

## **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) Foresight 2020: Exploration and Inspiration NARGS AGM hosted by Adirondack Chapter in Ithaca NY**

This document, intended to supplement the information published in the winter 2020 *Quarterly* (also posted to the NARGS website under Home to Events to AGM), more fully addresses issues relating to the AGM. Here you will find the following information:

- On-line Registration
- Check-in
- Guest Attendees
- Parking
- Accommodations On-Site (Cornell Residence Hall)
- Off-site Lodging
- Dining
- Accessibility
- Program Speakers
- Field Trips
- Weather
- Sunday On-your-own Garden Tour
- Free Time

### **Registration**

*Why is there only online registration?*

Virtually all past AGM attendees have registered online so we have dropped paper registration as an option.

*I need help with registration.*

If you are having difficulty navigating the online registration, contact our Registration Coordinator, John Gilrein, [2020agm@twcny.rr.com](mailto:2020agm@twcny.rr.com) for assistance.

*Can I revisit my registration to make changes?*

The online registration will need to be completed in one sitting. This will be explained up front and all items that will be included in the registration process will be listed upfront. Any modifications, once your registration has been posted, will have to be made by email ([confserv@cornell.edu](mailto:confserv@cornell.edu)) or phone call, 607.255.6290 during regular business hours from 9-5 Eastern time.

*How do I make payment?*

You will be directed to a secure webpage to pay by your Visa, Mastercard, or Discover credit cards.



## **AGM/Conference Check-in**

*What is the address of Robert Purcell Community Center, where we check-in for the conference?*

217 George Jessup Rd., on the north campus of Cornell University, Ithaca, NY.

*Will there be loading and unloading zone?*

There is a circular drive designated as a loading zone just outside the entrance.

*What time is Conference check-in?*

Check-in begins at 2:00pm and runs until 6:00pm, unless you have made prior arrangements for early arrival (such as those taking the Adirondack pre-Conference trip or the Thursday Syracuse pre-conference day trip).

*What if I arrive after 6:00pm for check-in?*

The Check-in desk at Robert Purcell Community Center will be open until 11pm for late arrivals and is on-call 25/7 after hours. After 11pm all entrances will post the on-call number.

*OK, what if I'm one of those people who will be arriving on Wednesday. When, where, how do I check-in?*

First, at the time you register you should acknowledge early arrival. Check-in is still at Robert Purcell Community Center where the Information Counter is operated from 7am to 11pm. Outside of these hours there is a phone number to call 24/7.

## **Guest Attendees**

*What if I am traveling with a companion who does not wish to attend the conference but would like to join me for meals?*

Due to low demand at past AGM's, we are not offering a guest registration. However, your travel companion can easily purchase meals by credit card at Cornell's Robert Purcell Marketplace Eatery. If you would like your guest to attend the Friday night banquet, you will have the option to purchase that meal on the registration website.

## **Parking**

*If I drive to the conference, does Cornell provide for parking?*

Yes, but a fee is charged 24/7. The parking rate at this time is \$7 per day. Once you register, we will send you specifics about parking accommodations in a nearby parking lot.

Parking in the lot located outside Cornell Botanic Gardens Visitor Center, which we will visit on Saturday, has limited spaces and is free weekends. The gardens are located a short (and scenic) walking distance from Conference HQ. We will arrange a sign-up board for carpooling.

*Will you have accommodations for special housing and/or parking, and/or dietary needs?*

Yes. When you make your reservation, please be specific as to your special needs and every reasonable attempt will be made to accommodate you.

## **Accommodations On-Site (Cornell Residence Hall)**

*If I choose to stay in the residence hall, what can I expect?*

You have the option of booking a single or double room. Room charge is per person with every attempt to honor your choice of roommate. The residence hall is literally steps away from meals, the evening lecture hall, and the bus pick-up point for the Friday field trip.

While a section of rooms have been blocked for our use, you can expect others will be staying in the residence halls and using the dining facilities.

Every room is climate-controlled and equipped with single beds and a bathroom for every three rooms, shared by up to five people. An elevator is available as well as lounges and a kitchenette for your use. The room fee is charged per person plus 8% sales tax.

*What time is check-in and check-out at the residence hall?*

Check-in is any time after 2 p.m.

Check-out time is 10 a.m. on Sunday June 21 and will be strictly enforced. If you aren't ready to depart for home, the front desk can offer short-term storage of your luggage.

*What is the cost of the rooms? (Note: these are 2019 rates and subject to change)*

Single: \$86 per person per night + 8% sales tax

Double: \$60 per person per night + 8% sales tax

*What is the deadline for booking?*

The rooms are held until May 15, 2020 subject to availability.

