



NATIONAL PARK  
SERVICE

SPECIAL  
POINTS OF  
INTEREST:

- NPS 100th Birthday & NPS Adopted 2016 Class
- Citizen Scientists
- Mather High School comes to Roosevelt -Vanderbilt NHS to learn craftsmanship skills in historic preservation.
- Thank you to our Park Volunteers

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# Hands on The Land

2015



## Citizen Scientists

Have you ever wanted to be a citizen scientist? This summer of 2015 brought the first Citizen Scientists to Roosevelt Vanderbilt National Historic Sites to participate in the *Dragonfly Citizen Scientist Project*. The program is a partnership between the National Park Service, Maine University, US Geological Survey and Dartmouth College.

The project first began in 2012 and included 40 national parks and over 800 citizen scientists.

This year Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Sites engaged eight citizen scientist volunteers to collect dragonfly larvae from specific sampling sites in the park.

The samples were sent to our participating partners to be analyzed for mercury. The results will help to reveal the mercury risk across the national parks system.

Mercury is a toxic pollutant that can harm the health of humans and wildlife that we are charged with protecting.

The main source of human caused mercury in remote national park environments is atmospheric deposition from coal -burning power plants.

The Dragonfly Citizen Scientist study connects people to parks and provides baseline data to better understand the spatial distribution of mercury contamination in national parks.

Thank you to our Citizen Scientist; Elizabeth Wallace, Roger Persell, the Da Silva Family, Evan Woods, and park Student Conservation Association volunteer Natilie Cheung.

For more information visit: [http://www.nature.nps.gov/air/studies/air\\_toxics/dragonfly/index.cfm](http://www.nature.nps.gov/air/studies/air_toxics/dragonfly/index.cfm)



Volunteer Elizabeth Wallace  
Photo by Roger Persell



Our youngest Citizen Scientists, the Da Silva brothers  
Photo by S. Norris

## NETN Bird Study

The Northeast Temperate Network (NETN), part of the National Park Service's national inventory and monitoring program, monitors a variety of natural resource indicators, called vital signs, for 12 parks in the northeast and the Appalachian National Scenic Trail. Breeding birds are one of these vital signs because they are a reliable indicator of ecological integrity and a high profile taxonomic group. 2015 was the ninth year of continual landbird monitoring in

the forests of Roosevelt-Vanderbilt NHS and many other network parks. NETN and the Vermont Center for Ecostudies accomplished this only with the invaluable help of volunteer birders who crawled out of bed at ungodly early hours, endured hordes of biting mosquitoes and black flies, and contributed their time, efforts, and expert birding skills. At Eleanor Roosevelt and Top Cottage, volunteers Barbara Mansell and Liz Martens have been conducting this survey for the past 4 years.



For more details visit the NETN website:  
[http://science.nature.nps.gov/  
im/units/NETN/index.cfm](http://science.nature.nps.gov/im/units/NETN/index.cfm)

# Cooperative Survey of Amphibians & Reptiles



Gwyn Daunton

Over the spring and summer months the park began a survey of reptiles and amphibians in cooperation with SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry. The survey is coordinated by Dr. James Gibbs, who literally wrote the book on New York State reptile & amphibian species. Conducting the field work are graduate student Samantha Dean assisted by technician Gwyn Daunton. The survey is targeted in areas where there has been little

information collected, primarily the Farm Lane and Top Cottage areas. This study will help determine the composition and distribution of reptiles and amphibians in the area and how they might be impacted by mountain bike and other trail use.



Photos by S. Norris

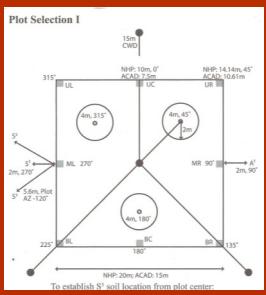


*A Nation that destroys its soils destroys itself. Forests are the lungs of our land, purifying the air and giving fresh strength to our people. ~ FDR*

Photo courtesy of FDR Presidential Library



FDR and Forester Nelson Brown



## NETN—Forest Health Monitoring

During the month of June NETN scientists came to ROVA to monitor several forest plots already implemented throughout the park.

