

## 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!

### Richard Feuer

#### Where did you grow up?

I grew up in Rockville Centre on Long Island. We lived within walking distance of Hempstead Lake State Park and that is where I learned my love for the woods.

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

I have had several volunteer roles over the past six years. My current roles are Volunteer Coordinator for Trail Keeping, volunteer photographer, and as a docent for the Van Leuven cabin in the Trapps Hamlet. I have volunteered for special events, ski patrol, and bike patrol as well. I also help the Meadow Guardians, but I started my volunteering as an Interpretive Guide and Backcountry Patroller six years ago. In 2023, my wife Tammy and I were honored to be given the Switlik Award for Exceptional Volunteer Service.

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

I am so grateful to all the conservation minded activists that came before us, starting with the Smiley Brothers in 1869, and for every local resident who helped to save the entire Northern Shawangunk Ridge from development. When we retired to New Paltz, I knew I needed to do my small share to help keep this landscape for future generations. Mine and Tammy's greatest joys in life have always been found on trails.



Photo by: Tammy Feuer

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

I am proud of several accomplishments. My first was being selected to revive the Trapps Hamlet cultural hikes and with the help of several staff members I created a new program that reflects my style of sharing the land and its history with our visitors. Secondly, I am proud that I was fortunate enough to inherit the role of Volunteer Coordinator for Trail Keeping and together with Trey Hotaling (our Staff Liaison) we revamped the idea of "one person, one trail" into a more team like approach to maintaining our trail system to the standards that our members and visitors deserve. I also became the first volunteer certified to use a battery-operated Stihl chainsaw to clear downed trees across trails. And, at the risk of rambling on, I am very proud that I was asked to be a Staff Trailhead Ranger (which I currently am) because of my enthusiasm in sharing my knowledge of The Preserve when I was a volunteer Interpretive Guide at the Visitor Center.

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

I have many favorite places depending on my mood and activity level. But, my heart will always belong to The Millbrook Ridge Trail, as it was the first trail we maintained, and we spent two seasons opening up the corridor (trimming brush and thorny cat briar).