

The Preserve Observer

Friends of the Rockefeller State Park Preserve Magazine Vol. XXXVII Spring 2017

Celebrating 20 Years



An oil painting by Boston artist Roberto Grande for an earlier Peony Festival

9th Annual Peony Festival Is Set for Thursday, May 11, 2017 At the Preserve Entrance

By Herbert Hadad

On Thursday, May 11, from 6 to 9 p.m., the Friends of the Rockefeller State Park Preserve will host one of the highlight events of the preserve spring season. It is the Ninth Annual Peony Festival – a fund-raising event that will celebrate the blooming at the entrance to the preserve of the famous Japanese tree peonies.

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Snows May Come Again But Cherish the Land We Have As Did The Rockefellers

By Benjamin H. Cheever

We haul our memories on our backs, and so jettison the lead bars, forget the dull dinner party companions, we even drop the gold. We keep what is light and precious. Puppy breath, a kiss, the clasp of a lover's hand. Inflation feeds steroids to nostalgia. "You could buy a Hershey bar for a nickel," we like to say, forgetting that you could toil all day digging ditches for a nickel." The past is also more dramatic. We didn't call it snowmagedden, but there was more snow when I was a boy. And more land for it to fall on.

I miss the snows of yesteryear. Now I like to remember that I knew even then that a giant was about to die. I like to think that I saw the portents in the gaps between the trees. It

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David Rockefeller in his living room

Family and 'Friends' Remember David Rockefeller With Respect, Boundless Gratitude and Love

By Clare M. Pierson and Evelyn Hadad

Clare and Evelyn are, respectively, the President and Vice President of Friends of the Rockefeller State Park Preserve.

On the first day of Spring we had the news that a giant left us, here in our hamlet of Pocantico. Everyone lives someplace, even those people who have an outsized effect on the

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Recollections - DR

By Ann Rockefeller Roberts

DR needs assistance now getting into the carriage his enthusiasm is undeterred He insists that I sit next to him in front his driver rides standing behind ready to assist DR wears leather gloves, a straw hat with black band

then we are off
he expects to leave promptly
both he and his pair of Morgans
restless to be out on the trails
nudging each other bobbing their heads
Let's get going!!

DR starts them out at a walk
Then using the tip of his whip and his voice
Guides them into a trot
an even steady pace for the open road
His attention clear, his gaze focused ahead

He came lately to carriage driving, after Peggy's death Building a beautiful carriage road in her honor "Peggy's Way"

winding through the woods above the lake

now he takes great pleasure inviting friends, family to go out with him,
Joining larger carriage events with elaborate picnics in an English manner on a hilltop with a beautiful view
The Hudson River or the Mountains in Maine

These rides are different every time-Scents of woodlands or ocean breezes Infinite choices, in Maine or in Westchester he decides where we are to go and for how long

We meet walkers, bikers, riders, other carriage drivers DR is courteous - greeting them, allowing children to come close, take photos and then moving on

The return is as orderly as the departure the attendants assist him and me out of the carriage relieving the horses of their harness washing them down, rubbing them dry before walking them back into their stalls

DR always invites me to come home with him for lunch and a nap,

if not, to come again as soon as possible It is bittersweet to part from each other where will we meet the next time?

Letter From NYS Parks Chief

(The following are excerpts from Commissioner Rose Harvey's letter)

On behalf of the staff of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, I extend our deepest sympathy to the family and close friends of Mr. David Rockefeller on this sad occasion.

I do hope you find some solace in knowing that his legacy will live on in so many special places across the state and nation, particularly his beloved Rockefeller State Park Preserve. Our visitors acknowledge and greatly appreciate the generosity of the Rockefeller family in the creation of the Preserve. Because of the family's remarkable vision, visitors follow historic carriage trails along the Preserve's wonderful untouched landscape, through preserve lands, onto Mr. Rockefeller's lands and back into State lands and not even know it! And, David was the personification of the family within the preserve. Seeing "Mister" drive by in his stately carriage was an evocative link to a by-gone era.

We are grateful for his intention to donate another 500 acres of land to the park, preserving even more of this wondrous land for generations to come. Perhaps his greatest gift in his example. His generosity is a reminder to us all of our shared responsibility to care for our environment and our public lands.

