

Photo: William Golden



The Big Brood: Duckling Daycare

By William Golden

Every spring, the preserve becomes the home to several broods of ducklings. Unlike geese, mother ducks raise the young on their own without any help from the drakes.

This year an amazing sight was observed. One of the mallards had a brood of 15 ducklings. Usually a brood consists of about 6 to 9 ducklings. So seeing the brood of 15 certainly attracted attention.

Now how is this possible? Do ducks have that many babies? According to Cornell Lab of Ornithology, mallards can have from 1 to 13 eggs in their clutch. The record set has been 24 ducklings.

continued on page 11

Preserve Regular Tackles the Alps

By Benjamin H. Cheever

Majestic is a word rarely associated with nature in this county. When the word “majestic” is trotted out, it’s apt to be in a real estate listing as a synonym for “gigantic” as in “a truly majestic kitchen with granite island and eat-in alcove.”

There are majestic views, but even then it’s not nature’s glory being touted as much as the way a homeowner might look down on her supine form while sipping absent-mindedly on her skim-milk latte.

We condescend to nature. Sure she has her blizzards and the Saw Mill River Parkway becomes the Saw Mill River after a heavy rain but most of us are dry and toasty most of the time. We’re watching Mother Nature’s temper tantrums from the sofa in our majestically appointed media room.

The trouble with not being scary is that you’re apt to be despised.

Nature is concentrated in open land.

continued on page 2



Photo: Peter Humphrey

Clare M. Pierson

From the Friends President

By Clare M. Pierson

Fall is upon us, with its vibrant temperatures and eye popping colors. Our two October events, the Autumn Pace and Rocky’s 5K, were both picture perfect days. The equestrians love this park, and the runners are challenged by the hills, but feel the same about their “Rocky’s”. Both the Rockwood Ramble 10K in June, and Rocky’s 5K in October, are very popular races with many runners coming back year after year.

Because of the funds we raise at these events and your support, we have been able to move forward with some very important maintenance projects. The Friends sponsored

continued on page 5

Alps, *continued from page 1*

We see a piece of open land, we close it up.

The Rockefeller State Park Preserve is a notable exception. A gift from the Rockefeller family first initiated in 1983, there are now 1,600 acres of state park preserve. The Rockefeller estate from which the land was taken was once a piece of open land in a county dotted with pieces of open land. This is no longer the case. Open land in Westchester is not as rare as tigers in Westchester, but it's rare.

You want tigers, you go to the Bronx zoo and visit the tiger exhibit. You want to ride horses under trees; you go to Pocantico Hills and visit the nature exhibit.

Neither zoos nor parks are profitable. The zoo has friends and so does the park. John Nonna is on the board of the Friends of the Rockefeller State Park Preserve. He's a lawyer working out of the city, but with an avocation for public service. He's been a county legislator and the mayor of Pleasantville. John was also an Olympic fencer, which this reporter should have considered before picking him as a climbing companion.

John's wife, Jean, decided that for her birthday she wanted to climb in the Alps. The Nonnas were going to take their daughter a drama teacher named Maryanne who lives in Brooklyn.

The writer of this article clambered to be included in the "Highlights of the Tour Du Mont Blanc in Comfort". He liked the sort of drama where there was an intermission. He liked the "comfort" part although the "high" in highlights made him dizzy.

Nor was Mr. Google reassuring. Mont Blanc was sometimes called the Death Mountain or the White Killer. One prominent article estimated that 100 people a year died climbing on or around the mother of many fountain pens.

But still he went. The Nonnas were irresistible.

Once there, though, he was sorely tested. There were no guardrails. A slip in the mud might easily become a slip into eternity.

When the party stopped to have a drink of water and some bread and cheese, the Nonnas had a variety of conversational gambits. Cheever had one conversational gambit: "I don't want to fall and die."

Quite unknowingly our little nature lover had been thrust back into the relationship that man had held with nature



John and Jean Nonna (left) and their daughter Maryanne pause with Benjamin Cheever on an alpine climb.

throughout most of time. Men were eaten by tigers. They fell from great heights.

The Nonnas jollied Cheever through parts of France, Switzerland and Italy.

Back at home and with no limbs missing, this reporter regarded his favorite park with new respect. Nature was not a pet. He couldn't think of one time the park had plotted to dismember a single human. Unfortunately he could think of several times that human beings had plotted to dismember the park. Land is money after all and money talks. He wished he had taken an Alp home in his suitcase. He might have set it out on Route 448. We need something to remind us of the majesty of nature.

