



Friends of the
Rockefeller State Park
PRESERVE

The Preserve Observer

Friends of the Rockefeller State Park Preserve Magazine
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Photo: Laurence Gill



Richard Nelson on duty

A Preserve Mainstay Reflects on His Career

By Richard Nelson
Preserve Naturalist

After almost 30 years of working on the Preserve, I will retire on July 1. I have worked as Preserve naturalist for almost as long as the Preserve has existed, since 1985. But in fact I was familiar with it long before then. My family moved to Sleepy Hollow, at that time called North Tarrytown, from the Midwest in 1947. When I was 10 years old, school friends and I started hiking on the Rockefeller Estate. We walked to Swan Lake, Eagle Mountain as it was called then, and occasionally Buttermilk Hill.

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Revealing the Pleasures of the Rockwood Ramble 10K

By Carolyn Oppenheim

I like to think of “Rockies” as my own personal paradise. When I stumbled upon it 16 years ago, I couldn’t believe my good fortune. Miles upon miles of Asher Durand-inspired scenery. Pristine trails that wouldn’t dream of gathering water, or ice, or even a stray stick that might jeopardize my footfalls. How considerate.

This notion of ownership is reinforced nearly every time I run in Rockies or its showy sister, Rockwood. I always find the trails

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Seventh Annual Spring Peony Celebration

Thursday, May 14, 2015

6 PM - 9 PM

Visitor Center Courtyard

Details on page 2



David Rockefeller makes his announcement as his niece, Lucy Rockefeller Waletzky applauds.

David Rockefeller Donates \$4 Million For Preserve Future

Operating Endowment Gift Is Aimed at Encouraging Public – Private Partnership

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo announced that David Rockefeller has donated \$4 million to establish an operating endowment supporting the Rockefeller State Park Preserve in Westchester County. This donation is one of the largest private donations in state park history, is intended to encourage public contributions and builds on the Rockefeller family’s longstanding

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7th Annual Peony Celebration Is Set for Thursday, May 14, 2015

By Herbert Hadad

On Thursday, May 14, from 6 to 9 p.m., one of the highlight events of the preserve season will be hosted by the Friends of the Rockefeller State Park Preserve. It is the Seventh Annual Peony Celebration – a fund-raising event that will celebrate the blooming at the entrance to the preserve of the famous Japanese tree peonies. There will be a cocktail and light cuisine reception, flower arrangements from local garden clubs and an exhibit of fine art. The exhibit, “Glorious Gardens”, features fine art photographs by Michael Garber. These gardens were conceived by renowned gardeners, designers and landscape architects representing major contributions in world history. Peggy Blizard has dramatized the theme with two oil painting of multiple-specie bouquets. (More details on page 8.) The reception will take place in the Visitor Center Courtyard under what is hoped will be clear blue skies and warm weather.

This celebration is a much anticipated one by members of the surrounding communities. It commemorates receiving the gift of 500 peonies from the town of Yatsuka Cho in Shimane Prefecture, Japan, in memory of the victims of September 11th. It was meant to express a gesture of healing and solidarity towards the United States. The peony is the signature flower from this area and is considered Japan’s “most noble of flowers.” The placing of Japanese flowers on American soil symbolizes the blending of two cultures and two peoples. Friends board member Evelyn Hadad, at the time the director of external affairs for the Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry in New York, arranged for this generous gift, and the Friends organization then created a landscaping project around the gateway to the preserve. Another 500 peonies were donated to the Brooklyn Botanical Garden. The remainder of the design called for American wildflowers and native trees.

Yatsuka Cho graciously sent over Japanese gardeners to plant the flowers and to teach the Preserve staff how to care for them. This work is continued to this day by dedicated volunteers led by Keith Austin, the former mayor of Briarcliff Manor and an avid gardener. Please come and enjoy your friends and the magnificent flowers! For information, please consult our web site, www.friendsrock.org. Ticket price begins at \$125.



The popular state-wide I Love My
Park Day is Saturday, May 2nd
(9:30 – 12:30).

We will continue the wetland restoration project that we began last year. We’re gradually increasing the native fern, flower, and shrub diversity in the wetland swale behind the office along the path to Swan Lake. We need your help to replace the non-native multiflora rose and privet with native witch hazel, winterberry, sweet pepperbush, ostrich fern, and jack-in-the pulpit. You’ll be able to return year after year to watch these plantings grow and mature. All ages are welcome.