Remembering The Rides

Friends Board Treasurer Carol Lyden, whose mother was Happy Rockefeller, said, "David and I shared our love of carriage driving through the Preserve that he deeply cherished. His extraordinary generosity towards the Preserve gave much pleasure to so many. And we will always remember with joy and gratitude what special attention he gave to the Preserve.

"In one of our recent conversations David asked me if I had been out carriage driving and told me how much he wanted to go. What a spirit he had!

"I will hold close to my heart a lifetime of memories with him.

"My husband John and I will miss him greatly."

David Rockefeller, continued from page 1

world, and this is where David Rockefeller spent most of the later years of his life.

"To the several local family members, he was mostly Uncle David. We are a collection of nieces and nephews, grand nieces and nephews, maybe a daughter included. Or a kindly neighbor. Even if the official relationship was cousin, Uncle was what we called him and he answered to," Clare Pierson, David Rockefeller's grand niece, said.

From Lucy Waletzky, daughter of David's late brother Laurance: "Uncle David was a very generous donor to the Rockefeller State Park Preserve and took great pride in the number of people visiting it. In addition, he was a warm and loving uncle who we will greatly miss for countless reasons."

"He loved the idea that family would continue to live here in the place his grandfather, the architect of the fortune, and his father, path maker

in philanthropy, had carved out of the hills overlooking the Hudson River. He was generous to us, quietly supportive, as he was generous to the State of New York," Clare said.

And David loved this land, this place. He with his carriages and his beautiful horses were a treasured sight on the carriage roads of Pocantico, the roads of our preserve. Best to step out of the way when he came barreling along—a carriage is not a car, and while there are brakes, these are also horses and they have an outsize momentum, along with their driver.

David Rockefeller, who passed away at age 101, grew up at his father's feet. John D Rockefeller Jr. loved his horses and his carriages, and he and his father set out the plans for the carriage road system here in the preserve, and Jr. built them. Being out in what was then the estate in Pocantico was one of Jr.'s delights, and clearly David caught his father's enthusiasm for driving and for being out in the natural world. His daughter Eileen R. Growald shared that love.

"My father inherited a love of carriage driving both from his own father and his wife, Peggy," Eileen recalled. "Peggy held the reins until her death 21 years ago. At age 80, having never driven, my Dad started right off driving a pair! He always wanted to be up to date. He loved the roads around the Preserve and spent many an hour trotting under the shade of the great trees that line most of the paths. Sometimes I brought my own horses to drive in tandem, but we most

enjoyed driving together. On occasion we stopped to have picnics by a stream. I will cherish the memories."

George Gumina is a Rockefeller cousin by marriage to Rachel, a granddaughter of Nelson A. Rockefeller. George, a horse lover to the core, grew close to Peggy and David, and admired their love and stewardship of the land. It led George to establish the Friends group in Peggy's memory and serve as the first president. "Uncle David was a loving and caring

man, not only to his family but to humanity. When we were together, he always wanted to know how were things on the preserve and the roads," George said.

DR, as he was also known, was a captain of banking, a builder of the Manhattan skyline, a friend and confidante to kings and prime ministers across the globe and a major collector of fine art and the sole surviving patriarch of his family. Yet he also enjoyed services

at the Union Church of Pocantico Hills, where he met Evelyn Hadad and her family.

"He was charming and approachable," she said, "so one Sunday I suggested he come to our home for dinner with our family. He accepted.

"Sipping his martini he admired a Persian rug and a Chinese brass incense burner. We moved to the dining room and took our seats. The last person to arrive at the table was our daughter Sara Jameela, the chef for the night. It was then that we witnessed his impeccable manners. David stood, came around the table and pulled the chair back for her. It was lovely to watch and unforgettable."

In an interview with The Preserve Observer five years ago, David Rockefeller recollected his passion for the land that never wavered. "I guess with my first five years excluded, I've been on the trails for almost 92 years." And that passion continued to the end of his very memorable life.





DR loved carriage riding in every season.





Bridge to Bridge Amble and Gamble Equestrian Event

October 2017

For Equestrians, Park lovers and anyone who likes a hearty lunch in a beautiful spot, it fills the bill. Go to www.friendsrock.org for details.