Ben Cheever is a writer, novelist, established roadrunner and board member of the Friends of the Rockefeller State Park Preserve.



Reaching the Friends

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

The Preserve Observer

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



Autumn Pace Event Ushers in Autumn

by Liz Meszaros

On Sunday, October 18th, the Friends hosted its 14th Annual Autumn Country Pace at Rockwood Hall, overlooking the mighty Hudson River. Our annual pace is a popular equestrian fundraiser that supports carriage road maintenance. This year, we were once again pleased to welcome some more new riders as a result of our collaboration with the Associated Bridle Trails Association, which offers riders the opportunity not only to compete in our pace, but in the Fall Pace Series. Many riders expressed their pleasure with the length and beauty of the new course this year and its many challenging jumps. Afterwards, over 160 guests enjoyed a delicious hot feast under the tent prepared by Turco's of Yorktown and served by Margaret Monteforte.

Our team of volunteers, who arrived at 6:30 am, were welcomed with hot coffee and tea to prepare them for what was to be the coldest morning of the fall season so far. The first team went out at 8:12 am and were greeted by the warmth of the sun.

Our Pace committee, led by Pace Co-chairs Lynn Lucas and Debbie Homer, worked very hard coordinating the volunteers and mapping out a new course with beautiful vistas and many challenging, perfectly paced jumps. This event is an enormous undertaking that would not be possible without the 50 plus volunteers assigned on the trails, at the registration desk, the start, the finish, the parking lot, the tent for set up and clean up, the raffle table, and finally, the composting area. We sincerely thank all of our volunteers for their hard work and dedication to our preserve.

We cannot forget our neighbors at New York Life Insurance Company who graciously lend us their parking lot each year. We also had assistance from the Briarcliff Manor Ambulance Corps and the Phelps Hospital Emergency Management Team who were instrumental in improving communications along the trail. We are grateful to the park staff, who always lend a helping hand transporting supplies to Rockwood Hall and ensuring a safe course for our riders.

The Friends would like to thank the following individuals or businesses who generously supported our event which contributed to the success of our Pace:

Aardvark Pet Supply, Pleasantville
 Agriventures Agway of Danbury
 Agway of Danbury
 Amy Franks at "VintageStableDesigns"
 Angie Kung & Barbara Mavian

Beech Hill Farm
 Blume Electric
 Blue Hill at Stone Barns
 Care of Trees
 Cornerstone Auto Repair
 Corbett Excavating
 The Feed Barn, Brewster
 Fox Hill Farm
 Gina's Life Coaching
 Glass Onion, Pleasantville
 Historic Hudson Valley
 Hudson Valley Writer's Center
 I Fetish Optique
 Lil Chocolate Shoppe, Pleasantville
 Lucas and Mercanti - Intellectual Property
 The Lyden Family at Riverview Farm
 Mid Hudson Veterinary Practice
 Miller and Associates
 New England Equine Practice
 Paws of Pocantico
 Peter Humphrey Energy Healing
 Presbyterian Church of Mount Kisco
 Refined Equine
 River Market
 Russo Farms
 Saddle Manor
 Shoprite of Thornwood
 Silamar Farm, Millerton, NY
 Stone Barns Center
 Tarry Tavern
 Twisted Bit Saddlery, Scarsdale, NY
 Tractor Supply, Amenia, NY
 Westchester Horse Council

Trophies and Ribbons to 10th place were awarded.
 Congratulations to all of the winners!

First Place winners were:

Pleasure Division: Mary Clark Romney and Donna Silvestri

Hunt Division: Jessica Owen-Smith and John Merryman

Western Division: Dana Faulkner, Sonya Meberg and Caroline Gesky

Junior Division: Amanda Difeo and Michelle DiFeo

The Friends Board would like to thank all who have joined us this year to support the preserve and its beautiful trails and especially **all of our volunteers who worked so hard** to make this pace a success! We could not do it without you!! See you on the trails!

Meet the New Members of the Board



Robert Lane

Robert Lane is Vice President for Development and External Relations at Phelps Memorial Hospital Center. As the hospital's chief fundraising strategist, he leads and manages comprehensive development programs, including capital campaigns and associations with top philanthropic prospects. He also oversees the Marketing and Communications Department.