DON'T FORGET!
the 14th Annual
Autumn Country Pace

**Sunday,
October 18, 2015**



Endowment, *continued from page 1*

support for its namesake park. Mr. Rockefeller also plans to donate approximately 500 additional acres of pastures, hayfields and forest to the Preserve in the future, adding to the more than 1,400 acres of parkland the Rockefeller family has donated since the park's inception in 1983.

"New York has some of the best outdoor recreational locations in the country, and, by working together with our partners in the non-profit and private sectors, we can maintain, improve and protect those destinations for years to come," Governor Cuomo said. "This funding will ensure that both today's visitors and future generations can enjoy all that the Rockefeller State Park Preserve has to offer. I am grateful for the Rockefeller family's ongoing support in this effort, and look forward to seeing this park continue to be one of New York's greatest windows into the great outdoors."

David Rockefeller said, "My family has been deeply engaged in the creation of parks throughout this country for more than a century. Our beautiful state park system is an important asset that distinguishes the greatness of New York State and we are proud to have played a role in its development. It is my hope that this contribution will make Rockefeller State Park Preserve more accessible and enjoyable for everyone."

The endowment will be used to maintain the park's signature historic carriage roads and stone arch bridges, which were built by John D. Rockefeller Jr. Designed to complement the landscape, the carriage roads allow visitors to experience the natural wonders of the area. The scenic paths traverse wood and stone bridges, wind through meadows and woodlands, and travel past streams, rivers and lakes. It will also be used to support innovative environmental programming, capital improvement projects and stewardship initiatives at the Rockefeller State Park to preserve its health and beauty.

The donation will be administered by the Natural Heritage Trust, a public benefit corporation established to receive and administer gifts, grants and contributions for New York State parks, conservation, recreation and historic preservation. It is the largest private donation to the Natural

Heritage Trust to establish an endowment supporting a New York State Park.

Rockefeller State Park Preserve is comprised of a significant portion of the Rockefeller family's fabled Pocantico Hills estate. The family has donated 1,400 acres of land, spanning from the Hudson River to the Saw Mill Valley, to New York State since 1983.

Under Governor Cuomo's leadership, New York State is making a historic commitment to improving and expanding access to outdoor recreation. The Governor's NY Parks 2020 program is a multi-year commitment to leverage \$900 million in private and public funding for State Parks from 2011 to 2020. The Governor's 2015-16 Executive Budget allocates \$110 million toward this initiative.

Lucy Rockefeller Waletzky, Chair of the New York State Council of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, said, "This exceptionally generous gift from my dear Uncle David will help ensure that the magnificent 32 miles of carriage roads on the Rockefeller State Park Preserve will continue to be enjoyed by walkers, runners, riders and nature lovers for years to come. This kind of private support, coupled with Governor Cuomo's generous capital investment, has stimulated a renaissance of our magnificent state park system."

Rose Harvey, Commissioner of New York State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation said, "State Parks has always relied on public-private partnerships to extend and expand the work we do – and these partnerships are now more essential than ever before. The Rockefeller family's commitment and generosity are a shining example in our New York State Park system that sets the bar for such partnerships."

Clare Pierson, President of the Friends of Rockefeller State Park Preserve, said "The Friends group is thrilled about David Rockefeller's very generous gift to the preserve. David's late wife Peggy was among the founders of The Friends and we appreciate his continuing the family legacy with this support that will enable this jewel of a park to continue to be available to so many. We hope it will also stimulate contributions from the park-going public and others devoted to conservation."



Based on a photo by Susan Chamber

Friends and State Continue Efforts for Trail Work

By Tommy Capossela,
Friends Board Member

A bridge repair project at Witch's Spring Trail was carried out after a tree had fallen on the bridge. Total trail renovation was completed on Deer Run, Gory Brook Trail and Buttermilk Hill Trail. The whole cost of the bridge repair and the three trail renovations was \$93,500. These projects were underwritten by the Friends of the Rockefeller State Park Preserve.

In addition to the funds supplied by the Friends, the State repaired trails at a cost of \$50,000.

Trail renovation and maintenance is an on-going activity that has to be done at Rockefeller State Park Preserve in order for all visitors to enjoy and benefit from these unique carriage roads.

