

# RIDGE TIMES



The Official Newsletter of the Chestnut Ridge Conservancy, Inc.—a 501(c)(3) Corporation

June, 2014 Vol. IV, Issue 1

ChestnutRidgeConservancy.org

## Casino Mural Restoration Project Hits Major Milestones

As first reported in last year's *Ridge Times*, the Casino mural project is well underway. To date, three of the five beautiful murals painted by **Bernard C. Feldman** in 1948 have been masterfully restored and preserved by **Eileen Sullivan** of *Aurora Art Conservation*. The first mural to be restored was the *Skiers* located on the south wall of the Casino. Its restoration was completed in December, 2013.

"To see the transformation of the *Skiers* mural as Ms. Sullivan spent hours in the restoration process is nothing short of amazing," said Ron Michnik, CRC Board Member and point person for the mural restoration project. "You get a true understanding of the effects that sixty-plus years of pollution and fireplace smoke have on a piece of art. You also gain an enormous appreciation for the skill and patience required to restore these murals to their original beauty," Michnik added.



Eileen Sullivan

Upon its completion, Ms. Sullivan turned her efforts to the *Foxes* and *Tree* murals which she completed in April, 2014. The *Cabin* should be completed in June. The *Deer* mural is expected to be completed in the Fall.

Restoration is not the only objective of this ambitious project. "We need to strike a balance between keeping the murals safe from scratches, chips, and the environment, without making them entirely inaccessible to the public. They deserve to be protected, but they are also an integral part of the Casino's atmosphere and charm," said Michnik.

The Conservancy is indebted to **Jack Bertsch** and **Polymer Conversions, Inc.**, **West Herr Automotive**, the **George G. & Elizabeth G. Smith Foundation**, **Mary Flickinger**, and others for their generous support of this project. The CRC is still seeking sponsors, donations, and grants for the remaining murals. If you are interested in being a part of this effort, please contact **John Bailey** at 716.662.0236, or via email at [info@ChestnutRidgeConservancy.org](mailto:info@ChestnutRidgeConservancy.org).



Skiers — before restoration



Skiers — at the halfway point



Skiers — completed



## More Movies on the Hill!

Once again this year, the Chestnut Ridge Conservancy will be presenting free outdoor movies on the sledding hill. We are pleased to announce that there will be three great movies in 2014:

- Friday, June 27: *Marvel's The Avengers*—9:45pm
- Sunday July 27: *Despicable Me*—9:00pm
- Friday August 15: *The Wizard of Oz*—8:30pm

Everyone is welcome. Bring lawn chairs and a blanket. Starting times are approximate depending upon sunset. In the event of rain, the movies will be shown in the Casino. Popcorn, snacks, and beverages will be available.

The *Avengers* may not be suitable for young children—bring them in July and August instead! More details on the movies can be found at [ChestnutRidgeConservancy.org](http://ChestnutRidgeConservancy.org).

Sincere thanks to **Arthur's Hardware** and **Arthur's Home Furnishings** for their continued generous sponsorship of the CRC's *Movies on the Hill* program. Sponsorship opportunities are still available. If you are interested in being a movie sponsor, contact **John Bailey** at 716.662.0236, or via email at [info@ChestnutRidgeConservancy.org](mailto:info@ChestnutRidgeConservancy.org).



## In Memoriam

The Chestnut Ridge Conservancy mourns the loss of one of its founding trustees, David M. Buyer, who passed away September 2, 2013 at the age of 74.



David M. Buyer

The Conservancy benefitted from Dave's 45-plus years of diverse experience that included military intelligence, corporate business management in both large and small companies, elected and appointed local and state government positions, business consulting, and undergraduate college teaching.

Dave was responsible for helping to market the CRC throughout Western New York and played important roles in organizing and working at many of our events including our parties at the Casino, annual meetings, and outdoor movies.

Dave was a huge supporter of everything related to Orchard Park and was active with the American Legion and the Orchard Park Council for the Arts. His friendship, as well as his contributions to the numerous organizations with which he was involved, are greatly missed.

The Conservancy will be installing a memorial bench at Chestnut Ridge Park in Dave's honor later this year.

