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# FROST VALLEY YMCA

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HURRICANE IRENE: A LOOK BACK

FROST VALLEY YMCA

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VIEW: [In Pictures—The Destruction of Irene](#)

VIEW: [Frost Valley YMCA 2011 Annual Report](#)

One year ago, on August 28, 2011, two days after summer camp closed for the season, Hurricane Irene surprised the Catskill Mountain region in the early morning hours by dumping twelve inches of hard rain on us. Here at Frost Valley YMCA, as raging rivers swallowed pastures, horses ran for higher ground above the castle. Biscuit Brook turned into a raging river and rushed the main camp property. Fish were visible swimming over the double yellow stripes on the flooded road. Rocks, debris, and fallen trees were strewn across campus. High winds caused flooding that washed out roads, bridges, fencing, and—sadly—Pigeon Lodge—home to our CITs. Deep gullies were carved into access roads to the north and south—the only access roads. No one could get in or out. Family camp, due to start that afternoon, had to be cancelled.

The next day dawned warm, calm, and sunny with clear blue skies. It was hard to believe the juxtaposition of that beautiful, late summer day and the destruction wrought by the storm. It was hard to imagine then, that just one year later, we'd have regained our footing to find ourselves in better shape than ever before.

The Frost Valley staff, fully trained in emergency procedure, was extraordinary during the storm and after, in a recovery effort that took months. Staff and volunteers worked every daylight hour to dig out, clean up, and cobble together fencing and roads. Where possible, they shored up bridges. Over the course of two days, they hiked horses and campers seven miles to waiting transportation in Claryville, the closest point of contact. They welcomed neighbors who'd long since run out of food and gas to the dining hall for meals, showers, and company. In a crisis, the Frost Valley spirit—our values, work ethic, and leadership skills—were on full display.

Our wider community of board members, donors, friends, neighbors and campers rallied in support from all over the world. The Frost Valley family has never been so strong, connected, and heartening.

## ABOUT FROST VALLEY YMCA:

Frost Valley YMCA is a 5,000 acre camp in the heart of the forever wild Catskill Mountains. We are, at heart, a summer camp all year long. But, we serve people through Camp, School Programs, Family & Group Retreats and East Valley Ranch. Please contact us for story ideas on these or any of our other many programs.