



Friends of the
Rockefeller State Park
PRESERVE

The Preserve Observer

Friends of the Rockefeller State Park Preserve Magazine
Vol. XLI Spring 2019

Photo: Herbert Hadad



Peter Iskenderian

New Preserve Manager Enjoys 2 Homecomings

By Herbert Hadad

Peter Iskenderian got comfortable in his new office on the Rockefeller State Park Preserve and unfurled plans on his desk for using the overflow parking lot. "We'll clean up the whole area, bring in sheds, one for the Friends, one for the Preserve, storing equipment, signage, ours will be for maintenance and environmental programs," he said.

Peter, cheerful and smiling, ticked off some of his other ambitions as the new Preserve manager – attention to maintenance for the recently declared historic carriage roads, planting native trees, blueberry bushes, maybe restoring part of the

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The Clintons To Be Honored At Friends Gala On June 22

President Bill Clinton and Secretary Hillary Rodham Clinton will receive the inaugural John D. Rockefeller Jr. Park Preservation Award presented by the Friends of the Rockefeller State Park Preserve at its gala on Saturday, June 22, 2019, at the Rockefeller Playhouse in Pocantico Hills.

"The Clintons' enduring commitment to the environment as well as their love for the Preserve make them the ideal first recipients of this award," said George Gumina, Founder and President of the Friends. Through countless endeavors, including The Alliance for a Healthier Generation, founded by the Clinton Foundation and the American Heart Association, which works to reduce the prevalence of childhood obesity and to empower kids to develop lifelong, healthy habits, the Clintons have shown their commitment to making this a better world. It has been thoroughly

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Photo: Jessika Creedon

David's Loop, February 2019

Friends—and One Special Friend—Restore David's Loop

By Jessika Creedon,
Administrative Director

In 2018, the Friends, with the very generous support of Dr. Lucy Rockefeller Waletzky, funded the refurbishment of 1,200 feet of David's Loop. For the visitors that frequent this section of the Preserve, the improvements were immediately obvious. Exposed rock and deep ruts were replaced with a properly crowned and surfaced section of carriage road. Swales were cleared, proper drainage was reestablished and roadsides were replanted. We are delighted to announce that by the time this

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Gala, continued from page 1

proven that healthy kids have higher attendance rates, higher test scores, and behave better in class.

Residents of nearby Chappaqua, the couple can often be seen strolling the Preserve's carriage roads with their dogs and greeting other visitors. "We are thrilled the Clintons will join us in person to accept this honor," Gumina said.

Honorary co-chairs of the event are County Executive George S. Latimer, Ann Rockefeller Roberts, the Lanza Family Foundation and the Westchester Community Foundation.

Special Invited Guest is Governor Andrew Cuomo.

Pace University and the Ginsburg Development Companies LLC are early sponsors of this event.

Festivities will take place in the majestic Playhouse, the two-story, Tudor-style mansion that John D. Rockefeller Jr. built in 1927 as a place for his family to gather and to host events.

The Gala Committee Members are Rachel and George Gumina, Evelyn and Herbert Hadad, Carol and Dr. John Lyden, Lisa and John Manuele Clare Pierson and Peter Humphrey, and Kimberly and Steven Rockefeller, Jr.

Resources raised by the 2019 gala will fund much-needed improvements to Brothers Path, Swan Lake and Rockwood Hall, three of the most popular destinations of the Preserve. Specifically,

- **Brothers Path:** The 1.1 mile-scenic gateway to the Preserve is a carriage road requiring the rehabilitation of stonework, drainage ways and road surface and edges to secure safe conditions for hikers, joggers, equestrians and all visitors, including those with limited mobility.



Photo: Defense Imagery Management Operations Center

- **Swan Lake:** The tranquil 22-acre freshwater favorite of wildlife-watchers will benefit from improved accessibility through the Brothers Path restoration and the creation of footpaths to the water's edge.
- **Rockwood Hall:** The former country estate of William M. Rockefeller is a distinct pastoral section of the Preserve overlooking the Hudson River. The carriage roads surrounding the Rockwood Hall Foundation, the footprint where the historic mansion once stood, need rehabilitation and reconstruction, including replacement of the missing pavers.

