

# **The Edmund Niles Huyck Preserve and Biological Research Station**



## **STRATEGIC PLAN 2011 Executive Summary**

Plan adopted by Board of Directors April 30, 2011

Published November 1, 2011

# **The Edmund Niles Huyck Preserve and Biological Research Station\***

## **Mission Statement**

The mission of the Huyck Preserve is to preserve the natural beauty of the Rensselaerville Falls, the watershed of Lake Myosotis and surrounding lands, to conduct long-term research on natural systems as part of a global effort to understand and protect the Earth's biodiversity, and to increase appreciation of this effort through innovative, field-based educational programs for students, teachers, and the community.

## **Vision Statement**

The Huyck Preserve strives to be a nationally recognized organization committed to the long-term protection of the Earth's regional and global biodiversity. This will be accomplished through high-quality land preservation efforts, biological research, and environmental education programs.

## **Purpose as stated in Bylaws, Article I, Section 2**

The objects of this corporation shall be to preserve the natural beauty of the Rensselaerville Falls, Lake Myosotis, Lincoln Pond, and the lands around them in the town of Rensselaerville, Albany County, New York; to increase the general and scientific knowledge and love of nature, particularly that of trees and wildlife, by maintaining a demonstration of reforestation and forest culture, and by providing means for increasing and protecting the birds, wild animals and fish within the boundaries of said lands and, in furtherance of said objects, to research, record, and preserve the history of said lands and do all acts in furtherance of said objectives, subject to such limitations as may be prescribed by law.

**\*Legal Name: Edmund Niles Huyck Preserve, Inc.**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE 2011 STRATEGIC PLAN

The 2011 Strategic Plan provides a guiding framework for the activities and management of the Edmund Niles Huyck Preserve and Biological Research Station. This planning document is based on the Huyck Preserve's mission "to preserve the natural beauty of the Rensselaerville Falls, the watershed of Lake Myosotis and surrounding lands, to conduct long-term research on natural systems as part of the global effort to understand and protect the Earth's biodiversity, and to increase appreciation of this effort through innovative, field-based educational programs for students, teachers, and the community." The plan contains sections on each of the key aspects of the Preserve's mission—conservation, research, education, and recreation.

This Plan was developed as a joint effort of the Board and Staff and represents an update of the 2001 Strategic Plan. The Board of Directors voted to adopt the 2011 Strategic Plan on April 30, 2011. It is anticipated that this plan will be reviewed annually and updated periodically.

### CONSERVATION/PRESERVATION

A primary purpose of the Huyck Preserve is to protect the Ten-Mile Creek watershed, providing an undisturbed, undeveloped area for scientific research, environmental education, and recreation. The Conservation goals are consistent with Land Trust Alliance Standards and Practices (adopted by the Huyck Preserve's Board of Directors in 2008).

#### Conservation Goals:

1. Improve/secure legal protection of the Preserve land in perpetuity.
2. Increase/secure the protection of surrounding land and promote regional connectivity.
3. Engage in active and passive stewardship of the land.
4. Build the capacity and expertise to protect the land.
5. Engage in outreach activities with nearby landowners.
6. Build partnerships and develop strategic alliances.

### RESEARCH

The Huyck Preserve supports research into behavior, ecology, evolution, natural history, systematics, and other areas in the natural sciences in order to increase the understanding of how natural areas work. The Preserve strives to enhance its national reputation as a field station that facilitates meaningful discovery in the natural sciences and serves as a training ground for field research. Monitoring and conservation-focused research will contribute to a fuller understanding of ecosystem processes and environmental change through published research, conferences, and other means of dissemination. In addition to encouraging investigator-driven, independent study, the Preserve will also foster targeted research that contributes to the stewardship and educational missions.

