



FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT HYDE PARK FOUNDATION'S

THE NEW DEAL



Welcome to the first issue of *The New Deal*, the official newsletter of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Hyde Park Foundation. 'The New Deal' was a series of programs, public work projects, financial reforms, and regulations enacted by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in the United States between 1933 and 1939.

Today, we are using it as the name of our newsletter to inform you of what the Franklin D. Roosevelt Hyde Park Foundation, and our partners, the National Park Service, are working on together to further the preservation and enhancement of the National Historic Sites at Hyde Park, New York. With donations from people like you, we are able to continue this important work.

Thank you for your support. We wish you a safe and happy holiday season!

Kevin Burke
Chair, FDR Hyde Park Foundation

IN THIS ISSUE:

MESSAGE FROM THE
SUPERINTENDENT

FDR'S HOME GETS MAJOR
UPGRADES

ROOSEVELT HOME GARDEN 2021

HISTORIC TREE PRESERVATION
PROGRAM UNDERWAY

VASSAR COMMUNITY FELLOW, MEG
RITZAU, ADDS TO THE ROOSEVELT
HOME GARDEN OFFERINGS

GET INVOLVED –
HOW YOU CAN HELP



MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT



Amy Bracewell
Superintendent
Roosevelt • Vanderbilt • Van Buren
National Historic Sites

It has been a joy to get to know all of our employees, partners, and stakeholders during my first year in the park. There is a richness in history and landscapes that provide unending possibilities for programming, recreational experiences, personal reflection, and opportunities to inspire action, and I look forward to digging into these opportunities and raising awareness of these special places.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the parks have been as busy as ever. I am incredibly proud of the work our teams have been doing this last year to continue to preserve and interpret the sites and serve the communities around us. A few of these remarkable projects include:

Springwood Restoration - The park embarked on a large-scale restoration project that included replacing the HVAC system, new intrusion and fire alarms, fresh paint inside, and restored balustrades on the north porch.

Programming - With authorization to re-open our sites in June, the interpretation team jumped into high gear to develop and implement new, safe tour options at Springwood and Vanderbilt Mansion. NPS staff developed self-guided audio tours for visitors to experience in the houses and we worked with [recreation.gov](#) to offer online ticket sales.

Volunteers - This year we fully welcomed back volunteers to our gardens. In addition to the regular care and planting, the Rose Garden and Gravesite saw some improvements made to the fencing and cleaning up of the hemlock hedge. These outside landscapes and gardens continue to provide wonderful opportunities for visitors and community members to enjoy the grounds.

You can read about all these projects and more on the following pages.

In June 2021, we also welcomed back a treasured piano to Eleanor Roosevelt's home at Val-Kill, in Hyde Park, New York. You can read more about this [generous donation here](#).

In addition to our successes enhancing the property and our programming, in 2021 we celebrated the 75th anniversary of the FDR Estate's inclusion in the National Park System. Due to restrictions with public visitations, our celebration was virtual which gives us an opportunity to [share it with you here](#).

One lesson that the pandemic has taught us is to be open to new opportunities and new ways of doing things. Our staff and visitors have been incredibly flexible and open this year to new ways of experiencing the parks. I think this opens up new discussions and possibilities of activities and programs that we can develop for next year and future visitors. How might we all re-fresh and re-invent visitors' connections to these special places? I am looking forward to engaging all of our partner groups in these types of discussions to develop new projects and activities.

Franklin D. Roosevelt



FDR'S HOME GETS MAJOR UPGRADES



Repainting the exterior

Over the past two years, improvements worth over \$3,100,000 have been made to Springwood, the lifelong Home of Franklin D. Roosevelt. The largest project was the replacement of the HVAC system. An inefficient oil-fired system was replaced with high-efficiency gas boilers. This switch will reduce the carbon footprint of the building by over 30%. The non-historic boiler house on the hillside was removed, and the new equipment was placed in a formerly vacant space in the Laundry building. To ensure the house and its contents are protected, new fire detection and security system were installed.



The new HVAC Mechanical Room

Since these major upgrades required the house to be closed to the public anyway, it was the perfect time to complete other necessary work. Park museum staff removed the entire contents of the building – thousands of objects and furnishing – and completed deep cleaning of every room on public display. Meanwhile, damaged plaster was repaired, and all the public spaces were repainted, including faux wood grain on the main hall doorways.



