

The Sam's Point Area of Minnewaska State Park Preserve will re-open to the public in a partial capacity on Saturday, May 28<sup>th</sup>. The Sam's Point Area has been closed since Sunday, April 24<sup>th</sup> after a wildfire ignited on the Verkeerderkill Falls trail on Saturday, April 23<sup>rd</sup>. The wildfire continued for five days, burning an area of 2,028 acres. The majority of the burn occurred in the globally rare ridgetop dwarf pitch pine barrens, which is a fire dependent community.

- Trails OPEN within the Sam's Point Area: Loop Road, Ice Caves Road, and Ice Caves Trail. The Sam's Point Overlook and views of Lake Maratanza are both accessible via the Loop Road.
- Trails CLOSED within the Sam's Point Area: South Gully, High Point Carriage Road, Indian Rock, High Point Footpath, and Verkeerder Kill Falls.
- Trails connecting the Minnewaska area to the Sam's Point Area will remain CLOSED until further notice. Those trails are: Lower Mine Hole Trail, Mine Hole Road/Long Path, Scenic Trail, Smiley Carriage Road, and Stony Kill Carriage Road.

We ask that you please adhere to the posted trail closures for both safety and ecological reasons. A large disturbance to the environment, such as wildfire, greatly increases the risk of certain invasive species becoming established. Walking in burned areas may compact the soil or crush seedlings. Staying out of closed areas will help this globally rare ecosystem regenerate. All visitor cooperation is essential.

Several research and monitoring projects are happening within Sam's Point to help us better understand this unique environment.



Bracken Ferns were the first plants observed growing in the burnt areas.



Painted Trilliums are growing in areas of low intensity burn, bringing some color back to the area.



Sam's Point staff surveying the burn area and establishing monitoring plots.



The thick bark of the pitch pine is one of its many fire adaptations. As you can see in this photo, the bark of this tree was completely charred while the sapwood and heartwood remain healthy.



Pitch pines have serotinous cones which open to release their seeds when they are exposed to high heat.