

# NATURE WALKS FOR CHILDREN AND OTHER NATURE LOVERS FALL 2011

We are a nature-loving group of moms, dads and small children on a series of rambles through local natural areas. All walks are designed with young children and babies in mind (interesting landscape features, easy trails, SHORT distances). Therefore, walks are very informal.

Most places are NOT stroller accessible, unless noted.

## **Thursday walks start at 9:45 AM.**

Over the years, we have found a SNACK to be necessary somewhere along the trail. Most of us usually bring a picnic lunch, and we often end up eating at least part of it on the trail. Most places have a nice picnic area near the parking spot. We identify those trips where eating lunch on the trail is the best option, so you can plan to bring something easy to pack (as compared to a watermelon in a cooler). It is always a good idea to bring drinks, sunscreen, bug repellent, raingear (just in case), and BOOTS. If the weather is bad, use your judgment or give us a call-- if it's warm enough and not raining steadily we'll probably venture out. If you have questions, please call the trip leader.

*Nature hikes, like most of life, involve an element of risk.  
Please be aware of this and be willing to assume responsibility.*

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Thursday, Sept. 15<sup>th</sup>: Lisha Kill Natural Area, Niskayuna.

Meeting time: 9:45 AM.

TRIP LEADER: Laurie Kirchman, 708-3257.

This beautiful sanctuary includes mature wooded highlands and ravines as it meanders along a portion of the Lisha Kill stream valley. The trail includes a moderate but short descent near the beginning of the ~.75 mile loop which we double back on at the end of our hike. We will be taking the Frank's Trail. Directions: Take NYS Thruway to Exit 25, follow I-890W to Exit 7/Rt 7. Follow Rt 7 for 2.2 miles than turn LEFT onto ROSENDALE RD/CR-158. Proceed on Rosendale 1.6 miles. The entrance to the preserve is on the right just past the Grange Hall and is marked with a white Nature Conservancy sign.

Thursday, Sept. 22<sup>nd</sup>: Peebles Island State Park, Waterford.

Meeting time: 9:45 AM.

TRIP LEADER: Laurie Kirchman, 708-3257.

This trail follows the shoreline of Peebles Island, which sits at the junction of the Hudson and Mohawk Rivers. There's a nice picnic area at the beginning of the trail and a picnic table stop on the trail with a view of a waterfall. Take I-787 north to where it becomes a smaller road with stoplights. About 2 miles past the Route 7 split, turn right (East) onto Rte. 470. Continue for more than half a mile, just before crossing a bridge over the Hudson; turn left (north) onto Delaware Ave. Continue to State Park entrance. The trail is at the far left end of the parking lot. NOTE: Parking will be free at this time of year, just drive past the parking booth.

Thursday, Sept. 29<sup>th</sup>: Five Rivers Environmental Education Center, Bethlehem.

Meeting time: 9:45 AM.

TRIP LEADER: Megan Orsini, 469-9128

A wonderful kid's place with a pond, geese, streams and more. This can be a muddy place, so dress accordingly. One year we saw a mama goose sitting on her eggs. From Albany, take Delaware Ave. through Delmar. Two and one-half miles from the Four Corners turn right on Orchard St. and then left onto Game Farm Rd. (Both turns are well marked.) Meet in the middle part of the parking lot. To reach Delmar from points southeast, you can take the Berkshire Spur (I-90) over the Hudson to Rte. I-87, and then 87 N to the Delmar exit. Follow Rte 9W S to Rte 32. Follow 32 around Delmar to a right on Rte 52 (a little over three miles). Follow 52 about 1 mile to Delaware Ave., take a left and look for Orchard St. on the right.

Thursday, October 6<sup>th</sup>: John Boyd Thacher Park, Voorheesville.  
TRIP LEADER: Kristin Pung, 439-4945

Meeting time: 9:45 AM.

Located 15 miles west of Albany on Rte.157. From I-90, take Exit 4, Rte. 85 West to Rte. 157 and take a right. Watch your speed as you enter the park, the speed limit is strictly enforced. We'll meet at the Hop Field parking area, the first picnic area on the left, and hike the Hop Field loop.

Thursday, October 13<sup>th</sup>: Albany Pine Bush, Albany.  
TRIP LEADER: Kristin Pung, 439-4945

Meeting time: 9:45 AM.

Sandy trails and little hills are fun for kids. Take Washington Ave. Extension west to Rte. 155 in Albany. Turn right onto 155 North. The NEW parking lot is at the new Discovery Center (the old SEFCU building - brick building with a clock tower), which we can check out after our hike. We will park around the back of the building near the new trailhead.

Thursday, October 20<sup>th</sup>: Emma Treadwell Thatcher Nature Center, Voorheesville.  
TRIP LEADER: Kristin Pung, 439-4945

Meeting time: 9:45 AM.

