

**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!*

## **Heidi McCowan**

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

I grew up hiking, skiing, and camping in Boise, Idaho. Went to college in Boston and ended up in Poughkeepsie after my husband got a job at Vassar College.

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

I started as a Trail Keeper for the Rock Rift Trail, and now also do the Stairmaster (East Trapps Connector) and I volunteer at various special events like Rock the Ridge and the Annual Benefit Auction.

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

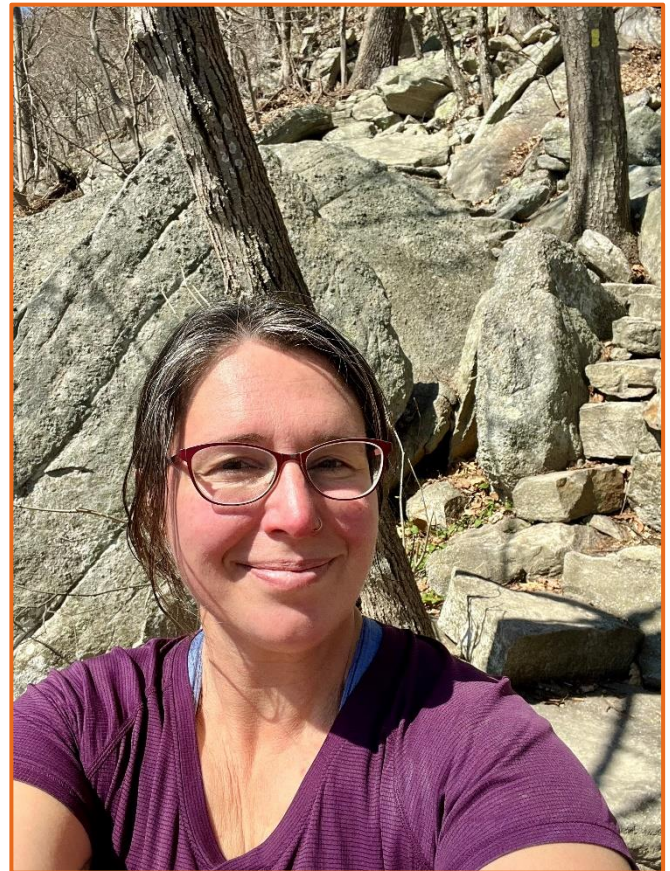
My husband and I have been coming to the Preserve for 18 years since we moved to the Hudson Valley, initially for climbing, now more for hiking, running, and biking. We moved to Gardiner in 2016, and when I was made aware of a need for a trail keeper, I jumped at the chance to give back to the place that has given us so much enjoyment for so many years.

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

I have worked at the Pine Road aid station for the past 3 years and have really enjoyed seeing all the runners and how appreciative they are of all the volunteers and supplies. The atmosphere is great, and everyone is excited to be there. My kids, Cole and Juniper come too, and they love passing food to the runners and making sure the tables stay stocked.

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

This is almost too hard to choose. I love running and biking the Overcliff/Undercliff loop...Millbrook Ridge Trail? Laurel Ledge? Rock Rift is a hidden gem I hadn't been on before taking it on as trail keeper since it's a little out of the way, and of course, Split Rock after a day out... It's all so good.



*Heidi McCowan on the "Stairmaster"; photo by Heidi McCowan*