



Friends of the
Rockefeller State Park
PRESERVE

The Preserve Observer

Friends of the Rockefeller State Park Preserve Magazine
Vol. XLIV Fall 2020

Photo: Ranger Susan Levenz



Erik Kulleseid, NYS Parks Commissioner

History Is Made at the Courtyard And Thousands Say Thank You

By Herbert Hadad

History was made in the courtyard of the Preserve earlier this year when senior officials of New York State gathered to announce that the beloved property was now part of the Rockefeller Pocantico Hills Estate Historic District. The distinction was recorded with a brass plaque at the entrance to the visitor center.

"Today, we celebrate the legacy of two generations that over seven decades created this unique landscape, where 65 miles of carriage roads reveal and enhance the beauty of this part of the Hudson Valley,"

continued on page 2

Friends Staff Get Up To Speed for Swan Lake Turtles

Herpetofauna, more commonly known as amphibians and reptiles, are a unique grouping of animals with a long evolutionary history. Familiar examples of 'amphibians' include animals such as frogs and salamanders, whilst the term 'reptile' encompasses animals such as snakes, lizards, and turtles. Though many of these animals have inhabited this planet for hundreds of millions of years, long before humans ever evolved, they are unfortunately disappearing in our lifetime at an alarming rate. The reasons for their extirpations and extinctions are largely driven by human disturbance. Pollution, agricultural runoff, roadways that fragment their habitats, and climate change are all direct threats to these animals, which for the most part,

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Please read President's Appeal Letter on page 5.

Photo: Don Pollard



Frances Chu (left), Ann Rockefeller Roberts and Ms. Chu's son Roderick

Extraordinary Friend Remembered Fondly

By Clare M. Pierson,
Former Friends President

Longtime Friends supporter Frances Chu passed away peacefully July 21 of 2020 having lived a life filled with a brilliant career, deeply meaningful philanthropic activities, and a loving circle of close family and friends.

Former park manager Alix Schnee first met Frances on Swan Lake. An avid and successful fisher, she had caught a 1½ pound bass. When the bass she caught was large enough, and it often was, she would carry it off to her favorite Chinese seafood restaurant, and it would become part

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National Status, *continued from page 1*

said Erik Kulleseid, Commissioner of New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.

He then said that I'm very honored to join with people who are so deeply committed to the stewardship of this park, which holds a special place in New York's environment and history. Good stewardship starts at the grassroots. I want to thank George Gumina, President of the Friends of Rockefeller State Park Preserve and the members of his board, for helping to care for the wonderful gift given by the Rockefeller family.

I am endlessly grateful as well to Lucy Waletzky, the chair of our State Council of Parks. She is the conscience of our state park system – always keeping us focused and reminding us what is so important about the places we are protecting. Thank you, Lucy.

Commissioner Kulleseid then stated that the Rockefeller family's legacy in creating and protecting state and national parks is without peer in the United States. What we see around us today is essentially a labor of love, begun by John D. Rockefeller Sr. and his brother, William, and continued by John D's son, John Jr., between 1890 and 1960.

Covering more than 3,000 acres, the district includes John D's magnificent estate – Kykuit – which was built between 1907 and 1913, and with its 250 acres of ground, has been a National Historic Landmark since the 1970s.

The new district ties that together with the entire grounds, which include the remains of William's former estate, Rockwood, as well as the carriage road network and its 47 bridges, which were laid out by John D. himself. The Park Preserve occupies about 1,700 acres in this district, with the rest privately held.

In the nomination form submitted to the National Park Service, there is a quote that captures what John D. Rockefeller thought as he envisioned these roads and wonderful views. He said: "I had the advantage of knowing every foot of the land, all the big old trees were personal friends of mine, and with the views at any given point, I was perfectly familiar. In a few days, I had worked out a plan so devised that the roads caught just the best views at just the angles where in driving up the hill, you came upon impressive outlooks and the ending was the final burst of river, hill, cloud and great sweep in country...and here I fixed my stakes."

The spirit of philanthropy also drove the Rockefeller family's vision of this site, and they opened these carriage roads early on to the public. People would often write to thank them for what they found here. And John Jr. would respond, explaining how glad they were to share it. In one such reply, he wrote: "We would feel selfish, indeed, with all the beauty nature has so lavishly provided in that section of the country were we not sharing it with our friends and neighbors, who likewise find inspiration and refreshment there."

