway National Water Trail. Paddlers will use the site as a pullout stop for day use on the river. (Please note that it is NOT planned as a car-top boat launch.)

Date: Friday, May 23, 2014

Time: 10:00 a.m.

Place: Vanderbilt NHS. Stay tuned for details

(More events on pages 3 & 7)

Bob Arata: Hyde Park Trailblazer



Our man at the top: Bob Arata and Bill Volk begin roofing the prototype trailhead kiosk, Roosevelt Farm Lane, 2004.

Ever since the first meetings and discussions in the 1980s, the possibility -- and the success -- of trails in Hyde Park have depended upon volunteers. Many people have contributed in many ways, large and small. Bob Arata has been one of those who has contributed continuously for over 20 years.

Bob grew up in Hyde Park, and he brings a special kind of caring for the place. Even a routine visit to a place like the Farm Lane trailhead on 9G can prompt an unexpected anecdote that helps to underline the legacy of our trails: “One day, as a kid, we were riding home on the school bus,” said Bob. “I looked out the window, and there was the President, sitting in his car with the top down, waiting to cross the road to go to Val-Kill.” *(more)*

(Trailblazer, cont'd)

Bob continues to bring a regular stream of historical & practical knowledge to our trails, and he has been a leader in just about everything we've done.

Partnering with BOCES to create gateways to our trails

In 2004, the Town of Hyde Park received a major grant to make trail improvements, including making at least three dozen trail signs. Each sign was to be tailored to a particular location, with trail names, place names and distances specific to that location. Bob quickly offered to help get them made with help from Dutchess BOCES, where he assisted Darren Davidson's construction class. "Just get us the wood and the design for how they need to be done," he said. Within a few weeks, BOCES delivered a stack of custom wood trail signs.

The students had devised an ingenious way to quickly lay out the signs, in a sort of production line. Rather than measure out each sign by hand, the students commandeered an overhead projector, to project the pages of the printed sign list against a blackboard. This enabled them to prop signboards on a ledge, one at a time, and quickly trace the text and format directly onto each board. From there, students carved the lettering into each sign using a router.

The BOCES students next built the 5 kiosks that now stand at our major trailheads. The hexagonal roofs that stand atop triangular bases presented interesting challenges, including the multi-angled shingling of cedar shakes. The roofs and bases were built in the shop at BOCES. Once built, Bob arranged to have the components transported so that he and others could assemble them on-site at the trailheads.

For only the cost of the materials, Bob helped the Town stretch its grant dollars to the max, and at the same time helped BOCES students gain valuable (and fun) experience, building structures that are a real and lasting contribution to the community.



Led by instructors Darren Davidson and Bob Arata, Dutchess County BOCES students built trailhead kiosks and created directional trail signs for Hyde Park Trails.

And when roof of the Hackett Hill Town Park was badly crunched by a falling tree less than a month after installation, Bob again teamed up with volunteer Bill Volk to do the repairs.



On behalf of the Town and Hyde Park Trails, Kathleen Davis presented Bob an award recognizing his legacy as a volunteer in 2013. Standing just behind them, the newly-repaired Hackett Hill trailhead kiosk shows off its rebuilt roof and snazzy cedar shingles.

(Trailblazer, cont'd)

As a board member and advisor for Winnakee Land Trust, Bob has for many years monitored and maintained trails, and posted boundary signs at the Winnakee Nature Preserve. He also actively worked with state and local enforcement to help prevent illicit uses within the Preserve, such as deer stands and trespassing by ATVs.

Bob also helped with four Eagle Scout projects on trails at the Winnakee Nature Preserve, including providing access to the work sites and hosting construction activities right in his driveway and backyard! And with new trails being planned and constructed within the Preserve, Bob once again enlisted BOCES students, this time to cut up and remove a wrecked and abandoned car that had long resided in the woods.

Because of his long experience with Hyde Park Trails, Bob is also one of 25 voices from the community heard on our "Hyde Park Explorer" trail podcasts.

To cap it off, Bob has also been a quiet but tireless political advocate for new trails and new trail areas in Hyde Park, and he has volunteered for many, many trail events. Watch for him next time you are out.

And please tell him "thanks!"

Below: Helping to make trail history: A host of trail partners and elected officials celebrated the opening of the Top Cottage Trail during National Park Week, 2007. Bob (center right) wore a flashy purple shirt!



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More Upcoming Trail Events



• "Take a HIKE with Mike!"