Mr. Lane has over 20 years of experience in fundraising, strategic planning, marketing and management. Before coming to Phelps he was president of Saint Francis Health Care Foundation in Poughkeepsie, New York, where he completed a \$15 million capital campaign. Prior to that Mr. Lane served as Executive Vice President for External Relations at EcoHealth Alliance, an international organization focused on the field of conservation medicine, based in New York City. He worked for 16 years at the world-renowned Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, ultimately as Vice President for Development, where he successfully completed a \$40 million capital campaign.

Mr. Lane has been Chairman of the Board of the Astor Home for Children Foundation and served on several boards including Mount Saint Mary College in Newburgh, NY.

A graduate of Binghamton University in Binghamton, NY, Mr. Lane earned his Bachelor of Science Degree (with honors) in Business Administration.

"Bob Lane was a great asset to the Friends and the Preserve even before he came on the Board," said Friends President Clare Pierson.



Patrice Ingrassia

In my twenties, I moved to Westchester to take my first full-time job. One of my great new encounters was walking into the gorgeous acres of parkland that we now call The Rockefeller State Park Preserve.

I was in great shape back then. It was easy to hike across what felt like "never-ending" carriage roads and to cross-country ski after snow falls. I'll never forget the day I was skiing by myself. A brown five-foot doe emerged out of tall bushes a few feet to my left. She was beautiful, staring at me intensely. She approached. And then I went truly cold.

Her yearling was on my right! In terms of speed, I am sure I skied a personal best getting out of there.

From the outset, I was grateful that the Rockefeller family encouraged the public to enjoy the land. I was thrilled when I learned of the park's inception in 1983 and their additional land donations. This had become a place the public could count on enjoying for generations.

Today, I still enjoy the Preserve. A few pounds heavier, I go there equipped in whatever "repair wear" I need at the moment to help whatever body part needs some support or assistance. My partner and I often bring Jesse, our spunky terrier, along with visiting family members and friends. They are always impressed. To us, it's magical.

We have more than 300,000 visits a year at the park. Yet, from a public image perspective, this is a hidden jewel. In financial terms, it's an unrecognized asset. In terms of communications, it's an opportunity!

I'm proud to have joined the board of the Friends so I can give something back to this sanctuary of beauty and wildlife. My professional experience is in education, marketing and communications. My aim is to provide ideas that help educate the public about the uniqueness of this jewel. I hope that through enhanced use of development techniques – from sponsorship to social media – that we engage people's imaginations, activate their participation, and encourage contributions.

New Yorkers treasure and advocate for Central Park. We can do the same for this land.

We have over 1,600 acres of forest, hayfields, pastures and 55 miles of carriage roads that function like arteries for runners, walkers and hikers. New York State's funding is not nearly enough to cover the maintenance. Big storms are only making it worse. Reconstructing Buttermilk Hill alone this year will cost many dollars. Our mission is vital, and we need the help of the public – be it your expertise, energy, donations or some combo of all. Support or volunteer at our events. Help our Social Media and Sponsorship Committee (which I co-chair). Invite us into your company to discuss partnerships. Buy your spirits and glassware at the Westchester Wine Warehouse, using the "Friendsrock" code at check-out or online. Share your ideas with us.

The Friends exist so that the park exists. I am glad to be one of the many supporters. Hope to see you out there!

President's Letter, *continued from page 1*

critical projects on Ferguson's Loop, Peggy's Way, Pocantico River Trail, Deer Run, Ash Tree Loop, and Overlook. Most recently, the Friends made it possible to repair the washouts and clear the drainage on Ridge Trail, and to resurface an eroded section of Witch's Spring. The trail improvements of the last two years have held up well during heavy downpours. We are continuing to do maintenance projects as the fall proceeds.

These projects are a little different than those we have done in the past. Usually we are doing major repair work on trails and leaving the maintenance to the state. As we approach the capital improvement project that the state is undertaking, we shifted gears to spend the better part of our funds on these maintenance projects because there is some funding now coming from the Governor's capital improvement funds for major repair work on the carriage roads.

Over the next couple of years we look forward to a partnership with the state to bring the carriage road system back to its original grandeur. More on that as we work out the details of our campaign.

Meanwhile, enjoy the preserve, we'll see you on the trails!