Forest monitoring is not new to this land. FDR himself began forestry experimentations and monitoring of his forest plantations that he implemented on his estate in the 1920's. Along with Nelson Brown, a forester and professor at the NYS School of Forestry, FDR planted over 1,000 acres in tree plantations. Their efforts were to find ways to manage lands in a responsible and economically sustainable manner.

NPS continues this endeavor in contemporary forestry monitoring measures. NETN forest health monitoring is currently conducted to obtain broad-based, and scientifically sound information through long term natural resource monitoring.

These studies will provide multiple applications for park management decision-making, research, education, and early detection of invasive plants, animals and diseases. Knowing the condition of forest resources is fundamental to the NPS's ability to manage the resources. The challenge of protecting and managing the natural resources requires a partnership-based ecosystem approach.

The monitoring program provides site-specific information needed to understand and identify change in complex, variable, and imperfectly understood natural systems. It aids in determining whether observed changes are within natural levels of variability.

### Preliminary Monitoring Objectives

1. Assess status and trends of ecological health for forested communities and other key communities of concern.
2. Detect new outbreaks of established invasive exotic plant species and newly arrived invasive plant species.
3. Detect new outbreaks of established forest pest species and newly arrived forest pest species.



Long-term Forest Monitoring

NPS Photo



# American Eel Migration



Chris Bowser of DEC instructs summer intern students on building an eel ladder



## American Eel "catadromous" Migration Research:

Each spring students and community volunteers have been working with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation staff and scientists to monitor glass eel populations in the Hudson River tributaries. This spring the NYDEC partnered with Roosevelt-Vanderbilt to conduct the citizen scientist monitoring at a specific tributary site at Vanderbilt Mansion NHS. Citizen scientists were Evan Woods, David Lindemann, Katie Friedmann, Michele Humbert, James Herrington, and Johann Kravic.

The study is spearheaded by the Hudson River Research Reserve and the Hudson River Estuary Program. Education Coordinator Chris Bowser of NYDEC at Norrie Point Environmental Center in Staatsburgh, NY over sees the field study.

Bowser met with NPS natural resource education specialist, Susanne Norris, DEC interns and citizen scientist volunteers to kick off the study at Vanderbilt. Bowser instructed all in the construction of an eel ladder at the site. Monitoring contin-

ued throughout the spring and summer months.

This baseline study is being conducted to determine why the historically-abundant American eel migrations in the Hudson River tributaries is declining.

The American eels are born in the Atlantic Ocean and migrate into the fresh waters of North America. The eels return to the Sargasso Sea to spawn after living for decades in the freshwater river, streams, and ponds.

For more details visit:  
<http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/39663.html>



# School Group Programs

## 2016 Adopted Class: Gardens of the Times



*From Heritage Seeds,*



*to School  
Hydroponic Garden,*



*to Table.*



Participating Shaker Student's



Photos by S. Norris

In 2012 the National Park Service issued a "Call to Action" to prepare for a Second Century of Stewardship and Engagement of advancing the NPS Education Mission. We knew the Shaker Junior and Senior High School in Latham, NY would be our "Adopted 2016 Class." Teachers and students readily signed up for the four year experience. Each year the students visited the park learning about the NPS, park service careers, and about the life of Eleanor and Franklin Roosevelt, and the Vanderbilt's.

In 2015 the students elected to focus on Eleanor Roosevelt and her home at Val-Kill. The park horticulturist, Anna de Cordova, introduced the students to the idea of a "Cultural Landscape" and the story that a historic landscape can communicate to visitors. They learned how the NPS researches and creates Cultural Landscape Reports and uses them to devise Treatment Plans that preserve or re-establish the significant features of the landscape.

In examining the property at Val-Kill, and researching Eleanor Roosevelt, the students were struck by Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt's shared ethic of sustainability and the many practical and productive ways that they used the land around the Val-Kill cottage to grow food for their family and friends, flowers to cut and arrange or share, and trees for forest products.

