

THOMAS COLE NATIONAL
HISTORIC
SITE



TAKE ACTION CARDS

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NOTICE NATURE

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“Our boat glided beautifully over the tranquil water...I never saw such depth & brilliances in the reflections: the most immense masses of brown from the shadowed depths of the woods were broken by the emerald green of the sunlit birches & maples, and the dead trees on margin & in the water added by their silvery tints to the harmony of colour.”—Thomas Cole, July 5, 1835

Thomas Cole took detailed sketches and notes when out hiking, stayed up to date on the latest geological research, closely observed nature, and reveled in spending time in it. He cultivated a deep sense of fulfillment from simply being in nature. Practice noticing and learning about your environment.

For one week, each day try to look closely at or learn the name of a new flower, bird, tree, mountain or other natural feature.

Organizations and websites that can help:

What Tree is that? Tree Identification Field Guide from Arbor Day Foundation: <https://www.arborday.org/trees/whattree>

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology: Online Guide to Birds and Birdwatching: <https://www.allaboutbirds.org>

Identify A Plant Instantly: Garden Answers Plant ID App. This app lets you take a picture of a plant you don't know and get detailed information about it: <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/garden-answers-plant-id/>

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SUPPORT ENVIRONMENTAL AND ART EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS

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To draw with facility is valuable...and ought to be taught in all our Common Schools; it is not merely an agreeable accomplishment but is positively useful. It gives precision to the eye and strengthens its perceptive powers.—Thomas Cole, Lecture on Art, 1834

Thomas Cole felt that all people could benefit from training in the arts and from spending time in nature. Today, great work is being done in schools and non-profits to make art and environmental education a more integral part of students' education. Several Hudson Valley institutions offer such programming:

Thomas Cole School Programs offers art and environmental education onsite, in the classroom, and online. If you are a teacher, visit the education tab on our website and try teaching one of our lesson plans in your classroom. Or, bring your students to our site.

The Clearwater is an educational sailing ship founded by Pete Seeger, legendary musician, activist, and environmentalist who wanted to help conserve and educate on the importance of the Hudson River.

Hudson Highlands Nature Museum develops responsible caretakers of the natural world through its special focus on Environmental Education. It uses its living collections of native animals, natural habitats and trails to present a wide variety of programs for people of all ages at its two locations.

Find an institution in your area that provides students with environmental or art education and volunteer or donate.

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TAKE PART IN YOUR COMMUNITY'S DECISIONS ABOUT LAND USE

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Among the inhabitants of this village he must be dull indeed who has not observed how within the last ten years the beauty of its environs has been shorn away.—Thomas Cole, Essay on American Scenery, 1841

Cole frequently expressed sadness at how quickly the town of Catskill was changing during the Industrial Revolution. Railroads cut scars into the valleys beneath the Catskill Mountains and acres of trees came down to provide for local industry. Today, we have agency within our own communities to affect decision-making. Most planning commissions, selectboards, and zoning boards hold public meetings and forums where you can educate yourself on environmental goings-on and land use issues in your community.

Become more involved in your community's decisions about land use. Find out when the next public meeting of your town government is and attend.

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