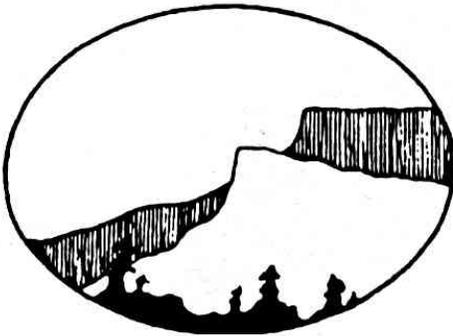




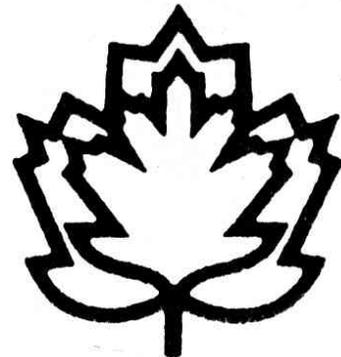
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# **Bike Patrol Handbook and Training Guide**

2016



**Mohonk Preserve, Inc.**



**Minnewaska State Park  
Preserve**

Gunks Mountain Biking Association  
Bike Patrol Handbook and Training Guide

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**GUMBA - Background**

GUMBA is the Gunks Mountain Biking Association. Started as a volunteer bike patrol at Mohonk in 1993, it expanded to Minnewaska State Park in 1995. In addition to the patrol program, GUMBA is also active in trail maintenance and mountain biking advocacy and volunteering to serve in other non-profit events such as the Survival of the Shawmagunks (SOS), Pfalz Point Challenge Race, Rock the Ridge and other community events. Our membership includes highly skilled riders and recreational mountain bikers who support our goal to promote responsible mountain biking on the Shawangunk Ridge and beyond to the larger off-road biking community.

**GUMBA - Mission**

**GUMBA** fosters an ethic among mountain bikers *of cooperation, caring and responsibility* to help expand and enhance trails for mountain bikers and all other trail users.

**GUMBA** promotes safe and responsible biking and hiking in the Shawangunk Mountains.

**GUMBA** educates mountain bikers and hikers in trail etiquette and in the responsible enjoyment of the land.

**GUMBA** fosters stewardship among mountain bikers toward land resources, including trail work and active participation in the care of those resources for all.

**GUMBA** represents the views of mountain bikers with the goal of improving our relations with the non-riding public, land managers and other trail user groups.

**GUMBA** enhances the enjoyment of our sport through activities that enrich the experience of mountain biking.

Each member is a committed volunteer. We do bike patrols, assist on trail projects or help out with events. We make visiting our great parks enjoyable, fun and safe.

**Here's what is available to our members:**

- Free annual membership to the Mohonk Preserve and free parking at Minnewaska State Park when patrolling. National Mountain Bike Patrol level patrol training.
- Mechanical clinics – Learn how to fix flats, broken chains and more.
- Fun rides with bikers at your own level and experience new trails.
- Skills clinics – go riding, get better.
- CPR & first aid training.

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**GUMBA Bike Patrol**

Bike patrollers are volunteers who have completed our training program and are able to inform, assist and educate mountain bikers and other trail users at Minnewaska State Park, the Mohonk Preserve and other areas.

Patrollers promote responsible mountain biking through IMBA's philosophy of environmentally sound and socially responsible riding, described in the universally recognized **IMBA Rules of the Trail**.

Emphasis is placed on education, trail user etiquette, local expertise and environmental concerns. We provide extra eyes and ears on the trail, radio-in accidents, fire, and other emergencies. Patrols also assist with minor mechanical problems, hand out maps, give directions, and find lost people.

**Enforcement is NOT a function of the mountain bike patrol. GUMBA patrollers are there to gently remind all trail users that there are rules, not enforce them.**

**How Patrols Work.**

Patrols operate at both the Mohonk Preserve and Minnewaska State Park plus some parts of the Mohonk Mountain House property. **We only patrol trails that are open to a bicycle, which means carriageways, not foot trails.**

Patrollers commit to volunteering one weekend day per month from May to October (six times a season). Patrols generally start at 10:00 am and go until 4:00 pm. We tend to patrol in pairs, but may patrol solo. The decision to patrol in bad weather or rain is yours.

Patrol dates are on the [www.gumba.org](http://www.gumba.org) calendar website. You can use the calendar to check if anybody else plans on patrolling on a day you want to.

**If you cannot make a scheduled patrol please update the on-line calendar as soon as you can. You should also email or call any people you were scheduled to patrol with. If you are dropping a patrol within 48 hours of when you were scheduled to ride, please call the people you were scheduled to ride with so they don't waste time waiting for you.**

If you must cancel at the last minute call the location where you are scheduled to patrol (Minnewaska 845-255-0752, Mohonk 255-0919) and ask them to let anyone you were scheduled to patrol with know that you are canceling.

You are expected to be conversant in the rules, regulations, patrol procedures, and have a working knowledge of the area including which carriageways are open to bicycles. **You need to read this entire pamphlet. We cannot have GUMBA members breaking these rules at any time. You are a role model!**

**Training is required for new patrollers with retraining every three years** (please plan on attending the first hour of each yearly training to get scheduled on your preferred patrol dates and hear about any land management policy changes, you are then free to leave). It includes patrol procedures, rules and regulations, conflict resolution, and radio operation. If someone wishes to become a GUMBA patroller after the yearly spring training, they can be spot trained with an experienced member during their patrol, and then put on the schedule. They will be required to take the training the following year.

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Note that you must be familiar with which carriageways are closed to bikes and which are open. Bike maps are available at the Mohonk Preserve's Visitors Center and at Minnewaska State Park.

Your bike needs to be in good working order. **You must wear an approved biking helmet.**

If you wish to patrol but know that you cannot commit to all six months just let us know ahead of time. All help is greatly appreciated. We understand you are a volunteer and will make every effort to accommodate your schedule.