To acquire tickets, purchase an ad in the gala journal or make a donation to the Friends of the Rockefeller State Park Preserve, please email Jessika Creedon at friendsrock.org or call her at 914-762-0209.

Beauty, History, and Hills: A Rockwood Ramble Course Guide

By Ron Vogl

On Saturday, June 1, the Friends of the Rockefeller State Park Preserve will hold the first of its two annual running competitions in the Preserve: the **Rockwood Ramble**. The 10-kilometer course offers everything runners know and love of the Preserve's carriage road network: breath-taking, tranquil natural settings, historical interest, and challenging rolling terrain. You'll love this course, but you best save your personal-record hopes for another day.

The start line sits majestically on the foundational remains of Rockwood Hall, the Gilded Age mansion of John Rockefeller's brother William. Where hundreds of running shoes now anticipatorily shuffle once stood 204 rooms in the Elizabethan style, complete with turrets. After William died in 1922, Rockwood endured a brief stint as a private country club, but the Great Depression doomed that venture and ultimately, due to insufficient maintenance, the house itself. Buying it out of bankruptcy in 1937, John Rockefeller Junior razed the house, and his son Laurance ultimately donated the remains to create the park we know today.

Those remains make for a gorgeous start, sporting views across the Hudson from the Tappan Zee (ah, Mario Cuomo) bridge to Hook Mountain and north almost to Bear Mountain. The start also features several prime arboreal specimens,

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David's Loop, *continued from page 1*

issue has reached your mailbox, the remaining 2,240 feet of David's Loop will have been completed by Bruce Corbett Excavating Inc.

An important access point for horseback riders and a connection point to Stone Barns and the Buttermilk Hill section, David's Loop is a gem. The forested trail does not lack for hills, but the natural beauty of the ferns and wetlands make a hike well worth it. From end to end, visitors will enjoy a picturesque and safe carriage road that brings so much joy to walkers, runners and equestrians. When summer settles in, the tree canopy provides a welcome respite from the sun and if you frequent Swan Lake, David's Loop is the perfect option to extend your time outside. Enjoy glimpses of nearby Brook Trail and its babbling brook.

A popular trail for equestrians, riders from nearby Beech Hill Farm and Fox Hill Farms can often be seen on David's Loop, which intersects with the Equestrian Access Trail. And last fall, our newly rerouted Rocky's 5K course took advantage of the improved carriage road and we look forward to bringing runners back in October to enjoy an even longer stretch of ideal running conditions.

Our mission, *to encourage public participation in protecting the Preserve's wildlife and habitat, sustain its historical and archaeological features, and most importantly - maintaining its unique system of carriage roads*, is clearly evident at times like this. Often, funding dictates that repairs must be done as spot treatments, patch one area here, clear a drain over there and so on. However, following the initial work last year, public support was immediate and donations were given to the Friends, earmarked for future work on David's Loop. These donations, coupled with Friends funds, along with the lion's share being given by Dr. Waletzky, allowed for the entire length of carriage road to be completed. This reestablishes the original roadway and drainage system as one cohesive piece, assuring the work done will stand the test of time. We are extraordinarily thankful to these donors, their contributions will benefit thousands of Rockefeller State Park Preserve visitors for years to come.



Photo: Jessika Crendon

David's Loop, March 2019

11th Annual Peony Celebration Is Set for Thursday, May 9 at the Preserve Entrance

By Herbert Hadad



Photo: Joe Golden

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

The title of the exhibit at the Visitor Center that will accompany this celebration is "Preserved Beauty, Peonies & Posies", curated by Audrey Leeds, graphics by Laurence Gill. The exhibit is a group show including Anne Bell, Susan, Breen, Joseph Keiffear, Ivan Pazlamatches and Radu Seervan, whose painting is on our cover. The title of Mr. Seervan's picture is "Japanese Tree Peony Garden".

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.

Lisa and John Manuele, Chairs of the Peony Celebration Committee, said, "Once again there will be a cocktail and light cuisine reception. And Terry Marchica, in charge of Special Events for the Briarcliff Manor Garden Club who solicits and organizes the floral displays, has assured us there will be beautiful arrangements donated by local garden clubs.

Rockwood Ramble, *continued from page 2*

including one beautifully shaggy weeping beech.

