

The Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Gorge

The Mianus River Gorge was formed by the rushing waters of the Wisconsin glacier which began melting 10,000 to 15,000 years ago. The water found a weakness in the confining rock and formed a cascade. In time, the erosive effect of the water weakened the face of the waterfall, causing it to move steadily backward, leaving a long narrow channel. Thousands of years of rushing water widened and deepened the initial breach, leaving the Gorge much as we see it today.

The Mianus watershed has been continuously inhabited for 8,000 years. Paleo-Americans from the Ohio River Valley chased saber-toothed tigers and woolly mammoths across the arctic tundra of Bedford around 6,000 BC. Later groups of Native Americans used the Gorge as a winter hunting ground and spent their summers at the mouth of the Mianus River along the shores of Long Island Sound. At the height of the European invasion in 1683, Sachem Myanos was the leader of the local Mahican tribe. His people, already devastated by European diseases, were forced off their ancestral land by colonial farmers. English farmers then cleared away the ancient forest, leaving only the steep-sided Gorge undisturbed. Walking along the hillsides of the river, one can see the stonewalls marking old pastures and hay fields right up to the edge of the Gorge.

The History of the Mianus River Gorge Preserve

Since our inception over fifty years ago as The Nature Conservancy's first land project, the Mianus River Gorge Preserve (MRGP) has grown from its original 60 acres to over 764. The Preserve was created in 1953 when local concerned citizens and scientific experts from several prestigious universities and museums sought to protect this remnant old-growth forest from development. In recognition of our rare hemlock forest, in 1964 the federal government designated MRGP the nation's first registered Natural History Landmark. In 1990, the Preserve restructured its historic relationship with The Nature Conservancy (TNC). Today, MRGP is an independent not-for-profit tax-exempt 501(c)(3) corporation affiliated with TNC. MRGP receives no annual funding from TNC and is solely reliant upon its own programs and fund raising to support its endeavors.

The MRGP is responsible for the conservation of the Preserve's old growth forest, woodlands, abundant wildlife and for protecting the watershed and wetlands feeding the Mianus River — a water supply for over 150,000 people in Westchester and Fairfield counties. To fulfill our mission, we work with and provide counsel to town boards and other local and regional land preservation organizations in an effort to protect watershed quality and remaining wildlife habitat. Through our programs in applied suburban ecology, we invest heavily in scientific research at all levels of education from high school through advanced graduate studies. We use this research to create and foster innovative land management practices for natural areas of human-modified landscapes while training the next generation of scientists.

Welcome to the Gorge!

We invite you to enjoy over 3.5 miles of woodland trails at the Mianus River Gorge Preserve. The Gorge is a private preserve, not a public park. Our trails are open only to hiking. While we understand this can be an inconvenience, the rewards are many. Our hiking paths are narrow and winding, well kept, yet rugged. Visitors have the experience of a remote wilderness within an hour's drive from one of the world's largest cities. It is important that we maintain this experience for all our visitors.

Please do NOT:

- Enter with dogs, even on leash
- Ride bicycles or any vehicles on trails
- Smoke or use fire in any form
- Remove or disturb plants, animals or minerals
- Picnic in the woods. Picnics are only permissible in the map shelter area
- Leave designated trails
- Cut or remove standing or fallen trees
- Hunt or trap animals
- Swim or wade in river, streams or reservoir
- Disturb scientific research sites
- Camp in the Preserve
- Use boats on the river or reservoir



Mianus River Gorge Preserve, Inc.
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Get Involved

We need your help to protect, preserve and promote appreciation of the Mianus River Gorge and its watershed. Please support our mission and our programs involving research and education, watershed protection, stewardship and land acquisition. The Mianus River Gorge Preserve is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization that relies solely upon the support of individuals who treasure this unique natural resource.

Please visit our Map Shelter to:

- learn about the delicate ecology and natural history of the Preserve,
- make a contribution in the donation box or a tax-deductible donation by mail to help support our programs,
- keep informed about our ongoing research and educational initiatives,
- obtain MRGP information, special interest publications and a copy of our latest newsletter, and
- learn about volunteer opportunities at the Preserve.

For the latest information, news and events, please visit our website www.mianus.org. If you have any questions or comments or wish to contact us, please email Rod Christie, Executive Director at rchristie@mianus.org.

Thank you for visiting and for supporting the Mianus River Gorge Preserve.

