

**Volunteer Vibes** - *Volunteers play many crucial roles at the Preserve. They maintain trails, welcome visitors, conduct research, educate youth groups, support special events, beautify our gardens, capture breathtaking photography, and much more, contributing their time, talents, and thousands of volunteer hours annually. We will be regularly featuring our volunteers in Talus Talk so that we can all learn who they are and why they do what they do for the Preserve. Let's meet our volunteers!*

## **Margaret Bonner**

### ***Where did you grow up?***

I spent my first 21 years in Kearny, NJ. After joining the Peace Corps, my husband and I went to Ethiopia for two years, before moving to Uganda and eventually Illinois to finish our graduate degrees. We later went back overseas with USAID to Tanzania, Indonesia, Washington DC, and Ethiopia. We retired 27 years ago to 15 acres bordering the Catskill Preserve in Kerhonkson.

### ***What is your volunteer role(s) here at Mohonk Preserve?***

I participated in the Bluebird Trail and the Pollinator Program. Now, I help with Special Events (Healthy Ulster, Rock the Ridge, Shawangunk Ride), the Invasives Species Program and my favorite, Phenology.

### ***Why did you decide to volunteer your time and talents at Mohonk Preserve?***

Back in 2016, I participated in the Preserve's Healthy Ulster Program and decided to give back. I also volunteer with the Cornell Master Gardener program and Phenology seemed a great adjunct.

### ***What is a volunteer accomplishment you are really proud of?***

I love handing out packets before the races when many are so anxious about their participation. Listening to their qualms and giving them a verbal boost is a vicarious high.

### ***Where is your favorite place/trail on the Preserve and why is it your favorite?***

It's where I spend most of my time: Testimonial Gateway. I started there with the Phenology program, undertook the Bluebird tracking in the area (continuing on even after the program stopped), checked for pollinators in the adjacent fields, and signed up visitors for Healthy Ulster and the races at the trailhead when I wasn't checking for spotted lantern fly in the same parking lot. I've watched the Testimonial Gateway develop and expand; it doesn't have the excitement of the ridges, but it has a homey feeling.



*Margaret Bonner gathering Phenology field data  
Photo by Amanda Rogers*