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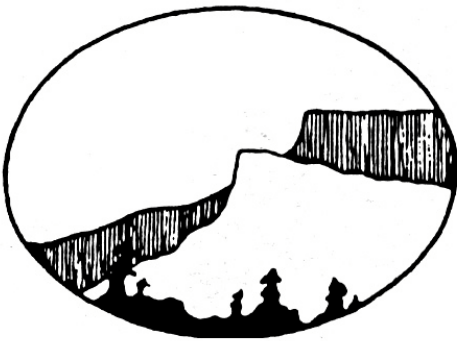
**Gunks Mountain Biking Association**



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## **Bike Patrol Handbook and Training Guide**

2010



**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. We started as the volunteer bike patrol at Mohonk Preserve in the fall of 1993. In the summer of 1995 we instituted patrols at Minnewaska State Park Preserve and became an independent organization under the name of the Gunks Off-Road Patrol (GORP).

GUMBA was formed in the winter of 1998 to broaden our focus and membership. In addition to the patrol program, we are also active in trail maintenance and mountain biking advocacy. Our membership also includes recreational mountain bikers who simply support our goals and wish to perpetuate responsible mountain biking on the Shawangunk Ridge.

**GUMBA - Mission**

Welcome to the Gunks Mountain Biking Association. GUMBA is shaping an ethic among mountain bikers to create better riding. It's an ethic of *cooperation*, *caring* and *responsibility* that will take all mountain bikers to more trails and improved relations with other trail users.

**GUMBA** is a group of mountain bikers with the primary goal of fostering responsible mountain biking in the Shawangunk Mountains. The "Gunks" are a truly awesome place to ride. Riding here is a privilege and being responsible is the best way to preserve that privilege.

**GUMBA** educates mountain bikers in appropriate trail etiquette, the IMBA rules of the trail and land management regulations.

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

**GUMBA** represents the views and activities of mountain bikers and to improve our relations with the non-riding public, land management and other trail user groups.

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

Each member is asked to make a commitment to volunteer. This may be for bike patrol one day a month, May – October... assist on trail work projects... or help out with advocacy events such as mechanical or responsible riding clinics.

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

- National Mountain Bike Patrol level patrol training
- CPR & first aid training
- Mechanical clinics – Learn how to fix flats, broken chains and more
- Fun rides with bikers at your own level and experience new trails
- Special recognition for members donating the most time in areas of patrol, trail work & advocacy
- Women's clinics for women looking to get into mountain biking or those wishing to enhance their skills by riding with women who are excelling in the sport.
- Skills clinics – go riding, get better

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**GUMBA Bike Patrol**

Bike patrollers are volunteer mountain bikers who have completed our training program and are able to inform, assist and educate fellow mountain bikers and other trail users.

The GUMBA Patrol operates as a volunteer group for Minnewaska State Park Preserve and Mohonk Preserve, land managers on the Shawangunk Ridge, who permit mountain bike riding on their lands.

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.**

**How Patrols Work.**

Patrols operate at both Mohonk and Minnewaska and receive general recommendations for an area to patrol. They are meant to be guidelines, not rigid itineraries. **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 (6 times a season). Patrols start at ten in the morning and go until four in the afternoon. We patrol in pairs. If there are an odd number of patrollers a patrol may be solo. The decision to patrol in bad weather or rain is yours.

Patrol dates will be assigned based on information you provide. You will be given a current schedule and a phone list. Schedules will be updated twice during the season.

**If you cannot make a scheduled patrol you are expected to trade dates with someone from the phone list. It is your job to keep calling until you cover your assigned patrol.**

It is easiest to trade about two to three weeks in advance; last minute cancellations should only be caused by unexpected circumstances. There is also a "short (notice) list" of people you should call in this event. If you must cancel at the last minute call the location where you are scheduled to patrol (Minnewaska 845-255-0752, Mohonk 255-0919).

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. You are a role model! We cannot have GUMBA members breaking these rules at any time.**

**Training is required new patrollers with a renewal every three years** (please plan on attending the first hour of each yearly training to get scheduled on your preferred dates and hear about 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. New bike maps are available.

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 6 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 also 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.us](http://www.gumba.us)).
- 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 running the organization

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

While there is no real technical mountain biking here there are plenty of miles (50) of trail. It is one of the most beautiful places in the East to ride. We hope you 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 the bike patrol volunteers.

#### **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 trails; you can do irrevocable harm riding off of the trails, even on the rock slabs. If the carriageways are extremely muddy consider riding another time.

This is a "pack in pack out" park. Take your trash home to dispose of it. If you see some litter stick it in your pack. Mommy nature will thank you.

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.