Photo: Margaret Fox Photography

From the Friends President

By Clare M. Pierson



As I write, we are mourning the loss of David Rockefeller, both the public man who gave so much to this preserve and the private man who was so dear to all of us (*See article on page 1 for my remembrances and those of others*). Spring can be a hard time.

As we look forward to this coming year, we are thinking about our event schedule. The **9th Annual Peony Reception** is coming up **May 11th**, with help from the local garden groups with their beautiful flower arrangements. Join us for a festive evening amidst those glorious peonies, and bring your friends! There is a link on our website to buy tickets.

The Rockwood Ramble has opened registration for Saturday, June 3. Set on the trails all around Rockwood Hall, this 10K combines the incredible views of the Hudson River with the gentle streamside carriage roads of Rockwood Hall, and a few challenging hills thrown in (it wouldn't be a run in this park without them!) There is a wonderful early bird sale still on!

We are also looking forward to our two October events. The Amble & Gamble will take place also at Rockwood Hall. It's a lovely trail ride for the equestrian set as well as being an opportunity to lunch at the foundation of the mansion that stood in Rockwood and see the boats sail by on the river and the horses come in from their ride. Please go to www.friendsrock.org for more details.

The Rocky's 5K takes place Oct. 21st, and goes out from the Preserve Visitor Center, and features more of those famous hills.

Please join us - you will have so much fun!





Memorial to

Richard Nelson Retired Preserve Naturalist

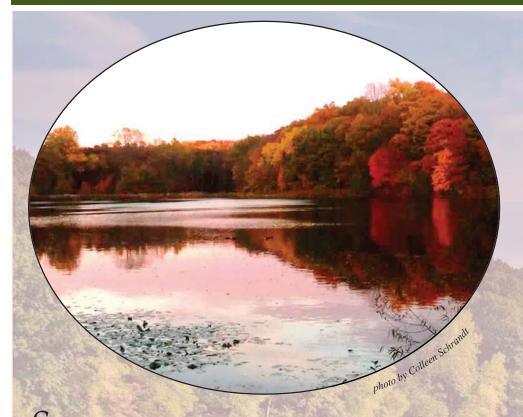


Richard Nelson, the Preserve's first employee in 1985, who birded here for over 30 years and absolutely adored the Preserve, passed away in January. He had retired on July 1, 2015 but continued his loving relationship with the Preserve by volunteering. He was a constant fixture here for so many seasons. There will be a memorial gathering to honor Richard on **May 22 at 4 pm** in the Preserve Visitor Gallery. All are welcome.

Board of Directors Friends of the Rockefeller State Park Preserve

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Jwan Lake is the scenic heart of the Preserve and Brothers' Path around the lake is the gateway. Brothers' Path, 1.1 miles, is our most popular trail

for good reason. You never know what you'll see and hear ... a fourhand carriage rounding the bend, honking geese skidding in at sunset, sweet milkweeds scented alive with butterflies, or early morning fog.



photo by Heidi Fuhrman

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Swan Lake is 22 acres in area, 18' at its deepest. The Rockefellers created it in the early 1930's by building an earthen dam across a small stream and valley. Brothers' Path crosses the dam which is embellished with spaced

The Delights of Brothers' Path and Swan Lake

boulders nicknamed "Rockefeller's Teeth" and a profusion of goldenrod, summer aster, bush clover, black-eyed Susan and wild peas. The spillway is forded by seven "stepping stones".



On the east side, the carriage road follows the 1880 route of the "Tarrytown Loop", a section of rail line which came to be known as the Putnam division of the New York Central Railroad. The path follows the railroad cuts through the bedrock under arched trees which grew after the tracks were removed in 1931.



photo by Norman Goldberg

The path on the west side

offers close-ups of painted

turtles of all sizes lined up

on logs, water lilies and,

sometimes, a momma

Mallard duck leading her



ducklings across the path. photo by Debra McGinnity her ducklings across the path. Magnificent red oak trees, which predate the Rockefeller era, stretch over the water, while uphill, the grasses of Overlook Meadow sway in the breeze.

As wonderful as the walk is, the trail itself needs rehabilitation. Reconstructing Brothers' Path is a top priority for the Preserve. The path will be rebuilt and surfaced with crushed stone. Drainage swales and bluestone culverts will be restored. The project will define "places" for people, such as benches, fishing spots, and lake access points.



photo by Marvin Klein

Along the trail and lake edge, on-going vegetation management favors native wildflowers and addresses dense tangles of invasive multiflora rose, privet, Japanese aralia, and vines. Native tupelo trees, dogwoods, and oaks will be planted to fill gaps left by dead trees.



