

The Cragsmoor Association

What started as a neighborhood conversation on the lawn of Ruth DeTar's home on a summer day in 1978 evolved into the **Cragsmoor Association**, celebrating its twenty-fifth anniversary this year.

The purpose of the organization – the general preservation of the natural beauty of Cragsmoor and the revitalization of the community as an art and cultural center – was formalized at its first meeting on August 20th, 1978, at the home of Pete and Marie Stanger. Of immediate concern was the protection from development of an area known to Cragsmoor residents as “**Bear Hill.**” Vincent P. (Pete) Stanger was elected president and the work began.

As with any newly-formed organization with a mission, the raising of funds to achieve their purpose consumed the **Cragsmoor Association** and created a flurry of activity which resulted in meeting their financial goal, aided by a generous donation from David Croyder. **Bear Hill**, sometimes called “**Bear Cliff,**” was purchased from Halsey Sherwood of Gardiner, who had previously contemplated developing the parcel, and the area was declared “forever wild.”

Achieving their immediate goal did not fully satisfy the members of the **Association** that has continued its endeavors in the preservation of Cragsmoor's natural beauty, including opposition to overflights and a battle against black fly infestation.

An offshoot of the determination that much of Cragsmoor should remain “forever wild” as an integral part of the preservation efforts led to the creation of a land conservancy in Cragsmoor.

The **Cragsmoor Association** does not “rest on its laurels” even today, continuing its community fundraising with such events as this past summer's highly successful silent auction at the firehouse, which benefited both the **Association** and the **Cragsmoor Fire Company**, equally. Continuing with its efforts to increase awareness and appreciation of Cragsmoor's natural beauty led the **Association** to cooperate with the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference in that organization's extension of its trail around **Bear Hill**, which is, of course, open to the public.

The **Association** holds its annual meeting the first Saturday in July and is currently served by James McKenney as president. Dues are a reasonable \$10 per year for individual membership. Voting membership requires that the potential voter be a resident or homeowner in Cragsmoor. ☆



The Cragsmoor Historical Society

The **Cragsmoor Historical Society** was founded in 1996 for the purpose of preserving and interpreting the history of Cragsmoor. At that same time, the few remaining members of the historic **Cragsmoor Federated Church** concluded they did not have the resources to sustain their building.

(See photo above, from the collection of Sally Matz; this picture shows the church before it was obtained and converted by the **Historical Society.**)

Rather than sell the building and see it converted to residential use, the congregation gave it to the newly formed **Society** in 1997 with the hope that the larger Cragsmoor community would invest in the deteriorated building and save it for future generations.

First and foremost, a new basement was constructed under the Community Room; this was necessary since the old dirt basement had three feet of water in it for many years. Next, the electrical system was improved and a smoke and fire alarm system was added, together with a telephone.

Prominently sited close to the road at the gateway to the **Cragsmoor National Register Historic District**, it is a familiar and cherished landmark to residents and visitors who come to Cragsmoor to see its architectural treasures, dramatic scenery, and the popular nature preserves at **Sam's Point** and **Bear Hill**.

Over the last five years, the **Society** has successfully raised money for, and has completed, some of the critical structural repairs necessary to keep the building standing. Currently, we are raising money to replace the roof and the interior ceiling. Donations in any amount are welcome and needed.

Please mail your tax-deductible donation to:
Cragsmoor Historical Society, P. O. Box 354,
Cragsmoor NY 12420.

Thank You. ☆

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