

## On-Location: Harriman State Park, New York

by Photographer Raymond Klass

Harriman State Park is located in Southern New York. It stretches from just north of New Jersey (about half a mile), to the Bear Mountain Bridge, and encompasses some of the best hiking trails, scenic vistas, streams and lakes in Southern New York. The park is about an hour drive from Manhattan, and a popular weekend escape for many New York City residents.

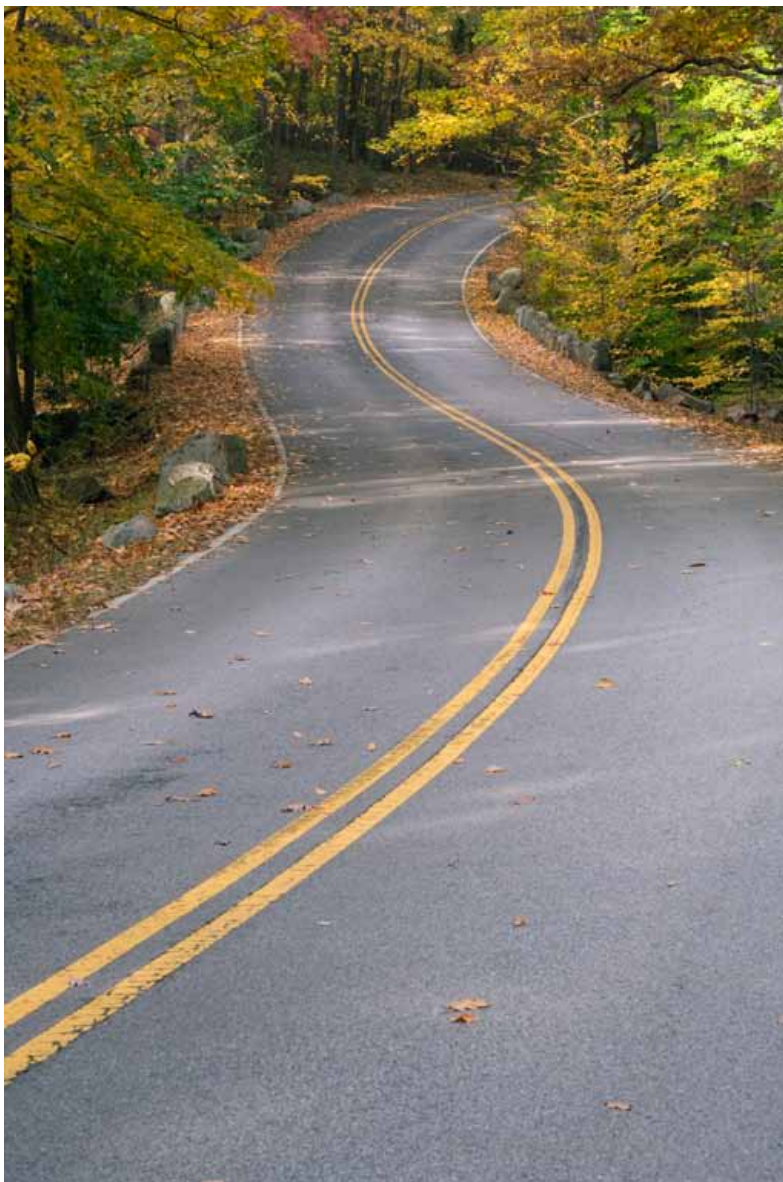
The photographic opportunities vary greatly with the seasons. Fall often brings great color and mild temperatures. The crowds tend to be small compared to some of the more popular "leaf pepper" destinations in New England. Peak color is typically during the second or third week of October, and often lasts into November depending on the weather.



Spring brings unpredictable weather - March can mean weather in the mid 60s, or sleet and rain well below freezing. Wildflowers generally begin before the leaves return, and start to come out in April. While the greenery doesn't fully return until late April or early May. Spring is a nice time to hike in the park, as there are fewer people and generally the snow has long since melted.

Summer is a great season for hiking, camping, and exploring some of the longer trails and scenic vistas. The Northeast corner of the park borders the Hudson river, and rewards hikers with spectacular panoramic views of the river and mountains. This is also a good time to launch a canoe or kayak on one of the many lakes within the park. Some of the lakes require a special license and key - these can be obtained by visiting the park office at Tiorati Circle and inquiring about the current regulations. You might want to phone the Palisades Interstate Park Commission at 845-786-2701 before visiting.

Winter is often a challenging, but rewarding season to create images at the park. Snowfall can vary greatly from a few inches to several feet, and typically falls during a handful of storms throughout the season. If you're looking for snow images, the best time to visit is right after or during one of these storms. The challenge here is that several of the roads are closed for the season, while others are maintained after the main roads are plowed, so you might be best off to take a 4 wheel drive vehicle.