*What housekeeping services are available?*

Each guest is provided with a twin bed made with sheets, blanket and bedspread, 2 towels, face cloth, soap, and drinking glass. There are laundry and vending machines on site as well.

*Am I permitted to book extra nights in the residence hall?*

Individuals who must arrive early for Conference-related activities are permitted to check-in on Wednesday June 17<sup>th</sup>. Due to other bookings, everyone staying in the residence hall must check-out by 10 a.m. on Sunday June 21<sup>st</sup> with no exceptions.

*What other amenities are provided at the Robert Purcell Community Center?*

There is an on-site convenience store, ATM, and vending. Should you need to access a computer, there is a computer lab. You will need to obtain sign-on credentials from the service desk.

**Off-site Motels:**

*Remind me again, what are the NARGS Conference rates at these motels:*

The rate at Best Western University Inn of Ithaca is \$139+ tax for single/double room for two. The Clarion Inn University Airport rate is \$129 + tax for single/double room for two. Taxes include an 8% sales tax and a 10% room occupancy tax.

*How long are these motel rooms available at this special rate?*

The special Conference rate is available until May 15, subject to availability and can be extended from June 16-22.

*How far are these two motels from the Conference Center?*

The Clarion Inn University Airport is located at 2310 N. Triphammer Road and is located 2.1 miles away from the Conference and about a 10 minute drive. Best Western University's address is 1020 Ellis Hollow Road and is also 2.1 miles away. It is located across campus so you should allow an extra 5 minutes of driving time. Also allow 5-10 minutes to walk from the parking lot, if you are driving.

*Will I need a car?*

Getting around Ithaca can be challenging without a car since public transportation is not the most accommodating. If you don't have access to a car, your best option would be to stay on campus. With advance planning though you can certainly manage to get around without a car using motel shuttle services, and such services as Uber, Lyft, or taxi (again, with advance booking). Keep in mind Ithaca also has car rental services.

*How far are these motels from the airport?*

Both motels are only minutes away from the Ithaca-Tompkins Regional Airport and they both offer free shuttle service.

*Are there nearby services and dining options at these motels?*

Yes. The Clarion has an in-house restaurant and is located just in front of a shopping mall and two shopping plazas. Best Western is located on the edge of a strip mall with a supermarket, pharmacy, and restaurants.

*Is there transportation provided from the motels to the Conference Center?*

Both motels offer limited shuttle service to Cornell. The shuttle must be reserved in advance.

*What are my off-site lodging options?*

Besides the blocks of rooms being held at Best Western University Inn and Clarion Inn motels, Ithaca also offers a number of motel and hotel options, airbnb's, and even camping facilities should you choose to look into making different lodging arrangements.

## **Dining**

*What meals are included in my conference registration?*

With the exception of Saturday night dinner-on-your-own, all meals within the official framework of the Conference – that is Thursday dinner through Sunday breakfast are included in your registration fee. Breakfasts and Thursday dinner will be in the Robert Purcell Marketplace Eatery. You will need to present the dining card issued to you at your sign-in to be admitted.

*What can I expect with the dining hall dining experience?*

The Marketplace is distinctly not the college dining hall experience of by-gone days. Be prepared to enjoy this award-winning All You Care To Eat dining room with a variety of menu options. Food stations include the Mongolian Grill, where guests select ingredients and a favorite sauce for the on-site chefs to grill to order, fresh sushi rolled right before your eyes, hearthstone-baked specialty pizza, and a large salad bar. Top it all off with a stop at the ice cream bar or extensive table of desserts.

*What can I expect from the boxed lunches?*

Lunch-on-the-go for our Thursday and Friday field trips will be boxed lunches including sandwich, fruit, dessert, and beverage. You will receive a lunch order form as you enter the dining hall at breakfast. Complete your order, then pick-up your personalized order as you exit the dining hall. We will also provide additional bottled water on the field trips.

*Where are the meals?*

With the exception of the banquet, meals will be in the Robert Purcell Marketplace Eatery. This is located in the same building as check-in and the evening talks. A semi-private seating area will be partitioned for our use.

*Will alcoholic beverages be available?*

Since Thursday's dinner will be offered in a Cornell dining facility where students may also be dining, no alcohol is permitted there. However, prior to the dinner hour, we are offering a "Taste of Ithaca" reception in one of the dorm lounges prior to dinner. We will have volunteers directing you to this location.

*Tell me more about the "Taste of Ithaca" social hour.*

This reception is our opportunity to highlight local products including tastings of Finger Lakes wine, beer, and hard cider. Light munchies and non-alcoholic beverages will also be provided. There is no charge for this social hour.