For generations to come, Swan Lake and Brothers' Path will continue to delight, renew and inspire visitors

> Centerfold content & design layout by Susan Antenen, & Laurence Gill

*** Gallery Schedule at a Glance ***

"A Visual Journey"

April 2 - May 7, 2017 Opening: Sunday, April 2nd

Artist Margaret Grace explores the Highlands to the Hudson River shores inspired by pre-dawn hues and architecture of houses illuminated in green by unseen light and silvery moonlight. She explores the depths beneath in a series of Hudson Canyon images when roding glaciers gouged out the river bottom far below, as a foreshadowing of a changing planet.

Isabella Jacob's "small house sculptures - (collaged interiors)", dramatize community life.



Margaret Grace

Audrey Leeds, Curator of the Art Gallery at the Preserve Visitor Center, fondly recalled, "There are precious moments in time when we remember the quiet presence of this soulful, considerate man, David Rockefeller, who supported the Art Gallery at the Rockefeller Park Preserve. His spirited interest attending exhibits, visiting with the artists and acquiring their works of art, encouraged a growing audience of visitors to the gallery and enhanced a keen interest in the environmental importance of the Park Preserve. It was an honor to share his years of commitment."

"Celebration"

featuring

Anne Bell, Radu Serban & Bonnie Sakoff

Opening: Sunday, May 14th

Artists exploring space use color, line form and rhythm interpreting what is alive. Subjects begin with plants and flowers each having their own choreography of movement. Our painters, inspired by this reality, have created their individual visual languages working with abstraction, inspired by realism while honoring nature's gifts. "Celebration" is dedicated to David Rockefeller.



Anne Bell



Radu Serban



Bonnie Sakoff

From the Preserve Manager

By Susan Antenen

One of the very best things we can do for children is to introduce them to the great outdoors and the wonders of nature. Nature benefits children's development in every major way –it instills a sense of beauty and calmness, enhances curiosity and respect for living things, improves focus and reduces Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), increases physical activity and agility, and leads to healthier eyes and body.

I'm very pleased to promote two New York State offerings that "connect kids to parks". Fourth graders are eligible for free passes to Rockefeller Preserve and 128 state parks through the "Every Kid in a Park" program (https:/www.everykidinapark.gov/). If you're a parent, grandparent, teacher, or neighbor of a fourth grader, please take advantage of this program and help us spread the word.

New York has also launched "Connect Kids to Parks," a field trip grant program for K-12 classrooms in school buildings listed as Title 1 or Title 1 Targeted Assistance. The grants reimburse bus costs, tolls, and program fees up to \$750 per classroom. (https://parks.ny.gov/environment/connect-kids.aspx) Saw Mill River Audubon Society is recruiting Title 1 schools for field trips to Rockefeller Preserve tailored to NYS-science learning standards including exploration of preserve habitats and learning about birding with binoculars available for all students. Thank you, Audubon, we couldn't do this without you!

I'm always happy to see children and families exploring the Preserve and wonder what children see and feel when here. This summer we invite children to show us by drawing the Preserve and its life. Their drawings will be exhibited in the Gallery in early August. Art supplies will be available in the Office beginning in June. The only directions are to explore, look around, and draw what interests you (then drop the drawings off in the office).

Warblers, vireos, thrushes and many of the colorful songbirds that migrate through or nest in the Preserve will be featured in an upcoming photographic and sound exhibit. Winged Jewels of the Forest will spotlight the work of nine local photographers who patiently stalk birds in the Preserve and Hudson Valley. The Gallery exhibit runs from June 18 to July 30.

If you wish to seek out birds in the wild with a top-notch guide, I encourage you to join Anne Swaim, Director of Saw Mill River Audubon, on morning bird walks in the Preserve that meet in the parking lot. The walks are for all ages and levels of experience.

Monday, May 8 at 7:30 am Thursday, May 18 at 5:30 am Thursday, June 1 at 5:30 am Monday, June 4 at 6:30 am

The spring rush is upon us. The woods are coming alive; our crews are out and about maintaining the trails and ramping up our habitat restoration activities. We look forward to encountering you on the trails.



