

NEWS from the Catskill Watershed Corp

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CWC hosts exhibit of Walt Meade wildlife photographs

MARGARETVILLE, January 7, 2016 – A new exhibition, “Wildlife Portraits: Hand-colored Photographs by Walt Meade,” is now on view at the Catskill Watershed Corporation (CWC), 905 Main Street, Margaretville.

The exhibit of 20 stunning black and white images, realistically hand colored by the legendary farmer, naturalist and avid outdoor photographer, can be seen weekdays from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. through March 30. Originally mounted at the Roxbury Arts Group and subsequently at the Delaware County Historical Association (DCHA), the show celebrated the artist’s 100th birthday in 2015. It features close-up photographs of Catskill Mountain denizens including fox and coyote, wild turkey and sparrow hawk, woodchuck and bobcat.

Walt Meade was born in Roxbury in 1915. He was an early student of nature and enjoyed fishing, hunting, trapping, digging ginseng and learning all he could about wildlife. From 1935 to 1956, he kept a remarkable hand-made book, *The Outdoor Record*, to preserve his photos and record his experiences in the out of doors and on his family farm.

With wife Letha, Walt operated a dairy farm in Montgomery Hollow and took every opportunity to go afield with camera in hand. He built a dark room in the pantry of their home and learned to make large black and white prints.

In the 1960s, Walt and Letha worked for Golfetto’s Studio in Stamford coloring people’s portraits. They soon applied the technique to Walt’s wildlife images. After Letha’s passing and the sale of the dairy, Walt became the farmer and nature teacher at Manhattan Country School Farm in Meeker Hollow, Roxbury where students from the New York City school spend several weeks each year learning about the natural world. MCS Farm Director Ginny Scheer became Walt’s second wife.

In the 1980s he revived and perfected the hand coloration process, and his meticulously rendered photographs became highly sought. His nature essays appeared in regional magazines, and in 1991 his book *In the Catskill Mountains: A Personal Approach to Nature* was published by Purple Mountain Press of Fleischmanns. It is still in print.

Walt Meade died in 1993. His grandson, Jim Zuidema, published in 2015 *The Outdoor Record of Walter F. Meade: The Early Experiences of a Catskill Mountains Naturalist*. It is a facsimile of Walt’s hand-made book, *The Outdoor Record*. Thanks to grants from the New York State Council on the Arts and the O’Connor Foundation, a copy of the facsimile will be placed in several public and college libraries in the Catskills region.

Works in the CWC exhibit are on loan from Ginny Scheer, who organized the show; and from the collections of Walt’s daughter, Donna Meade Zuidema; DCHA and the Roxbury Arts Group.

The CWC is a non-profit, Local Development Corporation responsible for several environmental protection, economic development and education programs in the New York City Watershed West of the Hudson River. www.cwconline.org