

*Land—  
they don't make it  
anymore.*

—Will Rogers



# SPARC NEWS

THE STEWART PARK AND RESERVE COALITION BULLETIN - SUMMER 2009

## SPARC ON THE MOVE

Strategic planning was the process and the outcome, with evaluations and prioritizing, at SPARC's day-long assessment of Stewart issues. Last March 21st, Board members and others forged short and long-term goals going forward, goals encompassing the SPARC organization, the monitoring of Stewart State Forest, and the provisions of the settlement that saved the Stewart Lands.

The day's facilitator was Melissa Everett, Ph.D., Executive Director of Sustainable Hudson Valley, a Kingston-based organization working to enable green and responsible economic development. Melissa herself has been successful as an author, and in teaching courses in leadership and community service at RPI, among many other accomplishments. She was trained in counseling and group facilitation and SPARC was the beneficiary of her professional experience and her dynamic group techniques.

In regard to Stewart State Forest, we agreed that monitoring habitat and environmental integrity needed to be joined to tracking the provisions of our agreement and the Stewart State Forest's Unit Management Plan (UMP). So often, planning documents are not fully utilized even though they should be.

As we considered our evolution as an organization, we agreed that Board development and increasing volunteerism and membership were important goals. As a result, we are seeking committee members, volunteer leaders, and applicants for Board membership.

If you've considered ramping up your SPARC support, now might be the perfect time to come forward, as we forge ahead with our strategy. You may contact us, by either email [sparc@frontiernet.net](mailto:sparc@frontiernet.net) or phone at 845 564-3018.

## DEC Meeting Notes

On February 19, 2009, several staffers from the Region 3 DEC office held a meeting for groups representing users of Stewart State Forest. The meeting was similar to meetings held in 2008 and 2007. Sandra Kissam and SPARC Board member Lynn Barber attended. DEC staff included foresters Jeff Wiegert and George Profous, who is regularly in the field at Stewart.

What type of users had a voice at this meeting? Bikers, snowmobilers, dog trainers, bird watchers and, of course, SPARC concerned with all types of recreation including hunting, as well as the preservation of habitat and species.

The discussion got lively around the issue of dog training groups restricting access when they use an area, which is counter to TRP (Temporary Revocable Permit) rules which include "no single group has exclusive use of any portion of Stewart State Forest".

The DEC staff shared how they are continuing to create and preserve certain areas as grasslands, the areas where they are doing limited cutting of trees, ongoing efforts to eradicate and control invasive species such as Knotweed and the Mile-a-Minute (MAM) vine. In addition they have put out signage for roads and trails, and have almost concluded the roadwork resulting in dirt and gravel surfaces.

There was mention of the citizen stewardship program known as Adopt a Natural Resource (AANR), which encourages volunteer projects. Also, the DEC has created a new 15-car parking area at Barron Road south.

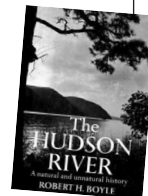
## Hudson River Celebrity Robert H. Boyle Featured Speaker

Bob Boyle, the extraordinary founder and past president of the Hudson River Fishermen's Association, which created the 'Riverkeeper', will honor SPARC as the featured speaker at **SPARC's 5th Annual Rudy Vallet Memorial Dinner**.

Author, journalist, activist, fly fisherman, Hudson River champion Robert H. Boyle, will headline our dinner scheduled for **Friday, October 30, 2009**. A famous fly fisherman and writer for "Sports Illustrated", he is the author of numerous books focusing on the environment (including cleaning up the Hudson River, acid rain, and global warming), citizen action, the world of sports, and more. In 1970, he was also the first to discover PCBs in North American fish, most notably striped bass he collected from the Hudson.

Right now, he is doing major revisions to his book "The Hudson River: A Natural and Unnatural History", originally published by Norton in 1969, and Bob probably knows more about the River and the Valley than anyone else. He gave John Cronin his job as Riverkeeper and organized commercial and sport fishermen to force the clean-up of the river's pollution, along with that other hero Pete Seeger. He was involved in the fight to preserve Storm King Mountain together with Scenic Hudson, as well as the fight to make Exxon stop discharging bilge and stealing fresh water out of the Hudson.

The SPARC dinner will be held, as before, in the **Colden Manor at Spruce Lodge**. Details and tickets will be available starting in September. **Be sure to save the date, Friday, October 30, 2009.**



### S P A R C M E E T I N G

We hope you can join us at the **Bethlehem Presbyterian Church Community Room** for a SPARC meeting on **Wednesday, September 23, 2009**. Once again we are gathering in this pleasant room to mix and mingle, hear a SPARC report and a speaker (TBA), as well as enjoy donated refreshments.

