

# Shawangunk WATCH

FALL/WINTER 2021

VOLUME 26 NUMBER 3

FRIENDS OF THE SHAWANGUNKS AND  
THE SHAWANGUNK CONSERVANCY

**SHAWANGUNK CONGLOMERATE  
PARCEL FUNDRAISING A SUCCESS!**

**GLAMPING WITHOUT A PERMIT**

**HIKES**

*Protecting Open Space in the Shawangunks since 1963*



Left, back row standing, L to R: Anka Angrist, Ted Sandler, Alex Bartholomew, Michael Rider, Carolina Alt, Barbara Rubin, Paul Alt, Patty Lee Parmalee. Seated L to R: Lynn Bowdery, John Hayes, Susan Curico, Bill Brooks. Photo by John Hayes. Right: Alex Bartholomew. Photo by Ted Sandler.

A dozen lucky people followed board member and geologist Alex Bartholomew from the Spring Farm trailhead to Bonticou Crag by way of the Northeast Trail on a bright mid-September day. At the summit, we were treated to an enlightening and enthusiastic crash course on Shawangunk geology. Among other things we learned about why Shawangunk rocks are unique and white, how glaciers sculpted them, and how to identify the scratches that the ice caused on the hard rock. Also, how such hard

rock ended up on top of soft shale, and the role of water in shaping the entire landscape. The destination, with its great views, was the ultimate payoff, but Alex dispensed buckets of fascinating observations during the journey through the woods and right on up to the top

Alex's enthusiasm is contagious. I came away thinking that if I had someone like him as a teacher of Earth Science in grade school, my life might have gone in a different direction.

**BY JOHN HAYES**

**SPRING WILDFLOWER HIKE WITH MICHAEL RIDER**

Michael Ride, a naturalist, wildflower expert, and Mohonk Preserve volunteer is planning to lead a hike this coming spring for FOS. His thoughts on the hike: "It might be good to do a walk on the Marbletown Rail Trail from Marcott Road for an April walk. It's a bit further than the one I always do at Spring Farm but has lots of hepatica and a tremendous amount of trout lilies and trailing arbutus along the

way. It's about two miles in each direction and almost completely flat. We could do it at Spring Farm but the rail trail has some richer things to see that are a little more reliable. Or I can take the FOS group in May to Spring Farm to see ladyslippers."

This hike (or hikes) is tentatively scheduled for April 24, or possibly May 21 or 22. We'll announce the date in an e-blast in the spring, and post on our website.



On the Peterskill, Zorian Pinsky (background), Sami Shub, and Alla Pinsky. Photo by Ted Sandler.

Our FOS Hike-A-Thon was held on September 26 on the Minnewaska Mossy Glen Trail.

In preparation for our hike, we learned the history of the old Minnewaska Mossy Glen Trails from Nick Martin, Minnewaska Naturalist. He shared that the Dallas Pool on Mossy Glen was named for a famous Pittsburgh Judge George Mifflin Dallas and his wife Ellen Markoe Dallas. Ellen was a Botanist and Mycologist; she recorded the Minnewaska flora and fauna, and published her findings in 1896 as *Minnewaska's Flora*.

On our hike we encountered beautiful and unusual sites including the classic Shawangunk Conglomerate formations along the flowing Peterskill stream, and many interesting mushrooms. We were fortunate to have Alla Pinsky participate and help us identify the mushroom varieties.

After a short break at the Blueberry Run Bridge, we returned by way of the Lower Awosting Carriageway.

It was a very pleasant hike on a wonderful sunny fall day at Minnewaska.

**BY TED SENDLER**

# YOU DID IT!

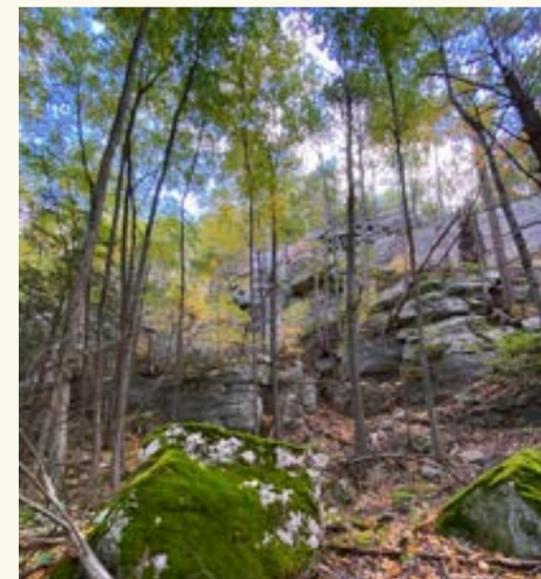
*Funding for Shawangunk Conglomerate Parcel is complete!*

STORY AND PHOTO BY JOHN HAYES

First may I say that Friends of the Shawangunks and The Shawangunk Conservancy had an amazingly successful fundraising campaign. We raised all the money we need to complete the purchase! Thank you, thank you! Your contributions triggered the Pril Smiley 3x match of the first \$15,000 raised after May 31.