The top three winners in the Rocky's 5k, left to right: Million Wolde, 2nd place, (also the 5000m Olympic Gold medalist from Sydney 2000); Nick Athanasidy, 3rd place (bib 394); and Nick Petsky (bib 393), who won the 5k in a time of 16:50. They were separated by only 1 second apiece!



Who could resist these T-shirts, a bonus for entering the race?



Some of the volunteers who made the race a success.

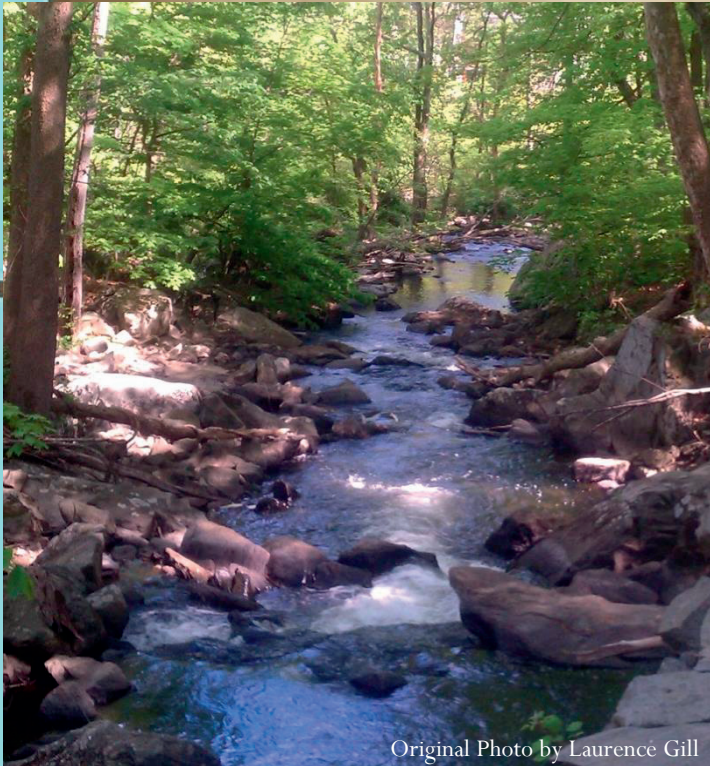
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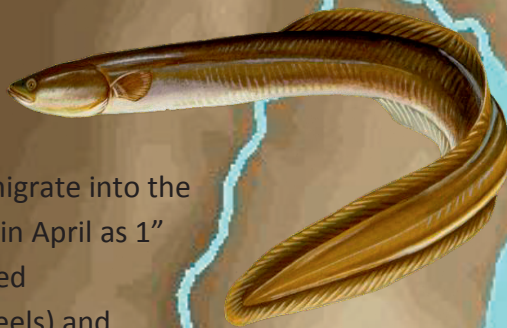
Water = Life: The Preserve rivers, streams, wetland



Original Photo by Laurecè Gill

From the Pocantico River's tumbling cascade to the innumerable small streams and picturesque Swan Lake, water courses through the Preserve, delighting our eyes and ears. These waters and wetlands are also valuable habitats and natural corridors for a diverse array of life.

American eels migrate into the Pocantico River in April as 1" long, clear-bodied juveniles (glass eels) and leave 20 or more years later as 2 - 3 foot long mature animals to return to their spawning grounds in the Sargasso Sea. They haunt the rocks and pools of the river, emerging at night to prey on aquatic invertebrates. A survey this summer confirmed a small population of eels in the Pocantico, despite the long history of dams on the river (historically called



the Mill River). This is welcome news, as American eel populations have significantly declined. Tributaries, such as the Pocantico, are essential for their recovery.



One occurrence of *fairy shrimp* is known in the Preserve. Fairy shrimp, tiny crustaceans related to lobsters, live quick lives in isolated woodland pools which are fish-less and dry out annually. About ½ inch long, they feed on algae, bacteria, protozoa and detritus. The females produce thin-shelled "summer" eggs which hatch before the pool dries and thick shelled "winter" eggs which overwinter in the dry mud, hatching in early spring before predatory beetles emerge. If necessary, the eggs can lie dormant in the pool bottom for several dry years.