## About the Chestnut Ridge Conservancy

### Mission Statement

The Chestnut Ridge Conservancy was formed to support the restoration and preservation of the rich natural, recreational, and historic resources that comprise Chestnut Ridge Park.

**Chestnut Ridge Conservancy, Inc.**  
**P. O. Box 1376**  
**Orchard Park, NY 14127**

web: [ChestnutRidgeConservancy.org](http://ChestnutRidgeConservancy.org)

email: [info@ChestnutRidgeConservancy.org](mailto:info@ChestnutRidgeConservancy.org)

Facebook: [Facebook.com/ChestnutRidgeConservancy](https://www.facebook.com/ChestnutRidgeConservancy)

Our office is located at the Casino in Chestnut Ridge Park.

**Ridge Times** Editor and Marketing Consultant:  
 William C. Even, *The Coming Wave, LLC*.

The Chestnut Ridge Conservancy is a 501(c)(3) corporation.

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### Board of Trustees

*Chairman:* Raymond Fabiniak  
*President:* John C. Bailey  
*Vice President:* William Thornton  
*Treasurer:* Jack Bertsch  
*Secretary:* Justine LeFauve  
*Directors:* Janet Benjamins  
 Elizabeth Cash  
 Daniel J. Glowacki  
 Justin Kahabka  
 Mona Lloyd  
 Michael Merritt  
 Ronald Michnik  
 Diane Morse  
 Michael Neumeister  
 Ronald Smith  
 Ed Starosielec



## CRC Board of Directors Biographies

Our board is comprised of sixteen dedicated volunteers who donate their time, talent, and resources to help make our organization and our park the best they can be. We will profile several of our trustees in each newsletter.

### Janet Benjamins

Janet presently serves as a Director of CRC. She and her husband, John, have lived in Orchard Park for 32 years, where they and their children have enjoyed tobogganing, sledding, hiking, playing tennis, and biking in our treasured Chestnut Ridge Park.

She has an MBA, an MA in Geology, a BA in Geography; has taught earth sciences and mathematics in college; worked in oil, gas, and copper exploration; and currently tutors mathematics at ECC. She has served, or is serving on, several not-for-profit and professional boards.

Janet considers herself to be a conservationist at all times, and a preservationist sometimes, of natural resources. She and her husband enjoy traveling far and wide, reading, gardening, being outdoors, and spending time with their children and grandchildren in Los Angeles and NYC.



### Liz Cash

Elizabeth (Liz) Cash was born in Chicago, moved to Orchard Park at the age of four and never left.

A graduate of the University of Buffalo and Albright Art School, Liz worked as a commercial artist, art department supervisor and customer service representative for local printing companies. She has also worked as an interior designer, ornamental horticulturist, and floral designer.

Liz is a member of Zonta International and President of the American Legion Auxiliary Post 567. She volunteers for Wings of Hope, Toys for Kids, Children's Hospital Telethon, the Public Awareness Committee for the Family Justice Center, and Kathleen Mary House. Liz is a member of the South Towns Gardeners, co-chairing the Flag Pole Garden at the Chestnut Ridge.

"Some of my fondest memories growing up were spent at Chestnut Ridge Park. I believe in its restoration and preservation for all of our future generations."

### Ron Smith

After getting a Bachelors degree in Mathematics from St. Bonaventure University, Ron taught high school mathematics for four years before leaving education for the corporate world. Ron joined Greater Buffalo Press as a purchasing manager. From there he became a part owner and VP of Operations for Purchasing Support, Inc., a firm specializing in helping other organizations optimize their purchasing function.



Since 2003, Ron has been a franchise owner of The BrickKicker Home Inspection Services.

In addition to being a supporter of the Special Olympics and SABA, Ron is very active in numerous community organizations including current and past involvement in Heritage Centers for the Developmentally Disabled, the Buffalo Chapter of American Red Cross, NYS Association for Retarded Children, the Erie County Fisheries Advisory Board, and the Erie County Charter Revision Committee.

Ron joined the Conservancy in 2013 and has been active in our grant writing efforts, as well as helping to prioritize the list of CRC park improvement projects.



