

## **Scenic Hudson – Parks & Preserves: *Harrier Hill Park***

Harrier Hill Park is a culmination – not a destination. It is the journey through the city of Hudson and town of Greenport that yields this vista as its reward. Traveling through the Hudson Valley countryside, I reminisced of descending through the Grand Canyon to its bottom at Phantom Ranch. I was captivated by the recollection that every step down the canyon trail was an unfolding panorama of texture, vistas and color, and that my boots changed color from the dust of each hue of rock

strata – red, brown, orange, green. This autumn day, as I travel up the Hudson River Valley, I see that Arizona trek paled in comparison as I witness vastly more textures, vistas, culture and history. I am bathed in the vast enticements of nature: mountains rising and ebbing from the valley, pastoral fields adorned with wildflowers, the charted channels of the Hudson River, and projecting through the fall foliage every spectrum of color.



**Harrier Hill Park**

Pausing at the Old Annsburo Orchards, I observed that the not so distant Catskill Mountains are defined as much by their cloves as by their peaks. The saddled mountains of Overlook and Platte, and the range of Devil's Path behind them – with Indian Head, Twin, and Sugarloaf visible – are adrift from the paired peaks of Kaaterskill High Peak and Round Top by the vast chasm of Plattekill Clove. And those salient peaks of Kaaterskill High Peak and Round Top – visible throughout the Hudson River valley – are separated from The Escarpment, North Mountain, and the Blackhead Range by the deep cleft of Kaaterskill Clove.

While this is a day of vast vistas, it is only in the city of Hudson that I touch the waters of the Hudson River. The waterfront offers picnicking, day dockage for both motorboats and kayaks, and cruises to the Hudson Lighthouse offshore. For dining and browsing, Warren Street is the Main Street of Hudson: eight blocks of 19<sup>th</sup> century architecture – from the Albany & Boston railroad tracks to the Amtrak rails – is a diner's haven.

For children, Greenport Town Park has a playground, pavilion, picnic tables, and ball fields. From here, trails lead to the Greenport Conservation Area – 5 miles of well-maintained walking trails owned by the Columbia Land Conservancy.

The best access to Greenport Conservation Area is the preserve's parking lot on Joslen Boulevard just a few hundred yards south of the town park. Here, a mile-long, fine gravel path with grassy shoulders provides easy access; it is heartening to see the parallel etchings of strollers and wheelchairs.

The two-mile Stockport-Greenport Trail directly connects the Greenport Conservation Area with Scenic Hudson's Harrier Hill and the vast acreage protected by the NYS DEC. This is a true woods walk in contrast to the pedestrian Greenport trails. Having lingered touring Hudson, and

meandering the many Greenport Conservation Area trails, I arrived at Harrier Hill at sunset. The Catskill Mountains – blue in this fading light – and cloves I observed earlier in the day stretch even wider from this vantage point. As a serendipitous treat, the full moon was rising precisely as the sun was setting – as it does each month. The short, gravel path from parking lot to pavilion at Harrier Hill makes access by strollers and wheelchairs easy.

Maps of each of these preservation areas are available on their respective websites: [ScenicHudson.org/parks/HarrierHill](http://ScenicHudson.org/parks/HarrierHill) and [CLCtrust.org/public-conservation-areas/greenport](http://CLCtrust.org/public-conservation-areas/greenport). These parks coupled with a tour of Hudson make for a full day trip.



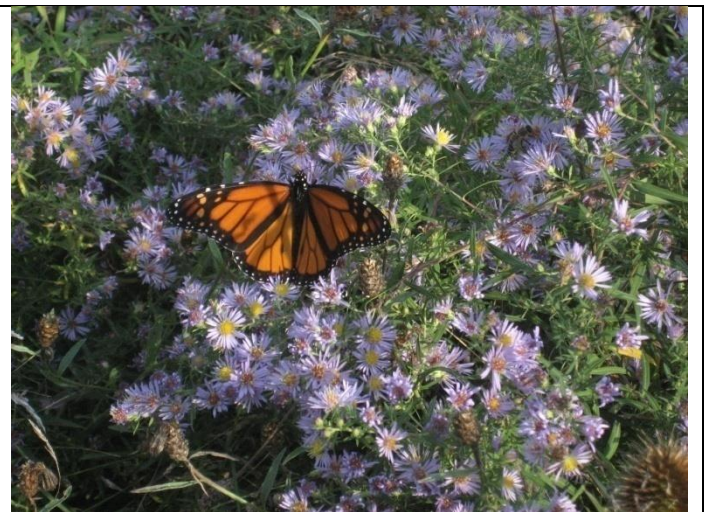
**Hudson Waterfront Park**



**Harrier Hill Park**



**Greenport Conservation Area**

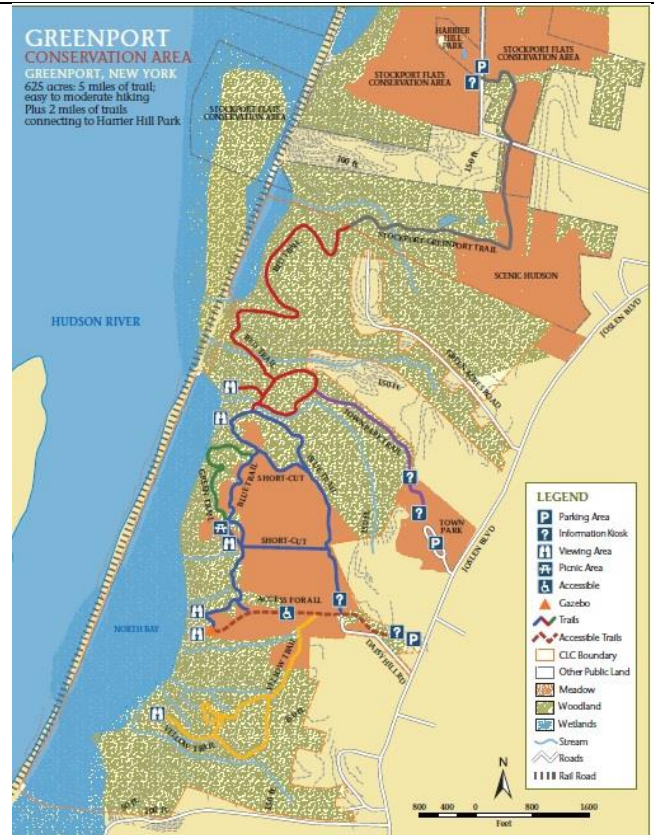


**Greenport Conservation Area**





**Harrier Hill Park map**



**Greenport Conservation Area map**