There are other Volunteer functions you can perform for GUMBA

- GUMBA also performs trail work. You may join exclusively for this purpose. We welcome anyone who wants to work on trails in addition to patrolling. Trail work dates and sites will be announced via email and on our web site ([www.gumba.org](http://www.gumba.org)).
- Assist with education booths, clinics and other types of advocacy work to keep biking thriving in the Hudson Valley.
- Participate in committee work to assist in running the organization.

### **Mountain Biking on the Shawangunk Ridge - Put it into Perspective!**

While there are only a few small sections of single-track mountain biking on the ridge, there are over 50 miles of carriageways open to biking. It is one of the most scenic places on the east coast to ride. When patrolling be sure to take time to stop and admire the view. You are patrolling to help others, but that's no reason you can't enjoy yourself. To make everyone's experience a little nicer there are some guidelines we would like bikers to follow. They are based on the International Mountain Biking Association's **(IMBA) "Rules of the Trail"**. These rules are designed to eliminate any adverse effects mountain bikes may have.

Keep in mind that the single greatest threat to mountain bike access is user conflict, when the activity of one person interferes with the experience of someone engaged in a different activity.

#### **Ride on Open Trails Only**

Bike maps are available -- use them. If you are having difficulty reading the maps ask for some help, many people find it difficult to read maps. If in doubt, find out. Ask a ranger or a bike patrol volunteer.

#### **Leave No Trace**

The Shawangunk Ridge is a special ecosystem. There are over twenty rare and endangered species here. Much of the soil is very thin and drains poorly. Stay on carriageways; you can do irrevocable harm riding off the trails, even on the rock slabs. If the carriageways are extremely muddy consider riding another time or another location.

The ridge is mainly a "pack in pack out" area. Take your trash home to dispose of it. If you see some litter stick it in your pack. Mother Nature will thank you.

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When you go through puddles go through the center where the soil will be the most stable. Don't go to the edge of the puddle or break down the side of the trail.

Please keep group size down to four or five riders. If you are here with a lot of friends split up into smaller groups with prearranged places to meet. You'll have more stories to share with each other later. Other users will thank you for it. Ten, twenty or even six bikes spread along the trail can seem like a wagon train to a hiker.

Minimize your visual impact. Try not to ride side by side, especially around blind turns!

### **Control your bicycle**

The cliffs near the carriageways are one of the delights of Shawangunk Ridge and offer incredible views. They also make accidents a lot more dangerous. Be careful!

The speed limit for bikes is fifteen miles per hour. Slow down when passing other trail users, way down! You may feel like you're in control but a hiker may not realize how skillful you are. The greatest number of complaints about bikes has to do with passing hikers inappropriately. When approaching hikers from behind let them know you are coming in a calm friendly tone from a distance of 30 feet or more. If you use a bell, start ringing it well before reaching a hiker (some hikers find bells startling). Try to pass hikers at a slow speed. Be sure to say hello and wish them a good hike. Be aware that some hikers may be wearing earbuds and not hear you. If a hiker gives no indication that they hear you calling out to them, pass them very slowly.

Not all of the serious accidents at the park occur near the cliffs. Inattention for even a moment can lead to a sudden spill. Even low speed falls can cause a broken collarbone, which could keep you off your bike all season.

*Ride single file, squeezed to the right, around all turns, especially at Minnewaska State Park.*

Skidding is unnecessary and causes erosion. If your rear wheel locks up, you are essentially out of control. Skidding can be a sign of inexperience or poor judgment. Learn how to use both of your brakes and to modulate your speed. Pay enough attention to where you are going so that you don't have to stop suddenly. Power turns and controlled skids seen in downhill races have no place here.

Some bikers enjoy catching some air now and then. If you feel inclined to launch remember that you're not in a plane. In the air you have little control over your bike. Don't bunny hop or wheelie near walkers, approaching turns, or near the cliffs. Make sure you have a good line of sight before you take to the air.

### **Always Yield the Trail**

We share these trails with a lot of other users. It is real important that we find ways to get along which means being courteous and following a few simple guidelines.

**Pedestrians and horses always have the right of way.** Be courteous when passing. Slow down and call out with a friendly greeting long before passing. Be especially careful when you see small children who may dart out in front of you. Be careful when approaching dogs, especially if they are off leash. When approaching a blind curve, try to imagine there might be young child or dog around the turn, because there might just be.

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"On your left" is not exactly a friendly greeting and can easily be misunderstood. Why not try something like "Hello, how are you? I'd like to pass on your left." Show other users that mountain bikers can speak in full sentences. Be polite, friendly and smile.

Passing horses requires even greater care. Horses can be easily startled and can be unpredictable. Consequently the rider may not have the same kind of control over a horse that you have over your bike.

Horses see movement very well, even behind them, but what they see is a little blurry. A bicycle, being quick and low to the ground, can seem like a predator to a horse. Sudden loud noise can also cause trouble. Either situation can startle a horse. The rider has very little control over a spooked horse. Don't take chances.

Call out to the rider well in advance, 20 yards is good. Slow down to almost a stop and ask the rider for instructions. Follow those instructions. Be prepared to stop and dismount. If you want to make a stunning impression dismount before being asked. Speaking to the rider in a calm voice lets the horse know you are friendly person and not threatening.

### **Never Spook Animals**

If you are lucky enough to meet some of our wild neighbors leave them alone. Look but don't touch, feed, pester or chase animals. Some can be dangerous. Raccoons can be vicious, some of the snakes here are poisonous, and almost any animal can have rabies. Enjoy them from afar keeping in mind that you are visiting their home. If you have an interesting animal encounter please add it to your patrol log.

### **Plan Ahead**

Know your equipment. Check your brakes, cables, and look for loose nuts before you hit the trail. Bring some tools and a patch kit or an extra tube with you. Check that your pump is going to work with the extra tubes you will carry (i.e. Presta or Schrader) or carry an adapter. Ideally carry a pump that works with both types of valves.

There is almost no potable water on the Shawangunk Ridge. Make sure you bring enough. A day of riding depletes your body of fluids. Dehydration is not fun. It can land you in the hospital. Drink before you are thirsty. Have extra water in your vehicle.