❄️ Friends Plan A Winter Gala ❄️

The Friends of the Rockefeller State Park Preserve have announced plans for a gala for the winter of 2015.

The event will be held at the Rockefeller Playhouse in Pocantico Hills. Honorees will include Phelps Memorial Hospital Center.

Details of the gala, at a date to be determined, will be available on the Friends website – www.friendsrock.org.



Reaching the Friends

Friends of the Rockefeller State Park Preserve
P.O. Box 8444 • Sleepy Hollow, NY 10591
(914) 762-0209

The Preserve Observer

E-mail: Friends@friendsrock.org
Website: www.friendsrock.org
Editors: Evelyn Hadad, Herbert Hadad
Letters and submissions are invited.
Please contact us c/o the Friends.



Artistic Expression: Two Opportunities

Call to Artists - The Art Gallery at Rockefeller State Park Preserve invites artists who represent aspects of the Preserve and Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture to submit their work for two group exhibitions in 2015.

Application, rules and requirements posted on rsspvolunteers.blogspot.com or pick up in Preserve office.

SNAP – Water Water Everywhere

The Art Gallery at Rockefeller State Park Preserve once again invites photographers to submit their work, this time around the theme of water in the Preserve. The theme is broadly construed and it is independent of stylistic constraints. Indeed, we are interested in all possible creative photographic interpretations of the theme.

Exhibit dates: June 28 – August 23;
Opening: June 28, Sunday, 1-3 pm

Application deadline: May 10

Submission deadline: June 15

CRACKLE – Paintings, drawings, and mixed media visual art inspired by the Preserve and Stone Barns

For the first time, we're organizing a curated exhibit of paintings, drawings, and mixed media visual art inspired by the Preserve and Stone Barns. All styles are welcome.

Exhibit dates: October 11 – November 29;
Opening: October 11, Sunday 1 - 3

Application deadline: August 25

Submission deadline: September 30

From the Friends President



By Clare M. Pierson

Dear Friends,

As I write this, spring is making its lovely, quiet entrance. The Passover/Easter/Full Moon weekend has come and gone, and the snow drops are up, the skunk cabbage has warmed their way through the last bits of snow, and the robins have come back in their happy flocks before scattering about to nest and lay their eggs in pairs. It was a long and cold winter.

The big news here at the Preserve is that David Rockefeller has given the Rockefeller State Park Preserve an endowment of \$4 million. We are deeply grateful for his generosity to this jewel of the park system. (See page 1 for details.) It gives us a stability that has been missing since the early 2000's for the 32 miles of carriage roads, bridges, and drainage system not to mention the ecology of the Preserve, educational programs, and all the other elements that go into running a park in one of the most densely populated areas of the U.S. In announcing the gift, Mr. Rockefeller was quoted saying that "It is my hope that this contribution will make Rockefeller State Park Preserve more accessible and enjoyable for everyone."

We can now concentrate on capital improvement, which as you know has been deferred for the entire park system. The State has begun a study for a Long Term Capital Improvement Project, which is looking at the infrastructure of the Preserve and prioritizing what areas need work, and how much. We will be called upon to make some contribution to this work, and that is where our fundraising efforts will go. We'll focus our fundraising efforts on this project and need the public's support, and we look forward to partnering with the state in the care of the Preserve.

Of course, we will always be champions of all attributes of the Preserve, especially the carriage roads system built in the 1920s by John D. Rockefeller Jr. for the use and enjoyment of the 300,000 skiers, runners, walkers, equestrians and more who come each year.

Our upcoming events include the very popular **Peony reception on May 14th** and the **Rocky's 10K on June 6th**. Please consider joining us for either or both of these fun events! We are also working on a sponsorship campaign, and welcome your help in securing sponsors of all sizes to help us achieve our important mission.

Yours truly,



Board of Directors Friends of the Rockefeller State Park Preserve

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Wildflowers and native pollinators enliven the

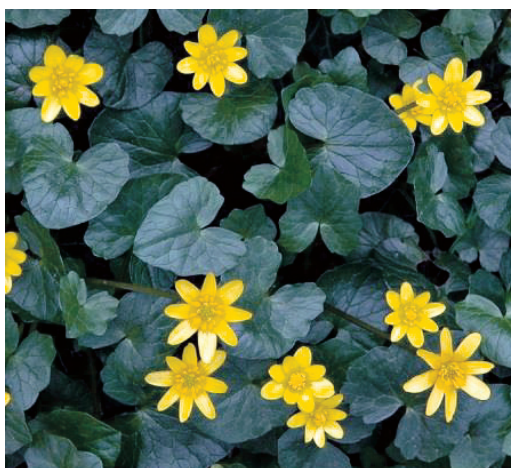
Spring wildflowers burst into bloom before trees leaf out and the forest becomes shady. Called “spring ephemerals”, trout lilies (*right*), toothwort, spring beauty, yellow violet, and wood anemone brighten the forest floor with splashes of yellow, white, pink.



