

SCENIC HUDSON PARK QUEST

FISHKILL RIDGE, FISHKILL

QUESTING:

Use the information and map to learn about the history and ecology at Scenic Hudson's Fishkill Ridge. Your Quest will lead you to several boxes. Inside each is a special stamp to mark this booklet. Don't forget to put the boxes back where you found them so other people can discover them too. The last box also contains more information about things you probably came across during your Quest and a register for you to sign. The adventure takes about 2 hours. Have fun!

DIRECTIONS:

From Rte 84: Rte 52 west 0.2 mile, left on Old Glenham Rd. 0.8 mile, left on Maple St. (at post office) 0.2 mile, left on Old Town Rd., third right on Sunnyside Rd., follow to end.

OPERATING HOURS:

Open year-round from dawn to dusk.



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SCENIC HUDSON **PARKQUEST**

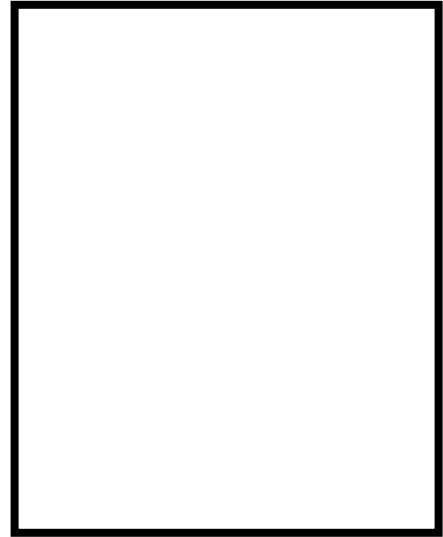
From the parking lot, walk to the Scenic Hudson kiosk and read the informative panels. Then look for the Red Trail; you'll be following it the entire way. In a couple of minutes, you'll reach an intersection with another kiosk; bear right into the dense forest. When the trail begins to get steep, keep an eye out for a tree "hugging" a rock. This is where you'll find the first box. Take out the stamp, mark your Quest booklet, then put the box back where you found it. Your adventure's just beginning!



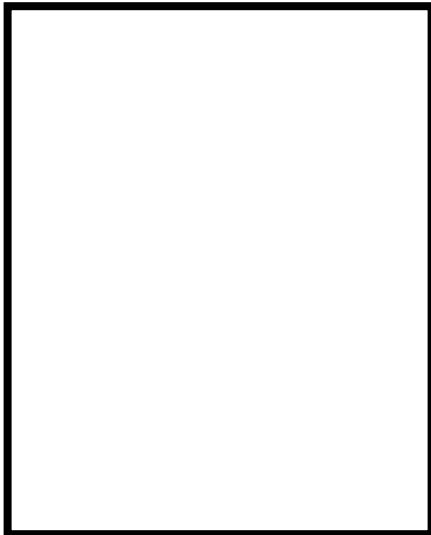
Lichen

Lichen is the result of what's called a symbiotic – or mutually beneficial – relationship between a fungus and algae. It commonly grows on tree trunks or rocks. Over time, lichen loosens the rock, creating soil in which mosses and ferns can grow. This is the beginning of what's known as "plant succession" – the gradual replacement of one type of vegetation by another. Here, the mosses and ferns will give way to annual herbs, then perennial herbs, shrubs and finally trees.

PLACE QUEST STAMP HERE



PLACE QUEST STAMP HERE



Continue up the hill. You'll pass a huge rock on your right and step over a blown-down tree with a red blaze on it. After two more blazes, look for the "three sisters" tree. The second box is inside it. Once again, remove the stamp, mark the correct box in your Quest booklet and place the box back where you found it.

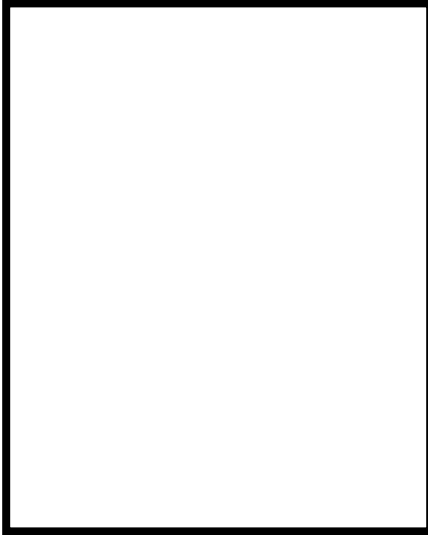


"Three sisters" tree

The forest naturally recycles its nutrients through decomposition. At the "three sisters" tree – so named because it has split into three distinct parts – you can actually see this process of decay taking place. Small insects, fungi and microscopic bacteria are breaking down the rotting tree, turning it back into soil that will fertilize the forest floor and help new plants grow.

SCENIC HUDSON PARKQUEST

PLACE QUEST STAMP HERE



When you reach an intersection, continue straight ahead, following the Red Trail as it heads downhill and to the right. Before the trail turns to the left, you'll pass beneath an "umbrella" of striped maples. Search this area for the third Quest box.



Forest

Within forests, the tallest trees make up what we call the "canopy." The "understory" growing beneath the canopy is comprised of smaller trees and shrubs that are more tolerant of shade. Ferns, grasses, mosses and wildflowers grow on the forest floor. You are standing in the midst of a northern hardwood forest. Native striped maples form the understory. The easiest way to identify these trees is by their distinctive white-and-green-striped bark.

PLACE QUEST STAMP HERE



Keep on the Red Trail, walking along a ridge and crossing over a streambed. After about 20 minutes, you'll come to a rest stop with a nice view. Enjoy the scenery and the break – you have about 10 minutes of uphill hiking to go. When the trail bends to the left, you'll be standing in front of a steep but smooth rock outcropping. Scramble up to the next trail marker at the top of the rocks. Once you've found the fourth and final box, sit and enjoy a magnificent Hudson Valley vista.

Glaciers

For 2 million years, a series of glaciers – ice sheets up to a mile thick – moved across our region, reaching as far south as where Long Island is now. They carved out the Hudson River Valley and scoured the tops of mountains and ridgelines (including Fishkill Ridge), exposing bedrock surfaces and creating distinctive scratch marks that are still visible. The last glaciers in our area melted about 12,000 years ago, leaving behind the landscape we see today – minus the human impacts, of course!



Now your booklet is filled with stamps – your Quest has been a success! Replace the Quest box where you found it and head back the way you came.

Why we protected this place...

Many species rely on multiple habitats, which is why it's critical to conserve large, unbroken spaces that allow these creatures to move about freely. On Fishkill Ridge Scenic Hudson has preserved nearly 2,000 acres of one of the Hudson Valley's most ecologically diverse landscapes, ensuring it will always be a prime destination for exploring nature.



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Who's Scenic Hudson?

We're a group of dedicated people who care about the area we live in – the Hudson River Valley. Forty-five years ago, our founders fought to protect a mountain from being made into a power plant. Since then, we've continued to work together with local communities to protect special places. We've created or enhanced 40 parks and preserves for you to enjoy.

For more information about our parks, visit www.scenichudson.org/parks.

Become part of our online community at:

www.scenichudson.org

ParkQuest created by Susan Hereth and Anthony Coneski.

Let us know what you think of this Quest. E-mail your comments to shereth@scenichudson.org.