Eat before you are hungry. Extra food in the form of high carbohydrate snacks or energy bars will keep your legs pumping longer. If you use up all the energy stored in your muscles you can "bonk", a condition where your muscles just don't work. Bonking four miles out can ruin your day.

Know the local weather and dress for it and/or carry appropriate clothing in your pack. A wind shell is almost always a good item to have along. Carry rain gear if there is a good chance of rain.

In spring and fall the temperature drops quickly in the afternoon. Even in the summer a stiff breeze can cool things down considerably. If the air is cooling off being dry helps. If you're clothes are wet from a swim in the lake, from perspiration, or rain, hypothermia can set in at only 50 degrees. Hypothermia can kill you.

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In the summer heat exhaustion and sunburn are concerns. Some of the trails here are in the sun most of the day. Be prepared. Consider leaving a tube of sunblock in your vehicle all season. Try to remember to use it before patrolling.

Watch for thunderstorms, particularly on summer afternoons. If one is approaching head for low ground. If you get caught in one on high ground get away from your bike and stay low. It is better to get wet than fried. Lightening strikes the ridge frequently!

### **Land Managers on the Shawangunk Ridge**

The Northern Shawangunk Mountains in Ulster County, New York, is a 40-square mile natural area encompassing over 35,000 acres of semi-wilderness used by hikers, bird watchers, climbers, bicyclists, skiers and other outdoor enthusiasts. Its sky lakes, dramatic cliffs and rock outcrops, scenic vistas, secluded glens, cascading waterfalls, and old growth hemlock ravines are home to rare and endangered plants and wildlife, some of which have remained relatively undisturbed since the last ice age. Today parts of this land of unusual beauty are legally protected and open to the public. Following is a description of various land managers on the ridge.

#### **The Mohonk Preserve**

The Mohonk Preserve owns over 8,000+ acres, a nonprofit organization founded as the Mohonk Trust in 1963. The Mohonk Preserve's mission is to protect a sensitive ecological complex in perpetuity while providing for public recreation and education. The Mohonk Preserve manages over 50 miles of carriage roads and 40 miles of foot trails for the enjoyment of the public. Over 250,000 annual visitors use the land, most passing through its five main entry points. Annual members are allowed free access to Mohonk; non-members must pay a day use fee. Mohonk has an additional charge for bicycling. Patrollers are granted a complimentary annual membership.

#### **The Mohonk Mountain House**

The Mohonk Mountain House is a separate property and a private, for-profit resort operation. A reciprocal agreement allows Preserve members to visit the 2,000 acre resort grounds (excluding the beach, interior and porches of the Mountain House) when they are open to day visitors. There is no extra cost if you enter on foot from Preserve lands. However, pets are not permitted on the resort grounds. Bicycles are restricted to certain areas. Be aware that the "No Bicycles" signs the Mohonk Mountain House posts on trails are different from the more standard ones the Preserve and the Park use.

#### **Minnewaska State Park Preserve**

Adjacent to the Mohonk Preserve is Minnewaska State Park Preserve, a 25,000+ acre public park. Minnewaska's goal is to preserve and protect the natural and cultural resources while making them available to the public for compatible recreational and educational opportunities. When entering Minnewaska by foot or bicycle, there is no entry fee. Minnewaska does charge for parking.

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Minnewaska is a separate jurisdiction from the Mohonk Preserve and has its own trail and carriage road rules and guidelines, though they generally consistent.

### **General Land Use Rules**

Each land manager on the ridge has rules and regulations governing the use of its lands by the public. These cover a range of issues from ecology, land protection, public safety and multi-user conflicts.

#### **Mohonk Preserve**

- Annual membership or day use fees are required to use the Preserve lands.
- Lands are open to the public during daylight hours only.
- Camping is not permitted, except for a small Boy Scout camp near Duck Pond.
- Fires are not permitted.
- ATV's, motorcycles, snowmobiles or other motorized vehicles are not permitted at any time.
- Horses are permitted on carriage roads only.
- Bikes are permitted on marked bike routes only; an approved biking helmet is required and an annual permit or day permit is required.
- Collecting of flora, fauna (including firewood), rocks or any other natural material on the Preserve is not permitted without prior approval.
- Dogs must be on a leash at all times
- Fishing is permitted only in the Coxing Kill below Fountain Brook.
- Firearms are not permitted (except during hunting season).
- Hunting is permitted in season, in designated areas, with a NYS hunting license and a Mohonk Preserve hunting permit.
- Skiing is permitted.
- Glass containers are not permitted. Note: alcoholic beverages are permitted in non-glass containers.

#### **Minnewaska State Park Preserve**

- Minnewaska opens daily at 9 a.m.
- Hours are posted at the gate. Note closing times varies seasonally.
- Parking costs \$8 per vehicle till start of swimming season (usually around mid June), \$9 afterwards till the end of swimming season.
- The park may be closed if forest fire danger is high.
- Minnewaska is a "Carry in-Carry Out" Park. Take your trash with you.
- Glass containers are not permitted.
- Alcoholic beverages are not permitted.
- Only radios used with earphones are allowed.
- Camping / camp fires are not permitted
- Remain on clearly marked paths and carriageways.
- Bicyclists must wear ANSI approved helmets
- Bicycles are permitted only on carriageways. Stay off the hiking trails.
- Raised portable grills are permitted in designated areas. Ground fires are not permitted
- Hiking is permitted on clearly marked paths and carriageways,

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- Horseback riding and horse drawn carriages are allowed on carriageways subject to permit
- Deer hunting only is permitted subject to restrictions.
- Pets must remain on a leash at all times. Pets are not permitted on any beaches.
- Picnicking is permitted at designated areas.
- Swimming is permitted in designated areas only when lifeguards are on duty.
- Caution: Private landowner has vehicular access. Park staff uses motorized vehicles. You may encounter these vehicles around any bend, moving or parked doing maintenance, etc.