Commissioner Kulleseid also thanked Bill Krattinger, lead researcher and author of this nomination; Kath LaFrank for significant insight and encouragement; and the team at the NYS Division for Historic Preservation, led by Daniel Mackay, Deputy Commissioner for Historic Preservation, for their work in recording this incredible legacy. It is a magnificent document.

The history of how this jewel came to be is a reminder of our shared responsibility to care for our public parks – they are among the greatest gifts that can be passed from one generation to the next.

The Commissioner concluded his comments by saying that our hope is that the listing on the National Register of Historic Places will help more people to appreciate and understand the meaning of this region and they will take up the fight to protect this park – and renew the gift for another generation to find "inspiration and refreshment" here.

Daniel Mackay, the Deputy Commissioner for Historic Preservation, then gave these equally compelling remarks by saying that New York State leads the nation in terms of number and diversity of National Register listings. Overall, we have a deeply accomplished staff, but knew there was but one person ready to face the challenges of this particular nomination - Bill Krattinger. He worked diligently and tirelessly to deliver a most exceptional nomination.

This nomination was challenging on multiple fronts:

- The former estate area is a geographically expansive resource, and while once the domain of a single owner, it is now broken up into an array of parcels with myriad owners, public and private;
- The district is in large measure a naturalistic/landscape resource, thus presenting challenges in terms of how to properly describe it in narrative form;



Photo: Ranger Susan Leventz

George Gumina, Friends President

Frances Chu, *continued from page 1*

of a feast she shared with family and friends, Alix included.

They became fast friends, bonding over their love of the Preserve as well as the work they were both devoted to at Rotary. Alix remembers amazing activities hosted by the Westchester chapter of the Organization of Chinese Americans, founded by Frances, popovers at Nieman Marcus, and advice on investing (never sell!). Frances never arrived empty handed. Alix remembers her bringing chocolates to the park staff on numerous occasions. "Frances was always expanding her mind, always engaged, and she was very generous to Rotary, and to the Preserve. I had a great time with her."

Park Manager Peter Iskendarian remembers her always smiling, and outfishing anyone on the Lake, "she was a fish whisperer, she knew all the spots". "When she came to fish, we'd have all our equipment, and this little lady goes out and catches a bucketful of fish" fondly remembers Laurence Gil, Director of Operations, of the jealousy of some of the other fishers.

As a Rotarian, Frances was the world's first female President of a Club (Chinatown) and received one of their Service Above Self Awards, granted to no more than 150 Rotarians worldwide – a "Prestigious award for Rotarians who demonstrate their commitment to helping others by volunteering their time and talents." She was a brilliant fundraiser. Among the organizations she worked with, in addition to the Friends, were the America Red Cross in Westchester, Beekman Downtown Hospital in New York City, and Chu Family Charitable Foundation that she created with members of her family to continue her charitable work.

As a young married woman, Frances always had a job. She worked as a translator at Ellis Island, speaking fluent English, Mandarin, Shanghai, Cantonese, and some Fukienese. Later she worked for an insurance company, and as a bookkeeper at Pan American World Airways, which provided hefty discounts for travel on Pan Am to her and her family. When Pan Am started their project

to develop the world's first on-line airline reservation system for international flights (PANAMAC), they held a company-wide aptitude test to find employees who might be capable of programming such a system. Mrs. Chu aced the test and was made a manager of that project. Her logical mind enabled her team at IBM to solve some of the vexing problems not addressed by American Airlines in their contemporary project to develop the world's first domestic airline reservation system, SABRE – for example, how to handle flights whose schedules made it appear that they arrived before they departed (because they crossed the International Date Line).

She went on to Chemical Bank and became their first female Vice President, and moved again to Saks Fifth Avenue to head up their Data Processing Quality Control. Being at Saks had more than one advantage, she had a discount on clothes, and her family benefitted a great deal from that! Mrs. Chu was a deeply caring person, and throughout her working career, she developed the talents of the staff, friends, and others around her. She took early retirement from Saks to allow them to use her salary to keep her staff on during their financial cutbacks.

Mrs. Chu was a strong, independent woman who faced down numerous health issues in the later part of her life, coming out to vigorous health again and again. She reminded me of my great uncle, David Rockefeller, whose life force was unimpressed with obstacles that often defeated more ordinary people. She was curious, brilliant, kind and sophisticated. I am grateful to have known Frances Chu.



