

# The Polypodium



News from the Council of Park Friends

Volume XXXI, Number 1

Winter 2011

## ANNUAL MEETING FEBRUARY 20th at 2:00 PM

Jamesville Community Church  
6300 E. Seneca Turnpike

### Featured Speaker: Tom Hughes

*“Natural Resource Stewardship in NYS Parks - connecting our community with conservation for protecting the American Hart’s-Tongue Fern.”*

Tom Hughes will provide a general overview of Natural Resource Stewardship in NYS Parks’ Central and Finger Lakes regions, highlighting some of his significant projects and accomplishments over the last few years. The preservation and protection of the federally threatened American hart’s-tongue fern at Clark Reservation and Chittenango Falls will be a special focus of his presentation. In addition, Tom will detail how park patrons and other interested members of the community can contribute to Natural Resource Stewardship projects in their favorite State Parks.

Tom is a Natural Resource Steward Biologist for the Central and Finger Lakes regions of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP). Prior to his time with OPRHP, Tom worked throughout New York State as a biologist and environmental educator for several agencies and organizations, including US Fish and Wildlife Service, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, Cornell Cooperative Extension, and SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry (ESF). Tom grew up near Rochester, NY and enjoys hiking, camping and fishing in Central NY and the Finger Lakes Region.



*Asplenium scolopendrium var.  
americanum*

---

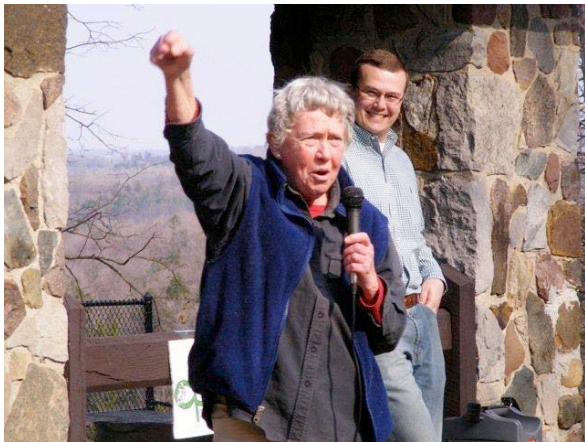
CPF website is: [www.councilofparkfriends.org](http://www.councilofparkfriends.org)

---

# KEEPING CLARK OPEN

Governor Paterson announced on February 19, 2010 that 55 State Parks and Historic Sites would be closed as part of budgetary reductions. Clark Reservation was one of those slated for closure. The announcement came as a blow to legions of Clark lovers. It is estimated that Clark Reservation receives some 37,000 visits each year. Closing it would save \$95,000. Showing that the announcement was no idle threat, the State soon began refunding reservation fees at parks that offer camping.

Historically, CPF has had more a nature education slant than one of advocacy. Yet if ever a situation cried out for action this was it. Many people came to us wanting to “do something”. We did two things. First, we organized a rally held at Clark on March 21 in conjunction with Senator David Valesky’s office.



Martha Holly Lowe addressing the crowd with Scott Butler, special assistant to Senator Dave Valesky.

Several hundred people showed up, many carrying signs, to protest the planned closings. TV and newspaper coverage of the event drew wide and favorable attention.



TV interview at the rally.

Second, we met with staff from the Regional Office to discuss allowing public access to Clark. A plan was developed according to which the parking lot would remain open and CPF volunteers would take over basic maintenance tasks, such as of lawn mowing, picking up litter and cleaning restrooms.

The axe fell on May 17. Clark and many other State parks were officially closed. For the next two weeks, CPF did as it had promised. We cleaned the restrooms, mowed the lawn and policed the litter.

(*Keeping Clark Open, cont.*)



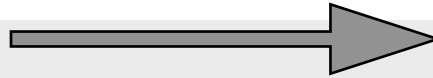
Dan Smothergill being outfitted on “the Jacobson” to mow the lawns.

Special recognition should go to Matt Thompson who assigned himself the job no one wanted: cleaning the restrooms (sometimes twice a day). By the way, Matt also created a Facebook page, *We Love Clark Reservation!* which provides a

resource for people who want to keep informed about Clark. His reward was to be chosen as the new nominee for Secretary of CPF!

One day before the start of Memorial Day weekend, the Governor and Legislator reached agreement on a plan to re-open closed parks. CPF was happy to return park maintenance to the professional staff that does such a terrific job. Although the crisis was weathered reasonably well, no one knows what this and future years will bring. The State clearly is looking to volunteers to play a greater role in park operations. Although CPF was glad to be of help last spring, we have made clear that we have no intention of performing maintenance on a regular basis. We all agree that Clark must remain a shining jewel. You can help by letting your elected representatives know how important Clark is to you.

## NEWS



*Moving ahead.* President Dan Smothergill and Vice-President Diane Wheelock announced at the November Board meeting that they would be stepping down after the 2010 year. A Nominating committee was appointed and recommended the following:

President – Martha Holly Loew  
Vice-President – Brett Mosier  
Treasurer – Diane Kuehn  
Secretary – Matt Thompson

Board – Allan Drew  
Board – Gordon Heisler  
Board – Ralph Manna  
Board – Greg Titus

The slate was unanimously approved at the December Board meeting and will be presented to the membership at the Annual Meeting.