## **Patrol Guidelines**

### **Who is in Charge?**

Patrollers are subject to the authority of land management personnel whenever on duty. The rangers have the final say. If for any reason there should be a question or a decision that you are unhappy with, please bring it to the attention of the GUMBA Board of Directors **after** your patrol is over

### **Scheduling**

You will be requested to schedule your patrols on GUMBA's on-line calendar. The calendar can be found in the Members Area on GUMBA's web site: [www.gumba.org](http://www.gumba.org)

### **Patrol Hours:**

- Patrols begin at 10 am and end at 4 pm; please be prompt. Call the Mohonk Preserve Visitor Center, 255-0919 or Minnewaska Ranger Station, 255-0752 to alert them if you must be late. Your patrol partner needs to know where you are and your expected arrival time. Try to communicate with your partner a few days before your patrol and exchange cell phone numbers. When trying to contact your partner's cell number if arriving late, do not rely solely on voice mail. Cell reception is very spotty on the ridge. If possible, send a text message.
- The decision to patrol in inclement weather or rain is up to the patroller. **If you decide to cancel due to weather call the above numbers and inform the rangers.**
- Late day patrols are encouraged during summer months, but are not presently tracked.

### **What to Bring with You:**

- Your bike with spare tubes, a patch kit, and any tools you feel you may need.
- An approved biking helmet.
- Water.
- Lunch or snacks.
- Reserve water & food in your vehicle.
- A change of clothes in your vehicle (this is important if you get caught out in the rain).
- A watch.
- Cell phone (optional, but very handy in areas that get bad radio reception).

### **What We Provide:**

- Patrol Vest (at Mohonk) and GUMBA Bike Patrol placard.

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- Pack with basic multi-tool, mini-pump and extra tube, duct tape, patch kit.
- A simple first aid kit.
- Maps, GUMBA cards, notebook & pencil.
- Radio (at Minnewaska and hopefully Mohonk).
- Garbage bag.

### **Where to check in**

- Minnewaska - park manager's office at the Peterskill parking area. Park by the maintenance building below the upper parking lot after entering the main park entrance. You can also park at the Peterskill parking lot and start your patrol from there.
- Mohonk – Mohonk Preserve Visitor Center on Routes 44/55 below the hairpin turn. Go to front desk to sign in and pick up the equipment. Proceed to the West Trapps Parking lot where parking spaces are reserved (except on very busy days) for patrollers until 10:00 am.

### **How to check in**

- Sign in (at Minnewaska).
- Pick up patrol equipment, which includes bike repair supplies, park brochures and bike maps, hiking maps, first aid equipment, a two-way radio, and a vest.
- At the end of your tour you will return equipment to the same place.
- Seek guidance on areas that land managers want patrolled or other concerns (construction, etc.).
  - At Minnewaska ask the person on duty in the ranger station.
  - At Mohonk see the ranger on duty at the steel bridge.
- When three or four patrollers are available split into two patrols and determine routes for each.

### **Patrol Routes:**

In general stick to high use areas. Always see if the landowner staff has any special concerns or areas for you go. The patrol is about interfacing not isolating.

#### **Minnewaska**

Cruise the upper lot until it is full. If there are two patrols one can head to the lower lot and then out on the trails. The lower lot fills much slower so don't hang around too long unless it is busy. Most activity centers near the two lakes. Watch for speeders at the far end of Minnewaska (away from the beach). Castle Point Carriageway gets lots of bikes. Take a tour around Lake Awosting after you stop by the beach. Check on "Cardiac Hill" whenever you are near by. Sunset Drive gets busy in the afternoon with both departing bikers and hikers.

#### **Mohonk**

Assist the ranger at the steel bridge providing cyclist information and education. If there is no activity, go for a ride and come back and check again. The primary patrol should work with Rhododendron Bridge as a focal point. Going out from the bridge and back. For instance go out Laurel ledge and back to the bridge. Then up Old Minnewaska Road to Home Farm Circle, across the connector to Old Stage Road, down to Oakwood, and return to Rhododendron Bridge.

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If there are two patrols the second patrol goes out to the north end of the preserve through Rock Pass. This is a great ride but you won't see a lot of people. Once there, concentrate on the area near Bonticou Crag. You can go out to Table Rocks where you will be looking for illegal use and ATV's. It is usually very quiet out there. Spring Farm and Guyot Hill are also good areas to check on.

## Procedures

**Patrollers must wear a patrol vest or a GUMBA Bike Patrol jersey, carry a patrol pack (or your own if equivalent) and a radio whenever possible.** To be effective in interfacing with the public, it is important that you are identified as a GUMBA volunteer.

The first part of the patrol should be conducted in the parking lot greeting mountain bikers and other visitors. Stop and talk to as many folks as you can.

Feel free to pass along information about GUMBA, safe riding techniques and tips to make visitors rides more enjoyable.

Provide recommendations on routes, their conditions, and time to complete them when needed.

Hand out maps and be prepared to explain them

As necessary inform visitors of any applicable rules in as non-confrontational manner. Assume that people don't know the rules rather than they are just ignoring them.

Try to explain the reasons behind the rules why it is important to abide by them.

Assist users experiencing equipment problems by offering them tools or supplies from the patrol kit. Try to have the user perform the repairs. As a last resort you may undertake the repair or adjustment. Stick with basic repairs. The objective is to keep people from being stranded or hurt by faulty equipment.

Any serious first aid or emergency actions need to be taken by park or preserve personnel who are trained. Call accidents in immediately on the radio. Take note of the time. If you encounter someone requiring minor assistance you may make items from your first aid kit available to him or her. **Do not perform first aid beyond your level of certification (See Emergencies).**

Interact with all users in as positive a way as possible.

Be alert for recruiting opportunities for Bike Patrol volunteers and GUMBA membership.

Be understanding of people's complaints especially from other user groups. Don't try to explain away poor behavior on the part of another mountain biker (See Conflict Resolution for techniques and specific situations you may encounter).

Check-in periodically with the park office or preserve ranger to let them know where you are, where you are going, and approximate time of next check-in. Call in problem behavior only if you feel a dangerous situation is about to develop. It's a judgment call!