The course's opening salvo is a short (a few hundred meters) and flat loop of what once effectively was Rockwood's front yard, the sort that had a formal garden and a stable. After that, it's a right turn onto the crumbling Hastings blocks that are the Upper Trail, which follows along what used to be the meadows that fed the estate's cattle and sheep.



The original Rockwood Hall

At around the three-quarter-mile mark, the trail turns right into the woods and drops down to Rockwood Road, where after a quick left your feet traverse 50 yards of what is the course's only stretch of asphalt. After a second flick left off of the road followed immediately by a right, you're on to the day's first incline of any note: three sharp and steep switchbacks that hoist you up on top of the Old Croton Aqueduct (OCA).

The OCA supplied New York City's water from 1842 all the way to 1965, when the City outgrew the aqueduct's daily capacity of 100 million gallons. Starting from the Croton River in Northern Westchester, the OCA ran 41 miles down to Central Park and another reservoir whose site now hosts the main branch of the New York Public Library.

The aqueduct's legacy is a mostly flat trail atop its roof that carries the Ramble's course though the first mile mark. A bridge designed to look like a stable takes you over Route 9 (the aqueduct fascinatingly took the under route, thanks to a fun-to-google engineering marvel called an inverted syphon). As the trail bends gently to the right, you'll pass your first clear reminder of its reason for existence: OCA ventilator shaft number 11. If you take the long way around it (maybe another day) you can see the blocked-up remains of the door that provided access for repairs.

The modern interchange of Routes 9 and 117 rudely interrupts the aqueduct's mostly level run, forcing the trail left and up in the day's second serious uphill effort. This one starts steep and then moderates, taking you to a bridge across 117. After a brief dip down and back up that takes you across the second mile mark, you're back on the aqueduct for a flat and nicely wooded half-mile; take advantage to settle into a rhythm.

Before long, a large, blocky stone structure looms in front of you. Called a weir, it functioned to divert excess aqueduct

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Preserve Manager, *continued from page 1*

foundation at Rockwood Hall.

Peter comes to the Preserve after serving the last twelve years as Park Manager at Moreau Lake State Park and Grant Cottage State Historic in Saratoga. He started his career as a park ranger at the Tallman Mountain State Park in Sparkhill

He mused over new activities close to him he'd like to expand – educational opportunities, maybe full-moon hikes, animal tracking, fishing, fly fishing, fly tying.

George F. Gumina, Founder of the Friends of Rockefeller State Park Preserve, said: "Peter has extensive experience in managing parks, especially the Preserve and the Old Croton Aqueduct. This is important because there has been increased activity at the Preserve since it was named to the State Registry of Historic Places. He is familiar with the land, understands its historic significance."

George's assessment was confirmed by former preserve manager Alex Schnee who was interviewed for this article. "He was the best assistant manager, the best professional to work with. He knew how to look at parks, he was great working with people, but he would not be pushed around."

His additional homecoming: Peter is a native of Rockland County across the river and his family continues to live in Blauvelt. "It's great to be back. During the snow season I went over and helped my mother with snow shoveling. I also helped my aunts and uncles, in their mid-90s."

"Peter Iskenderian is just the right person to have as a partner with the Friends in fulfilling the Rockefeller principle that state-private partnerships are effective," said Friends President George Gumina.



Photo: Herbert Haddad

One of the favorite pastimes in the Preserve

From the Friends President

By George Gumina

Spring is officially here and the weather is agreeable for outdoor activities. We have a lot of good news to report for the Friends!

We welcomed our new Preserve Manager, Peter Iskenderian, at the end of January and he is doing a fine job! We have shared with the State the cost of equipment for cleaning the drains, which is essential for keeping the carriage roads maintained. We have underwritten a new shed to go alongside one for the State to be erected in the back parking lot to store equipment. We are forming a positive relationship with Peter that will help improve the Preserve and its activities for everyone, our mutual goal.

The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) approved our application that the Preserve's historic carriage roads be listed on the NYS Register of Historic Places. Bill Krattinger at the State office was very instrumental with this project and we appreciate the enormous amount of work he did.