*What about the Friday banquet?*

The Friday banquet will be a catered dinner buffet in a private room reserved for us. There will be a cash bar serving beer and wine.

*What about special dietary or other special needs?*

The registration form will allow you to designate any special dietary restrictions and every effort will be made to accommodate your needs.

## **Accessibility**

*Are the Cornell facilities accessible?*

All Cornell facilities are in compliance with the Federal accessibility guidelines and standards as are the off-campus lodging options.

## **Program Speakers**

*Tell me more about the Thursday night Cornell Botanic Garden speakers.*

- **Emily Detrick**, the Elizabeth Weaver Director of Horticulture, will provide a welcome and overview of Cornell Botanic Gardens and its mission. She holds a horticulture master's degree from Cornell University with a focus on public garden leadership. Before moving to Ithaca for graduate study, she completed the practical horticulture program at Stonecrop Gardens.
- **Sarah Fiorello's** presentation "Cornell is Gorges," reflects her particular expertise in the natural history of the area's gorges, of which Cascadilla Gorge is maintained by Cornell Botanic Gardens. Her role at Cornell is as the Interpretation Coordinator, enhancing visitors' experience with interpretive materials such as brochures, exhibits, and self-guided tours. She holds a Bachelor of Science in natural resources and a Master of Professional Studies in horticulture from Cornell University. Previous experience includes working for the New York State Parks.
- **Krissy Boys**, Natural Areas Horticulturist, who along with other responsibilities, manages the Mundy Wildflower Garden, located on campus in a flood plain forest along Fall Creek. This involves removing invasive species, collecting local seeds, and propagating native plants for gardens, plant sales, and natural areas restoration. Her talk will focus on one of those restoration projects. Prior to joining Cornell Botanic Gardens, she was the gardener at the Brandywine River Museum in Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania, and the land steward in the Laurels Preserve. She has served as a steering committee member of the Finger Lakes Native Plant Society for the last 18 years.
- **Robert Wesley** is a botanist with Cornell Botanic Gardens with expertise on native plants of the area. His work responsibilities include looking after and monitoring the quality of vegetation in the 3,000+ acres of off-campus natural areas managed by Cornell Botanic Gardens. His Conference talk focuses on the Chaumont Barrens of Jefferson, County, a rare alvar grassland preserve – a prairie-like landscape of globally rare plant communities. Since the barrens are too far away for us to visit, Bob will bring the barrens to us in his presentation!

*What about the other speakers?*

**Kaj Andersen**, hailing from Denmark, will give a presentation on his involvement in building, planting and maintaining the crevice garden at Bangsbo Botanical Garden. He has been lecturing for more than 30 years, all over Europe. His first lectures were about aquarium fish, as he traveled professionally on many expeditions in South America, then later about Bangsbo and his travels to the alpine regions of Europe. His wife Minna will be traveling to the Conference with him.

**Harry Jans** Is an avid rock gardener, plant explorer and lecturer. He will deliver two talks – one is a whirlwind trip around the world of plant favorites while the second will focus on recent trips to Ecuador and Peru. His website (<https://www.jansalpines.com/>) is a treasure-trove of information and images. From his personal statement he writes, “ To see plants in their natural habitat is a luxury not everyone can afford. Fortunately I have been able to see and photograph plants in their wild habitat – not only in Europe, but also in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, North and South America, New Zealand, Australia, and Tasmania.”

*What can I expect from the After-hours Mini-talks?*

Short mini-talks have been offered at past conferences and have been so varied and inspiring that we are pleased to offer them at our conference. A mini-talk session is scheduled for Thursday night, and depending on the number of submissions, we will hold a Friday night session as well. Attendance at each session is strictly optional, intended to be very informal, and last about an hour. Submit your Powerpoint presentation to Steve Whitesell ([elysium214@aol.com](mailto:elysium214@aol.com)), coordinator, by May 15. We hope you will consider putting a short presentation together (5-15 minutes tops) on something you'd like to share. Be as creative as your own exploration and inspiration. That is, after all, the theme of the Conference!

### **Field Trips**

*Tell me more about the field trips.*

Field trips are scheduled for both Friday and Saturday. Be advised to wear comfortable clothing, hiking shoes, and perhaps use a walking stick. Please come properly prepared, exercise caution and know your own limits.

*What can I expect from the field trip transportation?*

On Friday we will be transported in comfortable 55-foot motor coaches that are equipped with a bathroom. The itinerary includes visits to three outstanding private gardens and a gorge walk.