In early spring, large bright green leaves of skunk cabbage and loud trills and barks of woodland frogs announce woodland



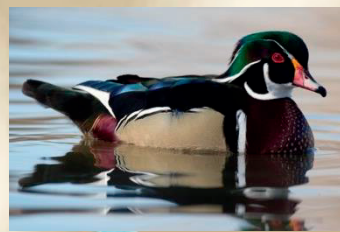
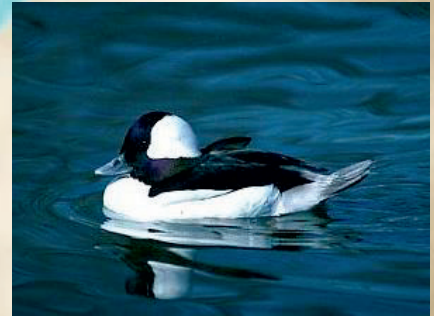
wetlands. *Wood frogs*, spring peepers, American toads and grey tree frogs breed in swamps and flooded wetlands then disperse into nearby woodlands. The Preserve has several breeding populations of these species, making it possible for visitors to the Preserve to hear spring sounds that have carried through the millennia.

Swamps and lake are vital habitats for wonderful creatures



The secretive *four-toed salamander* breeds in red maple swamps. The female buries clusters of shiny eggs in sphagnum moss hummocks where she guards the eggs until they hatch and drop as tadpoles into the dark waters of the swamp. There is concern that this species is regionally declining, so confirming that this species continues to breed in the Preserve is good news.

Waterfowl, especially the *bufflehead*, visit during migration and spend the winter if the lake doesn't freeze.



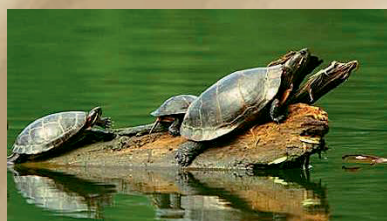
Male *wood ducks*, one of the showiest ducks in the world, court drab females in the Preserve's

wetlands. The males soon fly off, leaving the female to raise their young on the lake. Last year and this, some of the ducklings survived the predatory snapping turtles to fledge late summer.



Original Photo © by S. A. Cember. All rights reserved.

In the 22 acre Swan Lake, created by an earthen dam in 1933, *painted turtles* sun on logs. Fragrant water lilies brighten the shallows while snapping turtles, bass and perch lurk in the shadows.



For more information, visit the Preserve's blogspot: <http://rsppvolunteers.com>

Centerfold design layout & Pocantico watershed background image by: Laurence Gill & Emily Cheadle



Don Meeker and one of his innovations

New Signs, Safer Times

by Susan Antenen

Have you noticed the handsome new signs along the road entering the Preserve and the parking lot? This summer, park patron Don Meeker and his firm Terrabilt, an environmental graphic and sign design company, contributed considerable pro bono guidance and sign plans. Don consults with parks around the country, including developing sign standards for the National Park Service. This spring, when told about a traffic flow issue in the Preserve, he responded, "The trick is to put the right information at the right place". The next day he offered suggestions to improve the entrance and directional signage. This quickly grew into a site analysis and larger effort to improve pedestrian safety and standardize all signs. Thank you, Don, for your professional advice, measuring prowess, helpful sign mock-ups, elbow grease, sense of humor, and your love of the Preserve.

A Fond Farewell

After almost 30 years of service, Naturalist Richard Nelson retired over the summer. A party, sponsored by the Friends, was given to him and Steve Sciame, who left for a new post. Friends and relatives gathered at Trattoria 160 in Pleasantville.



Fans of departing Preserve employees Richard Nelson and Steve Siame wish them well!



Rockefeller State Park Preserve Staff

Susan Antenen, Preserve Manager
 Laurence I. Gill, Director of Operations
 Jeff Litwinowicz, Interim Maintenance Supervisor
 Dominic Garcia, Maintenance Assistant
 Emily Cheadle, GIS and Communications Specialist
 Vacant, Preserve Naturalist
 Vacant, Visitor Services and Outreach Coordinator
 Anthony Corda, Parking Lot and Visitor Services Assistant

From the Preserve Manager

By Susan Antenen

"This is my favorite place". So said Sal, a retired teacher, this morning as we walked along Brothers' Path looking across Swan Lake. He's not alone. Rockefeller State Park Preserve is very important to many, many people...for exercise, for nature and beauty, for relaxation and solace. Our task is to keep it wonderful now and for future generations. To set the course, we have launched baseline studies, planning initiatives, and on-the-ground stewardship projects relating to the historic carriage roads and natural resources.

