



Ridgelines

Autumn 2021 • #203



Autumn Ridge by Karen Maloy-Brady

Fall is fantastic at Mohonk Preserve! While the leaves took their time changing, the results have been spectacular as we've welcomed visitors to enjoy nature's splendor. In this issue of Ridgelines, we'll provide updates on our Conservation Programs, share the results of this year's Rock The Ridge and highlight the return of on-land education programs.

You'll also find beautiful autumn images from our Mohonk Preserve Volunteer Photographers, along with a listing of generous donors who provided critical support to the Preserve in the third quarter of this year.

We wish everyone a happy holiday season and hope to see you on the land!

SEASONAL UPDATES

PHOTO GALLERY. View seasonal photographs by our volunteer photographers, visit www.mohonkpreserve.org/who-we-are/newsletter-and-publications/ridgelines-203/#rl203-4. See more photos by the Mohonk Preserve Volunteer Photographers on their Facebook page: facebook.com/MPVPhotographers.



Turtles at Duck Pond by Maryalice Citera

GET INTO NATURE. See a full list of upcoming programs here: www.mohonkpreserve.org/events/

CHECK THIS OUT

COVID-19 Visitation Protocols. Please note: Masks are required indoors for all visitors and social distancing is encouraged for visitors at all times.

Mohonk Preserve 2022 Calendars make great gifts! Get yours today at the Visitor Center or online here: www.mohonkpreserve.org/who-we-are/2022-calendar/

Bring a digital Mohonk Preserve trail map with you on any mobile device! Our new trail map is now available on Apple iOS and Android devices using the Avenza Maps app.

www.avenzamaps.com/index.html

MOHONK PRESERVE MEMBER REWARDS PROGRAM. Show your valid Mohonk Preserve annual or life membership card at over 80 local businesses listed at www.mohonkpreserve.org/join/member-rewards/, and receive a discount or special offer.

We welcome our new business members who joined between July 1 through September 30, 2021:

- Angry Orchard
- Barbara Carter Real Estate Broker
- Finkelstein Memorial Library
- LaGrange Library
- Rose Memorial Library
- Smiles of the Hudson Valley



Conservation Programs staff on the trail by Leo Vatkin

Conservation Programs – From Founding to Future

In 2020, the Preserve’s Conservation Science and Land Protection programs joined to become the Conservation Programs department, www.mohonkpreserve.org/what-we-do/conservation-programs/, under the leadership of Director of Conservation Programs **Julia Solomon**. This integration enhances both our climate and natural history research, including community science programs, and our land protection and management work, including ongoing work with landowners to protect high priority properties. Working together, the conservation professionals in these programs take a comprehensive approach to deepening our connections and commitments to nature and our communities.

“Integrating these two closely linked programs strengthens our ability to tackle complex conservation and land management challenges,” said Mohonk Preserve President and CEO **Kevin Case**. “Longtime supporters of the Preserve have told me that this integration aligns with Preserve founder Daniel Smiley’s approach – he worked to protect land because of its conservation value, and he undertook careful study of the land that had been protected. They are glad to see these two vital programs working in tandem.”

Mohonk Preserve’s Conservation Science program, www.mohonkpreserve.org/what-we-do/conservation-programs/conservation-science/, is recognized nationally and beyond for its extensive collection of long-term research data, including more than 125 years of daily weather data and close to 90 years of natural and cultural history observations. These data and related natural history collections support the Preserve’s land management and stewardship activities and our educational programming. The collections are also frequently cited in research on climate change, biodiversity, bird migration, and human impact on the environment.

Since the Preserve’s founding in 1963, our Land Protection program, www.mohonkpreserve.org/what-we-do/conservation-programs/land-protection/, has protected over 8,000 acres of rugged cliffs, forested hollows, hidden wetlands, and pristine streams. We focus on conserving key recreation areas, fragile habitats and scenic viewsheds. Our land protection work is multi-faceted and involves maintaining strong relationships with landowners and local communities, negotiating land transactions and land protection agreements, and monitoring our protected lands to ensure that they are not threatened or challenged. This work relies on sophisticated map-making systems, which also enable us to provide tailored maps and wayfinding information for the Preserve’s visitors.

More than fifty years after we began protecting and studying the land, our conservation work is more important than ever, as Mohonk Preserve strives to both mitigate and adapt to a changing climate. According to The Nature Conservancy’s Resilient Land Mapping Tool <https://maps.tnc.org/resilientland/>, our protected lands store over 700,000 metric tons of carbon, provide highly resilient habitat and serve as a vital connecting corridor for plants and animals that are adapting to climate change.

