

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 Volunteer Vibes so that we can all learn who they are and why they do what they do for the Preserve. Let's meet our volunteers!*

Carol Rietsma

Where did you grow up?

I was born and raised in and around Grand Rapids, MI. After college at Grand Valley State University and attended graduate school at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, NJ. I got my job teaching ecology-based courses in the biology department at SUNY New Paltz after responding to an advertisement in the New York Times.

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

I am the Coordinator of the Phenology volunteers. Other roles are Volunteer Photographer, Board of Directors (Secretary), Education Committee (Chair), member of the Conservation Science, Nominating and Governance, and Executive Committees.

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

I love working and recreating outdoors. My first graduate student at SUNY New Paltz was Paul Huth; his thesis addressed environmental triggers for phenology (nature's calendar). He asked me to serve on the Research (now Conservation Science) Committee. I was later invited to join the Board of Directors. For my forty-plus years of teaching, I regularly took my students to the Mohonk Preserve for field experiences.

What is a volunteer accomplishment you are really proud of?

I am proud to help the Mohonk Preserve protect this beautiful landscape. I am also proud to help teach our Phenology volunteers how to make accurate observations and contribute to our understanding of global climate change.

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

Presently, it is walking the Pin Oak Allee at the Testimonial Gateway through all the seasons of the year. It is calming, inspiring, and majestic.



Carol Rietsma (center) observing leaf and flower buds with Phenology volunteers.

Photo by Susan Lehrer