## Do You Have Questions About the Park?

While the Conservancy is always happy to take your questions about the park, very often the best place to go for answers is the **Erie County Parks Department**.

Whether you have questions about trails, landmarks, or features; need to reserve a shelter for a private affair; or share your ideas or concerns about the park itself, you can:

- Contact the Erie County Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department at **(716) 858-8355**
- Visit the Erie County Parks, Recreation, and Forestry website at **www2.Erie.gov/parks**



## Park Improvements

The Conservancy has donated the first of three portable, dual-purpose steel racks in an effort to make sledding safer in the winter and to protect and secure bicycles in the summer. The racks can be moved around the park as necessary to meet the needs of park visitors as the seasons change. The remaining two racks will be delivered later this year.



*Bike and Sled Rack*

The Conservancy also contributed money to purchase plants and flowers for the flag pole garden next to the casino. The **South Towns Gardeners Club** donated their time to beautify the circular area surrounding the flag pole that was constructed as a part of the parking lot renovation performed in the late summer and early autumn of 2013. The small flags in the picture below were placed in the garden as part of a Memorial Day service held by the Orchard Park American Legion Post.



*Newly built Flag Pole Garden near the Casino*

## CRC in the Press

Conservancy Trustee Ron Michnik and Marketing Consultant Bill Even were guests on WNYB-TV's *Public Report* which aired on Saturday, May 31. Host Larry Wiggins gave the CRC an opportunity to discuss the upcoming events at the park and our organization's goals for 2014 and beyond.

In print, the Conservancy was featured in some very positive articles in the local Orchard Park papers, including an extensive mural-related article in the November 13, 2013 edition of the **Orchard Park Bee** and a front page article in the **East Aurora/Orchard Park Sun** on May 31, 2014 that discussed the upcoming events for 2014.

Our greatest exposure came from a great article in the Sunday, January 19, 2014 edition of the **Buffalo News** that featured a lengthy interview with CRC Trustee Ron Michnik regarding the mural restoration project and the impact the Conservancy has had on our beautiful park.



### Many Thanks to ...

... County Executive Mark Poloncarz, Parks Commissioner Troy Schinzel and Deputy Parks Commissioner/CRC Trustee Daniel Glowacki, Supervisor of Parks J. J. Thomas, and the entire Chestnut Ridge Park staff for their continued support and cooperation.

... Connie Lydon of **Schichtel's Nursery** for designing the landscaping layout around the Casino flag pole for the South Towns Gardeners and the Conservancy.



*Another beautiful day at Chestnut Ridge*

## Firefighter Demo June 11



*Erie County Fire Trailer*

The Chestnut Ridge Conservancy is co-sponsoring a **Firefighter Showcase** to be held at the Erie County Fire Training Tower located inside Chestnut Ridge Park. Local volunteer fire companies will be demonstrating various firefighting techniques including ladder rescue, rope rescue, and roof ventilation.

The event will be held on Wednesday, June 11 from 6:30pm to 8:00pm. It is open to the public. Admission is free. Parking will be available a short walk from the tower.

The **Erie County Parks and Recreation** department and the **County of Erie Emergency Services** division are also co-sponsoring the event.

More information is available at [iVolunteerFire.org](http://iVolunteerFire.org).

### CRC Executive Director To Be Hired

The Conservancy recently placed ads in the three Orchard Park newspapers looking for applicants to interview for the newly established position of Chestnut Ridge Conservancy Executive Director.

“With the success of our gala events and other fund raising efforts, we are now in a position to hire a part-time executive to help this otherwise volunteer organization get to the next level,” said CRC Vice President Bill Thornton.

The executive director will serve as the chief executive officer for the board and will be responsible for coordinating Conservancy projects and activities, scheduling meetings and events, ensuring compliance with our by-laws, and functioning as the primary point of contact for all Conservancy business.

The deadline for submitting resumes was June 1, 2014. The hiring will be announced through our mailing list and on our Facebook page.