TSC planned to dip into our treasury to make up any shortfall that remained after other sources had made their contributions. However, we just received news that the Mohonk Preserve, in recognition of the sheer size of the amount of land about to be protected, and of the benefit to the Preserve, has agreed to provide additional funding for the project.

May I remind everyone that in addition to the costs of the parcel (property itself, closing costs, survey, etc.), TSC had agreed to cover a stewardship endowment of \$7,500 to be paid to the Mohonk Preserve. This was stipulated in



the Conglomerate acquisition agreement. We also agreed to help the Shawangunk Conglomerate obtain a conservation easement on the adjoining 98 acres, bringing the total acreage of protected land to 169.

This was an outstanding achievement on the part of our membership, not to mention the extreme generosity of Pril Smiley. Of course, kudos need to go out to the Mohonk Preserve for their considerable contribution. This is the type of group effort that we can be very proud of!

The Conglomerates had hoped to close on the sale this calendar year. However, the conservation easement arrangements are taking longer than anticipated, so the actual closing will take place in early 2022.

Members, this was *your* doing! But, no rest for the weary; please keep donating towards our next project!

## THE NUMBERS

- \$143,180** Land cost (71.59 acres @\$2,000 per acre)
- \$7,500** Stewardship endowment
- \$21,850** Survey
- \$2,725** Phase I environmental study
- \$1,000** Appraisal
- \$3,500** Conservation easement on additional 98 acres
- \$1,300** Title premium and recording fees (estimate)
- \$1,000** Town of Rosendale planning board fees (estimate)
- \$182,055**

## GLAMPING WITHOUT A PERMIT

Over two decades ago, a man named John Bradley planned to build a “gated community” of 350 large homes on a 2100-acre Ridge parcel he had methodically acquired, located primarily within the town of Gardiner. When his “Awosting Reserve” proposal became publicly known, a grassroots movement opposing the project grew quickly.

BY JOHN HAYES

Save the Ridge embarked on what would be an intense four-year fight. With the help of an energized community, US Congressman Maurice Hinchey, Friends of the Shawangunks, and others, the development was stopped. Except for 250 acres retained by the Bradleys, the land was purchased by Open Space Institute and Trust for Public Land and ultimately transferred by New York State to add to Minnewaska State Park Preserve. In the aftermath, the Gardiner Zoning Law underwent major revisions, including creation of a Shawangunk Ridge Protection District.

John Bradley died in February, 2021. His daughter, Camilla, is now operating a glamping (“glamorous camping”) business on the property directly above the protected Palmaghatt stream, despite not having applied for any permits to do so, in contravention of current Gardiner laws.

Although no proposals comparable to that 2100-acre development from back in the day have materialized to date, the Ridge faces serial threats of death by a thousand cuts. The combined missions of FOS—strategic land acquisition, and environmental advocacy—continue to be an essential part of saving the Ridge.

For the edification of Friends members who do not read our local press, my recent letter on behalf of FOS to the editors of *The Shawangunk Journal* and *Hudson Valley1* follows:

### SIDELINED BY NEW CAMPGROUND LAW

Gardiner Town Board inaction regarding the unpermitted operation of Camilla Bradley’s Awosting “Club” glamping has been prolonged, secretive, and disturbing. The Gardiner Planning Board and Environmental Conservation Commission are both sidelined by the new Campground Law. It delegates campground permitting to the authority of the Town Board, which has betrayed its commitment



to the people of Gardiner by not enforcing regulations. It has also ignored its responsibility to steward the most valuable and vulnerable terrain within its boundaries by turning a blind eye to the possibility of environmental damage to the Shawangunk Ridge. The question is why.

Friends of the Shawangunks (FOS) has politely and frequently expressed its concerns to the Town Board throughout the past year. During this time, the Awosting Club has proceeded with construction

and extravagant commercial operation, profiting from glampers paying \$325/night to stay in large geodesic domes with outhouses, constructed in potentially illegal proximity to the highly protected Palmaghatt Stream. They have done so without submitting any permit applications—violating clear requirements with impunity, but seemingly without consequence.