ADK Patch-in-a-Day

Mike Cunningham, of the Mid-Hudson Chapter of ADK, will lead his 4th annual "Patch-in-a-Day" hike on 5 trails. Earn your new Walkabout patch (see page 6) by joining him on this adventure. Fast pace. Rain or shine. Bring rain gear, lunch & water. No dogs. **Advance registration required.**

Date: Saturday, May 17, 2014

Time: 9:30 a.m.

Place: Roosevelt Farm Lane Trailhead parking lot on Rte 9G, opposite the entrance to Val-Kill. The group will drive between hikes.

Contact: Mike Cunningham 203-748-7233 between 7:00 PM and 9:00 PM or e-mail him at hikermiker@yahoo.com

Any e-mail received after noon on Friday, May 16th, will not be answered.

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• National Trails Day:

4th Annual Hyde Park Trail

"End2End" 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 7, 2014

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

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(Still more events on page 7)



Special Assistance Needed This Spring: Big Night!

After a long winter, spring is just around the corner! People are not the only ones eager for the return of warm weather. Millions of frogs and salamanders are waiting patiently for the perfect conditions to kick off their breeding season. The first rainy night with temperatures above 40° will see a mass migration as these fascinating animals travel to the woodland pools where they were born.

Frogs and salamanders face many hazards during their trek, including one danger their ancestors never confronted: cars. Slow-moving salamanders and short-sighted frogs are defenseless against oncoming traffic. That's where you can help!



For the second year, Winnakee Land Trust is partnering with the New York State DEC's Hudson River Estuary Program to get volunteers out to help these rarely seen amphibians cross roads safely. DEC also asks that participants collect valuable data on how many and which species are crossing where. Not interested in handling frogs? We're also looking for volunteers to drive around on Big Night looking for new road crossings so we know where to send next year's frog-movers. The exact date depends on the right conditions, but if you sign up to help now we'll alert you when the time comes.

For more information call Shannon Duerr at 876-4213 ext. 3 or visit Winnakee's website at www.winnakeeland.org. We hope to see you out on Big Night!

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“A Spring Walk”

Excerpts from an article by author John Kieran, in Collier's Weekly, April 18, 1953

I walk because I like to walk. I enjoy the exercise and I am entertained by what I see and hear along the way.

One good thing about walking is that it costs practically nothing, which is an important item these days. It is also a highly respectable diversion -- especially in the springtime -- and often looked upon with admiration if the walker wears tweeds and carries a blackthorn stick; though that isn't the way I take to the road myself. Old clothes and a pair of field glasses with which to spy on birds are my equipment.

Often it takes me hours because I so frequently stand around watching birds through my field glasses or I stop to peer through a pocket magnifying glass at buds, leaves, flowers, seedpods, insects or other interesting items encountered en route. If it is good country, I never tire of going over the same ground and heartily concur in the opinion of John Burroughs: “To learn something new, take the path today that you took yesterday.”

I have good friends who share my liking for cross-country work and they double the enjoyment of a fine walk. But even if I start out alone, I meet many friends along the way. Eyebrows may be raised, or there may be some significant tapping of the forehead, when I mention some of these friends. One is a black-tailed hawk that I have come to know because he has several primary feathers permanently missing from its right wing.

Other friends are tall tulip trees that stand on a roadside above a river, their great trunks looming up like Greek columns. Every time I meet these trees I feel the better for it.

Take to the woods on windy days. It's quieter there. Keep your ears open. You can always hear more birds than you can see. Keep your eyes
(more)

(Spring Walk, cont'd)

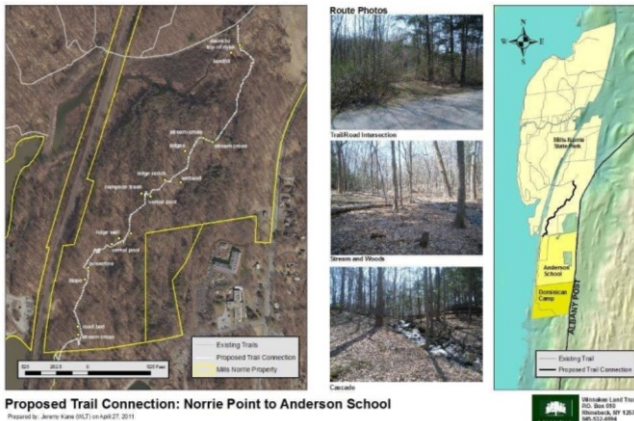
open. There are flowers in bloom through most of the months of the year, and trees are as interesting even in early spring as they are in summer. These are not sinister suggestions to stir non-walkers but merely my own rules of conduct. I have a few more. Take the sun over your shoulder for the best views. Avoid slippery footing as you would the plague, and don't sit on damp ground. Keep walking.

