

# Hudson River School Art Trail

## Trail Site 1

### Cedar Grove The Thomas Cole National Historic Site

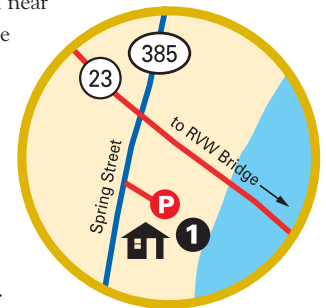
Cedar Grove is the home of Thomas Cole, founder of the Hudson River School of art. The site includes the Federal style brick Main House (c. 1815), as well as Thomas Cole's original studio building, on landscaped grounds with a magnificent view of the Catskill Mountain range.

The Main House and Studio are open by guided tours, which are offered Friday, Saturday & Sunday, 10 am to 4 pm, from early May through late October. The grounds and visitor center are open free of charge, and a small fee is charged for the tour of the historic buildings. For detailed information about hours, admission and group tours, log on to [www.thomascole.org](http://www.thomascole.org).

*“O Cedar Grove! when'er I think to part  
From thine all peaceful shades my aching heart  
Is like to his who leaves some blessed shore  
A weeping exile ne'er to see it more.”*

Thomas Cole, 1834

**DIRECTIONS:** Cedar Grove is located near the west entrance to the Rip Van Winkle Bridge. Take NYS Thruway (I-87) to exit 21 (Catskill). Make a left at the stop sign, then proceed 1,000 feet and make a left onto Route 23 East. Proceed 2 miles and make a right at the light onto Spring Street (Route 385). Cedar Grove is on the left. (Use the shared driveway with Temple Israel).



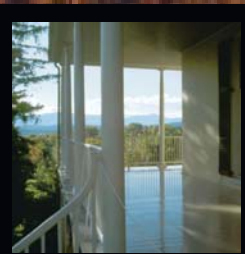
Charles Herbert Moore, *Thomas Cole's Cedar Grove*, 1868.  
The Thomas Cole National Historic Site, Catskill, NY.



Photograph of the Main House at Cedar Grove  
© Thomas Cole National Historic Site



Thomas Cole, *View on the Catskill - Early Autumn*, 1838.  
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY.



Photograph from the West Porch  
© Thomas Cole National Historic Site

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# Hudson River School Art Trail

## Trail Site 2

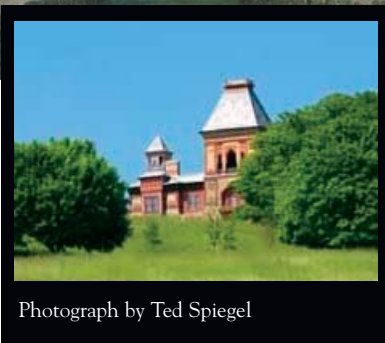
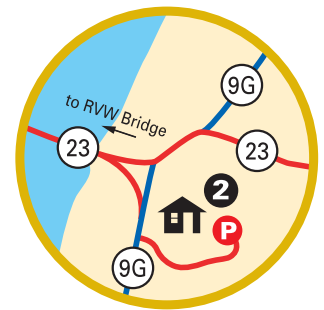
### The Olana State Historic Site

Olana is the home and workplace of Frederic Edwin Church, a former student of Thomas Cole and a leading Hudson River School artist. Built high on a hill and offering panoramic vistas of the Hudson River Valley, Church called Olana “the center of the world.” The Persian-style house and 250 acres of picturesque grounds are a masterpiece as grand as any of his paintings.

Tours of the house are offered daily (except Mondays), 10 am to 5 pm, April through November, and on weekends and by appointment from December through March. **HOWEVER, PLEASE NOTE THAT THE HOUSE WILL BE CLOSED**

DURING 2006. Please call Olana for updated information about the date of the reopening. The grounds with spectacular views are open from dawn until dusk every day. There is a small fee per car on weekends and holidays. For more information, log on to [www.olana.org](http://www.olana.org) or call 518-828-0135.

**DIRECTIONS:** From Trail Site 1 (the Thomas Cole Site), turn right out of the parking lot and immediately bear right onto Route 23 East. Go over the Rip Van Winkle Bridge and bear right onto Route 9G South. Olana is on the left one mile south of the Rip Van Winkle Bridge.

