

**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!*

## **Ruth Backenroth**

### ***Where did you grow up?***

I grew up right here in the Hudson Valley. After living my teens out in NJ, I returned to Ulster County for college and have stayed to re-settle here. This is home for me.

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

I have enjoyed both the garden group and the education volunteer group immensely. The leaders and the volunteers are dedicated, knowledgeable, and really fun to be around.

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

The Preserve lands are just so beautiful and accessible. When I returned for college, I took my first field studies classes and learned about the Preserve and what I was hiking by all these years. What a treat to have all this in our backyards. I realized it is now also a responsibility we need to take on to maintain it however we can help.

### ***What is a volunteer accomplishment you are really proud of?***

Working in the garden group gives me an immediate feeling of accomplishment. Weeding really is rewarding! Also, returning the next week to see the space you provided allowed for new flowering that has made a notable change. Working with the education group is a more reflective experience but also provides a feeling of accomplishment. Observing when students see the Preserve for the first time is such a positive experience and renews my hope for the future.

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

Spring Farm may be my favorite place on the Preserve. The trails are varied, and the views are the best!



*Ruth Backenroth in her garden.  
Photo by Walter "Snapper" Earl.  
Snapper is Walter's nickname.*