



Marcus J. Molinaro, County Executive

Dutchess County Parks to Celebrate Arbor Day at Wilcox Memorial Park April 30th

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Poughkeepsie... In celebration of Arbor Day, Dutchess County Parks will host a special event on Saturday, April 30th at Wilcox Memorial Park in Milan to honor and celebrate the beauty and history of the park.

Dutchess County Executive Marc Molinaro said, "Wilcox Park is steeped in history and Arbor Day is a great time to celebrate the Wilcox family's legacy of community involvement and forestry. We invite residents of all ages to come learn, explore, and celebrate all that this great Dutchess County park has to offer."

The day kicks off at 10 a.m. Saturday with an unveiling ceremony for new historic panels that recount the story of the Wilcox family, who owned the 615-acre property formerly known as Oakdale Farm. The descriptive panels are displayed on a kiosk built by Boy Scout Troop 50. The ceremony will also

include planting two pine trees in honor of the Wilcox family, who were celebrated for their visionary commitment to re-forestation of the property in the early 20th century, as well as gifting numerous Wilcox family historical materials to the town of Milan historian. Following the ceremony, attendees will have the opportunity to take a guided hike to learn more about the park's history. Attendees can register by emailing soneil@dutchessny.gov. The event will be held light rain or shine.



From the earliest days of settlement in Dutchess County, the forest was an essential resource. Farmers harvested trees to create fields for growing crops and raising livestock. Miners used wood to create charcoal for refining local iron ore. Sawmills turned lumber into boards for building homes and barns. As a result, vast tracts of the county became deforested. In the early 1910s, Frederick Wilcox saw an opportunity to reverse this trend on his family's estate, Oakdale Farm, planting as many as 10,000 trees per year for several years. Following the deaths of her husband and son, Irene Wilcox sold Oakdale Farm to Dutchess County in April 1961 on the condition that it be transformed into a public park.

Sandy Washburn, Dutchess County Parks Director, said, “This beautiful land has been carefully managed to preserve the forest the Wilcox family planted, ensuring its beauty and service to our environment last for generations to come. We invite everyone to walk among the trees and learn more about this area’s history and the role we all can play as its steward.”

Residents will have an opportunity to help develop the popular Disc Golf course at Wilcox Memorial Park clean and beautiful on Saturday, May 7th from 9am-2pm as Dutchess County Parks hosts an “I Love My Park” tee-pad building event. Volunteers ages 13 and up are needed to help construct tee pads on the park’s disc golf course in preparation for upcoming tournament play. Registration is required through the [New York Parks and Trails I Love My Parks Day website](#). Volunteers should enter their information and select the Wilcox Park event from the drop-down menu at the bottom of the form. This event is sponsored by Capital Discs in partnership with Dutchess County Parks.

For more information call 845-298-4603 or visit DutchessNY.gov/Parks for more information.

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