David's Loop is being rehabilitated due to Dr. Lucy Rockefeller Waletzky's generosity and funds from the Friends. *(Please see article on page 1.)*

We are excited about the upcoming gala on Saturday, June 22, at which President Bill Clinton and Secretary Hillary Rodham Clinton will be honored with the inaugural John D. Rockefeller Jr. Park Preservation Award and the funds raised will go towards work on Brothers Path, Swan Lake and Rockwood Hall. *(Article on page 1.)*

Our Peony Celebration *(Article on page 3)* is upon us and we are optimistic that the peonies will not disappoint us in their beauty. Followed close behind by our Rockwood Ramble 10 K race on Saturday, June 1. One of our board members, Ron Vogl, has written an article about the race route and all its extraordinary history. *(Article on page 2.)*

All of the Friends efforts go toward helping improve the Preserve, its carriage roads and its wondrous beauty for your enjoyment. Please help us continue that work by either donating funds or your time. You'll be glad you did!



From our cover: Radu Serban's Japanese Tree Peony Garden

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Park Project Will Add New Storage

Construction in the overflow parking lot will help biodiversity efforts

Regular visitors to the Preserve may have noticed a lot of activity near Nature’s Way recently – and it’s not the return of the grackles or the wildflower shoots poking their heads up from the ground. A major construction project including a new storage facility and parking lot improvements is under way that will make it easier for park crews to maintain the Preserve’s nearly 1800-acre portion of the 3500 acres of scenic carriage paths and rolling fields.

The work is happening in three phases: first, a 750-square-foot heated workshop to keep the Preserve’s tools all in one place, and make it easier to work on small engines and equipment in inclement weather. Because there’s no electricity in the current designated shop building, the park’s four facilities staff are required to use a generator (and massive amounts of power) to use even the smallest drill or tools. The workshop is expected to be completed in July 2019.

Neater, prettier parking



Construction crew laying the concrete forms for the shop’s foundation.

Photo Courtesy of Steve Mgrditchian, Pierotti Corp.

The new structures will enable the Preserve to add several pieces of new equipment to its arsenal to keep the carriage roads in tip-top shape. Those include:

- Porta-Mole, purchased with help from the Friends: To clean out clogged culverts, preventing trail washout.
- Road grader: For smoothing out and crowning rutted trails.
- Zero-turn mower: To access hard-to mow places and tight areas.
- DR mower: For cutting down invasive aralia.
- Chainsaw, hedge trimmers, weedwhackers, tree-planting equipment, new tractor attachments.

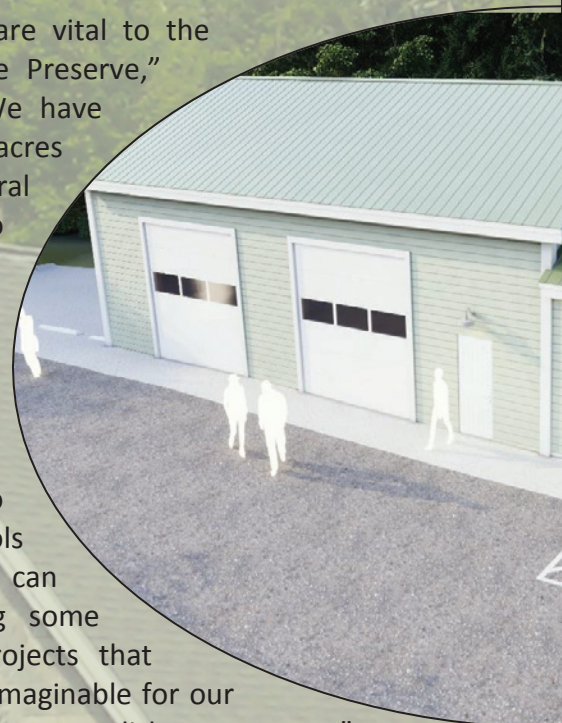
Biodiversity benefits too!

Rebecca Policello, the park’s Natural Resource Specialist, sees tons of benefits for her biodiversity efforts, as well. Right now, with limited storage, she only has enough loppers, shovels, weed wrenches and mattocks, for a small group of volunteers for invasive plant removal -- always a constant and pressing need at the Preserve.

“Volunteers are vital to the health of the Preserve,” she says. “We have nearly 1,800 acres of natural habitat to manage and a crew of just two people for most of the year. Having access to more tools means we can start tackling some really big projects that would be unimaginable for our small crew to accomplish on our own”.