*Grant.* Our ZBGA grant was renewed for \$1700. In a departure from the usual, the grant will be automatically renewed for two additional years without having to reapply.

*“The human spirit needs places where nature has not been rearranged by the hand of man”- Author Unknown*

## UPCOMING WALKS AT CLARK

### **FAREWELL TO WINTER WALK!**

Come celebrate the advent of spring Sunday, March 20th at 2pm at Clark Reservation State Park. We will meet in the parking lot and walk the trails as a naturalist talks about signs of spring. Bring the family and hot chocolate. Walk duration depends on the conditions. The walk will be led by Brett Mosier.



### **EARTH DAY WALK: EXPLORING FOR EARLY SPRING WILDFLOWERS**

Join Diane Wheelock to explore the Mildred Faust Wildflower Trail & a small portion of Long Trail in search of hepatica and other beauties of the woodland.

Saturday, April 23 at 10 a.m.  
Please meet at the Park Friends' Nature Center at Clark Reservation State Park. (Please dress for the weather, wearing non-skid footwear.) Questions may be directed to Diane at 315/446-0263. Hope to see you.

## **Ken Is Gone - Tim Is Back**

Ken Showalter, long time Supervisor at Clark Reservation and good friend of CPF, has moved on to a position in the Thousand Islands Region. Ken tells us that he will be working with a Friends group there at Point au Roche State Park. Lucky them. We wish Ken well.

The new Park Supervisor at Clark is Tim Gray. Tim started his career with State Parks right here at Clark Reservation in 1997 as a seasonal employee on the maintenance crew. He received his first permanent Parks appointment in 2000 at Glimmerglass State Park. Following stints at Gilbert Lake, Robert Moses and Coles Creek, Tim returned to the area in April 2010 where he now is charge of operations at Clark. We look forward to working with him.

# *ESF F.O.R.C.E.S. at work in Central and Finger Lakes Regions*

Since the spring of 2008 and the launch of OPRHP's Natural Resource Stewardship and Environmental Interpretation Initiative, nearly 300 State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry (SUNY-ESF) students have participated in Volunteer F.O.R.C.E.S. (Friends Of Recreation, Conservation and Environmental Stewardship). Through this model volunteer program, OPRHP has significantly enhanced its partnership with SUNY-ESF faculty, staff and students for natural resource and park improvement projects.



*Beginning in November 2008, students from SUNY-ESF assist with ongoing research for control techniques for invasive buckthorn. The results of their control efforts can be seen near the Nature Center adjacent to the east playground. In the absence of buckthorn, native plants are filling in the understory in these areas.*

In February of 2009, OPRHP held a recognition event at ESF's campus to thank the 200 SUNY-ESF students, staff and faculty who had contributed to projects at several state parks in the Central and Finger Lakes regions. This event, co-sponsored by the Council of Park Friends, also featured opening remarks by SUNY-ESF President Dr. Cornelius Murphy and a presentation by Wint Aldrich, Deputy Commissioner for Historic Preservation.

Students, staff and faculty from SUNY-ESF's FORCES have been involved with several projects at Clark Reservation over the past three years. Most notably, groups of students have worked with NRS Biologist Tom Hughes, Council of Park Friends and other regional park staff with efforts to control invasive plants such as pale swallow-wort and buckthorn. If left unchecked, these invasives negatively impact native plants, including the federally threatened American hart's-tongue fern.

2011 should be another great year of opportunity for ESF students to discover the great natural features at Clark Reservation while, at the same time, enjoying an outdoor classroom to explore their personal and career interests. The overall goal of ESF F.O.R.C.E.S. is to enhance regional NYS Parks' involvement with SUNY-ESF and other interested partners. The program intends to inspire students to explore careers in environmental science and public service.



*ESF SCIENCE educator Fernando Maldonado assists a student from the Syracuse City School District with measuring a chain pickerel captured from Glacier Lake as part of a fish survey completed in July of 2009.*

*Submitted by Tom Hughes, NRS Biologist, Central and Finger Lakes Regions.*

# Membership Information:

Annual membership in the Council of Park Friends supports a professional staff of naturalists who provide educational offerings for all ages and levels of interest, and entitles members to *The Polypodium*, a periodic newsletter of upcoming events, nature news and members-only activities. Send your dues to: C.P.F., PO Box 153, Jamesville, NY 13078 Attn: membership

| <u>Member Category</u> | <u>Individual</u> | <u>Family</u> | <u>Patron</u> |
|------------------------|-------------------|---------------|---------------|
| One year               | \$15.00           | \$20.00       | \$50.00       |
| Two years              | \$25.00           | \$30.00       | \$95.00       |
| Three years            | \$35.00           | \$45.00       | \$135.00      |
| Life membership        | (please inquire)  |               |               |

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

---