*What can I expect from the gorge walk?*

Friday's field trip includes a visit to one of the area gorges in one of the nearby state parks. Note the walk will be at a leisurely “botanical” pace on improved pathways that do involve walking up and down a considerable number of steps and woodland paths. It is possible to do only a portion of the walk. Each bus will break up into smaller groups accompanied by a naturalist.

*What can I expect from the garden visits?*

On Friday the field trip also includes visiting three private gardens of varying sizes. Some terrain may be irregular. Again, caution should be exercised.

*What can I expect from the Saturday trip to Cornell Botanic Gardens?*

On Saturday we hope many will choose to walk from the Conference Center to Cornell Botanic Gardens along scenic Beebe Lake trail, a basically level path taking about 15-20 minutes. Additionally, Cornell Botanic Gardens offers a parking lot –

free on week-ends – with limited spaces. We will post a sign-up sheet to coordinate drivers and riders, for those who prefer that option.

### **Weather**

*What is the weather like in June in Ithaca?*

There's an Ithaca saying that if you don't like the weather now, wait 10 minutes. June can offer a little bit of everything but snow. It is generally warm and humid, rarely exceeding temperatures in the mid-80's but more often in the 70's and nights cooling to comfortable sleeping temperatures in the high 50's to low 60's (and often requiring a light sweater or jacket). We have frequent cloud cover and, if we're lucky we will not see any precipitation. Yes, rain is a possibility. Our outdoor activities will be held rain or shine so come prepared. The residence halls have climate control.

### **On-your-own Garden Tour**

*What can I expect on Sunday's gardentour?*

We have lined up a number of private gardens for you to visit throughout the area. Your Conference packet will include addresses and garden descriptions to help you map out your route. We hope you will include a visit to our Chapter's public garden located on the grounds of Tompkins County Cooperative Extension's offices in the city of Ithaca.

*What are visiting hours?*

The gardens will be open from 10:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

### **Free Time**

*What activities do you suggest for the free afternoon on Saturday?*

For those who are interested in a guided tour of the Cornell Botanic Gardens Newman Arboretum, we will have an advance sign-up. Pat Curran, a docent as well as member of NARGS, will lead the tour of approximately 1½ hours.

We plan to provide a list of other activities both on- and off-campus. On campus options include trails and gardens to visit, the Johnson Art Museum, a hike in Cascadilla gorge, and more depending on your interests.

If you have your own transportation, there are many more options including a visit to the Laboratory of Ornithology or a visit to the downtown Commons shopping area, where there are many specialty shops and places to eat.

*Will you have dining suggestions for Saturday night's on-your-own dinner and for those extending their stay?*

In your Conference packet we will provide a number of dining suggestions. This will include restaurants near our Conference motels and downtown, as well as options close to the residence hall quarters. Some restaurants are offering special conference deals. Those with transportation will obviously have more options available to them.



*I'm thinking of extending my stay in Ithaca. What are some other things to do in the area?*

First, we hope you're considering staying Sunday afternoon to visit yet more private gardens that we are opening. Beyond that, here are additional suggestions (and by no means an exhaustive list).

Additionally, your Conference packet will include a Free Time hand-out and maps of the city and county. Here's a short list:

Check out the wineries for which this area is long-noted. Today, you can add micro-breweries and cideries to an ever-growing list. They are located for the most part along the shores of the Finger Lakes.

Ithaca's Sunday Farmers Market is a great place to grab lunch or pick up local hand-crafted items and it is located right on the water.

Take advantage of the beauty of the area to visit more gorges and waterfalls. Taughannock Falls State Park is located along Route 89 with its 215-foot falls accessible by a  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile trail or by observation overlook.

Get out on the lake with a boat ride or rent a kayak or canoe. Rentals are available at a number of locations including Taughannock State Park, Stewart Park, Myers Park, and Puddledockers.

Pick up a free Ithaca Times. It is a great resource for what's happening in town on any given day – including gallery exhibits, live music, theatre, book readings, museums, and much more.

If you're an advance planner, we suggest you check out <https://www.visitithaca.com/>, the official tourism website for Ithaca and Tompkins County, for more ideas.

### **Still More Questions?**

Our FAQ's have tried to address many of the details of the AGM and Conference, but you may still have some unanswered questions. If so, contact our Registration Coordinator John Gilrein, [2020agm@twcny.rr.com](mailto:2020agm@twcny.rr.com).

*This AGM and Conference is a program of NARGS, hosted by the Adirondack Chapter NARGS and not by Cornell University. NARGS and its affiliate, the Adirondack Chapter NARGS, assumes exclusive responsibility for all aspects of program content, scheduling, and procedures.*