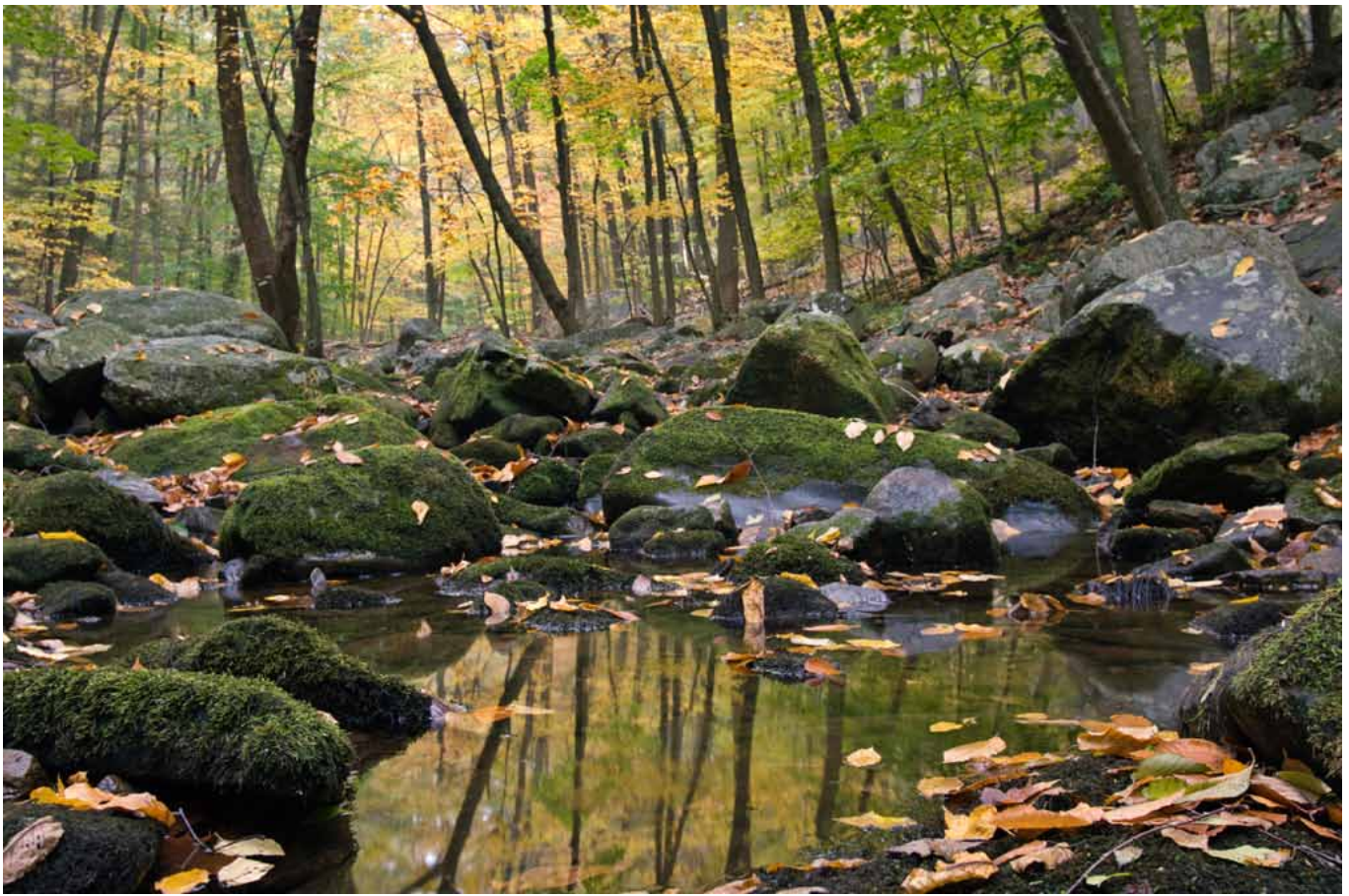


Before you begin exploring the park, I would recommend picking up a set of maps that cover the hiking trails, lakes, and topography. These maps are available in person at the rest stop on the Palisades Interstate Parkway, or online at <http://www.nynjtc.org>. The best topographic maps are produced by the New York, New Jersey trail conference that maintains some of the trails, and promotes the region.

One of my favorite locations is a short stretch of road leading from the Palisade Parkway to Tiorati Circle, know as Tiorati Brook Road. It is exit 16 off the Palisades Interstate Parkway, and follows Tiorati Brook for several miles with good pull-offs to photograph from. Opportunities here include rambling brook shots, a nice 6-7 foot waterfall with several cascades if water levels are high, and good wildflowers on the shores of the brook. At the end of the brook, and located on the road is Lake Tiorati, which offers good scenic views especially at dusk. A small boat launch area has a nice shoreline from which to shoot. You will need a key to park in the lot - this is available at the park office at Tiorati Circle (at the end of Tiorati Brook Road).

If you're looking to hike a further loop, the Northeast corner of the park has a 1777 trail that wanders through historic Doodletown, and as an offshoot you can hike to the top of Bald Mountain. There are many possibilities along the trail, from small macro subjects to nearly 360 degree panoramas of the Hudson River region. Some sections of the hike are moderately strenuous. It is well marked, but you should always hike with the essentials like water, a compass, and a good map. Cellular phone reception in the park can be spotty to non-existent. Always hike within your ability and let someone know where you'll be and when you'll return.







If canoeing or kayaking is of interest, Lake Kanawauke is a great place to visit. The lake is broken up into 3 sections divided by small tunnels you paddle through. Wildlife is abundant here, as are the fish. There are good views both on the water, and from the shore. Sunrise and Sunset are both wonderful here, so if you decide to paddle, plan on making a day of it. The large parking lot has picnic tables available, and the lake is a popular destination during the summer for families and picnics.

One of the less travelled areas worth visiting is Lake Nawahunta. Located on Seven Lakes Drive, it is a short walk from the Silvermine Lake parking lot (parking on the roadside is not allowed on any of Seven lakes Drive - I've been ticketed before). Nawahunta is a smaller lake with trails around it, and a great stream that feeds the lake on the northern side. This stream is perfect for fall reflections, and is situated near a beautiful stand of big pines that are magnificent in their own right. The trail stems out from here and ascends to the ridge-top. The area around the lake is flat and the woods provide easy off trail exploration of a beautiful area.

These are just some of the highlights of a park that would take a lifetime to explore. The Appalachian Trail runs through the heart of the park, and so on any given day you have a mix of day-hikers, through-hikers, paddlers, and cyclists all enjoying the natural resources of the area. If you're like me, and in the NYC area, this is likely a resource that you will enjoy throughout the seasons.