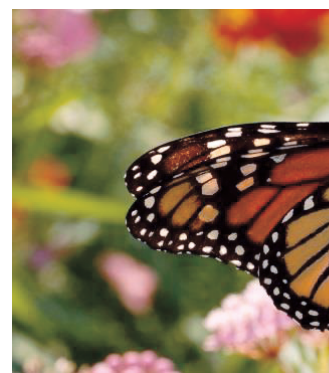
Not only are wildflowers lovely and treasured as a sign of spring, they are indicators of forest health. The greater diversity and abundance of native wildflowers, the healthier condition of the forest.

Unfortunately, columbine, bloodroot (*left*), trilliums, and wild orchids and many more are in decline or already lost in Rockefeller and Westchester County preserves.

Aggressive invasive plant species, such as lesser celandine (*right*), crowd out the specialized native wildflowers. When in bloom, large infestations of lesser celandine appear as a shiny green carpet with yellow dots, spread across the forest floor. The early, dense shade and shallow roots of Norway maples, selective browsing by deer, altered soil chemistry, non-native earthworms, soil disturbance and frequent mowing cumulatively contribute to the regional decline and loss of native wildflowers and insects that depend on them.



In the summer, sun-loving fields of black-eyed Susans, sunflowers, and black-eyed Susan's to name a few are their own. The swamp milkweed and scented common milkweed (*below*), a once common species primarily due to loss of natural



The Brown-belted bumblebee and native pollinators are little known. Native bees, wasps, and flies, and perplexing bumblebee and Trillium depend upon and contribute to diversity. They are also vital to flowers in your back yard and Food and Agriculture. Instead of native pollinators are solitary and in small holes in trees.

Preserve

flowers - goldenrods, mountain mint, milkweeds, a few of many – come into bloom and sweet-spicy scents attract the Monarch butterfly. Unfortunately, many of these species are now in alarming decline due to habitat loss.



(above on common milkweed) are some of the known natural treasures of the Preserve with endearing names like the peepolus cuckoo bee, and the Preserve’s floral success of crops and the Stone Barns Center for living in colonies, many of which nest in the ground or

Stewardship to protect them for future generations is underway.

Last July two photographers, Paula Sharp and Ross Eatman, began documenting the native pollinators of the Preserve and Stone Barns. They’ve created a very informative and beautiful website that describes the 17 wild bee and pollinating species they’ve found so far. <http://www.sharpeatmanguides.com/>



Leaf-cutter bee (left): Leafcutter bees are easily identifiable by their wide, somewhat flattened abdomens. They cut leaves and flower petals to transport back to their nests to wrap brood cells. This bee constructs nests in dead wood and rotted trees. Non-aggressive, they forage for nectar on orange milkweed, goldenrod and mountain mint.

Ligated sweat bee (right): If you look carefully at the purple coneflowers in the Visitor Center garden, you can see two or three of these bees on a single blossom with bright yellow saddlebags. These are stores of pollen on the bees' hind legs. Tiny, they reach nectar in flowers large bees can't enter. Ligated sweat bees are one of the four most important pollinators of sunflowers. They also pollinate bee balm, penstemon, goldenrod, bloodroot, rue anemone, dandelion, and violets.



Rockefeller State Park Preserve is taking steps to increase the diversity and abundance of native flowers and protect wild bees, moths, and butterflies. Conservation strategies include altering mowing regimes, planting and seeding native species, control of highly invasive plant species, protecting habitat, monitoring, education about threat of pesticides, and community outreach.