This is a lovely new nature center with trails along a lake, through fields and woodlands. There is a beaver lodge, and good wildflowers in spring. The Center itself boasts live reptiles, busy bird feeders, and lots of "hands on" nature for young ones to explore. Take Rte. 85 west to Rte. 157 towards Thatcher Park. Follow Rte. 157 directly through Thatcher Park (watch your speed as you enter the park, the speed limit is strictly enforced), and take the first right after the Park onto Ketchum Rd. The Center is 0.8 miles on the left.

Thursday, October 27<sup>th</sup>: W. Powell Bird Sanctuary, Old Chatham.  
TRIP LEADER: Laurie Kirchman, 708-3257.

Meeting time: 9:45 AM.

This is a beautiful site with woods, a stream and an open meadow for picnics. From Albany, take I-90 east to exit 12 -- Rte 9. Go south on Rte. 9 for 1.0 mile to an awkward left onto Rte 32 toward North Chatham. There's a large red antique barn called Ragtime on the right just before the turn. At North Chatham, turn right on Rte 203 to the end of the village. Take the first left onto county Rte 17. Stay on 17 about 3 miles, just past where Rte 66 merges in from the left. Just after 66 crosses a bridge into Chatham Center, take a hard left onto Rte 13. Stay on 13 approximately 2 miles, past signs for the Shaker Museum to the left. Just beyond, turn RIGHT onto Pitt Hall Rd. Pass the Quaker retreat center on the right (a lovely place). As you go up hill, bear LEFT at a fork. In less than ¼ mile, look for the Sanctuary parking lot entrance on the right.

Side trip note: Just a short drive from the sanctuary is the Old Chatham Shepherding Company, a working farm where visitors are welcome. Last year we saw baby lambs and lots of tractors. Bring some money for just-made cheese and yogurt, and a picnic lunch if it's a nice day.

Thursday, Nov. 3<sup>rd</sup>: Hollyhock Hollow Sanctuary, Feura Bush.  
TRIP LEADER: Laurie Kirchman, 708-3257.

Meeting time: 9:45 AM.

The Audubon Society's NY headquarters is here, and along with a butterfly garden, this preserve has level, easy trails, wonderful wildflowers and a picturesque stream. Sometimes we end up wading, so bring a change of clothes and boots or sneakers that can get wet. From Albany, take Rte 32 S to the Village of Feura Bush. Turn left (south) on Rte 102 for three miles, take a right on Rarick Rd., and go 2/10 mile. Park on the left. From Columbia/Rensselaer Counties, take the Berkshire Spur to I-87 N, exiting at Selkirk. Take a right onto Rte 144 S, another right onto Rte 396 W, and stay on it, crossing over Rte 9W. Proceed to a right on Rte 102 N. Rarick Rd. should be only a short way N on the left. Proceed as above.

Thursday, November 10<sup>th</sup>: Buckingham Pond Park  
TRIP LEADER: Kristin Pung, 439-4945

Meeting time: 9:45 AM.

This is a simple 3/4 mile walking loop, but is an unexpected urban adventure right in Albany. Geese and ducks are usually hanging out by the lake and sometimes box turtles can be seen sunning on rocks. The pond is fed by a perched water table, and the woods surrounding it make for a fun, and toddler friendly hike.

Directions: Take 85 to the exit for Krumkill Road. If you are coming from the south, bear right onto Krumkill Road and follow to the light at New Scotland Ave. If coming from the north, make a left at the light on the ramp, pass over 85 and make a right at the next light. Follow Krumkill Rd around until you come to a light at New Scotland Road. Make a left at the light at New Scotland (it is a "T"), less than 1/4 mile, make a left onto Euclid. Euclid will end at the pond. Make a left and follow the shoreline of the pond until you reach the playground and picnic area across from Colonial Ave.

## Extra Hikes

Here are a few places to go when you have more time, they are a bit of a drive but wonderful for families.

### *Papscanee Island Preserve, Rensselaer.*

This preserve is right on the Hudson River. If the tides are right, we can walk down the beach and watch boats go in and out of the port. From Rtes. 9 and 20 south and east in Rensselaer, bear right onto Rte. 9J south towards Castleton. After about 4 miles, turn right onto Staats Island Road, cross the railroad tracks, and the preserve is on the right. From the south, the preserve is 2-3 miles north of Castleton.

### *Greenport Conservation Area, Hudson.*

The area has great views of the Catskills and lots of cool places to stop for a break, including a gazebo. From Albany, take I-90 East to Exit 12. Turn right on Rte. 9 south and drive 16.3 miles to Greenport. You'll drive through Kinderhook along the way. Turn right onto Jolsen Blvd. (just past a Mobil Station) and drive 1.2 miles. At the Jolsen Motor Lodge, turn right onto Daisy Hill Road and follow to the end.

