In 2005 ECC received a Grant from the Hudson River Valley Greenway to fund the building of three pedestrian footbridges over small streams that intersect trails at Esopus Bend. In 2006, following a lengthy period of planning and site preparation, volunteers, under the dedicated leadership of project managers, Chris Florsch and Steve Chorvas, set to work. By the fall of 2007, they had successfully constructed three carefully engineered bridges spanning streams that are subject to dramatic elevation of water levels during periods of flooding and heavy rain.

By using all volunteer labor and services, and some donated materials and equipment, in the end the Stewardship Committee had a surplus in grant funds. Consistent with the intent of the grant, they requested and received a time extension and project re-scoping to include construction of 260 feet of boardwalks over wet and environmentally sensitive areas in Esopus Bend. Thanks to Matt Galchus’s Eagle Scout project, five more trail sites were protected with a series of boardwalks spanning minor streams on the eastern third of the Preserve.

Hudson River Valley Greenway in its mission to increase the public’s access to natural environments throughout the Hudson River Valley. We thank Mark Castiglione, Greenway Acting Executive Director, and his staff who have been most helpful and supportive to ECC project managers throughout this entire project. Chris Florsch, commenting on this 5 year endeavor, said, I only wish to thank the dozens of ECC volunteers who gave up week-ends and vacation days to work on this project in its various stages, and a special thanks to Steve Chorvas who gave a lot of his time and expertise and also administered the Grant.
Decks and Docks on the Esopus is definitely a most unusual and delightful event! It’s a safari trip by canoe, kayak or rowboat on the Esopus Creek in Saugerties with stops at some beautiful secluded decks, docks, lawns and patios of creek residents.

Last June, on a perfect sunny day the tour opened a whole new world for me. At each stop welcoming and hospitable homeowners encouraged us to relax and enjoy their beautiful views and delicious refreshments. If you aren’t fortunate enough to have your own waterfront deck it’s just great to come spend the afternoon relaxing on these inviting spots. (All homes may also be reached by car or bike.) And, for me, a true highlight of this event was listening to Geoff Harden and Friends’ bluegrass band. Music permeated the air that day.

The tour also includes a visit to Esopus Bend Nature Preserve, Saugerties’ own unique 161 acre preserve that supports an amazing variety of birds, butterflies and wildlife thriving in habitats as diverse as meadows, wetlands and upland Hemlock groves. There is much to explore along the well-marked trails and viewing points.

This year the third annual Decks and Docks Tour, a benefit event for Esopus Creek Conservancy, will be held on Sunday, June 6th from 11 AM to 4 PM. (Rain date: June 13th). Tickets are limited, so buy early! They are $20 for adults and $10 for children ($50 for a family group) and can purchased in advance by writing Esopus Creek Conservancy, at PO Box 589, Saugerties, NY 12477. For more information please call 845-247-0664 or go to www.esopuscreekconservancy.org

Decks and Docks 2010
— A Moveable Feast for the Senses!
by Harriet Tomasko

Dock of the Bay?
photo by Logan Callahan

Life Is Sweet on the Creek
photo by Logan Callahan

Up the Lazy River
photo by Logan Callahan

This Must Be the Place
photo by Logan Callahan

| Deck of the Bay? | Life Is Sweet on the Creek | Up the Lazy River | This Must Be the Place |
As you enter the Esopus Bend Nature Preserve these days you are greeted with a blanket of snow. Like a magic carpet that brings a hidden manuscript into view, the snow reveals a story written on the forest floor. The letters and words that tell the story are animal tracks that record the daily comings and goings of those that call the Preserve their home. Largely invisible during the other seasons, during the winter these tracks offer a fascinating insight into the lives of these forest beings.

When you take the time to follow and study the tracks you begin to realize that the things that drive the forest inhabitants are not so much different from the things that drive us. When we are hungry we go to the kitchen to find food; they also go to areas where food is available. When it is time to retire we go to the security of our bedrooms and lie down; when they retire they go to a place where they feel safe and lie down. Birth, death, companionship, solitude, warmth, coolness, shelter, protection, the same basics needs exist for us all.

Surprisingly, if you look deeper into the tracks, and break through the barriers of logic and science, you begin to get the notion that the same life force that runs through you, also runs through the track makers. The memory of this kinship has been lying deep in your consciousness like a smoldering ember. You begin to understand that when the white tailed deer browses a striped maple bud, that it is your lips that touch the branch, and when a red fox pounces on a white footed mouse, you hold the mouse in your jaws, and it is you also held in the jaws. You begin to recall a timeless bond.

So, as you enter the Esopus Bend Nature Preserve these days, don’t be surprised if you get the feeling that you are returning from a long trip down the evolutionary highway, to a familiar place, a place that harkens back to the childhood of your existence.
Moira Adamowicz has lived on the Creek for many years and often walked the former Schroeder Farm property with her son long before it became EBNP. One of ECC’s earliest volunteers, Moira always affably agreed to stuff and seal 1000 envelopes delivered to her home. More recently she has joined our mailing parties and has also made a big contribution of time and talent to the Decks and Docks fund-raising events. Describing her helping-out experiences with ECC, Moira said: “I like the mailing parties because you get acquainted with others who are involved and get caught up on what’s going on. But I also don’t mind just sitting quietly at home and stuffing envelopes while I’m watching TV or listening to music. And it’s great to get a call. Then I know ECC really needs some help. I do believe it’s important to support the people who have worked so hard to make Esopus Bend a great place. No matter how much or how little, it’s the proverbial drop in the bucket; it all adds up. Volunteers are essential.”

As an all-volunteer land trust ECC offers the community opportunities to sign up for a variety of jobs that are well suited to everyone. You can be in charge of a project or just spend a few hours sharing a task with other volunteers. Just contact Rita, eccrita@gmail.com or 236-6875 and let’s get started. As Moira has described so well, we really do need your help and it all adds up.

Moira Adamowicz on Volunteering
“No matter how much or how little”.

Spring/Summer Field Trips
Mar 06 1:30 PM Animal Tracking
Mar 14 9:00 AM Winter Tree ID Walk
Mar 21 8:00 AM Signs of Spring Walk
Apr 03 1:00 PM Vernal Pools Walk
May 01 7:30 AM May Wildlife Walk
May 08 9:30 AM Esopus Bend Paddle
June 19 8:00 AM Breeding Birds and Butterflies
June 26 All Day Eastern Catskills NABA Butterfly Count
July 17 11:00 AM Butterfly Walk
July 24 10:00 AM Dragonfly Walk
Aug 07 10:00 AM Butterfly Walk and Slide Show
Aug 22 1:30 PM Animal Tracking
Sep 05 9:30 AM Esopus Bend Paddle
Sep 18 9:00 AM Esopus Bend Ramble
Sep 25 9:00 AM Mushrooms
Oct 03 9:00 AM Autumn Tree Walk

ECC is grateful for the support of Kiwanis Club of Saugerties, sponsor of July 4th Celebration and Annual Garlic Festival September 25 and 26.

Esopus Creek Conservancy
PO Box 589
Saugerties, NY 12477
845-247-0664

Fostering Environmental Education for the Next Generation.

Please consider making a secure online donation at www.esopuscreekconservancy.org