

CONSERVATION CORNER

Conservation News & Local Events

By Skip Doyle, Conservation Chair

Hudson River School lecture, Wednesday, April 2, 6:30-8:00 at the Princeton Club

What does each of these have in common: the Hudson Highlands, the Catskills, Harriman State Park, the Adirondacks, and the White Mountains? They are all places dear to members of the Appalachian Mountain Club – many of which you have probably visited. They are also the settings for the paintings by the artists of the Hudson River School.

In the mid-1800's, the Hudson River School of painters brought to the public a uniquely American style of art with their realistic yet romanticized landscapes of a new nation. They portray the region that we preserve, where we recreate, and honor as a national landmark. Their landscape paintings celebrate the shared ideals of this era – the wonders of God expressed through creation, and mankind's intrinsic place in nature. Last year's AMC-PC lecture – a biography of Rachel Carson – was entitled "The Gentle Subversive." True to naturalists' counterculture, the Hudson River School could be called "subversives to secularism" as they hearken each of us to discover our own spirituality in nature.

This 90 minute, two-part lecture is hosted at The Princeton Club – home to eminent lectures across a broad spectrum of topics. This lecture features the noted specialist in American landscape painting, **Kevin Avery, associate curator at the Metropolitan Museum of Art**, who will discuss the works of the Hudson River School painters and their historical and geographical context with special reference to the Catskill Mountains where the School's earliest subjects were found. He is also a hiker and photographer, thus providing a pictorial link between the settings painted by the HRS artists and how those places appear today.

Also speaking shall be the acclaimed **artist and author, Thomas Locker**, who paints in a style reminiscent of Hudson River School; he will discuss his methods and works. Thomas Locker is the author of dozens of books, introducing classical art into children's books, of which my favorite is "Where the River Begins" – a story of two young hikers and their grandfather hiking Mount Marcy to Lake Tear of the Clouds. Several of his paintings will be on display, so feel free to visit the Prospect room before the lecture.

For those interested in viewing HRS paintings, visiting the historic sites, or actually trekking to the settings of these paintings, Appalachian Mountain Club hike leaders will provide this information after the lecture. While this lecture is free, space is limited. Contact Skip Doyle at skipnewyork@yahoo.com to register for this event.

AMC Annual Meeting – Conservation topics

In January, the AMC held its 132nd Annual Meeting in Danvers, MA. From our NY-NoJ Chapter, Mary Lindberg, Conservation Committee vice-chair of organization liaisons, attended as our Conservation representative. Key topics included: the Maine Woods initiative which has received a matching grant challenge (please donate through Outdoors.org!); partnering with the AMC mid-Atlantic office to include a conservation talk component to chapter activities in the Highlands region (contact jheisey@outdoors.org); reducing AMC's carbon footprint and what the mountains can tell us about climate change. The keynote speech and follow up conferences centered on bringing children into nature: "No Child Left Inside" which was developed by CT DEP and has become a national movement; AMC's Youth Opportunity Program now in its 40th year of operation; and workshops on jumpstarting these programs in AMC chapters. For more information visit www.outdoors.org/about/annualmeeting/summit-workshops.cfm or contact Mary Lindberg at maryklindberg@yahoo.com.

Conservation and ReCreation Nature Weekends

The Conservation Committee has developed three weekend events for the Summer Schedule which combines conservation education with active outdoors activities.

Fire Island, June 20-21 features talks about this island's habitats and history, and includes beach hikes to the Sunken Forest and the Fire Island Lighthouse.

Stowe VT, July 3-7 features an exploration of the region's history and includes a bike ride along Lake Champlain, hike of Mount Mansfield, and canoe (kayak) on the Lamoille River.

Esopus (New Paltz), NY, August 1-3 features a presentation by Carol and Bob White on the Catskills, and includes hiking in Minnewaska/Mohonk, kayaking (canoeing) on the Hudson, bike riding, and visiting local nature preserves..

Catskill Watershed Lands

The NYC DEP has opened 11,000 acres of watershed land in the Catskills for hiking and other recreational purposes. While the DEP is charged with protecting the water quality for NYC, it has relaxed its land-use restrictions and opened these watershed properties for responsible recreational use.