Controlling invasives can feel like a losing battle, but thanks to the support of this community, I’m optimistic that we’ll be able to preserve the native habitats at the park and continue to provide a home to our native plants and animals.”

Preserve Manager, Peter Iskenderian, also plans to erect two smaller 200 square-foot sheds (one purchased by the Park and the other by the Friends of the Rockefeller State Park Preserve), one of which will house materials for environmental education, landscaping and maintenance, and the other for horse jumps and signs for Friends events.



Building and Revamped Parking Lot

, lead to better maintained trails, and make coming and going easier

It's as much a beautification project as a functional one. The collection of old out-buildings used to store equipment hasn't been one of the park's most attractive features.

"Instead of people walking back there and seeing junk and maintenance equipment everywhere, we'll have it all organized inside the structures," said Tim Howell, Facility Maintenance Supervisor for the Preserve. "It will be such a better visual look at the park."

Plans are also in the works for two other phases, which will begin as soon as part one is complete.

Phase two envisions a 3,000 square-foot-storage building attached to the workshop for housing tractors, mowers and larger equipment that is currently left

outside and subject to the elements and vandalism. The park hopes to complete that work in 2020.



"This will almost guarantee that our equipment is ready to go when we need to make carriage road repairs or any other projects that require our attention," adds Peter Iskenderian. "It will also help in the beautification of the Preserve by getting rid of all the junky buildings. Once phase two of the project is completed, all those buildings will be torn down."

Lastly, in 2021, the Park hopes to completely repave the existing lot in a permeable material, with other environmentally sensitive design features including storm water treatment practices and bio-swales. The lot will include a vehicle charging station and will be able to accommodate trucks and vans for special events.

For easier and safer vehicle flow the existing gate at the top of Old Sleepy Hollow Road Trail will eventually be moved over to allow cars to directly access the Preserve exit



The project will make coming to the Preserve, and exiting after a day of fresh air appreciating its natural beauty, easier for everyone.

Construction on the maintenance area in the overflow parking lot began in February.



Photo courtesy of Steve Mgrditchian, Pierotti Corp.

For more information visit:
www.instagram.com/rockefellerstatepark
www.facebook.com/RockefellerSPP
parks.ny.gov/parks/59

*Centerfold content by Cynthia Dermody
 Graphic design & layout by Laurence Gill*

From the Preserve Manager

By Peter Iskenderian

The Rockefeller State Park Preserve holds a very special place in my heart. For me coming back to the Preserve is essentially like returning home. To some of you my name may be familiar because between 2004 -2007 I was the Assistant Manager of the Preserve. When I previously worked here I quickly learned what a special place this was to so many people and how important it is to protect and maintain it. As many managers do I left to take a promotion and advance my career but since the day I left I have been striving to one day return and continue the stewardship that's been passed down to me from the previous managers. When the Preserve Manager position opened up five years ago I still had so many goals to accomplish at my previous facility I knew I couldn't leave but I also knew I may never get a chance at the Preserve Manager position again, but it was a chance I had to take, I wasn't ready to go yet. When the Preserve Manager position opened up this time I knew it was my time, I achieved all my goals at my former facility and I was leaving it in great shape with an amazing staff.

When I pulled into the Preserve parking lot on my first day it looked as though not much had changed since I left twelve years ago, but I soon realized so much had changed. There were a few familiar faces in the office, like Laurence and Tony, but everyone else was new to me. Many friends and visitors I knew and conversed with on a daily basis were no longer here, like Richard, Peggy and Brother John but there were many others that I knew previously and just needed to rebuild those connections. The other considerable changes are the Preserve grew bigger with the gift from the David Rockefeller estate and now Greenrock is no longer available and there is a talented State employed maintenance team with new equipment and new maintenance buildings going up as I write this.

I was very eager and I jumped right in with both feet on day one. First job was to meet the staff, get to know them on an individual basis and find out what their role is at the Preserve. I was so happy to see the diverse background and knowledge the staff possessed. My next task was to find out what each employee needed to do their jobs effectively, whether it be equipment, training, money, volunteers or anything else. To be a successful manager I need to make sure everyone has what they need to do their job properly and safely. Otherwise we'll be fighting a losing battle.