### Patrol Completion

- At Mohonk return to the Visitor Center.
- At Minnewaska return to the park office.
- Return patrol equipment and inform park manager/ranger of any supplies that were used so the packs can be replenished for the next patrol.

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- **Complete patrol logs** indicating date and names of patrollers, areas patrolled, general conditions and numbers of visitors, situations encountered, animal sightings, etc.
- Be sure to record hours patrolled so we may quantify volunteer hours in dealings with IMBA, land managers and potential sources of grant funding for supplies, radios, etc.

### **Radio Procedures**

- Set radio to channel 1 (check at Mohonk and Minnewaska offices for current channel).
- Turn radio on and set volume to half.
- If radio has a squelch knob, turn until static is heard then back a little.
- Listen to see if someone else is using the frequency.
- Press button on side to transmit, wait two seconds then speak into the mike.
- Release button when finished speaking, wait for response.
- All calls are made to "Mohonk Ranger" (at Mohonk), or "Minnewaska Base" (at Minnewaska)
- Say "Mohonk Ranger" or "Minnewaska Base", this is Bike Patrol #\_\_ (# is 1 if your are first patrol out).
- Release button and wait for response.
- If no response wait a few seconds and try again.
- If still no response move to higher ground or away from blocking terrain.
- When you get a response press button again and explain:
  - If you are checking in.
  - What the situation is, if any.
  - What assistance you need if any. (Ranger w/truck, ambulance, fire dept.)
  - Your location as accurately as you can describe it (on \_\_\_ carriageway, near intersection with\_\_\_)
- Release button to receive instructions, press button to answer any questions.
- When conversation is finished you say "Bike Patrol #\_\_ out",

### **EMERGENCIES**

#### **Accidents and Injuries**

- Don't compound an injury. If you don't know, don't do.
- Immediately notify rangers by radio. If in a dead spot one of you can go to high ground.
- Take note of the time.
- Perform first aid only within your certified level of training.
- If person is unconscious check airways, breathing, and circulation.
- If there is a possibility of head or spinal injury do not move the person. Suggest that they just relax and stay put until help arrives.
- Remain calm and be reassuring, administer TLC.
- Only remove a person's helmet if you have been trained to do so. It is almost always better to leave it on.
- Keep the person comfortable, either warm or cool depending.
- Make sure there is enough room around them.
- Stay in contact with park personnel by radio and follow any instructions carefully.
- Do not leave an injured person unless there is absolutely no choice.

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- In the event of snakebite, keep the victim still and calm. Bring help to them.

**Fire and / or smoke**

- Report immediately by radio.
- Use extreme caution around fire. Fires can spread rapidly.
- Unless the fire is tiny and very easily controlled your time is best spent warning people away from the fire and clearly reporting its location.

**Dealing with the Public and Difficult Situations**

1. **Belligerent or intoxicated individuals** should be reported via radio. Don't get into a situation that could turn into a nasty confrontation. It is unlikely that you can reason with someone who is very intoxicated.
2. **Reckless or unsafe riders.** We don't want to cause accidents. Be careful about calling loudly to a cyclist. If need be you can follow them at normal speed and speak to them when they slow down. A little thought is required here; we don't need high-speed chases. You won't be able to deal with every situation. If someone is being extremely reckless and you can't safely do anything about it call it in.
3. **Encourage people to ride in small groups.** Four or less together. Bikes are bigger than walkers and spreading them out cuts down on the perceived impact by other users. Hiking groups can be encouraged to stay small, fewer than ten.
4. **Dogs off of leashes are not allowed.** Your best approach may be to let folks know that over a dozen dogs go missing on the ridge every year. Several dogs each year end up with a snout full of porcupine needles, not too nice for the dog. Dogs can and have died from poisonous snakebites. Keeping a dog on leash is as much for the dog's safety as others.
5. **Bicycles can easily frighten horses.** Bikes are quick, low to the ground and silent. To a horse that looks like a predator. Horseback riders have the right of way and should always be approached with caution. Bikers should always get the attention of the horse's rider before passing. Twenty yards is a good distance. Dismount and wait for the rider to tell you it is safe to pass. Pass a horse on the downhill side, this makes it easier for the rider to regain control of the animal if it spooks.
6. **Helmets are required.** They save lives. People die each year in bicycle-related accidents and many of them would be alive if they were wearing a helmet. Minnewaska gives tickets for "No Helmet" of about \$75. Mohonk rangers will ask people to leave and walk their bike if they don't have one, and may revoke riding privileges. Mohonk rangers can revoke a persons privilege to enter Preserve property for life!
7. **Litter.** This is a pack out what you pack in area. That means that you are expected to take your trash home and deal with it there. If you see it pick it up and carry it out. If you see someone littering gently suggest that it's not a good idea.
8. Water is practically unavailable. **Do not vouch for the safety or purity of any water source.** It's drink at your own risk. Bring plenty of water with you when you patrol, leave extra in your vehicle.
9. **The radio is an important tool.** Don't be afraid of it; please check in hourly. However don't tie up the airwaves unnecessarily. If you are having difficulty making contact go to higher ground. At Mohonk it is possible to relay messages through the Mohonk Mountain House if necessary (See Radio Procedures).
10. **We do not collect any fees. We have no enforcement powers.** You are not the police. If someone won't listen to you they won't listen. Let it go! We do the best we can. If someone's actions are particularly abusive or dangerous to others, report it on the radio (perhaps discretely around the next bend in the trail). If they're just annoying let it go. Even with disagreeable people you want all encounters to be as positive as possible. Give folks a reason to think next time, not to be angry with you.

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11. **Enjoy yourself.** Ride with different people, learn, share, smile and wave. You are riding in one of the most drop-dead beautiful places on earth. Take some time to see it. If you are having fun it will show and everything will work better. You represent mountain biking and the management of whichever property you are patrolling. What you are doing is more important than you can imagine. Thank you.

