Hudson River Valley
National Heritage Area

Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area was established by Congress in 1996 to designate, preserve, and interpret the nationally significant history and resources of the river for the benefit of the nation. This four-million-acre heritage area between Waterford and the northern border of New York City is a partnership of local, state, and federal sites with the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area. The National Heritage Area provides technical and financial support.

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Freedom and Dignity

Several sites along the Hudson River commemorate the American Revolution, the abolition of slavery, and Franklin D. and Eleanor Roosevelt. Together, they underscore the nation’s struggles to honor the basic human rights of liberty, equality, and dignity.

Today, Cole’s Cedar Grove home and studio, near Hudson, offer glimpses into the lives of artists and conservationists.

New Yorkers met at the Senate House in Kingston in 1777 and formed a new governmental system that continued to guide the state today. The patriots thwarted British attempts at controlling the Hudson by fortifying the Hudson Highlands at West Point and installing two massive chains across the river.

In October 1782, a year after the British surrendered at Yorktown, Gen. George Washington moved his army of 7,000 men to New Windsor, where the soldiers lived in log huts until June 1783. Maj. Gen. Henry Knox moved into the Ellisons’ farmhouse in Newburgh. It was there that Washington defined a potential routing by officers, made plans to defend the army, and awarded three badges of Military Merit that would become the Purple Heart and awarded three badges of Military Merit that would become the Purple Heart.

In the 20th century, President Franklin D. Roosevelt led the United States out of the Great Depression and through the turmoil of World War II. FDR was born at Hyde Park, the family estate in Hyde Park. Though it remained his lifelong home, Roosevelt felt the need for greater privacy and solitude while he was President and designed a small stone house that was constructed on Dutchess Hill. He used Top Cottage as a personal retreat and as a place for family gatherings and to entertain kings, queens, and other dignitaries. During the Great Depression, Eleanor Roosevelt and a few friends operated a small furniture factory at another Hyde Park retreat. She closed the factory in 1936 and converted it into a residence, which she called Val-Kill Cottage. After her husband died, she lived there for 17 years while engaged in her humanitarian causes. Next to Springfield was the presidential library, the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library and Museum, which celebrates the legacies of Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt through its extensive collections and informative exhibits.

Rock climbing on the Shawangunks offers climbers the opportunity to ascend some of the most challenging rock climbs in the northeastern United States. The area is also popular for hiking, with trails that range from easy to strenuous.

Nature and Culture

A dramatic sense of light and atmosphere. Seventeenth-century artists depicted landscapes with a dramatic sense of light and atmosphere. Thomas Cole, Frederic E. Church, and other Hudson River School painters were active in the area during the 19th century. Their works are celebrated in the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area.

Today, the Hudson River provides recreational opportunities for kayakers, canoists, and other boaters. The Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area supports activities such as the 10-day Great Hudson River Paddle in July, Hudson River Valley Ramble hiking weekends in September, and the Iliad by Alexander Liberman, Waterford.

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