On the carriage road front, engineers completed a comprehensive assessment of carriage roads which ranked the condition of the road surface, walls and stone bridges, and the drainage system segment by segment for 27 miles of trails on the state lands. The results are being used to set priorities for an upcoming multi-year capital improvement program to reconstruct eroded roads and their associated infrastructure.

In the meantime, the Preserve has ramped up carriage road maintenance in partnership with the Friends of Rockefeller State Park Preserve. In addition to removing fallen trees and mowing, this summer the State resurfaced Eagle Hill and some Rockwood trails, while the Friends sponsored critical projects on Ferguson's Loop, Peggy's Way, Pocantico River Trail, Deer Run, Ash Tree Loop, and Overlook. Most recently, the Friends made it possible to repair the washouts and clear the drainage of Ridge Trail and to resurface an eroded section of Witch's Spring. The trail improvements of the last two years have held up well during heavy downpours.

Through the spring and summer, scientists conducted biological surveys as part of a park-wide natural resource assessment. I'm very happy to report that we do have American eels in the Pocantico River as well as numerous other native species, such as black nosed dace. The three uncommon salamander species found during surveys in 2006 were found again, which is very good news, because amphibians around the world are in serious decline and populations blink out inexplicably. A volunteer launched a 3 year study to document nesting success of wood thrush, an at-risk woodland nesting bird species. Preliminary results indicate that despite having over 30 nesting pairs, the number of fledges is low, possibly due to predation by brown-headed cowbirds, raccoons, and blue jays. We also

started mapping key native and invasive plant species. I was excited to discover a single native wood lily in bloom. It's a tall true lily with orange bell-shaped flowers, now uncommon because it is normally a tasty treat to deer.

And we expanded our ecological stewardship. Thanks to Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture, 95 sheep and goats grazed the hills of Rockwood Hall to help manage the grassy fields and control invasive vines. In two years, we've learned that the animals fare well on a varied "wild" diet and that grazing is a beneficial part of the management regime, but that strategically-timed mowing and weedwacking is also essential. This is very much a work in progress.

To make headway on care of the forest, three seasonal stewards were hired with private funds under the auspices of the Friends of Recreation, Conservation, and Environmental Stewardship (FORCES), a State Park program to involve college students in parks. They cut, dug, wacked, and mapped priority invasive species, plants which crowd out native wildflowers and degrade forest health. Target invasives were black swallowwort, mile-a-minute vine, five-leafed akebia, Japanese barberry, and Asian bittersweet. The collegiate stewards made measurable progress in some areas and learned about forest vegetation and ecology. The FORCES team made it possible to incorporate volunteers, such as a high school student who worked full-time for 4 weeks and a NY Power Authority corporate workday.

After a very dry late summer, our busiest season, autumn, is here. Many first-time visitors are discovering their new favorite place. We thank our regular visitors for voting the Preserve Westchester's Best Public Park for two years running.

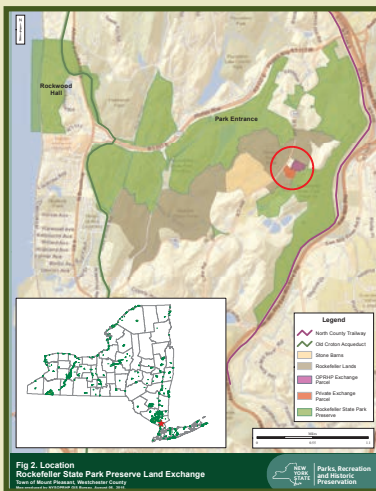
Happy trails,
Susan



Public Hearing Held on Land Exchange for Rockefeller State Park Preserve

The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (State Parks) held a public hearing on a Draft Environmental Impact Statement for a proposed land exchange at 6:30 pm on Wednesday, October 7, 2015 at The Gallery at Rockefeller State Park Preserve, 125 Phelps Way, Pleasantville, NY 10570.

State Parks was proposing the land exchange with an adjacent private landowner to protect an important viewshed area within the Rockefeller State Park Preserve and the surrounding area from development. State Parks proposed to transfer a 6.856 acre parcel of the Preserve to an adjacent private landowner in exchange for a 6.856 acre parcel of this highly scenic pastoral land from the private owner.



The DEIS is available at: <http://nysparks.com/inside-our-agency/master-plans.aspx>. Copies are also available for review at: Warner Library serving Tarrytown and Sleepy Hollow, 121 North Broadway, Tarrytown, NY 10591; Briarcliff Manor Public Library, 1 Library Rd, Briarcliff Manor, NY 10510; and Mount Pleasant Public Library, 350 Bedford Rd, Pleasantville, NY 10570.