#### Research Goals:

1. Attract both new and established scientists and foster a stronger field station culture.
2. Raise the profile of the field station.
3. Increase resources for the research program.
4. Conduct an in-depth feasibility study on developing a formal consortium of institutional partners.
5. Enhance the Preserve's reputation as an institution that helps to launch the careers of new scientists through educational programs and research opportunities.
6. Organize scientific conferences and workshops.
7. Conduct monitoring that will lead to a fuller understanding of ecosystem processes and environmental change.
8. Integrate field station research with educational programs.
9. Communicate conservation research findings in a way that informs planning and conservation policy.
10. Issues identified for future attention:
  - Determine most appropriate monitoring activities.
  - Determine carrying capacity for all activities.
  - Ensure that research activities are not compromised.
  - Determine a role for the Scientific Advisory Committee.
  - Build a broader and stronger research community.

## EDUCATION

The Huyck Preserve's educational programs are designed to increase the general and scientific knowledge and love of nature through innovative, field-based activities for students, teachers, members, and the community. The Huyck Preserve strives to achieve excellence in its education programs in order to provide the public with an appreciation and understanding of how the natural world functions.

### Education Goals:

1. Significantly increase children's and adults' knowledge and love of nature through year-round programs (that are low-cost or free for the local community); become a valued environmental educational resource for schools and teachers, especially in the school systems serving the Town of Rensselaerville and the Greater Capital District.
2. Create an Education Committee made up of board members, educators, and others to advise on education programs and assess needs.
3. Make the overall educational program fiscally self-sustaining.
4. Increase the Huyck Preserve's educational capacity by training staff to present programs, expanding the cadre of volunteers, and improving and adding facilities.
5. Help the local economy by hiring local people and using local resources when possible.
2. Develop a long-term policy for the use of Lake Myosotis that is rational and consistent and recognizes the historic commitment to the local community and that safety is of utmost importance.
3. Create a Recreation Committee that includes community members to help plan and advise on recreational activities.
4. Develop a risk management plan that is based on recognized national standards.
5. Increase the capacity of staff and facilities by using volunteers to lead walks and maintain trails.
6. Make the overall recreational program fiscally self-sustaining.
7. Help the local economy by hiring local people and using local resources when possible.

## RECREATION

The Huyck Preserve's recreational programs are designed to increase the general knowledge and love of nature; promote healthy outdoor activities among its members and the general public; and continue the close relationship between the Preserve and the local community by providing access to the Preserve and allowing enjoyment of the natural beauty of Lake Myosotis.

### Recreation Goals:

1. Encourage greater and more meaningful use of the Huyck Preserve's general recreational opportunities through interpretive signage and by scheduling guided and interpretive walks and other activities throughout the year.
2. Lay the groundwork for organizational advancement.
3. Maintain and strengthen financial stability.
4. Engage members, current and prospective supporters, and others through effective outreach.
5. Cultivate partnerships based on mutual interests and common goals.

## ADVANCEMENT

The Huyck Preserve is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization\* and supported partially by grants from the E.N. Huyck Foundation, a private foundation established after the death of Preserve founder Jessie Van Antwerp Huyck. Other sources of funding include membership donations; public and private grants; and income from program fees and facilities rentals. In the past the Huyck Foundation provided about two-thirds of the Preserve's funding, but that is no longer the case. The Preserve has increased fundraising efforts and is building its own endowment.

\* Historically the Huyck Preserve was classified as a private foundation because most of its funding was from a sole source. In recent years, the Preserve has successfully begun diversifying its revenue sources. Effective January 1, 2010, the IRS granted the Huyck Preserve a 60-month advance ruling to be treated as a public charity.

### Advancement Goals:

1. Create the capacity to meet operational challenges; diversify revenue streams.
2. Lay the groundwork for organizational advancement.
3. Maintain and strengthen financial stability.
4. Engage members, current and prospective supporters, and others through effective outreach.
5. Cultivate partnerships based on mutual interests and common goals.

## HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

Edmund (Ted) Niles Huyck (1866–1930) was a life-long resident of Rensselaerville and an early industrialist who ran F.C. Huyck and Sons, a company that manufactured papermaking felts. The Huyck mill was located at the base of the Rensselaerville Falls from 1870 to 1879, then moved to Albany, N.Y. Ted Huyck had a deep love for the natural beauty of the town of Rensselaerville. According to his biography, it was Huyck's wish that about 500 acres of his property including "the Pond and its shores be set aside for the enjoyment of the people forever." (Edmund Niles Huyck, *The Story of a Liberal*, by Francis Brown; N.Y.: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1935)

A year after Ted Huyck died, his widow Jessie Van Antwerp Huyck fulfilled his wish by establishing the Edmund Niles Huyck Preserve, Inc. The Huyck Preserve was incorporated as a non-profit, membership corporation in 1931 "to preserve the natural beauty of the Rensselaerville Falls, Lake Myosotis, Lincoln Pond, and the lands around them in the Town of Rensselaerville, Albany County, New York; to increase the general and scientific knowledge and love of nature, particularly that of trees and wildlife, by maintaining a demonstration of reforestation and forest culture, and by providing means for increasing and protecting the birds, wild animals and fish within the boundaries of said lands."

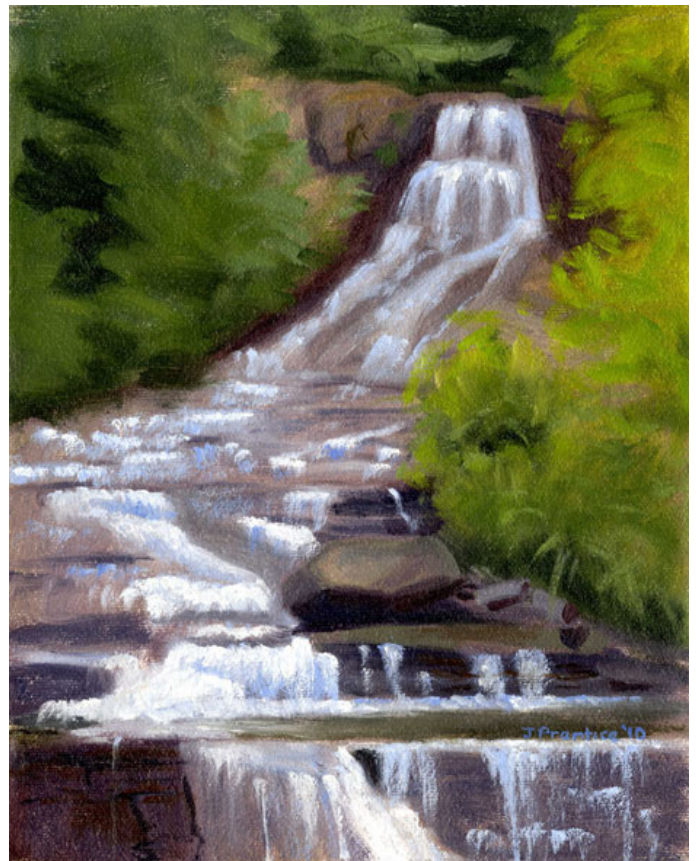
In 1938, the Huyck Preserve's Board of Directors engaged Cornell University mammalogist William D. Hamilton, Jr., Ph.D., to conduct an evaluation of the Preserve to determine its suitability as a site for scientific research. On Hamilton's recommendation, the Board resolved to organize the Huyck Preserve as a biological research station to further its role in increasing and imparting the scientific knowledge of nature.

Jessie Huyck died in 1959. Her will stipulated that a foundation be created to help support the Huyck Preserve. So in 1960, the E.N. Huyck Foundation was established "to promote research, scientific study and education in any and all kinds of fauna and flora, either directly or through individuals or organizations qualified to undertake such work." Today, the Foundation as well as membership donations and grants are the primary sources of funding for the Preserve.