The meeting will start at 7:30 PM and, if you need a reminder, the church is on the corner of Jackson Avenue and Rte. 94, in the town of New Windsor.

Do come and join fellow SPARC members. The meeting is free and you can email or call for information: 845 564-3018 or [sparc@frontiernet.net](mailto:sparc@frontiernet.net).

**See you there.**

## DUSTY ROADS

If you have wondered about all the construction just east of the Maybrook entrance to Rte. I-84, the project is NYS DOT's plan to reconfigure and create new ramps leading on to the interstate.

Somewhat east of the interchange site, is the now completed wetland mitigation that has been carved out of less than two acres of Stewart State Forest, accessible only from the highway. This was done to replace a wetland at the interchange construction area that apparently needed to be destroyed.

Pursuant to SPARC's settlement with the state, mitigation wetland projects are prohibited on the lands we added in 2005, and can only be done on the previously saved 5,000 acres. Furthermore, only Stewart Airport projects or DOT projects in Orange County, can consider Stewart as a site for wetland mitigation.

SPARC and co-plaintiffs bargained hard with DOT for these restrictions. While artificial wetlands are reasonably successful, Stewart State Forest already is comprised of at least 30% wetlands.

### NEW MAP with TRAILS



There is a new and updated SPARC's Stewart State Forest map. Same size (11x17) and full color, but this version have the new road, the new parking spaces and the current trails added. Get yours at **Dark Horse Cycles** in Montgomery, **Wheel and Heel** in Fishkill or **SPARC**. The map is available for a \$5.00 donation to SPARC.

SPARC, Box 90  
Blooming Grove, NY 10914

## sparc NEWS

– Summer 2009 –

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Sandra Kissam, *President*

EXECUTIVE BOARD

Lynn Barber, Michael Mallon,

Susan Mischo, Vinny Richichi,

Michael Serinsky,

Kelly Sheridan and Sharon Soons

Layout by edgeBlur



## Mile-a-Minute's New Enemy

After 2 years spent reviewing its EAF (Environmental Assessment Form), New York State just six months ago approved the use of weevils (*rhinocomimus latipes*, native to China) to control the Mile-a-Minute (MAM) vine. So our Region 3 DEC received a permit as well as the weevils, little beauty queens 2 mm long (it takes about 25 mm to make an inch).

Our own Stewart State Forest has been honored with a thousand weevils set free somewhat west of the Barron Rd. wetland mitigation site and 1500 put out near Creamery Lane. (A couple of years ago volunteers from SPARC were pulling these fast-growing vines by hand!) Yes, the weevils are eating. If they survive the winter, during the warmer months they will produce a new generation of weevils about every month. According to George Profous of the DEC they have eaten about five feet in a circumference from the release point, and are indeed focusing on MAM. There is plenty more for them to eat.

Interestingly, a number of other states were using the weevils for several years before New York, for example New Jersey, where they've been set loose in many counties including Middlesex (much research was done at Rutgers).

Let's hope Stewart gets more weevils, and let's hope they keep multiplying and get to the farms and yards adjacent to Stewart State Forest. By the way, only two other NYS locations have received the buggers: 1000 each to Iona Island and Ward Pound Ridge in Westchester.

*P.S. If you've been following all this you may remember that a beetle was introduced to control purple loosestrife some years ago. And it looks like it worked.*

Lynn Barber

## Doing a Community Good

No spin is needed. Volunteers came to our highway cleanup this past May 2nd and gave it their best shot. They did hands-on community service and felt good about it.

They **"walked the walk"**.

Maybe next time you would like to join us. It's refreshing to see the results and the full bags get left for the DOT to pick up. This time our thanks and kudos go to **Susan Mischo, Diana Kraut-ter, John Gebhards, Wayne Hall, Mark Rubin, Verne Bell, Sandra Kissam**, and our organizer **Lynn Barber**. A two-mile stretch of Rte. 207 looked pretty good and we were done by noon.

With a little planning and motivation you can be part of our next cleanup. It's scheduled for **Sunday, October 2nd, 2009**, and Lynn Barber's number is 845 744-6047!

## Welcome, Sharon

Sharon Soons is our newest Board member. She joined us this spring and brings to SPARC a wealth of experience working for non-profit orgs, which include the Tri-State Transportation Campaign, Transportation Alternatives, New York League of Conservation Voters, and the Brooklyn Bridge Park Conservancy.

Since returning to the Hudson Valley in 2005, she has also devoted herself to her family's farm, Soons Orchards in New Hampton, meanwhile working in her capacity as a professional organizer and home stager.