The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation oversees 180 state parks and 35 historic sites, which are visited by 62 million people annually. For more information on any of these recreation areas, call 518-474-0456 or visit www.nysparks.com, connect on Facebook, or follow on Twitter.

❖ Gallery Schedule at a Glance ❖

“Pleasures”

September 13 - November 8

Representational art images exhibiting the pleasures of people enjoying the beauty of locations bordering oceans, lakes, pools. The exhibit currently at the Visitors Center has noted artists Jarvis Wilcox, Sharon Falk, Eleanor Grace Miller and Page Simon.



“Two Women in Mountain Stream” by Eleanor Grace Miller

“CRACKLE ”

November 15, 2015 - January 3, 2016

Opening Reception:

Sunday, November 15 1PM - 3PM

For the first time, we’ve organized a curated exhibit of paintings, drawings, and mixed media visual art inspired by the Preserve and Stone Barns. All styles will be exhibited.



Arleen Kemler

Ducklings, *continued from page 1*

Could something else have happened to explain such a large brood? One theory is that it was not just one brood, but two. The reason why I think that there may have been two separate broods is that the first time I observed the big brood, I noticed that the ducklings were two different sizes. The difference was also noticeable to my friend who was also present and confirmed that the ducklings had two different sizes. The sizes were dramatic enough for another park visitor to remark on the difference.

Then what might have happened to the other mother duck? Have you noticed how many snapping turtles inhabit Swan Lake? I think there may be almost as many snappers as there are ducks. That certainly puts the ducks and the ducklings in a vulnerable position. Then we also have those coyotes, hawks and other predators in the preserve. So we surmised that one mother duck may have not survived to carry out the task of caring for her young.

Waterfowl who suffer damage to their bills frequently do not survive.

Unfortunately for orphaned ducklings, daddy ducks don't usually accept the role of single dads. But could a female mallard have adopted another duck's brood? Is it possible for one animal to adopt another animal's young?

The answer is yes. There are documented cases of animals adopting or protecting other animals. With regards to ducks, the evidence is that wild ducks will foster wild ducklings but not domestic ones. There is even evidence of male Muscovy ducks fostering orphaned ducklings. But wild ducks will reject any duckling, including their own, that possesses any scent of humans. That is why it is so important to not touch those cute little wild ducklings. On the other hand, domestic ducks have been known to foster wild ducklings as well as domestic ones.

Here is another interesting part of the story. Our duckling daycare mother duck is probably a survivor of an attack from a predator. Look at her bill in the close-up photo. She has a deformity that looks like an old wound, maybe from a snapping turtle. Mallards, and other dabbling ducks, eat using their bills to scoop up vegetation in the water. I have seen snapping turtles lurking around while the ducks seem oblivious during their eating frenzies. So far, I have never seen one of those snappers attack a duck. However, snap-

ping turtles have been known to attack waterfowl, and have been known to target their bills. Waterfowl who suffer damage to their bills frequently do not survive.

Could our duckling daycare mama duck have been predisposed to be empathic and altruistic as a result of having been a survivor? Scientists argue that instinct is the reason why ducks foster another duck's ducklings. The evidence that wild ducks will only foster wild ducks and not domestic ones is the evidence used to dismiss altruism as the motivation of foster care ducks. However, there is evidence that animals do have feelings such as empathy.



Photo: William Golden

Our heroine with the injured bill

There are many cases of animals bonding with animals of a different species. "Nature" did a show that appeared on PBS this year that documented cases of animals that have protected and adopted other animals that were not of the same species.

I am sure that some readers will think I am anthropomorphizing and that this is just a story about a duck with a big brood. Perhaps, but if that is the case, then we still have an amazing story about a challenged duck with a huge brood living and surviving here in our park.

Dr. William Golden is a practicing psychologist and professional photographer who has spent several hundred hours enjoying the preserve and photographing its wonders.





The Preserve Observer

Friends of the Rockefeller State Park Preserve
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HERE TO ENJOY...OURS TO PRESERVE

Ferguson's Loop Carriage Road Before & After Repairs Funded by the Friends Summer 2015

Badly eroded trail was re-surfaced with new subbase and top layer and drainage was re-opened.



BEFORE

AFTER