For more information, visit our blogspot: <http://rsppvunteers.com>

❖ Gallery Schedule at a Glance ❖



Three Baby Perched Birds
– Sybil Gibson

“Awakening – Spring”

April 5 – May 10, 2015

Reception: Sunday, April 19 1 - 3 PM

Artists Sybil Gibson, Mark Mastrianni, Ivan Pazlamatchev bring joy to the eye with visions of Spring images. Sybil Gibson's childhood memories and teaching experience shaped her celebrated tempura paintings. Ivan Pazlamatchev's passages focus on dream-like landscapes. Mark Mastrianni's intense artwork reveals layers of colorful, swirling particles. The exhibit is curated by Audrey Leeds and Ivan Pazlamatchev. All artists are represented by the Woodward Gallery, 133 Eldridge Street, NYC.



Flowers in Oval
– Sybil Gibson

“Glorious Gardens”

May 14 - June 21, 2015

Peony Celebration and Gallery Reception: Thursday, May 14 6PM – 9PM

This exhibit features fine art photographs by Michael Garber based on a new book, tentatively entitled, *The History of Landscape Design in 100 Gardens* published by Timber Press. The author, Linda A. Chisholm, Ph.D., an authority of landscape design at the New York Botanical Garden, reflects upon the culture of times and places as well as the individual creator/s. These gardens were conceived by renowned gardeners, designers and landscape architects representing major contributions in world history. Peggy Blizard has dramatized the theme with two oil paintings of multiple-specie bouquets.

“SNAP” – June 28 - August 16

Reception: Sunday, May 17 1 - 3 PM

“Pleasures”

August 23 – October 4

Reception: Sunday, August 9 1-3 PM

Summer Scenes: Representational art images exhibiting the pleasures of people enjoying the beauty of locations bordering oceans, lakes, pools. A group exhibit.

Rockefeller State Park Preserve Staff

Susan Antenen, Preserve Manager

Laurence I. Gill, Director of Operations

Jennifer Sylvestri, Maintenance Supervisor

Stephen Sciamé, Park Worker/Environmental Educator

Richard Nelson, Preserve Naturalist

Emily Cheadle, Volunteer & Communications Coordinator

Anthony Corda, Parking Lot & Patron Services

Anthony Todd, Seasonal Maintenance Assistant

From the Preserve Manager

By Susan Antenen

Stewardship of the Preserve's 1,400 acres of forest, fields, wetlands, river and lake and system of historic carriage roads is of utmost importance. It is our responsibility to retain the health, abundance, and beauty of the land, water, and native biodiversity for future generations. We see conservation of the Preserve's natural, historic, and cultural values as an on-going collective effort involving Preserve staff, volunteers, and the community-at-large.

To this end, we're striving to build a corps of informed, dedicated volunteer land stewards for the Preserve and the community. Whether you intend to invest your outdoor time and energy in the Preserve, Old Croton Aqueduct, Peabody Preserve, local parks, or your own backyard and neighborhood, we invite you to join our land stewardship initiative. Workshops and field days will provide basic training in local natural history and conservation biology from a landscape-scale perspective and stress positive actions we can take to foster native biodiversity and natural processes and safeguard nature's benefits to people. The first land stewardship workshop was held on Sunday, March 22. Over time, there will be more workshops and training opportunities open to all ages and levels of experience.

Our long-term conservation goal is to sustain our mosaic of forest, fields, wetlands and natural habitats while fostering native species of plants and animals. When you traverse the Preserve, you will soon see evidence of more and more stewardship projects. Along Lucy's Loop and Peaceful Path, where the mature forest is graced with an understory of spring wildflowers, maple-leaved viburnum and native shrubs, we are hand-pulling seedlings of numerous invasive species to keep these sections of forest in good condition. Stone Barns Center's sheep and goats will return to Rockwood Hall to help control the invasive vines that grow over the historic walls and manage the grassy fields. We are also undertaking species-specific management projects to control invasives that reduce flora diversity, such as black swallowwort, mile-a-minute vine, Asiatic bittersweet, and other super-aggressive plant species.

This year we will begin altering mowing regimes in a couple of "vest pocket" meadows, small patches of open field dominated by cool-season, European grasses where we want to gradually introduce and favor native grasses and field flowers, such as mountain mint, goldenrods, asters,

and milkweeds. Even small meadows can be lovely and provide cover and food for wildlife. We are also planning to strategically plant native trees, shrubs, and wildflowers, as we can't count on them to naturally establish themselves, due to selective deer browse, competition with invasive species and grasses, and insufficient seed sources.