Photo: Margaret Fox

Frances Chu and Clare Pierson at Peony Celebration

The passing of Ms. Frances Chu was a great loss for the Friends. Her energy and knowledge were matched by her generosity. The work of the Friends in support of the Preserve is dependent upon donations from members of our community like you.

Please see our website on how to give. And thank you!



www.friendsrock.org



Meet the Friends' Newest Friend



Brian Geary, his wife Liz and their three gorgeous children

Brian Geary, a life-long resident of Westchester County, has long considered the Preserve a special place. In fact, proximity to the Preserve is one of the things Brian, his wife, Elizabeth, and their three daughters, Maeve 8, Nora 6 and Caroline 4, love most about living in Pocantico Hills.

Walks in the Preserve are one of their favorite family activities. This was especially true in Spring of 2020 when Brian and his children spent a part of nearly every day exploring a different part of the Preserve. Tops among the many things that Brian admires and enjoys in the Preserve are the wide variety of mature and specimen quality trees. From the towering, native Tulip Poplars, to the varying cultivars of European Beech trees planted over 100 years ago, there is always a tree to discover, behold and admire.

Brian works as a lieutenant with the Yonkers Fire Department and for several years held an elected position on the Yonkers Firefighters, Local 628 executive board. He is a board member of the Pocantico Hills School Foundation and an active parishioner at Church of the Magdalene in Pocantico. Brian earned a B.A. in English from Fordham University in 1998. Before becoming a firefighter, Brian taught high school English for four years during which time he was enrolled in a master's program at CCNY.

In addition to enjoying nature on two feet or on two cross-country skis in the Preserve, Brian also enjoys riding the county's mountain bike trails and woodworking.

Check our website for any upcoming Zoom events and for when we are able to return to traditional events.

www.friendsrock.org

Turtles, *continued from page 1*

have a low tolerance to these stressors.

A broader aim of Rockefeller State Park Preserve is to improve its understanding of its wildlife biodiversity and to conserve target wildlife species along with their respective habitats. Recently, the steward staff has invested time in studying the biodiversity of aquatic turtles within its picturesque waterscape, Swan Lake. With the help of three dedicated Pace students, we used specialized nets to humanely trap and collect biological data for over 150 turtles from Swan Lake (releasing the turtles thereafter). The native species observed included Painted turtles, Common snapping turtles, and Musk turtles. While we expected to find one invasive species of turtle, the Red-eared slider, we were surprised to find not only another invasive relative of this turtle, known as the Yellow-bellied slider, but evidence of what seems to be interbreeding between the two as well (i.e. Red-eared sliders breeding with Yellow-bellied sliders). While both slider species are native to the United States, their native home range is limited to the south and south-central regions of the country. Both of these slider species are commonly sold in pet stores around the country, however, and oftentimes make their way into the northeast waterways when pet-owners can no longer care for them, eventually releasing them into the wild. Many individuals purchase these turtles from pet-stores when they are young, but fail to understand that they can easily live beyond 20 years of age, which is why they are released into the wild after only several years of care. Unfortunately, these non-native turtles, which are introduced to our waterways, can cause a plethora of detrimental issues for native wildlife and their ecosystems.



Felix Gonzalez handling a large Common snapping turtle caught in Swan Lake. This particular individual exceeded 16lbs in bodyweight and was likely 30 years or older in age.

The good news is that Swan Lake seems to show healthy levels of native turtle species. While our data has yet to be formally analyzed, we found a particularly high amount of Painted turtles and recorded many observations of Musk turtles. We also found several, very large Common snapping turtles, some of which easily exceeded one foot in length and weighed over 20 pounds. It was slightly concerning that we did not find many young or juvenile snapping turtles, which might suggest an imbalance

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From the Friends President

By George Gumina

This has been quite a year of challenges! The Preserve staff, led by Manager Peter Iskenderian, has done a superb job of maintaining the park during this pandemic and the several storms we have already had. And despite not being able to hold our regular events and fund raisers, the Friends organization has been very active.

We achieved the designation of the celebrated carriage roads onto the National Register of Historic Places and dedicated this important selection with a plaque. The ceremony took place in the Visitors Center Courtyard on Friday, July 31st with the Commissioner for New York State Office of Parks, Restoration and Historic Preservation, Eric Kulleseid, and Daniel MacKay, Deputy Commissioner, providing memorable words and historical background (please see article on Page 1).

The restoration of Brothers Path and some of the surrounding trails has moved forward for the Spring of 2021. And the Friends sent our support of \$250,000 for the project to Albany in October.