## Upcoming Events at CRP

We are pleased to announce the following upcoming events at Chestnut Ridge Park:

- **June 11, 2014:** Firefighter Demonstration at the Fire Training Tower; 6:30pm to 8:00pm—Free
- **June 23, 2014:** Chestnut Ridge Conservancy Mural Restoration Wine and Cheese Open House; 6:00pm to 8:00pm—Free
- **June 27, 2014:** Outdoor Movie — *Marvel’s The Avengers*; 9:30pm—Free
- **June 28, 2014:** Fishing Derby; 10:00am to 1:00pm—Free
- **July 27, 2014:** Outdoor Movie — *Despicable Me*; 8:45pm—Free
- **August 15, 2014:** Outdoor Movie — *The Wizard of Oz*; 8:30pm—Free

For more information on these and other Chestnut Ridge Park events, visit [EverythingOP.com](http://EverythingOP.com).



## What’s In Store for 2014

The following projects are in the works for this year ...

- Restoration of the land next to the MacKinnon lodge that is home to the park’s baseball diamond. We are examining options that include a baseball/softball diamond, volleyball courts, and a soccer field.
- Installation of windscreens and benches at the newly resurfaced tennis courts across from the Casino.
- Completion of the mural restoration project.
- Trail mapping.

### Would You Like to Volunteer?

If you are interested in volunteering at any of our events throughout the year, we’d love to hear from you! Please email us at:

[Volunteers@ChestnutRidgeConservancy.org](mailto:Volunteers@ChestnutRidgeConservancy.org)

We’ll follow up with you right away!

# Another Successful Gala Event Raises Over \$30,000

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Chestnut Ridge Conservancy Gala Event was held on Saturday, November 9, 2013 at the Orchard Park Country Club. Like the previous year, the event was a great success. In addition to an extraordinary gourmet meal and world-class entertainment provided by the *Bobby Militello Quartet*, the Conservancy raised more than \$30,000 that was deposited in the general account to help fund future Conservancy projects within the park.



Masters of Ceremonies Susan Rose and John Zach

This year's masters of ceremonies were **John Zach** and **Susan Rose** from **WBEN 930AM Radio**. Their chemistry and humor made for a very enjoyable evening for the 100 people in attendance.

Congratulations to Toni Cudney who was the lucky winner of the flat screen television set given away as a door prize. Thanks to **Polymer Conversions, Inc.** for their generous donation.

## Jack Bertsch Receives 2013 Guardian Award

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Chestnut Ridge Conservancy Guardian Award was presented to CRC Founding Trustee and Treasurer Jack Bertsch. Jack's generosity, selflessness, leadership, and unparalleled determination made him the obvious choice for this year's award.



CRC Chairman Emeritus Ray Fabiniak (right) presents Founding Trustee and Treasurer Jack Bertsch (left) with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Chestnut Ridge Guardian Award

## Thanks to All Those Who Made the Gala Possible

The Conservancy wishes to acknowledge:

- Jim Rahill of **First Niagara Bank** and his wife Patty for serving as honorary chairpersons
- Bill & Colleen Baker and the **Orchard Park Country Club** staff for great food and a wonderful evening
- The entire Gala planning committee led by CRC Trustee Mike Neumeister
- **Entercom Communications** for helping us to publicize the event over the airwaves
- All of the sponsors and attendees who made this event "the place to be"

## Senator Grisanti Pledges Funds to the CRC

While attending the 2013 Gala, NYS Senator Mark Grisanti pledged approximately \$200,000 in state aid to help fund various environmental projects at Chestnut Ridge Park. These dollars became available after projects for which the money was originally intended were cancelled. Sincere thanks to Senator Grisanti for his dedication to our worthy cause. Talks are underway to determine which items on the CRC's list of projects qualify for the funding and which projects are in line with Erie County's plans for 2014 and 2015.



The Bobby Militello Quartet



Jim Morse, Mike Capriotto and Trustee Jack Bertsch

## Our 2013 Gala Sponsors

The Chestnut Ridge Conservancy wishes to thank all of the very generous companies and individuals that sponsored our highly successful 2013 Gala event. We couldn't have done it without you!