Back at school, they challenged themselves to research the Roosevelt history in relation to the landscape, creating a 3 dimensional time line that includes both significant dates and events in the Val-Kill landscape and the lives of Eleanor and Franklin. Using this timeline, it is possible to think about what was happening in Eleanor and Franklin Roosevelt's backyard at the same time that one considers how their lives were playing out on the world stage. But, the students did not stop at research. They also took to heart Eleanor Roosevelt's credo to create positive change by beginning in your own small corner of the world. They determined that

they would demonstrate her message of sustainability in their own school. The group collaborated with their school Librarian, Technology teacher and Social Studies teacher to build a hydroponic growing system in the library. They planted it with heirloom vegetables that Eleanor Roosevelt grew at Val-Kill, including peas, radishes, lettuce, tomatoes, beans and strawberries.

Their finished product produced plenty of delicious, fresh food for everyone involved in the project to enjoy, and the whole school benefited from being able to sit, study, or read by the garden area's display while they watched the vertical crops grow up the library wall.

This coming year students will be learning about resource protection and natural resources. At the conclusion of the school year we will be Celebrating their accomplishments as our "Adopted 2016 Class" and celebrating the Centennial 100th birthday of the National Park with a birthday party.



Principal- Dr. Russell Moore, Social Studies Teacher-  
Kathy Peterson, and School Librarian Judi Stott. Missing  
are H.S. Social Studies Teacher - Dan Weaver, and  
Technology Teacher Evan Mastaitis.



# Mather High School Studies NPS Skills in Craftsmanship



Photos by S. Norris

*We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future.*

~ FDR



As part of the National Park Services' partnership with Stephen T. Mather Building Arts & Craftsmanship High School, Roosevelt-Vanderbilt NHS participated in a field work day experience with approximately thirty of the schools students and three teachers.

The High School is named for Stephen T. Mather who was the first director of the National Park Service. The school is a new Career and Technical Education high school for hands-on skills-training in the specialized building arts and landscape trades, focused on high-quality craftsmanship and historic preserva-

tion, and is located in NYC. The National Park Service has a unique partnership with the school and works directly with the students in the trades of carpentry, decorative finishes, landscape management, masonry, and plastering.

In May park employees created four different work stations throughout the park sites for students to learn hands-on skills in historic preservation. The stations included masonry, cultural land-scaping, mansion rehabilitation, decorative finishes, carpentry restoration, brick wall repointing, building assessment and garden rehabilitation.

## MATHER BUILDING ARTS & CRAFTSMANSHIP HIGH SCHOOL

These hands-on experiences, coupled with school academics and work-based opportunities advances the students potential for a successful career in these fields.

For more details visit: <http://schools.nyc.gov/SchoolPortals/02/M139/default.htm>



Photo by Paul Banks

Teachers participate in "Citizen Scientist" projects on eels, and dragonfly larva.

At the Teaching the Hudson Valley's Institute "Explore a Place. Discover Your World" this summer ROVA and the DEC teamed up to present a teachers workshop on Citizen Scientists in our parks. The workshop conducted was on the Hudson River American eel and Dragonfly research projects being conducted in the park. Nearly 25 educators participated in the workshop.

There were no slouches here! Everyone willingly waded into the water and got their hands dirty collecting the data. While this is serious scientific work there were plenty of smiles and laughs that added to the experience.

Comments on the workshop were: "Enjoyed this on a personal level. Don't do much of anything science related, but used to and this was fun science!"

"Outstanding!! Excited presenters and it was fun to get involved. I don't live close by, but when I retire this looks like something I will want to participate in. I wish my classroom was closer as well."

"Thanks Bowser and Susanne for a great afternoon along the river."

"Thanks for including Matt in the workshop involving eels. He talked about it the entire way home and then repeated himself to his father over dinner. It truly made an impression on him!"



