



Spring 2025 Volume 85

of the Mianus River Gorge, Inc.

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MRG office is expanding!

The Mianus River Gorge office is located across the road from the entrance to the 961-acre Mianus River Gorge Preserve here in Bedford. In 1979, MRG built a residence for the then caretaker Jim Gibb. At that time Mr. Gibb was the only employee



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Gorge attain its conservation, scientific,
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mianus.org
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with a volunteer Board of Trustees. After the hire of the first Executive Director in 1987, an addition to the house was added as an office for two full-time and one part-time staff.

Since that beginning, MRG has added extensive education and research programs for students, public programs for the community, and informed land management activities to improve the trails and the ecological health of the old-growth forest. With the addition of new staff over the years, that same one-room office built in 1979 houses five full-time and three part-time staff along with seasonal interns and high school and graduate students.

To put it simply – we have simply run out of space.

MRG is gearing up to undertake the construction of a new Research and Education wing added to our existing building to provide desperately needed office, classroom, storage and meeting spaces, absent from the present building. Imagine a space large enough to work effectively with students, and host community talks, workshops, presentations, and meetings.

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The mission of Mianus River Gorge, an independent, not-for-profit organization, is to preserve, protect and promote appreciation of the natural heritage of the Mianus River Watershed through land acquisition and conservation, scientific research, and public education throughout the region.



Mianus River Gorge is pleased to introduce Bedford Fields Notes, a new educational series on the natural world in Bedford, New York. The three 2025 programs feature world-class experts, including iNaturalist's Scott Loarie, Waterkeeper Alliance's Mark Yaggi, and renowned landscape architect Kate Orff. Moderated by CBS Sunday Morning's David Pogue, each will be a fascinating learning experience at Historical Hall in Bedford Village (6–8pm).

The series is presented by Mianus River Gorge, in partnership with the Bedford Historical Society, Bedford Garden Club, and Rusticus Garden Club.

The Wildlife program will have taken place on April 24, prior to printing this news bulletin, but tickets are available for Water (May 21) and Land (June 11). Please visit: BedfordFieldNotes.org for more info. We hope to see you there!

Trail Renovation across Safford Cascade

In ongoing efforts to improve trail conditions for an estimated 12,000 annual visitors to the Preserve, Mianus River Gorge engaged Tahawas Trails again. The crew came back early this spring to create a stable path over Safford Cascade along the Red Trail. They placed large stepping stones in the stream that made the crossing safer and improved the natural flow of the stream. Last spring Tahawas Trails renovated the Havemeyer Falls Trail and did a spectacular job to improve safety and create a beautiful trail corridor. They also improved the Green Trail in 2020, including the stream crossing over another portion of Safford Cascade, and were a major partner in completing the Cliff Trail in 2019. We hope you enjoy safely crossing this stream with amazing stepping stones that were beautifully placed by our friends at Tahawas Trails.

Tahawas Trails is a partnership of thirteen dedicated individuals who supervise crews of two to 14 seasonal staff. The partners have over 70 years of combined professional trail-building and planning experience. They are committed, safety-focused professional craftspeople, innovators, artists, educators, and passionate land stewards. They offer a full range of trail-related services, have been a member of the Professional Trail Builders Association since 2007, and were twice awarded the Trail Project of the Year for the Bear Mountain Trails Project in 2010 and Whirlpool Steps in Niagara Falls in 2013.



▲ Before...

◀ and after

Expansion, continued from p. 1

The building will house new classroom space that can be used for on-site public events or to work with groups of students in our award-winning research and education programs. A new, well-equipped lab will allow students and staff to conduct applied ecological research that is shared with other land trusts, preserves, and

institutions throughout the region.

As part of the project, we will renovate the existing office space, which has not been updated since 1979, and construct new office space for new and future staff.

MRG's board of trustees has enthusiastically approved the building project. The architect is drafting final plans. MRG is obtaining final cost

estimates and is working through the permitting process with the Town of North Castle. Start of construction is anticipated soon.