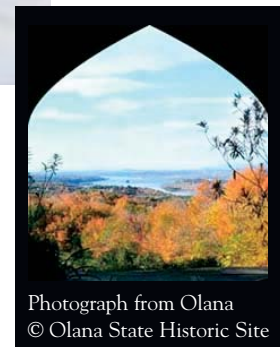


Frederic Church, *Clouds Over Olana*, 1872.  
Olana State Historic Site,  
Hudson, NY.

Photograph by Ted Spiegel



Frederic Church, *The Hudson Valley in Winter from Olana*.  
Olana State Historic Site,  
Hudson, NY.



Photograph from Olana  
© Olana State Historic Site

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# Hudson River School Art Trail

## Trail Site 3

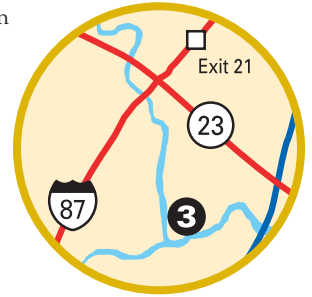
### View on the Catskill Creek

Just a few miles from Thomas Cole's home, this scene was frequented by Frederic Church when he was a student of Thomas Cole's, and was painted several times by both artists.

*"The painter of American scenery has indeed privileges superior to any other; all nature here is new to Art."*

Thomas Cole,  
*Journal entry, 1835*

**DIRECTIONS:** From Trail Site 1 (the Thomas Cole Site), turn right out of the parking lot to the corner of Spring Street and Route 23. Turn left onto Route 23 West, go 1/2 mile and turn left onto Route 9W South. Proceed 1000 feet on 9W, past the ramp to Jefferson Heights, to the bridge crossing the Catskill Creek. The classic view of the Catskill Creek with the mountains in the distance can be seen from the bridge or from the property of Tatiana's Restaurant on the north side of the bridge.



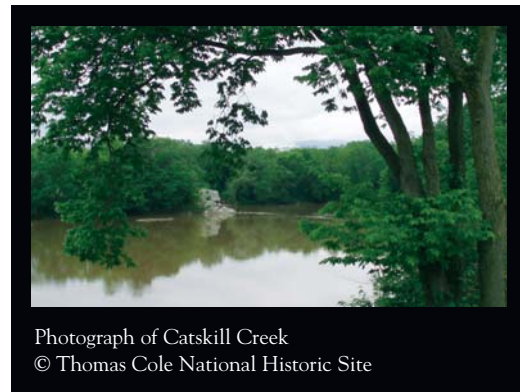
Frederic Church, *Scene on Catskill Creek*, 1847.  
 Washington County Museum of Fine Arts, MD.



Thomas Cole, *View on Catskill Creek*, c. 1833.  
 Albany Institute of History and Art, Albany, NY.



Frederic Church, *The Catskill Creek*, July-August 1845.  
 Olana State Historic Site, Hudson, NY.



Photograph of Catskill Creek  
 © Thomas Cole National Historic Site

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# Hudson River School Art Trail

## Trail Site 4 Kaaterskill Clove

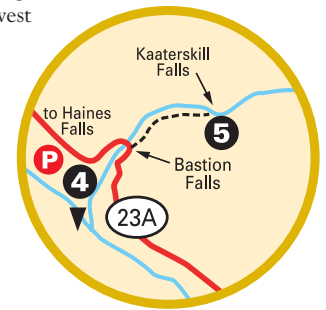
The clove, a distinctive feature or "cleft" in the Catskills, was one of the places most painted by the Hudson River School artists. The rugged terrain of the clove was created by glacial action and the erosive forces of the streams that cut into its depths and cascade down its sides. Palenville, at the foot of the clove, became America's first art colony.

Thomas Cole painted the clove from the top of Haines Falls, Asher Durand from nearby Santa Cruz Falls, and Sanford Gifford from near Poet's Ledge. Their paintings helped Americans form a sense of national identity. Here was a quality of nature wild, sublime, and distinctly different from anything known in Europe. The clove was of such importance to these painters that Durand chose it as the setting for the painting *Kindred Spirits*, his tribute to Thomas Cole with poet William Cullen Bryant. The area today is largely as it was in the 19th-century due to its inclusion in the Catskill Forest Preserve.