Our Board is welcoming a new member, Brian Geary, who is a local Pocantico Hills resident and a frequent visitor to the Preserve with his wife Elizabeth and three children, Maeve, Nora and Caroline. Please see Brian’s profile and family picture on page 4.

The Preserve Visitor Center has reopened! There are new rules requiring wearing masks and practicing social distancing but the art work is still as memorable as ever! The exhibits are described in Gallery Schedule at a Glance on page 10.

We want to thank Edge-on-Hudson Residences and Andrea Martone of Houlihan Lawrence Realty for sponsoring the production of new maps for the Preserve. We have welcomed so many new visitors to the park during the pandemic and the first thing many ask for is a map!

Besides 2020 being remembered as the year of the Covid virus, we also lost an ardent supporter of the Friends organization and the Preserve, Ms. Frances Chu. There is a wonderful article about this intelligent, kind and generous woman on page 1. But I want to say it is so important for each and every one of us to follow her unselfish example and help to preserve this beautiful Preserve. Especially during this pandemic, we cannot do it without your support. As the end of this year approaches, please give a gift to this oasis of calm amidst the stormy seas of sickness. As you walk these magnificent carriage roads, you will be glad you did!

We hope you stay safe, kindly support our efforts and the Preserve, and of course, come and enjoy this beautiful jewel of nature!



From the cover: Radu Serban’s Piermont Marina, oil on canvas

Board of Directors

Friends of the Rockefeller State Park Preserve

George Gumina, *President*

M. Evelyn Hadad, *Vice President*

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Carol M. Lyden, *Treasurer*

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Administrative Director: Jessika Creedon

Volunteering at the Preserve

By Ranger Su



At the Preserve we are blessed to have such a great community of supporters, including our many volunteers, as well as those who are members and contributors to the Friendsrock.org support organization. We have a growing online community via social media community. (we just hit 6600 followers on Facebook!)

When there isn't a hiring freeze as there is now, our entire team is 10 parttime and fulltime employees. To give you an idea of what this means, we have 2 people to maintain the flora and fauna of the entire 1700 acres of the Preserve (i.e. our Stewards). So, we are very reliant and EXTREMELY thankful for our volunteers and this issue is dedicated to all of them! Below, short summary of some of our volunteer programs and how to learn more. If you want to get involved, please reach out, but be persistent as sometimes we can get swamped!

STEWARDSHIP TEAM	Stewards help with habitat restoration and trail maintenance! There is always something different to work on; whether it be removing invasive plant species to help natives grow, maintaining existing native habitat, assisting in plantings, or clearing debris from trails. Sign up at: https://RockefellerStateParkPreserve.eventbrite.com
GARDENING TEAM	Every week volunteers come and care for the Preserve's magnificent gardens, including our world-famous Japanese Tree Peony Garden. We are seeking volunteers to join the team. The group meets every Monday, however, once trained, gardeners often come when time best suits them. CONTACT: gardens@rockefellerstateparkpreserve.org
GUARDIANS OF THE PRESERVE	The Guardians Program is a dedicated group who commit to weekly trail patrols and help with light maintenance and overall protection of the Preserve. Guardians contribute to the enjoyment of visitors by encouraging and engaging them to understand the purpose of the Preserve and its varied offerings. CONTACT: volunteers@rockefellerstateparkpreserve.org
MONARCH AMBASSADORS	Volunteers train to become certified Monarch Ambassador for the Preserve, learning how to protect these beloved pollinators by creating and maintaining habitat, as well as raising and releasing. To date, we estimate we have released over 1000 butterflies into the Preserve. CONTACT: monarchs@rockefellerstateparkpreserve.org
HULDA'S NIGHT	The Legend of Hulda the Witch dates back to the time of the American Revolution. If you have ever hiked the Witch's Spring Trail, then you have walked by Hulda's home. Each October we recreate and tell Hulda's story on a night in the Preserve. We need volunteers for set build, hike leads, lighting, props, etc. CONTACT: hulda@rockefellerstateparkpreserve.org
CORPORATE DAYS PROGRAMS	The Preserve collaborates with local industry and organizations to host volunteer workdays for corporate, church, school, and other groups (10 to 20 people). Workdays are a healthy opportunity to engage in team building and fulfill social responsibility goals. CONTACT: volunteers@rockefellerstateparkpreserve.org
CUSTOM PROGRAMS	We work with many local companies and organizations who have a need for custom volunteer programs, including Community Service obligations. CONTACT: volunteers@rockefellerstateparkpreserve.org



Not able to volunteer? You can still help by donating to the Friends! Contact friends@friendsrock.org



Stewardship Team

"SIGNS OF SPRING CAMPAIGN"
(watch for it!)