SPARC was delighted when Sharon took on the challenging job of Bike Tour chairperson, and pulled together our most innovative event yet, our tenth annual Bike Tour. To this, she brought her past experience running a NYC bike ride that had 3,000 participants. Wow.

Hey Sharon, welcome to SPARC. We look forward to your expertise and energy as we move forward to watchdog the lands and maybe even add acres.



### Thanks to Town of Hamptonburgh

SPARC wishes to thank the Town of Hamptonburgh for approving a request to hold our Board meetings in their Town Hall Community Room.

At the town meeting of Monday, June 1st, Supervisor Jankowski called for a vote by the Town Board members and after some discussion we received unanimous approval of our request.

The meeting room is bright and pleasant and Town Clerk Diane Fortuna has been very helpful.

## Robert Augello, Esq.

*A great friend of open space and the environment was lost when Bob Augello passed away last November 25, 2008.*

*Bob served as counsel to the Orange County Land Trust and was one of its founding members along with Ann Botschon but that was just the beginning.*

*He was also a longtime member of SPARC, and worked with the NY/NJ Trail Conference, The Nature Conservancy and Scenic Hudson.*

*We remember how, years ago, Bob joined a march and demonstration SPARC held at the Orange County Government Center. Almost 100 supporters, led by SPARC VP Rudy Vallet, circled the County office building carrying signs and chanting in support of a resolution Tom Pabucki would later introduce. The resolution? To support saving the Stewart Buffer Lands as open space. The legislature did not let it come to the floor for a vote, but we made our point.*

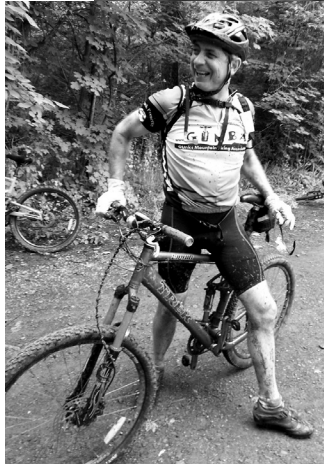
*We will always remember you with deep affection, Bob. You left us much too soon.*

## Bike Tour a Happy Mudfest

There's just something about playing in the mud that brings out the best in people! That was the case on June 20, when SPARC presented its **10th Annual Stewart State Forest Bike Tour**. Nearly 120 riders came out, despite soggy weather, to enjoy the lands on two wheels. Riders tackled routes from 9 to 18 miles, designed and marked by Stewart Guide Book author **Jeff Montanye**, with help from trail guru **Bill Shields**. Riders enjoyed a fabulous spread of food and drink, much sourced locally. **Gilded Otter** provided amazing beer, which complemented hot dogs from **Dines Farms** and organic grass-fed beef burgers from **Kezi-alain farms**. Snacks included strawberries from **Glebocki Farms**, donuts, apples, cider and peanut butter from **Soons Orchards**, and fresh pie from **Scotty's Country Kitchen**. "Great food!" said early morning volunteer and rider, **Jayne Fiero**. To top it off, literally, **Blue-berry Mountain** was on-hand with homemade ice cream.

In addition to the yummy breakfast and lunch, riders also got to enjoy free massage from **For Your Well-Being Massage & Yoga**, as well as mechanical support from **Wheel and Heel**.

Thanks to our great sponsors and riders, the ride cleared over \$2,000 to support SPARC's continued efforts to protect the lands. In addition to the folks



above, a big thank you to:

**Dialed in:** **Wheel n' Heel**, Wappingers Falls | **Ace Self Storage**, Newburgh & Hyde Park | **The Print Shop**, Newburgh | **Goshen Acupuncture**, Goshen | **Judelson, Giordano & Siegel, CPA, PC**, Middletown | **Assistacomp**, Bullville

**In the Zone:** **The Vein Center of Hudson Valley** | **Dr. Gregory Filardi**, Chiropractor | **Serene Foam Corp.** | **Dark Horse Cycles** | **Dr. Stephen J. Pavia**, Family Chiropractic | **Beacon Cycles** | **Not Just Bagels** | **Bryans Bikes** | **Scolaro's Bike Shop**

**Bunny Hop:** Gene's Autowaxing Center | Judith Powell, LMT | American Icon Screen Printing; and Rocket Fuel & Schwag donors: Newburgh Banana | Vails Gate Cycles IT & M II Go | Bikeway Bicycles. Also thanks to **Mobile Life** and the **Department of Environmental Conservation**. Last but not least, **thanks to all the volunteers** who helped make our 10th annual ride the best ever!

For photos and more on the ride, visit [www.SPARCride.com](http://www.SPARCride.com).

Our cool all-cotton American-made

T-shirt is available for just \$10!