We are currently raising funds to realize the building. We hope you will help us further advance MRG's environmental impact by providing the space for quality programs and initiatives that benefit each of us.

MRG's New Stewardship Barn

2025 is a year of change here at the Gorge. In addition to a new trail loop and the planned extension to the office building, MRG staff has been working hard on the construction of a new barn. The much-needed post-and-beam barn is located on Gorge property on E. Middle Patent Rd. We will be able to centralize our stewardship equipment and use the workspace to tackle larger projects. As an added bonus, it also gives us the space to store the new UTV, which was purchased thanks to generous donors from the community. Director of Land Management Budd Veverka is in charge of the construction, aided by staff, interns, and volunteers. We will be putting the finishing touches on the barn this summer.



New Interpretive Loop Trail



The Mianus River Gorge announces the opening of a new trail loop this June! This short, 0.2 mile loop starts to the left of the map shelter, and connects to the green trail along the river. The new loop trail is paved with gravel and is free of steps and steep inclines, making it perfect for an easy escape into the woods without being far from the parking lot. We have added several benches where you can relax and enjoy the scenery. A few steps from the end of the trail is a new wildlife viewing area from which to watch birds at the bird feeders and read about other wildlife you might encounter on your walk.

This trail provides an opportunity to learn about the forests and what we do here at the Gorge to protect vital habitat. As you continue down the trail, you will come across numbered posts, highlighting different aspects of our preserve. Take a handout at the map shelter so you can read along!

Building Strong Relationships in the Community

Part of MRG's mission is to share our conservation ethic and expertise with the community.

Executive Director Rod Christie presented "Protecting the Mianus River Watershed Through Conservation, Research, and Education," sponsored by the Old Greenwich Garden Club and Perrot Memorial Library. Rod led several walks for The Nature Conservancy staff from their Washington, DC, headquarters. A visit to Mianus River Gorge, the first land project of The Nature Conservancy in 1964, is an important touchstone for their staff. Currently, he is providing consulting services to several large landowners

related to natural resource inventory and site planning.

Director of Research & Education Chris Nagy, Ph.D., co-authored three scientific articles, co-taught a graduate-level ornithology class at Columbia University, talked about coyotes on several New York-area media outlets, and completed the wildlife corridor project for the Town of Bedford.

Director of Land Management Budd Veverka has been busy talking about living with bears at events in Croton-on-Hudson, Cold Spring, and Somers. He gave presentations at the New York Chapter of The Wildlife Society, Northeast Natural History Conference, and the Northeast Fish and Wildlife Conference.

MRG Welcomes Christodora Students

Nineteen students from New York spent a day at Mianus River Gorge helping with a trail project and hearing from staff about careers in the natural sciences. Here's a note from Christodora's City Programs Manager:

"I would like to extend a big thank you from all of us at Christodora! From a warm reception to a very personal and passionate Q&A to a well put together service project, we can all agree the day was great! Our students used new tools they had no prior experience with and took on tasks they've never been able to before. Most important, they learned something new and enjoyed themselves all the while."

Mianus River Gorge is pleased to share its knowledge and expertise with students from across Westchester and Fairfield Counties and New York City through an array of education programs and activities.



Meet Volunteer Elena Kubicek

Elena first came to MRG in September as a voluntary intern during a year off from Connecticut College and continues to volunteer regularly. She has proven to be a dedicated and vital member of our team, working on whatever has been asked of her, from data entry to construction. Some of her favorite projects were helping a WTP student with her plant phenology work using Nature's Note-

book and learning how to construct a post-and-beam barn.

After Elena finishes school, she would like to do educational program work at a land trust or nature center. Elena also volunteers at Hilltop Hanover Farm and Environmental Center and The Rewilding School. Thank you, Elena, for all your hard work!



Elena Kubicek, right, with WTP student Adriana DiGiacomo

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Contact Rod Christie, Executive Director, for land or conservation easement donations at rchristie@mianus.org

Contact Leslie Zachary, Director of Development, for any other donation questions at leslie@mianus.org