With an exceptional maintenance team, some large maintenance projects in place and ones planned for the near future it seemed to be the logical place to concentrate on. Prior to the old buildings being torn down in the back-parking lot

we needed to clean them out but we found that there was not only a large amount of park inventory being stored in the maintenance sheds but also Friends' items. So we needed to consolidate and store these items in a more organized fashion. I proposed that two sheds be purchased, one for the Preserve and one for the Friends group. I secured the quotes and the Friends and State agreed to the low bid and the sheds were purchased. It will be such a substantial difference when the unsightly buildings in the overflow parking lot get torn down and the phase 3 maintenance building project is completed. Phase 1 is the heated storage/maintenance building, phase 2 is the unheated garage portion of the building and phase 3 will be the paving and striping of the entire back parking lot. The contractor has mobilized and started phase 1 with tearing down buildings inside the construction zone. Once the new sheds arrive the unsightly buildings outside the immediate construction zone will be torn down.

The next big project will be the Phase 2 rehabilitation of the carriage roads around Swan Lake and the upper, middle carriage roads and the foundation loop at Rockwood Hall in 2020. These are the carriage roads that are in the most need of repair and need to be contracted out. When the carriage road conditions become right, the maintenance staff will be getting out and working on many smaller carriage road projects and culvert work. Many of the carriage road issues stem from culvert pipes that have been clogged for many years. Therefore, we purchased water jetting equipment to be able to clean out clogged culverts and start a maintenance prevention program to monitor and clean culverts on a monthly schedule. This program should help eliminate future wash-outs and costly repairs.

Some other exciting things we have coming up include the expansion of our environmental education programming at the Preserve. We have great partners doing amazing programs at the Preserve right now but I feel the staff can add to this by offering school field trips through the connect kid's program and develop programs for the general public. We are in a unique position to have this exhilarating outdoor classroom right in our backyard and we can do more to reflect that and get people of all ages into the facility for learning opportunities. We will be looking at introducing programs to our monthly schedule, like night programs such as full moon walks or sounds of the night hikes and programs geared towards specific age groups. We are also working with one of our partners to see if we can develop a multi-purpose outdoor classroom for environmental studies and other programming. Between the staff, our partners and

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❖ Gallery Schedule at a Glance ❖

“Where Have All the Flowers Gone?”

March 21 – May 5, 2019

An exhibition of botanical art featuring Corinne Lapin-Cohen with artists Lenore M. Adams, Rochelle Auslander, Phyllis Chadwick, Ann J. Goodman, Gloria Goren, Linda Jbara, Norma Kurman, Anna Rudnicki, Kristen Timothy-Lankester and Yona Shilling-Wiesen.



Corinne Lapin-Cohen:
“CATTAILS”
Typha latifolia

A series of paintings expressing concern with the steady destruction of our environment. The pollution of air, water and soil can lead to the destruction of ecosystems, habitats and the extinction of plants and wildlife.

In the oil paintings, the plant is absent with only the memory of its color or habitat remaining. Each oil painting is detailed by drawing with sterling silver or “silverpoint”, which will continue to tarnish and age forever thus making the work “alive”.

The exquisitely detailed watercolor paintings remind us of the beauty and importance of preserving our natural environment and native wildlife.



Corinne Lapin-Cohen:
“ARROWHEAD”
Sagittaria latifolia

“Preserved Beauty, Peonies & Posies”

May 9 – June 30, 2019

Opening Reception: Saturday, May 11 from 1PM - 3PM

The exhibit is a group show including Anne Bell, Susan Breen, Joseph Keiffer, Ivan Pazlamatchev and Radu Serban, whose stunning painting, “Japanese Tree Peony Garden”, is on our cover.

The cover work is an oil on canvas specifically created to be shown at the Peony Celebration. The painter, Radu Serban, is a well-known artist from Romania who is also an architect known for his beautiful landscapes of the Hudson Valley, New York City, London, Paris, Madrid and Barcelona.

Since the show includes many florals, the Gallery will be profuse with many types of flowers.

