

Hyde Park Trails Newsletter



Hyde Park, NY

Issue #9

Fall / Winter 2011- 2012

www.hydeparkny.us/recreation/trails

Mark Your 2012 Calendar for Hyde Park Trails:

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Hyde Park Trail Walkabout Kick-off at FDR Site, Sunday, April 28th, 2012

National Trails Day: Hyde Park Trail “End-2-End” Hike, 9 miles from Top Cottage to Vanderbilt. Saturday, June 2nd, 2012

National Public Lands Day & Seth Lyon Trail Volunteer Day, Location TBA, Saturday September 29th, 2012

Hyde Park Trails Recovering from Hurricanes

Erosion and washouts on NPS trails
Hurricanes Irene and Lee caused significant damage to several trails on National Park Service lands. On Roosevelt Farm Lane, the Maritje Kill overflowed its banks and eroded the downstream shoulder of the road. At the Home of FDR, one culvert was destroyed causing significant erosion on the Cove Trail.



A culvert below the Roosevelt Ice Pond failed, causing damage to the Cove Trail

The Lower Road at the Vanderbilt Mansion NHS saw a slump of up to a foot of sandy sediment across part of the trail.



Culverts washed out on Eleanor’s Walk, carving gullies and exposing large stones in the trail bed

At Eleanor Roosevelt NHS, trail damage was caused by two culvert failures and overflow of a pond atop Eleanor’s Walk.

NPS crews have reopened all of the trails, but there are scores of lesser impacts throughout the park, and much work remains.

Winnakee Nature Preserve trails

The Winnakee Nature Preserve also took a huge hit when Irene and Lee cut their devastating paths through the Northeast in late August and early September. Flooding at the Preserve’s Van Dam Rd. entrance caused the footbridge to float off its moorings and be re-deposited more than 100 feet away. Hundreds of pounds of mulch were swept away from the new plantings at the entrance.

Several culverts in the Preserve filled with debris and overflowed. Trees were uprooted and broken branches were deposited wherever the wind and water left them.

While the damage seems daunting, much of the park infrastructure fared the storm relatively well, thanks to regular maintenance and a number of carefully planned trail

projects completed a year ago, when the 2010 Seth Lyon Trail Volunteer Day was held at the Preserve.

The bridge was lifted back into place, and trails have been cleared for safe passage. Work is now underway on a number of restoration projects. But washouts remain, and there is still work to be done. If you would like to lend a hand, please call Winnakee Land Trust at 845-876-4213.

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National Public Lands / Seth Lyon Trail Volunteer Day at Hackett Hill

This year, National Public Lands Day fell on Saturday, Sept. 24th. Nationwide, this is a day of volunteer service on our public lands. While most focus on federal lands (National Parks and National Forests), in Hyde Park we include *all* lands that host Hyde Park Trails. We do this to honor the life and work of our lost friend and trail volunteer Seth Lyon.



More than thirty volunteers fought hordes of mosquitoes to help re-mark, repair and improve Hackett Hill trails

For us, National Public Lands Day is also Seth Lyon Trail Volunteer Day. Seth was an avid hiker, a trail builder/ maintainer on the Appalachian Trail and an active member of the Ralph's Peak Hikers Cabin Volunteer Club. But he also found time to adopt a Hyde Park trail and edit our newsletter. He believed in our system of community trails, where ALL trails are created equal, and people are actively encouraged to get out and hike them, for the multitude of benefits they provide. And judging from the many e-mails he sent us

about trail maintenance needs, Seth walked ALL of Hyde Park's trails.

We have a running joke that scheduling events for Hyde Park Trails really amounts to predicting storm days with near-perfect accuracy. It poured rain for days before our planned Sept. 24th work day. As the day drew near, the forecast improved only slightly, offering only a few hours without rain before resuming again around noon.

That morning, the rain lifted on schedule and thirty-three hardy volunteers turned out at the Hackett Hill Town Park picnic pavilion. The crew included a wonderful busload of Marist students, the RPH Cabin Volunteers Club, friends of Seth and his family, and our home team of Hyde Park Trail volunteers.

We were ready. Scenic Hudson, NPS and Town of Hyde Park had provided a complete array of trail tools. Generous sponsors had provided snacks and drinks to keep us fortified. And beginning weeks in advance, Jeremy Kane of Winnakee Land Trust had created GPS maps and a task list to guide us to our jobs and places.