### Platinum Sponsors



### Gold Sponsors



### Silver Sponsors



### Patrons



Planning for the 2014 Gala is already underway. If your organization would like to sponsor this year's event, please contact **John Bailey** at 716.662.0236, or via email at [info@ChestnutRidgeConservancy.org](mailto:info@ChestnutRidgeConservancy.org).



## CRC Publications Are On-line!

Have you misplaced your last Conservancy newsletter? Would you like to read the **1939 Erie County Park System** booklet? No problem at all! Now you can view all of the Conservancy's publications on-line.

Simply open up your favorite web browser and in the address line at the top of the screen, type:

# Issuu.com

and hit the **Enter** key. When the site opens, type **Chestnut Ridge Conservancy** in the "Search" box and hit **Enter** again. All of our publications are available for both downloading and on-line viewing.

## 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting Held

On Saturday May 10, 2014, the Chestnut Ridge Conservancy held its 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting at the Chestnut Ridge Casino. This year there was much to convey to the more than thirty attendees who enjoyed a presentation of the CRC's successes and future plans, as well as lunch provided by Legislator John Mills of **J. Mills Distributing**.

CRC President John Bailey provided a brief overview of our upcoming events, a financial report, and a review of the CRC's accomplishments over the past twelve months, including:

- The Casino mural restoration project
- The purchase and installation of racks that can be used throughout the year as bike racks in the summer and sled racks in the winter
- Landscaping the flag pole next to the Casino with the help of the **South Towns Gardeners**

Conservancy Vice President Bill Thornton provided the details of the CRC's plans for the next twelve months and beyond.



CRC Vice President Bill Thornton (standing) outlines the CRC Capital Projects slate

Special thanks to Jim Morse for serving as "grillmaster" again this year.



NYS Senator Mark Grisanti (left) speaks with CRC Trustee Ron Michnik and other guests at the 2014 Chestnut Ridge Conservancy Annual Meeting on May 10, 2014.

## Art Show to Benefit Conservancy Slated for 2015

In April, the Conservancy was approached by local artist Charles Houseman and Grace Meibohm of **Meibohm Fine Arts, Inc.** located at 478 Main Street in East Aurora, NY to discuss the possibility of hosting an exhibit and sale of art depicting Chestnut Ridge Park. The exhibition is planned for May 30 - July 18, 2015 and will be held at Meibohm Fine Arts.

**MEIBOHM FINE ARTS**  
478 MAIN STREET EAST AURORA 716 652.0940 MEIBOHMFINEARTS.COM

The gallery will invite select local artists to participate in the event. The artists will visit the park during the upcoming year to paint or photograph the beautiful park surroundings. There will be an artists' reception open to the public at the gallery on May 30, 2015 between 12:00pm and 5:00pm to kick off the exhibition. All of the works will be available for sale. Both Meibohm Fine Arts and the artists will donate a portion of the proceeds to the Conservancy.

"A mutual mission is shared by the Chestnut Ridge Conservancy and by artists who often look to nature for

inspiration, so I feel that helping to bring them together is a worthwhile effort," noted gallery owner Grace Meibohm.

"We look forward to working with Grace and Charles to make this an extraordinary event for the artists, the park, Meibohm Fine Arts, and the Conservancy. The financial benefits to the CRC are certainly a great reason for the Conservancy to get involved with this exhibit, but the fact that we are raising awareness of Chestnut Ridge Park in towns besides Orchard Park is truly a wonderful thing," said Conservancy President John Bailey.

Meibohm Fine Arts has held similar exhibitions in the past for other not-for-profit organizations including the **Western New York Land Conservancy** and **The Friends of Mill Road** land acquisition. If history is any indication, the Conservancy stands to receive a generous donation that will help us make improvements to our beautiful park.

Additional information on Meibohm Fine Arts can be found on the web at [MeibohmFineArts.com](http://MeibohmFineArts.com).

### Trail Marking Project Underway

With the generous assistance of Mike Borowiak, Vice President of **Nussbaumer & Clarke, Inc.**, Engineers and Surveyors, the CRC will undergo an extensive mapping of the numerous trails and paths inside of the park.