Wall work

The entire exterior was repainted, and a team of skilled craftspeople from the National Park Service Historic Preservation Training Center restored the balustrades on the north section of the roof. Finally, a new accessible path made from porous

paving provides a safe route for park visitors to the Home. Porous paving, as its name suggests, helps reestablish a more natural hydrologic balance and reduces runoff volume by trapping and slowly releasing precipitation into the ground instead of allowing it to flow into storm drains and out to receiving waters as effluent. Since water does not collect, there are no icy patches to worry about when winter comes.

Your Dollars at Work!

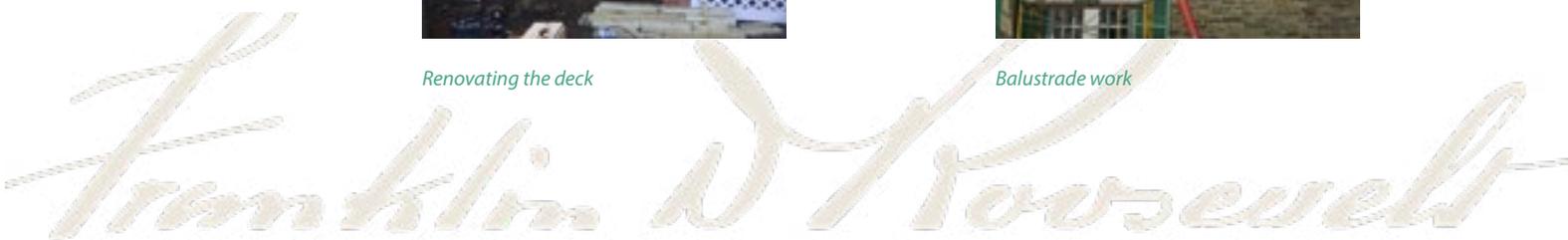
These improvements were in large part funded by park visitors: 75% of the project cost came from fees collected at National Park Service sites across the country.



Renovating the deck



Balustrade work





ROOSEVELT HOME GARDEN 2021

Public Engagement and Partnerships



After a year of limited and mainly remote public outreach, the Landscape and Garden Division of the Roosevelt Vanderbilt NHS was delighted to welcome visitors and groups to the park for in-person tours and activities. Students in the Farm to Table Concentration and the Sustainable Food Systems class from the Culinary Institute of America, members of the Poughkeepsie Public Library book club reading Doug Tallamy’s *Nature’s Best Hope*, and the staff from Wethersfield Gardens in Amenia, NY were among the groups touring the garden. High school students participating in the City of Poughkeepsie’s Nubian Directions Summer Youth Employment program capped off their season with a visit to the garden for education and career exploration.

Vassar College Community Engaged Learning Fellow, Meg Ritzau, developed an [audio tour](#) for the vegetable garden, which has allowed visitors to learn about the garden even when staff is not present. Meg also assembled photos and a script for a new wayside for the garden and updated information for the NPS’s [website](#).

For the past three years, the garden program has participated in meetings of the [Hudson Valley Food System Coalition](#), which focuses on food

equity, community health, and sustainability. This participation has enhanced the awareness of food and its availability to those in the Hudson Valley and to all associated with managing the garden.

With a return to on-site programming this year, the first park-wide Roosevelt Home Garden BLT Lunch was hosted! A variety of heirloom tomatoes, lettuce, and a perfectly ripe Tom Watson watermelon were on the menu.



Franklin D. Roosevelt

Volunteers

Volunteers play many important roles in the Home Garden. In 2021, 647 volunteer hours were contributed in the gardens at the Home of FDR. As an integral part of the workforce engaged

in planting, maintaining, and harvesting, they connect the garden with the community at large in significant and meaningful ways. We look forward to expanding our volunteer corps in 2022.



Perennial Crops

When the garden was re-established in 2016, park staff recognized that improvements to the soil (reducing compaction and improving soil quality and drainage) were needed prior to the introduction of perennial crops. With the 5-year

goal met in this regard, perennial crops were introduced to the garden this year. In spring 2021, asparagus, raspberries, strawberries, and rhubarb were planted. Grapes and currants will be added in 2022.