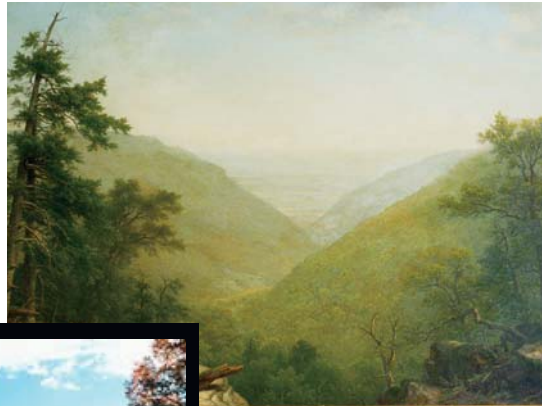
*"The peculiar fidelity and sentiment of nature with which Durand always depicts trees, is eloquently manifest. The aerial perspective, the gradations of light, the tints of foliage, the slope of the mountains – in a word, the whole scenic expression is harmonious, grand, tender and true."*

Henry T. Tuckerman,  
*Book of the Artists;*  
*American Artist Life*, 1867

**DIRECTIONS:** From Trail Site 3, turn right on Route 9W South; proceed 1.3 miles west to where Route 9W turns south. Leave Route 9W and proceed straight ahead onto Route 23A. Continue eight miles to Palenville, an early artists' community. Continue another 3-1/2 miles on Route 23A, climbing through historic Kaaterskill Clove, past Bastion Falls to the trail access parking area on the left side of the road. A view of the Clove is available through a clearing in the trees on the south side of the parking lot.



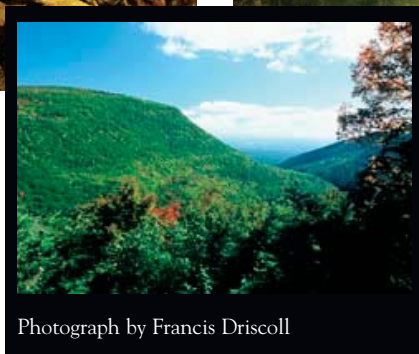
Thomas Cole, *The Clove*, Catskills, 1827. Oil on canvas, 25 x 33 in. New Britain Museum of American Art, New Britain, CT.



Asher B. Durand, *Kaaterskill Clove*, 1866. Oil on canvas, 38-1/4 x 60 in. The Century Association, New York City, NY.



Asher B. Durand, *Kindred Spirits*, 1849. Oil on canvas. Courtesy of the Walton Family Foundation, Inc.



Photograph by Francis Driscoll

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# Hudson River School Art Trail

## Trail Site 5

### Kaaterskill Falls

More than any other site, Kaaterskill Falls with its torrents rushing through the dark rocky gorge exemplifies the picturesque. Here, nature overwhelms. Hudson River School paintings frequently show humankind diminished in a vast wilderness, such as the lone Native American in Thomas Cole's painting Falls of the Kaaterskill. Awe for the vastness of America and spiritual wonder at the power of nature was being expressed by writers who set the stage for the Hudson River School in the early 19th century. James Fenimore Cooper was speaking of Kaaterskill Falls when he had Natty Bumppo say, "To my judgment, lad, it's the best piece of work that I've met with in the woods; and none know how often the hand of God is seen in the wilderness, but them that rove it for a man's life..."

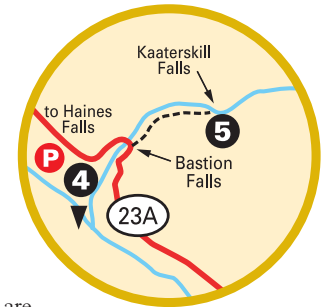
To Thomas Cole, one of the major elements in landscape painting was the waterfall.