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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, way down! You may feel like you're in control but the walker won't realize how skillful you are. The greatest number of complaints about bikes has to do with passing walkers inappropriately. Be sure to let them know you are coming in a calm friendly tone.

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.

*Single file, squeeze to the right around all turns, especially at Minnewaska.*

Skidding is unnecessary and causes erosion. If your rear wheel locks up you are out of control and it takes longer to stop. Skidding is a sign of inexperience and 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 have the right of way.** Be courteous when passing. Slow down and call out with a friendly greeting long before passing. Think about what it would feel like if you were walking on the trail with a young child.

"On your left" is not exactly a friendly greeting and can easily be misunderstood. Why not try something sophisticated 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 a real hero and smile.

Passing horses requires even greater care. Horses are not funny looking bikes. They can be unpredictable. That may sound odd but keep in mind that the rider does 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 is also trouble. Either situation can startle a horse. The rider has very little control over a spooked horse. Don't take chances.

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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 asked to. Say nice horsy things, in a calm reassuring voice, as you go by. This lets the horse know you're a person.

**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 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 and at Mohonk please complete a Research Observation Note.

**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).

There is 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 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 or carry appropriate clothing in your pack. A wind shell is almost always a good item to have along.

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 your clothes are wet from a swim in the lake or from perspiration hypothermia can set in at only 50 degrees. Hypothermia can kill you.

In the summer heat exhaustion and sunburn are concerns. Many of the trails here are in the sun most of the day. Be prepared.

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 25,000 acres of semi-wilderness land 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 and fragile communities, some of which have remained relatively

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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.

### **Mohonk Preserve**

Over 6,400 acres are owned by the Mohonk Preserve, 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 25 miles of carriage roads and 40 miles of foot trails for the enjoyment of the public. Over 150,000 annual visitors use the land, most passing through its four main entry points. Annual members are allowed free access to Mohonk; non-members must pay a day use fee. Mohonk has an additional bicycle permit system. Patrollers are granted a complimentary bike permit.

### **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 or by bicycle from Preserve lands. Pets are not permitted on the resort grounds. Bicycles are restricted to certain areas. Please Respect Signage!

### **Minnewaska State Park Preserve**

Adjacent to the Mohonk Preserve to the south is Minnewaska State Park Preserve, a 20,000-acre public park preserve owned by the State of New York and managed by the Palisades Interstate Park Commission. Minnewaska 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 onto Minnewaska from the Mohonk Preserve on foot or bicycle, there is no entry fee. Minnewaska does charge for parking. Minnewaska is under separate jurisdiction from the Mohonk Preserve and has its own trail and carriage road rules and guidelines. It now includes the "Save the Ridge" lands known as the Awosting Reserve.

### **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. \$9 for hiking and biking. \$15 for climbing.
- Lands are open to the public during daylight hours only
- Camping is not permitted.
- Fires are not permitted.
- Motor vehicles are not permitted.

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- 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 is required.
- Collecting of flora, fauna (including firewood), rocks or any other natural material on the Preserve is not permitted without prior approval of the Director of Research.
- Dogs must be on a leash at all times
- Fishing is permitted only in the Coxing Kill below Fountain Brook.
- Firearms are not permitted.
- Hunting is permitted in season, in designated areas, with a NYS hunting license and Mohonk Preserve hunting permit.
- Skiing is permitted.

### **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.
- 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,
- 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 coordinator **after** your patrol is over

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### **Scheduling**

You will be requested to provide your preferred day of the weekend at the beginning of the season and use the web site ([www.gumba.org](http://www.gumba.org)) to reschedule dates.

**If something comes up and you cannot make your commitment we ask that you find a replacement from the web site ahead of time. Every patroller needs to be flawless about this if our patrol is to be reliably run.**

#### **Patrol Hours:**

- Patrols begin at 10 a.m. and end at 3 p.m.; 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.
- 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.**
- A late day patrol may be added for summer months.

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

- Your bike
- An approved biking helmet
- Water
- Lunch or snacks
- Reserve water & food in your vehicle
- A watch
- Cell phone (optional, but handy in areas that get bad radio reception)
- A digital camera
- Sunscreen

#### **What We Provide:**

- Patrol Vest and name plate
- Pack with basic multi-tool, mini-pump and extra tube, duct tape, patch kit.
- A simple first aid kit
- Maps, GUMBA flyers, notebook & pencil
- Radio
- Garbage bag
- Whistle

### **Where to check in**

- Minnewaska - park manager's office, which is at the Peterskill Climbing Area. Park by the maintenance building below the upper parking lot.
- 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 for patrollers until 10:15 a.m.

