

check it out

Mohonk Preserve wins support for accessible education programs

Three foundations are helping people with disabilities learn about nature through grants to the Mohonk Preserve to expand its accessibility education program NatureAccess, which provides instruction both in classrooms and on the land. The funds will make possible a workshop this fall for organizations across the Hudson Valley seeking to design programs that accommodate visitors with a wide range of disabilities. The workshop will be led jointly by NatureAccess educators from the Mohonk Preserve and accessibility specialists from the Resource Center for Accessible Living (RCAL).

A grant for \$15,000 was provided by the Dorr Foundation of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, which supports science curricula and special education projects for youth on conservation and the environment. A second grant of \$10,000 was given by Ulster Savings Charitable Foundation of Kingston, which funds programs in education and other areas to strengthen communities in the region and has been a consistent supporter of the Mohonk Preserve.

The MDRT Foundation of Park Ridge, Illinois, which works with financial professionals who are members of the Million Dollar Roundtable to make philanthropic gifts, provided \$1,500; Paul De Lisio of New York Life and an active supporter of the Preserve secured the grant.

"This financial support is a clear endorsement of the Preserve's commitment to helping all people understand and enjoy the wonders of nature," says Executive Director Glenn Hoagland. "We're excited about the opportunity to work with RCAL, share the Preserve's expertise, and assist other nature centers and parks in expanding their programming for people of all abilities."

In an additional effort to strengthen outdoor accessibility, Preserve Education Director Kathy Ambrosini and Special Education & Exhibitory Educator Pam Uihlein were recently certified as Inclusivity Assessors by the New York State Inclusive Recreation Resource Center – allowing them to assess and make recommendations to parks, nature centers and other facilities on the provision of outdoor opportunities for people with disabilities.

"Many policymakers are calling for a 'No Child Left Inside' approach to education, which recognizes the importance of outdoor experiences for enhanced concentration, learning and emotional and physical well-being," says Ambrosini. "Thanks to the generosity of our funders and supporters, the Preserve can help apply this important principle region-wide and for all children and adults."

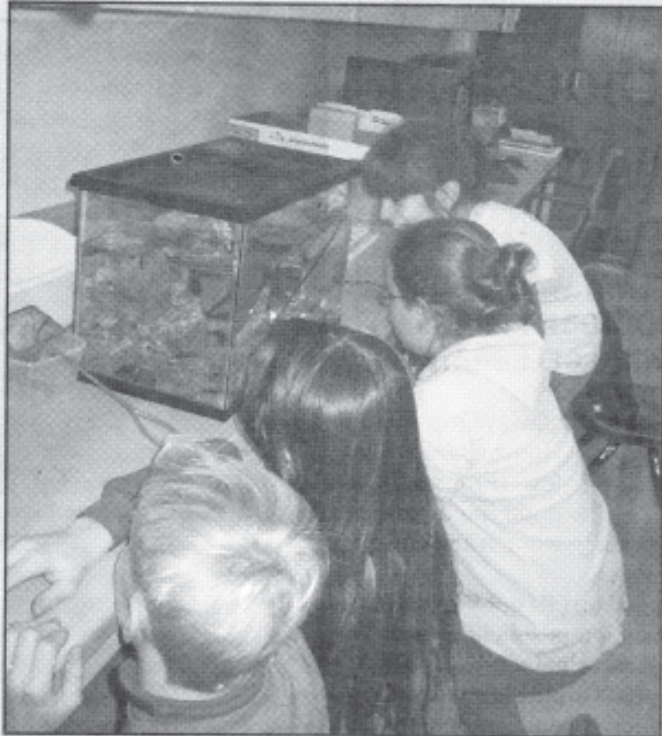


PHOTO BY SUSAN LEHRER

Local school children participate in Pondkeepers, a Mohonk Preserve NatureAccess program for classroom-based learning.