Curated by Audrey Leeds and Laurence Gill



Joseph Keiffer:
Silver Loving Cup



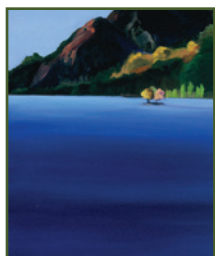
Susan Breen:
Bloom I

“The Historic Hudson River Inspires Today’s Artistic Visions”

Mid-June – End of August, 2019

New York Hall of Science

Audrey Leeds and Laurence Gill are producing a major exhibit at the New York Hall of Science. It includes the images of fine artist Margaret Grace and a group of photographic artists including Michael Garber, Michael Washburn, Jeffrey Friedkin, Jeff Seneca, Bobby Uricchio.



Margaret Grace:
Breakneck Ridge

Preserve Manager's Letter, *continued from page 8*

our incredible volunteers, we can build a strong education program and build a strong future for the Preserve.

As with all State Park Managers, my goals are aligned with the mission statement and guiding principles of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP).

Agency Mission Statement: *to provide safe and enjoyable recreational and interpretive opportunities for all New York State residents and visitors and to be responsible stewards to our natural, historic and cultural resources.*

Rockwood Ramble, *continued from page 4*

water to the Pocantico River just down the hill. You'll have to come back another time for a closer look, as just before you arrive a hairpin left jerks you into the deep woods of the Preserve and onto the day's third and toughest climb,



Photo: Ron Vogt

Bucolic Bubbles

which features a particularly nasty ramp just before it relents. This section is as challenging as it is peaceful; after some modest undulations the trail turns up to the day's highest point, which arrives appropriately near the course midpoint.

The ensuing descent starts steeply but after a sharp right moderates to the course's best stretch: a comfortably-graded, rhythm-inducing half-mile downhill through

the woods, taking you to beautiful stone bridge over the Pocantico River. As you cross it, look to your right to see the odd sight of a river channeling underneath an aqueduct.

After a sharp left, the course follows the river back upstream and through the fourth mile mark. Crossing back over a second, smaller stone bridge, it continues along the river bank to a bucolically bubbling bend, where the trail leaves the river's path for that of the smaller Gory Brook and starts a gradual ascent. After crossing the brook on a wooden bridge, the course ascends sharply before turning left onto the Thirteen Bridges Trail and diving back across Route 117, this time beneath it.

The course then takes you across only one of those thirteen bridges (the other twelve are definitely to be enjoyed some other time if you've yet to) before it turns left and back towards the finish line. This stretch presents the fifth and fi-

Agency Guiding Principles: *A commitment to people, preservation, service and leadership.*

Keeping up on the maintenance and aesthetics of the Preserve, continuing to foster the amazing partnerships that have been developed over the years and building a strong environmental education program will ensure that the land will continue to thrive for years to come and the OPRHP's mission and guiding principles are fulfilled.

Thank you for your support!

nal uphill of note, which gradually steepens as it takes you back to the bridge over Route 117 that you traversed some three miles previously. From here, only a little over a mile of flat and downhill remains before the finish.

You retrace your steps back along the aqueduct trail: descending to the roof of the aqueduct, passing by the ventilator shaft, negotiating the stable bridge, dismounting the aqueduct through the three switchbacks. At this point, the course offers relief from climbing back up to the Rockwood Hall foundations. Instead, you slalom along a brook through several small wooden bridges until you arrive at a bluff above the Hudson River rail line and its namesake beyond. Turning left, you're on the home stretch. With the vast expanse of the river on your right and the meadows and woods uphill and to your left, it's as the rest of the course and the entire Preserve: marvelous, exhausting, exhilarating, grounding.

As you cross the finish line, the Ramble presents a parting gift: a quarter-mile uphill walk back to the start. You're welcome.



Photo: BRon Vogt

The View from Mile 4

Life and Death on Swan Lake

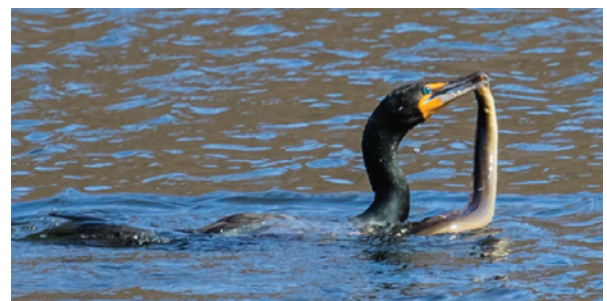
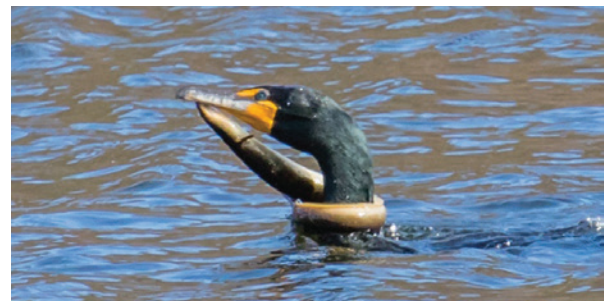
by Bill Golden