### *Ram's Horn Livingston Audobon Sanctuary, Catskill.*

This trail goes through an overgrown orchard to a tidal marsh with bridges and a viewing tower. Take I-87 South to exit 21, Catskill. Go left onto Rte. 23B, straight to 9W, then right onto 9W south into Catskill. Turn Left onto Grandview Ave, stay straight on Grandview through the traffic circle, down the hill to sanctuary parking lot.

### *Dyken Pond Environmental Education Center, Poestenkill.*

This is a lovely spot with an "Adirondack" feel. One trail boasts a short boardwalk over a real sphagnum bog, with many interesting plants, including the carnivorous pitcher plant ("little shop, little shop of Horrors"). One year we ate lunch by the lake and went wading. From the intersection of Rtes 150 and 43 in West Sand Lake, take Rte 43 E a short distance to Rte 351 N on the left. Take 351 to the four corner intersection (four stop signs) in Poestenkill (Beware! This is where people got lost last year). Take a right onto Rte 40, climbing the hill to just past the Barberville Falls. Take a left onto Rte 79N (Blue Factory Rd.), crossing the Poestenkill on a small bridge. Take 79 approximately 4 miles to Rte 80, which is also Madonna Lake Rd. Follow Madonna Lake Rd. approximately 2 miles, until it bears sharply left and Dyken Pond Rd. proceeds directly ahead. Take this dirt road approximately 2 miles to the Center. Park on the right.

### *Sam's Point Preserve, Shawangunk Mountains.*

This Nature Conservancy preserve is incredible. A scenic walk along an old ridge road brings you to the "Ice Caves" - a rock formation more reminiscent of the American Southwest than the Northeast. The narrow trail meandering through deep ravines and under arches will enthrall your kids and you! We will eat lunch on the trail. Take I-87 south to Kingston or New Paltz. From Kingston, take Rte. 209 south to Ellenville. In Ellenville, take Rte. 52 up the side of the mountain to the summit. At the top, take a left, following signs for the hamlet of Cragmoor. Keep left past the library and post office. Approximately 0.1 mile past the post office, take a right onto Sam's Point Road. Follow this 0.5 mile to the preserve gate and parking area.

### *Bartholomew's Cobble, Sheffield, MA.*

This is a beautiful place with great trails and lots of spring wildflowers. You can wander through open fields with wildflowers, through thick forest, scramble over rocks, hike along the Housatonic River, and make your way up to an overview with a great view. A fee is charged. There are several ways to get there from here, depending on your starting point, but get to Rt. 7 in western Mass. From Rt. 7 south in Sheffield, turn right onto Rt. 7A and follow for 0.5 mi. Turn right onto Rannapo Rd. and follow for 1.5 mi. Turn right onto Weatogue Rd. to entrance and parking on left.

### *Joralemon Park, Coeymans*

Designated "the best in our area" by a retired state botanist, this woodland is rich in lime-loving wildflowers and ferns and even boasts a playground! Sort of like Jurassic Park without the dinosaurs, it has interesting rock 'stacks' on either side of the trail. Take Rte 9W south from Albany to the intersection with Rte 143 in Ravena. Turn right (west) on Rte 143 and go approximately 2.5 miles to Rte 102. Turn right (north) onto Rte 102 and go ½ mile to the Park, which is on both sides of

the road. From points SE, take the Berkshire Spur (I-90) over the Hudson to Rte I-87 N. Take the first exit at Selkirk. Take a right onto Rte 144 S and proceed a short distance to a right onto Rte 396 W, which will take you to 9W S. Take a left on 9W and proceed to Rte 143 as above

*Landis Arboretum, Esperance*

This public garden offers 548-acres of natural scenic splendor that encompasses two Old Growth forests (including a 500-year old oak), four ponds, and 40-acres of cultivated and native plants on the site of a 19th century farm. From Albany, take route 20 west to Duanesburg, or take the NYS Thruway west to exit 25A. Take I-88 west to exit 24 – Duanesburg. Take Route 20 west six miles through Duanesburg to Esperance. Make your first right in Esperance at the Town Hall, onto Charleston Street, which turns into Conover Road. There is a green sign for Landis on Route 20 by this road. Follow for 1 ¼ miles. The road bears right 90 degrees at one point. Turn right onto Lape Road. There is a sign for Landis and a dead end sign. The main parking lot is ¼ mile down on your left.

*Hannacroix Creek Preserve, New Baltimore.*

This trail boasts a nice view of a waterfall, and it's not too long a hike. From Albany, take 9W south to Ravena. Turn left at the big intersection onto Route 143. In Coeymans, turn right onto 144. The preserve is about .8 miles on the right. From the east, take the Berkshire Spur to I-87 N, exit exiting at Selkirk. Take 144 south through Coeymans, preserve is on right .8 miles past Rte. 143.