The clouds of mosquitoes were also ready, but that's a whole story in its own right. But miraculously, the rain held off all day, defying the gloomy forecast.

The work party began. We repositioned and replaced trail signs, dug in new signposts, built a new section of sidehill trail on the Gorilla



Rock trail (see photo at left), removed old plastic trail blazes and refreshed painted blazes, repaired the rope guiderail along the sensory trail, removed two hazard trees

from a section of trail and re-decked the Forest Loop Trail swamp board-walk. It was a VERY productive day, and except for the hordes of mosquitoes, it was great fun.



Marist students helped refresh painted trail blazes



The RPH Cabin Volunteers loaned their Appalachian Trail -style hard work and expertise to re-deck the boardwalk on the Forest Loop (green) trail



Community Service Volunteers from Marist College bring in the tools at the end of the day

Thanks to everyone who helped out on that day! We hope to see you again next year!

THANKS to our sponsors who donated refreshments to fuel the trail volunteer day: fresh apples from *Terhune Orchards* in Salt Point; granola bars and cider from *Stop & Shop of Hyde Park*; cheese from *Cabot Creamery*; donuts from *Dunkin Donuts*; and juice from *Stewarts Shops* and *Winnakee Land Trust*.

And last but far from least: Thanks to *Williams Lumber* for helping us with much-needed building materials.

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Boy Scout Troop 86 Goes All Out



We ran out of space in our last newsletter, but we want to congratulate *Boy Scout Troop 86*. They hiked all 11 listed Hyde Park Trails last year, and each won our fifth anniversary collection of five Walkabout trail patches!

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It's that time of year: Please remember your friend, the trail tool

If you own trail tools (this includes yard tools, too!), remember to clean them before putting them away for the winter. We're talking about loppers, shovels, garden rakes, mattocks, McLeods or whatever.

Check for broken tools and for rust. For added rust protection, it's a good idea to rub them down with a light coat of WD-40, using a rag.



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Notes on Newts - - and the Hyde Park Healthy Trails Walkabout

Fall and winter are great times for trail

The Little Newt

*David McCord,
American Poet,
1897-1997*

The little newt
Is not a brute,
A fish or fowl,
A kind of owl.
He doesn't prowl
Or run or dig
Or grow too big.
He doesn't fly
Or laugh or cry-
He doesn't try.

The little newt
Is mostly mute
And grave and
wise.
He has two eyes.
He lives inside
Or likes to hide;
But after rain
He's out again
And rather red
I should have said.

The little newt
Of great repute
Has legs, a tail
A spotted veil
He walks alone
From stone to stone,
From leg to log,
From bog to bog,
From tree to tree
From you to me.

The little newt
By grass or root
Is very kind
But hard to find.
His hands and feet
Are always neat:
They move across
The mildest moss.
He's very shy,
He's very spy-
Don't ask me why.

walking. And if you haven't already walked at least five Hyde Park Trails (enough to earn your free Walkabout patch) you have until Earth Day, which is April 22nd.

Our trail patch this year is the red eft, the beautiful orange salamander (or newt) seen so often in our woods. They are fascinating creatures, and many people enjoy them. So we wrote about them in the last newsletter, and we're including a poem about newts in this one.

Eleanor Roosevelt was also an admirer of red efts, although she mistakenly thought them to be lizards (which are reptiles, not amphibians). She wrote about them several times in her nationally-syndicated My Day column. Sixty years ago, on June 21, 1951, she wrote, "I am afraid my little orange lizards have left our wooded roads for good this year. The ground is still damp and the sun was shining Tuesday morning, but none of them was out to enjoy the warmth. Their short season of life must have come to an end."

The weather has turned cold, and the red efts have once again gone into hiding for the season.

They'll reappear when the

conditions of warmth and moisture are right for them. Until then, there's plenty more to see and do on Hyde Park's trails. And you have until spring to earn the red eft trail patch.

Start out on your own Hyde Park Healthy Trails Walkabout:

www.hydeparkny.us/recreation/trails



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Salley Decker Recognized for years of AT Service

In July 2011, Salley Decker received the Silver Award from the Appalachian National Scenic Trail for 25 years of volunteer service. Salley is also an active member of the Hyde Park Trails Committee and acts as a representative from ADK. Her knowledge and experience make her an invaluable member of the Hyde Park Trails Committee.



