

Mamatoga Review: Go Take a Hike!

(at Hudson Crossing Park)

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It looks as if we might have been spared the rain that was threatening earlier today, but this morning, in an attempt to beat the storm that seemed imminent we went out to explore a new park suggested to me by a new reader we met at the Farmers' Market, Hudson Crossing Park. I had never heard of it before, and I went immediately to the website to get more information. According to [their site](#), the park is designed to “bring people together, bridge communities, foster environmental stewardship, and connect educational resources”. It is called a “Bi-County Educational Park project” and is centered around the Hudson River and Champlain Canal Lock 5 Island in the Towns of Saratoga and Northumberland. Just one mile north of Schuylerville, the park can be reached by water, on foot via the Old Champlain Canal Towpath, or by car via N.Y.S. Route 4. I was worried we wouldn't be able to find it (since my navigational skills are somewhat lacking to say the very least) but there was a nice big sign pointing us in the right direction from the road. The park has a series of trails, play spaces and boat access, and today we thought we would just explore the trails and playground area, although I'd love to also bring a boat and explore more some day soon. There is a nice big parking area just off the road with the playground right across the park. I was struck first by the really interesting modern architecture design of the picnic area shelter, it was instantly different from any other playground I had seen before. I also liked the fact that it seemed part planned, and part natural and organic, as if the park designers sort of fit their pieces into the natural landscape rather than push landscape aside (or get rid of it entirely) for their stuff. There are nice big signs with maps and information about the wildlife and flowers in the park and the kids immediately ran up the first hill to the top that overlooks the water where there was a simple swing set alongside a really interesting wooden modern shelter space. Not far from the swing set there is a long metal slide built onto the side of the hill and the kids absolutely went crazy over it. A few potato sack bags were alongside and the kids grabbed them and had a ball sliding all the way down from the top of the hill down to where the stone labyrinth was set up. In the center of the playground was a large sand table filled with green sand for little hands to play in, and another one filled with flowers. A little funny tiki style statue stood inside what I think is

designed to be like a garden, and close to that is a tunnel built into a small dirt mound for the kids to crawl through. There is a large bow of a boat built into the side of the hill as well, with a tiny little tree growing up right in front of it, and past this a smaller green slide for those who might be a little wary of the long silver one. At the bottom of the green slide a path of large square stones with mosaic designs lead back to the opening of the playground, and it was the little design touches like these that give the park the modern and thoughtful feel to it, I felt as if the designers of the park really had kids in mind when adding little touches like this. The large picnic area was really my favorite with the beautifully designed wooden roof-like overhead shelter, and there are plenty of picnic tables along with a porta-potty that is handicap accessible. After we thoroughly explored the playground area we took a walk on one of the trails, letting the dog off the leash and everyone got nice and tired out. I left the park wanting to see even more, and looking forward to coming back. They are still working on it, and I can't wait to see what other unique and interesting things they add to it to spark imagination and play.