Photos by S. Norris



NPS Photo

**SCA (Student Conservation Association) Interns  
Atiya, Pharoah and Jack**

*Men and nature must work hand in hand. The throwing out of balance of the resources of nature throws out of balance also the lives of men.*

~ FDR

Photos by Bill Urbin



Shreena &amp; Beverly



**BFGA volunteers setting up for plant sale and lecture in June.**



Arline &amp; the bean plants

## Resource Management and Facilities Division Interns & Volunteers

### Hands-on the Land Interns

There were many “hands on the land” this spring and summer to help us meet our goals in the Resource Management and Facilities Division. From a single afternoon to weeks in residence, a combination of interns, students and volunteers made a big impact in the park. We are grateful for all the people who stepped up, “Found Our Park”, and made a difference.

#### The Interns:

Pharoah Graham and Atiya Harvey participated in the National Park Academy Summer Internship program, living here, helping us with gardens and grounds work while learning about career opportunities in the National Park Service.

John Darms and Jack Masury came to the park as Student Conservation Association

Interns. Jack supported the Gardens and Greenhouse operation at the Home of Franklin Roosevelt in the spring, while John was based at Vanderbilt Coach House and supported summer landscape work throughout the park.

Alex Goddard a student at the University of St. Andrews, in Scotland, volunteered to research the papers of William Plog, a property manager for Sara Roosevelt, to support the Home Garden project. In addition he supported the education programming by assisting in the various education programs offered at the park.

The Branching Out Intern Program from the Olmsted Center in Boston spent a week at Val Kill, the Home of Eleanor Roosevelt. Fifteen interns re-laid the patio by the pool, improved

the plantings and entrance to the Val Kill Cottage and accomplished several maintenance projects throughout the gardens and grounds. This group was joined by three additional interns from NPS Partner, Mather High School in New York City.

Photos by S. Norris  
Atiya Harvey

Alex Goddard

### Hands-on the Land Volunteers



Students and faculty from local colleges contributed in their areas of expertise. Archeologist Dr. April Beisaw of Vassar College and her volunteers contributed over 180 hours of work to study areas with proposed construction in the historic core of the Roosevelt Home and Bellfield properties. Maureen Costura, a professor at the Culinary Institute of America and her students in the Bachelors of Applied Food Science Program, conducted research related to the Roosevelt Home Garden and held a fundraiser picnic to support the home garden project.

Marist College students volunteered to help with cleanup of the garage at the Home of Eleanor Roosevelt. The Poughkeepsie Day School connected with the Park for a day of service for their Middle Schoolers who worked on both the Beatrix Farrand Garden and the Val-Kill Landscape.

Boy Scout Troop #42 rebuilt a deteriorated trail at Vanderbilt Mansion from the White Bridge up to the great lawn.

Our Park Partners, the Beatrix Farrand Garden Association and the Frederick W. Vanderbilt Garden Association continued their marvelous support of these two beautiful gardens which simply would not exist without their steady and inspired efforts. And they, in turn, were supported by volunteers from Pathways to Employment and the Oakwood School.



Photo by Bill Urbin

**NPS employees Tim Meyerson, Don Shaffer and “Branching Out” Youth**

The Home of Eleanor Roosevelt, Val-Kill, was kept in great shape by community volunteers who come on Wednesday mornings to plant and maintain the gardens and care for the landscape in the historic core.

# FIND YOUR PARK



*Da Silva Family,  
Evan Woods, and  
Natilie Cheung  
find their park!*

## National Park Service



Roosevelt-Vanderbilt NHS  
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### Visit our Websites:

<http://www.nps.gov/hofr/index.htm>

<http://www.nps.gov/elro/index.htm>

<http://www.nps.gov/vama/index.htm>



The National Park Service turns 100 on  
August 25, 2016,  
and everyone can take part in the celebration!

The centennial will kick off a second century of  
stewardship of America's national parks and engaging  
communities through recreation, conservation, and  
historic preservation programs.

We invite you to find your park and discover the  
national parks and programs in your own backyard!  
<http://www.nps.gov/subjects/centennial/index.htm>