Supervisor Majestic’s oft-promised but never-provided legal review of the Awosting Club situation by the town attorney remains a mystery. A FOIL request by FOS to the Town Board produced many pages of totally redacted correspondence within the Town Board dating back to March 2, 2021. There was apparently a lot to say, but what? The Gardiner Town Board, nevertheless, repeatedly congratulates itself on transparency. In the absence of facts, we are left with questions. Is Ridge ecology and the fragile Palmaghatt stream and corridor being harmed? Are meaningful fines and/or an enforced shutdown of Awosting Club operations under consideration? What will it take to compel the submission of legally required permit applications and a site plan review by the Planning Board and ECC, as required for construction done in Ridge Zones 2 and 3?

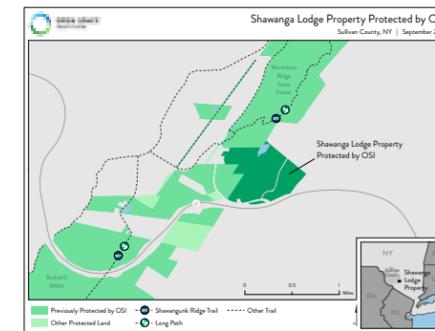
And why has this been allowed to go on, with no action by the Town Board, for so...very...long?

## OSI RESCUES THE RIDGE AGAIN

*A saga of environmental vigilance*

### EXCERPTED FROM THE OPEN SPACE INSTITUTE WEBSITE.

On Sep. 21 the Open Space Institute announced that it had permanently protected 228 forested acres known as the “Shawangunk Lodge” property. The parcel sits prominently on top of the Shawangunk Ridge, east of the Village of Wurtsboro, and is adjacent to thousands of acres of protected land in a series of interconnected state forests located on the Shawangunk Ridge, as well as the 3,300-acre Bashakill Wildlife Management Area (WMA). With this acquisition, OSI holds nearly 500 acres of land in the Wurtsboro area for addition to the Wurtsboro Ridge



State Forest and the Bashakill WMA. Due to its proximity to Route 17/Interstate 86, the site is highly visible from several vantage points throughout western Orange

County. OSI’s conservation of the property protects the southern Shawangunk Ridge viewshed and scenic views from the ridge.

The property also advances a much larger effort by OSI and partners to create a regional hiking trail spanning the entire 73-mile length of the Shawangunk Ridge from the New Jersey border north to the Rosendale Trestle. The Shawangunk Ridge Trail is in public use and is now nearly complete, with over 67 miles of the trail permanently protected.

Listed as a priority acquisition in the New York State Open Space Plan, the Shawangunk Lodge property is located just east of the Village of Wurtsboro and is near five popular recreational trail systems: the Shawangunk Ridge Trail, the Long Path, and the Sullivan O&W Rail Trail, the Mamakating Rail Trail, and the Delaware and Hudson Canal Trail. Protection of the property presents an opportunity to re-route a portion of the proposed Shawangunk Ridge Trail to

an off-road location, creating a “wilderness” walk and safer conditions for walkers, hikers, and runners.

### SOME OF THE LONG HISTORY OF THIS PARCEL, GLEANED FROM THE SPRING/SUMMER 2012 ISSUE OF THE SHAWANGUNK WATCH AND WIKIPEDIA

There was once the 123-room Shawangunk Lodge and cottages on what was then a 350-acre site. It operated from 1923 to 1972, went bankrupt, and burned in a suspicious fire the following year. The other abandoned buildings on the site became such a hazard that the Bloomingburg Fire Company eventually burned them down.

Meanwhile, in the mid 1970s a proposal for the site called for the construction of 650 condominiums. The Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) was the lead agency for the requisite environmental review, and rejected the plan due to limited ground water.

In 2003, there was a new plan for a 300,000 square foot sports/entertainment complex, an adjoining 250-room hotel, and parking for 5,000 vehicles, some in an elevated structure. Daily water consumption was estimated at 600,000 gallons. That undertaking halted after the DEC was named lead agency for the environmental review.

In 2010 there was a proposal to construct a gigantic structure with a basement level, a conference level above that of 410,000 square feet, a mezzanine level with banquet halls, a spa/pool level, and a hotel above all that. This was to include an eight-level parking facility for 3,600 vehicles, plus surface parking for 500 cars. Both Mamakating’s town and planning boards seemed receptive. The plan was to get all the necessary permits so that the site would be “shovel ready” when the economy improved, and if the site obtained a permit for legalized gambling. However, near-by Montecello won the competition for one of the few permits awarded by New York State, and the project did not advance.

Beginning in 1972, the Basha Kill Area Association, with some financial help from Friends and others, led the fight against these projects. This was a long, long journey to a very satisfying end.

