

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!*

Ken Pawson

Where did you grow up?

I grew up in Edgewater, NJ in sight of the George Washington Bridge and the NYC skyline. I lived in Montague, NJ for my last two years of high school, and in various locations in New Jersey until 1990 when I moved to New Paltz with my wife Rosemary.

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

I am the volunteer coordinator of the Interpretive Guides. I also serve with Rosemary at the Annual Benefit Auction, Rock the Ridge, Bridge 2 Bridge Run, and the Pfalz Point Challenge. Other volunteer assignments I've served in: Backcountry Patrol, Healthy Ulster, Phenology Observer, Climate Tracking, and informational tabling events.

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

My first Preserve hike was on the Chapel Trail. I enjoyed it so much that I spent a season taking as many different hikes as I could, taking notes on details as I went along. When I needed new suggestions, I stopped in at the Visitor Center and spoke with a volunteer Interpretive Guide, who gave me a tour using the VC's topographic model. I thought then that I'd enjoy sharing the knowledge I gained that year with our visitors. I joined the Interpretive Guides the following year, and I've loved it ever since.

What is a volunteer accomplishment you are really proud of?

The greatest accomplishment is knowing that you've been helpful to someone. It's a kick when visitors return from a hike you suggested and tell you that the hike was awesome and directions were spot on. It's also great to help participants in the Preserve's special events - especially Rock The Ridge - the racers' expressions of appreciation inspire me to volunteer again and again.

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

My favorite place is the Visitor Center on weekends. I enjoy greeting and meeting our visitors, especially first-timers with lots of questions. My favorite trail is the Millbrook Ridge Trail, because ... of course! I also enjoy the Woodside Trail, because it's a pleasant, quiet walk in the woods, off the beaten path.



*Ken Pawson volunteering at a Rock The Ridge Aid Station in 2019
Photo by Kate Schoonmaker*