## **How to Deal With Conflict**

1. **Slow down the action.** Many fights and arguments get out of control very fast. Before reacting, take a deep breath; count to 10 to buy time to think. If possible, find a way to excuse yourself from the situation for a moment so that you can collect yourself.
2. **Listen well.** Don't interrupt. Hear the other person out. Making eye contact, nodding, and saying "uh-huh" are ways to show you are listening. It especially helps to paraphrase or state in your own words what you hear the other person saying. This slows down the action and gets the other person to begin to listen to you in a non-confrontational way.
3. **Give the other person the benefit of the doubt.** In a conflict between two people, each person has feelings; each person has a point of view. You may not agree with the other person, but try to understand where s/he is coming from. Ask open-ended questions to get information about how the other person sees things. Try to listen with an open mind. If you see that you have done something wrong, don't hesitate to apologize.
4. **Acknowledge the other person's feelings.** When people believe they've been listened to, they generally become less angry and more open to listening to what the other person has to say. Statements like "I can see you're angry" or "You really feel strongly about this" tend to diffuse the anger and open up communication.
5. **Be strong without being mean.** Express your needs and your point of view forcefully, but without "dissing" or putting the other person down. Use "I-messages" to communicate how you are feeling rather than "You-messages" that put the blame on the other person. Name-calling, blaming, bossing and threatening tends to block communication and escalate conflict.
6. **Try to see a conflict as a problem to be solved, rather than a contest to be won.** Attack the problem, not the other person. Try to get away from fighting over who's right and who's wrong. Ask instead: What do I need? What does the other person feel they need? Is there a way we can both get what we want?
7. **Set your sights on a "win-win" solution.** In a win-win solution, both parties get what they want and come away happy. This requires good listening on both sides and creative thinking. If a win-win solution is not possible, you may have to settle for a compromise, where each person gets something and gives up something. A compromise is a lot better than violence.
8. **If you don't seem to be getting anywhere in solving a conflict, ask for help.** Of course, you'll need agreement from the other person that help is needed and you'll have to agree on who the third party should be. But a third party can be helpful. Try to find someone who is a good listener. Tell the third party their role is to help the people in the conflict talk with each other, not to take sides.
9. **Remember that conflict, handled well, can lead to personal growth and better relationships.** Try to see the conflict as an opportunity. Working through the conflict with a friend can lead to greater closeness. Hearing other points of view can introduce us to new ideas and increase our understanding of other people and ourselves.
10. **The true heroes of today's world are not the Rambos.** They are those who have the courage and intelligence to deal with conflict in creative, nonviolent ways.

Written by Tom Roderick, Executive Director of Educators for Social Responsibility Metro

## Frequently Asked Questions at the Mohonk Preserve

### Visitor Services and Amenities

#### 1. *What can I do at the Preserve?*

Activities include: hiking, biking, technical rock climbing, rock scrambling, bird watching, cross-country skiing, and snow shoeing. Fees are required for accessing the property: Hiking day fee is \$12, biking and climbing day fees are \$17 every day, including weekends. The higher fee for climbers addresses the higher impact of the activity, and the higher costs to the Preserve of the climbing rescue program. There is no fee to visit the Visitors Center and its immediate trails. Memberships are available.

#### 2. *What can I see at the Preserve?*

Preserve trails offer scenic views of the ridge, cliffs, forests, streams, and fields as well as the potential to view wildlife. Refer to the Seasonal Activities board located at the Visitor Center.

#### 3. *What kind of wildlife can I see there?*

Many types of birds can be found here including hawks, wild turkeys, vultures, ravens, peregrine falcons and songbirds. Also, deer, red fox, squirrels, porcupines, chipmunks, frogs, salamanders, black bear (rare sightings), coyotes (more heard than seen), mink, fishers, bobcats (extremely rare), snakes (some poisonous – so take care), and a large variety of insects. The smaller the group you are with in the outdoors, the better your chances are of seeing wildlife.

#### 4. *Recommended Hikes?*

Please refer to the Preserve's hiking map, which lists several popular hiking routes.

#### 5. *Do you have guided hikes?*

Yes, mostly on weekends. There is a schedule of public programs available at the Visitor Center and on our website [www.mohonkpreserve.org/](http://www.mohonkpreserve.org/). Most programs require pre-registration, but if not filled will take last minute sign-ups.

#### 6. *Why do I have to pay to hike, bike, climb, or ski around here? I pay my taxes.*

The Mohonk Preserve is the largest member- and visitor-supported nature preserve in New York. It receives very little federal, state or local government funding; instead it relies heavily on day fees, memberships and contributions which provide just over half of the funds needed to maintain the parking areas, carriage roads, trails, signage, and exhibits available to all visitors, as well as research and education programs.

#### 7. *Can I bring a group?*

Yes, 10 or more constitute a group, with a maximum of 30. Please make a reservation at least 2 weeks prior to arrival for eligible discounts on weekdays only. Groups visiting on weekends are not eligible for reservations or discounts. Refer to the Mohonk Preserve website for more information. Group bicycling is not permitted.

#### 8. *Do you sell food?*

At the Visitor Center, you can purchase trail mixes, a variety of Cliff Bars, and bottled water. If you consume them on the trail, you have to carry the refuse out.

#### 9. *Do you allow hunting?*

Yes, for deer only and for an abbreviated season, *but not with rifles*. Hunters need to purchase special permits from the Preserve. Refer to the website [www.mohonkpreserve.org](http://www.mohonkpreserve.org) for more information.

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**10. Do your parking lots fill up?**

Yes, especially on holiday weekends with good weather and almost always on any fall foliage weekend. We recommend coming on weekdays, during off-peak seasons, or getting an early start to avoid being turned away from parking. The lots at the Visitor Center are the most likely to have space available.

**11. Can I have a picnic at the Preserve?**

We do not have designated picnic areas with tables or trash receptacles. We are a carry-in, carry-out facility which means visitors should take all garbage with them when they leave. Visitors are welcome to bring food on the trail and eat along the way, but *should not bring glass bottles*.