Rockefeller State Park Preserve Staff

Susan Antenen, Preserve Manager
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Sean Liegey, Maintenance Supervisor
Dominie Garcia, Maintenance Assistant
Amy Zimmerman, Office Assistant
Anthony Corda, Parking Lot / Visitor Service Assistant
Jamal Eissa, Operations Assistant
Julia Ann Jardine, Conservation Communicator
John Zeiger, Seasonal Natural Resource Steward

Snow, continued from page 1

was early March of 2017 and from my kitchen window I could see the snows of this year coming down in generous handfuls, filling the park. My father said that the only time he ever heard me pray, I was asking God for snow.

If it snowed enough the schools would close. My mother would make err plurr. This was powdered snow tossed with powdered sugar. It was called err plurr, because it was eaten so cold that when asked if you wanted more, and you said "yes, please," it sounded like err plurr.

After breakfast the kids would pour out of the houses and throw snowballs at one another. Then we'd make peace with one another so that we could throw snowballs at cars. When a lucky marksman got a missile through an open window, the car might shriek to a stop. The driver would dismount and chase the screaming miscreants into the woods. Once in a great while, a laggard would be grabbed by the collar and slugged. Boys could be boys back then and boys could also be slugged.

That's all changed now. Do you suppose that we have less snow because there's so little land for it to fall on?

Whenever anything epic happened it was snowing. It snowed for JFK's inauguration. My father was invited. My mother thumb-tacked the card and its envelope to the pantry wall. This wasn't even taken down when a rude visitor pointed out that the envelope had not been postmarked until after the actual event had taken place.

The entire Cheever family—black Labrador retriever and all—watched the inauguration on the old Emerson black and white. There was Robert Frost in the snow with his snow-white hair and the wind whipping the pages out of his hands.

Lord but JFK was a handsome man. He had a voice you could get lost in and if he came upon a set of stairs, he'd bound right up them. Here was P.T. boat captain with an intellect as nimble as his body.

When asked about being a hero, JFK said, "It was absolutely involuntary; they sunk my boat." When he was charged with being rich, he said his father had written: "Dear Jack, don't buy a single vote more than is necessary. I'll be damned if I'm going to pay for a landslide."

The Rockefellers and Kennedys were the giants of my youth. Kindly giants. The Kennedys the Rockefellers both knew their Bibles: To whomever much is given, of him much will be required.

Great wealth has always been—will always be—a public relations nightmare, but I was fortunate to grow up in an era when many of the most powerful men and women rolled their sleeves up and spent their lives striving to make the world in which they'd prospered a better place for everybody else.

The Rockefellers founded museums and universities, they funded research and gave the land on which to build the United Nations. Frost wrote an original poem for the Kennedy inauguration. The title was "The Gift Outright" and the opening line: "The land was ours before we were the land's." My mind flips the words. "We were the land's before the land was ours."

Legend is most of what we know now about Native Americans, but legend has it that while they loved the land, they did not own it in the way that we do. Geronimo was a hard man. He'd bash the heads of children against the mantel piece. But Geronimo was also a religious man, a greenie. Asked about church, he said that the outdoors was his church. Apaches knew where they had been born, and where the placenta had been buried. They were the land's before the land was theirs.

It's fashionable to condemn our brutish conquest of this continent, but we forget that we are condemning our forefathers. To condemn, our forefathers is to condemn ourselves. We were a heedless and destructive force of nature, but we were and are still of the nature that we abuse.

I have the enormous good fortune to live in a house that looks out onto the Rockefeller State Park Preserve. Outside the kitchen window I look upon a gift.

David Rockefeller has just died at 101 and I'm not being nostalgic, when I say that he died too soon. David was the father of the community I have lived in for decades now. He wasn't just the father, he was the good father. When my mother read her poetry at the Hudson Valley Writers' Center, he came to swell the audience. He had authority and he liked to share it. This is in his family's DNA.

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Reaching the Friends

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

The Preserve Observer

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facebook.com/rockyspark
instagram.com/rockysparkfriends
Editors: Evelyn Hadad, Herbert Hadad
Letters and submissions are invited.
Please contact us c/o the Friends.