Trail Guide

Mianus River Gorge Preserve

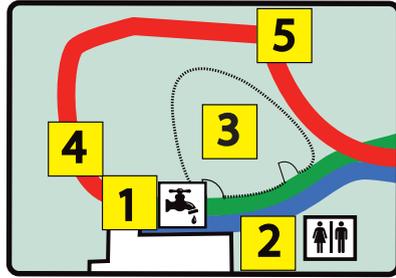
Photo Credit: Carl Hellman II - www.carhellman.com



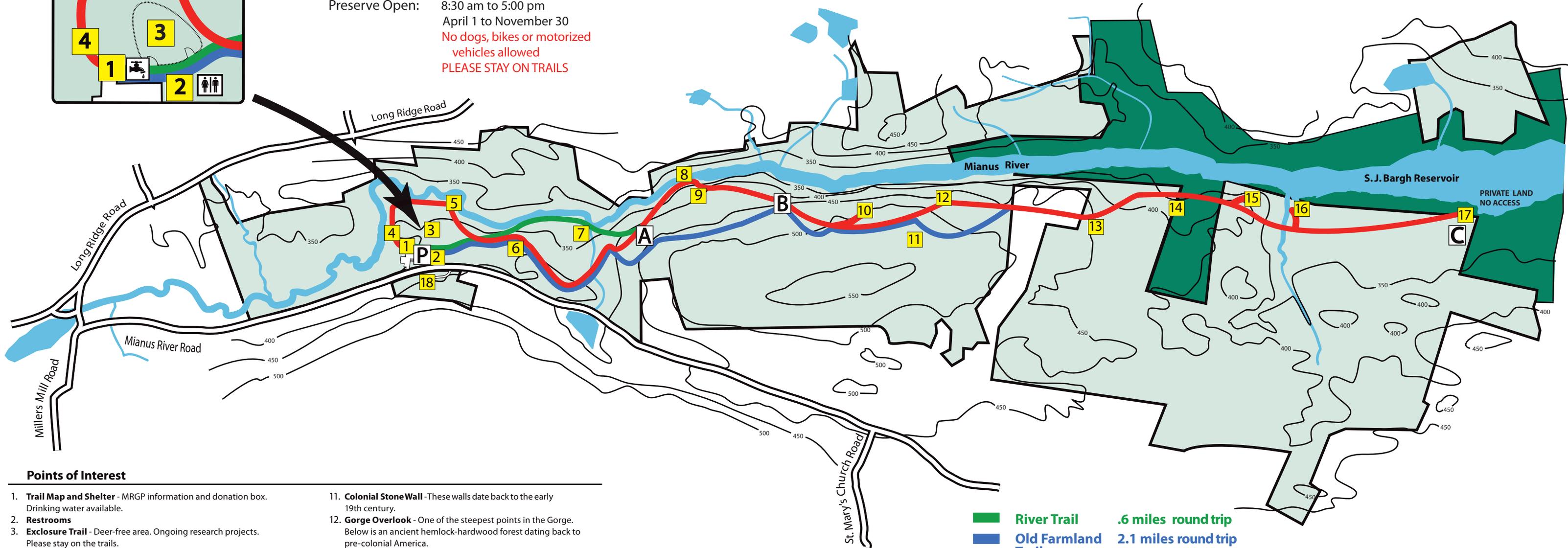
Open: 8:30 am to 5:00 pm
April 1 to November 30

Mianus River Gorge Preserve Trail Guide

enlargement



Preserve Open: 8:30 am to 5:00 pm
 April 1 to November 30
 No dogs, bikes or motorized vehicles allowed
 PLEASE STAY ON TRAILS



Points of Interest

- Trail Map and Shelter** - MRGP information and donation box. Drinking water available.
- Restrooms**
- Exclosure Trail** - Deer-free area. Ongoing research projects. Please stay on the trails.
- Lucy Adams Memorial Bench** - A river overlook easily accessible for those unable to hike our trails.
- The Forging Place** - Old wagon pass across the Mianus River.
- Red Trail Exclosure** - Our oldest deer-free experimental plot.
- Saffords Cascade** - Intermittent Mianus River tributary.
- Rockwall Breach** - Narrowest point across the Gorge cut by melting glacial waters 15,000 - 20,000 years ago.
- Monte Gloria** - Site of the first land acquisition named in honor of the Preserve founder, Gloria Anable.
- Hobby Hill Quarry** - Mica, quartz and feldspar mine were mined here in the 19th century by local farmers. Please no collecting.
- Colonial Stone Wall** - These walls date back to the early 19th century.
- Gorge Overlook** - One of the steepest points in the Gorge. Below is an ancient hemlock-hardwood forest dating back to pre-colonial America.
- James and Alice de Peyster Todd Woodlands** - 56 acres donated by a Preserve founder and his wife. Note the sharp edge between our older hemlock and younger hardwood forests.
- Vernal Pool** - Seasonal wetland and amphibian habitat.
- Reservoir Overlook** - The Mianus River supplies drinking water for 150,000 residents of Rye, Rye Brook, Port Chester and Greenwich.
- Havemeyer Falls** - (Waterfall seasonal) Healthiest tributary in the Mianus River's 37 square-mile watershed. This stream has traveled 1.5 miles through the Preserve.
- End of Red Trail** - Reservoir is private land. No access.
- Gibb House** - Mianus River Gorge Preserve Office.

- **River Trail** **.6 miles round trip**
- **Old Farmland Trail** **2.1 miles round trip**
- **Old Growth Forest Trail** **4.4 miles round trip**

Loop Trails to Points A, B and C

- A Out on Green, back on Red 1.1 miles
- B Out on Red, back on Blue 1.6 miles
- C Out on Red, back on Blue 4 miles