**12. Where can I swim?**

On the Preserve, you can wade at Split Rock at the Coxing Trailhead. Also, there is swimming at Lake Minnewaska and Lake Awosting in Minnewaska State Park Preserve. Swimming at Mohonk Lake is restricted to overnight guests of the Mohonk Mountain House.

**13. Can I go horseback riding? Do you have horses? Where can I park my horse trailer?**

Yes, visitors may ride on most of the carriage roads; please refer to the horse trail map. The Preserve does not provide horses; bring your own. Spring Farm Trailhead is the designated horse trailer parking area at the Preserve. Refer to the website [www.mohonk.preserve.org](http://www.mohonk.preserve.org) for more information.

**14. Where can I camp? Can I backpack?**

There is no camping allowed on the Preserve. There is a campground run by the American Alpine Club near the intersection of Rt 299 and Rt 44/55. Reservations are required. Check here for details:

<http://www.mohonkpreserve.org/camping>

Refer all other campers to commercial campgrounds in the area, such as Yogi Bear's Jellystone Camp in Gardiner. Telephone numbers for local campgrounds can be found at the front desk of the Visitor Center. There are also non-commercial/primitive sites available in the Catskill Mountains, managed by the N.Y. Dept. of Environmental Conservation.

**15. Can I bike? Where can I rent a bike?**

There are three different landowners on the bike map: Mohonk Preserve, Mohonk Mountain House, and Minnewaska State Park Preserve. **Know where you are riding.** Day permits and/or parking fees are required. Day users at the Preserve must purchase a \$17 biking day pass or include biking in their membership fee. A Preserve biking day pass will allow you to bike (not drive) onto all three properties; paying the Minnewaska parking fee **only** gives you access to Minnewaska. Day visitors biking onto Mountain House property must purchase a day permit from the Preserve and sign a waiver and may not park at the Mountain House gatehouse. Preserve day permits are available at the Visitor Center, at a trailhead, or from a ranger in the field. All cyclists must wear helmets. The Preserve does not rent bikes, but rental bikes are available at several bike stores in New Paltz, Rosendale and Gardiner. Go to [www.mohonkpreserve.org](http://www.mohonkpreserve.org) for more information. The Mohonk Mountain House rents bicycles to overnight guests.

**16. Dogs allowed?**

Yes, dogs are allowed but only if on a leash. Dogs are not allowed in the Split Rock wading area or on the Mountain House property.

**17. Are there deer ticks on the Preserve?**

Yes, we recommend that you take normal precautions. Wear light-colored clothing, socks, and long sleeves. Also recommended is performing tick checks and/or a shower after hiking.

**18. What are the weather conditions? (ski conditions in the winter)**

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Weather conditions can be heard on the radio channel 5, found in the daily newspaper or online. Trail conditions are faxed daily from the Mountain House during the ski season and are located at the front desk of the Visitor Center. These reports include groomed trails on the Mohonk Preserve.

### **19. *What is that tower on the ridge for? Who owns it?***

The tower seen on the skyline as you approach the ridge from New Paltz is the Smiley Tower, which is situated atop a hill named Sky Top. It was built in memory of Alfred H. Smiley between 1921 and 1923. Visitors to the Mountain House and hikers from the Preserve can take the stairs in the tower to the top for an impressive view of the surrounding valleys and distant mountains such as the Catskills, Berkshires, Taconics and the Hudson Highlands (6 states can be seen on a clear day). The tower overlooks Mohonk Lake and the Mountain House on the other side. Sky Top was used as a fire observation location for 50 years.

### **20. *What is the bridge (Trapps Bridge) over the highway for? Was it a railroad bridge?***

Trapps Bridge over Routes 44/55 is part of the historic carriage road network that runs through the Preserve. The roads were created from 1870-1929 to provide for carriage excursions and to connect the Mohonk Mountain House with sister hotels at Lake Minnewaska. It was never used as a railroad bridge.

## **Mohonk Preserve, Mohonk Mountain House and Minnewaska Comparison**

### **21. *How does the Preserve differ from the Mohonk Mountain House?***

The Mohonk Preserve is the largest visitor- and member-supported non-profit nature preserve in New York State. It is a living museum, a research site, an outdoor classroom, a haven for wildlife, and a world-class recreational resource. The Preserve is a day-use facility, and money collected from user fees and memberships is used to protect and maintain the Preserve, and to support our programs in education, stewardship, land protection and research.

The Mohonk Mountain House is a separate property and resort, with hiking trails and facilities for overnight guests and day users. The Mountain House hotel and land is a designated National Historic Landmark. The Victorian-style house overlooks Mohonk Lake. The Mountain House maintains about 2,200 acres around the hotel, and adjoining the Preserve's hiking trails and facilities for both overnight guests and day users. Day visitors must pay a user fee and observe Mountain House rules and regulations. Mohonk Preserve hikers may continue along carriage roads and trails onto Mountain House land, *but may not visit the hotel*. Guests at the Mohonk Mountain House are welcome onto Preserve land without paying a fee. Pets are not allowed on Mountain House property and, at times, the Mountain House may be closed to day visitors.

### **22. *Isn't this part of the state park system?***

The Mohonk Preserve is a private landowner on the Ridge. Minnewaska State Park Preserve is our neighbor to the southwest and is funded by New York through the Palisades Interstate Park Commission. We share many of the same geographical features with the park including Millbrook Mountain and Coxing Kill, and our carriage roads and trails interconnect. The Preserve and Minnewaska State Park, together with other organizations, share many common goals and concerns regarding the Ridge and have created the Shawangunk Ridge Biodiversity Partnership for coordinated management and scientific study.

### **23. *How did this place come into existence?***

Beginning in 1869, the Smiley family acquired much of the land on the Ridge to buffer their growing resort and provide quiet and beautiful spaces for their guests. In 1963, the family created a separate trust. The Trust's first land acquisition was in 1966, the 487-acre Trapps parcel, which includes the internationally renowned rock climbing cliffs. In 1978, the Mohonk Trust changed its name to the Mohonk Preserve. Since then, the Preserve has acquired additional land and continues to actively work toward land preservation on the Ridge.

