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## Thomas Cole National Historic Site Now Recruiting Trail Guides

Catskill, NY (May, 2011) The Thomas Cole National Historic Site is now recruiting people who love hiking, walking, and the great outdoors to conduct guided hikes during the season May through October along the beautiful Hudson River School Art Trail in the Catskill Mountains.

The Hudson River School Art Trail is a series of driving, walking and hiking routes to the sites that inspired America's first great landscape painters, enabling participants to walk in the footsteps of Thomas Cole, Frederic Church, Asher B. Durand, Jasper Cropsey, Sanford Gifford and other pioneering American artists, and to see the landscapes that launched the Hudson River School of art.

The Trail enables hikers to compare famous paintings by Hudson River School artists with the same views as they appear today. The majority of views appear remarkably similar to the 19th-century paintings, having been protected by their inclusion in the Catskill Forest Preserve. Often, several artists painted the same view, enabling a comparison of the artists' styles and choices. Other views are now vastly different from their 19th-century appearance, giving the viewer a sense of how our landscape has been altered by human activity during the last 150 years.

Trail Guides are volunteers who lead hikes along these magnificent trails. There are many benefits to being a volunteer at the Thomas Cole National Historic Site. All volunteers receive free training and ongoing education and enrichment, free invitations to most public events, use of the volunteer lending library, a free membership, trips to museums, galleries and other destinations, discounts on merchandise in the Museum Shop and special thank-you parties.

To find out more about becoming a guide on the Hudson River School Art Trail, please contact Melissa Gavilanes at 518-943-7465 extension 5. More information about the Hudson River School Art Trail can be found at [www.thomascole.org/trail](http://www.thomascole.org/trail).

### About Thomas Cole

As the founder of America's first art movement, the Hudson River School, Thomas Cole (1801-1848) is a central figure in the development of American culture. When Cole made his first trip up the Hudson River in 1825, thought-leaders were searching for something distinctly American to establish the nation's own culture as separate from that of Europe.

Thomas Cole found it in the Catskill Mountain wilderness, which came to symbolize the unspoiled character of the new nation. Lionized during his lifetime and celebrated by a generation of artists who followed in his footsteps, Cole is now widely regarded as the father of American landscape painting.

**About the Thomas Cole Historic Site**

The Thomas Cole Historic Site, historically known as Cedar Grove, is where the artist Thomas Cole lived, worked, was married, and where he died at the age of 47. Today the site consists of the Federal style brick home (c. 1815) in which Thomas Cole resided with his family, as well as the artist's original studio building, on five landscaped acres with a magnificent view of the Catskill Mountains.

**Directions:**

The Thomas Cole Historic Site is located at 218 Spring Street in Catskill, New York, near the western entrance to the Rip Van Winkle Bridge, with easy access from the New York State Thruway, Exit 21. Full directions are available at [www.thomascole.org](http://www.thomascole.org)