

# SCENIC HUDSON PARK QUEST

SHAUPENEAK RIDGE, ESOPUS

## QUESTING:

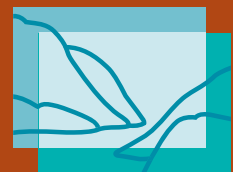
Use the information and silhouettes to learn about the habitats and animals at Scenic Hudson's Shaupeneak Ridge. After you have finished exploring the park, look for the Quest box where you'll find a special stamp inside to mark this booklet. Don't forget to put the box back where you found it so other people can discover it too. The adventure takes about an hour. Have fun!

## DIRECTIONS:

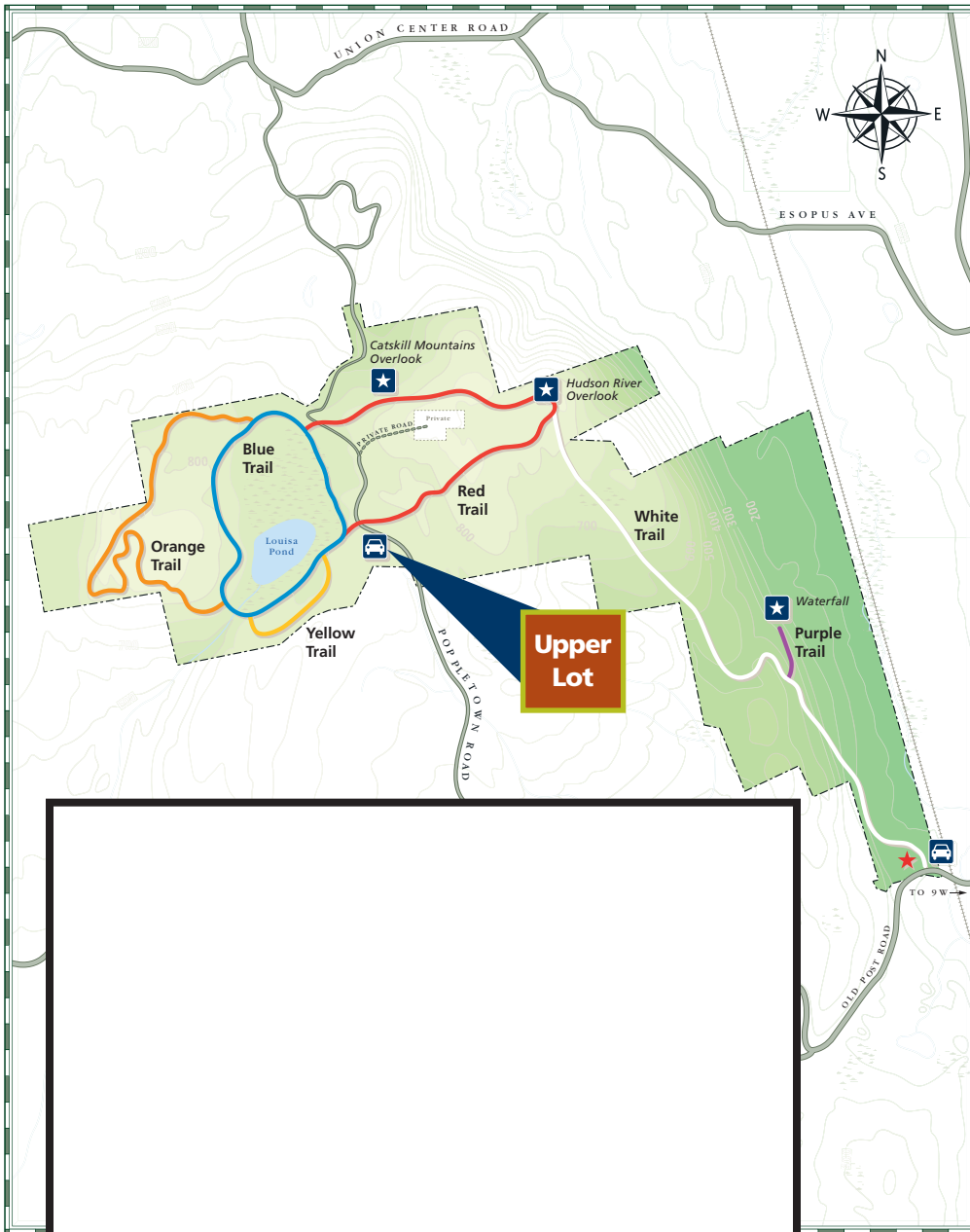
Upper Lot: From Rte. 9W take Old Post Rd. 2 miles west, right on Poppletown Rd. Parking on left.

## OPERATING HOURS:

Open year-round from dawn to dusk.



**SCENIC  
HUDSON**



**PLACE QUEST STAMP HERE**

## 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](http://www.scenichudson.org/parks).

## Where to find the Quest box:

Follow the Yellow Trail. At its junction with the Blue Trail, a box hidden within the circle of benches contains a special Quest stamp. Mark your guide, return the stamp to the box and replace it, for others to discover.

### Why we protected this place...

Ridge tops are particularly prone to development because of the views they offer homeowners. This is one reason Scenic Hudson protected the 570 acres on Shaupeneak Ridge—so all can enjoy its magnificent vistas. Another is that with surrounding forests being lost to subdivisions, wildlife is even more dependent on the habitats provided at places like Shaupeneak Ridge.