## ~ FOOTPRINTS ~

BY ANKA ANGRIST

The year is 1962, and I'm sitting on the carriage road facing the Uberfall, the climbers' exit from the Trapps climbing area. It's hot and dusty. I've been abandoned to my fate by two climbing pals who elected to do a route for which I was not a candidate. Without climbing experience, there were few routes for which I was in the running.

Suddenly, a woman I knew only slightly and whose prowess at attaining vertical destinations far exceeded my own, called to me. "Are you aware that there are at least 200 miles of hiking trails around here? Maybe you'd like to try one sometime."

I was dumbfounded. My introduction to the Gunks had involved driving up from NYC in the company of those who left me in the dust, technically speaking. After parking on the side of route 44-55 and ascending to the carriage road we would agree to meet after their ascent and allow me to try an easy route.

Her reference to hiking launched me into orbit. I had been hiking with my family since childhood and coming to New York City had robbed me of one of my favorite activities. My hiking guru then described various trails I could follow without getting lost. No maps, no GPS, no mobile phone.

I set out around the cliffs via the Overcliff carriage road, returning via the Undercliff road. My climbing friends shrugged at my account but were relieved to see me content to forego an attempt at climbing and

join them in a bite at the "OPEN" in New Paltz, so named because it had no other name than the sign on the door.

In the period that followed my introduction to the broader "Gunks" I found fellow hikers with whom to explore the area via marked trails as well as word of mouth routes and destinations. Bus service was scant and getting from the station in New Paltz to carriage roads was via hitching, walking (really!) or planned pickup by friends.

I eventually acquired a car, an ancient relic that would not pass today's inspection standards, and gained some freedom of choice regarding days and times to visit the area. On consecutive weekends we could explore areas that are now Mohonk Preserve or Minnewaska State Park Preserve and rarely encounter other hikers. The Mohonk Mountain House owned a large portion of the Gunks as did the Phillips family, that owned the Cliff House and Wildemere Hotels and the acreage that is now Minnewaska. Access to trails and carriage roads on the property of Mohonk Mountain House was free of charge and open. Parking was available at one of the lower lots of the hotel. Getting lost meant bushwhacking in one direction until a trail or familiar view presented itself.

Camping was where there was water (Split Rock) and swimming was available at Lake Minnewaska, Awosting Falls, Stony Kill Falls or any other watery destination. No

lifeguards patrolled the beaches.

A hiker getting seriously injured would have required that members of the party to walk out to the nearest phone to call police. No rangers, backcountry patrols or rescue units existed. A British couple were found roped together and crawling after dark on the Overcliff Carriage Road, afraid of falling off a nearby cliff!

Organizations that now protect the Shawangunks came into being as a result of tireless efforts on the part of individuals concerned about preserving the natural beauty of the Gunks while accommodating the growing numbers of hikers, climbers, skiers and nature enthusiasts who began arriving from near and far. They perceived the need to organize in order to prevent opportunistic acquisition of large tracts of the area, with detriment to the ecological integrity of the area. Their advocacy spawned the Mohonk Trust (now the Mohonk Preserve), Minnewaska State Park Preserve, and Friends of the Shawangunks, among a host of land preservation organizations.

I have been showing a friend who is relatively new to the area some of the most historically significant, as well as new trails. Our "hit list" offers an incentive to explore new or old routes, but now we have detailed trail maps accessible online, GPS, signs and articles to point us in the right direction. Easier and safer. Better for the land.

**TAKE A HIKE!**



## "CHERISH THE CABIN"

*There's nothing like a fall hike in the Shawangunks. So when Marc Fried called to ask if I'd like to accompany him on a hike up to his cabin, I jumped at the chance.*

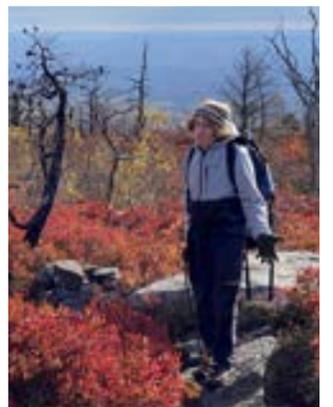
STORY AND PHOTOS BY JOHN HAYES

Most of us know Marc not only as a long time FOS member but also as a historian and author of numerous books about the Shawangunk Mountains, including *The Huckleberry Pickers* and *Shawangunk Place-Names*. Marc is also a columnist at the *Shawangunk Journal*.

Marc's cabin is located deep in the Badlands, the rugged plateau lying between the Verkeerder Kill and Fly Brook. He built it in 1966 and recorded an easement for it in the Ulster County Deed Record in 2001, based on squatter's rights.