Borowiak has generously volunteered his services, as well as the use of the company's state-of-the-art **Trimble GeoExplorer** global positioning system (GPS) mapping device, to walk and capture trail data. The collected data will then be used to mark the trails and display them on printed park maps.

### CRC Board Changes

The Chestnut Ridge Conservancy welcomes new board members Justin Kahabka, Mona Lloyd, and Ron Smith to our organization.

We also wish to thank David Shareno for his service to the Conservancy as board member and Secretary.

### Memories Wanted!

The Conservancy has two projects in progress and we need your old photos from Chestnut Ridge.



*Chestnut Ridge Picnic Shelter, circa 1939*

The first project is an article to be included in a 2015 edition of **Western New York Heritage** magazine. We are looking for pictures taken over the past 80+ years that show the park, the people, and the lifestyles of past eras.

In addition, we would like to create an electronic slide show on the Conservancy web site showing the evolution of the park over the years.

We request that photos be submitted electronically. If you have only "printed" photos, please email us at [photos@ChestnutRidgeConservancy.org](mailto:photos@ChestnutRidgeConservancy.org) and we will contact you. Credit for the photos will, of course, be attributed to the sender. Thank you in advance!



# CHESTNUT RIDGE *Conservancy*

In an effort to assist the County of Erie in restoring and maintaining Chestnut Ridge Park in the midst of budget cuts and rising expenses, a dedicated group of concerned citizens has come together to form the *Chestnut Ridge Conservancy*.

This not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization was established to support the restoration and preservation of the rich natural, recreational, and historic resources that comprise our own Chestnut Ridge Park.

We are working with the Erie County Parks Department to:

- Define projects that need to be completed
- Raise funds through the generosity of corporations, community groups, and citizens
- Sponsor events to raise awareness and encourage county residents to take advantage of the park's facilities and scenery

**We need your help to carry out our mission!**

*Please consider donating to our worthy cause. Simply complete the form below and include it with your check made out to ...*

## Chestnut Ridge Conservancy

P. O. Box 1376  
Orchard Park, NY 14127

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State/Province: \_\_\_\_\_

ZIP/Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please add me to your email mailing list.

Email: [info@ChestnutRidgeConservancy.org](mailto:info@ChestnutRidgeConservancy.org)

Web: [ChestnutRidgeConservancy.org](http://ChestnutRidgeConservancy.org)

Facebook: [Facebook.com/ChestnutRidgeConservancy](https://www.facebook.com/ChestnutRidgeConservancy)

## Will You Help Us Revitalize Chestnut Ridge Park?

The **Chestnut Ridge Conservancy** is working to restore our local treasure. Your assistance is critical! Please select your membership level and return this slip with a check for your tax-deductible contribution made payable to *Chestnut Ridge Conservancy*.

**Thank you for your support!**

Join on-line at:

[ChestnutRidgeConservancy.org/membership](http://ChestnutRidgeConservancy.org/membership)

### Annual Membership Levels:

Chestnut Family Membership	\$100
Family Membership	\$50
Individual Membership	\$30
Senior Membership (55 and up)	\$25
Community Groups	\$125
Conservationist	\$500
Preservationist	\$2,500
Park Benefactor	\$5,000

*Many companies will match employee contributions to 501(c)(3) organizations.*

*Please check with your employer to see if they participate in this type of program.*