The 2010 bike tour committee is forming now—to help out, e-mail Sharon, [sharon@soons.us](mailto:sharon@soons.us).

Sharon Soons

Well, the gates were open on both sides of Ridge Road to accommodate parking for the trailers! Rain or Shine had a new meaning at the **9th Annual SPARC Trail Ride** on May 3rd, and nothing was hindering enthusiastic horsemen who look forward to riding the trails in the park every year. The fantastic team of volunteers checked in trailer after trailer as they welcomed over 100 riders and wagon participants to this event much enjoyed by the equine community.

Debbie Schiraldi was honored to Chair the occasion with SPARC President Sandra Kissam, and Debbie added new changes that involved additional community support. Kudos to area businesses that eagerly donated gift certificates and prizes which amounted to over \$1,000! These included **Schunnefunk Shadow Stables**, **Loughran's Restaurant**, **Whinnies & Knickers**, **Heritage Feed & Supply**, **Debbie Schiraldi of Hudson Heritage Realty**, **Windy Hollow Hunt Club**, **Horse and Hound Stable**, **G & M Riding Club**,

## TRAIL RIDE WAS FUN!



**NY Web Master, Congelosi Trailer Sales, AgFocus/Equine Line Subscription, Horse & Rider English Tack and Apparel, Bob Jeffreys & Suzanne Sheppard, Dog Day Afternoon, and Ani-Mall Pet Center.**

Special 'Thank You's' to **June Evers** and **John Redman** in preparing the trails in the weeks prior. Volunteers wrangled the trailers at the sign-in and parking to flow the day successfully! Again this year much appreciation to the **Denman Family** for their Wagon Team of mules, and they are a delight to enthusiasts who just want to appreciate the land as a true pioneer experience. Thank you to **June Evers, John Redman, Linda Denman, Dave Denman, Alyson Schiraldi, Lynn Barber, Scott Greene, Lewis Sterler, Laura Lunt, Susan Mischo, Kathy Croak, and Kim Cassidy.**

And our gratitude to **Pine Bush Equine** for on-call veterinarian support.

Debbie Schiraldi

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**July 28th, 2009, Tuesday**  
**Stewart Airport Commission Meeting, 8:30 AM, Stewart Airport Administration Building**

**Sept. 6th, 2009, Sunday**  
**Rerun Horse Trail Ride, Stewart State Forest, call Debbie Schiraldi for info at 845 496-6754**

**Sept. 23th, 2009, Wednesday,**  
**SPARC Meeting, Bethlehem Presbyterian Church, 7:30 PM**

**October, 2009, Date TBD**  
**OCFSC annual dinner, call 845 782-7449 for information.**

**Oct. 4th, 2009, Sunday**  
**Highway Cleanup, Weed Road parking lot off Route 207, call 845 744-6047 for information**

**Oct. 30th, 2009, Friday**  
**Rudy Vallet Memorial Dinner, Colden Manor at Spruce Lodge, Rt. 17K, Robert H. Boyle speaker. Call SPARC for info at 845 564-3018.**

## Dear Members and Friends of SPARC

We sincerely thank the following, who have donated to SPARC since fall 2008. Your moral support, as well as your donations, means very much to us. Through all these years we have been a completely grassroots organization and individual donations have kept us moving forward.

Again, thank you.

### The SPARC Board

Carolyn Anderson	Bo G. Eriksson	Michael Landrum	Noreen Reynolds
Eulie Anderson	Michael Esposito	Charles Lanzer	Raymond Ricalde
Judith Andrews	Jayne & William Fiero	Marlena Lange	James Riley
Drs. Ajit & Liza Antony	Francis & Janet Fitzpatrick	Cathy Liljequist	Rock Tavern Sno Riders
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George Elias	John Kolp	Randy & Jacqueline Port	
		John Redman	

(We apologize for any omissions, please inform us of any errors.)

### I Want to Help SPARC Protect the Land

- I want to **join / renew my membership in SPARC,** Family/Individual \$15/yr\_\_\_; Organization \$50/yr\_\_\_; Member/Sponsor \$50/yr\_\_\_
- I want to **support SPARC with a donation.** For a completely tax deductible contribution, make your check payable to the Open Space Institute / note SPARC on the memo line. Supporter \$25\_\_\_, Sponsor \$50\_\_\_, Benefactor \$100\_\_\_, Other \$\_\_\_.
- I want to **help** (mailings, fundraising, clean-ups, phone campaigns, etc.). Call \_\_\_day, \_\_\_evening.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Make your check Payable to: SPARC. Mail to: SPARC, Box 90, Blooming Grove, NY 10914

[SUMMER 2009]

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