“Mohonk Preserve has a critical role to play in the fight against climate change,” Julia noted. “We are uncommon among land conservation organizations in managing a landscape of this scale, and we know that our lands are extremely important for both carbon storage and habitat for animals and plants. We also have this incredible record of climate data that tells the story of the changes that have been happening in this place over many decades.” www.mohonkpreserve.org/what-we-do/conservation-programs/conservation-science/weather-data/

Although climate change is already impacting Mohonk Preserve’s landscapes, and will continue to do so, Julia is confident that the Preserve’s Conservation Programs are well positioned to help meet this challenge. “The question is not whether the climate is changing, or even whether to act, but how the Preserve can act in a way that lives up to the spirit of our mission,” she said. She and her team are focused on protecting the land that is most important in a changing climate and to making sure that protected lands stay healthy as the climate shifts.

As Julia emphasized, “We are fortunate that the same practices that have guided us since our founding – close observation of nature, careful record-keeping and thoughtful decision-making – will serve us well as we adapt to climate change and work to protect the things that inspire us today and for generations to come.”



Ridge Rockers on course by Tom Weiner

Rocking the Ridge to Support the Preserve

This year, Rock The Ridge was held on Saturday, Sept. 25, 2021. Over 600 runners, walkers and hikers registered to take on a course across carriage roads and trails along the Shawangunk Ridge. This major fundraiser for Mohonk Preserve raised funds to support the Preserve’s Education, Conservation, Stewardship and Visitor Experience programs.

First-time 50-miler **Travis Hawkins** was the first male finisher with a time of 6:04:01. The first female finisher was **Jana Veliskova**, with a time of 8:09:44. The top relay finishers were **PPTC Breaking 8** with a total time of 6:09:58. Full race results and photographs from the **Mohonk Preserve Volunteer Photographers** are posted on the Preserve’s website at www.mohonkpreserve.org/rock-the-ridge/recap-and-results/.

This year’s Ridge Rockers raised nearly \$300,000 through their registrations and fundraising efforts to support Mohonk Preserve’s programs. Since its inception in 2013, Rock The Ridge participants have raised over \$1.7 million.

One exceptional fundraiser is **Norman Goluskin**, who is also a member of the Preserve’s Board of Directors www.mohonkpreserve.org/who-we-are/board-of-directors/. In addition to being one of the event’s founders, he has participated in every Rock The Ridge, both as a member of relay teams and as a solo 50 miler. This

year, Rock The Ridge coincided with Norman's 83rd birthday, which he celebrated by running the last relay leg of the course and personally raising over \$20,000 in support of Mohonk Preserve. He also helped secure an additional \$20,000 match from a generous donor.

"The Preserve thanks all our Ridge Rockers who went above and beyond to raise essential funds to support this place where people and nature thrive," said Mohonk Preserve Special Events Manager and Race Director **Tom Leader**. "We are grateful to the Preserve Board and staff who participated in and worked at the event, and over 150 volunteers, whose team effort made this event such a success."

Rock The Ridge 2021 was also supported by Trailblazer Sponsors Adidas, Altra, Clif Bar and Company, Darn Tough, Leki, and NuVance Health; Pathfinder Sponsor Arrowood Farms Brewery and Distillery; Community Sponsors Barton & Loguidice, Binnewater, Enviro-Clean, ShopRite New Paltz, Thruway Sporting Goods, Marvin and Company, P.C., CPAs, and Sims & Associates Podiatry.

As part of Mohonk Preserve's commitment to sustainability, the organization once again helped reduce waste headed to the landfill by going cup-free, recycling and composting.

The Preserve is busy planning for Rock The Ridge 2022, which will be held in the spring, with registration expected to open in January. The event continues to grow largely because of positive word-of-mouth advertising from past participants who enjoy the course and the support and encouragement they receive along the way from volunteers.

For more information about Rock The Ridge and the Preserve's other special events, visit www.mohonkpreserve.org/events/.



Orienteering at Spring Farm by Kim Tischler

Welcoming Learners Back to the Land

Since its inception, Mohonk Preserve's education programs have offered first-hand experiences in and with nature. In 1985, a benchmark program for the Preserve, the K-6th grade Field Studies Program with the **New Paltz Central School District**, began what is our longest continuously running partnership in education. The popularity of the Field Studies Program, www.mohonkpreserve.org/what-we-do/environmental-education/school-field-studies/, and its close ties to state and Next Generation Science Standards have led over 40 area schools to participate in the program.

During the pandemic in 2020, the Preserve's education programs pivoted as schools moved to online classes. "The Pond Keepers outreach program was adapted and made accessible for teachers and students online through daily observation videos, creature features, video lessons on locomotion, breathing, and camouflage

in lieu of a classroom pond,” noted Education Coordinator for Public & Youth Programs **Lauren Borer**. The *Hudson Valley Species and Climate Change* outreach program was also adapted as a remote program for grades 5 through 12. Through videos and activities, students explored how climate change is impacting local species and habitats.

