

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!*

Christopher Zimmerman

Where did you grow up?

I was born in Poughkeepsie but grew up in the Laurel Highlands, near Pittsburgh. My school offered an afternoon program and a summer camp. We went hiking, cycling, camping, caving, and canoeing. We learned how to swim, build fires, read maps, and identify trees. In short, I was lucky to grow up basically outdoors.

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

I volunteer with the Bike Patrol once a month, but I've also served as a Trailhead Ambassador and helped at events.

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

What would Ulster County be without the Preserve? I'm glad to give back. I've been inspired in large part by fellow members at the Bruderhof, the religious commune I belong to. Whether maintaining trails, volunteering at races, or making financial contributions, our organization has been a proud supporter of the Preserve for decades.

There's a family connection too: like the Smileys, my grandparents were Quakers. They were frequent guests at the nearby Mohonk Mountain House.

What is a volunteer accomplishment you are really proud of?

I've solicited volunteers from the Mount Academy, a local high school, for Rock the Ridge, and I've taken teens hiking and cycling at the Preserve. As a teacher and parent, I'm eager to energize the next generation. Unless we act, there won't be a wilderness for them to enjoy.

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

That's easy - Copes Lookout. No matter the season or weather, there's nothing like hiking up to one of those little wooden gazebos and drinking in the view.



*Christopher Zimmerman enjoying the outdoors
Photo by Bea Zimmerman*