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Harlem in the Woods

The CCNY Writers' Nature Retreat
at the Stephen & Betsy Corman Outdoor Center

Sponsored by the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC), the CCNY Outdoor Initiative and the Office of The President through the College's "Democratizing the Outdoors" Initiative



In 2022, the CCNY Writers' Nature Retreat was launched as a way to simultaneously deepen students' appreciation for and connection to the natural environment, and provide them an escape from the city. The Director of the MFA, Michelle Valladares, told participants what she hoped they might take away from the experience: "We cannot love what we do not know: oceans, lakes, birds, trees, the wilderness."

The weekend in nature provides students an opportunity to shed the stress of city life and explore their creativity amid the sugar maples and pine trees of Harriman State Park.

Thanks to the generous support of the Office of the President through the College's "Democratizing the Outdoors" Initiative, and in collaboration with the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) and the CCNY Outdoor Club, students are able to participate at no cost.



Retreat Overview

While the writing exercises and outdoor activities of each year's retreat will vary, students can expect the following array of activities and outcomes:

- Connect with nature through a variety of outdoor activities ranging from nature walks to kayaking
- Attend formal or informal lectures and discussions on issues ranging from climate change, environmental justice and local ecology
- Participate in group writing exercises and workshops
- Take advantage of unstructured time to focus on their writing in an environment free of distractions



The Appalachian Mountain Club

Since 1876 we've made it our mission to protect the mountains, forests, waters, and trails you love in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions. We envision a world where our natural resources are healthy, loved, and always protected, and where the outdoors occupies a place of central importance in every person's life. We encourage you to experience, learn more, and appreciate the outdoors knowing that your participation supports the conservation and stewardship of the natural world around you.

AMC is inspired by the untold diversity of our members and friends. We aim to be an inclusive, equitable, and kind community. At AMC we are united in our adventures by mutual trust, collective safety, respect for the natural world, and appreciation for our time together outdoors. We pledge that AMC will always provide a welcoming and respectful environment.

The CCNY Outdoor Initiative

CCNY Outdoor Initiative will leverage our partnerships with external groups like The Appalachian Mountain Club and share the resources of those partnerships to provide opportunities to faculty, students and staff who are interested in conservation and recreational outdoor activities.

The Initiative will continue to sponsor a range of outdoor activities aimed at broadening access and understanding of the natural environment, promoting the skills and knowledge that underpin outdoor recreation, and in both ways develop a broader cohort of stewards for the wild and natural spaces around us, including those in our immediate community.