Swan Lake in Rockefeller Preserve looks so beautiful and serene throughout the year. Life on the lake usually appears to be calm and peaceful. Of course, that isn't always the case whenever it comes to nature and wildlife. In nature, there are battles between rivals fighting over territory and mates. Animals are either the prey, the predator or both. These dramas take place throughout the day.

As a wildlife photographer, I seek to capture the beauty and the action that can be found in observing animal life. Sometimes I really get lucky. On one occasion, I was extremely lucky and witnessed a battle between a Double-crested Cormorant and a large fresh water eel. I almost always have a camera with me, so I was able to photograph the action.

I was surprised to see a fresh water eel in the lake. I did not know there were any there. More surprising was the size of the eel. We have many Cormorants that fish in Swan Lake during spring and summer. They frequently can be seen stretching out and drying their wings while perched on branches. They swim across the lake and dive for fish. If you are lucky, you might even see one with a fish in its mouth after resurfacing from the depths of the lake. I have photographed Cormorants fishing, but I have never seen anything like this before.

The Cormorant attacked the eel, but the eel fought back. The battle lasted for about half an hour. During that time, I was able to get well over 200 photographs. At one point the eel wrapped itself around the neck of the Cormorant. But nevertheless, the Cormorant won and swallowed the eel whole like it was a giant strand of spaghetti. At right are some photographs I took of the Double-crested Cormorant fighting with that gigantic eel.



Photos: Bill Golden

Rockefeller State Park Preserve Staff

- Peter Iskenderian, Preserve Manager
- Laurence Gill, Director of Operations
- Tim Howell, Facility Maintenance Supervisor
- Rebecca Policello, Natural Resource Specialist
- Julia Ann Jardine, Conservation Communicator
- Cynthia Dermody, Communications Consultant
- Jean Dolan, Park Office Assistant
- Anthony Corda, Parking Lot/ Visitor Service Assistant
- Sean Bolan, Natural Resource Assistant
- Hunter Salmon, Natural Resource Assistant
- Sean Sullivan, Buildings & Grounds Keeper
- Robert Kleinschmidt, Buildings & Grounds Keeper
- Maso Robinson, Buildings & Grounds Keeper



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



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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

Preserve's Carriage Roads Named to the State Register of Historic Places

The culmination of a multi-year effort by The Friends of the Rockefeller State Park Preserve came in late 2018 when the New York State Historic Review Board voted unanimously to designate the Preserve's 65-mile carriage road network for inclusion on the State Register of Historic Places.

The designation recognizes the unique beauty and character of the 16-foot-wide, crushed-stone pathways designed by John D. Rockefeller Sr. and his son, John D. Jr., over a 40-plus year period from 1910 into the 1950s. The winding carriage roads are the signature feature of the Preserve. The network is one of only two such extensive systems in the nation. The other, in Acadia National Park in Maine and also Rockefeller-designed, already has historic designation. The State Park Preserve's network includes well-engineered loops that traverse the property offering stunning vistas.

Ann Rockefeller Roberts, family member and author of *Mr. Rockefeller's Roads*, stated: "My Grandfather John D Rockefeller Jr introduced me to these roads at an early age -he taught us to ride, and we each came to love these roads and the out of doors through him. I have walked and ridden on horseback and in carriages along these roads with my own children and grandchildren.

My grandfather's desire in creating these roads was that people from all walks of life would be able to receive Nature's Blessings. In this high speed world, these carriage roads are a crucial resource - offering the calm and the beauty of nature to thousands of people. This generous and visionary action by New York State Historic Review Board will ensure that these beautiful and historic roads can be protected in perpetuity."