We have over 150 new signs to install and will need LOTS of help!



Hulda's Night



Monarch Ambassadors




GUARDIANS



BE AN RSPPP TRAIL TRASH TERMINATOR

COEXIST
Rockefeller State Park Preserve

NOTE: most of the images in this issue were shot pre-COVID.

Mother Nature Appeals To Two-Legged Animals

By Jean Dolen, Preserve Office Manager

Dear Two-Legged Animals,

My name is Mother Nature and we have many forms of beauty including Creatures, Rocks, Plants, and Trees. Our Creatures include warm, cold blooded, flying, crawling, swimming, or walking animals. We come in many shapes and forms. We prey on one another for food. We provide peace and beauty to the interested eye. We have roamed the earth before the Two-Legged Animals appeared. We were here first.

We invite you to come see us from afar, but don't get close. We protect our young fiercely. We have been invaded by the Two-Legged Animals and don't understand their need to be near us. We protect ourselves and feed ourselves.

Many of you Two-Legged Animals have a strange need to feed us candy wrappers, face masks, beer bottles, plastic bags, tissues, balloons, water bottles, kites, and fishing lines, etc. We had a beautiful home and now it is strewn with your stuff.

A Tree lost its branches because a kite was tangled around many of its branches. It was a beautiful young tree. Several other trees bore the burden of the heavy weight of Two-Legged Animals climbing.

Some of our Plants and Flowers have not been the same being touched by the Two-Legged Animals.

Even our Rocks will be forever changed. One big Rock was put in the trunk of a car because a Two-Legged Animal had to appease a crying child. Now it will sit in a room in a house away from the snakes, spiders, ants, rain, and snow in the woods. Some rocks have been defaced by the Two-Legged Animal.

Our Fish, Duck, Goose and Bird families are not allowed to eat bread, but those Two-Legged Animals keep assuming what they truly like to eat. They choke on your fishing lines and stumble after sipping from your beer bottles.

Our Turtles crawl slowly across the paths trying to avoid the non-stop mass of stomping feet. They can't get across fast enough. Our Snapping Turtle friends could be attracted to your toes when you stick your feet in the water. Our Snakes like to sun themselves on the warm rocks, but have to slither away when you disturb their nap. Our Coyotes love the taste of off-leash dogs. They can feed their whole family. They appreciate the meal.

Our Deer families want to roam through the woods but are finding Two-Legged Animals who are exploring off the trail, sprawling their blankets and chairs in their space. Our

Tick friends especially love you when you roll in the grass. They will gladly share Lyme with you.

Our visiting Horses enjoy a peaceful ride through the carriage paths away from any crowds. The riders truly appreciate it when their horses are not frightened. Our neighboring Chickens, Cows, Goats, Pigs, and Sheep appreciate being in the fields enjoying a peaceful day without being petted.

The Two-Legged Animals need to learn the importance of Foot and Hoof traffic only. No wheeled vehicles, toys, chairs, blankets, alcohol, coolers, or flying objects.

Our Nature families roam the park every day and night. Now they hide in their caves and holes to protect their babies from the Two-Legged Animals. But then the Two-Legged Animals go off trail and slip into their hole, and would make a nice meal for them. The caves are private homes. If you enter them you would not be offered a meal. You would be the meal!

Does anybody care about the Children of Mother Nature? Does anyone pay attention to the rules of Mother Nature? Please leave your Two-Legged Animal Garbage home. We do not speak your language. Our language is Roaring, Growling, Chirping, Hissing, Singing Songs, etc. We cannot express our pain and disappointment. We give you the beauty of our cuteness. But don't be fooled because we can be fierce. We are innocent bystanders who roam and try to live a peaceful life.

Then you came. Visit the Preserve with respect and distance. We appreciate those who care about us and keep our space clean and smoke free.

Thank you.