### **How to check in**

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- Sign in
- 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 for other information or concerns.
  - 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 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.

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, 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 when needed.

Hand out maps and be prepared to explain them

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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 offer reasons behind the rules and the reason 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 accomplish 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 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. There should be GUMBA business cards in the patrol pack.

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 situation 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.
- **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.
- 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 portable #\_\_ (# is on side of radio)
- Release button and wait for response.
- If no response wait a few seconds and try again.

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- 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 "#\_\_ 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. Or use your cell phone. Call Park office or Mohonk Visitors Center, not 911.
- 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 unless you are trained to. 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. Control traffic around the person, ask bystanders for help.
- 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.
- 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 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 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, but this is a delicate area.
4. **Dogs off of leashes are not allowed.** Your best approach may be to let folks know that a half a dozen dogs each year end up with a snoot full of porcupine needles on the ridge, not too nice for the dog.
5. **Bicycles can easily frighten horses.** Bikes are quick, low to the ground and silent. To a horse that is a predator. They are animals, not funny bikes. Horses 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 horseman to regain control of the animal if it spooks.
6. **Helmets are required.** They save lives. 5,000 people die each year in bicycle related accidents. 95% of them would be alive if they were wearing a helmet. Most bicycle accidents are caused by pilot error. Minnewaska occasionally gives tickets for "NO Helmet" about \$60. Mohonk rangers will ask people to leave if they don't have one, and may revoke riding privileges.
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. There is a hose at Minnewaska near the office, with water drawn from the lake. Again, at your own risk. Bring plenty of water with you when you patrol, leave extra in your vehicle. Patrollers may fill up at the office at Minnewaska, but do this sparingly please.
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 mountain house if absolutely 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. 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.
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 helps to paraphrase or state in your own words what you hear the other person saying.
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

### 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 (except at the Visitor Center): Hiking and biking day fees are \$10, and climbing day fees are \$15 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 above the water fountain 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 vipers--so take care), and a large variety of insects. Visitors can purchase a plant and animal checklist in the Nature Shop. 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/index.php?events](http://www.mohonkpreserve.org/index.php?events). 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 website [www.mohonkpreserve.org/index.php?groups](http://www.mohonkpreserve.org/index.php?groups) for more information. Group bicycling is not permitted.

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**8. Do you sell food?**

In the Nature Shop at the Visitor Center, you can purchase trail mixes, a variety of Cliff Bars, and bottled water.

**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/index.php?hunting](http://www.mohonkpreserve.org/index.php?hunting) for more information.

**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/index.php?horseback](http://www.mohonk.preserve.org/index.php?horseback) for more information.

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

There is no camping allowed on the Preserve. Some low-impact tenting is allowed near Trapps Bridge *for rock climbers only*. There are 20 sites available on a first come, first serve basis. Regulations for camping are available at the campsite. Refer all other campers to commercial campgrounds in the area such as Yogi Bear's Jellystone Camp in Gardiner, Creekview in Rosendale, or Hidden Valley in Kingston. All telephone numbers are located 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? Rent bikes?**

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 \$9 biking day pass or

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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. Mountain House guests may rent bikes from the Hotel. 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. Go to [www.mohonkpreserve.org/index.php?bike](http://www.mohonkpreserve.org/index.php?bike) for more information.

**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)**

Weather conditions can be heard on the base 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. See the new winter sports page on our web site at [www.mohonkpreserve.org/index.php?wintersports](http://www.mohonkpreserve.org/index.php?wintersports).

**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

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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?***

**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 Cragmoor off of

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Route 52, south of Ellenville. Their new visitor center opened in 2005. Cycling is not permitted at Sam's Point Preserve.

## **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 or the Gunks.com website ([www.gunks.com](http://www.gunks.com)).

### ***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 Butternut 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 four guide services registered with the Mohonk Preserve:

Eastern Mountain Sports (EMS)

High Angle Adventures

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[www.emsclimb.com](http://www.emsclimb.com)  
or (800) 310-4504

Mountain Skills  
[www.climbingschoolusa.com](http://www.climbingschoolusa.com)  
or (845) 781-8950

[www.highangle.com](http://www.highangle.com)  
or (800) 777-2546

Alpine Endeavors  
[www.alpineendeavors.com](http://www.alpineendeavors.com)  
or (800) 658-3094

The Mohonk Mountain House Now 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 Grit." The rock began as sand pebbles and cobbles deposited at the base of an eroding mountain range around 435 million years ago. It is therefore sedimentary, but also has been slightly metamorphosed by heat, giving it its remarkable hardness. In most of the rock one can see the water-smoothed pebbles of clear or smoky quartz embedded like raisins in a pudding.

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

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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."