The hike began on a cool October morning with cloudy skies. We parked at Sam's Point and headed toward Verkeerder Kill Falls, which is a perennial favorite, then up on the High Point Trail. The low-bush blueberries were vivid red under the clearing fall sky. Somewhere along the trail we headed east into the wilderness, bushwhacking our way. We saw two distinct bear scats before reaching the cabin.

Marc proceeded with some repairs to the cabin stovepipe while I ate a leisurely lunch and took in the views. We then bushwhacked our way out, back onto the High Point trail. As it was getting late, we reluctantly decided to skip the magnificent panoramas of High Point and take a shortcut directly down to the fire tower road. The weather turned cloudy and cooler. We reached the parking lot and, according to my calculations (smart watch) had hiked nearly 10 miles. I have to admit my legs were a little sore, but I enjoyed a great hike in the Gunks. I came away with a new meaning for "Cherish the Cabin."



You can order Marc's books by contacting him at [marcbernardfried@gmail.com](mailto:marcbernardfried@gmail.com) or by phone (he has a listed land line number).

## We'd like to thank a mystery donor!

A shoutout to the mystery supporter who has donated \$10 through PayPal each month since February 2019. We appreciate your reliable and sustaining support!

**PLEASE CONSIDER MAKING YOUR OWN MONTHLY PAYPAL DONATION!**

## FOS BOARD HOLDS RETREAT

Every so often we all need to get back to basics. Are we living up to our mission? Are we going about it in the right way? Can we be doing it better? The FOS Board mulled over these and other questions at a retreat in July

We owe it to our members, doners, and all who continue to enjoy our precious Shawangunks, to be fulfilling our commitments as volunteers dedicated to protecting the land. Rest assured, we came away with a renewed sense of vigor as we strive to do our very best to protect



Front row, left to right: Patty Lee Parmalee, Neil Zimmerman, Barbara Rubin. Second row: Jean Lerner, Anka Angrist, Janet Kern, John Hayes, Ted Sendler. Rear: Alex Bartholomew.

the Shawangunks from all threats, environmental and otherwise!

### A CHANGE IN OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

We are sorry to announce the departure of Ted Sendler from our board. In addition to leading hikes, Ted reviewed our financial status and bookkeeping practices. Ted took a strong interest in the Shawangunk Conglomerate parcel, leading hikes into it several times with other board members and guests. He also led this year's Hike-a-Thon at Minnewaska (see article). Thank you, Ted, for your service.

## JOIN US! DEVELOPMENT THREATENS ALL PARTS OF THE SHAWANGUNKS. JOIN OR RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP.

NAME

STREET

CITY / STATE / ZIP

EMAIL

Visit [www.shawangunks.org](http://www.shawangunks.org) to conveniently donate online.

THIS IS A CHANGE OF ADDRESS OR EMAIL

**BENEFACTOR \$250**

**PATRON \$100**

**FAMILY \$40**

**INDIVIDUAL \$25**

**OTHER \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

I would like to make an additional contribution to The Shawangunk Conservancy for land acquisition.

**AMOUNT \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

### PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

Your email address will help save time and money. It will be used for action alerts and the acknowledgment of contributions only. Neither The Shawangunk Conservancy nor Friends of the Shawangunks shares its mailing list with any other organization, ever.

### PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO:

Friends of the Shawangunks or The Shawangunk Conservancy

### MAIL TO:

Friends of the Shawangunks / PO Box 270 / Accord NY 12404

Contributions are tax deductible.

**MATCHING GRANTS:** If your employer has a matching grants program, send us the forms and we'll do the rest. IBM matching checks must be made out to The Shawangunk Conservancy.

# Shawangunk WATCH

is the publication of Friends of the Shawangunks and its companion organization, The Shawangunk Conservancy. This issue was written and edited by Friends board members Jean Lerner, John Hayes, Patty Lee Parmalee and Anka Angrist.

### FRIENDS OF THE SHAWANGUNKS THE SHAWANGUNK CONSERVANCY

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Friends of the Shawangunks, Inc. is a not-for-profit organization working to preserve open space in the Shawangunks.

The Shawangunk Conservancy, Inc. is a not-for-profit land conservancy.

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Website: [www.shawangunks.org](http://www.shawangunks.org)

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The latest financial report of Friends of the Shawangunks and The Shawangunk Conservancy may be obtained by writing to the Office of the Attorney General, Charities Bureau, 120 Broadway, New York, NY 10271, or by writing to us at the above address.

*Cover: Along the Verkeerder Kill Trail, by John Hayes*



FRIENDS of the SHAWANGUNKS  
Preserving Open Space Since 1963