Great egret – best left alone

From the Preserve Manager

By Peter Iskendarian

As with many of you, the Preserve has faced many challenges in the past nine months. Our staff saw both the positive and negative sides of this crisis and some very tough decisions had to be made. In doing so the last nine months has been long and has had a lasting effect on the staff and how we function as a team. It hasn't all been bad, in fact, we've all had many good experiences. It just seems that the negative ones really stick with us and make us think about what is at the root of these problems and how we can make a difference. One thing I have come to realize is that the challenges we have faced have brought the Parks team closer together, made us work harder to achieve the agency mission and to realize how lucky we are to work for New York State Parks.

Our team was also put on the front lines of the COVID response effort. Since early May, two employees from the Preserve were asked to work at the New Rochelle testing site, so three days a week Park Supervisor, Dmitri Benzinger and Park Worker, Michael Baris worked at the site helping with cleaning, delivering tests, picking up supplies and whatever else needed to be done to support the effort. Over time we were able to get Dmitri back to work at the Preserve, but Michael is still there, on the front lines two days a week.

With the increased attendance we are experiencing, it's been tough to get many of our job duties completed. When the parking lots fill, we need to drop whatever we are doing, shut the gates and switch to traffic control duties, once that happens, we're usually doing that the rest of the day until closing. It's also been hard to get maintenance duties done when the carriage roads are so crowded. Our equipment is large and when work needs to be done, carriage roads need to be closed or tasks put off until things settle down.

Mother Nature has also thrown us a few curveballs since August in the form of hurricanes and other large weather events. When Hurricane Isaias hit the Preserve in August



Photo: Herbert Hadad

Enthusiastic Preserve visitors line Route 117 because Preserve parking lot was full.

it took down over 100 trees that blocked the carriage roads. Our staff is trained to deal with storm damage, but this couldn't have come at a worse time. Staffing shortages, equipment issues and the pandemic, required the entire staff to be site clearing the carriage roads. The staff jumped into action and got all the carriage roads clear and passable for the guests, but the work was just beginning. We will be cleaning up the mess from Hurricane Isaias well into the spring. Mother Nature likes to remind us every year that we don't work hard enough, and she drops all the leaves from the trees in the Preserve. Think about your own lawn and driveway care and you can only imagine the work we need to do to manage the leaves in the fall. The 50 miles of carriage roads that need repair and the hundreds of acres of leaves to manage.

More than ever, it was extremely important that we get the carriage roads open and safe for our guests to use free from tree and leaf litter. For the past nine months the Preserve has been a place of rest, relaxation and recharge for the thousands of guests we welcome each week, and we are appreciative for those that have let us know it. The staff have been so appreciated by the guests during this crisis, whether they are walking in from parking on Rte. 117 or they are enjoying a blanket picnic at the Rockwood Hall area, we get "thank you's" from the parents and laughter from the kids. Even though we can't see their smiles, you can see it in their eyes how happy they are to be here.



Rockefeller State Park Preserve Staff

Peter Iskenderian, Preserve Manager
 Laurence Gill, P&R Supervisor / Director of Operations
 Jean Dolen, Office Manager
 Susan Lewenz, "Ranger Su", Conservation Communicator
 Joshua DiPaola, Natural Resource Specialist
 Dmitri Benzinger, P&R Supervisor / Safety & Facility Compliance Mgr.
 Maso Robinson, Head of Buildings & Grounds
 Michael Baris, Buildings / Groundskeeper
 Bruno Hilario, Buildings / Groundskeeper
 Jack Gandolfo, Buildings / Groundskeeper

Art Gallery
 Audrey Leeds, Gallery Curator

❖ Gallery Schedule at a Glance ❖



Swan Lake

“Glorious Hudson Valley Visions”

Paintings by Radu Serban

November 1-December 31, 2020

Radu Serban, born in Bucharest, is a realist painter. His landscapes, cityscapes, still life, floral subjects and portraits are sensitive, exuberant, colorful and textured powerful images of the surrounding world. He painted since he was a child, then studied art and architecture in Romania and Italy.

He settled in New York, currently living and working, totally immersed in the beauty and grandeur of the Hudson River Valley, concurrently he has conducted an active architectural career.



Sparkill Waterfall



Peony Hill



The Big River and The Bridge

“Spatial Impressions”

February 14 – March 20, 2021

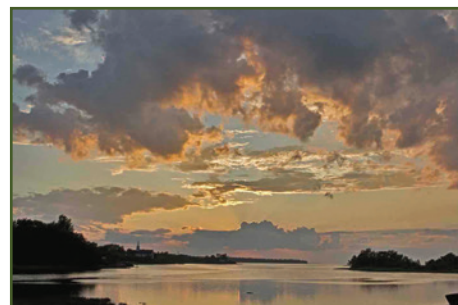
Forthcoming photography group exhibition by Michael Garber and Bobbi Lane that was skillfully photographed and inspires the viewer into 2021.