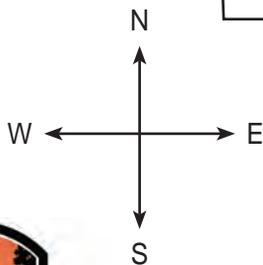
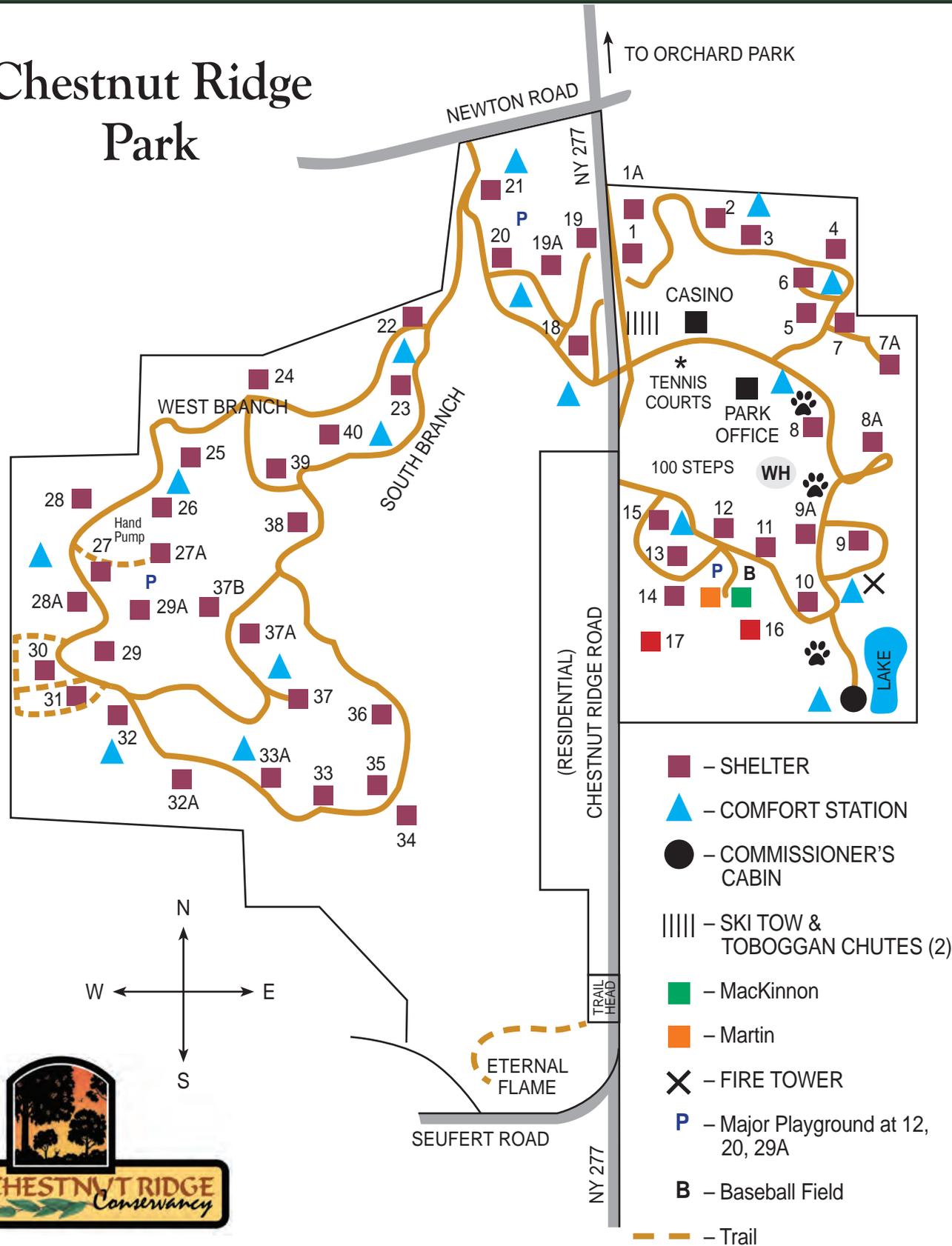
### ***I Would Like to Volunteer!***

I am interested in helping with:

- Fund Raising
- Events Planning
- Event Setup, Cleanup, and Activities
- Administrative Tasks



# Chestnut Ridge Park



Enjoy this map with compliments of the Chestnut Ridge Conservancy.

Please join us at [www.ChestnutRidgeConservancy.org](http://www.ChestnutRidgeConservancy.org)

-  - SHELTER
-  - COMFORT STATION
-  - COMMISSIONER'S CABIN
-  - SKI TOW & TOBOGGAN CHUTES (2)
-  - MacKinnon
-  - Martin
-  - FIRE TOWER
-  - Major Playground at 12, 20, 29A
-  - Baseball Field
-  - Trail
-  - Storage Barn at 16, 17
-  - Warming Hut
-  - Pet Waste Station