Snow, *continued from page 10*

Before it was the Rockefeller State Park Preserve, the land I love was the Rockefeller Estate. It was private land, but then the Rockefellers were more like the Native Americans than today's homeowners. They put up signs that read, "No hunting or fishing." There was nothing on those signs about trespassing. In this nation the Rockefellers are a force of nature.

I was four when my whole family hiked onto the estate for a picnic. My youthful father and my gorgeous mother led the way. A man and a woman on horseback passed us on the trail. The way I remember it, they both were dressed entirely in black. The woman was thrown. "She's dead," the man said. "She's dead."

The man couldn't easily dismount and so my father took the woman in his arms. She wasn't dead, of course, not even badly hurt. I use the incident as my excuse for never having learned to ride, but those strangers gave a mythic symmetry to our outing. We'd left the civilized world. We were deep in the mysterious forest and there was death.

Just one element was missing. It wasn't snowing. But then our memories mustn't be confused with what actually happened. The movie "Jackie" was almost ruined for me because it wasn't snowing at the funeral. I'd seen the JFK funeral on the same Emerson black and white on which I'd seen the inauguration. The snow was coming down in generous handfuls. I guessed that the tight-fisted movie makers didn't want to pay extra for a snow machine.

It was snowing at the JFK inauguration. And at the funeral too. I went on line to check. There was Robert Frost all right, with the wind whipping the papers out of his hands, but there wasn't so much as a single snow flake. Then I Googled images of the funeral. There it all was, the riderless horse which had—I knew—one boot backward in the stirrup. But no snow.

Then I remembered the loyal old Emerson on which I'd seen all the significant events of my youth. On the Emerson it was always snowing.

In my lifetime I've seen shopping centers and housing developments sprout like mushrooms after rain. Open land is melting away around us like snow in a hot skillet.

We are a nation of alchemists. Whatever we find, we turn it into gold. Sperm whales were turned into gold, then oil and titanium.

Living as near as we do to the great city of gold, the land itself is precious. Let's not trade this land for gold. We want to be rich, but we don't want to be Midas. Everything Midas touched, he turned to gold. Nifty right? Well it was nifty, until he touched what he loved the most. He touched his daughter and she died.

The Rockefellers gave us the land, but now it's ours. We need to make it ours. We should pitch in. Act like rich people. We should act like rich people used to do.

Mr. Cheever, the author of several books, is a member of the Friends Board of Directors.

Peony, continued from page 1

John Manuele, Chairman of the Peony event, said, "We will serve cocktails, light cuisine and good company. The festival is a personal favorite because of my experience in hospitality and because the floral activities are chaired by my talented mother-in-law."

Terry Marchica, in charge of special events for the Briarcliff Manor Garden Club, who solicits and organizes the floral displays, has assured us that once again there will be beautiful arrangements donated by local garden clubs, including her own in Briarcliff Manor, as well as Little Gardens of Tarrytown and Ardsley Garden Club. These are sold during the event to the highest bidder.

The festival will take place in the Visitor Center Courtyard under what is hoped will be clear blue skies and warm weather. Preparation of the peonies begins months before the event. One of the enthusiastic volunteer gardeners is Keith Austin, a former mayor of Briarcliff Manor and chairman of its planning board. Austin's colleagues include Chris Davies, Joann Stern, Mattie Varvaro and Ann Perkowski.

This celebration is much anticipated 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.

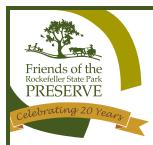
Please come and enjoy your friends, refreshments and the magnificent flowers! For information, please consult our web site, www.friendsrock.org. Ticket price begins at \$125.











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

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HERE TO ENJOY....OURS TO PRESERVE

ROCKWOOD RAMBLE 10K



10K Race on the Beautiful Groomed Carriage Roads of ROCKEFELLER STATE PARK PRESERVE 1 Rockwood Road • Sleepy Hollow, NY 10591

All Proceeds for Trail Maintenance

Registration fee - \$35 through June 1st • Registration fee day of race - \$40

Team Competition • Awards • T-Shirts • Refreshments

Register Online: www.register.chronotrack.com/r/27231 Additional Race Info: www.friendsrock.org/preserve-events/rocks-races/rockwood-ramble-10k

Thank you to Our Sponsor LL Bean for donation of gifts for the race!