*Michael Garber:
Kykuit with Hudson River*



Bobbi Lane: Iceland



*Michael Garber:
Sunset at Northumberland Strait, Nova Scotia*

Turtles, *continued from page 4*

in their generational demographic, but that data needs to be further analyzed. It's possible that the prevalence of mature snapping turtles, but the absence of younger populations, could mean that there are low survival rates for snapping turtle nests and juveniles. Common snapping turtles are important figures within our aquatic ecosystems and I best summarize their value as 'aquatic vacuum cleaners'. They will eat everything from aquatic vegetation, to fish, frogs, and insects, as well as small rodents and birds when the opportunity presents itself. For this reason, they are important to have as they control the biological load within an aquatic system.



Raymonda Martin holding a Red-eared slider, an invasive species of turtle, which was caught in Swan Lake.



Taylor Ganis using the proper handling techniques to safely restrain a large Common snapping turtle.

Whether or not you find turtles personally affable, they, along with other herpetofauna, have important roles in the ecosystems, which we value. Being mindful of our own behaviors is one of the best ways to improve their survival and welfare, such as properly disposing of your trash so that it does not enter and pollute our waterways. Rockefeller Preserve is currently home to several native species of herpetofauna, and while more work is needed to conserve these

animals, we can take simple steps today by being more conscious in thought and responsible with our actions.



Photo: Bill Golden

National Status, *continued from page 2*

- The signature feature are the district's carriage roads, a vast intersecting circulation system created over multiple decades; each road segment was surveyed and key designs of such engineering features as bridges, retaining walls, and drains—were recorded in detail.

The district pays homage to a carriage-road network and picturesque landscape of extraordinary quality and complexity. Both John D. Rockefeller Sr. and Jr. were personally invested in the development of the estate landscape and road system; no expense was spared nor were even the smallest details overlooked. There was considerable personal investment, beyond financial resources, by both men, into all areas of planning and implementation;

This designation serves to reinforce the central role the Rockefeller family has played—and continues to play—in the development and maintenance of New York State's park and recreational assets. The family's investment in NYS parks is both historic and ongoing. The designation celebrates and affirms that remarkable legacy of munificence.

Although located on the family's private estate, the carriage roads were made available to the public at an early date, and they continue to faithfully serve the needs of countless citizens in a densely populated and recreationally hungry part of New York.

Designation of the outlying area of the Rockefeller Pocantico Hills estate, beyond the previously designated core area that includes Kykuit, allows for a fuller comprehension of the estate and its historic development under JDR Sr. and Jr. It also places this New York legacy more on par with the Rockefeller family's investment in the carriage road system on Mt. Desert Island / Acadia National Park.

Friends President George Gumina then gave brief remarks stating that he started the Friends organization to honor Peggy Rockefeller, David Rockefeller's wife, who loved, rode and oversaw the maintenance of every bit of these beautiful lands. Lucy Rockefeller Waletzky pointed out that with these carriage roads on the national historic register no new roads could ever be created that would destroy existing important bird areas, such an important aspect of this Preserve. And the day's event was concluded by Linda Cooper, the NYS Parks Regional Director, who had introduced each speaker and added her own deep respect for the Rockefeller Family and the enduring legacy they have left to all of us.



The Preserve Observer

Friends of the Rockefeller State Park Preserve
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Have you heard of Amazon Smile? You shop and Amazon gives! It's one of the easiest ways to support the Preserve all year long. Amazon will automatically donate 0.5% of the purchase price of eligible products to the Friends of the Rockefeller State Park Preserve every time you shop.

4 Easy Steps

1. Go to smile.amazon.com
2. Enter your existing Amazon account information. That's right! Your settings, wish lists, registries and shopping cart is exactly the same.
3. Under "Pick Your Own Charitable Organization" type in "Friends of the Rockefeller State Park Preserve".
4. Do your shopping and don't forget to bookmark smile.amazon.com for future purchases.

NOTE: This is the important part. Even after designating FRSP as your benefiting charity, we only receive donations if you login through smile.amazon.com. Please consider using this every time you shop at Amazon. Thank you for your support!



Reaching the Friends

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The Preserve Observer

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