Become part of our online community at:

[www.scenichudson.org](http://www.scenichudson.org)

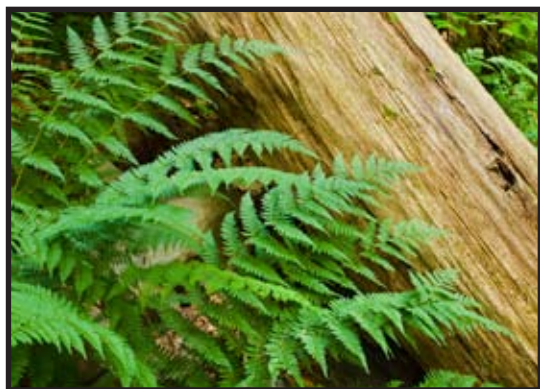
Let us know what you think of this Quest.

E-mail your comments to [shereth@scenichudson.org](mailto:shereth@scenichudson.org).

ParkQuest created by Kate Brill.

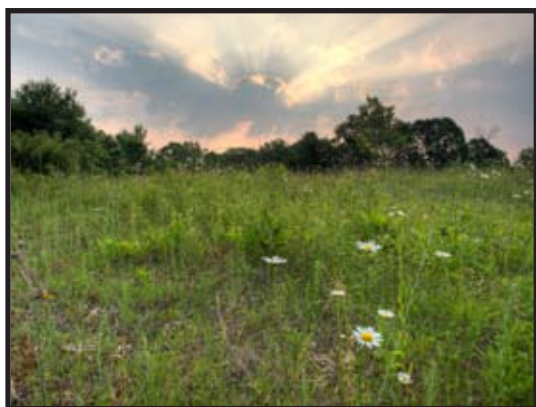
One of the reasons Shaupeneak Ridge is so special is its great diversity of habitats. This not only makes hiking here more interesting, but is important environmentally. Lands that support great biodiversity are more resilient to potential disturbances such as fires or damaging storms.

During your walk, you'll be exploring the plant and animal communities in each of Shaupeneak Ridge's habitats—forest, field and pond/marsh.



### **Forest** ●

The forest at Shaupeneak Ridge is temperate deciduous, which means it changes with each season. Forests are composed of three layers. The forest floor is the lowest layer. It consists of soil, leaf litter, mosses and other small plants. The understory is made up of trees and shrubs that grow under the canopy, the forest's uppermost layer, where the treetops merge. See if you can identify each layer.



### **Field** ●

Fields are dominated by grasses and low shrubs. Many fields need to have disturbances—such as fires—to stop them from turning into forests. Many birds, small mammals and insects rely on fields for nesting and feeding. The tall grasses also provide a good getaway for animals trying to avoid sharp-eyed predators.



### **Pond/Marsh** ●

Stand at the edge of Louisa Pond and look for flying insects; they're hunting for smaller insects to eat. Also keep an eye out for birds fishing along the shore, or swooping down for a catch. Some animals, such as beaver, live in the pond. Others come to it to cool off or take a drink.

A marsh is a type of wetland that has too much water for large plants to grow. It's dominated by grasses and other wetland plants such as cattails. Animals use marshes for food, shelter and nesting.

## SCENIC HUDSON PARKQUEST



### Dragonfly and Damselfly ● ●

Old as the dinosaurs, dragonflies and damselflies have similar life cycles. Females lay eggs in or near water. The creatures spend most of their time underwater as nymphs. When they emerge, they fly and hunt for small insects, making good use of their swift speed (they can fly up to 30 mph!) and large jaws.



### Great Blue Heron ●

These majestic birds can be spotted near bodies of water. They wade along a pond's edge, looking into the water for fish they can spear with their long, sharp beaks. They usually nest in trees near water.



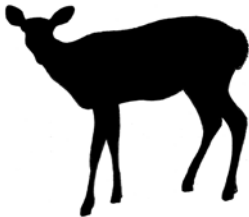
### Goldenrod ●

Considered a weed by some, this flowering plant adds color to fields. Its nectar provides food for many insects, some of which lay their eggs on the growing plants. This creates a gall—a ball-shaped growth surrounding the larvae that protects it from the elements and animals.



### Chipmunk ● ●

Chipmunks may seem like cute animals that scurry around for our enjoyment, but they play a big environmental role. Like squirrels they are hoarders, stockpiling nuts for winter nourishment. This provides an important way of dispersing seeds to different areas of the forest. They also eat and disperse fungi including mycorrhizae, which aid plants in obtaining nutrients from the soil.



### White-Tailed Deer ● ●

Why is there so little understory in this forest? Where are all the young trees? An overpopulation of deer eats all the new growth. Since so many of the deer's natural predators no longer live in the area, hunting is an important way of controlling their numbers.



### Beaver ●

Beavers are notorious for altering their habitat. Louisa Pond was shallower before beavers built a dam, causing the pond's water level to rise and its size to increase. Wetlands created by beavers provide vital habitat for many other animals and help to cleanse the water by filtering out impurities.



### Oak Tree ●

Oaks have what are called "mast years," when they produce a larger amount of acorns than usual. Animals that feed on the nuts are not accustomed to so much food, which gives oaks a better shot at having new growth. However, oaks at Shaupeneak Ridge are severely threatened by the huge deer population. They eat the oaks' young growth, inhibiting the trees from growing to full size.



### Phragmites ●

This is a type of reed grass that's invasive in the Hudson Valley. While it has been used for wetland stabilization projects, it threatens natural ecosystems by competing with and pushing out native species like cattails.



### Red-Winged Blackbird ● ●

A cattail marsh is the quintessential habitat for these birds. They nest in cattail stands and use the plants' leaves for their nests. Blackbirds feast on insects and seeds they find in fields and marshes.