The Huyck Preserve is located on the western edge of the Helderberg Plateau (42° 10' latitude, 74° 10' longitude) in the

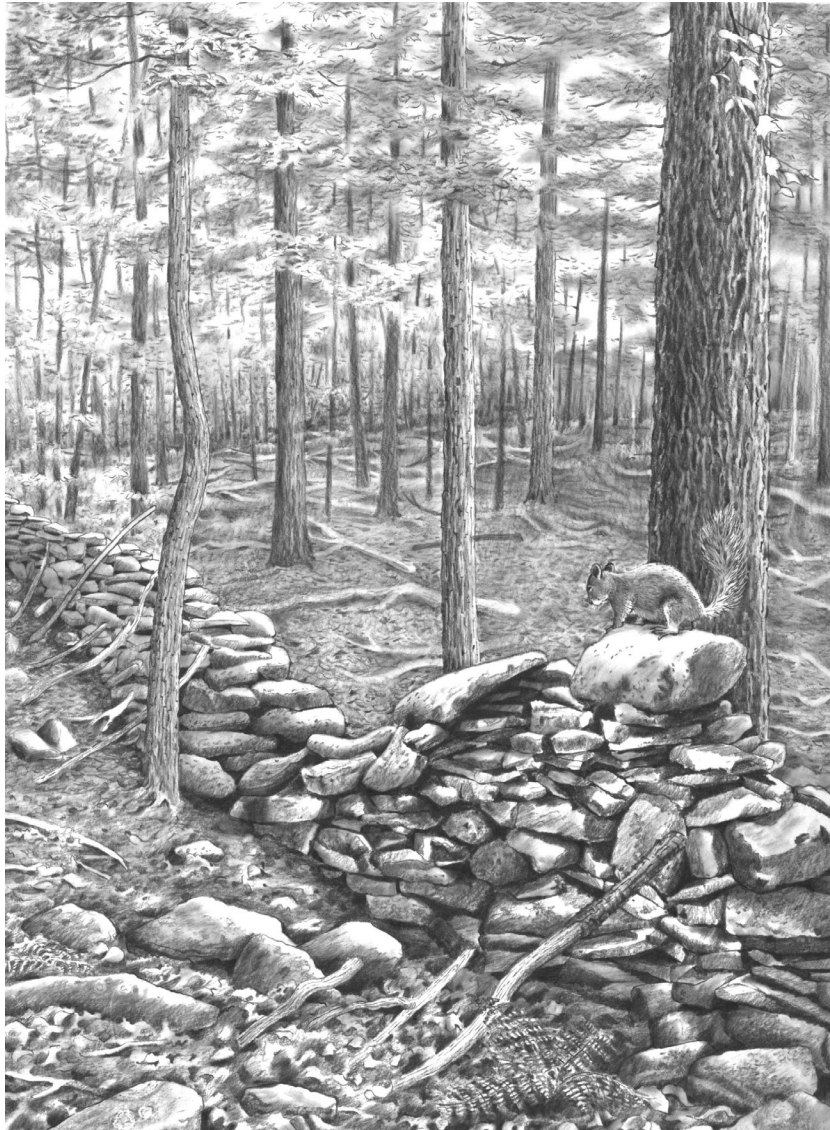
towns of Rensselaerville and Berne, N.Y. Since 1931, the Huyck Preserve has grown in size from 500 to about 2,000 acres.

The uniqueness of the Edmund Niles Huyck Preserve and its Biological Research Station come especially from the long-term research record. Since 1937, hundreds of scientists have conducted research at the Huyck Preserve and have published more than 450 scientific papers. In addition, the Preserve's larger and obvious fauna and flora, as well as several other taxonomic categories, have been inventoried regularly since 1937. The resulting database can be used to evaluate changes that may be occurring due to environmental disturbances such as climatic variations, pollution, and the introduction of invasive species.



The Rensselaerville Falls, by Jan Prentice (COM.EN.ART)





Stone Wall, by Margie O'Brien (COM.EN.ART)

**EDMUND NILES HUYCK PRESERVE, INC.**  
**P.O. BOX 189**  
**RENSSELAERVILLE, NY 12147**  
**518-797-3440**  
**E-MAIL: [INFO@HUYCKPRESERVE.ORG](mailto:INFO@HUYCKPRESERVE.ORG)**  
**WEB SITE: [HTTP://WWW.HUYCKPRESERVE.ORG](http://WWW.HUYCKPRESERVE.ORG)**