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Great Things Coming This Year!

A new trail link is in the works

This year, the Hyde Park Trail Committee will be able to offer some great new outdoor opportunities to the public. This spring, the committee will begin work on a major piece of the Hyde Park Greenway Trail that is needed to connect with Mills-Norrie State Park.



When finally completed, the new section of trail will lead from Mills-Norrie State Park, south through the western portion of the Anderson School Property (on a trail easement managed by Winnakee Land Trust), to an overlook on the former Dominican Camp Property (which is owned and managed by Scenic Hudson). Visitors will be able to park at Mills-Norrie State Park and -- starting from a new trailhead kiosk located near the marina (which should receive its map and panels this year) -- hike about 2.2 miles to the viewpoint/ rest area on Scenic Hudson lands overlooking Esopus Island.

The bigger plan is to eventually extend this trail section further south through a trail easement (managed by Winnakee Land Trust) at River Ridge Condominiums, which will eventually lead to the Vanderbilt Mansion NHS, and the existing 9-mile Hyde Park Trail link to the FDR sites.

The Hudson River Valley Greenway graciously awarded a grant to Scenic Hudson, to restore the overgrown overlook on the former Dominican Camp Property. Some funds were used to remove an old structure from the viewpoint site, and to clear and reclaim the land. The remainder will go toward an interpretive sign and two trailside benches that will look out to Esopus Island and the Catskills. *(Thank you, Greenway!)*

The Hyde Park Trail Committee will coordinate especially with the Taconic Region of New York State Parks and the NY-NJ Trail Conference for the section of trail within Mills-Norrie State Park. Representatives met this winter to map, flag, and discuss the routing of the trail on the key portion of the trail that crosses state park land.

How Can We Get it Done?

Hyde Park Trails will organize several trail work parties throughout the spring, summer and fall to complete this important section of trail. **Here is where you come in: We need volunteers who would be interested in helping to create this great trail link.** There will be opportunities to learn trail-building skills, including building a few footbridges. We also need help making and installing directional trail signs and markers, and once the trail is built, helping to monitor, maintain and improve it over time. We will post more information about these volunteer trail opportunities in the upcoming months so **please be sure to check our Facebook page.**

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www.facebook.com/HydeParkTrail

Hyde Park Healthy Trails 2014 Walkabout Celebrates Trees at Winnakee Nature Preserve

We are amazed, The Walkabout program is already entering its *ninth* year. About 200 people complete it each year. Some live nearby, but others travel from as far as other states to do it.

What is a Walkabout?

The idea of the Walkabout is very simple: Walk at least five of Hyde Park's trails within the year. Keep track of your walks on a free checklist. 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. Quiz: Can you name the tree species?

The trail map/checklist is available for free. We try to keep them stocked at trailheads, but you can also pick one up at any of the National Park Service visitor centers, at Hackett Hill Town Park, or at the State Park headquarters in Staatsburgh. Or you can download the map and see more information at www.hydeparkny.us; click on "Recreation" then "Trails."

What's new this year?

Each year, a new Walkabout trail patch features something special about Hyde Park. This year, it's all about trees. The trail patch for 2014 celebrates the newest offering on our trails: a

marked and guided tour of trees and other features at the Winnakee Nature Preserve that our partners at Winnakee Land Trust call the **Winnakee Educational Arboretum**.

The Fall of 2014 will bring yet another addition: funded by a Malcolm Gordon Fund grant from the Open Space Institute, Winnakee will create an educational curriculum and begin bringing groups of students from Hyde Park schools to the arboretum.



The tradition of interest in trees at today's Winnakee Nature Preserve began with a previous owner, Col. Archibald Rogers, who is credited with fostering young FDR's interest in forestry

Why a "Healthy Trails" Walkabout?