*"It is the voice of the landscape for it strikes its own chords, and rocks and mountains re-echo in rich unison."*

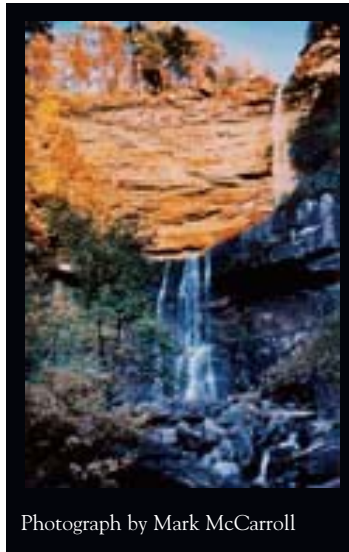
Thomas Cole,  
*Essay on American Scenery, 1835*

**DIRECTIONS:** Leave your car at the parking area for the previous stop (Trail Site 4). Proceed cautiously back along the highway downhill to the bridge at Bastion Falls. Cross the bridge, turn left to exit the road and follow the trail to the right of the falls, which climbs up 1/2 mile to the base of Kaaterskill Falls. The two-tier waterfall is one of the highest in New York State, and this is the location of Thomas Cole's Falls of the Kaaterskill, one of the paintings that initiated the Hudson River School. Then return to the parking lot.

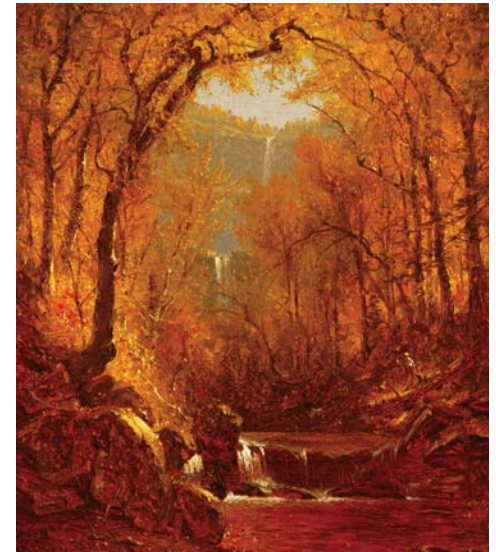
**NOTE:** There is no maintained trail under the falls or to the top, where the water originates; attempts to climb there are dangerous and cause erosion.



Thomas Cole, *Falls of the Kaaterskill*, 1826.  
 The Warner Collection of Gulf States  
 Paper Corporation.



Photograph by Mark McCarroll



Sanford R. Gifford, *Kaaterskill Falls*, 1871.  
 Oil on canvas, 14-3/4 by 12-1/4 in.  
 Gift of Katherine French Rockwell.  
 Photograph © 1995. The Detroit Institute of Arts.

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# Hudson River School Art Trail

## Trail Site 6

### North-South Lake

One of the first paintings of the Hudson River School was done from this shore. Thomas Cole's *Lake with Dead Trees* was based on sketches that Cole made here in 1825. Back in his New York City studio, he painted revolutionary canvases from the sketches from that trip. Twenty-five years later, Jasper Cropsey would paint the exact same scene.

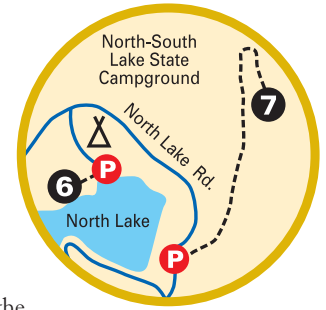
Trail sites 6 and 7 are in North-South Lake Public Campground. A day-use fee is required, and the campground is open May-October only. (For exact dates please visit [www.dec-campgrounds.com](http://www.dec-campgrounds.com).)

*"The most distinctive, and perhaps the most impressive characteristic of American scenery is its wildness."*

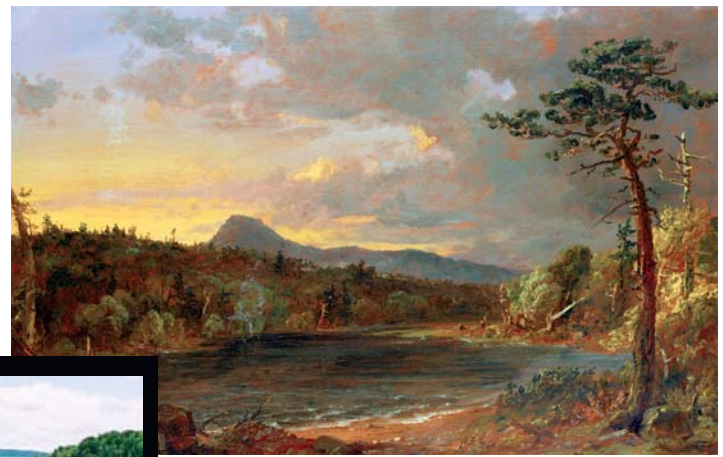
Thomas Cole,  
*Essay on American Scenery*, 1835

