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GENERAL NEWS: NEW TRAILHEAD TO STORM KING OPENS

Hikers who want to explore Storm King Mountain now have a new entrance directly off Bayview Avenue/Route 218 in Cornwall-on-Hudson. On Friday morning, the Esty and Hellie Stowell Trailhead was officially unveiled in a ceremony with representatives of Scenic Hudson and Camp Olmsted, which had collaborated to create the new entryway.

The new trailhead is behind the old Donahue farm, which is now owned by Camp Olmsted. Camp Olmsted, itself part of the United Methodist Church's Five Points Ministry, agreed to work with Scenic Hudson to create access to Storm King Mountain through the fields behind the farmhouse.

Steve Rosenberg, senior vice president of Scenic Hudson, welcomed a small group of visitors that included Cornwall-on-Hudson mayor Joseph Gross, trustees Rick Gioia and Barbara Gosda, and Gary Haugland, of the New York/New Jersey Trails Conference, who has worked to create the trail from Donahue Memorial Park up to the mountain.

Rosenberg spoke of the history of Storm King Mountain and how a group of local citizens banded together to stop Con Edison from building a hydroelectric plant on what he called "the most iconic feature along the Hudson River."

Esty and Hellie Stowell, he said, were among the first to oppose the Con Ed project and Esty was key to making Storm King Mountain part of the Palisades Interstate Park. That 17-year legal battle led to the formation of Scenic Hudson, which honored the Stowells with the new trailhead.

The story of Storm King Mountain and Con Edison's project are described in an information kiosk at the trailhead, which includes a parking area for twenty vehicles. Rosenberg said that Scenic Hudson's goal was for people to experience the natural beauty of the area and also to find in that experience the motivation to take action to benefit their community, as the Stowells and others did.

Before the group set off across the meadow trail to hike to the first lookout, Reverend Bill Shillady, representing the Five Points Mission, praised the natural beauty of the area and prayed that "we continue to be good stewards of this creation that God has given us."

The only person who appeared to be unhappy with the new trailhead is Pat Donahue, who lives with her sister in the farmhouse one passes driving up to the parking lot. She says that visitors to the new trailhead often park in her yard and leave empty cans strewn around. Twenty years ago her mother sold the family farm to Camp Olmsted and she remembers another era, when farm animals had the run of the place and an occasional hiker was always offered a helping hand.

With the new trailhead entrance, more people will likely enjoy the pastoral landscapes at the foot of Storm King Mountain as well as the views from its peak. And, as they pass the Donahue farm to the trailhead, perhaps they will be grateful that this view is now being shared.



Rev. Bill Shillady, Gary Haugland, Steve Rosenberg and Mayor Joe Gross cut the ribbon at the new trailhead.



The informational kiosks tell the story of Storm King Mountain from the arrival of the Dutch through today.



This sign on Bayview Avenue marks the entrance to the Esty and Hellie Stowell Trailhead.

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Today, Nov. 7, 2015, my friend and I parked at the new trailhead. This was by accident actually, as we were looking to start at the entrance on 9W.

We were ecstatic to find this entrance as parking was clearly marked, spacious, and well kept.

posted by stacy ferraro on 11/07/15 at 5:35 PM

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