

A Park Pilgrimage Through Beacon, NY **by Skip Doyle**

From shoreline to mountain, a string of parks link an extended nature walk through Beacon, NY. For fit individuals wanting to hike these treasures, the Adirondack Mountain Club is offering a day-long trek of these nature sites on Saturday, April 20.

Starting at the Beacon train station is Riverfront Park which besides having a playground and picnic area, hosts the unique River Pool – a pool-like enclosure ensuring safe wading for children in the Hudson River. For distance swimmers, on July 27, the River Pool organization is sponsoring a swim across the Hudson River from Newburgh to Beacon to benefit the river pool in Riverfront Park. With the sailboats of the neighboring Beacon Sloop Club, and views up and down the Hudson River, Riverfront Park is a perfect place for a picnic and stroll.

Next door is Scenic Hudson's Long Dock which besides offering shoreline access, contains the River Center – the restored historic Red Barn now used for the arts and environmental education (currently on display is an exhibit of Hudson River Valley photography). "Scenic Hudson is not just about land preservation," says Matt Shipkey, project manager at Scenic Hudson, "it is also about public access to those areas, environment improvement, and nature education." Long Dock once housed a ferry terminal, oil terminal, and junkyard. In an exhaustive reclamation project, Scenic Hudson removed the contaminants of this site's industrial past to create a park attractive to wildlife and providing river access to walkers and kayakers – complete with a kayak pavilion for the storage of kayaks and rentals through Mountain Top Outfitters (mountaintopsonline.com).

To the south is Dennings Point which includes a walking trail and the Beacon Institute for Rivers and Estuaries (bire.org). The environmental exhibit in the B.I.R.E. facility offers a concise history and science of the Hudson River. "We welcome walk-in visitors to B.I.R.E." says Public Affairs director, Terry Platz, "both to see our exhibits and to enjoy the picnic tables on our grounds afterwards."

Heading away from the river, Madam Brett Park – maintained by Scenic Hudson and its volunteers (ScenicHudson.org) – provides wonderful vistas of waterfalls, wetlands, and the western hills of the Hudson River Valley. A boardwalk and observation platforms along the way affords up-close discoveries of fauna.



Bird Watching in Madam Brett Park



Boardwalk along Fishkill Creek

Casual hikers have the option of concluding the trek at the Fishkill Creek waterfalls on the culturally rich, Main Street in Beacon. Hearty hikers will then forge on ascending the rigorous trail up Mount Beacon where a half-century ago a scenic cog railway offered a leisurely ride to the restaurant at the summit. After exploring railway remnants at the top, and enjoying the overlook of Beacon with the remaining rays of the sun, hikers will descend to the Mount Beacon parking lot to complete the trek.



Mount Beacon – cog railway engine

For more information on this Beacon Shoreline-to-Mountain hike, view the Outings tab on the website of the mid-Hudson Chapter of the Adirondack Mountain Club (midHudsonADK.org) or contact Skip Doyle, the hike leader at SkipNewYork@Yahoo.com.