**DIRECTIONS:** From Trail Site 4 (Kaaterskill Clove), proceed west 1.2 miles, passing the Mountain Top Historical Society. Turn right onto North Lake Road (County Route 18) and continue 2

miles to the gatehouse at North-South Lake Public Campground. Pay the entrance fee and request campground and trail maps. Enter North-South Lake Public Campground and bear left toward the North Lake Beach. At the stop sign turn right, drive down the hill and park in the small parking area near the Recreation Center. Follow the short level path directly across from the Recreation Center toward the narrowest part of the now-combined lakes. Cole did his sketches for *Lake with Dead Trees* from the bank of South Lake, which is on the right about 250 feet down this path.



Thomas Cole, *Lake with Dead Trees*, 1825.  
 Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin College, Ohio.



Jasper Francis Cropsey, *Catskill Creek*, 1850.  
 Oil on canvas, 18-3/8 x 27-1/4 in.  
 Smithsonian American Art Museum, museum purchase 1966.50 (Note: this Cropsey painting above is misnamed. It depicts North-South Lake, not Catskill Creek.)



Photograph of North-South Lake  
 © Thomas Cole National Historic Site

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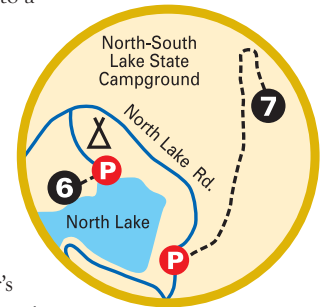
## Trail Site 7

### Sunset Rock

Give yourself about two hours to enjoy this foot trail that climbs a rocky incline, passes open views of the Hudson Valley, and ends at one of the most frequently painted views of the Hudson River School.

The ledge known to artists of the Hudson River School as Bear's Den is now called Sunset Rock. An 1879 guidebook called it "... the grandest combination of mountain scenery to be met with here or elsewhere." Painters of the Hudson River School sketched from scenic points such as this one, took notes on colors and atmospheric details, and returned to their studios to complete the paintings. The finished works often combined on a single canvas different elements from a variety of locations.

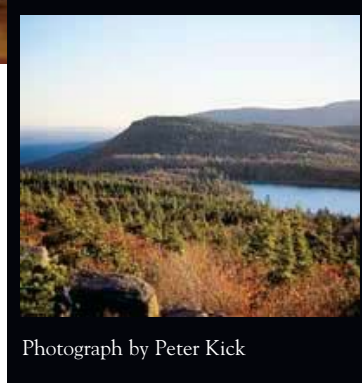
**DIRECTIONS:** From Trail Site 6, drive back up to North Lake Road, turn right and drive to the North Lake Beach parking area. The beach is to the west, a picnic area to the east. Walk east across the picnic area, and when you get to the fence at the ledge, go left. You should soon see the blue trail markers of the Escarpment Trail. Sign the register, continue north another 500 feet and begin a climb, which is the most difficult stretch of the hike. Go 1/4 mile to a favorite spot of Thomas Cole, a ledge he knew as "Prospect Rock" but now labeled "Artist's Rock," which will give a sweeping view of the Hudson Valley. The trail then leaves the ledges, and in less than a half mile along the blue trail it meets a junction with a yellow trail toward "Sunset Rock." In Cole's day, this location was referred to as "Bear's Den." Return by retracing your path to North Lake Campground.



Thomas Cole, *The Catskill Mountain House: The Four Elements*, 1843-44.  
Oil on canvas, 29 x 36 in. Private Collection.



Jasper Francis Cropsey, *Catskill Mountain House*, 1855.  
The Minneapolis Institute of Arts.



Photograph by Peter Kick

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