

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 Hoey

Where did you grow up?

I was born in Manhasset and raised on Long Island. Throughout my childhood we would visit the area for climbing, hiking and biking. I attended SUNY New Paltz for a BS in Computer Science. After starting our family on Long Island, my wife Tara and I decided to move full-time to Gardiner. We felt it was better to live in the area versus fighting traffic on weekends while also raising our two children around the activities they have come to enjoy.



Photo by: Jesse Davis, a Mohonk Preserve Volunteer

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

My volunteer roles at Mohonk Preserve started with Backcountry Patrol. A few years later I heard about the Trail Builders program and quickly joined the group. Recently, I have taken on the role of being the Volunteer Coordinator for Trail Builders so that the group's previous coordinators, Artie Hidalgo and Linda Shekita, can focus their efforts with the Jolly Rovers Trail Crew. Due to a mostly snowless 2024/25 winter, my plans to join the Cross-Country Ski Snow Grooming group had to wait until the wonderful winter we had last year. I hope we have another season like that!

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

I decided to volunteer at Mohonk Preserve since it is a place that has brought tremendous joy to my family and so many others. In my early visits to the Preserve, I often wondered how the various stone staircases were done. They are helpful to get you where you are going yet blending seamlessly into the background of the landscape. Andy Reynolds, the Senior Manager of Volunteer Programs, sent out a volunteer newsletter mentioning that the Volunteer Trail Builders were looking for new volunteers. A chance to learn the secrets of the

craft arose. Ever since, I have loved working on the staircases while spending time with our fellow Trail Builder volunteers.

What is a volunteer accomplishment you are really proud of?

For trail building, I am truly proud of the work the group did on the new Split Rock Loop Trail. The ribbon cutting ceremony was a moment for us to celebrate all the hard work while knowing generations of people will enjoy the fruits of our labor.

For snow grooming, despite the often-frigid conditions outside, the smiles and waves each person gives along the way shows how much they appreciate your efforts. It is a testament to the uniqueness of opportunities Mohonk Preserve has to offer.

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

One of my favorite spots related to trail building on the Preserve is to sit on the bench by the side of the timber staircase we installed on the Split Rock Loop