Franklin D. Roosevelt

Small Space Gardening Exhibit

Soil improvements have also allowed the Small Space Gardening Exhibit to be moved to its permanent location this season. The plantings have been simplified for a better understanding of the growing systems on display and improved circulation within the exhibit. Standardized

exhibit signage was also created and installed this year. These improvements, along with the audio tour developed by 2020 horticulture intern Jennifer Edwards, have made this exhibit easily accessible and understandable to visitors.



Produce Donations

Over 300 crates of vegetables grown in the Roosevelt Home Garden were donated to meet

community needs in 2021, primarily through [Dutchess Outreach](#).



Climate, the Environment, and our Garden Strategies

The Landscape and Garden teams are committed to organic practices to fertilize and control pests in the garden. Only pest control products that protect the crops while minimizing human health and environmental risks are used. Choice products and timely applications reduce impacts to beneficial insects, including pollinators. In addition to the weekly organic spray program, a biodegradable film mulch (to control weeds and reduce insect pest populations), kaolin clay (a

white, chalky material applied to foliage to reduce heat stress and deter insects), and a fine mesh netting to exclude insect pests, have been integrated into the grading practices. Also, staff and volunteers are trained to recognize plant pests and beneficial insects. This year a large population of helpful blue scolid wasps were found in the garden; these feed on and help to control grubs of Japanese Beetles and June Beetles.



The Landscape and Garden Division of the Roosevelt Vanderbilt NHS thanks the Franklin D. Roosevelt Hyde Park Foundation for their continued support of the Home Garden Restoration. Their support ensures the interpretation of an important legacy of the Roosevelt family in Hyde Park and allows us to connect our community and visitors to their stories.

Franklin D. Roosevelt



HISTORIC TREE PRESERVATION PROGRAM UNDERWAY



Preservation of landscapes is complicated by the fact that they are composed of living things – namely plants that grow, age, and die. It would be easy to preserve the Roosevelt and Vanderbilt Landscapes if everything in the landscape stayed the same. If sunny gardens didn't become shaded, and shaded areas didn't become sunny, if environmental factors were stable and agricultural activities never changed, one could maintain a picture-perfect moment in time that exactly captured these families' lived environments.

Quercus Alba

Constantly changing landscapes in the natural growth, death, and renewal cycles are regularly maintained. Careful records are kept, and plants are replaced thoughtfully. In the study of historical documents and photos, the choices made by the people whose stories we interpret are honored. In some cases, plants warrant extra thought when considering their ultimate replacement. Throughout the Roosevelt Vanderbilt NHS, there are trees with unique characteristics, stories, or both. If they have grown to champion size and age, they may have genetics contributing to that success. This category includes the Vanderbilt Ginkgo, the Bellefield Carolina Silver Bell, the Val-Kill Red Veined Enkianthus, and the Roosevelt Cucumber Magnolia. Others may have a sentimental aspect, like a seedling

from the mighty white oak at the field in front of Springwood that Eleanor Roosevelt brought in a coffee can plant in her yard at Val-Kill, or the heirloom apple varieties in the Roosevelt orchard. In these cases, the ideal replacement of a tree would propagate the historic tree. It is connected generationally to the story that gives it extra importance, and it shares the genetics that contributed to its success.

For this reason, Roosevelt Vanderbilt NHS has partnered with the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation to develop a formal Historic Tree Propagation program for the park. Historic trees that have been identified are worth the effort of propagating because their story is unique; their genetics are unusual or strong, or they



Carolina Silverbell



Golden Ginkgo

are not readily available in the marketplace. A propagation plan has been developed for each of these trees either by seed, which retains some of the genetics of the parent plant, or by cuttings, which are a clone of the parent plant. To do this work, a simple mist propagation system in the little “Fern Room” of the Historic Roosevelt greenhouse, which has less sun exposure and an ideal environment for propagation, has been created. In addition, the nursery beds between the vegetable garden and the rose garden hedge will be reestablished to house the new trees and return the nursery area to the Roosevelt Home garden.