### **24. *What and where is Minnewaska State Park Preserve? Sam's Point Preserve? What are the facilities and charges?***

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**Minnewaska State Park Preserve** is managed by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP), and charges a parking fee per vehicle, but no individual day fees. Hikers or bikers entering from the Preserve must observe the Park's rules, but incur no additional fees. Entering the Preserve from Minnewaska does require a Mohonk Preserve membership or day pass purchase. **By car**, continue up Route 44/55, approximately 5 miles to the main entrance on the left. **By foot**, highlight the Southern section map, either the High Peterskill Trail from Coxing (approx. 3 1/2 miles one way) or Trapps Road from Trapps Bridge, approx. 3 miles. There are 3 other parking/entry areas.

The **Sam's Point Preserve** is managed by The Nature Conservancy and is adjacent to the southwest border of Minnewaska. It is accessed through Cragsmoor off of Route 52, south of Ellenville. Their new visitor center opened in 2005.

### **Directions**

#### **25. How do I get to the Mohonk Preserve? (directions)**

Exit 18 off the NYS Thruway. Turn left (west) onto Route 299, through the village of New Paltz. Continue on Route 299 west 7 miles until it ends at Routes 44/55 in Gardiner. Turn right and continue 1/2 mile to the Mohonk Preserve Visitor Center on the right.

#### **26. What public transportation is close to you?**

There is a Trailways bus station in the village of New Paltz. The Preserve is about 7 miles west of the village. There is no public transportation from the bus station to the Preserve except for private cabs.

#### **27. Where can I stay locally?**

There is a large variety of lodging available in the area. Direct visitors to the rack card display area in the Visitor Center or to the Area Guide page on our website ([www.mohonkpreserve.org/index.php?areaguide](http://www.mohonkpreserve.org/index.php?areaguide)), which includes hotels, B&Bs, restaurants, and other area businesses that support the Preserve. Also refer visitors to the New Paltz Chamber of Commerce.

#### **28. How do I get to the Mohonk Mountain House?**

*A hand-out is available at the front desk for your convenience.*

From the Mohonk Preserve Visitor Center: basically 4 lefts: left out of the parking lot, left onto Route 299, left onto Butterville Road and left onto Mountain Rest Road—continue 2 miles to Gatehouse on left.

If the Mohonk Mountain House is open to day visitors, you will pay a separate entrance and parking fee if you drive in. Your Preserve day pass or membership doe not allow you to drive onto Mohonk Mountain House lands.

#### **29. Can I get to the tower from here (Visitor Center)? How many miles?**

Highlight the Northern section trail map. Undercliff or Overcliff to Rhododendron Bridge--Old Minnewaska Road to Lake Shore Drive. Approximately 4 miles to Sky Top (one way). This can take 3 hours round trip; please be sure you have adequate time.

### **Rock Climbing**

#### **30. Can I climb? Where can I see climbers?**

Rock climbing is a sport that requires special equipment and skills. Those interested in learning how to climb should hire a guide service for professional instruction. Please refer them to EMS Climbing School in Gardiner, (845) 255-3280, or Rock & Snow in New Paltz (845) 255-1311. Visitors can see climbers at the Trapps along Undercliff Road. There are several guide services registered with the Mohonk Preserve. Please check for a list at: <http://www.mohonkpreserve.org/fitness-and-recreation>

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The Mohonk Mountain House offers rock climbing at Sky Top for overnight guests only who are accompanied by an authorized guide from Alpine Endeavors. Only overnight guests with an authorized guide are permitted to climb at Sky Top at this time.

### **31. *I want to rock scramble, where can I do this?***

Access is from the Preserve Trailheads at the Visitor Center, West Trapps, Spring Farm, or by paying the Mountain House day-use fee and parking at the Gatehouse. *Note: The Mohonk Mountain House has its own parking and fees.*

On the Mohonk Preserve you can rock scramble at Bonticou Crag--the starting point for this hike is the Spring Farm Trailhead. There is also rock scrambling at Giant's Workshop off Laurel Ledge carriage road. The best starting point for this hike is either the West Trapps lot or any of the Visitor Center lots. The most popular of the rock scrambles is the Labyrinth Path (a.k.a. lemon squeeze) at the Mountain House. From the Preserve, start at the Visitor Center lots or Spring Farm to access Mountain House property and the Labyrinth Trail. This gets very crowded on peak weekends.

### **32. *How do the rock climbers get the rope up there?***

There are two ways to get the rope set-up for climbing: an experienced climber can climb up the rock with a safety harness and place removable hardware (like camming devices or stoppers) in the rock. Then their rope is clipped through the protection to catch them should they fall. This is called "lead climbing". The other way is for someone to hike the rope up to the top of the cliff on a trail and set up an anchor (usually around a tree or boulder) to attach the rope. The rope is attached to the anchor in the middle, and the rest is dropped to the ground. The climbers then tie into the rope at the base of the cliff and climb from there. This is called "top-roping".

### **33. *What kind of rock are the cliffs made of?***

The Shawangunks are made up of a very hard and resistant quartzite conglomerate, locally referred to as "Shawangunk conglomerate." The rock began as sedimentary deposits at the bottom of a deep ocean 470 million years ago. It was later uplifted and deformed by subsequent asymmetrical uplifts and eventually eroded by glaciers and later millions of years of weather. The sedimentary layers are clearly visible in many areas of the ridge, some showing small pebbles from the once ancient seabed.

### **34. *Why are the cliffs here? What about the pile of rocks at the bottom?***

Because the rock is so hard, pressure from colliding landmasses caused vertical fractures and uplifting. During the ice age, when a series of mile-high glaciers moved over the Ridge, the forward (southern) side of the mountains broke away, a phenomenon common in glaciated areas worldwide. Today the process continues in part because of seasonal freezing and thawing in the fissures of the rock, abetted by the erosion of the underlying layer of softer shale. Blocks that fall away and lie at the base of cliffs are called "talus."