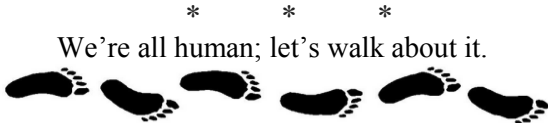
Regular physical activity, especially walking, is recommended by every major health organization, and probably by your doctor as well. Walking is one of the simplest things we can do to help slow or prevent such common ailments as heart disease, stroke, diabetes, overweight, osteoporosis, arthritis, depression, and even cancer. It costs next to nothing, and the risks are relatively small. The benefits increase if you walk regularly. The standard recommendation is at least 30 minutes of exercise most days a week.

So the Walkabout is ONE way to help maintain or improve your health. Once you get out on any of Hyde Park's Trails, we hope that you will return many times, for many trails and many seasons. If you have any health issues, you should talk to your doctor before starting any new exercise.

(more)

Begin your Walkabout this spring ... or anytime

The official start of the Hyde Park Healthy Trails Walkabout year is National Park Week, which happens around Earth Day, in mid-April. But you can start and finish anytime. You have all year to get out and walk at least 5 of the 11 listed trails. Check off your completed trails on the trail map/brochure, and return it at any of the visitor centers to collect your patch. *See you on the trails!*



Before

Cool trail facts:

Building a sustainable hiking trail --one that can stand up to weather plus wear & tear-- means more than clearing brush (although that's also very important). We like to build "full bench-cut"

trails that are cut into the hillside. The trail surface is given a slight downhill cross-slope, so that water flows across the trail in a broad sheet, and never has a chance to collect in puddles or form gullies.



After



Practice makes perfect! Volunteers make our rustic trail signs by hand, using wood that is sawn from fallen trees in our parks. You can come help make some new signs (and check our spelling) on June 19th.

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Still More Upcoming Trail Events

• Learn to Make Rustic Wood Trail Signs using a Router

Do you have a woodworking router, and know the basics of using it? If so, come help make some much-needed, rustic trail signs out of wood. We'll show you the basics of layout and give you the chance to practice your skill. Bring a picnic lunch, and BYO router, cord and 2 bits that we will specify. Watch for updates on Facebook.

Date: Thursday, June 19

Time 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Place: Park at Hackett Hill Town Park.

We'll set up and work in the picnic pavilion. *Please call or e-mail in advance, for information and also sign-up. This will help us tailor the program to the group, and plan enough materials: Karl Beard 845-229-9115 x2034 or karl_beard@nps.gov.*

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• Seth Lyon Trail Volunteer Day/ National Public Lands Day

Join us for a rewarding trail work party!

Date: Saturday, Sept 27, 2014

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

Place: *TBA – watch for updates!*

Hyde Park Visual Environment Committee Teams with NPS for Stone Walls

Ever since the beginnings of the Hyde Park Visual Environment Committee (VEC) in 1974, a fundamental part the VEC mission has been to protect and preserve the distinctive stone walls that weave through the town. The aesthetics and historical significance of these walls help to define the character of the Town of Hyde Park.

In November 2013, the VEC completed a project to repair the stone wall located north of the old Farm Lane trailhead on Rte 9, extending to the property line of the Golden Manor Hotel. This wall was rebuilt with donations from VEC, which teamed with the NPS and Adams Landscaping (a side business of Adams Fairacre Farms) to complete the project. The 150-foot, rebuilt wall complements the new path NPS installed behind the wall, removed from traffic.



Stone wall work along Rte 9: Before (top); during repair by VEC and Adams Landscaping (bottom); and after completion, with NPS path (top of next column).



VEC Stonewall Chair Bill Ring plans to continue the mission at new locations in the 2014 season.

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Winnakee Debuts Environmental Education Scholarship

With funding from a Winnakee Board member and other supporters, Winnakee Land Trust has established the Winnakee Environmental Education Scholarship to send six local high school students to the weeklong DEC Summer Camp. Two Hyde Park students, Naomi Mendes and Christian Santiago, have been awarded the scholarship. Also participating are students from Rhinebeck, Red Hook, and Pine Plains.

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You Can Help Make Hyde Park Trails Better Yet!

Do you have a photo, poem, brief article or sketch that relates in some way to Hyde Park's trails? If so, we'd love to share it through the newsletter.

There are plenty of other ways you can help build and improve our award-winning trail system. Come to one of our organized events. Join a trail work party, make a trail sign, or adopt a trail or trailhead kiosk. We'll show you what to do. Or offer your own ideas. We need your interest and talent. Contact Kathleen Davis at Hyde Park Recreation: 845-229-8086 or reccdirector@hydeparkny.us