Older trees can be more challenging to propagate with reduced seed viability and lower rooting percentages from cuttings. A program with a low percentage of success still yields some new

nursery stock that will be in the park on “stand-by” either as a replacement tree or as the stock plant from which another generation or two of trees is more easily grown – all with a direct link to the original. This will help ensure these majestic, historic trees have continued long life in the park. They are truly priceless. At the same time, this new program ensures the unique history of these plants is included in the landscape’s replacement and preservation plans.



Pear Tree



Red Veined Enkianthus

Franklin D. Roosevelt



VASSAR COMMUNITY FELLOW, MEG RITZAU, ADDS TO THE ROOSEVELT HOME GARDEN OFFERINGS



Meg Ritzau

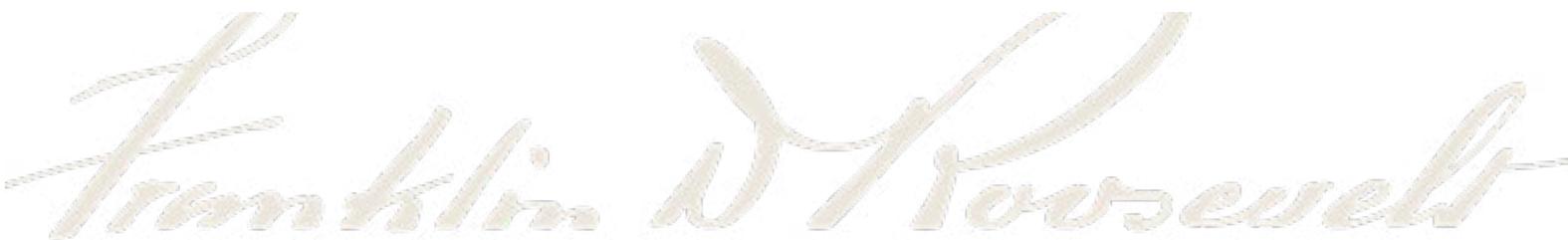
This past summer, The Roosevelt Vanderbilt NHS was fortunate to partner with the Vassar College Community Fellows Program. This program matches unique learning opportunities for students with capacity-building needs for community organizations. In doing so, the program invests in the future of the community through civic engagement.

Vassar College Junior, Meg Ritzau, fully supported horticulture efforts throughout the park under the supervision of the NPS Horticulturists, Anna de Cordova, and Susan MacAvery. After a two-week orientation to the site, Meg selected the Home Garden communications needs for a focused project. With a fresh perspective on the garden, she applied skills in observation and listening to synthesize the information that NPS staff most wanted visitors to understand with the questions visitors most often asked when touring the garden. The result is a new, three-stop audio tour that runs down the central path of the garden, a new article on the Home Garden for the park website, and a plan for a flexible informational kiosk in the Small Space Garden Exhibit.

The Hudson Valley endured a particularly hot and stormy summer that challenged the horticulture team and the gardens immensely. Meg's curiosity, energy, and work ethic were a gift to the park

that allowed the horticulturists to build on the program despite these trying conditions. Meg summarized the impact the program had on her in these words: *"The fellowship allowed me to experience horticulture work and historical interpretation, and it was an amazing way to begin exploring the wider Dutchess County community. Harvesting and donating produce to Dutchess Outreach illuminated some of the food security systems in Dutchess County. Additionally, volunteer sessions always provided educational opportunities, park horticulturists were happy to give detailed answers to questions about plant varieties, historical significance, diseases, and maintenance. I hope to emulate this quiet, engaging leadership – it consistently led to a communicative team working to maintain beautiful spaces outdoors."*

You can listen to the [audio tour here](#) and read the [Home Garden article here](#).





GET INVOLVED – HOW YOU CAN HELP



Springwood House - FDR's Home

Preserving these National Historic Sites is of great importance in protecting the integrity of the Roosevelt's legacy, the buildings, gardens, and surrounding forests for people to experience, learn about, and enjoy. This is achieved through the hard work and dedication of the National Park Service and by the raising of supplemental funds by the Franklin D. Roosevelt Hyde Park Foundation. You, too, can help us with this by subscribing to our newsletter **online**, or by **making a donation today**.

Thank you!

Franklin D. Roosevelt

 Franklin D. Roosevelt
Hyde Park Foundation

4097 Albany Post Rd.
Hyde Park, NY, 12538
845 546-4229
www.fdrhydepark.org

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