

## gardiner



PHOTO BY JOHN THOMPSON

*Researchers in the "living laboratory" of the Mohonk Preserve.*

## New research underway to support health of forests

**T**o better understand environmental changes occurring in the Shawangunk Mountains, the Mohonk Preserve has awarded its 2009 Loewy Family Foundation Research Fellowships to scientists who will study ecological trends in the region's signature chestnut oak forests. This work will investigate whether two key trends in recent decades – fire suppression and overbrowsing of vegetation due to high deer populations – are responsible for the diminished regeneration of the forests, and offer insight into possible solutions.

Marc Abrams, Steimer Professor of Forest Ecology at Penn State University, will survey different areas of the forest at the Mohonk Preserve to determine the extent of the chestnut oak regeneration problem. Carol Rietsma, Associate Professor of Biology at SUNY New Paltz, will expand a research project on the effects of deer browsing on forests that she has conducted since 1998, focusing more closely on chestnut oak forests and incorporating the impact of conducting controlled burns in those areas.

"The Mohonk Preserve has long been a living laboratory for hundreds of scientists and students who conduct research on critical environmental concerns, including forest health, water quality, climate change, and plant and animal survival," says Glenn Hoagland, Executive Director. "The Loewy Family Foundation provides necessary support for projects that lead directly to land management and protection strategies."

For more about research underway at the Preserve, see <http://www.mohonkpreserve.org/index.php?research>.