Ongoing upkeep of the historic carriage roads in the Preserve is another major stewardship priority. We are assessing the condition of 32 miles of roads, stone walls, bridges, and drainage system. The assessment will be used to determine which trails and associated infrastructure need reconstruction and repair. Trail maintenance through the seasons entails blowing the leaves in the fall and spring, cleaning culverts, mowing trail edges, removing fallen trees, and repairing eroded sections. It's a big job that takes constant vigilance. Fortunately, the Friends of Rockefeller State Park Preserve are committed to helping us ramp up our day-to-day maintenance and significant capital improvements.

Stewardship also encompasses care of the spectacular tree peony garden in front of the visitor center. When the snow melts, our volunteer gardeners will spring into action. We need more hands in April to ready the 425 peonies for their floriferous explosion in early to mid-May.

If these projects interest you, please become a volunteer. Workshops and field days along with Preserve news and events, are posted at www.rsppvolunteers.blogspot.com.

Without a doubt, these stewardship initiatives are challenging and on-going. In regards to the ecological stewardship, we have much to learn and figure out, as our metropolitan location and climate change means we are on the new frontier of land management. Over time, we hope to involve more and more of you in our stewardship activities and find effective ways to reveal Pocantico Hill's landscape history, change, and ecological processes to all our visitors.

Cheers, Susan Antenen



Richard Nelson, *continued from page 1*

We were, as I recall, mainly interested in a pleasant walk. Observing nature, including birds, was not a major focus.

Years later, in the late '60s and even more so in the 1970s, I became interested in birds and nature. I discovered that the estate possessed a wealth of bird life and began to accumulate a respectable bird list with pileated woodpeckers, golden-winged warblers, fox sparrows, and Louisiana water thrushes. I discovered that Eagle Mountain had a rich selection of birds, especially during migration.

There was another aspect at work as well. During the late 1960s I attended the University of Arizona. While I enjoyed the Southwest and did a lot of hiking with the University's hiking group, I found that being in a semi-arid area increased my nostalgia for the lush, green landscapes of the Northeast. When I came back east in 1970, I started hiking more frequently, perhaps with greater appreciation. Having spent four years in southeast Arizona, one of the best areas for birding in the United States, my interest in birds intensified. From that time onward, I hiked on the estate almost incessantly in good weather. Even then I hoped that the estate might become a park.

My interests encompassed wild flowers and other wildlife as well as birds. I still remember seeing my first coyote at the base of Eagle Mountain in 1981. I explored parts of the estate where I had rarely gone before, such as Thirteen Bridges and Witches Spring, my two favorites ever since.

Soon after the Preserve was formally established, I was able to get a job on its staff. I did naturalist type work such as going out on the trails and recording what I saw, but also general maintenance, such as cleaning the bathrooms, if necessary. The staff was quite small, so it was necessary to perform a whole series of tasks.

In 1995-96, I initiated formal bird surveys – breeding from April through July; autumn migration from August through

November; and winter bird counts. I had three routes: Old Sleepy Hollow Road Trail; Witches Spring and valley bottom of Thirteen Bridges; and, for a while, a route up and over Overlook, Ash Tree Loop, and down to the Swan Lake. Each census was conducted weekly, weather permitting. In addition, I documented water fowl on Swan Lake through the fall and winter. I recorded wildflowers, such as purple trillium, rue anemone, pinxter flower, and marsh marigold.

What I saw changed over the years. I used to see and hear ruffed grouse drumming, but regretfully they have disappeared. Thirteen Bridges valley bottom was thick with evergreen hemlocks and extensive patches of spring beauty and yellow, blue and white violets. Pink lady slipper orchids and columbine, never common, also have vanished. Wood ducks used to raise young on the Pocantico River. On the plus side, turkeys and black vultures are now regularly seen.

In recent years, my census activity has been considerably reduced, but I still do a weekly walk along the Old Sleepy Hollow Road Trail and, when the Lake is not totally frozen, the Swan Lake waterfowl count. In recent years I have devoted much of my time to organizing these data.

Finally, let me express my deep debt of gratitude, which is difficult to convey because it is so vast, to the many people without whose assistance I could not have done this: Preserve managers and staff over 30 years; friendly patrons along the trails; volunteers whose activities on behalf of the Preserve are impossible to enumerate; leaders of the Saw Mill River Audubon Society; and finally, the office mascots, including two Irish setters (both named Chester); a short coated border collie, Maeve; a most lovable mutt named Occhi; and finally the present friendly occupant, a big orange tabby, Oscar, with a loud purr who makes life in the office especially pleasant.

