

Volunteer Vibes - *Volunteers play many crucial roles at the Preserve. They maintain trails, welcome visitors, conduct research, educate youth groups, support special events, beautify our gardens, capture breathtaking photography, and much more, contributing their time, talents, and thousands of volunteer hours annually. We will be regularly featuring our volunteers in Talus Talk so that we can all learn who they are and why they do what they do for the Preserve. Let's meet our volunteers!*

Rick Cronk

Where did you grow up?

I was born and raised on the South Shore of Long Island, only minutes from the beaches, so I spent my youth surfing till I left for SUC New Paltz in 1972. First visited the Preserve during Freshmen Orientation, with an ascent of the Lemon Squeeze, and a few weeks later my first climbing day with the New Paltz Outing Club. A year later I was president of the club till graduation in 1976. Over the past 50 years, I've pretty much stayed in the Mid-Hudson Valley, climbing, hiking, skiing, cycling and even paddling in the Shawangunks.

What is your volunteer role(s) here at Mohonk Preserve?

The Climbers' Trail Crew Volunteer Coordinator.

Why did you decide to volunteer your time and talents at Mohonk Preserve?

My first volunteer experience on the Preserve was joining Thom Scheuer and others fighting a brush fire above the Overcliff Road. Fourteen years ago, Dick Williams invited me to join his volunteer trail crew and try my hand at trail building. After I retired from my teaching career in 2009, I became a regular on the crew. I figured it was a great way to give back to the Mohonk Preserve, and the climbing community, for all the good times and great experiences I have had on the Preserve.

What is a volunteer accomplishment you are really proud of?

The Climbers' Trail Crew's collective accomplishments are easily seen in the network of ascent trails that have been built over the years. A legacy that will hopefully outlast all who have contributed their time and energy in service to the Mohonk Preserve, its members, and the general public who visit.

Where is your favorite place/trail on the Preserve and why is it your favorite?

The best thing about my favorite trail is that I never see anyone on it. In times past, hundreds of climbers would have passed along this trail as they finished their climbs and returned to the base of the crag. Nowadays, the trail is all but abandoned and fallen into disuse as climbers now rappel down to the base of the crags.



*Rick offers a little nudge to a stone as it travels along to its new home.
Photo by Dick Williams.*