This fall, we’ve been excited to bring the outdoors back to outdoor education on the Preserve’s lands, welcoming students from New Paltz and beyond. Our educators hosted field studies classes on *Pond Habitat: Discovering Animal Life*, *A Day in the Life: Lenni Lenape Lifeways*, and *Water, Concerns & Solutions* to New Paltz kindergarten, 4th grade and 6th grade classes. We also welcomed back **Rondout Intermediate School** 4th graders for *A Day in the Life: Lenni Lenape Lifeways*, and **The Garrison School** 8th graders for *Ridge Habitat*.

“Teaching in the field and giving students hands on learning experiences is why I love my job,” Lauren said. “After more than a year working at Mohonk Preserve, I finally got a taste of a busy fall season of Field Studies!”

The Preserve’s *City Kids on the Ridge* program also continued with on-land programs for Newburgh’s **San Miguel Academy** with STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) programs including *Trail Impact Assessment*, *Orienteering*, and *Stream and Forest Habitats* for 6th graders, while 7th graders focused on growing as “Youth Conservation Leaders,” with programs covering *Phenology*, *Citizen Science Climate Trackers*, and *Field & Forest Management*. The 8th graders participated in “Junior Ranger” programs including *Technical Rock Climbing*, *Leave No Trace* and *Map and Compass*. **Nora Cronin Presentation Academy** students participated remotely via the *Hudson Valley Species and Climate Change* and are pivoting to our in-person *Pond Keepers* outreach program for December, while preparing to return to the Preserve next fall.

“Outdoor field studies are magical and can be transformative experiences that provide some of the most unforgettable moments in a student’s life,” said Preserve Education Coordinator for Student Programs **Kim Tischler**. “It’s hard to put into words the joy I feel welcoming classes back to the ridge to engage in exciting, hands-on learning that is tangible, authentic, and meaningful; that connects children to the natural world around them and uses children’s innate capacity for wonder as a springboard for inquiry, exploration, and fun.”

As the newest member of the team, Preserve Education Outreach Coordinator **Ashawna Abbott** has enjoyed being able to experience outdoor education, while also gearing up to return to classrooms late fall into early spring with the Preserve’s popular Outreach Programs www.mohonkpreserve.org/what-we-do/environmental-education/outreach-programs/, including *Pond Keepers* and *Hands-On Archaeology*, and *Hudson Valley Species and Climate Change*.

“Outreach is such an incredible modality that helps us bring hands-on programs to the schools we work with,” Ashawna said. “I’m especially looking forward to bringing pond life back into the classroom, and all the exploratory learning that comes with it. We still offer virtual options, but it’s so exciting to see the receptiveness of schools to the return of in-person outreach programs!”

As they wrap up the active autumn season, the Education team is gearing up for a busy spring. “As coordinator of the Preserve’s on-land field study program, it’s terrific hearing from many area administrators and faculty seeking spring opportunities for their schools and classes,” Kim noted. “We look forward to cultivating shared outdoor experiences with more area students, chaperones, and teachers.”

To learn more about Mohonk Preserve’s innovative and inspiring education programs, visit www.mohonkpreserve.org/what-we-do/environmental-education/.



In Appreciation of Gifts Received July 1 through September 30, 2021

In Memory of

Jocelyn Marie Anama – You left us too soon from
Anonymous

Phil Jacobus – Hiker, climber, and lover of mountains from
Judith Hakam and Paul Wemp
Ulster County Board of Realtors

Jeff Neuman – Knowing how much Jeff loved Mohonk, we thought this gift to the Mohonk Preserve would be an especially appropriate means of remembering him. Our hearts are broken and we still think of him every day. Please accept our deepest condolences from
Marvin and Betty Libson

Walter Schreiber from
Merrill Schneiderman, Elyse Glazer and Family

Dr. Joseph Westwater – In memory of and love for Jay Westwater. He lived life to the fullest – loved his family, friends, the wilds of outdoors and work in the ER from
Carole Kraus

In Honor of

Jon Birdsall – Congratulations on your great run! from
Jon Birdsall

Finn Ryan Watters – In honor of Finn's birth from
Jane Bloom

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Nicole Gueron and Carter Strickland – Thank you to a special couple from
Frank Davis

Maya Projansky – In loving support of Maya Projansky and family during a time of loss and transition from
Amy Estersohn

Ann Turpin from
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Conservation Science Staff & Volunteers from
James Hoover and John Aubry

Neall Burger and Wes Ostertag This gift is in honor of Neall and Wes on the event of their 35th wedding anniversary. You've lived a loving, adventuresome life already. Wishing you many, many more explorations ahead! With lots of love from
Carole Kraus

Serena Abraham & Bibin Varghese What a treat it is to share the bounty of this community with you! from
Carole Kraus

Jon Ross Thank you for going the extra mile to help me on July 26. I locked my keys in my car and you were so nice to help me. from
Mary Rahe

Arthur Ochs Sulzberger Jr. from
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