P.S. Although I will be officially resigning I hope to return as a volunteer.



Rockwood Ramble, *continued from page 1*

populated not by people but by trees in various stages of seasonal dress and undress, shimmering ribbons of river and stream, and the occasional deer taunting me with exemplary running form. Once, a seal gazed at me from a rocky outcropping of the Hudson, but that's about as crowded as it gets.

Over time, I've committed every rock and root to memory. I'm pretty sure they sit silently in judgment, wondering where I've been for the last week and a half, or whether I should've had that 2nd (o.k. 3rd) glass of wine on the night before speed work.

At these moments, it's hard to fathom that my bucolic treasure is a mere 25 miles from sweaty, overcrowded, pushy Manhattan. Even the faint sounds of Metro North in the distance can be whisked from my panting imagination. An embarrassing admission: I have more than once formulated a plan for outsmarting a bear should I encounter one on the trails. Such are the depths of solitude my personal running paradise offers.

Shortly after formulating my mental Bear Survival Guide, I decided to let others into my personal nirvana by joining up with the Rivertown Runners. The crazy thing is, every one of them thinks that Rockies is their own personal running paradise. I don't have the heart to tell them, as they seem like nice people and they all worship my trails in uncannily similar ways to mine.

Which brings me to the title of this essay. Why in the name of all that is Rockies would I subscribe to allowing



Carolyn Oppenheim (right) and Todd Ruppel

my hallowed paradise to be infiltrated by a sweaty, pushy 10K race?

Simple.

When it comes to racing, I am a proud and competitive being. The Rockwood Ramble creates welcome distractions for you.

On the day of the race, many will come to inhale the incomparable Hudson Valley air. To marvel at the softness of the trails underfoot (while making a mental note to donate to the trail maintenance fund, or even bend and stretch for an hour or so to clear a few sticks themselves.) Some wide-eyed competitors will wonder whether their breath was taken away by the astonishing view, or the hills they've hoofed to get to it. Now, I will think all these things too. Tomorrow.

Today, I'll be working on my Personal Record.

Your IRA Distribution Can Benefit Your Park

By John Settembrino
Friends Board Member

Although required minimum distributions from IRAs are mandatory after age 70 ½, a few fortunate people take the proceeds reluctantly and just spend the money or add to their other accounts. Since these proceeds are taxable as ordinary income to the IRA owner, they could push them into a higher tax bracket or even reduce or eliminate some government programs.

Why not donate the required minimum distributions to the Friends of the Rockefeller State Park Preserve? The contribution would be tax deductible as a charitable donation and would offset the taxable income that the required minimum distributions would create. Your generous donation would assist our organization in fulfilling the many programs and functions we support to maintain our beautiful park for everyone.

Even if you do not take the required minimum distributions from your IRA, a generous donation would be deeply valued, especially to assist our trail crew after this long and snowy winter. With over 32 miles of trails to maintain and due to budget constraints, the New York State Office of Parks relies on generous contributions to keep the park running as it should. Our mission is to assist New York State to maintain this wonderful treasure for all. Your generous donation is greatly appreciated! For more information please contact us at friendsrock.org or call (914) 762-0209.



The Preserve Observer

Friends of the Rockefeller State Park Preserve
P.O. Box 8444
Sleepy Hollow, New York 10591
www.friendsrock.org

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Friends President Speaks to the Fortnightly Club

By Herbert Hadad

Clare Pierson, the president of the Friends of the Rockefeller State Park Preserve, recently addressed the venerable Fortnightly Club on the importance of the 1,400-acre preserve to the region and the continuing dedication of the Rockefeller family to natural conservation and preservation. She encouraged the club members to enjoy the park and participate in the Friends role of supporting it.

Clare, the granddaughter of former Governor and Vice President Nelson S. Rockefeller, spoke to about 45 club members in the Friendship Hall of the



Union Church of Pocantico Hills, which is celebrating its 100 anniversary. Her presentation was followed by the Club's traditional offering of chocolates and water.

The Fortnightly Group was founded in 1868 for the promotion of "social intercourse," according to its by-laws, and for the attainment

of knowledge of its members of current, historical, and cultural topics. The membership is limited to 50 active members.