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NPS Launches Trail Master Plan

The Roosevelt-Vanderbilt NHS has launched a process to create a master plan for trail use on NPS land. The goal of the Trail Plan is to lay the groundwork for a comprehensive, well-designed, sustainable trail system which provides a variety of visitor experiences that support the parks' missions. There are more

than 20 miles of trails on the NPS Hyde Park sites, taking into account public trails, unmarked trails, and user-created trails.

The process involves several stages. These include data collection and evaluation of existing conditions, public outreach, exploration of alternatives for the trail system, and the assessment of the environmental impacts of the options considered. In the spring of 2011, NPS convened a series of focus group workshops and a public meeting to gather input.

A draft plan will be released for public comment during winter 2011-2012, and more public meetings will be scheduled before the plan is finalized.



Participants discussed trail issues and opportunities at the NPS planning workshops

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Changes Coming to Roosevelt Farm Lane Trailhead on Rte 9

In 2012, construction of a new parking area and connecting trail will take place at the site of the Hyde Park Drive-In Theater. The existing Farm Lane parking area on Route 9 was always planned as a short-term measure until permanent parking could be constructed. This plan will enable the continued operation of the Drive-In while providing several key improvements:

- Increased parking capacity (expanded from the current 6 spaces to 40 spaces)
- Alignment of the Drive-In entrance with the entrance to the Home of FDR NHS

- Installation of a traffic-actuated signal at the intersection
- Pedestrian walkways connecting from the parking area to Farm Lane
- Sidewalks along Route 9
- Removal of the interim parking area adjacent to the Hyde Park Steakhouse.

Roosevelt Farm lane will remain open throughout the time of construction.



The Route 9 trailhead and parking for the popular Roosevelt Farm Lane trail will be relocated and expanded in 2012

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National Heritage Area Grant to Interpret Trails at Mills-Norrie

The Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area awarded Hyde Park Trails a grant to design and produce trailhead maps and interpretive panels at the Mills-Norrie State Park complex.

The final product will be two new, three-sided trailhead kiosks – one at Norrie Point and the other at Staatsburgh Historic Site, the historic

home. Maps on the kiosks will orient the hiker, and interpretive panels will “tell the story” of the surrounding parkland. At Norrie Point, this will be the story of the Hudson River, and also the CCC camp that built most of the park buildings there. Panels at the Staatsburgh Historic Site will highlight the landscape surrounding the historic home.

The project working group includes partners from the State Office of Parks and Mills-Norrie State Parks; NYS-DEC’s Hudson River Estuary Program, the NPS Rivers & Trails Pgm, Winnakee Land Trust and Town of Hyde Park Recreation.

Mike Pessulo, of Boy Scout Troop 228, is building a new trailhead kiosk at Norrie Point that will house the maps and panels for that site. See it framed-in, below. This is Mike’s Eagle Scout project. We’re very grateful for his help, and impressed by his workmanship!



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Northern Dutchess Trail Conference Coming April 21

Winnakee Land Trust will host the first Dutchess County Regional Trails Conference at the Marist College Cornell Boathouse on Earth Day weekend, 2012. The conference will bring together towns, villages and trails groups from across the county to learn from each other, share resources, and help envision the kinds of trails and connections that would together result in a truly regional system of trails.

The conference is made possible by a grant from the Hudson River Valley Greenway.

Conference presentations will focus on practical aspects of funding, trail building and working in partnerships. A poster session will invite all participants to present their communities’ trail projects, and also network with other attendees. Smaller “break out” sessions will map out and discuss potential connections and destinations, given existing ownership land-use patterns. This will help create an overarching vision that will join great destinations with safe, beautiful trails.

To prepare for the conference, Winnakee is now meeting with local trails groups and volunteers, and gathering information about what’s already been accomplished in the region. Contact Winnakee at 845-876-4213 or info@winnakeeland.org

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What’s that square jaggy thing?

People with smart phones can visit websites from wherever they can receive a signal. A free downloadable app lets their phone read so-called “Quick Response”



or QR Codes such as this one, which directs the user to a particular web page. You’ve seen these before. We started using them for the trail cell phone tours this summer. And now you can see them at our trailheads as well.

Those of us without smart phones can always visit Hyde Park Trails online at:

www.hydeparkny.us/recreation/trails

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To keep up with Hyde Park Trails happenings, and to post your own pictures



and stories, follow Hyde Park Trails on Facebook.